CHAPTER III

METAPHYSICAL DETERMINISM

3.1 Scientific Materialism and Metaphysical Determinism

Though scientific determinism and metaphysical determinism shared the same foundational base, viz., the principle of causality, their orientations were different. This is evident from the different types of questions raised by them, — questions which were relevant to two different realms of existence. While scientific determinism dealt with physical phenomena, metaphysical determinism focussed its attention on man. All the same, as it was suggested in the previous chapter, the implications of the scientific doctrine in the realm of metaphysics are far-reaching.

While anthropological determinism and certain aspects of biological determinism are also centered round man, metaphysical determinism studies the effects and implications of 'conditioning' on human freedom. The question of 'free action' and its link with moral responsibility is of special interest from this viewpoint. Metaphysical determinism is commonly understood as negating all forms of human freedom. Our main concern in this and the following chapter is to consider this position critically, in some detail.

Like scientific determinism, metaphysical determinism too is based on causal premises which lead to a conclusion
(which is the effect). The two major premises which inevitably lead to the conclusion are:

(a) "Every macroscopic physical event has a cause" and
(b) "All human actions are macroscopic physical events."

The conclusion which follows from these two premises is "Therefore, all human actions are caused or determined."

From the foregoing definition it is evident that metaphysical determinism does not totally differ from scientific determinism, since premise A is exclusively a scientific dictum. The proposition, "every macroscopic physical event has a cause", forms the corner-stone of all scientific enquiries. Metaphysical determinism gains its entry through premise B, inasmuch as all human actions are equated with macroscopic physical events. Metaphysical determinism is justified when an action is considered purely as an event. Thus scientific determinism not only supports metaphysical determinism but also imparts greater clarity to the doctrine.

The basic argument of metaphysical determinism can then be formulated thus: "If an event is in all respects causally explicable, then it could not have been different, since to explain an event completely is to just show that nothing else

was possible in the circumstances.\footnote{2}

3.2 Transition from Scientific Determinism to Metaphysical Determinism

It could also be argued that if one thing is the cause of another, given the occurrence of the first, the second must occur. Such an approach to determinism through causal explanation does 'influence' our concept of human freedom. If all human actions are described as macroscopic physical events and fitted into a causal network, the the possibility of 'genuine alternatives' or 'freedom of choice' appears to get obliterated. As extrapolation of the basic argument also implies that if everything that occurs is governed by causal laws, then nothing that fails to happen is possible or was ever possible.

3.3 Two Crucial Issues Suggested by the Transition

When looked at from this angle, metaphysical determinism seems to bolt the door to the idea of 'free choice' and gives rise to several questions which are of crucial importance to ethics and moral philosophy. Two of them deserve close scrutiny. The first relates to the entire range of physical determinants and their implications for human freedom. The

question could be framed as follows:

Is the self to which I refer my deliberate volitions a self of strictly determinate moral qualities, a definite character partly inherited, partly formed by my past actions and feelings, and by any physical influence that it may have unconsciously received; so that my voluntary action, for good or evil, is at any moment completely caused by the determinate qualities of this character, together with my circumstances, or the external influences acting on me at the moment including under this latter terms my present bodily conditions?

This question encompasses all aspects of human conditioning.

The second issue follows from the first and is directly concerned with the question of freedom of choice, and can be framed as follows:

Is there always a possibility of my choosing to act in the manner that I now judge to be reasonable and right, whatever my previous actions and experiences may have been?

The essence of the question is whether we have freedom of choice, despite our conditioning. These two questions form the core of the determinism-freedom issue.

3. 3.1 The First Issue as Counteracting the Rigidity of Metaphysical Determinism

The first question relates to the role played by physical determinism and psychological determinism in regard to human

4 Ibid.
decisions and choice. We had occasion to note in the previous chapter that physical determinism had its roots in the causal law which was considered basic to science. The extension of causal laws to the human realm signified that causal laws governed human thought and action as well. Thought could be explained and interpreted in terms of chemical changes and electrical 'energies' in the cerebral cortex, and human freedom seemed to get entirely wiped out. Several philosophers subscribed to this view. 5 It is no wonder, therefore that physical determinism which ran counter to human freedom, was considered a form of 'hard determinism'.

5 The adherents of necessitarianism (the standpoint which maintains that everything happens necessarily and that everyone has to do what he actually does) like Hobbes pointed out that the acceptance of physical determinism, would go counter to upholding free action. This view is similar to that of actualism which maintains that nobody can do anything different than what he actually does, and that only the 'actual' is possible. An eminent adherent of this view was Hume.

6 It was William James who coined two terms to denote two varieties of determinism. One was 'hard determinism' and the other, 'soft determinism.' Indicating the distinction he writes: "old fashioned determinism was what we may call hard determinism. It did not shrink from such words as fatality, bondage of the will, necessitation and the like. Now-a-days we have soft-determinism which abhors harsh words, and repudiating fatality, necessity and even pre-determination, says that its real name is freedom." See "The Dilemma of Determinism" in John J. McDermott, The Writings of William James, New York: Random House, Inc., 1967, pp. 587-590.
Psychological determinism, the other 'aspect' which provides substance to the first issue, differs from physical determinism to the extent that it draws the distinction between man's psyche (or mind) and his physical body. By calling attention also to the non-physical aspects of man, psychological determinism may be considered to have added a new dimension to the general doctrine of metaphysical determinism. By differentiating man from the general physical order of nature, psychological determinism brings into the discussion a more intricate and complex 'entity' which eludes scrutiny by means of pure physical analysis. It is significant to note that the psychological dimension makes for a less rigid deterministic approach.

This is evident particularly when we look into the different types of emphasis in the two approaches. An adherent of physical determinism would consider only physiological laws to explain human action though the laws themselves might relate to complicated neurological or glandular states. The contention of the physical determinist is that given such laws a physiologist could even predict (at least theoretically) about 'human decisions' from a study of certain states of the body. This means an individual's decisions would not have 'emanated' in any way from his beliefs or
desires. The inadequacy of this type of analysis of human action is evident. Though we grant that it refers to an important dimension of analysis of human phenomena, we also note that it represents, at best, an analysis of only one aspect of human life, and as such, it is inadequate.

Psychological determinism recognizes certain kinds of laws other than the purely physiological, known as genetic and structural. The theory highlights the mental aspects of man such as consciousness and rationality. Since the two types of determinism refer to two dimensions of man, they


The genetic laws explain the conditions determining human action such as earlier events in life, the experiences of the individual and the reactions exhibited by him. Structural laws relate to the conditions governing decision procedures and action-patterns and include some 'psychological traits' as well.

8 The distinction between two kinds of 'events' reinforces the distinction between physical determinism and psychological determinism. An event rises to the state called 'action' only through the operation of psychological factors. All naturally occurring phenomena may be termed 'happenings'. The rising of the sun, as well as the 'changes' that take place inside the human body such as heart beats, reflex actions and metabolic processes may be referred to as 'happenings'. 'Actions', on the other hand may be described as those which occur through human intervention. Signing a will, making promises or inviting someone over, are instances of 'actions'. These instances point to the fact that actions are backed by reasons, motives and intentions. (See G.E.M. Anscombe, Intention, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1958, p. 9; (Foot Note contd next page)
may be considered to complement each other. With the inclusion of the psychological dimension into human phenomena, metaphysical determinism loses its rigidity of approach.

3. 3.2 The Second Issue as Suggesting the Lines on which Case for Freedom could be Built

This leads us on to the second issue referred to above, viz., the question of human freedom. The question can be stated thus: given the fact of conditioning in human life, is there a possibility of getting over the conditioning effect? It hardly needs to be added that the question must be analysed carefully.

3. 4 The Determinism - Freedom Spectrum

The second issue has been analysed by proposing four major theses within the fold of metaphysical determinism. These four standpoints which discuss determinism and freedom

(Foot Note No. 8 contd).

vary widely. In this spectrum fatalism is considered as 'extremely deterministic'. This is the outcome of fatalism being approached as a form of logical determinism. But when it is understood as an external power or as the effect of a supernatural agency, it falls outside the range of the determinism-freedom spectrum. Our interest in discussing fatalism is due to the dimension of logical determinism present in it.

Further, discussing certain aspects of fatalism is considered necessary here since the theory has been responsible for several misconceptions regarding the doctrine of determinism.

Thus it may be emphasized that total determinism or hard determinism (which includes fatalism as an aspect of it) occupies one end of the determinism-freedom spectrum.

Hard determinism maintains that everything is determined in every way. This position comes next (after the thesis of fatalism) in the determinism-freedom spectrum. This viewpoint which combines both physical determinism and an extreme form of psychological determinism, considers human freedom a myth.

The other end of the spectrum is occupied by the doctrine of total freedom. Its main contention is that man is totally free, and that he is determined by nothing
whatsoever. According to this position any form of determinism is meaningless.

Within these two extremes fall the other two theses, referred to as libertarianism and compatibilism. According to libertarianism, human freedom is realized only in a 'moral' situation. Only when faced with or while taking moral decisions does man's capacity for exercising 'choice' becomes explicit, asserts the libertarian. When confronted with a 'moral situation' in which an individual has to take a decision, he is free in a 'contra-causal' way, maintains the libertarian. Though in this theory there is a recognition that elements of determinism as well as freedom are found in human life, there is only a half-hearted attempt at accepting the compatibility of the two concepts.

The thesis of compatibilism on the other hand accepts the possibility of the interplay of determinism and freedom in human life. It takes the view that determinism is compatible with freedom.

Our present objective is to lay bare the untenability of the two extreme standpoints of total determinism and absolute freedom as well as to point out the inadequacy of the libertarianistic thesis. The aim of our critical analysis is to argue that the case for
compromise can be made, and that our idea of freedom can be
explicated not by denying determinism outright but by accept-
ing aspects of it.

3.5 Total Determinism Understood as Fatalism

Though fatalism as a form of logical determinism was
referred to by us as occupying one extreme and of the spectrum
of the determinism-freedom issue, and hence as deserving
analysis in the context of our discussion in the present thesis,
we find that a reference to fatalism as popularly understood
is not without its value. Thus, though the popular under-
standing of fatalism is strictly outside the determinism-
freedom frame, it needs to be referred to even before the
logical dimensions of it are considered. The reason for such
a preliminary consideration of 'popular fatalism' is that it
helps us in a negative manner to indicate what determinism
is not.

More precisely, the first and the popular 'version' of
fatalism is to consider human life to be totally subjected to
the operation of an external, supernatural agency. Man accord-
ingly is considered a mere puppet. This idea is picturesquely
expressed by Omar Khayyam thus:
The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on; not all thy Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
Nor all thy tears wash out a Word of it.

Fate is considered as an 'ultimate unity' which gradually unfolds all 'future happenings'. It is visualized as inevitably and necessarily controlling all things. It is taken to represent an absolute inscrutable power to which all things are being subject. Such a concept of fate was developed when the idea of rational necessity eluded human understanding.  

Expressing it in a different way, fatalism treats the future in the same way as it considers the past. Just as we know by our experience that past events cannot be 'prevented' or undone, the future too 'cannot be helped' maintains the fatalist. What will be, will be, he says.

Thus stated, the difference between fatalism and determinism becomes apparent. For, while the former implies the existence of an external, trans-empirical agency or power, the latter implies no such thing. The doctrine of determinism


3. 5.1 Logical Determinism as Supporting Fatalism: Cfr. Objections

The second way by which fatalism has been proposed is from the angle of logical determinism, and as such it falls within our framework of the determinism-freedom issue, as we had indicated earlier. Hence it deserves to be discussed at some length. Though the purport of this discussion too is to lay bare the untenability of this 'extreme form' of determinism, we concede that the logical way in which it is

proposed does pose formidable problems to the central issue of freedom.

The strong-point of the thesis we are contesting may be indicated as follows. Though this perspective replaces the idea of 'helplessness' of man, the basic argument of fatalism is still retained. Hence contemporary discussions of fatalism derive enormous support from the theory of logical determinism. The mainstay of logical determinism is that it highlights the inevitability aspect of the occurrences of events.

The inevitability aspect is explained logically thus: an event, state or proposition can have only two truth-values, namely 'true' and 'false'. No third value (tertium non datur) can be assigned. It can be seen immediately that this type of argument in support of fatalism is less vulnerable than the previous version of it. This is because if we choose to deny logic, we should be denying the place of reason in human life.

12 Aristotle in his De Interpretatione developed this law of binary values through his celebrated 'sea battle' argument. What he says is deceptively simple. He says that events, occurrences and statements must be true or false. That is, any event takes place because it was true all the time, and an event which does not actually occur, was false all the time. Therefore, everything that ever happens, 'happens necessarily' Aristotle maintained.
In this connection it is significant to note that some influential thinkers have tried to counter the position of fatalism on the same logical grounds by drawing out the meanings and implications of terms like 'true' and 'false'. For instance, Ryle, an eminent representative of this fold, claims that the two predicates 'true' and 'false' are improperly applied to future propositions. He observes that we pass a judgement over an event as 'true' or 'false', only after and not before its occurrence. Hence the usage of the terms (true and false) ought to be construed not as helping to 'describe' but only in 'passing a verdict' on 'events'.

The terms 'true' and 'false' are, according to Ryle, adjectives, which are erroneously considered to imply the qualities (or properties) present in the propositions which they characterize. For example, the properties of sweetness and whiteness are seen to inherently reside in sugar all time. Ryle points out that in a similar way we mistakenly consider a proposition to be inherently true or false all time. Though Ryle's argument is strong, it is difficult to accept his contention that the ideas of 'truth' and 'falsity' of a statement or an event arise only at the end. Further, it is important to note that the terms 'true' and 'false' are not

totally non-descriptive. For, in actual experience, we find that true statements are backed by experimental facts while false statements are not.

Thus it appears that the various ways of looking at the terms 'true' and 'false' do not weaken the law of excluded middle of classical logic, which is central to the doctrine every of logical determinism. The law of bivalence considers proposition to be bivalued, i.e., either the proposition is true or it is false.\textsuperscript{14}

To overcome the problem presented by the law of bivalence many sought to reject the standard interpretation of this law. Logicians worked out three-valued and multi-valued systems of logic. Lukasiewicz was one of the pioneers in this regard and considered that the granite fortress of fatalism could be broken by the application of a multi-valued logic. According to him, propositions (relating to future events and occurrences) could have any of the three values, viz., 'true', 'false' and 'indeterminate'.

\textsuperscript{14} The law of bivalence (or the law of excluded middle) may be expressed in logical terms as the disjunction (\textbf{OVQ}) which is a logical equivalent (\textbf{Qv-Q}) and which is considered to be a necessary truth.

Lukasiewicz contends that fatalism which depends solely on the law of bivalence (or the law of excluded middle) breaks down when another truth value called 'indeterminate', 'neutral' or 'intermediate' is included in the system of logic. The symbol 'I' is used by him to denote its truth-value. 15

Lukasiewicz's argument against fatalism is objected to on the ground that even a three-valued system of logic points, nevertheless to logical necessity. The logical structure of fatalism thus seems to be unbreakably strong.

15 According to Lukasiewicz 'future contingent' matters have a truth value that is different from the traditional truth-values, viz., truth and falsity. He gives the following example to explain his position. He writes: "I can assume without contradiction that my presence in Warsaw at a certain moment of next year, e.g., at noon on 21 December, is at the present time determined neither positively nor negatively. Hence it is possible, but not necessary, that I shall be present in Warsaw at the given time. On this assumption the proposition 'I shall be in Warsaw at noon on 21 December of next year', can at the present time be neither true nor false. For if it were true now, my future presence in Warsaw would have to be necessary, which is contradictory to the assumption. If it were false now, on the other hand, my future presence in Warsaw would have to be impossible, which is also contradictory to the assumption. Therefore the proposition considered is at the moment neither true nor false and must possess a third value, different from '0' or falsity and '1' or truth." (cited in Nicholas Rescher, Many-Valued Logic, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1969, pp. 22-23.) This third value, according to Lukasiewicz, represents "the possible" and joins "the true" and "the false". (Ibid., p. 23.) Also see (Ibid., pp. 148-154).
For instance, the fatalist may use the following steps to promote his argument:

1. Either it is true that you will raise your right arm five minutes from now or it is false that you will raise your right arm five minutes from now.

2. If it is true that you will raise your right arm five minutes from now, then there is nothing you can do to avoid raising your right arm five minutes from now.

3. If it is false that you will raise your right arm five minutes from now, then there is nothing you can do to enable you to raise your right arm five minutes from now.

4. Therefore, either you must raise your right arm five minutes from now or you cannot raise your right arm five minutes from now. In either case, you are not free with regard to raising your right arm five minutes from now.

From the strength of the above arguments the fatalist might think that his position is unassailable. But it is not so.

It can be pointed out that the fatalist arrives at the wrong conclusion though starting from true premises which are mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive.\(^\text{17}\) In this case, the two mutually exclusive alternatives are: "either it is true that you will raise your right arm five minutes from


"and "or it is false that you will raise your right five minutes from now." Since these are the only two mutually exclusive propositions, it may be maintained that they are also collectively exhaustive, so that what will happen necessarily is only one of these two alternatives, not both. In other words, what will necessarily happen be either P or not P. Thus for the argument is logically und.

But the fatalist arrives at a false conclusion by using the term "Necessarily (P or not-P)" to mean "Necessarily P or necessarily not-P." Further, "P which is a possible happening, is also not necessary; whereas P or not-P, which is necessary, is not a possible happening." Hence, it needs to be pointed out here that the combination of both P and not-P is inapplicable to the very same happening, as the fatalist mistakenly supposes.

It can also be argued that the law of bivalence is not necessarily applicable to all statements. For instance, in regard to the future, we cannot make statements and judge them either to be true or false well in advance. The idea can be explicated by referring to the significance of

18 Ibid., p. 52.
19 Ibid.
Aristotle's classical example of the proposition: "A sea fight will occur tomorrow" in this regard. If normal conditions prevail, it is up to us whether there will be a sea fight tomorrow. Thus at this moment, it is neither true nor false that there will be a sea fight tomorrow. Such a statement may be termed 'indefinite'. The possibility of this statement becoming true or false depends very much on what we decide to do tomorrow. As Steven Cahn observes:

It is important to realise that it is not just our ignorance regarding tomorrow's events that leads us to say that the statement is indefinite, but we are also ignorant regarding many events that occurred millions of years ago. Statements about the occurrence of such past events, however, are either true or false, since it is not up to us whether these events occurred. However, it is up to us whether certain events occur in the future, and if for this reason that statements affirming or denying their occurrences are indefinite.

'Indefinite' here means that the truth or falsity of the event (or occurrence) depends upon us, and so it is not yet true or false that it will occur.

In other words, it cannot be 'true' that an event which is within our control will occur, for we may decide against making it occur. In the same way, it also cannot be false that an event which is within our control will not

occur, for we may decide to bring it about.

Thus premise (1) of the fatalist's argument, - "either it is true that you will raise your right arm five minutes from now or it is false that you will raise your right arm five minutes from now" (or putting it in its logical form (QV - Q) is not rigidly and strictly applicable to statements concerning future events which depend on us entirely. We cannot beforehand describe an action to be true or false, for it is, as yet indeterminate; for performing the action depends upon what we decide to do. Thus the fatalist's position is rendered ineffective and hence untenable. 21

Though fatalism may be repudiated by the employment of sophisticated logical structures, or skilful arguments,

21 The fallacy in the fatalist's argument can also be pointed out in another way. For example, from the proposition "Either you are going to be killed in this raid or you are not" (either A or not-A which is correct) the fatalist sets forth two incorrect propositions such as "If you are going to be killed, you will be killed whatever precautions you take" and "If you are not going to be killed, you will not be killed whatever precautions you neglect." The flow in the fatalist's argument becomes apparent. For, as Hosapers remarks "It is a plain empirical fact, which any set of statistics will bear out, that those who neglect to take precautions stand a higher chance of being killed and those who do take precautions stand a higher chance of remaining alive. People's actions play a part in the causal nexus of events...the fatalistic conclusion, that human beings are impotent to change the course of events is simply false empirical proposition." (Op. Cit., p. 323).
it is well known through experience that "we shall never make things other than what they will be, but we do often make them other than what they would have been if we had acted differently or failed to act at all."22 Thus to say that the future will be the same no matter what we do, is not the same as saying, that it would be the same no matter what we did.

3. 52 Hard Determinism

The purport of our present argument is to suggest that the doctrine of hard determinism which has been proposed (though without specifically bringing in the idea of fatalism) is also unacceptable. For, in all discussions concerning hard determinism (contemporary as well as classical) the concept of moral responsibility has been set aside as insignificant. The characteristic feature of hard determinism as proposed is that it visualises man as a victim of circumstances and as a passive entity acted upon by heredity and environment. Scholars who contribute to this school of thought consider man in purely physicalistic terms and regard him as a mere

bundle of flesh and bones.\textsuperscript{23}

We shall, in this connection, critically consider the position of Edwards and Hospers who have striven hard to advance arguments in support of hard determinism.

\subsection{Proposal 1}

Two main arguments are advanced by Edwards to deny moral responsibility altogether.\textsuperscript{24} His first contention is that man cannot be considered 'free' and 'responsible' since human 'desires', 'choices' and 'efforts' are determined entirely by 'outside factors', such as heredity and environment.


Hard determinism needs to be distinguished from fatalism. The main assumption of fatalism that all events are-preordained implies the existence of some supernatural 'power' Hard determinism does not posit any such supernatural agency or power. It derives its strength from the functioning of the laws of causality which 'appear' to operate in the macroscopic realms of physical phenomena.

He is critical about the soft determinists (and several others who support soft determinism) arbitrarily stopping at the level of desires and volitions. Edwards insists that a more indepth analysis of the matter be made, for our desires and our whole character are derived from our inherited equipment and the environmental influences to which we were subjected at the beginning of our lives. His argument, in short, is that since we had no hand in shaping our character and personality, we are not free in any sense of the term.

To illustrate his argument Edwards takes into consideration individuals A and B, both of whom are suffering from neurosis. A has the energy and courage to undertake therapy, and change his character-structure. B, lacking courage and energy, relapses more into neurosis. Edwards points out that A's success is brought about by his 'desire' to change which was already in him, while it was not the case with B. This desire to change or putting in the required effort was not of A's own making but totally given to him by other extraneous factors, according to Edwards. In his own words: "there must have been first effort, and the effort at that time was the result of factors that were not his making."26

26 Ibid., p. 109.
(b) In his second argument supporting hard determinism, Edwards employs C.A. Campbell's distinction between two conceptions of moral responsibility. The first one refers to the person who arrives at a moral judgement due to the pressure of adverse circumstances. But while in a reflective mood, states Campbell, the same person realizes (besides other things) that he 'could have chosen otherwise' than what he actually did. Edwards interprets this reflective 'sense' of moral responsibility in a different way. He states that the expression 'could have chosen otherwise' must also include in it the possibility of the agent to "originally choose his own character - the character that displays itself in his choices and desires and efforts."27 From this statement it follows that the prerequisite for freedom and thus moral responsibility, is that the agent be presented with the possibility of originally 'choosing' his character, which is in reality beyond his reach, and hence impossible. Thus Edwards posits that human freedom is a myth.

Through arguments (a) and (b) Edwards tries to render void the concept of moral responsibility.

We shall now chalk out Hosper's position before taking stock of hard determinism as a whole.

27 Ibid., p. 110.
3. 522 Proposal 2

Hospers too emphatically maintains that man is not morally responsible. He has two main arguments:

(c) Human actions are totally determined by the unconscious, which is itself brought about by the interplay of heredity, environment and early childhood experiences. Hospers asks:

How can any one be responsible for his actions, since they grow out of his character which is shaped, moulded and made what it is by influences — some hereditary, but most of them stemming from early parental environment — that are not of his own making or choosing?

This statement signifies that nobody could help being other than what he actually is. Given the total background, the individual's subsequent behaviour or action is totally unavoidable. This is because a man cannot 'escape' from the effects of his childhood experiences over which he did not have any control whatsoever. In that case man cannot be held morally responsible for his actions since they were not deliberately 'done' by him.


29 Ibid., p. 119.
The denial of moral responsibility applies to non-neurotics as well as neurotics, since neither of them were 'responsible' for their early childhood-experience and the subsequent character formation, maintains Hospers. The argument is that every desire and intentional act of an individual — and this includes the idea by putting forth efforts to overcome the evil affects of childhood-conditioning — is so wholly determined that there is no room whatever for the 'exercise' of freedom or deliberate choice. To the question as to how the totally determined non-neurotics (even granting that they are only few) are able to overcome their infantile conditioning, Hospers replies:

They have it in them to overcome early deficiencies by exerting great effort and they are capable of exerting the effort. But whether or not you are the kind of person who has it in him to exert the effort is a matter of luck.

Hence, according to Hospers even non-neurotic behaviour characterized by rational considerations, is of no credit to the individual.

3. Ibiu., p. 128

Obviously, Hospers is not using the word 'luck' to denote chance events that are supposed to be uncaused. Here Hospers seems to mean by 'luck' those causal factors that are beyond our control such as heredity, environment and early childhood conditioning. To have a particular type of 'conditioning' which leads to non-neurotic 'normal' behaviour (which is beyond the agent's control) is simply a matter of or good fortune, according to Hospers.
(d) Secondly, Hspers maintains that the terms 'free' and 'responsible' become significant only in one context and not in another. By this Hspers means that we operate at 'two levels of moral discourse'. He writes: "One level (let's call it the upper level) is that of actions; the other (the lower, or deeper level) is that of the springs of action."\(^{31}\) Any talk of 'freedom' and 'responsibility' is applicable only to the upper level, while at the lower level, notions like 'right', 'wrong', 'could', 'can' and 'responsibility' lose their meaning. While concepts like 'voluntary', 'involuntary', 'compelled' and 'uncompelled' are meaningful at the upper level, these distinctions disappear at the lower level of moral discourse.

3. 523 Why Proposals 1 and 2 are Unacceptable

As can be seen, the arguments put forward by Hspers and Edwards to support hard determinism, share several common features. In regard to the main thrust of their arguments there seems to be unanimity. The purport of their arguments is that since man is totally conditioned, he cannot be held morally responsible.

From the arguments put forward, it becomes obvious that these thinkers rarely consider man as an 'actor'. They

\(^{31}\) Ibid., p. 129.
consider man mostly as a passive entity. This idea of hard determinism finds reflection in almost every page of the Edwards-Hospers thesis. We do not deny the fact that man is conditioned by heredity, environment and childhood experiences. But our question is whether man is to be considered a mere creature of circumstances. When we delve deeper into the arguments of hard determinism, we find that it denies moral responsibility because human behaviour is 'caused' by factors beyond man's control. It is difficult to accept the thesis that 'fixing' moral responsibility does not depend on the degree of rationality shown by the individual, but on the fact that certain acts are ultimately due to factors entirely beyond the individual's control.32

The concept of freedom is intimately and reciprocally related to moral responsibility. The concept of freedom is also closely related to the rational faculty in man. By over-emphasizing the role played by external factors alone in 'shaping' human behaviour, hard determinism brings in a

32 It is significant to note that unlike the hard determinism, the soft-determinist employs the criterion of degrees of rationality to gauge moral responsibility. For instance, he recognises the differences in moral responsibility between an adult and a child or between a neurotic and a non-neurotic.
purely one-sided analysis of the human situation and hence it is unacceptable.

In the moral sphere we do recognise some cases of behaviour which deserve to be treated as 'exceptional'. Instances of these 'exceptions' are provided by behaviour resulting from mental diseases, physical and mental coercion and unconscious acts. When behaviour exhibited by the individual is due to such 'causes', he cannot be held morally responsible for any act of commission or omission. These 'exceptions' can be considered as 'excusing conditions'. Hence individuals who are 'subject' to these 'excusing conditions' can hardly be considered as morally responsible. But it needs to be pointed out here that the hard determinist commits the mistake of considering any condition as an 'excusing condition'. In other words, the hard determinist considers any action that is caused, as also being compelled. But, the fact that a causal explanation can be given for a compelled act and an uncompelled act does not imply that both kinds of acts are 'excusable'. Only the 'compelled' act is 'excusable' and not the other.


The greatest difficulty in accepting the Edwards-Hospers theory is that it treats neurotic and non-neurotic behaviour alike. Hospers nowhere differentiates a neurotic from a normal person. In fact, even the psycho-analytic conception of the 'degrees of freedom' is unacceptable to Hospers.\(^3\) What Edwards and Hospers describe as 'human behaviour' relates to a neurotic or a less mentally endowed person. Thus by stretching the basic idea of determinism to the extreme, the Edwards-Hospers theory presents a distorted picture of human behaviour.

The other criterion for assessing moral responsibility stems from the individual's ability or capacity. Viewed from this angle, again, the hard determinist's position is not satisfactory. Our contention can be made clear thus. Let us for instance take the case of a baby-sitter. The fact that she did not create her body, or that she did not choose the education she received are not relevant considerations for judging whether she is morally responsible (or not) for some event that may take place during her employer's absence.\(^3\) On the other hand, if she is physically coerced

\(^3\) According to psycho-analysis, a person is considered free in inverse proportion to his neurotic behaviour.

or loses consciousness, she is not to be held morally responsible. Thus moral responsibility is ascribed to individuals who possess certain capacities or abilities. Even if the possession of these capacities themselves depend on several conditions 'outside' the agent's control, it does not weaken the sense by which the term 'moral responsibility' is used (as in the above context).

Thus the criteria for the assessment of moral responsibility rests on the degree of rationality possessed by the individual and on certain capacities or abilities possessed by him. While these are the two positive prerequisites for gauging moral responsibility, the presence (or absence) of 'excusing conditions' may form the negative prerequisite. By rejecting all the three prerequisites (for the assessment of moral responsibility) the hard determinists standpoint does not contribute much towards man's day-to-day functioning and interaction in society.

Rationality, which is an extremely important prerequisite for moral responsibility and, more importantly, the effort required to exercise it, cannot be solely due to 'luck', as Horsens would have us believe. In the context of moral responsibility the term 'luck' has no meaning at all. We
consider a person to be 'lucky' when something unforeseen and beneficial happens to him, and not because he acts as he 'should', in a given moral situation.

According to Hospers' own terminology, a neurotic who overcomes his neurosis is 'lucky'. And 'luckier still' are those who have no such hurdles to overcome at all. From this it follows that as long as a person is normal, he is 'lucky', and if he becomes abnormal (or neurotic) he is 'unlucky'. And those who exert 'effort' to overcome their neurosis are also the lucky ones. Here in fact, the persons who 'appeared' to be 'unlucky', turned out to be 'lucky'. There is yet another category of individuals whom Hospers fails to recognise. They are the 'lucky' ones turned 'unlucky', i.e., the non-neurotic (normal man) who suddenly sinks into neurosis. If he continues to remain in this state he continues to be 'unlucky' and if he responds to therapy he once again becomes 'lucky'. This type of analysis can go on indefinitely. For, the 'lucky' can turn 'unlucky', and again become 'lucky' and probably turn 'unlucky' again. Hospers' view that if we have favourable childhood experiences, heredity and environment, we are basically lucky and if we are deprived of them, we are basically 'unlucky', is far from being helpful in

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37 Hospers, Determinism and Freedom in the Age of Modern Science, p. 125.
analysing the concept of moral responsibility since there is nothing so basic about luck and unluck, especially since it is found to alternate indefinitely in life (as we have pointed out above).

The issue is rendered less obscure when we substitute 'effort' for 'luck'; for, it also unlocks the door to moral responsibility. Much as the hard determinist may abhor it, praise and blame, innocence and guilt derive their meaning only through moral responsibility. Hence, the hard determinist is inconsistent when he pleads for the innocent (or condemns the guilty), for, as Sidney Hook points out:

> to be morally innocent of having committed an evil deed entails that one is not morally responsible for its commission, and to be morally guilty entails that one is. If moral responsibility is a vacuous expression, then moral innocence and guilt are too. 39

We shall now consider the second argument of Edwards and Hopes. Edwards states that to ascribe moral responsibility to an individual, the agent must have been presented with genuine alternatives to 'choose his original character' (which the individual should be able to recognize in a reflective mood). The criterion suggested here is not acceptable since it is self-contradictory. For, 'choosing' one's original

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character, 'already' indicates, the nature of the person. Apart from being unintelligible and obscure the expression 'choosing our original character' does not describe any actual situation.

Turning our attention now to Hospers' concept of the two-level-moral-discourse, it needs to be pointed out that a clear-cut distinction between the two levels cannot be made in actuality (i.e., between the level of action and the spring of action). If the springs of actions, viz., desires, wants etc., 'cause' our actions on the upper level, then how can the two levels be disengaged from each other? Further, the two levels are in constant interaction and, as such, the 'choices' that are made at the upper level, influence future desires. 'Action' itself is 'born' as a result of the two levels 'merging' in an indistinguishable manner. Thus, "individual choices of the present are not only causative agents of future the events and future acts; they are also generating and modifying agents of new desires and altered character-structures."


In this connection it should be noted that however much we go back into our past, we can never reach a point where we were presented with an alternative to 'choose' our character. It is significant to note that even to exercise the choice, we must know already what kind of character we want, which in turn already indicates our character.

Hospers' distinction between the two levels of moral discourse also raises another difficulty. According to him, an individual is not morally responsible at the level of action, since actions are caused at another level, viz. the spring of action. Now the question which arises here is whether an individual is to be held guilty at the 'level of action' or at a more basic level which provides the spring for action. 'If it is the 'more basic level' (from which action springs) that is considered crucial, then we get a conflicting picture of one and the same person being guilty and innocent simultaneously.

Further, the hard determinist contends that his analysis reaches down to the very roots of our life and existence. But in taking an extreme stance, he also gets far removed from the realm of actions. By analysing past conditioning alone, the theory does not offer an adequate analysis of future actions. That is why it appears to be an extremely one-sided analysis of the human reality and hence unacceptable.

It cannot be denied that human nature is extremely complex both in terms of its structure and its 'functioning'. It is also generally recognised that at present our knowledge of the multi-dimensional personality structure and the
complex human functioning is meagre. In view of this, the extremely one-sided analysis of the hard determinist evidences a gross neglect and a total disregard of the other dimensions of the human personality.

From the foregoing analysis of hard determinism and its implications for moral responsibility, we can reach the conclusion that the kind of determinism as advocated by Edwards and Hospers suffers from several setbacks. Moral responsibility which is crucial for the smooth functioning of society in general and the individual in particular is rendered merely incidental by the Edwards-Hospers brand of determinism. The Edwards-Hospers thesis is which highlights the passive aspects of human life, and totally disregards the active aspects which give substance to the concept of human agency. In short the Edwards-Hospers thesis cannot be taken seriously since it does scant justice to the task of analysing and interpreting human life in general and its moral aspects in particular. It is obvious too that, the theory of hard determinism which shares many features with scientific determinism proves inadequate to analyse the complexity of human life.

It is obvious that if, as explained above, the claim of total determinism is not acceptable, the idea of freedom seems not merely plausible but emerges as a distinct possi-
bility in the realm of human life. Cautiously voicing the case for freedom here is not born out of diffidence regarding the stand we are taking, but out of a full recognition that the deterministic aspects of human life cannot be denied. In other words, it needs to be emphasized that the acceptance of both the aspects of determinism and freedom is called for.

3.6 The Idea of Total Freedom - Its Untenability

The idea of 'total freedom' occupies the other end of the determinism-freedom spectrum. A typical instance is the theory proposed by Jean-Paul Sartre, which we shall now examine.

That Sartre does not accept any element of determinism is evident from his observation: "Man cannot be sometimes a slave and sometimes free, he is wholly and for ever free or he is not free at all."\(^{41}\) He chooses the first alternative and maintains that freedom is an 'ontological necessity'.

Sartre holds that freedom is the first condition for action, and every action is intentional. Since every action is free and intentional, there are no such things as 'unfree acts'. Action, as opposed to a mere happening entails

intention.\textsuperscript{42}

The second important condition for action is the necessary apprehension of the 'objective lack,'\textsuperscript{43} in so far as it 'brings about' the intention necessary for action. Sartre's own illustration is illuminating. He writes:

\begin{quote}

The \textit{intention} of providing a rival Rome can come to Constantine only through the apprehension of an objective lack... Creating Constantinople is understood as an \textit{act} only if the first conception of a new city had preceded the action itself or at least this conception serves as an organizing theme for all later steps.
\end{quote}

Thus the apprehension of the 'objective lack' may be considered to have the way for future actions, via the 'intention'.

\textsuperscript{42} For example, a careless smoker who has unwittingly caused an explosion has not 'acted', whereas a worker who carries out an order in dynamiting a quarry has 'acted'. The second individual has 'intentionally realized a conscious project.' (\textit{Ibid.}, p. 433).

\textsuperscript{43} In Sartre's philosophy, the 'For-itself' which is the human reality or human consciousness is by its very nature characterized by 'lack'. 'Lack' is a kind of external negation, where one thing is not the other. For example, a cow is not a horse. This 'lack' or 'scarcity' (a Marxist term, adopted later by Sartre) is meaningful only in the human context. According to Sartre this 'lack' can never attain fulfillment since it is the very nature of consciousness to have that 'lack'.

In contrast to this, the object or the 'In-itself' is 'full'. There is no development or change in it. Since it is full, the object does not have the 'lack' or possibilities. It is what it is, it has 'fullness'. This is brought out in the Sartrean dictum, "Man is a being who is not what he is, and who is what is not'.

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., p. 434.
Hence Sartre’s concept of man can be considered to occupy the other end of the spectrum since it considers freedom as the very essence of human nature. It is interesting to note that even such an extreme position does not ignore the role of heredity and environment in shaping the individual. This is evident from Sartre’s concept of facticity (or situation) which is explained in terms of one’s (a) place (b) past (c) environment (d) fellowmen and (e) death.\textsuperscript{45} Sartre maintains that far from impeding freedom facticity provides the basis for free choices. According to him it is freedom which impress upon us that there are some things which are physically impossible for us. These restrictions nevertheless do not hamper us completely. As he says,

\begin{quote}
there is freedom only in a \textit{situation}, and there is a situation only through freedom. Human reality everywhere encounters resistance and obstacles which it has not created, but these resistances and obstacles have meaning only in and through free choice which human reality is.\textsuperscript{46}
\end{quote}

The contrast between such a theory and the Edwards-Hospers’ thesis is obvious. The very same factors (heredity and environment) which were considered to have bolted the door to human freedom, are seen as enhancing freedom in Sartre’s philosophy. While the earlier view considered man to be a

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., p. 489ff.

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., p. 489.
passive creature who was totally moulded by the two factors (viz., heredity and environment), the Sartrean view holds man to possess the power of 'free play' with his situation as facticity. This leads us on to the Sartrean reiteration of moral responsibility in so far as it is maintained that total freedom implies total responsibility (which includes the consciousness of being the sole author of an action). Since every action, by hypothesis is totally free, it entails the position that the responsibility for an action is also total.

Though Sartre's theory of total moral responsibility 'sounds better,' it does not seem to be acceptable in toto. For it ignores certain 'excusing conditions' which do cause a 'decrease' in moral responsibility in specific cases. To hold an individual 'inflicted' with 'excusing condition' (such as insanity, neurosis, unconscious acts, etc.) as totally responsible is as unacceptable as not holding a 'normal' individual responsible for an uncommendable act. The extreme position of total freedom also has the effect of shaking the foundations of moral responsibility as badly as the uncompromising stance of the hard determinists who deny moral responsibility wholly.

Furthermore, the untenability of the extreme view of total freedom, can be argued for 'from within' the Sartrean position itself. For even in his *magnum opus*, *Being and
Nothingness, some deterministic elements (in human life) are conceded by Sartre through his concept of the 'fundamental project'.

By categorically stating that no act is brought about by chance or randomness Sartre argues that human actions are never performed arbitrarily. The 'fundamental or original project' of the individual prevents arbitrariness of action. It does not remain static, and is subject to modification. In so far as the fundamental project is suggestive of some goal which is to be achieved or realized in the future, human actions can be visualized as being directed towards 'the project'.

The fundamental project can thus be seen as a teleological determinant. It is obvious that total freedom is inconceivable, and is perhaps only a theoretical possibility.

In addition, Sartre clearly concedes two limitations to freedom, as Barnes has noted:

(1) The fact that I exist at all and my existing as a free being does not depend on me. I am not free not to be free. Necessity compels me to exert my free act of choice in 'internalizing the external'.

(2) My freedom is limited

47. This 'fundamental project' is based on our 'original choice'. The 'original choice' is the choice of myself in the world or my being-in-the-world. "Our being is precisely our original choice." (Ibid., p. 462).
by the freedom of the other person. 48

By the expression 'internalizing the external', Sartre means that by a free act of consciousness, man takes what is presented from the outside, and constructs a structure of his 'inner' life. By 'outside', Sartre means the society, the environment and especially the social class to which one belongs. 49

The second limitation stems from the 'factual existence' of others. According to Sartre, we have an 'alienated outwardness' which is brought about by the presence of others. 50


49 We find several examples (all of them Marxian ones) which Sartre cites to illustrate his point. For example, "a woman working in a factory for subsistence wages may decline after careful calculation, that the role of a mother is closed to her." (Ibid., p. xxii). Here, the 'situation' says Sartre, has already determined her course of action. Another suitable example is that of a young man from a bourgeois family selecting his career, in contrast to that of a boy from a worker's family. While the former sees the world as offering a variety of pathways to a professional life, the latter sees most of these paths being already barred off. (Ibid., p. xxii).

50 This concept is made clear by Sartre when he points to the fact that we realize our various positions in life, for example, as a ruler, slave, teacher, student, etc. and even how we 'appear', because of the others. For instance, "tribes are not aware of themselves as black, tall, or short until they are aware of others recognizing them as such. From that moment they must live these objectified qualities as both alienated from them and yet their own." (see Joseph S. Catalano, A Commentary on Jean-Paul Sartre's "Being and Nothingness", New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1974, p. 209).
This alienation which is 'forced' on man limits his freedom considerably. This can be contrasted with/case of heredity and environment, which, though comprising the 'situation', does not prove an obstacle to freedom in the way the feeling of alienation does.

Thus when we delve deeper into Sartre's position, we realize, that there are some determinants even in this concept of absolute freedom. It seems to us therefore that a theory of total freedom is also in extreme position inasmuch as it overlooks the deterministic aspects of human life completely. Our submission here is that a position which takes into consideration both the aspects of determinism and freedom, is better reflective of the human situation and is hence more acceptable. Since man is a wondrous mixture of physical nature (or matter), consciousness and the power of self-consciousness, he cannot be fitted into any rigid scheme or law — be it determinism or total freedom. Human life can be understood best as incorporating a fine mixture of deterministic and free elements.

If total determinism and total freedom are untenable, can freedom be described (at least in some contexts) as 'contra-causal', as the libertarian suggests? We shall now turn our attention to the standpoint of libertarianism which also suggests that determinism and freedom are ultimately
incompatible with each other.

3.7 Libertarianism: A Half-Way House

The incompatibilist stance of libertarianism stems from the fact that man is considered as totally free in moral situations inasmuch as he has the ability to choose from several alternatives presented by the situations themselves.

Here we shall consider some of the arguments put forward by C.A. Campbell, the most eminent representative of this standpoint. He has 'clearly stated the position with the help of the following two propositions: 51

i) Freedom as such is realized only in moral situations and human actions are not subject to causal laws.

ii) The self is the sole 'cause' of these 'inner acts of choice', and it provides man with the power to act in different ways.

Campbell concedes that the causal principle operates in the physical universe, but he contends that it cannot be applied to the study of human actions without any modification. Actions performed in situations where the individual is confronted with a moral dilemma are to be considered 'contra-causal'. Campbell rejects the view that human actions are to be explained solely in terms of heredity and environment.

for, a 'free choice' would then be rendered meaningless. Thus the first proposition provides the guidelines for the libertarian's concept of freedom.

Campbell's second proposition is that a free act is 'caused' solely by the 'self', which is endowed with the power to exercise its 'causality' in various ways. The free acts are 'self-caused' and these differ in kind from the 'acts' caused by the 'character' of the individual. A distinction between the 'self' and its 'character' is obviously presupposed here. Campbell writes: "contra-causal freedom...posits a breach of causal continuity between a man's character and his conduct." Thus, 'self-originated', 'inner' choice is emphasized in the second proposition. Further, Campbell claims that introspection reveals the role of the 'self' during moments of moral decisions.

Campbell's assertion that it is the self which exercises moral freedom, and not its formed character needs careful scrutiny. The self's character is moulded and formed by the environment and heredity. Since it is 'caused' by heredity and environment it cannot be the activator of free moral actions, contends Campbell. The character which is influenced by heredity and environment can only be analysed in terms of strong desires.

52. C.A. Campbell, "Is 'Freewill' a Pseudo-Problem?" in Mind, 60, October, 1951, pp. 459-460.
and motives that have gone into its making. Thus in most situations our character determines our actions. But in the realm of moral situations, the self's freedom of decision comes to the fore. Campbell's concept of freedom is applicable only in situations of moral judgment.

Campbell explains his contention by giving the example of the agent who finds himself in a morally tight corner. For instance, the agent knows alternative A to be morally right, but there is also another way B open, which is incompatible with A, and towards which the 'strongest desire' formed by the agent's character runs. In such cases of moral temptations, though the agent knows A to be morally right, he 'desires' B. But Campbell argues that though B is temptingly easier or a more attractive course to follow, it is found that the agent who is duty-conscious, normally would 'choose' course A which is morally right. He further points out that the inclinations or desires of the agent are different from the duty-pursuing self. He writes:

In such situations, we all rightly or wrongly believe that even though B continues to be in the line of least resistance, we can never the less align ourselves with A.

Campbell believes that this can be done by introducing a new energy or the 'effort of will' which can act contrary to the inclinations of the agent.

to the dictates of desire and achieve a higher goal which is the moral act.

Campbell admits that to the external observer the concept of self and its contra-causal freedom are unintelligible, but 'introspection' and 'experience' make us aware of these, especially when we are faced with moral conflicts.

Though we concede that moral freedom implies that the agent is the sole 'cause' of an act, it should be emphasized that the self-character dichotomy too, leads to several difficulties, if it is pressed too far.

The first difficulty is regarding the problem of prediction. Human nature may not be totally predictable. But this is not because human life cannot be explained in causal terms but because it is so complex that it cannot be fully comprehended. Though total predictability is not possible, predictability is not impossible either. The prediction-possibility is open only because of the intimate relationship between a person's character and his actions. The libertarian's view thus seems to go contrary to the law of predictability which does take the relationship between 'character' and 'action' seriously. P.H. Nowell Smith perhaps is appreciative of this difficulty when he observes'
The essence of Campbell's account is that the action should not be predictable from a knowledge of the agent's character. But if this is so, can what he does be called his actions at all? 

However, we find Campbell himself admitting that the knowledge of an agent's character acts as a clue to prediction. Though it is a limited clue, it is by no means negligible, contends Campbell. 

But, if this statement is to be taken seriously, it would amount to conceding that the individual's character also aids prediction. If character helps prediction of future decisions, how can it be said that it has no part at all to play in taking moral decisions?

Furthermore, Campbell also concludes that

nothing can be the object of possible choice which is not suggested by either the agent's desires or his moral ideals, and these depend on 'character' for us just as much as for our opponents.

The import of this statement is that one of the determinants of 'possible choices' is the agent's character. If 'moral ideals' 'depend' (to a certain extent at least) on the agent's character, it is a contradiction in terms to maintain (as the

55 In Defence of Free Will, p. 129.
56 Ibid., p. 46.
that moral decisions libertarian does) are in no way caused or influenced by the agent's character. The difficulty of Campbell's position emerges even more clearly when he admits that,

character determines the situation within which the act of moral decision takes place, although not the act of moral decision itself. 57

Since character marks out the situation within which the moral decision takes place, it becomes apparent that it also indirectly determines a 'moral decision'. Since the 'boundary' of the situation is itself marked out by character, the self's decision-making gets 'restricted' (in some sense) by this 'boundary'. Thus, the self's act of decision cannot oppose and transcend its formed character altogether.

The self-character dichotomy leads to another difficulty, which is even more serious. The libertarian repeatedly asserts that only actions originating from the 'self' are 'free' and deserve to be either 'praised' or 'blamed'. The actions produced by the agent's character are not taken into consideration where assessment of moral decisions are concerned. If this be the case, what happens when the strongest desire produced by the character of the agent and the sense of 'ought' produced by the self's will coincide? 58 The only reply of the libertarian is that in such situations the agent

57 Ibid.
58 Also see Robert Young, Op. Cit., p. 129.
'cannot help' doing what he does (though it may be his duty). This would amount to maintaining that even commendable actions (since they in some ways emanate out of the agent's character) would not deserve moral praise. But this is hard to accept since a 'good' act is always to be commended — whether it was born out of the dictates of the will or of the self, or of the combination of both. Moreover, actions 'emanating' from character need not necessarily be deplorable.

In addition to the grave difficulties posed by the self-character dichotomy model, the libertarian's account of the 'self' too is far from satisfactory. It is not clear whether the 'self' referred to is the empirical self as used in the field of psychology or a transempirical, metaphysical self. If the latter is meant, the libertarian would undoubtedly find himself in deep 'metaphysical waters'. If the former is the point of reference, the difference between the empirical self and character has still to be accounted for.

Campbell maintains that the self can 'comprehend' man's character and is also endowed with the 'creative power' to change it. Since the self is able to understand and influence the individual's character, it is not derived from character, asserts Campbell. But it does not follow that because man is capable of 'shaping' and 'reshaping' his character, the
decisions that he makes are not caused by some aspect of his character. Further, "the fact that an individual can decide whether or not to evaluate all his decisions does not mean that this decision is not caused by some decisions he has made in the past." This is due to the fact that a man's character is basically composed of his beliefs, attitudes and several other factors which can be causally explained. Further, there is no tangible evidence to show that the 'self' can 'comprehend' or 'change' man's character, as the libertarian asserts.

Libertarians seem to believe that human nature is beyond empirical observation, and maintain that human actions can be explained by bringing in an entity called the 'trans-empirical self.' The need for a transempirical self does not arise in order to explain moral decisions and evaluation of character, for these two can be subjected to empirical investigation, as in psychology. Further, moral decisions, their consequences and the situations which determine praise and blame are dealt with in detail by jurisprudence, which also adopts the method of empirical investigation. Hence it can be argued that since some aspects of human nature can be analysed and understood through empirical investigation one

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cannot say that it eludes empirical investigation totally.

If empirical investigation cannot reveal the 'self' and the belief in contra-causal freedom, then how do we come to know them, it may be asked. The answer of the libertarian is that we know them to be true through 'introspection', or by our 'inner experience' or an 'inerasicable belief'.

Though a feeling of freedom may be experienced by introspection, we are not aware of a 'self' (as different from character) or a breach in causal continuity, which is contra-causal freedom. "The statement 'X entails a breach in 'causal continuity' could not be established or refuted in introspection." Further, even a 'belief' in something, need not necessarily be true (or makes it true).

Besides the notion of contra-causal freedom, the libertarians believe (or make it true) that the decisions occurring in a moral situation are not caused by character, which is nourished by the factors of heredity and environment. The libertarians hold that this feeling is revealed to everyone by 'introspection.' But is this really the case? What about

60 In the Appendix to On Selfhood and Soulhood, Campbell tries to counter-Nowell Smith's contention by remarking that introspection reveals "a belief seemingly inerasicable - that one is contra-causally active." Op. Cit., p. 216.

the hard determinist, who through 'introspection' realises
that all his decisions are caused by heredity and environment?
In order to disprove the 'claims' of the hard determinist's
introspection, the libertarian must go beyond introspection
and produce an argument to support his position. Thus pure
introspection alone cannot reveal contra-causal freedom or
the self-character dichotomy.

Campbell's appeal to introspection in revealing the
truth of contra-causal freedom and the self-character dichotomy falls to the ground on another important count as well.
For, the accounts of the 'findings of introspection' vary even among philosophers. For instance, the evidence gained by
philosophers belonging to the creeds of hard determinism — as those of Huxley and Edwards would radically differ from that
of the philosophers of the libertarian standpoint. Or for that matter the introspective 'truth' derived by a philosopher
upholding the position of compatibilism may also differ
gained by from the introspective truth / the libertarian. Since
'introspection' or 'inner experience' differs from philosopher to philosopher (in a more general way, from individual to


63 See J. King-Farlow, "Mr Bradley and the Libertaria
Austroasian Journal of Philosophy, 37 (December 1959), p. 2