THE ONTOLOGY OF AGENCY IN THE LIGHT OF DETERMINISTIC CAUSATION: A FOLK-PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY

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Abstract: *In this piece of work I have revisited the free will problem which is a problem about intentional agency under deterministic causation as is perceived in the folk mindscape. I have first tried to disentangle the concept of deterministic causation from some of its mistaken offshoots like fatalistic inevitability and have shown how holding and transmitting this misconception to the concept of agency can negatively manipulate the folk-psychological concept. In fact, a primary contention of this paper is to adduce evidence that folk concept about agency may not subliminally run counter to deterministic causation. It is only the particular libertarian belief of the experimenting philosopher that may interpret it as indeterministic. Citing some folk-psychological studies, I have tried to propose that folk-psychology may support event-causal account of agency, which is consistent with determinism.*

I. Introduction: Why Folk Psychology Should Matter When it Comes to Assessing the Nature of Agency

Is the ordinary psychological belief in ourselves as the uncaused source of our actions and in our ability to do otherwise than what we did just an upshot of a deep-rooted metaphysical concept about our sui generis nature of existence as rational and social beings? While analytical philosophical literature of the last century proposed that trying to uphold this ability along the path of rationality, brain science and mind's science of this century have tended to dispose this long-cherished concept, suggesting that brain states and processes required for generating physical acts supersede or maybe even eliminate the mind's capacity, the latter being something we think makes us do what we want to. At this stage, the question is how to forge a reconciliatory path? Psychologist Roy F.

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Baumeister curiously notes: "If freedom and choice are completely illusions—if the outcome of every choice was inevitable all along—why must people agonize so over decisions? Why do they argue and strive so much for the right to decide (that is, for power and liberty)?" (Baumeister 2008, 15)

What is the commonsense hunch about agency? Well, in all likelihood, our commonsense would prod us to proclaim that we are beings capable of executing our goals through deliberation (involving planning and choice making), unless we are suffering from certain ailments like kleptomania, dipsomania and alien-hand syndrome that clamp down on the process of deliberation (thereby interfering with and disrupting mental causation). And we are also quite likely to declare that nothing that we think about doing and actually do are inescapable phenomena, fixed beforehand by factors external to us, i.e. factors beyond our control. This self-image conceived by commonsense has a pragmatic value. But it would be interesting to know whether this self-conception really appears self-evident to us or do we somehow cling on to it as to a placebo so that we can carry on with our custom of attributing responsibility, praise and blame. One way to discover this is to introduce into folk-psychology certain descriptions of the functioning of free will in terms of determinism, fate and neuro-chemical (mechanistic?) descriptions of mental states and then find out whether this self-image is treated with any skepticism. There is need for one clarification here: we should not be turning to intuitions in the hope of finding either a positive or a negative answer to the question about the existence of free will. We should look up to intuitions not for a definitive answer but in the hope of a direction.

Philosophers for ages have taken their own intuitions very seriously in order to buttress the philosophical positions they adhere to. But a new surge in philosophy now dismisses this attitude of philosophers of taking their own intuitions for granted as what the aficionados of this new wave of philosophy refer to as mere "armchair analysis" and demands that intuitions concerning philosophical puzzles like free will, intentional action, nature of moral judgment etc. be elicited in their primordial form and their psychological origin examined. This new surge in philosophy known as experimental philosophy is a collaboration of psychological method and philosophical insight. Its proponents claim this to be a better methodological instrument than the conceptual analysis — a legacy of the analytic trend to flesh out a concept say knowledge, moral

properties etc while resting on one's own "intuition pumps"[1] all along. While conceptual analysis is itself an empirical method purportedly aiding philosophers in matching the semantic properties embedded in a concept to the subjective beliefs (the philosophers' own), the method is often overshadowed by a first-person perspective bias. Jesse Prinz points out the inadequacy of the method of conceptual analysis when it comes to bringing our intuitions in line with the states-of-affairs of the world: Conceptual analysis proceeds through first-person access to psychological structures, or introspection. Introspection is error-prone, and there are methodological perils associated with drawing conclusions from investigation using a single subject (oneself). ... concepts can be acquired through experience, and they can be revised through experience. They have no special status when it comes to revealing facts about the world. (Prinz 2007, 3)

When the focus of the analysis shifts from the philosopher's own intuition to the broader area of the intuition of the laypeople, the effect of single-subject bias can be alleviated. The advantage of the folk-conceptual analysis lies in the neutrality with which the philosopher first brings out the most prominent folk intuitions concerning certain concepts (knowledge, moral judgment, free will, intentionality etc.) and then determines how that belief fares corresponding to the concrete illustrations of that concept. Admittedly, the concept coming out as dominant after an experimental analysis may be the one supported by the philosopher himself who is conducting the experiment. But the survey method and the experimental analysis of folk intuitions evades the charge of parochialism[2]. According to the proponents of experimental method belonging to the philosophers' fraternity, the method is especially useful for giving an outline to concepts that heavily fall back upon on pre-philosophical intuitions and thought-experiments. (Nadelhoffer 2007, 123-49)

According to Manuel Vargas, one of the leading supporters of the experimental philosophy, it is capable of leveraging the problem of free will (the concept pertaining to our self-efficacy is naturally integrally connected with commonsense intuitions) in three possible ways (Vargas 2006), 252-53): I) Instead of coming out with a consensual pattern in the folk concept regarding the relation between deterministic causality and free will, empirical research may

[1] The credit of the coinage of this phrase goes to Daniel Dennett. See Dennett, 1984, 12.

[2] See Nichols, 2004, 514-18. Nichols here makes an appeal to the advantage of folk-conceptual analysis.

spawn conflicting patterns of intuitions—some outright incompatibilist responses and some contemplative compatibilist responses, for instance. Be that as it may, the lack of unanimity in the characterization of freedom of agency vis-à-vis the concept of deterministic causality has the potential to provide the philosophers with all the more reason to investigate into the underlying psychological mechanisms of the anomalous intuitions. II) Consequently the methodological assumptions philosophers sometimes unheedingly rely on to advocate a particular position on this topic will also come under the scanner. III) Experimental research has the benefit of bringing to the table "what intuitions look like before layers of philosophical training and investment in one or another view work their magic on professional philosophers' own conceptions of commonsense." (Ibid., 253)

The concept of free will has been traditionally characterized as the ability for alternate action and the feeling of being the ultimate source of action. (Kane ed. 2005, 5) Philosophers narrow down on these two features as the hallmarks of free will primarily because it is quite evident that free will in this capacity would not have worked if it were not a first-person mental capacity for rational control and making choices and decisions. The point is, whatever notions about free will we form and vigorously put forward they need to make reference to the folk-psychological assumptions about agency and the agent-action relation. We must not however presume here that by making an appeal to the folk concepts for getting a hang on the ontology of agency, we are already characterizing the folk belief in agency and free will as essentially anchored in what Ryle famously had an anathema to — the "double-life theory" or the "two-worlds legend", a supposed Cartesian legacy that created an unbridgeable gap between the mental states and processes preceding an action and physical (read mechanical) states and processes preceding an action. It would be premature to surmise that the folk concept of free will is resting on at least an implicit belief in mental-physical dichotomy. It is not just the agenda of the psychologists to "find out what people mean when they use concepts of freedom, choice, and responsibility in their daily lives and to illuminate the inner processes that produce the phenomena", (Baumeister 2008, 16) philosophers appreciative of the empirical research on folk-psychological theories about agency, choice-making and free will also hold a strong belief that natural intuitions driving the folk concept will help throw light on the actual happenings. The suggestion to be made is, it would certainly be unwise to sideline the folk concept of free will, not just because surveying it will bring into prominence what we are inclined to believe and discard but will also

show how believing or not believing something has an effect on how we behave.

II. The Folk Concept about the Ontology of Intentional Agency[3]

Although the question can be framed in this simplistic manner for the purpose of eliciting the folk concept in its most natural form, it should be formulated in such a way so that it effectively elicits the implicit belief either in indeterminism or determinism underlying the folk concept of the ability to do otherwise. So behind the descriptive question the purpose of the experimental philosopher should be to find out whether the laypeople give a positive or negative answer to the philosophically formulated question: "Can we hypothetically conceive of an agent to have done ~A at t_1 if he did A at t_1 given the same antecedent conditions?" An experimental philosopher should remain careful to not jump into the conclusion that folk concept of agency (grounded in the ability to do otherwise) is deterministic at heart, if response to the above question is negative, and indeterministic simply because the response is positive. In what follows, we would present and compare two different sets of folk-intuitional studies to show that folk concept about the nature of human behavior may be a bit more complex than is supposed and may not be fully captured by the determinism (would necessarily happen)/ indeterminism (may or may not happen) binary. In fact, the very presupposition by some philosophers that the concept of determinism entails

[3] I owe the employment of the term "intentional agency" to Malle (op. cit., p. 209) to emphasize folk-psychological belief in the role of intentional states causing behaviour. Attribution of intentional agency ought to depend on two qualifications: i) the agent should be consciously aware of her intention to do A [see Kane, Robert. (2007). "Libertarianism", in John Martin Fischer, Robert Kane, Derk Pereboom, and Manuel Vargas (Eds.) *Four Views on Free Will* (pp. 5-43). MA, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing. p. 20 for the meaning of having an intention] and ii) the agent should be capable of implementing the intention with "reflective practical reasoning" as some would insist [see Clarke, Randolph. (1993). "Toward a Credible Agent-Causal Account of Free Will", *Nous*, 27(2), p. 198] that reasoning is a requirement for counting acts as freely done]. These features serve to discount acts done with agency but not intentional agency such as acts of alien-hand syndrome, acts done under duress and addiction. A note however should be taken of the fact that though intentions are themselves conscious mental states, they may be nonconsciously formed by dispositional states (beliefs, desires) of the agent.

inevitability and accordingly perceived by the laypeople as opposed to freedom of agency is arguable. But the presupposition is not maintained by philosophers alone; psychologists also quite often harbor the same belief. Things become more muddled when psychologists are guided by this same erroneous view about deterministic causality mainly because if determinism is portrayed as logically equivalent to fatalism then it automatically looks anti-free will, and this erroneous presupposition consequently skews folk intuitions towards an incompatibilist tendency. Let us quote here at least one such psychologist who nurture and propagate the idea that determinism is by default anti free-will. Psychologist Roy F. Baumeister, who otherwise gathers evidence that belief in free will is rather a norm than a wishful thinking in folk-psychology insofar as it is perceived as expedient for behaving in compliance with socio-cultural customs, argues that if people start believing that occurrence of human actions is deterministic in nature, then their motivation for socially acceptable behavior will be severely stymied. The reason according to him is: "To the lay determinist, everything that happens is inevitable, and nothing else was possible. Thinking about what might have been is thus pointless if not downright absurd, because nothing else might have been (other than what actually happened)." (Baumeister 2011, 3)

This pattern of thinking on his part induced the subjects of his study to justify why they could not have done other than the one (a detrimental act) they actually committed with the proviso that they were in a deterministic setup. When the subjects were made to believe that they were acting in a setup conducive to free will they came up with just the opposite belief. Baumeister offered a simple explanation for the obviousness of this folk intuitional response: "The lack of counterfactual thinking in the no-freewill condition can be considered as a straightforward response that is consistent with determinism. After all, if nothing could have happened other than what actually happened, then there are no counterfactuals." (Ibid. 3)

This kind of manipulation, however, of the belief about the nature of agency does not necessarily indicate that folk belief in the alternate ability could have been satisfied only if determinism was confirmed to be false. Hopefully, some philosophers are quick to point out that deterministic causality in no way inhibits human actions in hypothetical situations, which is in situations other than the one in which an action already occurred. Nor does the belief in the truth of determinism render counterfactual thinking futile. Richard Holton (Holton 2011, 14–15.) invokes a thought experiment-like scenario involving another person's

thought about "doing something otherwise" counterfactually, despite the person's standing belief in determinism. The scenario he asks us to imagine is something like this: A person, eventually a subject of a psychological experiment is assigned like other subjects the task of pressing buttons of different colors so that she can gain some reward or nothing at all. The subjects are also told that pressing particular color buttons will maximize the reward, while pressing others will fetch reward in lesser degree, if not nothing. Now with this motivation, the subject in question closely observes which button is the most rewarding not just in her case but also in the case of other subjects. And she discovers that hitting the red button comes with the maximum reward. Now even if she believes that "*I could not have pressed the red button because I chose to press the green button*" (which is how a deterministically explained human act can be linguistically presented), there was nothing wrong on her part to think about the empirical possibility that "*if I had pressed the red button, I could have got greater reward*" (another instantiation of deterministically explained human act). But if she believes that "*I could not have pressed the red button because it was inevitable for me to press the green button*" (which is how a pseudo-deterministically understood human act will be linguistically presented), then where is the room for her to think counterfactually that *if I had pressed the red button, I could have got greater reward?* The suggestion put forward by Holton is, it is the belief in fatalism and not determinism that runs counter to the idea of a human act happening otherwise. If it is already an inalterable fact that the subject in question would press the green button and under no circumstances the red button, then there cannot be any motivation left for her to even contemplate the "if" ("*If I had hit the red button*") part of the counterfactual. Once again, it can be seen how mistaking determinism for fatalism undermines a proper understanding of the folk intuition about the ontology of behavior and agency.

Before we go on to present the folk assumptions about agency, we need to spend a few more words about the background assumption with which some experimental philosophers start off and which bears a significant influence in the way they categorizes the folk concept. Philosopher Shaun Nichols whose study report I have examined here hypothesized that the laypeople's notion of agency would turn out to be based on an implicit belief in indeterminism primarily because their mind is poised to find agent-causal (See Figure 1) account of free will more intuitively convincing. Agent-causal accounts hold that i) determinism inhibits free will (incompatibilism), ii) agents naturally possess free will

(libertarianism as opposed to hard determinism) and iii) an agent is armed with the ability to do otherwise absolutely independent of any change in the laws of nature or past conditions including the sub-agential components such as desires, beliefs, intentions etc. Therefore, an agent-causal libertarian account of free will essentially makes an unconditional analysis of the alternate ability principle its keystone. An unconditional analysis of free will proposes: An agent X could have done ~A instead of A *even if nothing changes* prior to X's A-ing. The "nothing" in the statement includes not just the laws of nature but also the mental states of the agent up until the moment of choice emphasizing that no other factors, not even the agent-involving events like the agent's beliefs, desires etc have to change. The view may sound a bit odd, as it seems to require non-causality for the implementation of the alternate ability principle. However, an agent-causationist has a particular kind of (indeterministic) causation in mind. As explicated by Randolph Clarke: "... when an agent acts with free will, her action is not causally determined by any prior events. The agent herself was said to cause her action, and this causation by the agent was said not to consist in causation by an event or collection of events. An agent acting with this sort of freedom, it was claimed, acted with the ability to do otherwise. And what the agent did was not an accident or a matter of chance; the agent herself made it happen that she did what she did. She was an uncaused cause of her so acting." (Clarke 1993, 191)

Then the unconditional analysis of intentional agency in terms of the alternate ability condition, seems only a reinstatement of the Law of the Excluded Middle in emphasizing that an agent can do either an action or not do it (A v ~A), which is of course indisputable. But in addition, the unconditional analysis also demands that an agent can do either A or anything other than A only if the agent as a uncaused soul-substance[4], as it were, is the necessary cause of A or anything other than A. Turner and Nahmias give a description of the agent-causal account thus: "*agent-causal* libertarians argue that for agents to act freely they must participate in a special sort of relation, *agent-causation*, which holds between a *substance* (the agent) and an *event* (the action) and which is not further reducible to a causal relation that holds between mental states of the agent and the action. Furthermore, if an agent *S* freely performs an action *A*, the agent-causal relation

that holds between *S* and *A* must be such that *S* could have done other than *A*." [5] So putting together all these clauses of the unconditional analysis, we can now logically represent it as the following statement which is not tautologous:

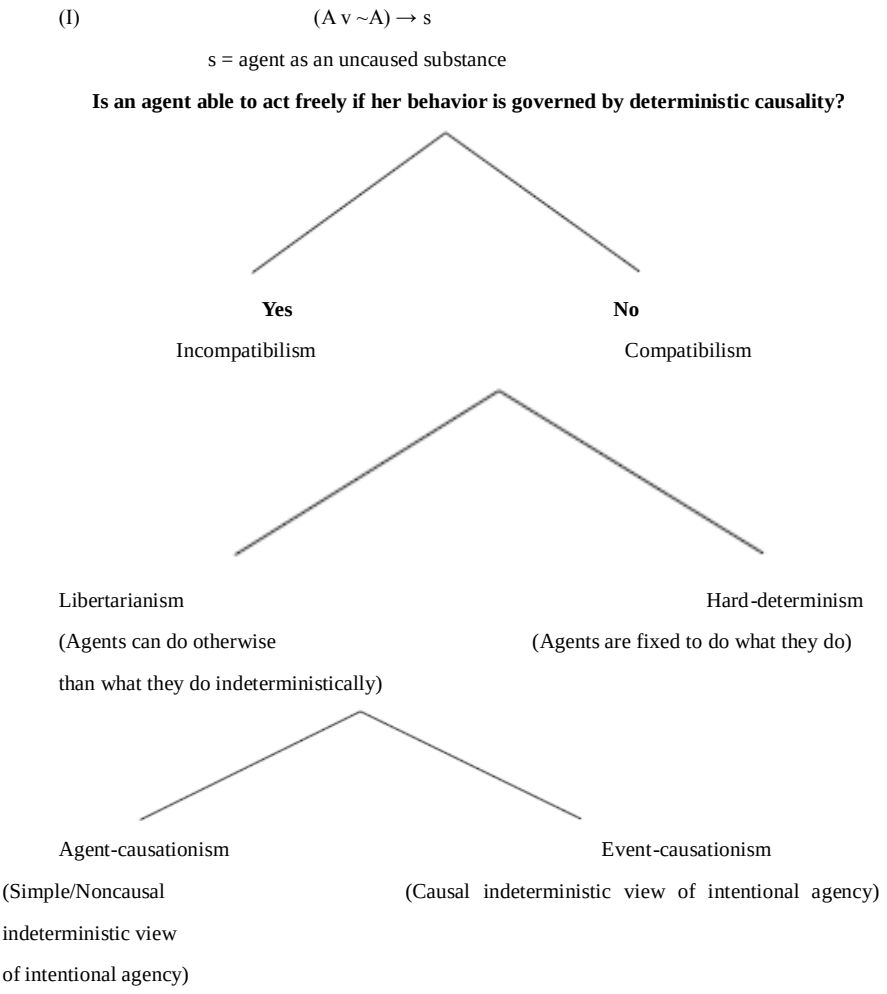


Figure 1

Now this can be contrasted with the event- causal account of libertarianism. An event-causal account renders the agent's *could have done otherwise* ability

[5] Turner, Nahmias, 2006, 598. Also, see the paper for arguments against agent-causal view and the unconditional analysis of free will.

plausible by demanding the proviso that certain agent-centric events (beliefs, desires, intentions) have to come into play in the choice or action making process to indeterministically cause the action. So while agent-causal accounts require unconditional analysis of the alternate ability principle, event-causal accounts need a conditional analysis. The conditional analysis mandates: An agent X could have done ~A instead of A *only if some prior event* relevant to the occurrence of an alternate action or choice *changes*. Now taking p as any such prior event, we can logically translate the above conditional statement as follows:

(II) $(A \rightarrow p) \vee (\sim A \rightarrow \sim p)$

The conditional analysis of free human act emphasizes the point that an action A will be done by an agent only if some relevant prior event p holds as a necessary condition and in order for the agent to not decide to do A ~p has to hold as a necessary causal condition. And unlike (I), (II) is a tautology. This way of understanding agency, as it can be seen, is in tandem with deterministic causation. It can be noted that while both agent-causal and event-causal accounts explain free will in terms of indeterminism, it is only the latter that can be consistent with compatibilist accounts of free will. This is because, in many event-causal accounts, the local pockets of indeterministic cause of action (agent's mental states) do not disallow the deterministic relation between the mental process of deliberation and decision or between the decision and action.

Let us in particular cite the event-causal account developed by Alfred Mele since it attempts to construct a particular ontology of free agency that is supported by a balanced interplay of deterministic and indeterministic causal processes. That such is the case can be clearly discerned in the case of deliberative intentional acts (choice-acts) as is suggested by Mele. When someone decides to do something, say, A, and implements the decision to do A, the causal chain that leads to the act is something like the following on Mele's account (Mele, 543):

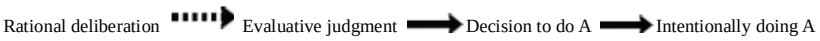


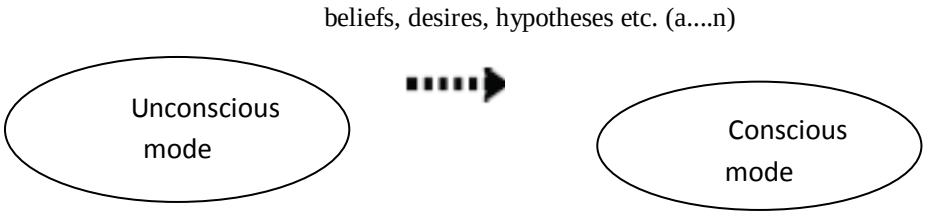
Figure 2

Now Mele points out that when we claim that we could have done otherwise than what we did in a given situation, the truth of this claim (i.e. the truth of the

alternate ability principle) rests on an indeterministic causal relation between our rational deliberative process and our evaluative judgment coming out of this deliberation. The dotted arrow in Figure 2 indicates this indeterministic leap from the rational deliberative process to the final judgment of evaluation. According to Mele, the rational deliberative process preceding a decision or a choice involves weighing the pros and cons of various alternative actions that means sweeping through and assessing a nebulous mix of beliefs, desires, hypotheses etc. On Mele's view the indeterministic leap from this rational deliberative process to the evaluative judgment lies in that, any of the beliefs (a...n), desires (a…n), hypotheses (a...n) may "come to mind", i.e. brought on from their unconscious (offline, passive) mode of existence to the conscious (online, occurrent) mode of existence. It is undetermined which of these beliefs, desires, hypotheses etc. will figure in the agent's rational deliberative process as worth of consideration, and will ultimately be taken up by the agent to make the evaluative judgment. Technically speaking, Mele would suggest that indeterministic causal relation holds between rational deliberation and evaluative judgment insofar as there are no conditions to nomologically cause the mobility of particular beliefs, desires etc. from their unconscious or inactive mode to the active, conscious mode (see Figure 3). The evaluative judgment on the other hand is made when a particular action path is selected from among the various alternative actions considered when the agent's mind was in the rational deliberative mode (see Figure 4).

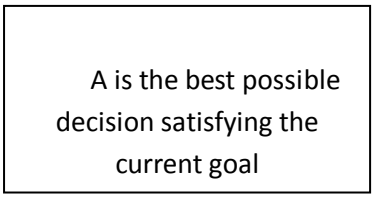
Note that while the agent-causal libertarian theories downplay the causal role of sub-agential events or components like individual beliefs-desires-opinions-hypotheses etc., which we have earlier referred to as constituting an agent's dispositional system over the agent's ability for alternate action, the event-causal libertarian theories offer a credible picture of how agent-specific intentional and dispositional states play a necessary causal role in making alternate ability a reality. Perhaps the agent-causal libertarians think that by denying mental states of any causal power with regard to action and positing the agent as an autonomous substance that is not preceded by any other cause and that is capable of functioning absolutely independent of any internal interference (read mental states), they can successfully keep freedom of agency separate from determinism. This way of explaining the ontology of free will, however, comes at the cost of pushing mental causation out of the picture. Granted that there is an autonomous agent which is the referent of the 'I', which these libertarians would admit of as a self– a mind independent entity— it cannot be denied that this self

can only exercise free will through the intermediary of its psychological states. Mele's event-causal libertarian view sketched above in our reckoning is quite an intelligible libertarian account of free will. Like Mele, Robert Kane also makes a strong case for (non-arbitrary) indeterministic causation to offer a plausible account of free will. Without going much into the detail, we just want to note that Kane argues that the ability to implement more than one action possibilities, which he refers to as "plural voluntary control" is tenable only if indeterministic processes are granted. (See Kane, op. cit., 30)



Rational Deliberative Mode

Figure 3[6]



Evaluative Judgment

Figure 4

Now in their study, (Nichols, Knobe 2007, 663-85), Nichols and Knobe provided adult participants with the descriptions of two universes. Universe A was semantically presented in a manner in which choice making events looked deterministically (pseudo-deterministically) caused according to Nichols and

[6] The dotted arrow indicates an indeterministic relation between the unconscious dispositional and intentional states and their manifestation as conscious dispositional and intentional states.

Knobe, while the semantic presentation of Universe B invoked the idea that choices could be made indeterministically again in a non-event-causal sense. The subjects were asked which of the two universes they judged more akin to their own. The outcome of the experiment was that the majority (more than 90%) of the participants marked universe B as their answer. On the basis of this response Nichols concluded that in folk psychology human behavior is viewed as indeterministic; folk concept about agency is not amenable to any nomological principle which means folk concept of agency has an inherent component of agent-causationism. Furthermore, pretheoretical mind is inclined to conceive of agency in an unconditional way. There is however reason to be skeptical about this way of characterizing the folk concept of intentional actions in contradistinction to non-intentional actions. Nichols seems to believe that is the case because what their responses stand for is the following unconditional statement requiring indeterminism: If I caused an action A, thinking in retrospect, i.e. counterfactually I could not have A-ed as well, because I am the sole causal factor in doing A. But an alternative explanation of the response, especially in the two universes study might be that the laypeople found the clause incorporated in the description of the determinist universe viz., "everything had to happen the way it did" a deterrent for the ability to do otherwise. But as Nahmias points out: "It is important… to distinguish the trivial claim that, in deterministic universes, nothing could have been different *if* the past and laws were not different, from the downright false claim that, in deterministic universes, everything had to happen as it did. Simply saying that a universe is deterministic says nothing about whether its initial conditions or laws had to be as they were." (Turner 2006, 606)

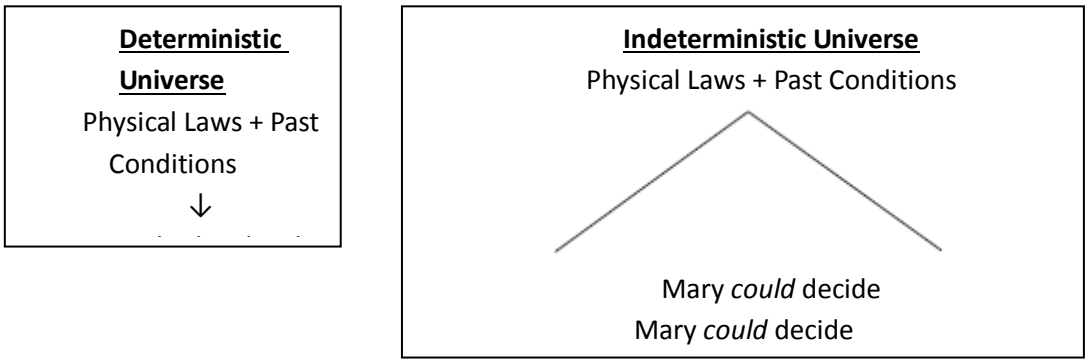


Figure 5

Again those who responded that an agent did not have to choose to do what he did even though the past conditions remained fixed does not indicate that they are implicitly supporting unconditional analysis of free will. Nichols however conducted a study (Nichols 2006, 306) that apparently shows that the folk believe that an agent can choose to do something even if *nothing changes.* Nichols presented the following vignette to the study subjects (75 undergraduates):

The Scenario: On 4/13/2005, Bill filled out his tax form. At precisely 10:30 AM, he decides to lie about his income. But of course he didn't have to make this decision. Bill could have decided to be honest.

Next, the subjects were divided into two groups and asked to judge the correctness of either of the following two analyses of the given scenario.

The Conditional Analysis: Bill could have decided to be honest at 10:30, 4/13/2005, *but only if* some things had been different before the moment of his decision.

The Unconditional Analysis: Bill could have decided to be honest at 10:30, 4/13/2005, *even if* nothing had been different before the moment of his decision.

The Response: Most of the participants judged that Bill could have decided to not cheat tax even if nothing changed prior to the decision. Nichols interprets this result as the rejection of conditional analysis of free will in folk psychology.

Now there is some good ground to remain skeptical about the claim that laypeople really believe that alternate possibilities are open to an agent with no necessary precondition for the alternate choice to be made. Such a belief is contrary to any law of causation. Nichols, however, may suggest that this indicates an agent-causal belief in free will. An agent-causal notion of free will holds a special kind of causal relation between the agent and her choices, irreducible to any other causal laws. But it may be doubted whether the response stems from any agent-causal notion of free will. Those who supported the unconditional analysis of free will might have just surmised that *nothing* had to change externally for Bill to make an alternative choice. Bill's intentional states were enough to cause the possibility of his deciding to be honest, in which case certain considerations that Bill paid attention to, coupled with perhaps Bill's pre-existing motivation or inclination to be honest deterministically resulted in his making the decision. In the words of psychologist John Baer: "Each of us has many courses of action that are possible in the sense that they are within our power—we *could* do them if we choose to do so—but we act only in ways that

accord with our natures....if who a person is (her personality, cognitive abilities, beliefs, ideas, emotions, memories, wishes, thinking styles, etc.) is to have power over what she does—and isn't this what we really mean by free will?—then the only kind of free will that is coherent is deterministic free will." (Baer 2008, 308-09)

III. Conclusion

I began this paper with the suggestion that the causal law of determinism does not in principle pose any obstacle to free will at the conceptual level unless it is conflated with the doctrine of determinism. While fatalism emphatically holds that whatever be the antecedent conditions, the agent is incapable of deciding otherwise than what she did. On the contrary, determinism makes the innocuous claim that every event is preceded by a string of sufficient causes that ensure the occurrence of that event. Given this, I cannot help but adopt a compatibilist line of argument in that it seems evident to me that if an agent wants to do A instead of B, in each case the agent must have sufficient mental causes for so deciding. So there is no need for any agent-causation that paradoxically does not rest on sub-agential causation i.e. causation by the agent's mental states. And hence, though indeterministic processes may well exist at the level of deliberation, the relation between deliberation and decision one hand – and decision and action on the other, can be explained in terms of deterministic causation without jeopardizing agency.

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