



Determinism Versus Freedom and Values

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ABSTRACT: -

- Dealing with the two problems of free will and clarify the two-basic sense of freedom.
- What is meant by determinism and indeterminism?
- Dealing the two sense of freedom: - Ordinary Sense of freedom and other philosophical sense of freedom.
- Explain the Determinism and indeterminism. Determinism is standbyconceived as causation by antecedent events and circumstances. On the other hand, indeterminism denies that everything that's happen has a cause.
- The real problem of free will turn out to be whether there can be freedom and values if determinism is true.

KEYWORDS: - Problem, Free will, Sense, Determinism, Indeterminism, Causation, Freedom, Value

INTRODUCTION-The free will problem counters first of all, on the question whether humans are really free in what they do and second on the related concern about values. i.e., are we responsible for what we do if we are not free to do what we want to.

Satisfactory answers to these questions depend on the one hand on how we understand the word 'freedom' and, on the other, on whether we accept determinism or indeterminism. It is therefore, necessary before dealing with the two problems of free-will mentioned in the beginning to clarify about the two basic senses of freedom and what is meant by determinism and indeterminism.

Ordinary sense of Freedom

What we ordinarily mean by "freedom" is nothing but freedom of choice. In this sense freedom means the power of choosing / selecting any one of two or more alternatives. Some people also mean freedom as spontaneity or as autonomy or as exercising one's own control or as doing as one wishes. But on critical examination they are found to be no different from "freedom of choice" which is implicit in all of them

Philosophical sense of freedom



There is also another sense in which the word "Tree" is contrasted with "determined" One is supposed to be free when what he does is not determined by external events. This may be called the philosophical sense of freedom. It should be remembered here that those who take "freedom" in the philosophical sense do not deny that it is used in the ordinary sense in our day-to-day conversations. Consider the deliberation of a person about whom to vote for any candidate and is convinced that the selection is up to him regardless of prior influences but viewing his eventual behaviour as a segment of larger natural and historical processes, those taking "freedom" in the Philosophical sense would argue that there are underlying cause determining his choice and so the deliberation is not free.

Determinism and Indeterminism

Determinism, specially the most acceptable scientific or causal type holds that whatever happens is determined without any exception by antecedent conditions where determination is standardly conceived as causation by antecedent events and circumstances. On the other hand, indeterminism denies that everything that happens has a cause and maintains that certain things like human actions are indetermined.

Now we may come back to the problems. One way of dealing with them is the Analysts way of defining "freedom" in its ordinary sense of having both freedom and values no matter whether determinism is true or indeterminism. Such a solution seems however to be the most ridiculous and naivest for those who have raised this question i.e., the Hard Determinists have never denied to have such practical freedom. What they claim is that in the ultimate analysis such freedom turns out to be no freedom of all, because one's choice is nevertheless caused by antecedent or non-free.

The second ridiculous solution comes from Indeterminists, who claim that certain things especially human actions are neither caused nor determined. No sort of incompatibility arises, then whether we take "freedom" in the ordinary sense or in the philosophical sense. In fact, libertarianism, which asserts that people are free and responsible, is the natural corollary of Indeterminism. But such a solution is totally unacceptable since it amounts to the denial of the scientific truth that everything has a cause and thus, contradicts something universally accepted. From the researchers conducted in zoology and psychology it has now been established that all behaviours are brought by genetic and environmental factors. Now see what John Hospers says in this context. "Nobody ever pretended that the stones have freedom or frees will but it has been contended that human beings have and science is gradually showing up this claim a mere superstition. We know for more today than even before about people's hereditary constitution and environmental conditions, the laws of how people behave, all the factors that make people acts as they do. The person is becoming more and more like the stone. But this is delusion, he is no freer than the stone is. The forces acting on him are more complex, and therefore far more difficult to discover than those acting on the stone, but they are there just the same. Thus, determinism can never be denied for the simple reason that it is based on the widely accepted



universal theory of causation. So, the real problem of free-will turns out to be whether there can be freedom and values if determinism is true or, if broken into two, there are two problems

- I - Is freedom compatible with determinism?
- II - Is any value compatible with determinism?

Regarding the first problem of compatibility between freedom and determinism, it has already been pointed out that, if taken in the ordinary sense, freedom can be compatible not only with indeterminism but also with determinism. This is what has exactly been done by the soft determinists - the compatibility among the determinists - when they say that not only freedom is compatible with determinism but also that it is possible only to the extent that determinism is true. They would argue somewhat like this, "Don't you want your acts to be caused - caused by you? Can you really call them free if they are uncaused? Thorough analysis of this type of argument would only show that the soft-determinists have taken "freedom" in its ordinary sense of autonomy or having choices. On the other hand, the hard determinists have taken "freedom" in the philosophical sense of not being determined and concluded that freedom can never be consistent or compatible with determinism. What they mean to say in other words, the freedom is an illusion since behaviour is brought about or determined by genetic and environmental factors. Thus, freedom in the philosophical sense and determinism cannot just go together simply because it is logically impossible. Regarding the first problem we may, therefore, conclude that if taken in its ordinary sense, freedom is consistent with determinism, but it must be inconsistent with determinism if it is taken in the philosophical sense. That is from a narrow perspective we are no doubt free, but from a broader perspective we are only bound and helpless creatures. Had it not been so everybody could get and do anything he / she wants to. Nobody ever wants death, ill health and sufferings but we all know that life of anybody never goes this way,

Let us then, come to the second problem regarding compatibility between values and determinism. Persons like Harry Frankfurt think that moral or obligatory or responsible actions are compatible with determinism because they do not require alternative possibilities of action and, thus, do not presuppose freedom, (Interpreted from the risk taker's point of view, however, even obligatory actions presuppose freedom of having alternatives. If somebody does not care for the possibility of sanctions / punishments for violating an obligation freedom of performing or not performing the action remains open for him) By implication other values, i.e. non-obligatory actions which presuppose freedom of choosing one of the alternatives are not compatible with determinism. Both are they justified in thinking so it is a clear "No". My point is that not only obligatory values, but any kind of values are consistent compatible with determinism, but they are so not because they do or don't presuppose freedom of having alternatives as though by the Frankfurt style compatibility, but because of the facts that values, whether obligatory or non-obligatory cannot be incompatible with determinism unless they presuppose freedom in the philosophical sense of not being determined and no value presupposes such freedom. So, any value or value system can be compatible or co-exist with determinism.



This may also be substantiated by the fact that in the deterministic lives of our values have come, changed or reformed and replaced by others with the possibility of the trend remaining forever. Any value, whether new or changed or formed come out of thinking of a person or a group of persons and then influences the behaviours of people. Thus values, themselves, are parts of the deterministic process.

Summary

What has been presented. So far may finally, be summarized as follows:

1. Being based on a scientific truth, determinism cannot be denied
2. Freedom in the philosophical sense of not being determined is not compatible with determinism
3. Freedom in the ordinary sense and values are compatible with determinism.

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