

1 Free will vs. determinism

Significance of free will?

Laplace's demon:

"We ought to regard the present state of the universe as the effect of its antecedent state and as the cause of the state that is to follow. An intelligence knowing all the forces acting in nature at a given instant, as well as the momentary positions of all things in the universe, would be able to comprehend in one single formula the motions of the largest bodies as well as the lightest atoms in the world, provided that its intellect were sufficiently powerful to subject all data to analysis; to it nothing would be uncertain, the future as well as the past would be present to its eyes."

Determinism: Given any complete state of the universe at a time and the laws of nature, the complete future of the universe is fixed.

2 Compatibilism

Hobart's compatibilism

- "That we are free in willing is, broadly speaking, a fact of experience. That broad fact is more assured than any philosophical analysis." (420)
- But at the same time, Hobart thinks it follows from the assumption that we have free will that determinism is true!
- How is he thinking of freedom?
 - A free act must be caused by the agent's character, desires, motives, etc.
 - "*In proportion* as an act of volition starts of itself without cause it is exactly, so far as the freedom of the individual is concerned, as if it had been thrown into his mind from without ... in neither case does the volition arise from what the man is, cares for, or feels allegiance to; it does not come out of him ... Far from constituting freedom, that would mean, in the exact measure in which it took place, the loss of freedom." (423)

Person S is free in performing act A iff S has the power to do A, and nothing interferes with this power.

- What does it mean for S to have the power to do A?
 - If S wills A, then A will follow.
- Hobart: This means that freedom is law-like. This also means that even though it follows from S's wishes at a time that A occur, if S had wished otherwise, A would not have occurred.
- "When we attribute power to a man we do not mean that something will accomplish itself without his wanting it to. That would never suggest the idea of

power. We mean that if he makes the requisite move the thing will be accomplished." (426)

2 Objections

No significance:

"What significance is there in my mental struggle to-night whether I shall or shall not give up smoking, if the laws which govern the matter of the physical universe already pre-ordain for the morrow a configuration of matter consisting of pipe, tobacco, and smoke connected with my lips?" (Eddington, quoted in Hobart, p. 430)

No responsibility:

"But how, it is asked, can I be responsible for what I will if a long train of past causes has made me will it ... Is it not these causes that are 'responsible' for my act - to use the word in the only sense, says the objector, that seems to remain for it?" (431)

"The parent past produced the man, none the less the man is responsible for his acts ... The past finished its functions in the business when it generated him as he is. So far from interfering with him and coercing him the past does not even exist."