CHAPTER IV

THE COMPATIBILITY THEORY OF FREEDOM

4.1 Determinism and Freedom are Compatible if Misunderstandings about them are Removed

In our review of the two extreme theories concerning freedom (one asserting that man was completely free and the other reiterating that freedom is a myth) we found them both unsatisfactory. The suggestion that the two theories were, after all, not incompatible with each other was made in the previous chapter. We shall now consider this 'alternative' in some detail. We shall examine whether the concept of freedom could be considered meaningful within the boundaries of determinism, for, this in effect points to a common ground between determinism and freedom.

4.12 Freedom is not Indeterminism

It seems necessary to reiterate that it is wrong to equate freedom with indeterminism. At the outset we would like to emphasize that a theory of total indeterminism cannot provide us with even a framework for working out a theory of freedom. All the arguments aimed at raising indeterminism to the status of freedom could be shown to be futile on two fundamental counts.
Firstly, the extreme indeterminist asserts:

however completely physical objects and perhaps animal organisms are subject to the laws of cause and effect, man remains free from those laws in his will or capacity for making decisions... neither mechanical nor physio-chemical laws extend to, or account for man's moral and volitional nature. These are free and undetermined in the fullest sense of the word.

This argument is difficult to concede, since it is now accepted that physio-chemical laws do have their effect upon human behaviour. Apart from the physio-chemical laws, psychology has also analysed certain 'laws' as operating in the mental realm of man. Hence the idea of total freedom (as uncaused) is factually unfounded. The indeterminist's other contention refers to the basic 'feeling' of total freedom which accompanies volitions and free actions. Even though we may have this 'feeling' of freedom, the fact remains that our actions are not done without any 'determining' factor whatever. Many of our actions are backed by 'purposes' or intentions (including unconscious ones) and hence cannot be considered to be performed without any restraint. If actions were considered to be randomly performed, then the relation


2 For instance, disturbances of the thyroid gland, brought about by the excessive secretion of thyroxin, causes depression and inhibits normal behaviour. Normal human

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between the agent and his action would get disconnected with (even) his past. Thus, if indeterminism is true, we cannot draw any inference from the present character of the agent to what he will do in certain hypothetical situations in the future. But from the fact that we are able to predict human behaviour it is evident that an indeterministic interpretation of human life is unacceptable.

Further, the upholders of indeterminism argue that the deterministic position would render evaluations of human actions (as 'good' and 'bad') meaningless, since the individual, by hypothesis has no control whatsoever over situations in which he finds himself. This argument can be easily turned against the indeterminist himself, since a random act (accepted by the indeterminist) cannot be considered as 'controlled' by the agent. In any case such a charge against determinism is without any basis since the upholders of a theory like soft determinism do not wholly deny human freedom. From this viewpoint, human freedom consists in exercising the discretionary powers and hence praise and

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capacity and ability can get suppressed by the excessive (or defective) secretion of certain enzymes and hormones which are bi-chemical substances.

4. 13 Determinism is not Fatalism

Moreover, determinism is not dangerously close to fatalism, as the proponents of indeterminism hold. While fatalism stresses the futility of all human endeavour, determinism asserts no such thing. While a fatalist may be considered as a determinist (since he accepts causality 'rigidly'), a determinist need not necessarily be a fatalist. This is because the acceptance of the causal principle does not imply that people themselves cannot act as causal factors for bringing about certain situations.

All that determinism asserts is that in principle certain events are predictable on the basis of past events. The claim of determinism can thus be expressed in modest tones, and hence it seems to be, on purely logical grounds, more acceptable than indeterminism whose claims are on the extreme side. It cannot be denied that man is biologically determined. He is a member of certain species, which has its own characteristics. Man is also anthropologically determined. The social tradition that he inherits, the codes of conduct he follows, and the beliefs of his age have a great effect on him.
The study of genetics impresses us with the idea that man is also determined by heredity. The genes as the media of heredity-transmission, apart from determining physical characteristics also determine mental qualities and personality-traits to a large extent. Furthermore, the various hormones and enzymes produced in the body do influence patterns of human behaviour.

From the foregoing it is obvious that while indeterminism does not provide any ground for a theory of freedom, at least some important aspects of determinism may be integrated into a theory of human freedom. This possibility is recognized by the position of compatibilism. The compatibilistic standpoint tries to present an integrated picture of human life, by accepting aspects of determinism as well as of freedom. The compatibilist's main contention is that even though actions are caused, they are not necessarily unfree.

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4 Paul Weiss states that the term 'genetically determined' has three different meanings: (1) The student of genetics uses the term as a shorthand label to designate unequivocal relations between certain genes and certain 'characters' of an organism; (2) scientists in various other branches... accept it literally in its verbal symbolism; and (3) the public import a fatalistic meaning into it. (See "The Living System: Determinism Stratified", in A. Kostler & J.R. Smythies, ed., Beyond Reductionism, London: Hutchinson & Co., Ltd. 1972, pp. 33-34.) Weiss asserts that the term as understood in the first way is devoid of the implications of predestination or fatalism as understood in the third way.
4.14 **Compatibilism as Accommodating Determinism and Freedom**

The two propositions of the compatibility theory are:

1. There are several possible senses of 'free' and related terms.

2. There is no incompatibility between determinism and freedom defined in certain ways.

The second proposition has been interpreted in two different ways, even within the fold of compatibilism. There are some compatibilists who maintain that freedom is inconceivable without determinism, and is hence rendered meaningless without it. These are the 'hard compatibilists'. The 'soft-compatibilists' do not insist on any such entailment relation between determinism and freedom. They only maintain that there is no inconsistency in considering an action as being determined and yet free. In this chapter we will be arguing for the second variety of compatibilism, but we shall consider the first variety in brief, as a preliminary.

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The 'hard compatibilists' argue that determinism is merely a feature of the analysis of free will. As R.E. Hobart, a proponent of this view states:

"determinism is true... insofar as we have free will... absence of determination... is no gain to freedom, but sheer loss of it; no advantage to the moral life, but blank subtraction from it."

This claim made by Hobart stands to reason, since without conceding a causal relationship between the individual's nature and his actions the latter cannot be considered to be consciously directed. According to this theory, freedom becomes meaningful only through action. This signifies that a free action is one which is determined by the agent's will and emanates from his desires and beliefs.

Soft compatibilism (which can be subsumed under the head of soft-determinism) can be best understood by delineating the various senses which the terms 'determinism' and 'freedom' possess. As we saw earlier in the thesis, 'determinism' implies predictability, causality and explanation.

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7 R.E. Hobart, "Free Will As Involving Determinism and Inconceivable Without It", in Burdick, ed., Free Will and Determinism, New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1966, pp. 64-65. Hobart also draws out the relation between free-will and determinism in the following manner. He refers to free-will as giving rise to the statement: "I produced my volitions" and to determinism as stating: "My volitions are produced by me." Hence, according to Hobart, determinism is free-will expressed in the 'passive voice'. (Ibid., p. 71).

8 See supra, pp.2-9.
These were the ways in which the doctrine was explicated in the realm of science.

4.2 Determinism, Freedom and Necessity

The problem relating to human freedom arises when causality is mistakenly equated with compulsion, and the predictability-aspect of determinism is erroneously considered to imply the fixed course of future events. Some determinists (especially the hard determinists) rejected free will on the ground that all events were 'necessitated' by antecedent conditions. On the other hand, incompatibilists like the libertarians denied any possible reconciliation between freedom and determinism on the supposition that an 'uncaused' act alone could be considered 'free'. Thus the difficulty in understanding the term freedom stemmed from the fact that the predictability and causality aspects were interpreted as 'necessitation'.

4.2.1 Several Shades of Meaning of Necessity as Promoting Clarity to our Concept of Freedom

The term 'necessitation' itself has several shades of meaning, according to the context in which it is used. These need to be examined in order to promote clarity to our understanding of the problem of determinism and freedom. Three of them may be spelt out here.
4. 21.1 Logical Necessity

In the first place the term 'necessitate' refers to logical deduction. Certain premises 'necessitate' a conclusion. For example, from the premises, "All men are mortal", and "Socrates is a man" the conclusion that logically (or necessarily) follows is: "Socrates is mortal". The import of logical necessity is that, given certain premises (or antecedent conditions) it would be contradictory to deny the conclusion.

The term 'necessitate' used in the above sense is also applicable to pure mathematics. For example, if we take three positive numbers - three, two and one, - since three is greater than two, and two greater than one, it follows necessarily that three is greater than one. Once we have understood the concept of number and the term 'greater than' we can see that the 'conclusion' cannot be conceived otherwise. This sense of necessity as employed in logical deduction and mathematics can hardly be applied to causal relations. 'Necessity' understood in this sense nowhere refers to a cause. That causes do not 'necessarily' affect in the logical sense is seen from the fact that there is no logic

contradiction involved in denying that under certain conditions a particular event will occur. Thus logical necessity does not entail causal necessity.

4.2.1.2 Predictability (mis)understood as Necessity

The term 'necessitate' understood in the second sense relates to an empirical discovery of the nature of causal relations. For instance, when we speak of an individual's action as being necessitated by factors like heredity and environment, what we mean is that given the above-mentioned conditions, we can know empirically that an action or event will probably occur or take place. The term 'necessitate' used in this sense does not carry the same implication as it did when it was used in the first sense. When used in the second sense, we cannot, with absolute certainty, assert that an event will or must occur at the wake of certain antecedent conditions.

The term 'necessitate,' in this sense, can indicate, at best, a high degree of probability and not absolute certainty. In terms of empirical observation or analysis, the occurrence of an effect (or event) may only be 'anticipated' from the given (or observed) antecedent conditions. The implication is clear that if new factors emerge, the 'event' anticipated may not occur at all.
This way of understanding the term 'necessity' (which is emphasized by the compatibilists) can be elucidated by a simple example. Let us take the case of three sportsmen A, B and C, and suppose that until the present moment, A had always beat B, and B had always beat C (in a particular game). The question is whether it would 'necessarily' follow that A will beat C? It is obvious that this conclusion cannot be drawn, since so many factors like A falling sick, and C playing better than ever before may 'intervene' and 'falsify' the conclusion drawn. Thus what 'actually' happens would depend on several other contingent factors. If A is in 'form' and there are no impediments or accidents, it may happen that B might be beaten by A. But, understood in this way, 'necessity' would mean that an event will happen only if nothing intervenes to stop it.

Now we are able to see the defect of the hard determinists' position, viz., that it equates the two meanings of necessity (indicated just now) and erroneously arrives at the conclusion that 'high probability' could be substituted by 'certainty'.

The term 'necessitate' understood as 'high probability' is compatible with freedom. This does not mean that the principle of causality itself loses its meaning. It only
means that everything is not completely predictable.

The unpredictability is due to the fact that in the universe at large, the number of 'potential causes' is infinitely large and, as such, causes are not completely knowable; consequently, not all possible events can be comprehended. Even though much may be known, there may remain much more to be known. Thus, though it is possible that all events are caused, it does not signify that all future events have been 'decided' 'precisely' already, ensuring accurate prediction of the future course of events.

The determinist may still persist and argue that even if it is conceded that not all the 'causes' in the universe may be fully comprehended by the human mind, freedom of the individual could still be denied. He may suggest that by confining one's attention to a smaller sphere, the 'avowed freedom' of the individual may be 'disproved'. By studying the individual's heredity and the environment in which he is brought up, an accurate prediction of his future and his future course of actions is possible, the determinist may argue. The implication clearly is that the certainty of the prediction is because of a definite course of events 'determined' by certain factors (like heredity and environment) and not by the individual.
Thus, 'freedom' understood as 'total unpredictability' suggests randomness, and does not offer an adequate explanation of meaningful, responsible action. The theory of the determinist seems to reduce rather than enhance the scope of freedom.

Further, it does not follow that an individual is unfree merely because someone can anticipate the future course of his actions, or can know about everything he does. We cannot rule out the possibility of the agent having thought about the pros and cons of choosing various courses of action before deciding upon one.

The man who acts is the man who has doubted, not the observer who has predicted, or the agent would not have had the doubts. The action of the man who doubts is not the action that is seen by the unlooker: the one is a decision, the other a deduction.

Hence, the predictability of actions does not signify that there is no scope for decision-making in the sphere of human action. As such it cannot invalidate the compatibilist's concept of freedom.

More basically, the possibility of accurate prediction of human behaviour has been questioned by several philosophers. Stuart Hampshire has drawn attention to an important difficulty in this context. If an individual is faced with two alternative courses of action to choose from, prediction of the choice that may be made is possible. But Hampshire points out that if the individual 'learns' of the prediction, it may itself influence him to falsify it (or to even make it true, as the case may be).

Further, Hampshire maintains that the idea of total predictability runs into an infinite regress, when a prediction by itself is understood as something which needs to be predicted. Hampshire's view on this aspect of predictability is similar to Karl Popper's view which draws out the 'indeterminacy' present in a man-made or mechanical predictor such as a computer. A computer which is able to predict about the world, can never predict everyone of its own future states, and therefore it also cannot predict accurately the future states of the environment with which it constantly interacts. If total predictability is not possible even in the case of a machine, how can it be possible in the case of human action which is much more complex?

4.2.3 Causality (mis)understood as Necessity (Compulsion)

The third sense of 'necessitation' refers to situations where individuals are coerced to act against the dictates of their will. It is obvious that if an individual acts according to his wishes, desires and intentions, his behaviour cannot be considered to have been 'compelled' or 'necessitated'. In the first of the situations envisaged, action is not merely 'caused', but compelled as well, whereas in the second, the course of action is caused, but not compelled.

Thus causes do not 'necessitate' 'action' except when an individual is under the pressure of compulsion. The concept of compulsion is considered important from the compatibilist-perspective, since many compatibilists hold compulsion to be diametrically opposed to freedom. A detailed consideration of the compulsion-freedom issue is thus called for in this context.

Some sources of confusion of the meaning of the term 'necessity' have been pointed out by scholars. These discussions, if will become evident, are helpful in the present context.
4.2.3.1 Necessity (Compulsion) and Freedom: Sources of Confusion

Schlick attributes the cause of confusion (viz., wrongly equating causality with compulsion) to the erroneous interpretation of the word 'Law'. He maintains that when used in the context of the state, 'law' means 'a rule by which the state prescribes certain behaviour to the citizens'.

In the context of physical nature the meaning of the term is quite different, for, "natural law is not a prescription as to how something should behave, but a formula, a description of how something does in fact behave."

Even psychological laws should be construed as laws of nature, according to Schlick. For, unlike civic laws, they do not 'direct' the individual's behaviour. They are descriptive laws which indicate the nature of the 'will' or the psychological states of the individual. They only explain the mental states of the individual which provide the foundation for action as a given moment. Hence particular 'psychological states' may be deemed to 'compel'.


14 Ibid.
behaviour but *not* the 'mental laws' taken together. The confusion here illustrates that when descriptive laws of nature are misunderstood as prescriptive, causality is mistaken for compulsion.

Following these considerations, Schlick states:

*Freedom means the opposite of compulsion: a man is free if he does not act under compulsion, and he is compelled or unfree when he is hindered from without in the realization of his natural desires.*

Hence, according to Schlick, man is unfree when he is locked up or chained, or forced at gunpoint to do something which he would not otherwise do. In the absence of these fetters, man might be considered free and responsible. The feeling


It can be observed here that Schlick's position on human freedom is similar to Hume's. Hume states that, "it will not require many words to prove, that all mankind have ever agreed in the doctrine of liberty as well as in that of necessity, and that the whole dispute, in this respect also, has been hitherto merely verbal... By liberty, then, we can only mean a power of acting or not acting, according to the determinations of the will... Now this hypothetical liberty is universally allowed to belong to everyone, who is not a prisoner and in chains."


that one 'could have willed otherwise' arises, states Schlick, not from the absence of a cause, but from the which is derived from ability to act in the way one wanted to.

Further, the very concept of responsibility rests on causation which explains the regularity of human volitions. An 'in-deterministic' or 'chance' action not only annihilates responsibility but is also meaningless, since the moving powers behind actions (which are motives, and intentions) cannot be explained in non-causal terms. Schlick goes to the extent of maintaining that human freedom becomes meaningful only by the co-presence of determinism.

4.2.1.3.2 Freedom and Constraint as Opposed

Like Schlick, Ayer too is of the view that the opposite of freedom is not causality but constraint. Ayer argues that difficulties inherent in contrasting freedom with causality can be got over by distinguishing between freedom and constraint. To say the least, uncaused actions can hardly be described responsible. The meaning of 'responsible moral action' gets completely obliterated by maintaining that actions are 'uncaused'. When, on the other hand, freedom is contrasted with constraint or compulsion (instead of with causality or determinism) moral responsibility gets adequately explained. In this context Ayer explains that
when we say,

I act in character, it is to say that my behaviour is consistent and, to that extent predictable; and since it is above all for the actions that I perform in character that I am held to be morally responsible, so far from being incompatibly with determinism, tends rather to presuppose it.

If free action is not caused, it is obvious that causally explaining action is the only alternative open. It would follow then that a free action can be envisaged better by thinking in terms of the absence of constraining factors.

Ayer further claims that denying causes in the realm of action does not give a satisfactory answer to the question related to moral responsibility. If it is purely out of chance that an individual acts in a particular way, he could hardly be held responsible for actions performed — good or bad. The mere assertion that 'actions resulted from free choice' does not signify the absence of causal factors, for the question arises as to how the 'free choice' itself was made. Hence Ayer reiterates the importance of determinism as sufficing meaning into the concept of freedom. He observes:

Either it is an accident that I choose to act as I do or it is not. If it is an accident,

then it is merely a matter of chance that I did not choose otherwise; it is surely irrational to held me morally responsible for choosing as I did. But if it is not an accident that I choose to do one thing rather than another, then presumably there is some causal explanation of my choice, and in that case are led back to determinism.17

In this statement Ayer explores the two alternatives presented by explaining the term 'to choose'. While one of the alternatives leads irrevocably to 'chance' or 'indeterminism', the other alternative is a causal-deterministic one. Compatibilism understands 'to choose' in the second sense for the reason that the expression becomes meaningful only if it is backed by intentions and reasons, and not by chance.

4.2.3.3 Compulsion—Internal as well as External

Though we are in general agreement with the main features of the Schlick-Ayer theory of compulsion (which is a form of compatibilism), a few changes seem to be required

17 Ibid., p. 275.

When Ayer describes actions as 'chance' or 'accidental,' it is not clear whether he means by chance (or accident) the absence of cause. When an event or an act is described as chanced or accidental, it need not necessarily imply that it is undetermined. A chanced event generally means an ever whose cause is unknown or unexpected. A typical example which illustrates an event of chance would be as follows: A bullet from a gun which misses a target gets deflected from its path and wounds a man. Here the agent cannot be held responsible for something which was done by 'accident', that is, it was done unintentionally or unknowingly. But this does not seem to be what Ayer has in mind when he employs the word 'accident' for here the word 'accident' denotes uncaused event.
for a better explication of the significance of human freedom. The question which needs investigation in the Schlick-Ayer theory is, whether and if so, to what extent 'compulsion' (according to Schlick) and 'constraint' (according to Ayer) make for unfree actions, and how their opposites can make for 'free' actions. Certain kinds of 'free actions' may no doubt be described as 'uncompelled'. The obvious instances are those not done under external physical constraints — or under duress. When an individual is subjected to constraints and compulsions, he certainly is deprived of his freedom.

But the term 'compelled action' is more comprehensive than the Schlick-Ayer theory would have us believe, for 'compulsion' can also be internal, and not merely external. Schlick holds that even those actions which are compelled from 'within' — like those emanating from the influence of alcohol and drugs, and from madness — are to be considered as 'external'. He writes:

In such cases, we consider the man more or less untree, and hold him less accountable, because we rightly view the influence of the drug as 'external', even though it is found within the body; it prevents him from making decisions in the manner peculiar to his nature. 18

18 Schlick, Problems of Ethics, p. 151.
schlick's explanation of the term 'internal compulsion' is not clear. The type of compulsion affected by drugs and alcohol may be referred to as 'external' in an oblique way, but his elucidation fails in the case of 'madness' as a form of compulsion. For, in cases of madness, the victim is in all respects compelled totally from 'within'.

In this connection it is important to note that psychologists have also recognized 'unconscious compulsions'. The 'unconscious compulsions' which are directed from 'within' are brought about by hereditary as well as environmental factors such as early childhood conditioning. These factors leave their impression on the unconscious and direct an individual's drives, desires and decisions. When these in turn affect the unconscious in an reverse manner, the resultant condition is neurosis, madness and the like.

Moreover, there are several instances on the basis of which it could be argued that compulsions are not merely external. These would go to show that even in the absence of external physical restraints, compulsive effect is felt from within. McIntyre cites the case of a person under

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The fact that he is not watching television does not mean that he is unable to do so. It merely indicates a disinclination towards watching television. The 'causes' for the preference may be referred to as 'standard causes'.

In contrast to this, 'non-standard' causes are those that actually render an agent unable to perform a particular action by hindering him from taking a particular course of action. Hypnosis, pathological urges, brain washing and physical external constraints (or external compulsions) are typical examples of non-standard causes. It is obvious, that external and internal types of compulsions are included under 'non-standard' causes. It is needless to add that such an understanding of the term 'compulsion' presents a more comprehensive picture of behaviour 'under constraint'. P.F. Strawson also points to the need for distinguishing between types of causes. Though the 'compelled' and 'freely willed' types of behaviour are equally subject to the causal principle, they differ since their determinants differ in their nature. Hence if no attempt is made to distinguish between causes which are at the basis of different types of behaviour, even normal behaviour would wrongly be classified under under neurotic behaviour.

maintains Strawson.

Thus the 'compulsive overtones' of determinism have to be understood carefully. Not all actions are compelled as the hard determinist would have us believe. There are actions which are caused but not compelled, and can hence be considered 'free'. Just as there are certain causes which are referred to as 'compelling' (non-standard causes), there are others which are non-compelling. These may be referred to as standard causes and are in the form of reasons, and intentions purposes.

Human behaviour can be explained in terms of underlying motives, purposes and desires. The purposive behaviour of man is closely linked with reason. In fact an action may be considered purposive only if it is backed by reason. Though reasons, intentions and purposes could thus be envisaged as instrumental to true actions, could it also be said that reasons, elude causal explanation as some thinkers have maintained? These philosophers hold that causal explanations may suffice when man is considered merely as a physical

organism. But when he is considered as being endowed with a sense of agency, a mere causal explanation is inadequate as they argue. When man is considered an agent he is seen to employ teleological concepts, reasons and intentions, and the resulting types of explanation (reason-explanations and motive-explanations) cannot be subsumed under 'causal explanation' they maintain. Some of these philosophers even claim that reasons preclude causal explanations.

Though we admit that reasons form a different kind of explanation, it is difficult to consider reasons as not providing causal explanations. Though 'reasons' cannot be equated with 'simple causes' observed in the inanimate world, it does not mean they cannot be considered 'causes' at all. For, they are intimately and meaningfully related to 'actions' and render them 'free'. As such, the process of reasoning which 'influences' 'action' has to be considered as providing an exclusive category of 'cause'.

The idea that 'reasons' may be considered as 'causes' has been technically expressed in the following manner:

R is a primary reason why an agent performed the action A under the description d only if R consists of a pro-attitude of the agent towards actions with a certain property, and a belief that the agent A, under the description d, has that property... From this it follows that a
primary reason for action is its cause. 24

This statement underlines the fact that reasons and actions are causally related, — the former being responsible for the production of the resultant effects, viz., actions. If reasons are accepted as causes, it does not follow that actions are 'reduced' to 'mere happenings' (as Melden, Taylor and others seem to believe) and render the actor a victim of circumstances. For, it is the power of reasoning that differentiates a purposive agent from the one who is merely acted upon. The causal role of reasoning in human life, understood in this sense may be referred to as "agent causality," 25 while the other causes explain physical phenomena, those causes which are also reasons impart meaning and depth unto a free action. Thus we have argued that by distinguishing between 'standard' and 'non-standard' causes, the substance of freedom can be understood properly. Our implication has been that when 'freedom' is understood in this way, it can be considered to be compatible with determinism.


4.3 **Compatibilism and Moral Responsibility**

It is clear that this view of freedom as compatible with determinism is a result of understanding freedom not in its literal sense but in a restricted sense by linking it with man's rational and purposive nature, and also considering it to be born out of 'intentions'.

An obvious outcome of this approach is that compatibilism can be interpreted as emphasizing the possibility of reconciling freedom and determinism through the concept of moral responsibility. This idea of moral responsibility can be concretely expressed by examining specifically the relationship between rationality and freedom.

Rationality and freedom are so related that an increase in rationality correspondingly increases the degree of freedom possessed by the individual. While a 'normal' individual may make the optimum use of his freedom, in others it may vary. For instance, a kleptomaniac who suffers from this disorder only mildly, may not steal when he is aware of being watched by a person representing authority, like a policeman.\(^\text{26}\) This

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indicates clearly that he does possess some degrees of freedom. Similarly, a person who is under a post-hypnotic suggestion may act contrary to the suggestion of the hypnotist, if the consequence of the act 'commanded' conflicts with his ultimate values. In contrast to these two instances, a person suffering from total insanity suffers from a total loss of freedom.

Similarly, degrees of external compulsion too indirectly indicate 'degrees of freedom' — without ruling out the possibility of a total denial of freedom. A verbal threat may signify mild external compulsion without ruling out freedom altogether. On the other hand, being forced at gunpoint is a case of exerting total external compulsion, denying freedom altogether. Thus the compatibility theory of freedom recognizes degrees of freedom possessed by individual. Hence it may be said that the compatibilist takes a 'mid-position' between the hard determinist and a proponent of total freedom.

The compatibilist's 'mid-position' can also be explained with the help of the 'corrective view' of blame and

punishment. The 'corrective view' concept holds that blame and punishment can be made to serve as causes which bring about changes in the behaviour of the intended persons. The argument is that an individual can be held to be morally responsible only if his actions can be altered in the future.

In this connection Stevenson remarks,

ethical judgments look mainly to future actions. Even when they are made of past or imaginary acts, they still serve a dynamic purpose— that of discouraging (or encouraging) similar acts later on.

Considered from this viewpoint, an insane person who is incapable of modifying his future behaviour cannot be held (morally) responsible for his actions, and a normal individual with his 'rationality in tact' (who can effect modification in his own behaviour) can rightly be considered responsible.

28. Though retributive punishment has its use, the 'corrective view' of punishment is more 'forward looking', since it attempts to 'change' future actions and thus enlarges the individual's sense of responsibility. Retributive punishment may be applicable in cases where an individual is 'indifferent' to blame. It should be noted though, that these cases form the exception rather than the rule.

The idea can be explicated further in the following way: only 'avoidable' acts which are modificable, come under the purview of ethical or moral judgments, whereas 'unavoidable' acts (which, by hypothesis indicate that no deliberate modification of behaviour can be affected) cannot be subjected to moral evaluations. The word 'avoidable' here suggests the implication of freedom as a power. Freedom understood as a power is closely associated with ability, opportunity and capacity. Some scholars have suggested that the idea emerges clearly from the usage of the term 'can' in regard to action. Our knowledge of human capacity is based on

30 "'A's action was avoidable' has the meaning of 'If A had made a certain choice, which in fact he did not make, his action would not have occurred." Ibid., p. 293.

31 Jonathan Glover speaks of instances where a 'wrong' act is not the result of a 'bad intention', but is rather the result of lack of ability or opportunity. See Op. Cit., p. 198.

32 Many philosophers believe that the word 'can' indicates the power of the individual to do otherwise — pointing both to the individual's ability and capacity. Examples of 'can' as denoting ability are: "he can speak five languages", "he can swim well" etc. The 'can' of opportunity is used simply to denote the capacity one has in doing certain things, which are not actually being done at the moment of reference. "I can write, if there is pen paper", and "I can swim, if there is water" are good examples for the latter usage of 'can'. In these instances the word 'can' indicates capacities which may be realised when presented with favourable circumstances. The following are some important thinkers who have adopted this line of analysis: M.R. Ayers Op. Cit., pp. 119, 144;

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certain 'epistemic conditions.' These epistemic conditions are: temporal proximity, circumstantial variety, agent similarity and simple frequency. All these four conditions which help to confirm or negate ability are based on temporal factors. Ability may fluctuate with the passage of time, but freedom as ruled by reason or intelligence, is not so time-bound. Hence ability and capacity contribute towards freedom of action, along with reason and intelligence. These are the ingredients which constitute man's 'practical freedom'.

Thus according to compatibilism, there is an interplay of both the elements of determinism and freedom in human life.

Though compatibilism accepts the validity of both determinism

(Foot Note cont'd. from page 144)


33 Temporal proximity refers to the amount of time that has lapsed between the actual observation of a particular action and a later date when the agent repeats the same action. This condition is of considerable importance since by the passage of time (or the increase in the age of the individual) does affect the power of action (especially physical action). 'Circumstantial variety' helps us ascertain the individual's power to act (by already having observed the agent perform a particular action in the past).

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and freedom, it steers clear of extreme determinism and total freedom on the count that they do not satisfactorily account for the 'responsible' elements in human behaviour. Thus unlike the two extreme views, compatibilism presents a picture of 'positive freedom', which is of great importance to ethics and moral responsibility. Further, the 'degrees of freedom' recognized by the compatibility-thesis point to its deeper and careful reflection on the subject of human freedom. Our thesis that neither of the two extremes is applicable to the human situation has thus gained strength from the compatibility-thesis. It is now time that we explicate the idea of freedom as self-determinism.

4.4 Freedom of Self-Determinism

In contradistinction to the 'negative freedom' of non-compulsion, factors like reason, intentions and purposes backed by intelligence serve as 'causes' for free action and constitute 'positive freedom'. These 'causes' can be considered as self-

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'Agent Similarity' refers to the fact that the agent has not undergone any radical change from the time he was observed to perform any action to a later point of time when a similar claim is made. Lastly, simple frequency refers to the condition that our ability to judge an individual's capacity to act depends on the frequency with which we have seen him perform that act.

determined, since they issue out of individuals themselves. Thus positive freedom can be interpreted as the power of self-determination.\textsuperscript{34} Self-determinism avoids extreme determinism and total indeterminism. The viewpoint of self-determination seems to be better-fitted to the primary data concerning man, then either of the extreme views.

The term 'self' used by us in this discussion deserves 'self' here an elucidation. The term is understood as 'empirical self' which is devoid of any metaphysical or theological connotations. It is used to denote the individual (or the moral agent) taken together with his character.

We deem it important to mention here that our usage of the term 'self-determination' differs from the way a liberta

\textsuperscript{34} The concept of self-determinism has been espoused by several philosophers, both ancient and recent. Aristotle, Spinoza, Thomas Reid, Duns Scotus, Machiavelli, Rousseau, K. Aquinas, and Augustine are but a few names which deserve mention. Among contemporary philosophers and writers of science, those who accept this view in some form are: Erwin Schrödinger, What is Life? Cambridge: The University Press, 1944, pp. 87


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rian (like Campbell) uses it by distinguishing the 'self' as an entity from its character. Campbell's view is clear from his statement:

The agent cannot regard his formal character as in any sense a determinant of the act or decision as such. The act is felt to be a genuinely creative act, originated by the self ad hoc, and by the self alone.\footnote{C.L. Campbell, \textit{In Defence of Free Will}, pp. 37-38 and pp. 43-44.}

This idea of a quasi-metaphysical or transempirical self (as distinct from its character) is not acceptable to us in the context of reiterating the importance of self-determinism in our understanding of freedom.\footnote{See supra, pp. 102-112.}

Newell-Smith's analysis of 'self' is more acceptable to us. He states:

'Self-determiner' can be construed by analogy, with other 'self-compounds', such as self-propelled, self-centered, self-controlled and self-

(Foot Note contd. from p. 148)

governing. Some of the words apply to non-human objects... Coming to the human scene, to say that a state is 'self-governing' is to say that its inhabitants make their own laws without foreign intervention; and to say that human is 'self-centred' is to say that he is always thinking and talking about his dinner, his golf handicap, the virtues of his wife, and the prowess of his children. In each case there is a subject and an object but the 'self' is neither subject nor object...there is no incompatibility between an action being 'self-determined' and its being predictable or characteristic of the agent; for 'self-determined' would mean, determined by his motives and character, as opposed to 'forced' on him by circumstances or other people.

The following considerations would show the tenability of the standpoint we have adopted.

The standpoint of self-determinism distinguishes an action from a happening in an important way. Self-determinism implies that the agent forms the 'end of the line' of length causal chains and is capable of arriving at moral judgements. Unlike happenings which merely turn a link in a causal chain actions are endowed with the potential of even changing the course of the causal path.

Though self-determined actions have the inherent potential of 'changing' the causal path, they do not negate causation. The difference between self-determinism and

ordinary causation depends solely on what determines. This freedom does not mean absence of determination. "It is determinism by the self — not by the natural forces nor other agents." 38 We find that certain 'human happenings' (or actions) are not the fixed outcome of a simple causal nexus. In such instances, where the agent is considered as 'acting freely', we find that the 'sufficient condition' is supplied by the agent himself. This may be in the form of a reason, intention or purpose, the exercise of which is not rigidly fixed by prior events. This sufficient condition is endowed with the power to produce any one of several results. Thus a 'free' cause, unlike a 'necessitated' cause is superabundant by nature. 39 The power of such self-determining causes extends to a multiplicity of effects.


39 Mortimer J. Adler, The Idea of Freedom, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1958, pp. 431-440. A cause is 'superabundant' or free in the sense that, "though it is determined by antecedent events to produce one of the alternative effects E1, E2, E3 and E4, it is nevertheless not thereby necessitated to produce the one effect it does in fact produce." Ibid., p.433. Though the free cause is sufficient to produce either E1, E2, E3 or E4, before this cause operates, none of these alternative effects can be predicted with certitude from any knowledge we might have of the cause. Thus we call the cause which has the potential of producing a diversity of effects a 'superabundant cause' which is different from a 'necessitated cause' which is endowed with the potential of producing one effect alone.
any one of which the cause is sufficient to determine.

The power of self-determination is 'creative' and 'selective'. Hence it should be considered 'active' rather than 'passive.' It is 'active' in the sense that it enables man to choose one among several alternative courses of action. It is considered 'creative' since it actualizes a potentiality and since 'creativity' in this regard encompasses alternative possibilities, the 'power' emanating from it can be considered 'selective'. The power of self-determination is not 'neces-
sitiated' in the sense in which 'cause' as ordinarily under-
stood produces a specific effect.

This power of self-determination points to the uniqueness of man. Man's creativity together with his sense of responsibility indicate this uniqueness. That he is not a mere product of complete physical determinism is clear from the fields of art, literature and music which point to human creativity and originality.

The power of self-determination which is unique to man can emerge and grow strong under favourable conditions. Frederick Ferre fittingly compares this power with the
power of speech. Recent studies in experimental psychology have shown that this freedom differs from person to person.

Our views regarding freedom (as self-determinism) in the human sphere are corroborated by biologists who have also raised the question as to whether living systems be considered non-living totally deterministic, they maintain that only macro-physical systems can be so considered. The idea is explicated in the following passage which points out that

the number of possible combinations...is generally immensely larger than...degrees of freedom...living systems are self-programming; this means that the particles of which they are composed form an internal simplification, or self-representation and these systems of self-representation which assume control of the whole organism seem utterly brittle in many cases because they appeal to origins spontaneously. This concept of living organisms being uniquely different from non-living systems in having self-representation raises a point of most profound importance.

The striking parallels listed by Perre between self-determinism and the power of speech are their normal development from infancy to adulthood, qualitative differences in their development from individual to individual, their growth from childhood to adulthood, and their power to grow and develop under favorable conditions.


Thus living systems cannot be treated on par with non-
living physical systems. 'Self-programming' and 'self-
representation' which are characteristic of living systems,
reach a high degree of complexity in man and culminate in
his power of self-determination. A physical system being
devoid of these two aspects is therefore devoid of self-
direction.

From the foregoing analysis we are led to the follow-
ing conclusions: Human phenomena are so complex and varie-
gated that no extreme standpoint can be helpful in compre-
prehending them. Elements of determinism and freedom are both
found in human life and, hence a standpoint which conceives
aspects of determinism without neglecting freedom altogether
is more adequate to portray human nature. Determinism
may be envisaged as drawing the 'boundaries' within which
human freedom operates. As Bronowski states,

A society moves under material pressure like
a stream of gas; and on the average, its indi-
viduals obey the pressure; but at any instant,
any individual may, like an atom of gas, be
moving across or against the stream. The human
will on the one hand compulsion on the other
exist in play within these boundaries.

43 J. Bronowski, *The Common Sense of Science*
Hence, it could be maintained that there is a continuous interaction of elements of determinism and freedom in human life. It may be added that this ‘commingling’ is crucial to the well-being of the individual and indispensable to a well-ordered society.

To the extent he is free, man is also responsible. It might thus be said that “the sense of personal responsibility, which expresses itself most clearly in our feeling of obligation, or the sense of ‘ought’ is quite meaningless apart from the power of choice.”

In the next two chapters we shall attempt to illustrate our thesis that both elements of determinism and freedom are discernible in human life by a reference to the concept of social action, and also by a brief analysis of the doctrine of karma. In the first illustration human life is considered in the context of society; in the second, purely personal aspects of human life are considered.