

FREE WILL DEBATE: FROM ILLUSIONISM TO COMPATIBILISM

RAJAN

The philosophy of free will is an old one. Like anything longstanding, it has been rehabilitated over time. Understanding this very fact; the present paper has three objectives, accordingly: to introduce the free will problem as it exists in recent philosophical debates; to explain how the idea of free will may be an illusion in the first place; and to speculate that critical conjecture on the same issue may help us to feel that to a great extent, we are free to take the free decision in life in order to feel that human existence may worn out the existential nihilism, and subsequently, may embrace meaningfulness. In short, we aim to explicate the contesting debate on free will and illustrate the metamorphoses in argumentive locations of illusionism and Compatibilism. Whether we believe it or not, the role of free will is a prerequisite in all courses of human ideas and action. In addition, it is also the reason that many thinkers have attributed it with the notion of 'postulate' without which human existence, values, and action loses their significance. In order to make this debate adventures, we aim to set a perfect balance between illusionism and indeterminism via the compatibilist position of free will. This deliberation will help us gain two results; on the one hand, it will defuse the temporary binaries available in the free will positions, and on the other hand, it will provide the philosophical locus on whether we are truly free or live under the canopy of fate.

Introduction:

What if we get to know that all our actions and choices are predetermined by any external or internal forces? What if we get persuaded, based on the consequential argument that will to power, will to life and will to love are the only chief motivations of all our actions and desires? For an instance, we may position the desires for status, fame, wealth accumulation etc. in the will to a power category; food, water, sleeping and sex in the will to life cataloguing; and all our social and ethical choices and activities in the will to love classification. Now the question arises can we still be called free? What if natural laws and causation determine the limit of humankind? What if both dominated as well as the controller, behave under certain structure under unstructured power?¹ Most probably, this would present a great existential crisis in front of the whole of humanity or to say in Albert Camus terminology, it would be an absurdist position. Actually, the question of free choices and freedom becomes quite multifaceted at the human level. We find three classifications in this respect: deterministic, indeterministic and soft-deterministic (compatibilistic). Each classification provides its own position

¹ Power, which is not an apparent or structured phenomenon as per Paul-Michel Foucault, makes us all behave differently whether we dominate others or vice-versa since the structure of power is hidden. Now question arises, if we all acts differently after an entrance of power can we still be called free? Isn't a dilemma which require careful contemplation? See-Foucault, M. (1980). Power/knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977. United Kingdom: Pantheon Books.

about human freedom and choices. The present paper also aims to examine the above questions and classifications. Throughout the composition, we will also find a common thread and critique of questions such as: what is the meaning of choice and free choice? How far can we resist the compression whether external or internal? Is absolute freedom possible? How far freedom is important for a meaningful life? Further, the paper aims to conclude that the oldest debate of determinism and free will in philosophy isn't beyond answering. We just have to answer it more personally and practically, with more of a sense of what we need to believe in to be calmer and more fulfilled.

(I)

The history of philosophy has been full of contending arguments around the ideas and classical dichotomy of Free Will and Determinism. Simply identified, the issue hangs on whether human beings should be thought of as fundamentally free to choose their actions and transform their lives or whether they should be reckoned as being at the heart determined by forces beyond their control, be it fate, natural law, personal imprisonments, politics or class or whatever. The debate has been long-running and immensely significant. It originated with Indian and Greco-Romans love of wisdom and wonder, dominated Christian philosophy and reverberates on to this day among philosophers, psychologists and neuroscientists. Historical analysis also shows that the discussion over 'fate' and "freedom" or 'human limit' and "human potentially" is as long as the notion to pursue a good and meaningful life. This debate again becomes essential when lots of new factors, particularly the scientific one has been safeguarding a very good place to examine the paradigms of free will. And it is essential since reality is not the monopoly of mere speculation only; sometimes it should be handover to empirical observations as well. As Eddy Nahmias put it:

Questions about free will and responsibility have long been considered the purview of philosophers. If philosophers paid attention to any science, it was physics since physics might tell us about whether or not the traditional threat of determinism is true. This is changing, though too slowly. Philosophers considering human autonomy and responsibility need to pay more attention to the relevance of the sciences that study humans, partly because neuroscientists and psychologists are

increasingly discussing free will, usually to argue that their research shows that it is an illusion.²(Miller, 2008)

The debate over free will and determinism, as noted above, always have been critical in a variety of ways. There are at least four very strong arguments to prove that human beings are not free at all which hardcore indeterminists take for granted. The first argument follows that since human beings primarily are bodily beings, and both our body and mind including the whole neural network is completely determined second by microsecond by causal laws of nature. Therefore, it is really hard to imagine the idea of free will. Of course, we can't be certain about what exactly causes what. However, there is a law to be exposed, and if anybody has perfect knowledge of all the causes and effects, then they may have the power to challenge the very idea of having free will. As the Buddha also inhabited that given the preconditions of our past (*Pratītyasamutpāda*) whatever happens in the present is completely determinable and not free at all. In short, it is not up to us. That's the first argument why there is no freedom if you believe in Science and Buddha's philosophy of *Pratītyasamutpāda*. And there is also another reason which is based on psychological determinism. Bhagavad-Gita and Stoics school of thought tells us about this sort of determinism. It tells us that if we don't understand what are our attachments and addictions, then no one can sojourn us to be completely the slaves of our past karmas and desires as it becomes an automatic chain which we have to break to be at least on the path of compatibilist. As Bhagavad-Gita sequentially mentioned the chain of captivity (a form of psychological determinism):

dhyāyato viṣayān puṁso sangasteṣūpajāyate

sangāt sañjāyate kāmah kāmāt krodho' bhijaayate// 2.62 //

When a man thinks of objects, attachment for them arises; from attachment, desire is born; from desire arises anger.

krodhaad bhavati sammohah sammohaatsmritivibhramah

smritibhramshaad buddhinaashobuddhinaashaatpranashyati // 2.63 //

From anger comes delusion, from delusion the loss of memory, from the loss of memory the destruction of intelligence; from the destruction of intelligence he perishes.³(Prabhupada, 2001)

Perhaps, we may use Jean-Jacques Rousseau's political principle i.e. "Man is born free and everywhere he is in chains" as an analogy to embrace the personal position of being in the deterministic position. It might be a bad analogy to use Rousseau's expression in the sense of the present composition

²Miller, Christian B. Armstrong, Walter, (2008). *Moral Psychology: Free Will and Moral Responsibility*. United Kingdom: MIT Press. .p. 1

³Bhaktivedanta, A., Prabhupada, A. C. B. (2001). *Bhagavad-Gita as It is: Complete Edition with Translations and Elaborate Purports*. United States: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust.pp.136-137

because he used such expressions to represent the public and natural state of humans. But to be clear, we have used it intentionally to show that man is not only doomed to be subjugated to external circumstances (as Rousseau presupposed), but also of an internal one. For an instance, we can be enchained to our passions and bonding, as Bhagavad-Gita and stoics also proclaim, which may directly contradict the very notion of freedom of individual choice. As Hume deliberately proposed “...reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them”⁴(Hume, 1888) or as William Shakespeare dares ‘...Give me that man that is not passion's slave, and I will wear him in my heart's core, in my heart of heart, as I do thee’⁵(Shakespeare, 1881) or as Fyodor Dostoyevsky, echoed ‘...The reason is a slave to passion’. Such expressions show how both internal as well as external enslavement are possible. Rousseau’s philosophy, on the one hand, examines how man surrendered his state of autonomy to the modern condition, largely subjugated by inequality, dependency, violence and unhappiness, and Hume, Shakespeare, and Dostoyevsky and many more, contrariwise, asks to find ways to compromise with our limits in one way or other. In short, if we lose the very essence of being free i.e. being intelligent of our self, then we are lost forever. And such things happen all the time to most of us in some way. That's psychological determinism. Adding to the psychological determinism, those who confine humans to the dominant category of pain and pleasure also presents a great challenge to the free will advocators. Utilitarianism (including hedonist theory) and most of the Indian philosophical schools seem to depict morality and human nature in this manner.⁶Certainly, it leads to another philosophical problem of psychologism as it confines humans into the mere category of ‘pain’ and ‘pleasure’. Prof. Dayakrishana beautifully raises this problem when questioning the whole Indian philosophical tradition which begins with the problem of suffering and ends with a permanent solution of it

⁴ Hume, D. (1888). *A Treatise of Human Nature*. United Kingdom: Clarendon Press.p.48

⁵ Wright, W. A., Hart, J. S., Clark, W. G., Shakespeare, W. (1881). *The Complete Dramatic and Poetical Works of William Shekespeare*. United States: E. Claxton & Company.p.680

⁶The ideas of pleasure (*sukha*) and pain (*duhkha*) play central roles in the framework of the Indian moral system. Pleasure is often defined as that which is desired for its own sake (*svatahicchavisyah*) and pain is defined as what is hated for its own sake (*svatahdvesavisayah*). Another way of defining pleasure is: whatever is favourably regarded by all (*sarvesāmanukūlavedaniyam*); the opposite being the case with pain. So that these definitions of "pleasure" do not extend to "absence of pain" (or "decrease of pain"), which is also desired for its own sake and favourably regarded by all, it may be necessary to add the clause "whatever is a positive entity (i.e., not a mere negation)" to the definitions. See-Mohanty, J. N. (2000). *Classical Indian Philosophy: An Introductory Text*. United States: Rowman& Littlefield Publishers.p.110

either through *Moksha* or whatever.⁷(Krishna, 1997) In other words, it seriously raises a great concern whether humans are just the finger-puppets to face the waves of pain and pleasure. For that reason, it further leads to the problem of free will. As Bentham put it:

Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. On the one hand, the standard of right and wrong, on the other the chain of causes and effects, are fastened to their throne. They govern us in all we do, in all we say, in all we think: every effort we can make to throw off our subjection will serve but to demonstrate and confirm it.⁸ (Bentham, 1879)

The third reason to prove that we are not completely free comprises the fact that what will happen tomorrow has already been fixed based on mathematical laws. Newtonian Determinism, for an instance, says that the universe is a clock that's convoluted up at the beginning of time and has been ticking ever since laws of motion. So whatever you're up to five years from now has already been fixed. It's already known using Newton's laws of motion. Einstein firmly believed in that. Does that mean that a morally evil person isn't really guilty of his works because he was already preordained billions of years ago? Einstein would say, well naturally, in some sense that's true that even every wrong act in history was predetermined. However, it would still be a crime, at least, from a law and practical point of view. Returning to the main argument, we may have two options — one suggests that anything that will happen tomorrow can be prophesied based on the actions we take in the present. Further, it also can't be changed. Past, as we know, is totally beyond of control. We cannot change the past. It's only in science fiction that you can have a time machine and go change the branching. But in reality, we cannot go back and change something that we did in past. So past is outside our control.

Now we are left with the idea of the present. We say something like the present is in our control. But what is the present? If we closely examine the idea of the present and slice it, then we don't find anything present at all. In Indian philosophy, particularly in Buddhism, there is nothing called as 'the present'. The argument is almost like a conventional physics argument. This is

⁷Krishna, D. (1997). *Indian Philosophy: A New Approach*. India: Sri Satguru Publications.p.39

⁸Bentham, J. (1879). *The Principles of Morals and Legislation*. United Kingdom: Clarendon Press.p. 23

beautifully presented by *Gautama* (founder of Nyaya school of thought). He asks us to imagine that from the branch of a tree a fruit falls, and in its trajectory, if you call the part it has fallen ‘the past’ and the part it will fall now or the rest of it ‘the future’, and between the two there is no gap; so everything divides into past and future, there is no present at all. In short, the moment I say present, it has gone. So the present doesn't exist, the past is gone and can't be changed. Now one is left with the hope that the future is in our hands. At least, we can do something about that. But is it really the case? The very famous children's book *Panchatantra* tells us that what is going to happen we may not know.⁹ At a minimum, we cannot be sure. We think either this will happen or not happen. In logic, this is called as the law of excluded middle which suggests that either something will happen or not happen. So past and future cannot be changed and there's nothing called present; and since these are the only dimensions of time, therefore, there is no way to say we are completely free.

In fact, those who try to defend the existence of God based on the thesis of free will make one serious mistake i.e. on the one hand they accept god as omnipotent who presides within every heart and contrariwise give clearance to the available problem of evil in the world by proclaiming that it is not the god who is responsible rather our own free will that has been misused. It can further be presented as a good argument to theist people who have long justified the great evil and suffering in the world based on the contradictory notion of having free will and the existence of an omnipotent god. Thus, the question is am I truly free if God is making me do everything (theological determinism)? Should I be considered responsible for all my wrongdoing? Anyway, we do not need to describe how thoughtful the problem of evil presents a challenge in front of theists who believe in the heart seated omnipotent god. In Mahabharata, one serious incident occurs which opens our eyes regarding free will while being a theist. *Duryodhana* tells *Bhisma* when discussing the subject matter of morality that he knows what dharma is but doesn't get the courage to embrace that, and he also knows what *Adharma* is but doesn't get rid of that. In other words, if Krishna is the god who presides in everyone's heart; then it is he who should be responsible for all my doings including the wrong ones. As *Duryodhana* critically echoed:

jānāmidharmaṃnaca me pravṛttirjānāmipāpaṃnaca me nivṛtṭiḥ |
kenāpidevenahṛdisthitenayathāniyukto'smitathākaromi || 57 ||
That is, as noted above, I know what is good and moral but I am not willing to run through it; I also have knowledge of

⁹ See- Parasuraman, S. (2015). *The Panchatantra*. India: Jaico Publishing House. p.93

immorality but always feel vulnerable. I feel that some mysterious power govern my choice who is always seated in my heart.¹⁰
(Sukthankar, 1998).

In short, theistic philosophy also makes us feel a little confused with regards to the free will problem. Speculatively speaking, it is a different thing that some may consider the aforementioned limits as a limit of life (birthplace, death, time and space etc.) i.e. 'existential givenness', various may consider it as a power of the eternal or omnipotent (theological determinism), and some even associate it with sole chance only, which is totally out of control and have got its own existence and the like. Fate, intention, necessity, causation, and human calculations and action etc. notions are the typical part of philosophical as well as scientific thinking, and perhaps their relationship is essential to be speculated for the pursuit of any meaningful goal. Discussion over 'fate' is worth noting, especially with the question of 'meaning of life'. The whole philosophy of life, morality, virtue and meaning of life and so on – have been driven by the notion of freedom of will and choice. In other words, the way moral world can't function without freedom of choice, so though the meaning of life requires free –will (sense of being free in choices).¹¹

We all may come to an understanding that it the fate (things outside of our power) or a deterministic world that any of us would like to duck to know our actual worth and place in the unknown world.¹² However, it takes great effort and experience to come up to this stage. As so many humans beings live and die without facing any philosophical crisis of freedom and choices, for them, such discussion would be nothing more than nit-picking. Anyway, our responsibility is to examine whether such a crisis exists or we essentially make some sort of rational bluffing. So the question ascends — are we truly free? We mean, on the one hand, most of us have a clear sense that we are free. We feel that our choices are thoroughly governed by ourselves. And all of sudden, on the other hand, find ourselves in a deep sense of existential crisis when get to know that there are varieties of factors (internal and external) which determine our choices and way of life. The later approach presents a daunting challenge in front of us to know whether we are that much powerful to

¹⁰Sukthankar, V. S. (1998). *On the Meaning of the Mahabharata*. India: Motilal Banarsidass.p.62

¹¹Free will is often considered as the ability to choose between different possible courses of action unimpeded. See- Omoregie, J. (2015). *Freewill: The degree of freedom within*. UK: Author House .p.77

¹²German philosopher Martin Heidegger once echoed that we have been thrown in this world. With such expression, Heidegger aimed to describe humans' individual existences as being 'thrown' into the world. To some extent , the question of free choices also applies to *Heideggerian* ontological quest to know whether we are truly and absolutely free ...

encounter any external forces and events so that we can present ourselves as the sole authority of our life.

Traditional arguments for incompatibilism (hard-determinism) and fatalism, as précised above, are based on an "intuition pump", which put forward that if a person is like other mechanical things that are determined in their behaviour such as a robot, then people can't have free will. Another argument for hard-determinism is that of the "causal chain". Most hard – determinists reject the idea that freedom of action consists simply of "voluntary" behaviour. They contend, rather, that free will means that someone must be the "ultimate" or "originating" cause of his actions. Being responsible for one's choices (self-caused) is the first foundation of those choices, where the first cause means that there is no antecedent cause of that cause. The argument, then, is that if a person has free will, then they are the ultimate cause of their actions. If determinism is true, then all of a person's choices are caused by events and facts outside their control. So, if anything someone does is caused by events and facts outside their control, then they cannot be the ultimate cause of their actions. Therefore, they cannot have free will.

(II)

As a result, the aforementioned existential crisis appeal to us to ponder upon the question: do we have control over our actions, and if so, what sort of control, and to what extent? One pragmatic loss of not understanding such existential demand has been well consumed by the modern technologist. With the help of behavioural psychologists, modern technologists to gain profit by controlling the desires and wishes of an individual have sharply presented a challenge in front of us. Aldous Huxley's position, which can help us to grasp the modern freedom and free will crisis, in his dystopian masterpiece "Brave New World" had been the same. Huxley argues that earlier our freedom was snatched from us with force, but now with the help of technology and drugs, we offer it our own as if it seems a burden to us.¹³ We mean conditioning of the human mind has become quite easy which presents a sharp challenge to freedom of choice and to the feeling that life has meaning with which modern man seems to be more susceptible. In other words, the moment we lose or vanishes the sense of being in dichotomies or dilemmas of choices, we should be instantly cautious whether we are choosing freely or else.

To a very large extent, we may accept the crisis put forward by external determinism in the form of anything whether force or compulsion or whatever since still we have the power to respond and assert the situation in

¹³Huxley, A. (2008). Brave New World. United Kingdom: Random House.p.31

our way.¹⁴ As a stoic philosopher, Epictetus famously echoed: "Man, what are you talking about? Me in chains? You may fetter my leg but my will, not even Zeus himself can overpower."¹⁵(Epictetus, 1890) But the real problem occurs when we ourselves contradict the philosophy of free will by being slaves to our desires, instincts and so on.¹⁶ One may say that it is our choice and way of life to be whatever we wish to be, then where are we lacking the freedom of choice? It is, in fact, an argument based on ignorance that miscues the facts that freedom comprises in rational choices (harmony between choice and action), and since any sort of conditioning (desires and instincts slavery) contradicts it, then we are fundamentally hypnotized than being truly free. We forget the very distinction between need and conditioning (compulsion). To overcome this ignorance, we need to ask – isn't a reasoned contradiction to have a dichotomy in our choice and action?

Richard Rorty's famous dictum "*Take care of freedom and truth will take care itself*"¹⁷ may also convey lots of connotations in a very few words which suggest that man is all about freedom and freedom only, and all the other things come later. Of course, it is a complex phenomenon that inculcates lots of things in a prima-facie manner. Freedom, in other words, doesn't mean that we are allowed to do all the things which don't make any sense with reasoning, responsibility and social structure and so on. In fact, the idea of Freedom, without any doubt, is essentially a primary conjecture to all of the moral human activity and to make them meaningful too. And it is also the foundation of ethics that guides our public as well as private life and consequently formulate practical ethics. When Kant echoed freedom to be one of the essential components (pre-postulate) of being a moral agent, he means that between the old age dichotomy of good and pleasant, reason and instinct; it is the reason and the good that must be given the primacy over its counterpart. Therefore, all the life-related questions such as — what is meaning in life? Does anything really matter? How can life achieve lasting significance? How can we explain the human propensity to struggle for ideals? How is meaning related to contentment, happiness, joy? Is meaning something we discover, or do we create it? What is the nature of value, and what are its sources in human experience? Can there be a meaning in life without religious

¹⁴ Typically, we have three classification of determinism. It is causal, logical and theological determinism...

¹⁵*The Discourses of Epictetus: With the Enchiridion and Fragments.* (1890). United Kingdom: G. Bell and sons.p.6

¹⁶Sartre Calls It The Condition of '*Bad Faith*'. See-Sartre, J., Barnes, H. E. (2003). *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology.* United Kingdom: Routledge.

¹⁷ Rorty, P. o. C. L. R. (2006). *Take Care of Freedom and Truth Will Take Care of Itself: Interviews with Richard Rorty.* United Kingdom: Stanford University Press.

faith? What is the meaning of death? Is life worth living? What would enable us to have a love of life?, and the like, principally concern or presuppose freedom in one way or other. As Gazzaniga put it:

Each of us feels as if we have a storyline for our lives. That narrative suggests to us that we are agents acting of our own free will and can make our very own choices, whether those choices are good or bad, right or wrong. The impression that the narrative — a psychological centre, a self, a control room — exists is an incredibly powerful one, which has even the most strident determinists, at the personal psychological level, questioning the proposition that we are all simply pawns in the brain's elaborate chess game.¹⁸ (Armstrong, 2014)

So how the lack of freedom does affect an individual and social life? The answer is simple following the fact that any doctrine of fate and overpowering phenomena deprives an individual of meaning and responsibility for their choices. Subsequently, this event makes everything pointless. We neither can be blamed nor praised for anything. Even the praise has to be surrender to fate or to the entity (state, god, chance or whatever) which control it. As we noted above that Free will is closely linked to the concepts of moral responsibility, praise, guilt, sin, and other judgments which apply only to actions that are freely chosen. It is also connected with the concepts of advice, persuasion, deliberation, and prohibition. Traditionally, only freely willed actions are seen as deserving credit or blame. And surprisingly, any argument in the favor of this doctrine that 'if fate exists, we can't be responsible for anything' get clearance. All we have to do is to echo – 'don't blame us for anything; it is all about Fate! But Part of the reason why the question seems so hard to find a conclusive answer is that it is always framed in objective terms as if we might discover either Free Will or Determinism could be an advisable interpretation for human beings in general.

But, in truth, the debate becomes more interesting and more relevant if we change the parameters of the question – and ask simply: is an idea of Free Will or of Determinism more or less relevant to me? All of us will have different needs in this area depending on our contrasting levels of two psychological qualities: Fatalism, on the one hand, Aspiration on the other. We have discussed the former one above. Now let's focus on aspiration which is also an integral part of any meaningful life. But it doesn't mean that this

¹⁸Armstrong, Walter Sinnott (2014). . *Moral Psychology, Volume 4: Free Will and Moral Responsibility*. United States: MIT Press. p.59

philosophy of aspiration is free from lacunas. The difficulty with the philosophy of ambition is that it focuses on the overly exaggerated notions of Free Will. Those who practice it estimate that everything about their lives is capable of change. They will declare that they can achieve all things simply through an exercise of will. Their career and income, their relationships and prospects are all, apparently, subject to dramatic change. It's an inspiring philosophy, but one that reliably also leads – when things don't work out, as they never do in all areas – to bitterness and rage. Therefore, each of us needs to decide for ourselves whether we should have greater faith in Determinism or in Free Will. We should ask how much of the suffering in our lives can be traced back to a defeatist attitude and how much might be traced back to reckless aspiration. In other words, some of us need to subscribe to absolute Free Will, while others may need more of a mature acceptance of a Deterministic worldview. As Plato writes “...We must accept what happens as we would accept the fall of dice, and then arrange our affairs in whatever way reason best determines.”¹⁹ (Plato, 1992)

So when we have largely invaded with free will and determinism debate, what is the wisest way to circumnavigate the argument between the two? How can we find the calming response to the question “am I free to choose,”? Perhaps the stoics' and existentialists compatibilist position or Aristotelian and Buddhist golden mean path can be the best way to find some calming position. Stoics, for an instance, proposed that we should always try to balance between a Free and a determined state through proper understanding of what is in our control and what's not. This virtue (balance in life) has been the part of philosophers, saints and sages thinking to accustom us to life and its limit. Reason and virtue enable us to meditate with considerable accuracy about the path of destiny, which offers us a chance, distinctive among living beings, to increase our sense of autonomy by ensuring a good solution to the old age dichotomy of 'good' and 'pleasant'. Virtue allows us to calculate when our wishes are in irreversible conflict with reality and then bids us to submit ourselves willingly, rather than angrily or bitterly, to necessities. We may be powerless to alter certain events, but we remain free to choose our attitude towards them, and it is in an unprotecting acceptance of what is truly necessary then we can find a distinctive serenity and freedom. The argument is simple, if everything happens by fate, then nothing is 'up to us'. But as we

¹⁹Plato, Grube, G.M.A. Reeve, C.D.C. (1992). *Republic (Grube Edition)*. Hackett Publishing Company. p 275

know there are lots of things which we can control. So, everything doesn't happen by fate.²⁰

But how would we know what is virtue? Or what is rational? Or what is in our control and what is not? Or what are our limits? In this regard, the stoic position seems quite solid and practical as well. Their notion of virtue helps us to determine what is in our control and what is not. In other words, the stoics' notion of virtue simply scrutinizes what is our own action and what is not. My action implies that which is determined by my own reason and will, and except for such actions, all our actions are outside of control and should be left to fate to live a good life. Those who have a sharp understanding of such rational demands also knows the ways to complement determinism and free will. We may grasp the above question answer in the following Epictetus expression: "Some things are up to us and some are not up to us. Our opinions are up to us, and our impulses, desires, aversions – in short, whatever is our own doing. Our bodies are not up to us, nor are our possessions, our reputations, or our public offices — in short, whatever is not our doing..."²¹(Epictetus, 1890) If we rope our happiness to things, not within our control, be it wealth, beauty, social status or even our health, we will suffer unnecessarily. For chance, limits, luck, randomness, or whatever one wishes to call it, plays a considerable role in each person's life. We can easily lose the external goods or great compliment on which, in ignorance, we base our happiness, or even fail to attain them in the first place. As Cicero put the beautiful question in this regard:

...If there were no such word at all as fate, no such thing, no such force, and if either most things or all things took place by mere casual accident, would the course of events be different from what it is now? What is the point then of harping on fate, when everything can be explained by reference to nature and fortune without bringing fate in?²² (Cicero, 2014)

Thus It becomes worth noting fact that acceptance of aforesaid does not have to lead to fatalistic resignation in the assumption that because some things are out of our control, so too is our well-being. As Epictetus explained,

²⁰ Sartre existentialist argument also affirm this approach that obviously there are lots of things which limits us and are out of control , but still the ultimate shot of choice requires an individual response which he /she can't escape except through 'Bad -faith' (cheating) .

²¹Epictetus. (1890). *the Discourses of Epictetus: With the Encheiridion and Fragments*. United Kingdom: G. Bell and sons.p.11

²² Cicero, M.T. (2014). *Delphi Complete Works of Cicero (Illustrated)*. Delphi Classics.p.2799

“it is not things that trouble us, but our judgments about things”²³(Epictetus, 1890) in other words, because we can control our judgments, the quality of our life is also within our control. To sum up, we may formulate that to live a ‘good life’, we must develop a reasoned and virtuous tendency to decide what is in our power and what is not. What we should pursue and what should be left untouched? And let these things be decided by reason, virtue and universal reason and so on. It was the things that Indian sages, Nietzsche, Sartre and Camus indicated and stoics empathically proposed i.e. follow the philosophy of *Amor fati* (love of fate).²⁴As Nietzscheechoed :

I want to learn more and more to see as beautiful what is necessary for things; then I shall be one of those who make things beautiful. *Amor fati*: let that be my love henceforth! I do not want to wage war against what is ugly. I do not want to accuse; I do not even want to accuse those who accuse. Looking away shall be my only negation. And all in all and on the whole: someday I wish to be only a Yes-sayer...²⁵(Nietzsche, 1999)

In other words, there are certain laws in nature or in the human world that cannot be rehabilitated, and so, ought to be acknowledged to live life in serenity. For an instance, the law of causation in nature or any other law and the place of society, culture and individual genetics have to be accepted in one way or another. Such things are like the thrown dice that we have to arrange reasonably and virtuously as it is the wisest option one can have. Those who do the task with wisdom and ease lives life in serenity, otherwise, self-invited calamity is foreseeable. Philosophically we know this theory as soft-determinism or Compatibilism. This theory is based on the notion that free will and determinism are mutually compatible, and that it is certainly possible to believe in both without being logically inconsistent. In short, to live a good life with our limits and strength, we need to segregate between ‘free will’ and ‘desiring omnipotence’ because power is often misconceived with having free will. Those who have the understating of this do not have to struggle with life perplexities as they know (capable) how to arrange all the affairs of it. So with the present composition, we looked into the matter of having free choice while discussing the varieties of concerning notions such as choice, freedom, action, external or internal force, the meaning of life and so on. We also

²³ Ibidem

²⁴ It is worth noting thing that this philosophy of ‘*amor fati*’ is quite different form fatalists’ way of life. Former stands for life affirmation since it provide space for actions and courage; while the later one is life negating, leaving everything up to the unknown.

²⁵ Golomb, Jacob. Lehrer Ronald, Santaniello Weaver. *Nietzsche and Depth Psychology*. (1999). United States: State University of New York Press.p.61

concluded that the oldest debate of determinism and free will in philosophy isn't beyond answering, and there are lots of ways to harmonize them, Compatibilism is one of them. The presentation of the argument in favour of determinism is not to promote nihilism rather hopes and ways. In a nutshell, becoming aware of the questions, philosophy and arguments-counterarguments of freewill can actually make our existence a little more autonomous and meaningful too.