

## FREE WILL II

Hobbes argued that an action was free just in case it followed from one's desires, in the sense that had one desired otherwise, one would have acted otherwise. And on the standard compatibilist account, this is understood as the gloss on 'could have done otherwise':

Could have done otherwise = would have done otherwise if one had desired to do otherwise

The proponents of the consequence argument contend that this is not a good gloss on 'could have done otherwise'. For what if one could not have desired otherwise? Then there is surely an important sense in which one could not have done otherwise. And proponents of the consequence argument contend that that argument shows that if determinism is true we could not have desired otherwise. Indeed, they hold that this is true even if we replace 'desired' with 'chosen' or any other possible psychological state or action. The basic idea is that, if determinism is true, how we are now is determined by laws of nature, and the state of the world long before we were born; but we cannot change either the

### The Consequence Argument

- P1 Necessarily, a given set of laws, L, is true
- P2 Necessarily, a given state of affairs, S, obtained well before you were born
- P3 Necessarily, (if S and L, then you will do F)
- C Necessarily, you will do F

Is this argument valid? It assumes two modal principles:

**Agglomeration:** From Necessarily P, and Necessarily Q, infer Necessarily (P and Q)

**Closure under logical implication:** If one proposition P logically implies another proposition Q, then from Necessarily P, infer that Necessarily Q

These principles are controversial. For instance, the first fails for possibility: from the fact that it is possible for me to stay in bed, and the fact that it is possible for me to get up, it doesn't follow that it is possible for me to stay in bed and get up. People normally assume that it holds for necessity.

The second fails in certain accounts in which the necessity operator is understood as representing knowledge. For instance, it fails in Nozick's account, in which knowledge is understood as governed by a counterfactual condition, roughly:

- A knows p iff
  - (i) p is true
  - (ii) A believes p
  - (iii) A would not have believed p if p were not true
  - (iv) A would have believed p if p were true.