



Free Will Requirements

The major and minor requirements for human free will must deal explicitly with the determinist objection and the randomness objection that are the core issues in the **standard argument** against free will in the previous chapter.

We need one requirement to defeat the **determinism** objection and another distinct requirement to defeat the **randomness** objection.

If we can meet these two requirements, we may have also eliminated the **responsibility** objection, but some philosophers think we can meet the responsibility objection whether or not we have free will, so this needs a bit more thought.

Part One - The Randomness Requirement

First, there must be a **Randomness Requirement**, unpredictable chance events that break the causal chain of determinism in an appropriate place and time. Without a chance break in the chain, our actions are simply the consequences of events in the remote past. There would be but one possible future.

This randomness must be located in a place and time that enhances free will, not one that reduces it to pure **chance**. If we can find this place and time, it will defeat the **determinism objection**.

Determinists do not like this requirement!

Any mention of randomness threatens to make everything random. (See CHRYSIPPUS' fears on p. 7.)

Note that strong libertarians (e.g., ROBERT KANE) say that indeterminism, centered in the decision itself, is needed for human freedom that provides ultimate responsibility.

Some randomness - chance or indeterminism - is required. The problem is how to prevent that randomness from making our decisions themselves random.



Part Two - The Determinism Requirement

Next, there is a **Determinism Requirement** - that our actions be **adequately determined** by our character and values, our feelings, motives, and desires.

Randomness can not be the direct and primary cause of our actions if we are to defeat the randomness objection and satisfy the determinism requirement.

Some libertarians do not like this requirement!

Determinists who think that determinism is all they need for **free will** call themselves compatibilists.

Part Three - The Responsibility Requirement

If we can meet these two requirements, can we automatically satisfy the **Responsibility Requirement**?

We can do this by showing

1. that the determinism we really have in the world is only adequate determinism and
2. that the randomness we have (especially quantum indeterminism) has negligible effect on that adequate determinism, but provides the alternative possibilities from which our determined will can choose, can make a selection for which we can be responsible.

These requirements should be such as to satisfy Libertarians, in that they ensure the unpredictable **alternative possibilities** needed for freedom.

They should also be such as to satisfy Determinists, in that they ensure the **adequate determinism** of the will and its actions, causal decisions that are needed for moral responsibility.

The requirements are straightforward, coherent, and intelligible, to guard against the centuries-old criticisms of free will as “unintelligible.”

Let's summarize the implications of each requirement.



The Randomness (Freedom) Requirement

Over the centuries the freedom requirement has been described in many ways. We can explicitly clarify those descriptions that are in many cases equivalent.

- Chance exists.
- Indeterminism is True.
- Our Decisions are Unpredictable (even to ourselves)
- Our Actions are “Up to Us”
- We have Alternative Possibilities
- After the Fact, We Could Have Done Otherwise
- We Start New Causal Chains
- We Create New Information.

The Determinism (Will) Requirement

The will requirement has had many forms corresponding to the dogmatic forms of determinism.

Instead of a strict causal determinism, the world offers only adequate determinism and soft causality.

- Adequate Determinism Is True
- Chance Must Not Be The Direct Cause of Action
- Our Will is Adequately Determined by Reasons
(Character, Values, Motives, Feelings, Desires, et.)
- Our Actions are Causally Determined by Our Will

The Moral Responsibility Requirement

The moral responsibility requirement is a joint consequence of randomness and adequate determinism.

- Since we always have Alternative Possibilities
- Since we can knowingly say , we Could Have Done Otherwise
- Since our Actions are Causally Determined by Our Will and are Up to Us
- We are Morally Responsible for our Actions

