

FREEWILL AND DETERMINISM DEBATE: THE PHILOSOPHICAL PARADOX

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Abstract

There has always been the challenge to examine the argument that man is free, therefore, could be held responsible for whatever action he takes. On the other hand, it is argued that man is not free and his actions are often predetermined. This sets off a sharp contradiction or paradox. The challenge posed by this sharp dichotomy therefore, is that often times none of the philosophical schools of thought is prepared for a compromise. The main objective of this paper is to provide the need for a consonance by both positions. In most of the discourse on determinism and freewill, the emphasis has been on these divergent positions. Central to the discourse on freewill and determinism debate, this paper adopted the philosophical, sociological and historical methodological approach. The assumption therefore is that there is a significant dimension with respect to appreciating a compromise between the two concepts. It is recommended that both schools of thought should examine areas of convergence in order to reap the inherent dividends in their different positions.

Keywords: Debate, Determinism, Freewill, Paradox, Philosophical.

Introduction

The freewill and determinism debate has often taken the front burner in religious and philosophical discourse. In the words of Oshitelu¹ this dates back to the time of St. Augustine and Pelagius. On his part, St. Augustine (354-430 A.D.) holds that when Adam fell, all “his posterity fell with him”. In this case, he submitted that, men “do not have freewill, but are enslaved in sin”. In sharp contrast to the position of St. Augustine, Pelagius (360-420 AD), posited that, “man has freewill and can be saved whenever he so desires”. In his teachings, St. Augustine emphasized that predestination was clearly a sovereign decree by God through which people are saved or condemned, Gonzalez² argued. On his part, Pelagius opined that pre-destination was mainly inextricably interwoven with the foreknowledge of God concerning future human decisions, Dahlin³ opined. In this instance, Augustine argued that God knows whom he will choose to save, while Pelagius submitted that each of us, sin for ourselves, out of our own

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freewill. The consequence of this, according to Pelagius is the conviction about human freedom, and that man was responsible for his own moral destiny. This is the submission of Bokenkotter⁴. The import of their position is seen in two popular schools of thought in theology and philosophy. These are Calvinism and Arminianism. The former, holds that man does not have freewill, while the later holds an opposite view.

The philosophical views of Freewill and Determinism to a large extent in the opinion of the writer may have been remotely sharpened by the position of Augustine and Pelagius. The position of Saint Augustine with respect to Free Will is aptly put. He argued:

Choices as to what to do are made in the virtue of the will. Desire can never overwhelm an agent, because they have intellects and wills, agents are not determined by basic bodily desires. Rather, an agent gives in to desire in virtue of the will, which operates freely and never under any compulsion. If a will were ever coerced, it would not be a will; therefore human beings commit sins freely by giving in to the desire for temporary things, which the intellect and will could disregard in favour of the eternal things that human beings ought to pursue. This is clearly posited by the Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy⁵.

The attempt made by Augustine was basically to incriminate man's will in the entire process of sin. Thus he argued that since human beings act freely, they are the ones responsible for evil in the world and not God. Suffice it to say that there are other divergent opinions held by some philosophers with regard to the position canvassed by Saint Augustine concerning Free will. However, the essence of the diversity in opinions would be captured by the writer within the sphere of determinism, which is the opposing philosophical school of thought to Free will.

The objectives the writer sought to address include the followings: First, to examine the freewill and determinism debate. Although this aspect has received considerable philosophical attention in popular literature, it is important to state that a re-examination would enable the author identify the right premise on which to hang his position. Another objective to be addressed by the author is the consideration of the philosophical implications of freewill and determinism. This stems from the major attempt at identifying the different philosophers and their positions concerning freewill and determinism. The right comprehension of their philosophical positions would give the writer ample opportunity to adequately articulate his position or argument. Finally, another major objective of the study would be to determine the possibility of building an acceptable consonance between freewill and determinism. The positive goal from this

attempt would be to summon all to appreciate the philosophical dividends from such a compromise. The consequence of such an attempt, ultimately, is to embrace the inherent benefits from the positions canvassed by both philosophical schools of thought.

In achieving the objectives previously highlighted by the author, various literatures and works on freewill and determinism were consulted. This allowed for a robust appraisal of the phenomenon. Therefore, the major methodology applied by the writer in investigating the problem was philosophical, sociological and historical. The problem of this study which the writer attempted to address was whether a compromise can be built between freewill and determinism? The author also found out the different philosophical positions held concerning freewill and determinism. Finally, what are the philosophical benefits from this consonance? The significance of the work is hinged on the fact that it would contribute to the body of literature in the area of freewill and determinism. This would enhance a rich advocacy for the building of an enduring consonance with respect to the phenomenon under consideration. In its attempt at achieving the above stated objectives and significance, the study also examined the freewill and determinism debate and the positions canvassed by some philosophers concerning this phenomenon. It also considered the philosophical implications of freewill and determinism, and some common forms of determinism. Finally, the study highlighted the possibility of a consonance between freewill and determinism, hence reducing the sharp philosophical divide between them.

The Freewill debate

In examining the issue of freewill, it is important to consider the term, freedom. According to Omoregbe⁶, freedom is the capacity of self-determination, that is, the capacity to decide what to do. He further posited that, man is by nature free; freedom is part of his very nature and to lose one's rationality (e.g. by insanity) is to lose one's freedom. This, according to him, means that actions performed in the state of insanity cannot be free actions since the agent does not know what he is doing. The implication of this argument in the opinion of the writer is that knowledge is quite essential in the consideration of the concept of freedom. The person involved in any action should be well aware of what he or she is doing before such action can be said to be free. On the strength of this position, it is further opined that, the concept of freedom runs simultaneously with that of responsibilities. This signifies that man is held responsible for the way he or she uses freedom, Omoregbe⁷ submitted.

One of the most prominent voices of freewill was Saint Augustine. In the Early Middle ages, he had argued, with tremendous philosophical conviction, that man had free will to act. He posited clearly that "choices as to what to do are made in virtue of the will." This, according to him meant that "desire can never overwhelm an agent, because they have intellect and wills, agents are not determined by basic bodily desires. Rather an agent gives in to desires in virtue

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of the will, which operates freely and never under compulsion". This is clearly captured by the Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy⁸. On this premise, he argued that if a will is ever coerced, it would not be a will. Furthermore, he concluded that the reason human beings commit sins freely is due to the fact that they have given in to the desire for temporary things. The implication is that the intellect and the will could disregard this, in favour of the eternal things that human beings should be rightly poised to pursue, Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy⁹ further presented.

Apart from the argument on free will, Augustine was basically interested in arguing that since man acts freely, he is the one responsible for sin in the world and not God. The position canvassed by Saint Augustine, is that man is free, and this freedom has guaranteed his action. This poses a major challenge to the proponents of determinism, who simply attribute the dynamics of man's action to causal factors outside man. The proponents of freewill subscribe to the fact that human beings have the freedom of choice or self-determination. This means that, given a situation, a person could have done other than what he or she did, posited Houdmann¹⁰. They hold tenaciously to the fact that freewill is incompatible with determinism.

It must be noted that, freewill has been debated by different theologians and philosophers for a very long time. It is the view of some that man has the ability and capacity for freewill. That is, the ability to choose actions without been forced to follow a certain course either due to the influence of others or natural laws. It is commonly believed that the concept of freewill does not pose much problem to most theists. Extended further, the concept of freewill is an important premise on which most of the events in the society are based. A clear example is the decision often taken in most legal systems. This is due to the fact that freewill is necessary for the notion of personal responsibility. On the basis of the aforementioned, Oshitelu¹¹ declared that, freewill is the belief that man determines his own behaviour freely and that no causal antecedents can sufficiently account for his action. The implication of this is that a person's actions are caused by him. The concept of freewill presupposes that there is no force or compulsion. It follows that if man is made to act under forceful influence or compulsion, he is not free. His action or inaction is influenced by external forces.

The aspect of freewill is also justified by the experience in the Garden of Eden. In this instance, according to the Genesis account, God gave Adam and Eve the freewill to make choices. God did not create them as robots. In the exercise of this freewill or freedom, they chose to disobey God by eating from the tree they were originally instructed not to eat from. No doubt, man has the ability to take decisions and initiatives on his own. Thus he can think freely and act on the basis of his initiative.

The Position of Some Philosophers on Freewill

There has been a strong philosophical divide with regards to the phenomenon of freewill. According to Christian¹² no voice in the defence of human freedom has been more persuasive than that of the existentialist, Jean-Paul Sartre. For him, there is no determinism of any kind. He stated clearly, "Nothing tells me what to do". I myself decide. I cannot blame God or others, or any past environment. I am now what I make myself to be. I have to accept the consequences of my own freedom, take the responsibility for my decisions, and face the consequences thereof." Sartre believed that human freedom is not always a blessing, it is often a tragedy. Whether we like it or not, man is condemned to be free. The implication of this position is articulated by Omoregbe¹³. He submitted that Sartre said that it is not possible for a free being to avoid making a choice. Omoregbe, further posited that, according to Sartre,

Man is free to choose not to choose what he wants, but he is not free not to choose, since a refusal to choose is already a choice made. To refuse to choose is in fact one way of choosing, to refuse to take a decision is already a decision taken. Freedom is the freedom of choosing. Not to choose is, in the fact, to choose not to choose.

In this instance, Paul-Jean Sartre argued that man is not free not to be free. He cannot avoid being free, for he is condemned to be free, and, whatever he decides to do is an exercise of this freedom. This has positioned Paul-Jean Sartre as a stout defender of human freedom. However, Omoregbe¹⁴ posited that "man's exercise of his freedom can be obstructed by some factors which may be physical, psychological, social and environmental. For example, insanity, physical force or violence may render the exercise of freedom impossible. On this note, therefore, moral responsibility is removed. This is based on the fact that the prevailing circumstances would not have permitted him to act otherwise.

The position of the writer is premised on the argument that man is truly often beclouded by different choices. On the strength of this, he is expected to make a choice. This is regarded as a common occurrence. However, even when man decides not to make any choice, he has in fact taken a position that could be adjudged as having made a choice. If his action is to be categorized, he would be regarded as having taken a physical position or decision. It may not be right to give such judgment in a vacuum, as that action in itself is regarded as a choice. The decision not to choose is itself a choice. Therefore, the writer agrees with Paul-Jean Sartre that not making a choice is itself a choice. The exception to the position thus canvassed is reflective on some constraints that may impinge on man's ability to make choices. A major constraint may be when one is overwhelmed by a terminal illness. In this instance, man may have some desires, for example, for food or other physiological needs. He is incapable of making any choice to have them. His present position does not give him an opportunity

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to make a choice. It would be unfair to conclude, at this instance that since he did not make any physical choice, that decision could be regarded as a choice genuinely made. No doubt there is the likelihood that he would have acted in the way he wanted if he were in the right frame of mind and state of health. On the strength of this, the writer agrees with Omoregbe¹⁵ that someone who is out of his mind (for example, insane) cannot be said to be capable of making any logical choice. It is obvious in most instances that someone who is insane does not have insight with regards to the happenings around him. It follows that such an individual cannot be said to be acting freely. This position tends to challenge the argument posited by the proponents of freewill with respect to man's freedom and liberty to act.

Oshitelu¹⁶ stated the position of philosopher, John Locke on freewill. The philosopher, Locke, gave a startling illustration with regards to freewill. In Locke's Essay concerning Human Understanding, Locke, in Oshitelu,¹⁷ he described a situation where a man who is fast asleep is carried into a room where someone he had long wished to meet is present. He argued that when that man is awake and he notices the presence of that person, he still would prefer to stay and enjoy that company rather than go away. The decision to stay, according to him, is voluntary. He also gave an example of a man who wakes up in a room, that unknown to him was locked from outside. The man chooses to remain in the room believing that he has chosen freely, not knowing that in reality he has no option. According to Locke, his ignorance of the true position of things gives him an illusion of freedom. Thus, he concluded that freedom consists in our being able to act or not to act, according as we shall choose or will. It can be safely concluded that the man initially considered by Locke was truly there "under compulsion", but no doubt, the conduct demonstrated by him can be said to be voluntary. This is due to the fact that he chose to remain there voluntarily, on his own will, not particularly due to any form of compulsion, but he actually had clear reasons for his choice. The far-reaching implication in this instance is that man's behaviour can be fully voluntary and hence properly subject to praise and blame, reward or punishment, even though one was not free in the circumstances to do otherwise, Oshitelu¹⁸ argued.

The philosophical discourse on freewill is also vividly captured by Honderck¹⁹. He argued that, it is impossible for man to have a freewill or freedom and at the same time be tele-guided. The implication is that God gave man reasoning faculty, this has made him to be responsible for his actions, deeds and attitudes. The above position is also supported by Saint Thomas Aquinas. According to him, man should be able to freely choose his actions. If this were not the case it would be impossible to hold man morally accountable for his actions, consequently there will be no room for ethics. Since man is the originator of his own actions, he should be able to choose his actions freely without inhibitions, he averred. He then supported his position by declaring that "...human beings originate their actions. Actions come from the agent causing

the action in pursuit of a goal, so the first source of an activity's exercise is a goal" argued Aquinas²⁰. In comprehending the position canvassed by Aquinas, it must be clear that the first source, according to him is the will. The will is actually the ability that is pursuing the goal. Consequently, this 'activates abilities that in turn pursue the means towards the goal'. In establishing Aquinas' position, it was declared that "our other actions being willed cause other actions to be willed, Armchair Philosophy²¹ submitted. Thomas Aquinas gave an example to elucidate his position. He explained that "when taking medicine, the willing of this action is preceded by deliberation which in turn comes from the willer's will to deliberate. Since the will moves itself through deliberation, it cannot be said that the will compels itself to will." Thus, Aquinas supported freewill; he believed that it is a "necessary presupposition of morality". On this note, he asserted that, "if the will were not free, how could we account for moral responsibility for our actions? How could we blame, punish, praise, or reward people for their actions if they were not acting freely"? Thomas Aquinas argued that the will is free and human actions are free actions". To him, a free action is a voluntary action, and this is, conscious action that has its source within the agent himself," Aquinas, in Omoregbe²². This position canvassed by St. Thomas Aquinas, makes him one of the greatest proponents of freewill. He strongly opposed determinism, which he described as removing the basic fibre of morality. On this note, the writer concurs that freewill, to some extent enhances responsibility and morality as argued by Aquinas.

Implications of Freewill

The position canvassed by Christian 2009²³ is quite instructive in order to articulate the implications of freewill. Christian 2009²⁴ outlined three basic implications, thus:

- i. The absence of freedom will mean that there can be no moral, legal or any other kind of responsibilities. This is definitely why people could be convicted for wrong doings.
- ii. He also surmised that "we struggle from day to day and year to year, in desperation or joy, and always with hope, to attain our life goals," Christian, 2009²⁵. The implication of his position is that if we are not free, then all our striving is meaningless.
- iii. He asked a question, "What can life mean if we have no freedom to make choices, choose lifestyles, and set goals". In this regard therefore, "we think we're free, feel like we're free, act like we're free, we treat ourselves and others as though we are free...." This aspect makes the question of freedom to centre basically on, what we are, or, aren't. From the position canvassed by Christian, the writer submits that the feeling of freedom gives man a sense of joy and

fulfilment.

In support of the above implications, Oshitelu²⁶ submitted that:

- a. If there is no freewill, there can be no morality. According to him, morality is concerned with what men ought and ought not to do. If whatever he does is done under compulsion, then it does not make sense to tell him that he ought not to have done what he did and that he ought to do something different. Under such consideration, moral precepts will be meaningless. This means that if he acts under compulsion, it will be unjustifiable to mete out any punishment, for he could not help doing what he had done.
- b. On the other hand everyone is said to be responsible for his or her actions.
- c. God has given us reasoning faculty. The challenge is that we are responsible for our actions, deeds or attitudes.
- d. It is also opined that, responsibility for one's own character is undeniable, indeed inescapable. This is the bedrock of the philosophical thought known as "Existentialism".
- e. Lastly, it could be argued that freewill means that man must be responsible both personally and to the community as a whole.

From the above implications, questions can be raised. One of such basic question is: "Can man be said to be really free?" It can further be argued whether man possess genuine moral freedom, power of real choice, true ability to determine the course of his thoughts and volitions, to decide which motives shall prevail within his mind, to modify and mould his own character? On this premise are man's thoughts and volitions, his character and external actions, all merely the inevitable outcome of his circumstances? Are they all inexorably predetermined in every detail along rigid lines by events of the past, over which he himself has had no sort of control? This is the real import of the freewill problem. Thus, another school of thought emerged with the view that man is not free, but his actions are determined by certain causes. This is the determinism school of thought. Its position is at sharp variance with that of freewill.

The Determinism debate:

Is man truly free? This has formed the major source of contention between some theologians and philosophers. For some, they hold the view that man obviously is free. While others argue that human freedom is an illusion. By implication, they contest that all human actions are determined by certain causes. This means that every action demonstrated by man is an effect of a cause. In

other words, it is determined; it means that human actions can be comprehended in terms of cause and effect, short of freedom. This position is captured under the term, determinism. It is the strong view of determinism that every event has a cause. Consequently, everything in the universe is absolutely dependent on and directed by causal laws. This, according to them, means that all human actions and events are predetermined. This may be why it is argued that determinism is incompatible with freewill.

The term, determinism, according to Omoregbe²⁷ is the view that man is not free, that his actions are determined by certain causes. Kalin²⁸ asserted that determinism is the theory that all human action is caused entirely by preceding events, and not by the exercise of the will. This also agreed with the position of Davis²⁹, who stated that determinism is the “view that every event has a cause and that everything in the universe is absolutely dependent on and governed by causal laws”. He however, drew a sharp contrast between determinism and Fatalism. According to Davis³⁰, fatalism is the view that, “what will be, will be”, since all past, present and future events have already been predetermined by God or another all-power force. This position (fatalism), when extended to religion, may be referred to as predestination. This means that, “whether our souls go to Heaven or Hell is determined before we are born and is independent of our good deeds? Suffice it to say that, the subject of predestination falls outside the scope of our present discourse. It must be mentioned, none-the-less, that the contemporary Christian theology has also found attraction/debate towards/concerning this theological discourse.

The philosophical argument on determinism can be summarized by the definition given by Oshitelu³¹. He stated that, “in its simplest form, determinism merely says, event has a cause. We may not know what the cause is and we may never find out, but it has one”. The dimension taken by Christian³² is also quite appropriate. He defined determinism as, “the assumption or doctrine that every event in the universe has a prior cause and that all effects are at least theoretically predictable if all the causes are known”. However, it is important to note that, though most of the definitions of determinism converge at “cause and effect”, from different perspectives, there are actually different forms of determinism. This actually hinges on the reason(s) given by the proponents of the different forms of determinism.

Different forms of Determinism

The objective set out under this consideration would be to examine various forms or kinds of determinism. The writer would examine some of the different forms of determinism and the philosopher(s) associated with the various schools of thought. Though most of them subscribe to the fact that human actions are determined (cause and effect), they differ in their approaches towards establishing this phenomenon. The following forms of determinism are thus examined:

i. Metaphysical determinism:

It holds the view that the entire universe is an interrelated whole in which everything is connected with another thing, Omoregbe³³. On this basis, the entire universe is seen as been ordered or ruled by rigid laws of nature. This means that we can determine or trace every action by the laws of nature, thus trace such to certain causes. Metaphysical determinism was clearly embraced by the philosopher, Benedict Spinoza. According to him, the belief in human freedom or autonomy is nothing but a result of ignorance, especially of the causes of man's action. In articulating this position, Spinoza opined that: "Men believe themselves to be free, because they are conscious of their own actions and are ignorant of the causes by which they are determined. If we were to acquire adequate ideas of our actions, since these would carry with them knowledge of their causes, we would immediately see this belief as the delusion that it is, Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy³⁴. This is based on his metaphysics. He actually argued that the mind as a finite mode is therefore determined to be and to act by other finite modes. In this instance, according to Spinoza, "to posit a faculty of the will by which it is made autonomous and independent of external causal determinants is to remove it from nature," Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy³⁵. He further debunked the Mind-Body problem by denying that the human being is a union of two substances. According to him, the human mind and the human body are two different expressions. They are actually under thought and extension- of one and the same thing, the person. This he further authenticated by arguing that "because there is no causal interaction between the mind and the body, the so called mind-body problem does not exist, Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy³⁶.

On the above note, Spinoza stressed that man is a part of the universal nature; hence he is subject to the causal laws of nature just like other things in the universe. According to Spinoza, "belief in human freedom is due to ignorance", thus, he declared that, "Since man is part of nature, since he is not a Kingdom within a Kingdom, not an isolated being, but part of a whole, how can he be free or autonomous? How can his actions be free when he is part of nature?" He drove his argument further by submitting that human freedom actually reflects ignorance, Spinoza, in Omoregbe³⁷. He captured this aptly: "men think themselves free in as much as they are conscious of their volitions and desires, and because they are ignorant of the causes by which they are led to wish and desire". In clear terms, he argued that man's mental activities are just as subject to, and determined by, the causal laws of nature as his bodily activities. This means that such mental acts as decisions, choices, reflection, etc. are determined by some natural causes and governed by the laws of nature, Omoregbe³⁸. This formed the strong philosophical basis on which Spinoza rejected the entire argument of free will. He holds the strong opinion that every action of man is contingent on natural causes which are propelled by natural laws. This of cause

has continued to widen the gulf between the proponents of free will and those of determinism.

Another philosopher who supported metaphysical determinism was Gottfried Leibniz. He argued that God, being both perfectly good and also perfectly powerful, cannot fail to will the best world, thus he insisted that this is consistent with the saying that God is able to will otherwise, Leibniz³⁹. In his view, all the “past, present and future actions of every man are the predicates of that man and are contained in the very notion of that man”. This means that a deeper view of every man would indicate all his actions as part of that man, Leibniz, in Omoregbe⁴⁰. Thus, according to Omoregbe⁴¹, “by the very fact that he is this or that particular person, he necessarily performs and will perform certain actions”. Hence, when God looks at any person, he sees in him all the actions he will perform.

The implication of this argument is that man is not free, but his actions are determined by cause and effect. Although the writer believes that there is some level of inter-relationship between some common phenomena in the world, he however takes exception to the argument that all events that one particular man experiences would likely be experienced by others. Where then is the variety that pervades human experiences in the world. Are all the so called rigid laws that govern the universe often applicable to everyone in the same way? The writer is not convinced about this major tenet on which metaphysical determinism is built.

ii. Theological determinism

Wartik⁴² stated that theological determinism is essentially the view that God, in His sovereignty, has determined everything which will generally happen. This, according to him, is generally paired with compatibilism which is the “view that, despite God’s determining of creaturely action, those creatures are still responsible for their behaviour”. He also outlined the level of debate or content of determinism. There is open theism which holds the view that the future is in some sense, open to the extent that even God does not know for sure what will happen. Apart from this, there is also molinism. The “middle knowledge” perspective holds that God knows counterfactual of creaturely freedom-God knows what anyone will do in any situation and so comprehensively knows the future”. However, according to Wartick⁴³, molinism holds the opinion that “God does not determine what will happen. He merely foreknows it.” He further argued that the fourth content or level of determinism can be referred to as “Bare Omniscience”. According to him, those who hold this view basically “fall into a combination of the previous three categories-mixing and matching as they will”. The three categories with respect to the content of determinism as stated by Wartick⁴⁴ include the followings: compatibilism, open theism and molinism.

The aspect of theological determinism has posed a great problem to both philosophers and theologians. Notable among them is St. Augustine. He posited

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that, it is true that God has already known in advance whatever any man is going to do in the future, but God's foreknowledge does not push a man, or compel him, to act. He still acts freely. God's foreknowledge is not the cause of man's actions, Omoregbe⁴⁵. According to him, there is another aspect of theological determinism referred to as pre-destination. This view was taught by some protestant reformers like Martin Luther and John Calvin. According to them, "God has pre-destined some people for salvation. These are the elected or the chosen ones. Because he has chosen them for salvation he gives them grace to live good lives," Omoregbe⁴⁶.

It is worthy of note that the reformers lay great emphasis on the indispensability of God's grace to man. The position of the reformers, Martin Luther and John Calvin draws a clear similarity between theological determinism and pre-destination. The major tenet of predestination, according to Calvin, is that not only does God govern all events, he has also determined who will be saved and who will be damned. This position was also canvassed by Luther. He posited that God had chosen the saved, and the destiny of the damned is the product of their freewill. The position maintained by Calvin concerning predestination had earlier on been stated by Luther and Augustine, according to Sproul⁴⁷.

According to Luther and Calvin, man is weak and corrupt. He is also helpless, due to the corruption brought about by the original sin. Those who are not chosen are denied of the grace to live a good life. The writer takes exception to the teaching on pre-destination as an absolute means of understanding theological determinism. The following questions would justify the position of the writer. First, what have some done to merit being "elected" and others "rejected"? Secondly, can they be blamed for not living the good life? This doctrine appears to put the blame with regards to man's action, purely in God's domain.

iii. Economic determinism:

The position held by this form of determinism is that all "human activities in any society are determined by the economic situation of the society," argued Omoregbe⁴⁸. According to Omoregbe, economic determinism is a Marxist theory. The main tenet of this theory is that all the basic challenges and stages of societies are due to changes in economic situations. The Marxist theory of dialectical materialism argued that matter is dialectical, and it is this that directs the course of "history by directing all human activities". In all activities carried out by man, he is simply following the direction of this dialectic operating in history, this is the position of Gouldner⁴⁹. This could be why Marx holds a strong view with regards to economic determinism. To Marx, it means, "given a certain mode of production, then there will follow a certain superstructure of other relations" Gouldner⁵⁰ further stated. This position converges at the declaration made by Marx when he wrote: "in acquiring new productive forces, men change

their mode of production, and in changing their mode of production, in changing their way of earning their living, they change all their social relations. The hand-mill gives you society with feudal lord, the steam-mill, society with industrial capitalists,” posited Marx⁵¹. Marx then asked rhetorically, “Is this not an economic determinism”?

In the opinion of the writer, Marx analysed the theory of human nature and examined this on the degenerative impact of capitalism on man’s sense of self and his creative potentials. This must be one of his major considerations for indicting capitalism. The position of the writer is collaborated by Zeitlin⁵² and Perez-Diaz⁵³. They surmised that “the dominance of mode of production applies to all spheres of society in a capitalist environment. This form of universal determinism (also known as historical materialism) applies to all class-exploitative societies. It is this interpretation of Marxism that is referred to as economic determinism,” surmised Zeitlin⁵⁴, and Perez-Diaz⁵⁵. What Marx attempted to achieve was to give Hegel’s philosophy a social interpretation. By so doing, he transformed Hegel’s transcendent Absolute Spirit into productive or economic forces. Hence he transformed Hegel’s theory into the dialectic of matter and economic forces.

In Hegel’s transcendent Absolute Spirit, he posited that self-consciousness should be seen as a social phenomenon and not as an achievement by an individual neither should it be based on natural or genetic evolution, this is maintained by Moran⁵⁶. This made Marx to present a theory whereby economic factors determine non-economic spheres of life, for example, politics, religion and ideology, argued Stillman⁵⁷. It is safe to conclude that Hegel and Marx held a mechanistic view of how the human mind works. They argued that the:

brain receives impression from the outside world; this automatically moves the individual to take action. They question, ‘are men free to choose this or that form or form of society.’ What we call free will is nothing other than an awareness of the impelling forces which move an individual to action; he is not free to change the course his very nature dictates. This is canvassed by Fleischer⁵⁸.

It can be rightly argued that both Marx and Hegel viewed the law of Economic determinism as the creative force in the progress made by man. This position was strongly opposed by Jean-Paul Sartre, who argued that, “there is no blind force in history directing human activities”. This according to him is due to the fact that even in the face of any economic situation, man freely decides what to do and how to react to the situation. On the strength of this position, Sartre⁵⁹ argued that human beings have the choice to do whatsoever they want, as they are definitely still responsible for their actions and consequences. This position, in the opinion of the writer, portrays Sartre as an advocate of soft determinism, which agreed clearly with his idea of freedom. This is in direct conflict with hard determinism, which does not believe that man has absolute control over his

actions posited Sartre and Priest⁶⁰.

iv. Ethical determinism

Ethics, simply put, is concerned with voluntary actions for which man must be accountable or held responsible. Such actions should be free. That is, man may choose to perform it or may choose not to perform it. The position of ethical determinism is that man's action is determined by what he sees as good. It means that when any man sees something as good and also knows it to be good, he feels internally compelled to do it. Some of the advocates of this form of determinism are Aquinas, Socrates and Plato. Socrates maintained that when people become aware of good, they become incapable of choosing to think or act in a bad way, *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*⁶¹. Plato agreed with Socrates, as he argued that knowing good makes it impossible to choose bad. He drew an illustration to buttress his argument. He argued, that "If a noble soldier thought that he could save a comrade by jumping on a grenade, he could do so. If he did not think he could save any one, or bring about any good greater than his own life by jumping on the grenade, he would be incapable of jumping on it". Therefore, according to Plato, this suggests that the choice people make is often determined by the knowledge of good and evil, *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*⁶². They posited that the will is made for the good and is not free to reject the good when confronted with it. In other words, they contended that if anyone rejects a good thing, this is due to the fact he has observed an evil aspect in it, which will then lead him to rejecting it.

The advocates of ethical determinism pushed their position further by declaring that man is not free to choose what he knows to be evil because it is evil. He makes his choice on the basis of the fact that he sees some aspect of it as good. On this note, Socrates and Plato argued that it is ignorance that makes man to commit evil acts. This form of ignorance is the lack of the right knowledge that evil, when perpetrated, is harmful to the doer. In their argument, they posited that no one can knowingly do evil acts, since he knows the harmful effect to him or her. However, those who do evil are only attracted by the "good aspect" which they see in what they are doing, and what they will likely gain from it. They are ignorant of the harm they are doing to themselves.

There are some glaring challenges with the position of Socrates and Plato in respect of Ethical determinism. In this researcher's opinion, their argument appears to be addressing the ideal. It is an assumption, which more often than not may be wrong. To believe that man would often consider the decision he makes through the application of stringent thoughts, can rightly pass for a mere assumption. It should be appreciated that there are some decisions or choices made on the spur of the moment, without any genuine recourse to mental scrutiny. For example, when man is confronted with great danger, he would likely, impulsively, respond without any second thought. The outcome of his

response could be positive or negative. He may not have given any due consideration to the consequences or aftermath of his decisions.

The writer agrees with the position of Aristotle with respect to ethical determinism. Aristotle deferred strongly from the opinion shared by Socrates and Plato. In Aristotle's opinion, people's minds are influenced largely by reason and desire/appetites, *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*⁶³. He posited that one can rationally determine an action to be bad. However, such an individual may still desire to perform that action. It must be noted that the person concerned has the ability to choose between these conflicting influences. It means that he is free to choose between good and bad behaviour. It is the opinion of this writer that the position of Aristotle places the right moral burden on the individual with regards to choices and decisions. For example, a drug addict is aware that his excessive addiction is bad for him. Nevertheless he still chooses to act that way. This is a clear act, motivated by his desire to continue on drugs. On the strength of this, the author concludes that man is responsible for most of his actions; therefore he is ethically obligated to accept responsibility.

v. Physical determinism

The theory of physical determinism argues that, man cannot be said to be free since he is part of the physical nature, and all his actions are determined by the physical laws of nature. The materialists have found this theory plausible. They opined that there is no spiritual element in man. Democritus found this position quite appealing. No wonder he opined that, everything in nature including man is composed of atoms, argued Democritus, in Omoregbe⁶⁴. He extended this to the human soul which he also believed is made up of atoms. In this wise, every movement in the entire world, is said to be the result of the movement of atoms, and regulated by the laws of nature.

The perception of physical determinism was adopted by Epicurus. Though he adopted this mechanistic world-view, he however, modified it so as to adequately account for man's moral obligation. Those who share this view-the Epicureans, do not want to deny man's freedom; hence they decided to modify the atomic world-view. According to them, atoms should be seen to be swerving and not actually falling straight. On the strength of this, they argued that the movement of the atoms is not completely predictable because in the course of their movement, instead of moving straight, they sometimes "swerve." This swerving of the atoms gives rise to unpredictability and therefore makes room for freedom opined Omoregbe⁶⁵.

Thomas Hobbes (1657), a philosopher, was greatly influenced by the development of physics in his days. He concluded that man is completely material and his actions are fully determined by the effects of matter in motion. In this wise, all human action for example appetites, are due to natural forces operating in man. He also argued that "God is the ultimate cause of every action, but as long as a person is not physically forced to do an act, the act is free."

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Hobbes⁶⁶ couched this in terms of liberty versus necessity, rather than free versus externally determined will. Following the view of Hobbes, is the French philosopher, La Mettrie who saw man as a machine. He saw man as the product of matter just like other things in the universe. In his position, he reduced the soul of man to matter, arguing that the only difference between man and animal is the size and structure of his brain, Mettrie, in Omoregbe⁶⁷.

Another main advocate of physical determinism was Baron Paul Von Holbach, He was a materialist who carried the aspect of determinism very far. His book, "The system of Nature", captured his views lucidly. He argued that the only reality that exists is matter in motion. Man is purely matter, a product of matter and part of nature". He further opined that, as "part of nature, he is completely controlled by the laws of nature, like anything else". By implication, his view is that man's thoughts, decisions and actions are caused by natural forces external to him. Baron opposed the idea of freewill vehemently. He argued that, man as part of the universe and nature, cannot be free. He actually does not have control over his ideas, thinking process and decision making. These processes are determined by forces external to man, the way nature has arranged these actions in the universe with no input from man, Holbach⁶⁸ submitted. He argued that "free will is an illusion , thus the actions of man are not free, but are determined by the way the exterior state of the world affects our beliefs and values, thus have been shaped by other external factors throughout our life," Holbach. He gave an example of a man who is thirsty to illustrate his argument on determinism. According to Holbach, the thirsty man got to the source of water, which was a fountain, he discovered that the water was poisonous. He decides whether to satisfy the thirst or to stay alive. The decision he makes, according to Holbach, is as a result of the character of the person. This character was formed by uncontrollable forces outside the person. On the strength of this contention, Holbach⁶⁹ argued that no man should be held morally responsible for his actions.

The writer wants to articulate his contrary view by asking the following questions: "can one actually subscribe to the fact that there is no spiritual element in man, as physical determinists have averred? Can man truly be seen from purely a materialistic point of view, including his actions? This is the bone of contention between the physical determinists and the freewill proponents. In the opinion of this researcher, man cannot rightly be observed only and purely from materialistic point of view. It is common knowledge that the entire anatomy and physiology of man, clearly reveals that he is animate and not in any way inanimate. This clearly shows that man is quite different from mere physical materialistic considerations, as the proponents of physical determinism would want to elucidate.

vi. Psychological determinism

The field of psychology deals with the study of human behaviour. Therefore according to psychological determinism all human behaviour, thoughts, and feelings are the consequences of psychological variables. They include heredity and environment posited Freud⁷⁰. He further argued that human beings are not free since their actions are determined by psychological factors as instincts. It is commonly acknowledged that Freud is the founder and exponent of psychoanalysis, which is the first major school of psychology, opined Gomez⁷¹. According to Gomez, their major view is that “man has instincts, hereditary unconscious urges. They are actually “a deep inaccessible repository of urges or drives that are the major determinants of behaviour, of which all individuals are unaware, as analysed by Freud, in Gomez⁷². It was on this premise that, Daniels⁷³ concluded that Freud was a strong proponent of determinism. He took exception to the fact that any act just happened or was due to free will. This means that the position of Kramer⁷⁴ is based on the causality principle which believes that nothing takes place by chance or accidentally. This clearly positioned Freud as a psychological determinist.

On their part, David Hume and Thomas Hobbes believe that human actions are determined by motives. In this instance, Hume described the link between causality and man’s capability to rationally make a decision. Hume⁷⁵ therefore argued that man would assess a particular situation based on certain predetermined events, and from that, forms a choice or an opinion. Hobbes⁷⁶ opined that God is the ultimate cause of every action, but as long as a person is not forced to do an act, the act is free. On the other hand, Skinner⁷⁷ holds that man’s actions are influenced by his environment. The position held by Skinner, has led him to conclude that the causes of all man’s actions lie in the environment. According to him, it is only because we do not appreciate the depth of our environmental causes of our behaviour and that of others that we are tricked into believing in our ability to choose. On this argument, Skinner believed that a person who commits crime actually has no choice since he is propelled by environmental circumstances and personal history. These have made the committing of that crime by the person natural and inevitable, argued McLeod⁷⁸.

The writer finds it difficult to accept the position of Skinner and most naturalists with regard to their argument on psychological determinism. It is not arguable that, to some extent, man is a product of his environment; this however should not indulge man into believing that every action and act should be excused by environmental re-enforcers. It is the opinion of the writer that if Skinner’s position is allowed to take sway in our consideration of determinism, man would often have justification for his actions, even when they are inimical to both man and his neighbour. It would also be difficult to hold man responsible and accountable for all his misdeeds. Neither will it be worthwhile to reward good deeds and punish evil deeds. Omoregbe⁷⁹ also took exception to the positions of Hume and Hobbes. He postulated that what determines man’s action

is his freedom of choice. This according to him indicates that when an action is free this does not mean that it has no cause. He further gave the illustration of a man who is thirsty. The action of taking water to quench the thirst has a cause. The cause is the thirst that he is experiencing. He is also free not to take water. The decision to drink water is a free one and the action of taking the water is also a free action, in spite of the fact that it has a cause Omoregbe⁸⁰ opined. The writer agrees with the position of Omoregbe. There is a clear distinction between cause and the freedom to make a choice as articulated by Omoregbe. It is this distinction that has not been clearly appreciated by Hume and Hobbes in advancing their argument on psychological determinism.

In summary, Skinner saw human actions as determined from outside (that is the environment) while, Freud saw human actions as determined from “inside” (within). Skinner argued that, freedom is not a fact of human experience. All of our responses – the impulse that lie behind so-called free choices are the result of unique past contingencies of conditioning and reinforcement that have shaped us into what we are, is articulated by Christian⁸¹. He further argued that “what we call freedom is merely the successful avoidance on the part of any organism of some aversive feature in its environment. All organisms are manipulated and controlled, therefore, by the dynamic feature of their environments”. Hence Skinner concluded that, “freedom is a myth, and a dangerous myth.” He actually saw freedom as an “illusion”. Christian⁸² supported Skinner’s position as he submitted that what Skinner actually meant was that “freedom is a pleasant emotion, which is itself a conditioned (caused) response”.

The writer takes exception to the support given by Christian with regards to Skinner’s position. The argument of Skinner goes far beyond the emotional dynamics of freedom. What Skinner actually attempted to articulate was the fact that man’s actions are the direct product of his environment; hence man should not and cannot be blamed for any action since these actions are propelled by environmental vagaries beyond man’s control. If accepted, this position would breed anarchy and irresponsibility as people would no longer be held accountable for their misdeeds.

vii. Fatalism

The term fatalism according to Houdman⁸³ is the belief that, “what will be will be”, since all past, present and future events have already been pre-determined by God or another all-powerful force. In religion, this view is commonly referred to as predestination. Pre-destination holds that whether our souls go to Heaven or Hell is determined before we are born and is independent of our good deeds. It is actually not dependent on our choices, Houdman⁸⁴ averred. In this regards, according to fatalists, man’s actions are not merely determined but are fated. This means that if our actions are already determined, it is in a way already settled how we will decide to act. Furthermore, if our actions

are already fated, it follows that what we will do is already settled regardless of how we will decide, Levy⁸⁵ argued. Concurring with this, Omoregbe⁸⁶ declared that fatalism is the belief that “whatever will happen will happen, irrespective of whatever a man may think or do”. Thus, it is believed that “whatever happens was fated to happen and there is nothing any man can do to prevent it from happening”. He classified fatalism into two, the first one is, universal fatalism”. This means that everything that happens has been fated to happen and there is nothing man can do about it. “What will be will be.” The other one is “particular fatalism”. This states that, “some events (not all), have been fated to happen and no man can do anything about it or prevent it from happening”.

It is argued by Balogun⁸⁷ that the metaphysical interpretation given by some African Philosophers with regard to human destiny (*ori*) in the Yoruba thought are in consonance with fatalism, hard determinism and pre-destination. However, Balogun sees fatalism from the perspective of soft- determinism. He argued that this framework will provide the right philosophical justification for punishment and moral responsibility which are part of the hallmarks of Yoruba philosophical belief. On his part, Gbadegeshin, in Balogun⁸⁸ is of the opinion that the aspect of destiny and fatalism should not be considered in isolation. In his examination of the idea of destiny and determinism in the Yoruba culture, he argued that one should live out his destiny. In other words, he maintained that “if one has a destiny, he or she should live it out in order to form a personal identity through experience.” His position presupposes that one has a clear role to play irrespective of the argument advanced with regard to destiny or fatalism. The writer agrees with the contention that man cannot hide under the alibi of fatalism or destiny to perpetrate all forms of nefarious activities. Neither can man be excused from justifiable responsibility by claiming the seeming dynamics of fatalism, destiny or pre-destination.

It is important to address some pertinent questions with regard to the position canvassed by the proponents of fatalism. The writer believes that the right answers to these questions would give sufficient support to the position canvassed by the fatalists. On the contrary, if these questions are not adequately addressed, the writer is of the opinion that the position maintained by the fatalists is then fraught with controversies, disagreement and unjustifiable propositions. The following are some of such questions: First, who has fated that a hired assassin will take the life of another man? Who has fated that an armed robber would attack a harmless innocent man? From the view of the writer, it may be difficult for fatalism to adequately address these questions. This is hinged on the premise that these actions carry very weighty moral burdens, which in most cases are at variance with the norms of most societies. It is difficult for anyone, in most cases, to applaud those who are involved in what can commonly be referred to as dastardly acts. The writer, on the strength of this argument finds the position of fatalism quite contestable in most cases.

viii. Historical determinism

This theory believes that historical events are determined. That is, history is determined. This means that present and future events actually unfold according to pre-determined sequences, Hegel⁸⁹ argued. One of the major advocates of historical determinism is Hegel. He believed that historical events are inevitable since they are “moments in the dialectical process of the Absolute’s self-development. Such events are part of the dialectical process of the Absolute. This position was interpreted by Moran⁹⁰. According to Moran⁹¹, a common interpretation of Hegel’s dialectic is that “neither a slave nor a master can be considered as fully conscious. A person who has already achieved self-consciousness could be enslaved, so self-consciousness must be considered not as an individual achievement of natural and genetic evolution, but as a social phenomenon”. It is opined that Hegel captured his position succinctly by declaring that “world history exhibits nothing other than the plan of providence.” Thus, he argued that “history follows a specific path, one that is predetermined by the purposeful movement of the spirit through time; hence the course of history is a fixed immutable fact.” This is captured by Burrell⁹². In other words, Hegel argued that individuals such as Adolf Hitler, Alexander the Great and other notable historical figures were instruments in the hands of the Absolute to further the process of its self-development. By so doing, Burrell⁹³ argued, is that the main action of the Absolute is that he uses people to make history and thereafter throws them away.

It is opined in philosophical parlance that Karl Max adopted Hegel’s view. No doubt, Hegel is well known for his teleological position in respect of history. This position was later taken over by Karl Marx. He is said to have inverted this into a materialistic theory of historical development, culminating in communism, surmised the Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy⁹⁴. In the opinion of Marx, it is not the Absolute that determines history, but economic forces. It is productive and economic forces that dictate the direction of history. The writer wonders if the position of Marx has not been overtaken by history. It is common knowledge that the argument of communism has since become obsolete. The writer wonders if the “Absolute” could not be said to be the one dictating history. Whatever or whoever Marx sees as the Absolute, it is clear, in his view, albeit, covertly, that he acknowledged the Absolute as a higher force.

ix. Hard determinism

This is one of the distinct positions of determinism. The theory commonly posited that all human actions are causally determined. This means that we never act freely therefore cannot be held responsible for our actions. Some examples or forms of hard determinism are psychological determinism, theological determinism, physical determinism, etc. These forms of determinism have been on considered. The basic position of hard determinism is that it completely denies human freedom, thus does not make room for moral

responsibility. Materialists, who see man as machine, and do not also believe in any clear difference between man and animal, are said to be “Hard determinists”. It submitted by Omoregbe⁹⁵ that some philosophers who belong to this school of thought include, Baron Paul Von Holbach and LaMetrie.

x. **Soft determinism**

The position of soft determinism is that it does not deny moral responsibility completely. This means that they do not deny man’s freedom in totality. Examples of soft determinists are, David Hume, J.S. Mill, Thomas Hobbes, etc. The positions of some of them have been considered earlier on. They all believe in moral responsibility, though deny man’s freedom, argued Omoregbe⁹⁶.

xi. **Indeterminism (Libertarianism)**

This is regarded as an extreme position with respect to freewill and determinism. The view held by the proponents of indeterminism is that human behaviour is totally uncaused. The implication of this, according to Geisler⁹⁷ is that there are “no antecedents or simultaneous causes of man’s actions. Hence all man’s acts are uncaused; hence any given human act could have been otherwise”. He further surmised that some indeterminists extend their position beyond human acts to the entire universe.

On his part, Oshitelu⁹⁸ saw indeterminism as the logical contradiction of determinism. The theory holds that some events are not determined. Oshitelu argued that several indeterminists draw their support from Heisenberg’s principle. This principle states that it is impossible to predict where subatomic particle is, and how fast it is moving at any given moment. Thus it is argued that since subatomic events are inherently unpredictable, how much more so are complex human acts. On his part, Omoregbe⁹⁹ saw indeterminism as an exaggeration of human freedom. Hence he posited that, to say that an action is free does not mean that it has no cause. The position held by the indeterminist proves that they have exaggerated the role of human freedom.

Finally, indeterminism is said to be unacceptable to a Christian. As Geisler¹⁰⁰ continued to argue, “For if indeterminism is true, then either the existence of God or any causal connection between God and the universe would have to be denied. The Christian position, he further stated is that “God created the world and he providentially sustains it and intervenes in its affairs”. He supported his position with the following scriptures: Matthew 6:25-32, Colossians 1:15-16. The writer agreed with the position of Geisler. This is based on the fact that indeterminism holds the absolute view that there are events that do not have any cause.

The implication of the position of indeterminism, in the opinion of the writer is that if this position is allowed to hold sway, the role of the “Causal agent” would be obviously eliminated. The Christian position is that God is the

ultimate cause of all events as he has both sovereign role and power. This is the bane of indeterminism. Most proponents of freewill, according to Houdmann¹⁰¹, subscribe to the fact that acts of choice are capable of not being determined by any physiological or psychological cause. The consequence is that they recognize the dynamics of causal factors, though they do not accept this, yet do not out rightly rule out the presence of the causal agent in most philosophical experiences.

xii. Theistic determinism

It holds the view that all events in the universe, including man's behaviour and actions are determined (caused) by God. One of the strongest advocates of theistic determinism is puritan theologian, Jonathan Edwards. He contended that the "concept of free will or self-determinism contradicted the sovereignty of God". According to him, if "God is truly in control of all things, then no one could act contrary to his will, which is what self-determinism must hold. For God to be sovereign, he must cause every event, be it human or otherwise. Edward¹⁰² argued that God is the ultimate source and sustainer of everything else. The consequence is that God is sufficient and wholly determines all that happens. This position agrees with pre-destination. It is difficult to draw a sharp dichotomy between theistic determinism and pre-destination. This is based on the fact that they subscribe to the sovereign act and nature of God, especially in causing and governing events. The writer is of the opinion that this is the basic strength of theistic determinism. Once this aspect is jettisoned, the entire position is no longer applicable.

xiv. Self-determinism

This holds the view that a person's acts are caused by himself. Self-determinism believes that factors like heredity and environment have a great influence on man's behaviour. They, however deny the fact that such factors are the major determinants or the determining causes of people's behaviour. They out rightly reject the notion that events are uncaused or that events cause themselves. It is therefore held by them that "human actions can be caused by human beings," Geisler¹⁰³ submitted. One major proponent of self-determinism is Thomas Aquinas. He argued that it is not the will of a person that makes a decision, but it is the person who acts by means of his will. In a clear attempt to orchestrate this position, Aquinas surmised that man originates his own action. This means that Man should be able to choose his actions freely without inhibitions. In articulating this argument, Aquinas¹⁰⁴ puts it succinctly by declaring that "... human beings originate their actions. Action comes from the agent causing the action in pursuit of a goal, so the first source of an activity's exercise is a goal. This led Aquinas to opine that, since the person is the first cause of his acts, it is meaningless to ask what the cause of the first cause is. Just as no outside force caused God to create the world, so no outside force caused

people to choose certain actions. For man is created in the image of God, this includes the possession of freewill.

The writer finds it difficult to accept that man has the right in all situations to choose his actions, as posited by the proponents of self-determinism. There are situations, for example, when man is constrained by external factors and forces to act otherwise. For example, if a man is held in detention on the basis of false charges, and he knows that he is not responsible for what he was accused of. It is not possible, on the basis of his conviction with regards to his innocence, to free himself. He is actually in that position not on the basis of choice, but constraint, which is beyond his control.

The challenge with determinism

Some philosophers and theologians have argued on the grounds of the lament by Apostle Paul in the book of Romans chapter seven. Here, he exclaimed that he does those things he ought not to do. "O wretched man that I am", was his concluding lament. It is on this basis, according to Christian¹⁰⁵, that some determinists further argue that there are "capricious causal forces inside us, directing us to do countless acts against our wills. In the words of Oshitelu¹⁰⁶, he opined that the challenge with determinism is actually the dilemma of determinism. According to Oshitelu, if determinism is true, we can never do other than we do; hence we are never responsible for what we do. This is actually the position of determinism. According to Christian¹⁰⁷ it is a theory that holds that "every event in the universe has a prior cause and that all effects are at least theoretically predictable if all the causes are known."

Maher¹⁰⁸ opined that there are two clear lines of argument on which the opponents of determinism hang their objection. First, the one "based on the consciousness of freedom in the act of deliberate choice", and secondly, the one based on the incompatibility of determinism with our fundamental moral convictions. In pointing out the short coming of determinism, Maher further argued that, "the notions of responsibility, moral obligation, merit and the like, as ordinarily understood, would be illusory if determinism were true. The theory is in fact fatal to ethics, as well as to the notion of sin and fundamental Christian belief that we can merit both reward and punishment".

The writer outlines some of the seeming pitfalls of determinism. thus:

- a) The desire on the part of the proponents of determinism that others who share contrary views from them should actually accept their position is a reflection of accepting the freedom to change one's allegiance or position. This in itself is an open acknowledgement that people should have the freedom of choice. This is nothing but freewill.
- b) If determinism accepts that God determines all actions, it is then impossible to hold man morally responsible for his actions. This, of course would remove the role of ethics and other forms of moral

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- obligations from the affairs of man.
- c) The aspect of blame and praise will find no relevance if actions were determined. It means that no one would be praised for doing well; neither would anyone be blamed for doing wrong.
 - d) It should also be noted that determinism will not give room for rational thought. This means that all we do would be determined by non-rational forces.
 - e) The aspect of determinism presupposes that everything is determined beyond the control of man. The consequence is that this would lead clearly to fatalism.
 - f) Finally, determinism gives the impression that man often does what he desires. If this is accepted as the norm, it follows that God gives the desire before one performs any act, whether wrong or right. The implication is that a hired assassin or an armed robber would have been given the desire by God to carry out their nefarious activities.

The above challenges of determinism and the previously outlined challenges of freewill, make it imperative to advocate a consonance between them. This is considered relevant on the basis of some glaring benefits from their different positions, in spite of the seeming pitfalls. The position canvassed by the proponents of freewill and determinism appear to have some logical support and philosophical relevance as each of them attempts to articulate its position. Is it possible to achieve a consonance between the theories of freewill and determinism? This is the main motif of this paper.

Is there any possibility for a consonance between Freewill and Determinism?

The presupposition canvassed by this subhead is whether the gap between freewill and determinism can be bridged by advocating a modest philosophical compromise. It must be appreciated that the strong philosophical divide by both proponents of freewill and determinism has made the process of compatibility an illusion. They have both pushed their positions to great extremes. The philosopher, Walter Starce maintained a startling position with regard to the theories of freewill and determinism. He contended that the problem is semantic. This, according to him, is elucidated by Christian¹⁰⁹, as meaning that the problem of freewill and determinism has to do with the problem of language. He supported his position with an illustration of the response of the advocates of determinism to the situation of their children telling lies. According to him, they will not hesitate in blaming the children and punishing them for lying. He thus posited that if they were fully convinced that man is not really free, they would not do that, since the children were under an unavoidable cause to act in that way.

On the above note, Walter Starce¹¹⁰ posited that the freewill and determinism debate arose from the wrong assumption that freewill and determinism are both incompatible. He concluded that a free action is one that is performed voluntarily, that is, as a result of man's free action and not under any duress. Even though that action is free or performed voluntarily, it has a cause. Starce therefore argued strongly that "freewill is a condition for moral responsibility and determinism being compatible with moral responsibility" In this wise, "in order to justify praise or punish people, they must be responsible for their actions. In everyday life, people are held responsible for their actions even if their actions could have been accurately predicted. Therefore, determinism can exist in a world of moral responsibility, Starce¹¹¹, argued. From the position of Starce, the writer is of the opinion that moral responsibility is compatible with determinism. The presupposition, therefore, is that determinism is true, since some events in the world are caused, and freewill also exists. For example, in the opinion of the writer, the natural argument could be that no one determined the family, tribe or country he or she should be born into. Neither did any one determine his sex. However, it is possible for us, in spite of this, to contribute, willingly to what we want to make out of life, our seeming advantages or disadvantages notwithstanding.

Omoregbe¹¹² disagreed with Walter Starce. According to him, Starce appeared to equate "to be caused" with "to be determined". He appeared to be speaking of both as if they are interchangeable. He ought to have differentiated between "causality" and "determinism". He however posited that "a free action is an action which is caused but which is not determined by that cause. In other words, an action that is determined by its cause cannot be said to be a free action. The sharp dichotomy is that the advocates of freewill do not accept that all actions are determined by their causes. They however agree that all actions are caused, just like the proponents of determinism. On this premise, Omoregbe¹¹³ submitted that, "to say an action is determined by its cause means that once the cause is present, the action necessarily follows and the doer would be unable to prevent or avoid it". This position is the strong argument pressed forward by the advocates of determinism, but rejected by the advocates of freewill. He drew an illustration to explain the position. For example, if one is thirsty, he may decide to take or not to take water. The action of taking water to quench the thirst is caused by the thirst. The act of drinking water is not a free action. This is due to the fact that one may not necessarily drink water to quench thirst. You may be thirsty, but refuse to drink water. In this instance, freewill intervenes between thirst and drinking water. This, in his opinion, means that, if I decide to drink water when I am thirsty it is a free action, the result of free decision, even though it has a cause (thirst). It is not determined by its cause, but brought about by my free decision, and that is why I am responsible for it, he argued. This indicates that human actions are free actions. This is the major reason people are held responsible or accountable for their actions. This calls for punishment, reward,

praise etc.

The writer is of the opinion that Omoregbe carried his position too far with regards to the above illustration. The argument proposed by Starce, is that the will is under the control of man or anyone who is to take the decision at that time. If the person concerned is open to options, whereby he has the right to consider the most appropriate, and also has the right to act, then he is free to make his choice. This is what, in the opinion of this researcher, Starce intends to articulate. The example given by Omoregbe, acknowledges that the individual can decide to take water to quench the thirst or decide to act on the contrary. This is a clear acceptance of the fact that the one concerned is left with robust alternatives from which he could make his free decision. This must be why Starce¹¹⁴ posited that “our uncoerced, our unforced choices are made freely, since we are in control of the most immediate stages of long causal chain.” Starce¹¹⁵ claimed that “such a notion of freewill, compatible with determinism, is necessary if we are to understand how anyone can be morally responsible for his or her actions.

The position canvassed by Sherman¹¹⁶ clearly supported the fact that an enduring consonance can be built between freewill and determinism. He argued that “rigid determinism states that everything is predetermined, people are puppets, and the political result is fatalism. Free teleological causation or freewill, which says that humans are at liberty to do whatever they will, and the political result is voluntarism. He then declared that both views on freewill and determinism are inaccurate and one sided. Therefore he posited that it is possible to combine the best of both positions. The writer agrees with Sherman that the right compromise between freewill and determinism would lead to the possibility of assessing human behaviour based on human choice.

There appears to be a continuous wide gap between freewill and determinism. Both advocates appear to hold tenaciously to their position. It is the view of the writer that, they should each see the areas of agreement between both positions and forge a middle line of agreement. It is obvious, from the writer’s point of view, that none of the philosophical schools of thought can claim absolute monopoly of acceptance. Each of them has continued to orchestrate their distinctness rather than see the possibility of a compromise, which would ultimately culminate in a robust philosophical consonance. This, in the opinion of the writer would address the seeming paradox between freewill and determinism.

Conclusion

The freewill and determinism debate has posed a tremendous challenge to theology and philosophy. In spite of the sharp divide and dichotomy, both concepts have added great challenge to the various aspects of philosophical discourse, both existentialism and materialism. The paper advocated the need to build an enduring consonance. The position of the paper is premised on the fact that both philosophical positions share obvious strengths and weaknesses as

highlighted. This notwithstanding, the paper advocated that the different strengths inherent in both schools of thought could be explored for the desired philosophical advocacy. This can be achieved through obvious appreciation of the philosophical value in the differing positions canvassed by each of them. As this culminates in the desired compromise and consonance, the existing divide would be bridged. The questions that would then follow would not be whether man is truly free? Or if his actions are caused? But how to make man appreciate the essence of the moral burden on him to accept responsibility for his actions.

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