

Libertarianism

Campbell, C. A. *In Defense of Freewill*

Three Views on Freewill

View / Thesis	Hard-Determinism	Libertarianism	Compatibilism
Freewill	N	Y	Y
Determinism	Y	N	Y

- Incompatibilism: freedom and determinism are not compatible
 - Hard-Determinism: no action is free
 - Libertarianism: some actions are free, but not caused
- Compatibilism: freedom and determinism are compatible

Hard-Determinism Argument

- Argument (Blatchford)

1. A free action =df an action that is contrary to heredity and environment
2. All action is caused by **deterministic** laws of heredity (genetics), environment only
3. So, no action is contrary to heredity and environment from 2
4. So, no action is free; freewill is an illusion from 1, 3

Does an Indeterminism allow for Freedom?

- Reject premise 2?
 - One reason is that some laws are indeterministic i.e. probabilistic
 - Psychological laws may be indeterministic
 - Laws of Quantum mechanism are indeterministic
 - Probabilistic laws tell us what will probably happen, not certainty; so we cannot determine what will happen next if we know the laws
- Blatchford assumes that actions are governed by deterministic laws of heredity and environment. What if psychology was indeterministic? Would that make room for freedom?
- It still seems that we would not be morally responsible for any of our actions. Suppose I am deciding whether to commit a crime, and it is just chance (a random event) that results in me committing the crime. Am I morally responsible for that action? No: I had no control over the event.

Campbell's Response

- Campbell: reject 2, but for a different reason.
- The fact that we deliberate and trace back a person's history (including environmental factors) when evaluating their moral character suggests that we are trying to separate external influences and the person's own self determination; some of our actions will be influenced by heredity and environment, others will be self-determined *only*
- Our actions are caused by genetics, environment ***and choices***

Campbell's Libertarianism

- an act is a 'free' act in the sense required for moral responsibility if
 - (a) the agent is the sole cause of the act (self-caused, self-determined) and
 - (b) the agent could exert his causality in alternative ways

- Action not free: agent is not the sole cause (violate condition a)
 - Physical Constrain (e.g. a guard physically prevents you from leaving the prison)
 - Psychological Threat (e.g. someone with a gun and demands your wallet)

- Action not free: agent has no alternatives (violate condition b)
 - Psychological Compulsion (e.g. obsessive compulsive disorder, addictions)

Reason 1: Experience of Choices

- Evidence of one's own internal experience of making significant decisions (such as moral decisions) is the experience of directly bringing about the act itself. We feel this pull and the act of picking one of the alternatives.
- “Let us ask, why do human beings so obstinately persist in believing that there is ... self-originated activity ... they do so ... because they feel certain of the existence of such activity from their immediate practical experience of themselves.” (285)

Reason 2: Onus of Proof

- **Science has not proven determinism of all actions:** Science has not confirmed the hypothesis that all of our actions are caused by heredity and environment **only**.
- Our experience of choice is strong evidence in favor of the existence of choice
- Until science proves that only heredity and environment determine actions and never choices, we are justified in believing that we have choices
- Onus of proof is rests on the person who rejects the self as self-determined
 - “Until cogent evidence to the contrary is adduced we are entitled to put our trust in a belief which is so deeply embedded in our experience as practical beings as to be ... ineradicable”

Objection 1: Predictability of Action

- Objection: How is it that we can, after becoming acquainted with someone's personality and character, consistently predict their behaviour?
- Reply:
 - prediction is compatible with freedom since prediction only shows that an act is not capricious or wholly out of character.
 - Free acts only cover a small range of one's acts. The rest may be caused.

Objection 2:

- Suppose we grant Campbell that the self causes actions.
- How did the event 'I self-caused X to happen rather than Y'
- Explanation 1: I believed in X and desired to do X that I chose to do X.
 - But, this explanation is deterministic – the beliefs and desire determine what the choice is – and so still it looks like it wasn't up to us
- Explanation 2: nothing caused 'choosing to do x'
 - If nothing caused this event, then it seems to be random. My choosing to do X just 'popped' into existences. But, then we are not in control of the choices we make, and we surely aren't responsible for the choice.

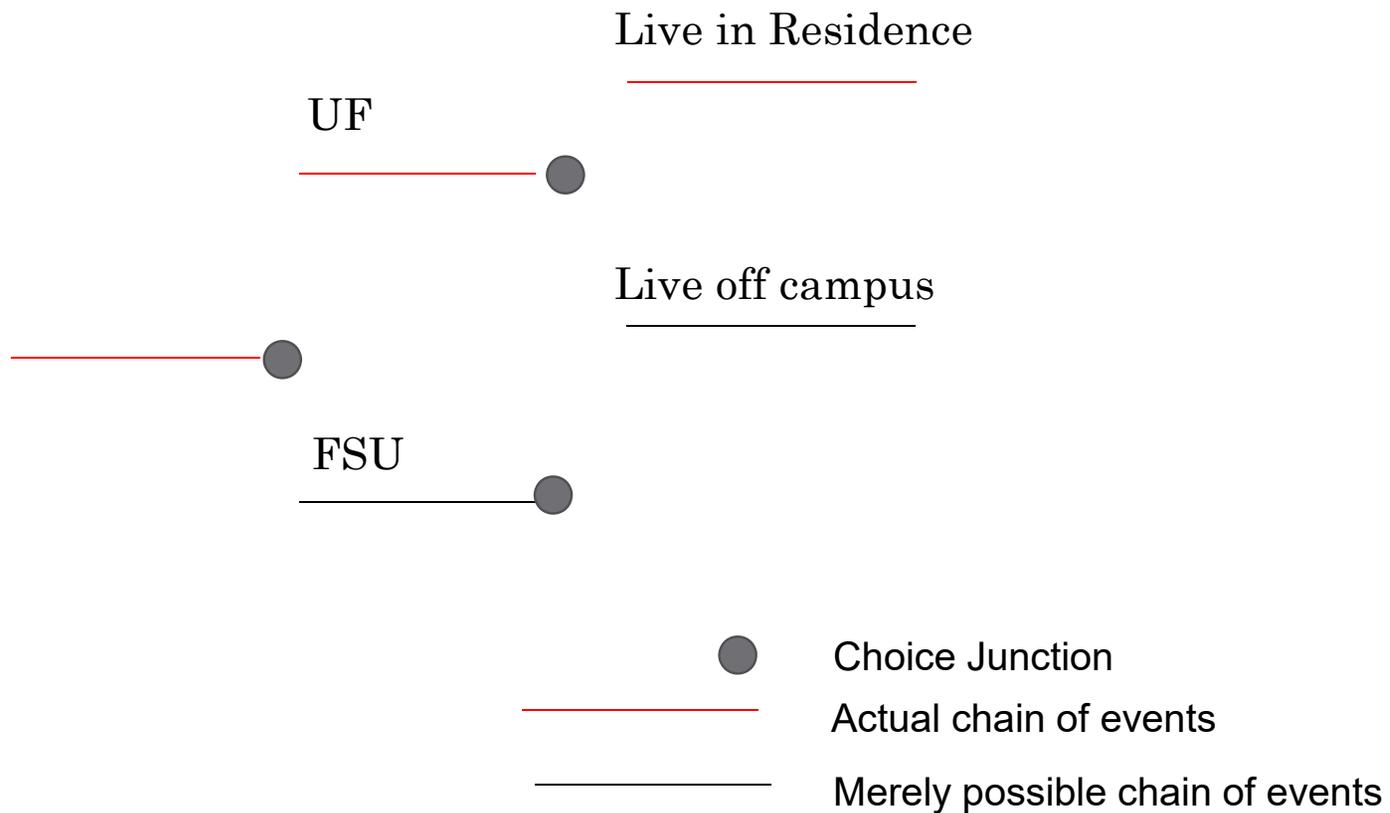
Compatibilism

- Compatibilism attempts to combine both determinism and freewill
- How? It redefines 'free' in such a way that it does not require 'control' or 'ability to do otherwise', but still retain what we think are free actions
- ...

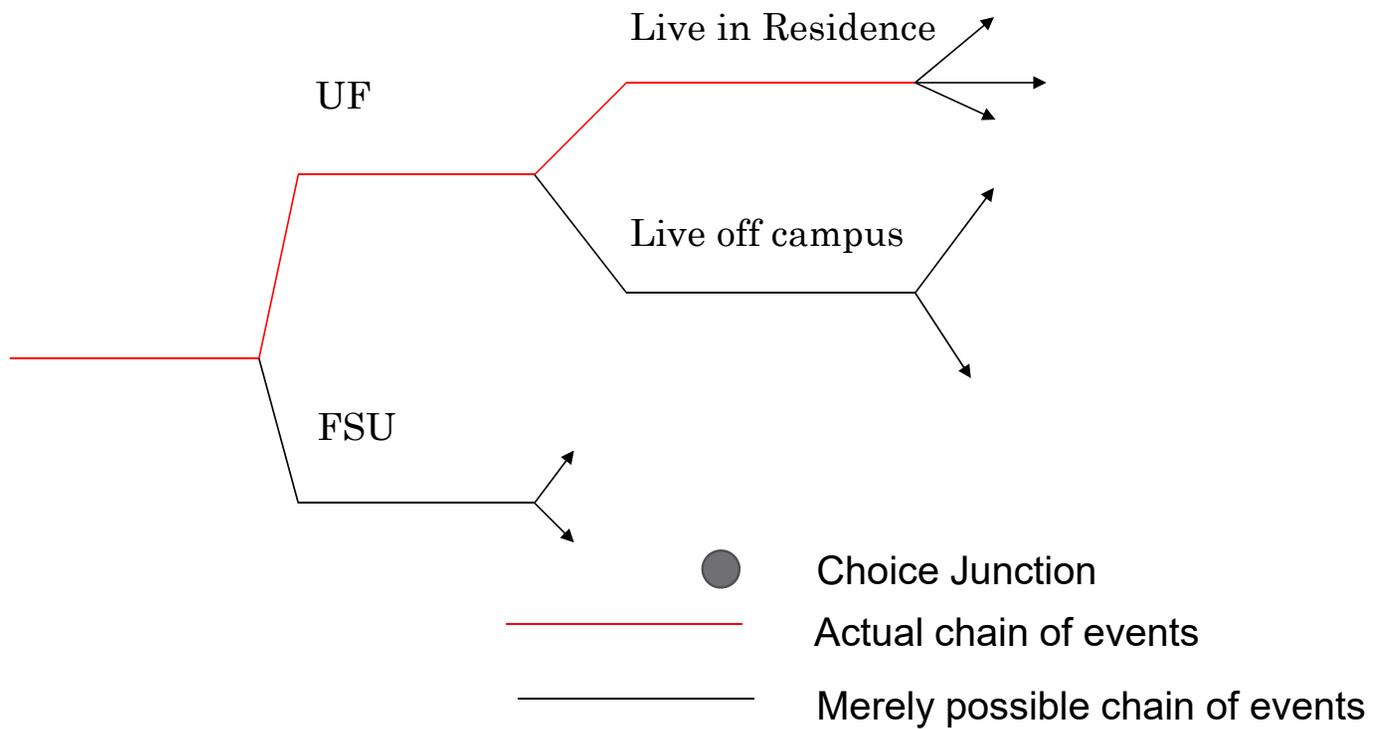
What is 'the self' anyway?

- What is the mind?
- What is it to be us? The people that we are?
- What is to have a soul?
- This is the topic of our next few readings

Libertarianism



Hard-Determinism



Clarification: Indeterminism in Physics

- Psychology (Blatchford): deterministic
- Different theories of physics (Other versions of Hard-Determinism):
 - At the level of 'large' bodies: Newtonian, General Relativity
 - Micro: Quantum Mechanics
- **Newtonian, General Relativity** are deterministic
 - fit Laplacian Demon Hypothesis – for every event there is some previous cause that determines that event
- **Quantum Mechanics** is indeterministic
 - There are many possible states of the universe at any given point and any macro state is a probabilistic distribution of the underlying subatomic processes that constitute matter .

Freedom and Morality

- A person X is morally responsible for having done Y just in case
 - X was free to do Y
 - X could have done not Y (he had alternatives open)
 - X is in control of doing Y

Argument for Hard-Determinism

- 1. if our actions are free then we could have done otherwise [freedom]
- 2. we could not have done otherwise [causal determinism]
- 3. therefore, none of our actions are free

- Libertarian: 1 is true, but 2 is false; determinism is false, specifically for actions that we choose freely