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The Denial of Transcendental Freedom is Self-Refuting

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Claremont McKenna College

**The Denial of Transcendental
Freedom is Self-Refuting**

submitted to
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by
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Abstract

The questions of what kind of freedom morality requires and how to reconcile the capacity for free agency within a determined temporal sequence represent the crux of the free will debate. Traditional compatibilists claim that determinism does not preclude our capacity for moral agency. Nuanced determinists, such as Derk Pereboom, deny the existence of moral agency and argue that free will is not required to save the basic modes of our practical lives, such as our capacity to affect each other and to lead *practically moral* lives. I will argue in favor of Kant's view, which holds that since freedom and moral agency is metaphysically possible we cannot deny the possibility of free will and morality. The object of this thesis is to argue for why Kant's position holds an advantage over determinism and compatibilism; it is not necessarily to argue for Kant's argument, although I do explain and argue for aspects of it in support of my broader goal of establishing the superiority of Kant's account.

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Chapter 1

The Stakes of the Debate

Organized society is largely founded on our capacity to be held accountable to our actions. We find it important to present awards to soldiers for acts of valor and to academics for contributions to the field. Every day, in some form or fashion, we praise people for the good things they do and blame them for the bad things they do. However, barring exempting factors such as mental illness, this entire practice of holding people accountable to their actions presupposes that we are each responsible for our actions; we have the capacity for free choice. While it may seem obvious that people deserve to go to jail for committing crimes and to receive praise for exceptional acts, it is not obviously clear that free will exists. Without free will, our entire system of accountability is unfounded; and if free will is metaphysically impossible, then we may also stand to lose our privileged status as persons.

Challenges and Strategies

The questions of what kind of freedom morality requires and how to reconcile the capacity for free agency within a determined temporal sequence represent the crux of the free will debate. There are essentially three sides to the debate: determinists, who reject free will and morality; compatibilists, who seek to reconcile free will with determinism; and libertarians, who hold that free will is possible because nothing is determined.¹ The

¹There are of course different forms of these three camps, but this is the fundamental layout of the debate.

challenge of this debate is that there are numerous conflicting conceptions of what kind of freedom morality requires and whether we stand to lose much if free will is false. The strategy is to begin with an argument an opponent will readily accept, and then use that shared premise to expose an incoherency in the opponent's argument. As we expose conflicts within the opponent's argument, we reduce the numerous paths the opponent could take in order to avoid abandoning her framework. At a certain point, the opponent will be obliged to abandon her framework and take seriously an argument which is at least metaphysically sound.

Lay of the Land

Determinism can be subdivided into hard and soft. Hard determinism is at one extreme of the free will debate. Hard determinism wholly rejects the possibility for free choice and maintains that every action is determined in time. Hard determinism rejects all forms of moral accountability. Soft determinism, which in a sense is a form of compatibilism, takes a middle ground between the two extremes of the debate and accepts that determinism is true, insofar as our actions are qualified by the temporal sequence, but nevertheless holds a deflated sense of free will in which some human action can be free – such as choosing between giving the money to the criminal or running away.

Libertarians hold that since everything is indetermined, then there is nothing incoherent about an agent making free choices for those actions which have yet to materialize; these are actions made possible by indeterministic events. However,

libertarianism by itself is a weak position. For free will to be possible under libertarianism, every action must align with the indeterminant event, which is a dubious condition given the small probability of our actions aligning with such spontaneous circumstances.

Traditional compatibilists, similar to the soft determinists, entertain the possibility of moral agency insofar as one has the ability to choose between a possible set of outcomes. However, the compatibilist conception of free action is insufficient to preserve morality. On a compatibilist view, my ability for free choice is limited to the extent of what is made possible by the temporal order. If determinism is true, then every present action is fixed to previous actions, all the way back to the beginning on time. Traditional compatibilism of free will and determinism offers nothing less than an illusion of free will and morality. No matter how we view the free will debate, free will as it is properly understood is not possible if determinism by itself is true.

To understand why Determinism by itself rules out free will consider the following case: a race car driver making a successful turn on the track is caused by the driver's turning of the wheel at the appropriate moment. The turning of the wheel is caused by the driver's movement of the arm muscles. The driver's arm movement is caused by the firing of brain's neurons. The firing of the brain's neurons is caused by the stimuli feeding into the brain. These stimuli are caused by the driver's sensory perceptions. These particular sensory perceptions are caused by the drivers present situation. The driver's present situation is caused by a previous situation (such as the driver getting into the car). This causal lineage can be traced back in infinitum; the causes can be traced back in time until

we arrive at the initial cause of everything. The driver's present situation is informed by previous situations, and so the possible actions the driver can take are fixed to what came prior, and so the driver's capacity for free will is likewise qualified.

As Kant argues, asserting determinism by itself precludes free will and morality:

“... all the actions of the human being in appearance are determined in accord with the order of nature by his empirical character and other cooperating causes; and if we could investigate all the appearances of his power of choice down to their basis, then there would be no human action that we could not predict with certainty, and recognize as necessary given its preceding conditions. (A549-50/B577-8)”

As I will argue, free will properly understood (by Kant) is the ability to be the undetermined source of one's actions.² For Kant, free will implies the ability to begin a series of events; the ability to be the initial cause of one's actions. This conception of free will is called transcendental freedom. Practical freedom, made possible by transcendental freedom, is the ability to will this sense of free action within the determined temporal order.

The distinctions formed above are not set in stone and are helpful to the extent they illustrate the spectrum of views and inform a successful strategy for arguing against

²This is Kant's conception of free will which, as I will argue throughout the paper, is the only conception of free will which can support moral imperatives of the sort we require in our daily lives. There are other philosophers, such as the compatibilist Harry Frankfurt, who claim that moral agency suggests the ability to do otherwise than one did – that if we have the ability to act differently than we did, then we have the ability to will moral outcomes. However, as will become apparent later on in the paper, Frankfurt's “could have done otherwise” argument” also requires the ability that one be the source of one's actions if one is to be held to moral imperatives.

opponents. There are philosophers who attempt to craft some combination of the views discussed earlier. For the purposes of this thesis there are two especially noteworthy philosophers in that camp: Immanuel Kant and Derk Pereboom. In response to the problems associated with traditional compatibilism, Kant attempts to show by means of a new form of compatibilism that free will and determinism need not conflict.³ In stark contrast, Derk Pereboom denies that the rejection of free will and morality is detrimental insofar as we can carve out enough room to save the modes of our practical lives; namely things such as the ability to hold legitimate emotional responses to the actions of others. If there is some means by which we can affect each other's actions (and save the modes of interaction), then perhaps determinism is not so bad afterall – or so proponents of that view claim. In this next chapter I will first present Pereboom's case against free will. I will then argue in proceeding sections that Pereboom's nuanced approach to the free will debate is illusory, with the broader goal of showing why the best argument in the debate is Kant's.

Chapter 2

Derk Pereboom and the case for Practical Morality

Pereboom denies the freedom required for morality by arguing that the case for practical freedom is incompatible with determinism of the temporal order and/ or credible

³ This new form of compatibilism, "Kant's compatibilism," is inspired by Allen Wood. For the purposes of this thesis I am operating on Allen Wood's two-worlds interpretation of Kant's argument. The alternative, the one-world interpretation, provides for the same conclusion that morality is metaphysically possible but takes a different route to establish that conclusion.

forms of indeterminism (such as quantum mechanics). The freedom required for morality is precluded by determinism because any present action or deliberation is fettered to the causal chain of action's past, and so all present actions are already determined.

Indeterminism is equally fatal to morality because everything that happens is the result of mere coincidence at the quantum level; and so although things are not determined by the causal chain, we lack the freedom causally-eflicate thing since everything is in flux.

Pereboom's goal is to establish the causal-eficacy of reason-responsiveness as grounds for preserving morality despite his views against the freedom required for morality. For the purposes of this thesis I will refer to Pereboom's position as *Practical Morality*; a conception of morality which denies the possibility of moral agents, but preserves the practice of striving for moral action on practical grounds.

Pereboom maintains that "determinism is true" and "it is true that according to hard determinism we are not free in the sense required for moral responsibility, and therefore, what happens cannot be affected by choices that are free in this sense" (Determinism Al Dente [DAD], 22/31). In principle, Pereboom advocates for a notion of causal efficacy in which person X **consciously encourages** person Y to **act differently than she has in the past**. Since Pereboom thinks we are reason-responsive, then Pereboom can establish legitimate emotional responses to loved ones when they do something either good or bad, and then argue that we can strive to act morally on these grounds.

Although Pereboom concedes that the freedom required for moral responsibility is impossible, he wants to carve out enough space to save what is required of relationships;

namely the legitimacy of emotional responses we experience in response to the actions of our friends, peers, and loved ones. Pereboom suggests he can save relationships by showing that although we cannot be held morally accountable, we are nevertheless responsive to reasons, and that we can affect each others actions by appealing to these reasons in the form of encouragement and admonishment (DAD, 22).

Pereboom believes that there is utility in striving for morality even if we never have the capacity to fully achieve it; that “even if no one is ever really morally responsible, it would still be best sometimes to *hold* people morally responsible” because people are nevertheless responsive to reasons. And so although we cannot *blame* people for their actions, we can at the very least *encourage* them to act otherwise than they did (DAD, 32). Pereboom’s conception of encouragement or admonishment as they relate to practical morality is distinguished from his conception of praise and blame as they relate to moral agency. Praising or blaming someone presumes that they are morally accountable for their actions insofar as *they themselves* are the causally effective force of their actions, and as such are deserving of blame or praise in virtue of their willing certain actions. Consider the following:

When we praise Teddy Roosevelt for overcoming his Asthma, we presume that Roosevelt *willed* certain deliberate and free actions to accomplish his goal; and that he could have done otherwise; such as choosing to not to overcome his Asthma. Conversely, for Pereboom, encouraging or admonishing someone only requires that they are *responsive* to these inputs, regardless of their agency over

them, and that their actions can be affected accordingly regardless of determinism. If we were to encourage Teddy to overcome his Asthma, we would presume that he would be responsive to our encouragement, regardless of whether or not Roosevelt himself could will the outcome *qua* himself. Even if Roosevelt did not will to overcome his Asthma, he could nevertheless be causally-*efficacious* to overcome his Asthma by appealing to his reason-responsiveness.

The distinction between the two cases is a matter of where the causal efficacy is placed: in the former, Roosevelt's free will is the causally-effective force of his actions, while in the latter, reason-responsiveness is the causally effective force of the outcome. Pereboom is able to uphold the latter case because it does not require a notion of practical freedom independent of causally determined things.

To achieve the causally-effective notion of reason-responsiveness, Pereboom claims to "legitimately appropriate...[Ayer and Dennett's] position.. that the determinism of our deliberations, choices, actions, and their consequences does not undermine their causal efficacy," and that this causal efficacy can be leveraged to strive for morality (DAD, 31). I argue, however, that there are two intimately related parallel objections to Pereboom: (1) If Pereboom's argument about indeterminism is true, then reason-responsiveness could not be causally effective. (2) With respect to Pereboom's determinism, the causal efficacy of reason-responsiveness by means of deliberation suffers from an illusion of freedom; I argue that although causally efficacious, reason-responsiveness and our deliberations in general are still causally determined under Pereboom's account, and thus not sufficient

to carve out enough space for one to *deliberately* affect another. In both objections, the apparent causal efficacy of reason-responsiveness by coincidence aligns with the causally determined sequence or the indetermined sequence, thereby precluding the possibility for legitimate deliberation and affection.

Pereboom's objection to libertarian free will is that "random physical events are no more in our control than are causally determined events," and so we lack the capacity to affect change (DAD, 28). Pereboom does briefly entertain the idea that indeterminism could accommodate agent-causation such that we are able to affect things since the causality of things is not predetermined; but the possibility of such action is too narrow to allow for consistently free action(28). However, if his coincidence argument against libertarian free will works, then it also denies the causal-efficacy he needs.

If the world is founded on an indeterministic base, and it is in virtue of this indetermined base that nothing is determined, then the causal-efficacy is likewise placed at the indetermined level; and as such instances of practical morality above the base at the macro level would by chance align with the indeterministic event. If the world is based on indeterministic things, then everything above that base (the "macro world") is indeterministically determined by things at the base; and so not only do we lack the freedom required for morality, but we also lack the ability to appeal to causally-efficacious things such a reason-responsiveness because outcomes are determined randomly at the quantum

level (Schaffer, 506/507).⁴ Since everything is in flux at the base, there is nothing grounding the causal efficacy of reason-responsiveness and so this capacity is illusory for libertarians. With respect to determinism (which Pereboom thinks is true), Pereboom says that if someone thinks that the freedom of the sort required for moral responsibility is possible, then they are under some sort of illusion (DAD, 31). The problem for Pereboom is that if his arguments against free will work, then he himself shares the illusion.

Pereboom maintains that all present actions are causally necessitated by the consequences of actions past (DAD, 22). Pereboom objects to himself when he attempts to carve out the possibility of consciously and willfully affecting our loved one's by means of deliberation (DAD, 22/23). Reason-responsiveness presupposes the the capacity of deliberation, for this deliberation is what informs us of the means by which we may try to affect each other and explains our reasons for responding as we do. Conscious deliberation as required for reason-responsiveness necessitates that we be the cause of such actions. However, if determinism is true and we lack control over our actions, then this deliberation is illusory. It is a matter of happenstance when A's apparently deliberate appeal to Y's reason-responsiveness results in the same outcome required by the temporal sequence. These forms of ostensible deliberation are not forms of legitimate deliberation because they are necessitated. Since Pereboom believes that determinism is true, he cannot concurrently argue that reason-responsiveness is causally efficacious in virtue of our

⁴ See Schaffers Monism for a discussion on physicalism and its consequences for causality in the macro world.

capacity for deliberation. Pereboom's notion of the causal efficacy of reason-responsiveness is consequently illusory for the same reason that free action in an indeterminated world amounts to blind chance. Pereboom can not save practical morality with an illusory belief.

Even if there is utility in believing in the causal efficacy of reason-responsiveness, insofar as practical morality is beneficial to a good life, it is dubious that Pereboom claims that determined or indeterminated actions can be said to be *morally* good or bad (DAD, 32). It is incoherent that Pereboom denies the freedom required for moral responsibility, but also suggests that we strive to act morally. To suggest that someone should strive for morality is to suggest that someone should strive to be the initial cause of their actions. But this is impossible for Pereboom. If Pereboom is to preserve his view that although moral agency is not something that we have the capacity to command but something we can strive for, then he must establish something else which grounds morality as a legitimate concept. Even if this grounding did exist, we would still lack the capacity to strive for it because, to Pereboom, we lack the capacity for deliberation. If Pereboom maintains that he is striving to act morally by means of his practical morality, then Pereboom suffers from the same illusory belief discussed earlier .

Pereboom is now faced with defending that all of our reasoning is either necessarily indeterminately random or necessarily determined such that the causal-efficacy he seeks is precluded if he is to uphold his views against free will. If Pereboom wishes to save the sort of affection necessary for relationships, then he is required to accept a framework which

divorces some aspect of the intelligible self from the causally determined temporal order such that transcendental freedom (and thus causality of the sort Pereboom requires) is possible. Even if Pereboom decides to retreat to the hardest of hard determinism and abandon his practical morality altogether, I will argue that Pereboom is still obliged to take seriously Kant's argument for free will.

Primer for Kant

If reason seems to be something that can operate in accordance to the causally determined temporal order and at the same time independently of it, we are able to consciously make it so that, or encourage that, someone acts differently. Since things in time are determined, and since Kant suggests that reason is free to ponder beyond the determined realm, there must be an extent to which reason is *transcendentally free* from the temporal sequence. The faculty of reason is able to be *practically free* because it equips the otherwise causally determined material self with something which is transcendently free, thereby relieving the material self from the fetters of determinism.

Chapter 3

Recap and Introduction to Kant's Position

In the last section I explained why Pereboom's argument for our ability to affect each other vis a vis reason-responsiveness is illusory. If either determinism or credible forms of indeterminism (such as quantum mechanics) is true, then any instance of

ostensible deliberate reason-responsiveness is a matter of happenstance in which X's conscious appeal to Y's reason-responsiveness parallels either the determined sequence of the causal chain or the indeterminate event.

In this section, I will present what Kant's response would be to those who deny the sort of freedom required for morality. I will then argue that this is the most compelling response to opponents of free will. Although Kant cannot determine that free will exists, all he needs to prove in order to defeat opponents of free agency and morality is that his argument is at least metaphysically possible; opponents of free agency will then be charged with the burden of proving that Kant's argument is false if they wish to maintain their views against moral responsibility. The genius of Kant's approach is the simple but sophisticated goal of showing that "the power to being a state *on one's own*" (A533/B561) is nonetheless metaphysically possible, thereby forcing his opponents into a similar position of conceding that they lack sufficient reason to reject morality on deterministic grounds.

Kant's Metaphysics of Free Will and Morality

Kant's goal is to show that determinism and morality need not conflict. Kant's compatibilism of free will and determinism is distinguished from orthodox notions of compatibilism in the following way: recall that traditional compatibilists seek to carve out space for free will within the temporal order despite determinism being true. For traditional compatibilists, actions are free in virtue of our ability to do otherwise despite determinism

being true. The problem for traditional compatibilists, however, is that it is dubious as to whether any action can be *truly* free within the determined temporal sequence. While free will to a traditional compatibilists may be the choice between two or more actions, such choices result in none other than “freedom of the turnspit” (KpV 5:94) in which regardless of the choices we make, our actions are nevertheless fettered to the temporal order.

Traditional forms of compatibilism should be rejected because they do not satisfy the requirements of free will as it is properly understood. In summary, free will, properly understood by Kant, is "the power to being a state *on one's own*" (A533/B561); it is the ability of an agent to be the initial cause (independent of external causes), or unconditioned cause, of an action or sequence of events (A448/B476). I will first present a summary of the groundwork for Kant's argument, and then show why to deny transcendental freedom (the sort of freedom required for moral responsibility) is self-refuting (as interpreted by Wood). I present Kant's argument from the top down, starting with the sort of freedom Kant thinks is required for moral agency, and then discussing how Kant is able to establish the metaphysical possibility for this freedom.

Moral Agency Made Possible by Transcendental Freedom

Since, according to Kant, determinism is true, then there must be something in virtue of which the freedom required for moral responsibility is made possible. In order to uphold freedom in a practical sense, Kant must show that this practical freedom is grounded outside of the temporal order. To do this Kant will need to account for the

existence of things in themselves, and show why this transcendental realm is metaphysically possible. But more on that later. Transcendental freedom is understood as the ability to be the uncaused cause of a sequence of events; such as the initial cause of the causal chain of the temporal order; the power to being a state *on one's own*" (A533/B561; A534/B562). Practical freedom, made possible by transcendental freedom, "is the independence of our power of choice from coercion by impulses of sensibility" within the temporal order (A534/B562). In one sense, practical freedom is the ability to abstain from sensuous impulses, and in another, the ability to will certain actions motivated by the faculty of reason (Wood 79-83). The faculty of reason enables us to have this independence and to abstain from sensual impulses. This practical reason, grounded in its pure form outside of the determined order, is the causally effective and practically free mechanism which allows us to abstain from otherwise causally determined impulses (A803/B831).

Transcendental freedom, on the other hand, must be independent of the temporal order if it is to operate with unmitigated freedom and as such "demands an independence of this reason itself" (A803/B831). Transcendental freedom is beyond reason (reason as understood in the realm of appearances) because it does not conform to any pre-established principles; for to say that transcendental freedom operates on some pre-established principle is to say that there exist a pre-existing cause for this principle. Since transcendental freedom consists in being the uncaused cause of something, it is free from any and all external restrictions, including reason as it operates in the temporal order

(A533/B561). That being said, what matters here is that we establish that practical freedom is necessary for morality, and that it operates within the laws of nature but nevertheless provides for the freedom of the sort required for morality. I find it important to reiterate the following point: of his project Kant notes that he has “not been trying to establish the reality of freedom...” but to show that “nature at least does not conflict with causality through freedom” (A558/B586). Although transcendental freedom may conflict with the laws of nature, Kant need only show that it is possible in order to maintain the validity of practical freedom (A803/B831).

Appearances and Things in Themselves

Allen Wood in *Kant's Compatibilism* argues for a two-worlds interpretation of Kant's account of things in themselves. The two-worlds interpretation advocates for a distinction between the world of appearances and the world of things in themselves. Our modes of sensibility require a spatiotemporal framework; objects could not exist without space and change could not occur without time. In one respect knowledge of sensible things is made possible by our faculties of sensibility and in another our knowledge is restricted by the limits of our sensibility (A239). The objects we perceive in space and over time are merely appearances of the things in themselves (A26/A33). Our spatiotemporal framework for sensing these things could not be something learned from experience, for I could not imagine things existing without space nor could I comprehend causality without prior knowledge of time. But since we do understand things within a spatiotemporal

framework, we must have possessed this framework prior to sensible experience (A42/B59). The things in themselves must exist independent of the sensible realm since space and time are a priori intuitions which exist only in us, and thus makes the spatiotemporal representations of things dependant on the human constitution (A26/B42; A32–33/B49). Again, Kant maintains that we cannot know anything about things in themselves, but all he seeks to accomplish is to demonstrate that such things are metaphysically possible (A239).

It is in virtue of this distinction between appearances and things in themselves that the noumenal self (the timeless and completely free aspect of the self) makes practical freedom in the realm of appearances possible. Our will is not subject to the laws of nature but subject to the law of reason – a mode of the noumenal self – which we give ourselves a priori (before sensible experience) (A551/B579). We are practically free agents because the initial cause of the temporal sequence is the noumenal self; and the faculty of practical reason is likewise self-legislated from the noumenal self and transcends the temporal order, and thus the determinism.

Recall the early conversation regarding the disagreement of what kind of freedom morality requires, and in what circumstances people can be held morally accountable. It would reduce the force of moral imperatives if we are only to be held morally accountable for our actions under certain conditions. In Wood's interpretation of Kant's view, we are always free from determinism even when we fail to exercise that freedom (Wood, 82), and so we are always subject to moral accountability (barring cases of mental disabilities or

other relevant exempting factors). Wood accounts for our failure to exercise our freedom by suggesting that the exercise of freedom requires power, and Kant holds that "only freedom with regard to the inner legislation of reason is really a power; the possibility of deviating from legislative reason is a lack of power" (TL 227g 26e). We fail to exercise our freedom when we lack the power required for its execution. This is not to say however, that we fail to act freely because we lack practical freedom. If I fail to complete the marathon it is not because I lacked the ability to run, but because I lacked the power to execute on my ability to run. I can still be blamed for failing to complete the race because I was previously able to run, and I knew or should have known to prepare myself in advance so as to possess the power to execute my ability to run. Likewise, people may still be held morally accountable even when they act on sensuous impulses because they are practically free and always command the capacity for free action, despite determinism being true (A534/B562).

Transcendental freedom and transcendental things, which make possible free will and morality, may be impossible to learn about – insofar as our access to this type of knowledge is epistemically limited – but their existence is nevertheless metaphysically possible. The force of this conclusion must not be understated. There are certainly numerous objections, some of which I will entertain shortly. Regardless, determinists do not have anything substantial with which to respond to Kant.

Objections

A. The Ontology of the Noumenal and Phenomenal Selves

The question of the ontology of the noumenal and phenomenal selves poses a considerable challenge to the two-worlds theory, but not fatally so. While Wood has trouble reconciling this problem, it must be noted that we lack epistemic access to the transcendent realm and ultimately there is little we can do to resolve this problem beyond establishing its metaphysical possibility.

Kant says that it is possible “to regard an event on one side as a merely natural effect, yet on the other side as an effect of freedom” (A543/B571). Our will, a mode of the intelligible self (endowed by the noumenal self), is not subject to the laws of nature but subject to the law of reason which we give ourselves a priori (A551/B579). As Wood notes, Kant argues that although events in time follow a necessary causally determined order, a timeless choice of my intelligible character nevertheless affects the natural world, insofar as our timeless selves affect our material characters (whether by endowing the phenomenal self with a character disposition, traits, or personalities) (Wood, 91). The actions of our material selves are consequences of the character our timeless selves create. For each choice that the timeless self makes, there is a subset of possible worlds in which this material character could potentially exist (given the demands of the laws of nature). Once the phenomenal character has been established, its actions must conform to the

natural laws of the empirical world; but the cause of the specific temporal order itself is a result of the subset of possible worlds in which the specific character could exist (Wood, 91). Thus, even though our actions in time are determined by the temporal order, the cause of the character's will itself exists outside of this determinism and accordingly affords the phenomenal self with the capacity for practical freedom. Kant says that "reason has causality in regard to appearance; its action can be called free, since it is exactly determined and necessary in its empirical causality (the mode of sense). For the latter is once again determined in the intelligible character (the mode of thought)" (A551/B579). The freedom required for morality – the state of beginning a series in itself – is made possible in the determined phenomenal world because the determination is an effect of the noumenal self, and so ultimately we remain in control of our actions.

B. Indeterminism

Indeterminism for Pereboom precludes the causal-efficacy of things like reason-responsiveness because change occurs for no reason; things are in indeterminate flux. This consequence of indeterminism was integral to showing why Pereboom's conception of practical morality is illusory. Since Kant, like Pereboom, presupposes that determinism is true, it may appear that the indeterminism objection to Pereboom also applies to Kant. I argue, however, that Kant's argument maintains his structural advantage over Pereboom's on this score. For Kant, the source of causal efficacy is found outside of the realm of appearances in the transcendental realm. Recall that transcendental freedom is

the ability to be the initial cause, or the causal-efficacy of all subsequent causes. It is not a problem for Kant that we lose the sort of causal-efficacy Pereboom requires because our capacity for causally-efficacting things is grounded outside of the undetermined realm of appearances. In fact, asserting indeterminism may actually help Kant because it alleviates the concerns associated with the ontology of the noumenal and phenomenal selves discussed above. If indeterminism is true, then for Kant we are still the initial cause of the indetermined sequence. While indeterminism reduces the probability of free action for traditional libertarians, it only strengthens Kant's notion of beginning a series in itself since the cause of indeterminate outcomes is us (as opposed to the outcomes on a traditional libertarian view resulting from mere chance). Kant is in a sense a libertarian about free will – for he maintains that our actions are not determined – and asserting indeterminism in the realm of appearances may actually resolve some of the concerns discussed earlier.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

Given the stakes of the free will debate, and given the force of determinism, the impact of Kant's argument must not be understated. While Kant's account results in some spooky conclusions, such as the existence of an aspect of ourselves outside of the realm of appearances which we are epistemically limited in accessing but nevertheless know is there, the structural advantage of the argument provides an effective means of preserving our moral intuitions. Pereboom seeks to preserve our moral intuitions but premises his

argument on an illusory belief. Kant's argument, which is metaphysically possible, holds a structural advantage over the others. Kant's argument is essentially that because we don't know whether free will exists we cannot with good reason reject morality; to entirely deny transcendental freedom is self-refuting on this score.

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