THE NOTIONS OF FREEDOM AND PREDICTABILITY
with special reference to
HUME, MILL, AND BRADLEY

by

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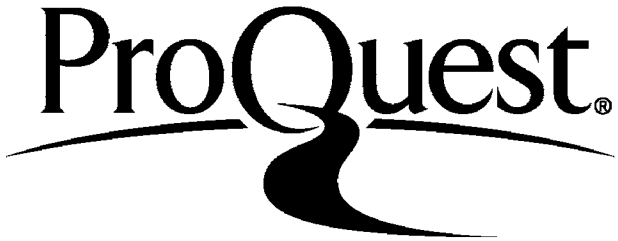

ABSTRACT

The introduction consists of a general statement of the problem of free-will.

The chapter on Hume begins with a brief sketch of his metaphysical position, followed by an analysis of his conception of necessity. His arguments against the idea of liberty are then evaluated. In connection with this the concept of prediction is also discussed and it has been attempted to show that freedom of spontaneity is, either, not freedom, or has no distinction with freedom of indifference. His arguments from the standpoint of morality and religion are critically considered. His effort to prove the problem of free-will as verbal is shown to be inconclusive.

Mill's metaphysical position is not discussed in detail but only occasionally referred to or presupposed. The inconsistencies of his language in describing causality and necessity are pointed out. Next, his analyses of the direct consciousness of free-will, and of free-will which is involved in the idea of morality, are discussed and criticized, together with his conception of "one's desire to mould one's character". Reference has been made to his theory of punishment.

The chapter on Bradley deals with a description of his analysis of the 'vulgar notion of responsibility' followed by a critical treatment of his arguments against Libertarianism and Necessitarianism, with reference to his notion of predictability. Attempt has been made to estimate how far the introduction of a notion of absolute self can do justice to the popular conceptions of freedom and moral-responsibility. In the context of moral responsibility, reference is made to his theory of punishment.

The conclusion consists of a summary of the results of the previous chapters and a comparative discussion of the merits of each view as a reconciling project.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The problem of free-will is not a new problem, but too old to comment anything new. It is so very complicated, partly because philosophers have treated it from so many different standpoints. Moreover, it has given rise to diverse issues connected with the different aspects of human life. On the one hand, it relates to our psychological and scientific discoveries, a relevant change in which, might mean a change in our notion of freedom. On the other hand, our conception of ethics, religion and law are dependent on our notion of free-will. For instance, the discoveries, made in the field of science and psychology in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, have moulded our notion of free-will in a considerable way, as a result of which we have learned to view the ethical and other problems from a different angle than what we used to do before. This happens because in the first place, the different issues arising out of the idea of freedom are interwoven and secondly, this problem, unlike other philosophical problems, cannot be discussed in isolation.

There is nothing as common, simple and apparently indubitable as our ordinary experience of free-will. Everyone feels the presence or absence of it, whenever a

question of the exercise of choice or action arises. But when we go beyond our personal feeling and compare it with other fundamental concepts and laws of our life, there seems to be no other idea which is so ambiguous, conflicting and inconsistent as our notion of free-will. It is difficult to eradicate the feeling of freedom from our consciousness. It is also difficult to maintain it in the face of our other experiences.

One such experience is our causal experience. To speak truly, the issue of free-will arises from its conflict with the law of causality which is more or less unanimously believed at the level of educated common sense. From the standpoint of science, all phenomena, it is thought, are causally connected including the phenomena of our minds. The implication of the causal connection is that the cause-event and the effect-event are invariably connected. This invariable connection is sometimes stated in the form of a necessary relation, and some other times in the form of a regular sequence. In both cases, it means, that given the cause, the effect follows regularly, i.e. the effect is determined by the cause and where the cause is known, the effect can be predicted.

Such causal determinism when extended to the human mind, means that the action follows from the volition which again follows from our formed character and circumstances. Like physical events, all mental phenomena are also subject to causal law and necessity.

Our feeling of freedom, which Sidgwick has called "the immediate affirmation of consciousness in the moment of deliberate action",[1] is in direct dispute with this notion of causation. The dispute arises from their mutual incompatibility.

So far as the meaning of the term 'free-will' is concerned, we are faced with certain difficulties. There is no agreed definition of what we mean by free-will or freedom of the will. Sometimes, it is thought that free-will means that our will is free. Then, it will mean, that our will, which is regarded as an agent, has the ability to act as it wills. But usually, by free-will, we do not mean that our will is free, but that we are free to will. Yet, what the philosophers mean by calling a man free to will is difficult to ascertain. Their opinions are divergent and often mutually contradictory. They have formulated their definitions of freedom in accordance with their respective philosophies. As a result, sometimes it is said, that free-

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1. H. Sidgwick, Methods of Ethics, 6th Ed. p.65. Edt.1901.

will means uncaused will; at other times, it is said, that free-will means caused volition, but caused in a special way, i.e. in one case, in order to be free, my volition should be without a cause; in another case, like the rest of the universe, my volition is always caused; but some of these causes exert constraint or compulsion, and others do not, and, in the latter case, only my will can be called free.

This explanation of free-will has been accepted by the empirical philosophers. For them, freedom is not opposite to causal necessity, as nothing can happen without a cause. On the contrary, the free-actions are also caused actions. The difference between free and not-free action is one of constraint which is present in the latter, but not in the former. Hence, the solution of the problem of free-will, for the upholders of empiricism, lies in clearing up the ambiguities of the meanings of the terms involved in the issue.

The empirical interpretation of free-will is consistent with the law of causation, but free-will implies not only the absence of constraint, but also the presence of choice or alternative action. Where there is no scope for alternative action, there in spite of the absence of

constraint, free-will becomes doubtful.

The freedom of choice is not at all compatible with the causal law. Because causal relation means an invariable connection between the cause and the effect, i.e. given the cause, the effect must follow and it cannot be otherwise, while choice implies that an action can be otherwise.

The idea of free-choice is essentially connected with our ethical and juridical laws. The concepts of moral responsibility, punishment, blame etc, presuppose the existence of free choice. We cannot call a man morally responsible for the action which he cannot help. Nor can we punish someone for an action of which he has no choice. If every action inevitably follows from our formed character and circumstances, no room for choice can be allowed. The empirical theory of free-will as such, cannot account for the presence of choice in our voluntary action.

This has taught the later Idealists to search for the solution from another perspective. The notion of free-will not only involves a notion of choice, but also a notion of personal self. Free-will means 'I' am free to will. The action follows from my own personality or self. The determination of the will comes from the self. The Idealists in their interpretation of free-will give importance to this

notion of a rational self, from which all actions follow, eventually. Because the self is rational, therefore, the actions following from it aim to be consistent and gradually advance towards the realization of a higher goal.

Such a conception of action is quite compatible with the law of causation, and the Idealists do not raise the question of free-choice, which is more or less impossible in their metaphysics. They ascribe moral responsibility to a person, on the ground that the action follows from the self of the person concerned, and from no other entity.

These are the issues in outline, which I want to discuss in this paper. I restrict my paper to an analysis and criticism of the views of Hume, Mill and Bradley, because they are the best exponents of these two different types of interpretation of the notion of free-will. Hume and Mill represent the general empirical outlook on the matter, whereas Bradley, in antithesis to the Hume-Mill theory, typifies the idealistic trend.

It is a matter of historical interest, that so far as the deterministic notion of free-will is concerned, there is a gradual transition of thought, from Hume and Mill to Bradley, which in every new stage is supplemented by the emergence of a new additional idea. Bradley is the

culmination of the deterministic trend, though his determinism is different from that of Hume and Mill.

In the conclusion, I have tried to evaluate these views and to find out their respective merits. No attempt has been made to reach a positive conclusion. This is because of the nature of philosophy itself. The nature of philosophy is more close to an attitude, than to a subject with fixed laws, premises and conclusions. The question of reaching a conclusion is not very significant here. The philosophical problems require proper treatment, rather than any claim to ultimate solution.

CHAPTER I

DAVID HUME

Among the philosophers of the 17th and 18th centuries, Hume seems surprisingly contemporary with us, both in philosophical outlook and analytical thinking.

Hume was the pioneer philosopher who gave a thorough empirical treatment to the notions of freedom and predictability with a view to reconciling them both. It is true that a more or less similar line of thought is observable in a few other philosophers who were predecessors of Hume, and it is not very difficult to trace back the source of his theory of freedom in their writings.

Hume seems to be very much influenced by the ideas of Hobbes, Descartes, Spinoza, Collins and others. His title 'On Liberty and Necessity' is reminiscent of Hobbes's elaborate discussion with Bishop Bramhall on "The Question Concerning Liberty, Necessity and Chance".[1] Hobbes discussed the point from almost the same point of view as Hume does. In this essay, Hobbes remarked, "the distinction of free in to free from compulsion, and free from necessitation I acknowledge. For, to be free from compulsion is to do a thing so as terror be not the cause of his will to do it.... But free from necessitation, I say no man can

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1. The English Works of Thomas Hobbes: Edt. Sir W.M.Bart: Vol.V. 1839-45.

be and it is that which his lordship undertook to disprove."[1]

Similarly, in Hume, we find a distinction between freedom from compulsion and freedom from necessitation which he calls respectively freedom of spontaneity and freedom of indifference.

With reference to his predecessors, what Hume wrote concerning liberty and necessity, is not absolutely extraordinary, but his novelty lies in putting the whole controversy in a new light by giving a new definition of causal necessity. Hume for the first time points out that the whole controversy of freedom "has hitherto turned merely upon words." It arises from the ambiguous meanings of the terms used, and once the proper meanings are understood, the problem becomes what in the twentieth century has been called a pseudo-problem.

In considering Hume's theory of freedom, I should like to begin with a very brief sketch of his philosophical position for two reasons:

(1) First, a philosopher should be judged in his own terminological context which inevitably follows from his philosophical position. More or less, each philosopher has his own set of terms and meanings, especially suitable for the development of his premises. Unless we know these

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1. Ibid., p.248, No.XIX.

premises and assumptions, it is difficult to grasp what exactly he wants to say.

Hume has used words and terms in a very special sense, in the context of the problem of freedom. He has adopted a terminology quite appropriate for his empirical treatment. Hence, a retrospection of his philosophical position will help us to understand the reason for such specification of the meanings of words used.

(2) Second, in Hume's philosophy particularly, the idea of liberty is closely connected with the ideas of necessity and causality. These two ideas form the nucleus of Hume's philosophy, where they stand for definite meanings, peculiar to Hume himself and suitable for his main thesis. Speaking truly, Hume is more concerned with the idea of necessity than that of liberty. Both in "A Treatise of Human Nature",[1] and "Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding",[2] he has given considerable attention to the treatment of the idea of necessity. In the "Treatise", the essay on liberty and necessity appears under the general heading of "The will and direct passion". Later, in the "Enquiry", it supplements the chapter on necessary connection, and the relation between the two becomes more prominent and closer than in the "Treatise".

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1. A Treatise of Human Nature: D.Hume: Edt.L.A.Selby-Bigge, 1958.
2. Enquiries concerning Human Understanding: D.Hume, Edt. L.A.Selby -Bigge; 1902 (Second ed.)

Therefore, unless we know the proper implications of the principle of necessity as enunciated by Hume, we cannot expect a true understanding of his theory of liberty; and an understanding of the principle of necessity means going back to his philosophical position.

It is a legitimate question to ask why Hume feels an urge for the specification of the meanings of terms used in connection with the problem of freedom? The answer to this question lies in his philosophy as a whole.

Being a successor of the empirical trend of thought as introduced by Locke and others, Hume finds it inevitable to sacrifice the old rationalistic conception of cause, i.e. the cause , being a power, generates the effect and the relation between the two is a necessary relation. Hume's sole desire is to explain the concept of causality in terms of experience. His consistent empiricism demands a restriction of the meanings of the terms used in this context.

It would be a mistake if one thinks that Hume denies the causal relation as such. All that he wants, is to find out precisely what it is.

Hume says that the idea of causal connection is

derived from relations among objects, and these relations are those of contiguity, succession and necessary connection. Hume admits that although contiguity and succession are two factors involved in the idea of causal relation, they are only of secondary importance. "There is a necessary connection to be taken into consideration; and that relation is of much greater importance, than any of the other two above-mentioned."[1]

This shows that from the very beginning, Hume regards necessary connection as an essential factor of the notion of causation, and then he proceeds to explore its meaning. If we have an idea of necessary connection, then corresponding to that idea, there must be either an impression of sensation or of reflection, as all ideas, for Hume, are ultimately derived from impressions.

This attempt to find out the corresponding impression of the idea of necessity is proved indirectly. First of all, he tries to show that the so-called causal relation consists of nothing but a relation of constant conjunction between two objects, and then he claims that, since, this idea of constant conjunction cannot furnish us the idea of necessity the idea of necessity must be a determination of the mind.

Hume thinks that the principle of universal causation

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1. Treatise, Bk.I, P.III, Sec.2. p.77.

i.e. why every event should have a cause and why a particular cause must have a particular effect, is neither intuitively certain, nor demonstrable.[1] Its only support comes from experience. All that we get from experience is nothing but the order of contiguity and succession between two objects. The repetition of this order gives rise to a new relation. This is the constant conjunction between two objects. This experience of constant conjunction produces a sense of connection in our mind, which we designate as causal connection. One instance is not sufficient for this purpose, but several instances are necessary where the relations of contiguity and succession are preserved.

"The first time a man saw the communication of motion by impulse, as by the shock of two billiard balls, he could not pronounce that the one event was connected: but only that itwas conjoined with the other. After he has observed several instances of this nature, he then pronounces them to be connected."[2]

The only alteration which has taken place is: "Nothing but that he now feels these events to be connected in his imagination, and can readily foretell the existence of one from the appearance of the other."[3]

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1. Ibid., Sec.3, p.79.
2. Enquiry Sec.VII Part 2. p.75.
3. Ibid., p.76.

The notions of cause and effect, thus entirely depend upon the idea of constant conjunction. But from this idea of constant conjunction, it is not possible to derive the idea of necessary relation.

"From the mere repetition of any past impression, even to infinity, there never will arise any new original idea, such as that of a necessary connection, and the number of impressions has in this case no more effect than if we confined ourselves to one only."[1]

This is true not only of the impressions of sensation but also of reflection. "The will being here considered as a cause, has no more a discoverable connection with its effects, than any material cause has with its proper effect.... The actions of the mind are, in this respect, the same with those of matter. We perceive only their constant conjunctions; nor can we ever reason beyond it. No internal impression has an apparent energy more than external objects have."[2]

If the idea of necessary connection is derived neither from the impression of sensation, nor from that of reflection, then there cannot be such an idea. But Hume has already accepted the idea of necessary relation as an essential point in the notion of causation. Hence, in order to save the situation, he says that although there is no

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1. Treatise, Bk.I. P.3. Sec.VI. p.88.
2. Ibid., Appendix, pp.632-3.

impression as such, corresponding to the idea of necessary connection, we have it in the form of psychological determination on 'custom-bred-expectation."

Hume compares the idea of necessity with "propensity," which custom produces "to pass from an object to the idea of its usual attendant."[1] All that the human mind can discover by experience is nothing but a series of constant conjunctions between two objects or entities. On the basis of these constant conjunctions mind imagines that there is a necessary connection and infers the existence of one whenever it sees the other. Hence, if there is any necessity it comes from the mind of the observer; necessity does not lie in the nature of objects.

Thus, Hume denies the idea of necessity as an internal connection which can never be otherwise, and analyses its meaning into mere subjective determination. This, Hume has done in order to remain consistent with his empirical philosophy. His phenomenalism, so long consistent, cannot allow any other sense of necessity except that of psychological determination.

It is quite interesting to note that although Hume denies the rationalistic implication of the term 'necessity' he does not abandon the term itself. It would be less

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1. Ibid., Bk.I, P.3, Sec.XIV, p.167.

ambiguous if he would have used the phrase 'determination of the mind', or something like that, instead of 'Necessity', because that was all he wanted to mean by the term 'necessity'. But the continuous use of the term 'necessity' often gives rise to a false impression of Hume's doctrine.

The same ambiguity of language is present in the 'Treatise' as well as in the 'Enquiry'. For instance in Sec.VII, P.I, p.82, of the 'Enquiry', where he says that necessity is observable in the operations of the material objects, he makes use of the phrase "Determination by the energy of its cause". This shows that he is not free from the tendency to believe in causal energy or power, which elsewhere he denies.

Hume's idea of liberty is derived from this conception of necessity. His theory of liberty consists mainly in showing the operation of the principle of necessity in the case of human behaviour.

Hume seems to be very much impressed by the constancy of relations observed among physical objects. It is his view that to discuss the problem of liberty and necessity, one should start not from one's experience of soul and will, but of matter. Hume seems to have two oppositions in his mind. First, he wants to make clear a position which could

almost be described as materialistic and which conceives a necessary relation between two physical objects designated as cause and effect. Hume wants to show that from an empirical perspective it is not possible to perceive any necessary relation between two physical objects except that of constant conjunction. Secondly, he argues against the philosophers who failing to find out such a necessary relation between motive and action, form a conception of freedom of will. Hume points out very aptly that the idea of constant conjunction, which is equally present both in physical objects and voluntary actions, and which has become the ground for the formulation of physical necessity should also be a ground for the formation of the idea of mental necessity. Hume starts with matter, because the idea of necessity is easy to comprehend in the case of physical relations. In the physical world, in the operation of the bodies, no trace of liberty or indifference could be found. They are always governed by the principle of causal regularity or necessity.

Hume's formula for detecting necessity is to find out the presence of two factors, viz., "the constant union and the inference of the mind; and wherever we discover these, we must acknowledge a necessity."[1]

In the case of voluntary actions the same factors

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1. Treatise, Bk.II, P.3. Sec.I, p.400.

are detectable too. Our actions have a constant union with our motives and tempers. We always act on the basis of this constancy. Evidences can be shown from History, from the sameness of human nature and from the universality of motives and feelings. Since, one factor, constancy is present, it is also expected that another factor viz. the inference made by the mind, should also be present, and, as a matter of fact, it is present. The constant conjunction between motive and action does influence us to infer the existence of one from that of another, as it does in any physical operation. Whether in History, Politics or Morals, we always act on the basis of these two factors.

Hence, the relation between our motive and action is as necessary, as the causal relation between two physical objects. From this, Hume draws the conclusion that there is nothing like liberty or indifference in voluntary action. All human actions necessarily follow from their antecedents and if there is any irregular action, it is due to the secret operation of a concealed cause which the observer fails to notice.

Thus analysing the meanings of the terms 'necessity' and 'liberty', Hume declares that the problem of free-will arises from the ambiguity of the words used. Hume's hope is to clarify the issue by his own terminology, according to which,

"Necessity makes an essential part of causation and consequently liberty, by removing necessity, removes all causes, and is the very same thing with chance. As chance is commonly thought to imply a contradiction, and is at least directly contrary to experience, there are always the same arguments against liberty or free-will."[1] Hume is quite consistent so far as this terminology is concerned. It appears from what he says that there are two aspects of a causal situation: (1) the objective aspect consists of the constant conjunction of entities independent of any subjective determination, and (2) the subjective aspect consists of the determination of the mind which leads to the expectation of a future constancy between two entities already observed to be conjoined. By necessity, Hume means this subjective determination of the mind. On the other hand, by liberty Hume means freedom from necessity and, therefore, when it is allowed, it removes both necessity and causality, and becomes equivalent to chance.

When Hume says that liberty removes necessity, all that he should mean is the removal of the subjective aspect of causality viz. the determination of the mind. The objective aspect, viz., the regular sequence between two events known as cause and effect, remains as it is, and is not a bit shattered by the removal of necessity. This happens,

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1. Treatise, Bk.II, P.3, Sec.I, p.407.

because the necessity which Hume conceives is only a necessity of our subjective world, - a device of our language. But in the non-mental objective world, there is no such necessity.

For Hume, the events which lack this subjective determination are accidents. But when considered objectively, either all events are accidents or they are not. They can be called accidents because none of them is causally connected, since, causal connection is a mere psychological determination. Again, they cannot be called accidents, because none of them lack the relations of contiguity and succession, from which the idea of causal necessity is derived. If they are regularly contiguous and successive, they may remain so independent of our expectation. When considered subjectively, they appear quite different. The events which have been observed repeatedly, do not appear as accidents because, in their case the mental expectancy is already formed. But the events which unfortunately could not give rise to such mental expectancy by being objects of repeated observation, are known as accidents. Ofcourse, all these accidental events are mere negation for Hume. He does not allow the existence of accidents. Even where events appear to be accidental, they are actually due to the operation of some concealed causes. But explanation of facts with references to the concealed causes is rather a negative

device. It means explanation in terms of terms unknown. So long as one does not show that there are real causes behind such phenomena, it is no good saying that they are due to concealed causes. It adds nothing to one's argument. Hume's contention,however, is that there is nothing like chance or accident in the world of events - physical or mental. Every event is caused in the regularity sense. Either we do experience this regularity or do not. Where we experience it, we imagine and expect a future repetition, and this is all that is meant by necessity in Humean Terminology.

Quite clearly, Hume is making a distinction between logical necessity and necessity formed from the sense of regularity. In the former sense, it cannot but be, but in the latter sense, it is just a mental expection. Hence, to come back to our point, removal of this mental expectation does not in any way mean the removal of the regular sequence of events. For the latter in no way depends on the former. Nor does it mean a total looseness from the causal nexus.

It appears, that when Hume says that liberty removes necessity, he unconsciously means not only this subjective expectation, but also the objective regularity of events and that is why by "liberty from necessity" he means an indifference or a chance.

It is true that if there is no such expectation of

the mind for the constant conjunction of events in future, then it will no more be possible to go beyond the evidences of the senses. Such expectation produces a belief on the basis of which we can make inferences. But Hume cannot avoid this situation even if he retains necessity in the sense of subjective determination, and causality in the sense of regularity. The moment he has denied the logical necessity in causal situation, the door for probability is opened. No amount of the expectation of mind arising from the experience of regular sequence, can furnish the sufficient ground for the inference of the future from the past. There are both uniformities as well as non-uniformities in the experiences of the past, and moreover the proportion of the observed uniformities is so small in comparison with the vast and yet unknown regions of nature, that no universal absolute generalisation is possible from that experience.

It may be pointed out that the belief in the existence of the physical world, is, according to Hume, a belief constructed from these observed unities and regularities by the determination of the mind. If this determination is destroyed, and the sense of regularity with it, the idea of the entire physical world will be destroyed.

But if a belief in the external world is a composition of the mind, then the observed regularity is also

a composition of the mind. The regularity or the uniformity exists only for a mind which observes them. On the other hand, Hume thinks that the objects and events are in themselves discrete and separate from each other. The discreteness and the separateness are experienced by the same mine which has experienced the regularity of objects. Otherwise, one cannot know these two characteristics of objects. Hence, both discreteness as well as regularity are experiences of the mind. Sometimes experience reveals the 'looseness' of the objects, sometimes their regularity.

This shows that even if the sense of regularity is destroyed, together with the determination of the mind, the idea of the physical world will not be destroyed. In the absence of regularity, we can have an idea of a physical world which will contain discrete and isolated entities. In arguing against liberty, Hume rejects all sorts of immediate feeling of liberty. In the 'Treatise',[1] as well as in the 'Enquiry',[2] he mentions three sources of the origin of the idea of liberty. These are:

(1) The reluctance to believe that we are governed by necessity.

(2) The false sensation of liberty which we have in our mind, and,

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1. Treatise: Bk.II. Sec.II. pp.407-408.
2. Enquiry : Sec.VIII. P.I. 72, p.92.

(3) The belief that without it religion and morality will be impossible.

1. As to the first, such reluctance arises from the fact that men believe strongly that in the case of the physical objects, "they perceive something like a necessary connection between cause and effect." But in the operations of their own mind, "they feel no such connection of motive and action"; from this they conclude that there is a difference between the effects which result from material force and those which arise from thought and intelligence.

The type of necessity which Hume means here, is that which cannot but be, and the assumption which he makes here, is that the absence of this type is easily detectable in the case of motive and action. It is interesting to note that when Hume wants to deny logical necessity, he starts with the mind. But when he wants to assert necessity in the sense of regularity, he starts with the matter. The argument suggests, as if one can detect the presence of logical necessity in the case of matter. But that there could be a logical necessity in the case of matter, is totally rejected by Hume in the 'Enquiry'. The necessity, neither regular, nor logical, is easily discernible in the case of mental behaviour. Although the sense of regularity, on which Hume's idea of necessity is

based, is acknowledged by ordinary people including the 'poor artificer' of Hume who works on the assumption of this regularity between motive and action, yet the naive man does not bother much with the presence or absence of necessity of any type. This is, because sometimes we do act regularly, sometimes do not. The past regularity itself may be a cause of future deviation. All that a man does is that after discovering the regular sequence of physical objects, he anthropomorphically ascribes an element of compulsion to them, which he does not feel in his own case, and concludes accordingly, that his will is free and not governed by necessity. The reluctance comes from the absence of compulsion, not from the absence of logical necessity.

A. Flew, in his "Hume's Philosophy of Belief" remarks that the force of this argument "is considerably diminished by his failure ever to distinguish, explicitly between the sense of necessary connection in which he is denying the subsistence of such connections and the sense in which he is committed to affirming them."[1]

Such confusions between two senses of the term necessity - one the regularity sense in which Hume accepts it, and the other, the logical sense in which Hume denies it, arises from his reluctance to give up the term

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1. A.Flew: Hume's Philosophy of Belief : Ch.VII, p.150, 1961.

'necessity'. He wants to keep it in a specified sense which is completely different from its usual meaning. As a result, as A.Flew points out, "even if people feel no such connection of motive and action, they surely do at least feel a connection (in that other sense)...."[1]

2. The second source of the origin of the idea of freedom is a false sensation. Hume calls the idea of liberty a 'false' and 'seeming' idea. He says "in our reflections or in performing action we are sensible of some looseness or difference." We feel that our actions are subject to our will--and imagine--that the will itself is subject to nothing."[2]

We have already seen, that the sensation of 'looseness' is nothing but an experience just like the sensation of 'regularity'. If the experience of regularity is not a seeming experience, the experience of 'looseness' should not be a 'seeming' one. Moreover, even if we accept Hume's statement that, "we imagine, the will itself is subject to nothing", what we actually imagine is, not that the will is uncaused, but that it is free from compulsion, and as such it has no antagonism with what Hume wants to prove. Here, Hume misreads the 'naive' imagination.

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1. Ibid., p.151.
2. Treatise, Bk.II, Sc.II, P.III, p.408.

It is not very clear what Hume actually wants to mean by calling liberty a 'false idea'. Is it a false idea in the same sense in which the idea of logical necessity, when applied to facts and events, is? Even the idea of necessity, when taken in the regularity sense, is not in a better position than the idea of liberty. Both of them occupy the same status in the process of experience. Both are equally derived from experience - one from the experience of regularity in the sequence of events, and another from the experience of 'looseness' or 'indifference'. More precisely both are imaginations of the mind inspired by the data of experience. In one case, mind imagines a necessary relation and proceeds according to that, and in another case, mind imagines a sense of freedom and works according to that. As both these ideas are from incomplete observation, they are equally probable. They equally share the possibility of becoming a seeming experience in future. The only criterion which Hume, as an empiricist, has to judge the validity of the idea of liberty, is the criterion of experience. But experience fails to uphold the superior claim of the idea of necessity over the idea of liberty.

Hume says that the idea of liberty is a false idea, is evident from the following fact:
Every action can be studied in two ways:-

(a) by an agent and (b) by an observer. As an agent, one feels something like liberty, yet as an observer, one can easily see that the action is necessarily connected with and can be inferred from its preceding motives, dispositions etc.

It is rather strange that in all other cases of mental feelings one is supposed to be one's own best judge, except in this case of the feeling of so-called liberty. For instance, in the case of necessary relation, there is no necessary connection in the physical world, though one feels like that; again, in the case of liberty of spontaneity, one feels that there is no inner or outer compulsion. In all these cases what one feels is taken for granted, except in the case of the feeling of 'looseness' or 'indifference' in our actions.

Hume says that the causal regularity, if there is any, is not a quality present in the mind or the matter concerned, but belongs to the mind of the observer who may or may not be the agent. It consists of an inference made by the observer from the antecedent motives to the subsequent actions. Moreover, in the context of a particular motive, the observer is bound to infer a particular action. Determination enters in this way. Even if the observer fails to infer correctly, the failure does not mean that the

action has occurred by sheer chance. It is either due to a concealed cause or due to the failure of the observer to assess the situational conditions properly. This shows that all our actions are determined and not free in the sense of freedom from necessity, "and whatever capricious and irregular actions we may perform; as the desire of showing our liberty is the sole motive of our actions, we can never free ourselves from the bonds of necessity."[1]

There is no dispute, so far Hume wants to mean that all our actions are necessarily connected in a regular sequence with our motives and dispositions. But a problem arises when Hume claims that from the knowledge of these antecedents, the actions are in principle, predictable. Causal determinism, for Hume, means predictability. The condition of such prediction is that one has to know the antecedents exhaustively and accurately in every detail. This hypothetical claim is the main argument of Hume in favour of prediction.

If Hume can show that the conditions preceding a particular action are both 'in principle' as well as 'in fact' knowable, then his claim would be valid one. On the other hand, to invalidate Hume's claim one has to show that these conditions are both 'in fact' as well as 'in principle'

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1. Treatise: Bk.II. P.3. Sec.II. p.408.

unknowable. Not only that we do not know them, but also that we cannot know them. To prove that we cannot know them, is to prove that it is logically impossible to know them.

Hume's claim rests on the principle of mechanical causation. It was his desire to make a Newtonian science of human nature. According to mechanical determinism, the events and the objects of the universe are mechanically determined consequences, which are predictable from their antecedents with reference to some universal laws of nature. These physical events and objects are isolated and discrete, and static enough to be brought under some universal laws of nature. Hume considers mental events as isolated and discrete, and also believes that the generalization of their abstract characters is possible. Hence, quite logically, if one knows the conditions, one can predict the mental events. But there are certain basic differences between human motives and actions, and physical states or events. It is very doubtful whether the application of the principle of mechanical causation in the case of motive and action is not a category-mistake. Universal laws, like the laws of nature, in virtue of which we can predict a human action from its antecedent motives, are not easily obtainable. Psychical events - motives and dispositions are too complex to be generalized. Moreover, they are so interwoven, that

one cannot be abstracted from the others. The mechanical precision obtainable in the case of isolated physical events are completely lacking here. Because the mental events form a sort of unity from which it is not possible to isolate one single motive or action, nor are they mutually comparable and repetitive by nature. All these factors stand in the way of generalization. But unless there are such established general laws of mind, as laws of nature, prediction becomes impossible.

From the standpoint of Hume's psychological atomism, there is nothing logically wrong in saying that human actions are in principle predictable, but unless we can in fact make such predictions we cannot call it a valid principle. The idea of logical possibility becomes an empty idea, when it is not actually possible. We may have a logical principle, but we must have a practical principle to judge what is practically impossible and what is not. This is equivalent to saying that so long as the prediction is not verified, we cannot be certain that we have known all the relevant conditions determining the action. The causal connection is revealed completely only when what is predicted is actualised. It is only then we can know which of the conditions are necessary and which are not.

This happens because prediction always refers to the future. In future, there is always an openness for

possibilities. What has not yet happened, can be prevented or altered by the alteration of the conditions. But this is not the case with the past. What has already happened cannot now be otherwise. Here events are more or less fixed and stable. It is easy to look back and account for an event. Since there is an openness of possibilities in future, all that one can do is to say what are the possible results of a given cause. But one cannot accurately foretell which particular result or effect will follow.

The factor, which sometimes brings change in the conditions and thus makes it impossible to know them exhaustively, is the gap of time between prediction and the actualisation of the action. However brief and insignificant it may be, during this time-gap the situation may change. The subtle changes which may occur within this short period, are not easy to comprehend. In Hume's philosophy, this time-factor is not negligible, as the cause is always prior to the effect in time. Due to this time factor, the nature of the causal conditions always remains uncertain and difficult to be apprehended exhaustively.

The number of the conditions is another factor which often intervenes with their exhaustive knowledge. In order to make a certain prediction, one has to ascertain accurately that all positive conditions, which are necessary for the

occurrence of the action, are present, as well as all negative conditions which can hinder the occurrence, are absent, i.e. one has to know an infinite number of conditions, which is simply physically impossible to know.

There is another difficulty which is peculiar to human actions only. The prediction of an action can itself be a factor for the determination of the occurrence or non-occurrence of the action, e.g. on hearing the prediction that I shall vote for Labour, I may or may not change my mind.

It is true that in some cases, we can predict human action. But such cases are so limited in comparison with the number of cases where we cannot, that no generalization is possible. It is possible only so far as our experience goes. We cannot predict where the results are absolutely unknown. Where causes are permanent and static, and a sense of regularity is already formed, prediction is possible. But even there because of the factors mentioned before, one cannot be certain about the predicted result. Knowledge of the causal conditions can lead only to different degrees of probability, but not to absolute certainty. This is particularly true of all sorts of creative activity. They are causally determined, but at the same time, do not follow in a regular sequence from the preceding conditions. They are determined without being predictable.

All these show that Hume's hypothetical claim that human action is in principle predictable, is only an empty claim leading to innumerable difficulties in practice.

Even if it is allowed that it is possible to know the causal conditions accurately, there is another difficulty concealed in the idea of the liberty of spontaneity as formulated by Hume.

After showing that the liberty of indifference, being opposite to causal necessity, is a myth, Hume says that the only sense in which freedom can be allowed, is the liberty of spontaneity which is freedom from compulsion or constraint. By calling it 'spontaneous' Hume means that it springs from one's own inclinations and tendencies. Hume calls this a hypothetical liberty consisting of the power of acting or not-acting according to the determinations of our will. Liberty does not consist for Hume in making a choice between two or more alternatives, but it is an ability to act as one wishes. In this sense only, liberty is compatible with determinism and consistent with the idea of necessity.

There is nothing to dispute with this primary sense of liberty. It is true, that I can act, or not, according to my own determinations, and thus enjoy the liberty of spontaneity, while my action is fully caused by its

antecedent conditions. But the idea of the liberty of spontaneity is not as simple as Hume makes it appear to be, and it is doubtful how far the distinction between the liberty of spontaneity and the liberty of indifference can be maintained.

What Hume wants to mean by liberty of spontaneity is that, if I choose to remain at rest, I may, or if I choose to move, I also may. This, he says, is universally allowed to all, who is not a prisoner or in chains. This means that if I move, the cause of my movement is my choosing to move. That is, my choice is the determining cause of my movements. In Hume's theory of causal regularity there is no break. Hence, my choice is equally caused by some other mental factors, like 'I have chosen to choose to be at rest', or some non-mental factors like circumstances, environment, heredity, etc. The difficulty with Hume is this; in speaking of liberty of spontaneity, he does not go beyond the jurisdiction of conscious motives. But our motives can be traced back to external as well as internal factors which are ultimately beyond our control. When these factors are given, a particular action of mine must follow necessarily, and no question of my "choosing to remain at rest or to move" arises. Under the given circumstances, the action must follow, or I have so to choose, whatever it may be.

A.Flew says that from this it does not follow that I

could not have decided otherwise. I could, had some one given me good reasons.[1] This claim actually suggests an alteration of the antecedent conditions when some one gives me 'good reasons' in favour of doing otherwise, it may lead to a change of my psychological or physiological conditions which will make me to do otherwise. But Hume believes in predictability which demands a constancy of the causal conditions. Prediction is possible only when conditions are static and stable enough. Hence, the alteration of the precedent conditions which Flew suggests, is not possible in Hume's theory.

Moreover, "I could have done otherwise, if I had chosen" - this statement is meaningless in the context of Hume's theory. To know the conditions exhaustively, is to know that there can be only one possible effect of these conditions. There cannot be room for any other result or any chance of the action being otherwise. The person who acts under such conditions, is not a 'free' person; he cannot do otherwise even if he is free from compulsion.

Freedom, for Hume, means a feeling of non-coercion. I can move my hand this way or that way, and nobody compels me in doing that. This feeling of non-coercion is felt by me. I am the agent here. But what is the guarantee that my

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1. A.Flew: Hume's Philosophy of Belief, Ch.VII, p.156.

feeling is not a "seeming idea" of a pseudo-liberty? That I am not a reliable judge, Hume has proved in the case of liberty of indifference, where I feel a sense of 'looseness'. Similarly, the feeling of non-compulsion may be a seeming experience. It is quite possible that there is an inner compulsion which I am not conscious of. Instead of external coercion, there may be psychological coercion, such as persuasion, suggestion etc., which are really beyond our control. Moreover, with the advance of psychological and physiological knowledge, the possibility of an action's being otherwise gradually diminishes.

This shows, that in the background of his conception of causal regularity, what Hume calls the liberty of spontaneity, when analyzed properly, either leads to strong determinism and is not freedom at all, or if we want to make it freedom proper, it becomes equivalent to freedom of indifference.

3. As to the third: according to Hume, the idea of liberty arises from a common belief that the ascription of moral responsibility demands freedom of action. Unless a man is free to act, he cannot be held responsible for his action. Hume argues that far from being incompatible with determinism, moral responsibility demands it; i.e. the ideas of liberty and necessity, in the restricted sense prescribed

by Hume, are indispensable for morality and religion. This view has influenced many of the later philosophers who have developed and elaborated it in their own way.

Hume says, if freedom means freedom from necessity, then free actions are non-caused actions without any link with the motive, dispositions and nature of the agent. Hence, he should not be held responsible for them. If so, then "it would be impossible to praise or blame, to punish or reward a man, because it would be connected with nothing permanent in his nature."

What Hume wants to suggest is that, in order to call a person morally responsible, (a) all his actions must be causally linked with his motives, dispositions, and character, and (b) he must remain the same person.

If these two suppositions are denied, then "a man is as pure and untainted, after having committed the most horrid crime, as at the first moment of his birth." The third suggestion is that (c) like the laws of nature, there are laws of mind stating in universal terms that similar motives have similar and uniform effects on the mind, in similar circumstances. So far as the first suggestion is concerned, Hume makes a confusion between 'having a cause' and 'being in character'. It is true, that every action has a set of sufficient conditions in the sense that it is

caused by them. But it is not essentially true that action should always be linked up with the character-traits of the agent. For instance, a truly honest man can deceive a person, a thief can check his temptation. Such actions cannot be predicted from the established character of the person involved, although it may be easy to account for them, to give sufficient reasons.

Hume says that "the action is caused" means "it is always connected with a motive in our mind", and hence in that sense necessary. When we act capriciously in order to show our freedom of action, there also is a motive which is motive for the display of our freedom. If we take 'motive' in the literal sense, it is doubtful how far we can say that all our actions have antecedent motives. There are actions which we perform without any definite motive or intention, e.g. accidentally I shoot a man without the least intention of killing him.

The second suggestion is clearly incompatible with Hume's notion of personal identity. It suggests the idea of permanent self underlying the 'perishing' actions, which is most uncommon in Humean philosophy. According to Hume, a person is nothing but a bundle of different perceptions in a constant state of change. It is not necessary to have any

permanent element in order to call a person the same person. The idea of a permanent self is a confusion between two ideas of diversity and identity. The identity of the self or mind is fictitious for Hume. They lack any constant character. Moreover, it is not absolutely necessary that in order to blame or reward a person he must have something permanent in his nature. In practice, we often blame people for actions which are not linked with their permanent nature. For instance, when an honest man steals once in his life, for the first time. That incident has no connection with his permanent nature, nor is he the same person which he was before, or will be afterwards. Still we blame him for what he did. Hence, the permanent character of the self is not essential for reward or punishment. Hume could have shown this quite easily, but in his zeal of applying the principle of necessity to human action, he contradicts his own theory of personal identity. So far as the third suggestion is concerned, no generalisation of mental behaviour is possible

Hume himself raises certain objections against his theory, but fails to answer them properly.

Hume realises that his principle of necessity leads to a position where the "ultimate author of all our volitions" is God, "who first bestowed motion on this immense machine, and placed all beings in that particular position, whence every subsequent event, by an inevitable

necessity must result."[1] This objection, according to Hume consists of two parts:

(a) "that if human actions can be traced up, by a necessary chain, to the Deity, they can never be criminal", and

(b) if they are criminal, God is the ultimate author of guilt.

The answer to this objection, which Hume tries to give is neither sufficient, nor plausible enough. To speak candidly it is no answer at all. In his eloquent language, he poses an answer but he himself is quite conscious of its inadequacy. He fails to reconcile his principle of necessity with these theological questions. His first answer is stoic in character - that everything good and evil, is good as an element in the whole, and in the long run. But he also admits that "though this topic is specious and sublime, it was soon found in practice weak and ineffectual."

His second answer is an admission - admission of the philosopher's inability to solve how "God can be the cause of all actions without being the author of moral evil." Hume is a bit ironical here. Many of the later critics have considered this last argument of Hume's theory of liberty and necessity as the weakest one. They have tried to show that Hume has failed to answer the question properly.

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1. Enquiry, Sec.VIII, P.II, 78, p.100.

But Hume is more interested in showing the efficacy of causal principle in the case of human action, than in theological speculations. He admits, that as a philosopher his "true province" is "the examination of common life", and he remains satisfied with its difficulties.

After considering all these arguments we are left with one point, viz. that the problem of liberty is, as Hume calls it, a verbal problem. For Hume, the problem centres round the meanings of the terms used and it can be solved by a consideration of these meanings and implications. The problem rests on a misconception of the natures of liberty and necessity and once the misconception is corrected the problem becomes unreal.

Hume seems to be wrong in his estimation of the problem, and his difficulty arises from this wrong estimation. In every philosophical problem one has to use concepts which need clarification. Analysis of these concepts gives rise to certain amount of verbal explanation. It involves elimination of verbal ambiguities, specification of the conceptual meanings etc. Every philosophical problem is verbal from this point of view. But this does not mean that they are essentially verbal and therefore at bottom, no problem at all. It is a general and misleading tendency to

regard all conceptual problems as verbal and therefore 'pseudo'.

The point is this, that in spite of his clarification of the meanings of the terms used, Hume is far from the solution of the problem. He is right so far as he points out that if an action does not causally follow from previous motive and disposition, it will be equivalent to chance, and this is not the freedom what is demanded by moral responsibility. Hence, if anyone thinks that free-will means freedom from causal continuity, then it is a pseudo-problem.

But the notion of moral responsibility not only demands that the action must causally follow from the 'character' of the person, but also that 'the action could have been otherwise'. The Humean empiricism with its causal regularity finds difficulty to tackle with this last factor. In Humean philosophy, since there is an unbreakable causal continuity, the action could never be otherwise. Although Hume always insists that his idea of necessity is necessity in its lowest degree, i.e. a mere expectation based on regularity, but in practice, he always uses the term in its strongest sense leaving no room for an uncaused event - or an event's being otherwise. Hence, by calling the problem verbal, he has, indirectly chosen one of the two extremes which he wants to reconcile. He moulds the problem in his

own empirical fashion and answers it in his own way, which is not always very conclusive.

CHAPTER II

JOHN STUART MILL

John Stuart Mill is more famous and well-known for his views on political liberty than for his conception of freedom of the will. The latter is only an incidental and supplementary development in connection with the account of causation. His conception of free-will was first expressed in his 'System of Logic' under the title of "Of Liberty and Necessity"[1] which clearly indicates Humean and the Hobbesean inclinations. Later in "An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy",[2] he criticised the idea of the freedom of will as held by Sir William Hamilton and forwarded his own opinion on the matter. These later views are nothing but the enlargement and elaboration of his earlier views. The only difference is that here he gives more importance to the moral side of the question.

Mill follows the tradition of British Empiricism which Hobbes, Locke and Hume had established. Like Hume, he treats the problem of free-will from a consistent empiricist's standpoint. Like Hume again, he feels it necessary to define the terms generally involved in the problem of freedom. These terms are: causality, necessity,

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1. A System of Logic, Bk.6. Ch.II, 9th ed. 1875.
2. An Examination of Sir W. Hamilton's Philosophy, Ch.XXVI, p.564 (6th ed.) 1889.

predictability and liberty. It is his idea also, although he does not suggest it explicitly, that the problem of freedom is a problem of the ambiguities of the meanings of the terms used. Once these meanings are clarified, Determinism becomes compatible with human freedom. Mill's treatment of the problem is entirely Humean, except for a few qualifications which he adds here and there.

Before I enter into the detailed analysis of Mill's theory of freedom, I wish to point out the inconsistencies of his language when he describes the ideas of causality and necessity in connection with the freedom of the will.

Mill's theory of causation is an attempt to develop the commonsense view in a consistent way. Causation for him is nothing but a regular sequence observable among phenomena. He says that experience does not show any causal nexus or sufficient reason in the cause, but only an invariable sequence.[1] In the beginning of his essay, "Of Liberty and Necessity" he asks the question whether the law of causality applies in the same strict sense to human action as it is to other phenomena, and his answer is positive. He regards this question as the basic problem of the freedom of will.

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1. Ibid., Ch.XXVI, p.576.

Mill next proceeds to discard the idea of necessity in the sense of a mysterious constraint. He says:

(i) If necessity means such a mystical tie "then" the doctrine is not true of human action; but neither is it then true of inanimate objects. It would be more correct to say that matter is not bound by necessity than that mind is so."[1]

(ii) Just like Hume, Mill thinks that "Some form of necessity is suggested by our collective experience of life" ... and ... "any necessity other than the unconditional universality of the fact we know nothing of...."[2]

(iii) In his "A System of Logic", Mill makes a distinction between causality and necessity. Mill thinks that the whole problem of the freedom of will arises from a confusion between the meanings of necessity and causality. He says, "I am inclined to think that this error is almost wholly an effect of associations with a word; and that it would be prevented, by forbearing to employ, for the expression of the simple fact of causation, so extremely inappropriate a term as Necessity." He says, "Causation is uniformity of sequence" but "necessity is more than this. It implies irresistibleness".[3]

(iv) A few lines after this assertion, Mill adds a

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1. Logic. p.423.
2. An Examination of W.Hamilton's Philosophy: Ch.XXVI,p.576.
3. Logic, p.424.

qualification to the idea of necessity. He says, necessity is of two types; (a) one is subject to counteraction and (b) another which is not subject to counteraction. Human action, according to Mill, belongs to the first category. "When the idea of necessity is applied to the human will, "it only means that the given cause will be followed by the effect, subject to all possibilities of counteraction by other causes. But in common use it stands for the operation of those causes which are supposed ~~to be~~ too powerful to be counteracted at all."[1]

From (i) and (ii) it appears that by necessity, Mill means a constant conjunction or a regular sequence of events, and as such causality and necessity are equivalent. But in (iii), calling necessity 'irresistible', he makes a distinction between the ideas of causality and necessity, and by 'necessity' means only the second type of necessity which he mentions in (iv). In (iii), causal relation seems to be resistible whereas necessary relation is not. But in (iv), we are told, that in causation, there may be two different types of necessity - subject to counteraction or not subject to counteraction. This means that necessity not only means 'irresistibleness', but also 'resistibleness', i.e. sometimes it is unconditional necessity and sometimes

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1. Ibid., p.424.

it is a conditional one. These lines are in direct contradiction with what Mill has said in (iii). Mill gives two instances to clarify these two types of necessity. Death for want of food or air is the example of unavoidable necessity, whereas death from poison is the example of avoidable necessity. Mill says, in the latter case death can be avoided by means of a stomach pump.

It is difficult to see the distinction between these two examples. If conditions remain the same, the death from poison is as unavoidable as the death from want of food or air. If conditions change, if in the case of death from poison, we can use a stomach pump and thus can avoid the result, then in the case of death from want of air, we can also use an oxygen cylinder and thus may avoid the necessary result. It would have been better if Mill had cited death only as an example of irresistible necessity. The necessity in the sense of unavoidability which must follow whatever may be the conditions, is not easy to be found. Even in the case of material operations, we find conditional necessity which is always subject to counteraction. Of course, Mill does not think that this irresistible necessity is difficult to find. On the contrary, he speaks of the 'agencies of nature which are really uncontrollable."[1]

It is clear from what has been said before, that

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1. Ibid., p.424.

Mill makes a distinction between the agencies operating in the case of human action, and the agencies of nature. The latter is uncontrollable, whereas the false sense of uncontrollableness in the former arises from the use of the same terms in both the cases. The causal principle which operates in the case of human action varies according to the variation of the preceding circumstances. The action follows necessarily, only when the cause is not controlled by some other causes. Human actions "are never (except in some cases of mania) ruled by any one motive with such absolute sway that there is no room for the influence of any other."[1] From this point of view "any given effect is only necessary provided that the causes tending to produce it are not controlled."[2]

Mill hesitates to call this resistible regularity or causal connection by the name of necessity. Mill says, "That whatever happens could not have happened otherwise unless something had taken place which was capable of preventing it, no one surely needs hesitate to admit. But to call this by the name of necessity is to use the term in a sense so different from its primitive and familiar meaning, from that which it bears in the common occasions of life as to amount almost to play upon words."[3]

This distinction between physical and mental cause on

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1. Ibid., p.425.
2. Ibid., p.425.
3. Ibid., p.425.

the basis of unavoidability and avoidability, is not really tenable. The physical necessity is as subject to the variations of conditions as mental necessity is. It is true, that, in the case of physical operations, sometimes causes are beyond our controlling capacity. But this does not mean that they are essentially irresistible, and independent of all conditional variations.

Even if we accept this basic difference between the mental and the material cause, it will put us in another difficulty. Both Hume and Mill accept the regular sequence of material objects as the standard case of causality and necessity. Then they draw a comparison between physical regularity and that of mental phenomena, and finding that they are similar in all respects, conclude that since, in the one case we can predict with accurate precision, in the other case we can also make similar predictions. This conclusion rests on the presupposition that the regular sequence observed in both the cases are similar. Mill says: "Volitions do, in point of fact, follow determinate moral antecedents with the same uniformity and (when we have sufficient knowledge of the circumstances) with the same certainty, as physical effects follow their physical causes." Here "the results are as uniform and as accurately foretold, as in any physical enquiries in which the effect depends upon a multiplicity of causes." And, "... the cases in which

volitions seem too uncertain to admit of being confidently predicted, are those in which our knowledge of the influences antecedently in operation is so incomplete, that with equally imperfect data there would be the same uncertainty in the prediction of the astronomer and the chemist."[1] Mill concludes, "a volition is a moral effect which follows the corresponding moral causes as certainly and invariably as physical effects follow their physical causes."[2]

All these statements are inconsistent with the distinction that Mill made between resistible mental agencies and irresistible physical agencies. If they are really different, then the possibility of making accurate predictions in one case cannot be a guarantee of making such predictions in the other.

Like Hume, Mill believes in the predictability of human action. Human action is predictable with as much certainty as can be done in the case of physical events, provided one knows the preceding conditions. Mill takes this proposition as a "mere interpretation of universal experience, a statement in the words of what everyone is internally convinced of."[3]

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1. An Examination of Sir. W.Hamilton's Philosophy, p.577.
2. Ibid., p.578.
3. Logic. p.422.

As to the interpretation of universal experience it can be said that our experience provides not only the information of successful prediction but also that of unsuccessful falsified prediction. In some cases we believe in the possibility of prediction, in some other cases, we do not. An interpretation of experience gives evidences for both sides. It is much easier to show that human behaviour in general, is predictable. But it is difficult to prove this of individual behaviour. For instance, it is easy to predict how the average intelligent human beings would behave in a certain situation than to say how x would behave in that situation. Experience supplies arguments in favour of both. As Professor Ramsey says, "... unpredictability seems to arise only because we are too easily content with a restricted number of cause factors. In the same way ... predictability may seem to arise when we are too easily content with an imperfect description of a certain situation."[1]

Hence an appeal to "the interpretation of universal experience" does not place the necessitarians in a better position.

Mill claims that the prediction of human action could be as accurate and precise as that of physical phenomena. Such precise prediction can be made only on the

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1. I.T. Ramsey: Freedom and Immortality, Ch.I, p.16 Date 1960.

basis of a necessary relation between cause and effect. In Mill's theory, the term 'necessity' is used in the regularity sense. So far as our experience goes, A is regularly followed by B. When one predicts, one does that on the basis of this regularity. Regarding this regularity, Mill says that we do not know whether it 'must' be so, but it always 'does' so. If we make prediction on the basis of this regularity which refers only to past and present states of affairs, our prediction will not be precise and accurate knowledge of the future - but just an expectation, a shaky belief.

Prediction, on the basis of regularity, would be accurate, if the future is always the repetition of the past. But there are cases of mental phenomena where such repetition is completely absent. For instance, when I am writing a poem for the first time in my life, there is no observable regularity behind, on the basis of which prediction can be made as to why I use a particular image to describe a situation, and not the others. Again, even if I had been writing poetry for a long time, and had used one particular image on several occasions, nobody can predict on the basis of this, that, in future, I shall use the same image on a similar occasion. It may happen that being tired of the past image, I apply a new one. Of course, according to Mill, one could have done that if one knew the

new motive. But, in practice, such knowledge is not possible when one proceeds on the basis of mere regularity.

It is true that in many cases we do predict on the basis of regularity, and sometimes the causal connections are explicable only in terms of regularity. Yet, the predictions based on regularity tend to be inaccurate whereas the predictions based on necessity are not. The reason for this is that, in a regular sequence, the cause and effect are treated as isolated and discrete units, which are connected only temporally and sometimes spatially too, e.g. "the cloud is followed by the rain" or "the flesh divided and the blade went in between the divided parts".*

In these cases, the cause is simply an incident which regularly precedes the effect. Nothing is suggested more than this. On the basis of this type of regularity, "taking my brief-case in my hand" is as much a cause of "my going out" (as they follow in a regular order for a pretty long time, and sometimes one can be predicted from the other) as 'cloud' is the cause of 'rain'.

Such regular sequences cannot afford a sure basis for prediction. In order to predict correctly we must have a knowledge of the whole situation that goes beyond mere regularity. This means that the cause-event and the effect-event are brought under a theory, or more precisely, are

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* I owe this example to Prof. H.B.Acton.

explained by means of a law.

In the phenomenal world, the logical necessity like 2+2 = 4 is hardly obtainable, but still, the cause-effect relation, although contingent, is something more than a regular sequence. As Mr. N.R. Hanson puts it, "No case of saying truly that X is the cause of Y is a case of just having seen X and Y are related temporally and spatially. It is also a case of seeing that since X is the kind of thing that it is, Y is just what might have been expected to happen.[1] Hence, prediction of the effect, from the cause is justifiable and guaranteed only when they are brought under a theory. A cause in order to be a cause, presupposes a theory. It can be said against this that what we call a theory or law of the phenomenal order, is nothing but a generalization of several instances of regularity. This may be true. But when the relation of cause and effect is explained by means of a theory, much more is suggested regarding the nature of the cause (as to why it stands in such a relation with the effect which in future can serve as a ground for prediction), than what is done in mere regular sequence.

Referring to the theistic belief, Mill says that if freedom of will is consistent with Divine foreknowledge,

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1. N.R. Hanson: Causal Chains : Mind: 1955, p.299.

then it can be consistent with any other foreknowledge. On the basis of this, he suggests that, in an agent-observer situation, it is possible for the agent to enjoy freedom of action, whereas at the same time, the observer can predict his action in every detail. But, Divine foreknowledge if there is any, is not on the same level with ordinary human foreknowledge. The latter requires justification from experience, the former does not. This is rather a particular theological proposition which does not help the necessitarians very much.

Like Hume, Mill does not believe in the existence of freedom which is opposite to causal necessity. With Sir William Hamilton, he agrees that the real supposition of the free-will doctrine is that our volitions are uncaused.

It is interesting to note the comment of 'An Inquirer' in this matter. 'The Inquirer' says that the free-will doctrine does not mean that our volitions are uncaused but that they are caused by 'me'.[1] But the 'Inquirer' has misunderstood Mill, and I agree with Mill that nothing is really gained by calling 'I' the cause of our volitions. When we say that 'I' am the cause of a particular volition, what we really mean is that a desire or motive of mine is the cause of that volition. Any change in my desire, will

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1. The Battle of the Two Philosophies by An Inquirer p.45. Pub. 1866.

be followed by a change in my volition. But if we want to mean that the volition changes even when the 'I' (including all desires and motives) remains unchanged and static, then the changed volition is really uncaused.

Mill gives us two reasons for our belief in the freedom of the will: (1) Our instinctive consciousness of freedom and (2) the feeling that the denial of freedom degrades our moral nature. Mill analyses both these two sources and shows that they are insufficient to prove the justifiability of our belief in the freedom of will in the sense of freedom from causal necessity.

As to the first, Mill follows more or less, the same line of argument as that offered by Hume. He says, that, believing that there is something more in a causal connection, some mysterious bond, than mere regularity, and finding the absence of such mysterious bond in the case of volitions, people conclude that they are not compelled to obey any particular motive, they are free. But this is a pseudo-feeling of freedom. Mill says, that if feeling of liberty is true, then "Our internal consciousness tells us that we have a power, which the whole outward experience of the human race tells us that we never use."[1] Mill analyses very clearly this pseudo-feeling of freedom. He asks the question, is it really the freedom of the will of which we

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1. An Examination of Sir. W.Hamilton's Philosophy, p.578.

are directly conscious, or are we conscious of moral responsibility in which the idea of freedom is implied?

Mill first takes up the proposition that we are directly conscious of free-will. This consciousness arises from the fact, as Mansel says, that conditions remaining the same, we can choose A today, and B tomorrow. But here, Mill rightly points out, although the antecedent conditions are not altered, what has altered is our judgment of these conditions. If our judgment remains the same, together with the conditions, we shall not be able to choose B tomorrow. Hence, whenever there is a change in our choice, the change is not due to chance, but either it is due to a change of the external conditions or a change of our mental attitude. Of course it is true that the Libertarians,when they say 'we can choose A today, and B tomorrow', they do not mean that it is due to chance. All that they mean is that it is determined by the self. But the 'determination of the self' means, either, the self itself is again caused by some other factors external to the self, or the self is not caused by anything else. The former is against the Libertarian theory, and the latter is equivalent to saying, as the Determinists have shown, that there is a break in the causal nexus or an accident, i.e. a chance.

Mill's argument against the direct consciousness of free-will is as follows:

"To be conscious of free-will, must mean, to be conscious, before I have decided, that I am able to decide either way.... Consciousness tells me what I do or feel. But what I am able to do, is not a subject of consciousness. Consciousness is not prophetic; we are conscious of what is, not of what will or can be. We never know that we are able to do a thing, except from having done it, or something equal and similar to it. We should not know that we were capable of action at all, if we had never acted. Having acted we know, as far as that experience reaches, how we are able to act; and this knowledge, when it has become familiar, is often confounded with, and called by the name of, consciousness."[1]

The implications of this passage are threefold:

(1) The statement 'I can decide ...' is an ability-statement and therefore cannot be obtained prior to experience.

(2) Being an ability-statement, it does not describe any state of consciousness, and,

(3) It is hypothetical, not categorical, i.e. it always refers to past or future conditions.

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1. An Examination of Sir W.Hamilton's Philosophy, p.580.

(1) As to the first, if the statement 'I can decide' means 'I am able to decide', then it is true that we cannot be conscious of our abilities unless we have exerted them. To use Mill's example, "If we are born with a cataract, we are not conscious previous to being couched, of our ability to see."[1] This is true of all of our primitive and first experiences. Unless we learn to walk, we are not conscious of our ability of walking, although we may know what it means from the walking of other people. It is only after experiencing the exercise of an ability, that we become conscious of the ability. To a grown-up man, no consciousness of his own abilities is primitive and first in this sense, in which it is 'first' to a child who is learning everything through experience. There is nothing absolutely 'new' and 'first' to a man. In every situation where constraint or compulsion is absent, we know that we can decide either way, before we have decided. Thus what is obtained from experience, later becomes a part of our permanent knowledge.

Mill is right when he says that sometimes this acquired knowledge of abilities is confounded with direct consciousness or awareness. But it must be pointed out that by consciousness of free-will, Hamilton, Mansel and others, do not mean any innate or inborn idea prior to experience. Hence, the question at issue is, not whether ability-

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1. Ibid., Note. p.581.

statements like 'I can decide' are prior to experience, but whether they can describe any state of consciousness.

(2) This refers to the second implication. It is difficult to determine whether a statement like 'I can decide' describes a state of consciousness, because the meaning of the verb 'can', as used by Mill, is not very explicit. P.P. Alexander, in his criticism of Mill, says, "According to Mill, we know that we are able to act, but have no consciousness of being able, though how this should be unless knowledge is denied as a mode of consciousness, Mr. Mill has omitted to explain."[1] Here Alexander regards knowledge of an ability as equivalent to a mode of consciousness; and this is what Mill seems to have opposed in his theory.

It appears from what Mill says, that the verb 'can' in 'I can decide' is a dispositional verb. It implies an ability. It means that 'I know, I shall be able to decide....', and knowledge of an ability does not describe any present mental state, but only a particular disposition to act in a particular way. Here Mill anticipates Ryle and Austin. In the languages of Ryle and Austin, 'can' stands for a "capacity verb" or a "performative word". To say, 'I can decide' does not entail a state of consciousness of actual

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1. P.P. Alexander: Mill and Carlyle, p.23, 1866.

decision or the opposite. This is what Mill means when he says that consciousness tells us what 'is'. The capacity of making a decision, being an ability, cannot be given by direct consciousness. He says "Ability and force are not real entities, which can be felt as present when no effect follows. They are abstract names for happening of the effect on the occurrence of the needful conditions, or for our expectation of its happening."[1]

Granted that free-will cannot be obtained from direct consciousness, what is the ultimate outcome of Mill's contention? It seems to me that all that Mill wants to discard is the idea that free-will can be apprehended by a single mental action. The ability to decide or any other ability is not a type of being which can be apprehended by a single conscious state of the mind. But this cannot disprove the idea of free-will as such. The notion of free-will may not be derived from direct consciousness. But, since, to know something is to know it as true, if the ability of making decision is known to us, then this knowing cannot but be true. Without the ability of decision, we cannot decide either way, and it does not matter, how we come to know the ability.

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1. An Examination of Sir W.Hamilton's Philosophy, p.581 note.

(3) The third implication is the outcome of the second one. If the statement, 'I can decide' is an ability-statement and does not describe a state of consciousness, but a disposition, then it is conditional. It means that such a statement is hypothetical referring either to a past conditional or to a future one. 'I can decide' either means, 'I can, if I have experience', or 'I can, if I try'. In each of the two cases, it is assumed that the if-clause stands for a conditional clause.

It is a general way of expressing the dispositional statements in terms of the verb 'can', and can-statements are generally thought to involve 'if-clauses'. They are supposed to be incomplete without the 'if-clauses'. For instance, "I am able to swim" means "I can swim", which again means "I can, if I know or if doctor gives me permission."

The difficulty of attaching an 'if-clause' with the can-statement is that there remains always a temptation to consider this as a causal-condition. If, the 'if' of a can-statement is always a causal conditional, then denial of the consequent will always mean the denial of the antecedent and vice versa. For instance, if the 'if' of "I can swim, if I know" is a conditional if then "I cannot swim" will mean "I do not know swimming", and again "I do not know swimming" will mean "I cannot swim". But in the

statement, 'I can, if I try', the denial of 'I can' does not mean that I have not tried. Nor does the denial of the antecedent 'if I try', mean that 'I cannot'. It simply means that 'I can, whether I try or not, i.e. I am able to'. This is what Austin means when he says that 'can' is not always conditional or subjunctive, but sometimes indicative too. Moreover, the 'if' here, is not always an 'if' of causal condition, it may be an 'if' of, doubt, hesitation or stipulation.[1]

Austin has shown that verbs like 'can' which are supposed to imply an 'if clause', can also occur without an 'if-clause'. "For let the verb in question be to X: then we shall never say simply 'I X', but always 'I X if I Y': but then also, according to the accepted rules, if it is true that 'I X if I Y', and also true (which it must surely sometimes be) that 'I do, in fact, Y', it must surely follow 'I X', simpliciter,without any 'if' about it any longer."[2]

It is true that these 'can' and 'could have' statements can be expressed in a subjunctive mood with an if-condition. For instance, 'I can decide' may be analysed into

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1. J.L. Austin: Ifs and Cans : Proceedings of British Academy: Vol.XLII, 1956, pp.115-117.
2. Ibid., p.118.

'I shall, if I try'. But still 'I can' does not always lead to 'I shall ...if'. Austin gives another example in support of this: "'I can hole it this time', does not mean that I shall hole it this time if I try or if anything else: for I may try and miss, and yet not be convinced that I couldn't have done it;"[1]

The point is this, that here Austin has used 'can' in a general sense. The statement 'I can hole it' means I am able to hole it or I am usually able to hole it, if I try. But here, it also means, that I can hole this type of thing or whatever it may be. In this case, even if I fail, my failure does not disprove my ability.

But there are cases where 'can' is used to mean a particular specific action. In that case, 'I am able to hole it' means that I am able to hole only this and here failure means I have not the ability to hole it. In the latter case, when 'if' is used, it stands for a causal conditional, but this does not happen in the case of the former.

Hence, it can be concluded, that, though the first two contentions of Mill are correct, the last one is not so. Mill has suggested the conditional use of the verb 'can', but it need not be always conditional. The can-statements

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1. Ibid., p.119.

being ability-statements, can be expressed in terms of 'shall ... if', but this is not universally true; nor the 'if', used in such expression, always refers to a past or future conditional.

In the beginning, Mill was not free from the idea of the direct consciousness of the free-will. In "A System of Logic", he spoke of "a feeling of moral freedom of which we are conscious of"[1] and of "a practical feeling of free-will common in a greater or less degree to all mankind." Again, in the introduction of his essay 'On Social Freedom', he has expressed similar views. He thought that the belief in free-will is not based upon any process of logical argumentation but on some immediate or spontaneous sense, on some movement of consciousness. Men believe that they are free ... mainly because they cannot help believing it.[2]

All these statements are inconsistent with what Mill wants to establish so forcefully in "An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy", although Mill himself denied that there was any inconsistency or incompatibility

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1. Logic. p.427.
2. Mill: on Social Freedom. p.33. (Reprinted 1941 - by D. Fosdick). (This essay was not published during Mill's life-time, and is hardly mentioned in any study of Mill's work, or in his Bibliography; the exact year when it was written can not be known. Moreover, the tone of the essay differs from his earlier writings. All these make it doubtful whether Mill wrote it. Supposing that Mill wrote it, it is not consistent with what he said in the Logic, as well as in 'An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy', regarding the feeling of freedom).

between his views expressed in these two books.

Mill says that, the actual implication of the statement that 'one's will is free' - is that I could have chosen the other course, if I had preferred it, but not that I could have chosen one course while I preferred the other. He rejects 'our ability to will in opposition to our strongest preference." This means that all our actions are determined by our strongest motive or in other words, our action follows necessarily from our stringest motive which is the determining cause of it. In the case of a choice, where we are able to act either way, we are always guided by our strongest motive is formed by our assessment of the comparative values of the alternatives differing in some respects or by our preferences, our inclinations etc. This gives rise to the following difficulties.

There are cases where it is difficult to form a strongest motive. This happens with random action. For instance, in a magic show, when the magician asks me to choose one of the two Sticks lying on the table, which are exactly alike in all respects, there is no reason why I shall choose stick No.1 instead of the stick No.2. There is no observable difference between the two sticks by which I can ascertain their values and thereby conform my strongest motive to choose Stick No.1. In this case, I am not acting in accordance with some strongest motive.

It may be argued that under these circumstances, I am governed by the strongest motive that I must choose one, whatever it may be. It does not matter whether it is stick No.1 or stick No.2. But this is not compatible with the idea of predictability which Mill asserts. Mill says that human action is predictable, if one can know the antecedent conditions. Now, the strongest motive of any action is one of the causal conditions. But here the knowledge of the strongest motive does not help at all to predict my choosing stick No.1, rather than stick No.2. Even if the observer knows all antecedent conditions including the strongest motive, he will not be able to predict this type of random action which is voluntary and unpredictable.

If to act freely means to enjoy the liberty of indifference, then the random actions are nearer to the liberty of indifference than to the liberty of spontaneity.

Mill next proceeds to consider the second alternative, that the idea of freedom is implied in the idea of moral responsibility. Denial of it degrades our moral nature. By 'freedom' he means "our ability to act in direct opposition to our strongest preference", i.e. equivalent to the freedom from causal necessity. Mill thinks that the idea of moral responsibility implies the idea of punishment. Here Mill has interpreted, as Bradley points out, the popular notion of responsibility. In the mind of an

ordinary man the idea of responsibility is connected with those actions only, which are again connected with the idea of punishment. But this is rather an incorrect interpretation of the popular mind. There are cases where moral responsibility does not always imply the idea of punishment to an ordinary mind. For instance, a person may save a man from drowning, or from fire, at the risk of his own life, though he is under no pressure of punishment. Men often volunteer to do things under the pressure of moral responsibility which is not attached with any idea of punishment whatsoever.

It can be said that in such cases the person is at least blameable and blame is punishment. But blame is not a sort of punishment. This is evident from our use of the following sentences; "he may be blameable, but should not be punished" or "I can blame him but, cannot punish him." These sentences do not involve any logical inconsistency. Blame may refer to punishment. But it is not punishment. Moreover, there are cases where one feels oneself responsible for helping a wicked man, though he cannot be blamed for not doing that. For instance, the Bishop in "Les Miserables" of Victor Hugo, saved Jean Val Jean from being handed over to the police and thus from imprisonment, under no pressure of blame or anything like that.

The difficult question which Mill has to face in

this connection is, if our actions are always caused by the motives of which punishment is one, how men could be held responsible for their actions, and how the infliction of punishment could be justified.

The answer which Mill gives is essentially Humean, but it does not contradict his notions of mind and personal identity as it did in the case of Hume. Although a Humean in other respects, Mill differs from Hume's flux-theory of the mind. Mill thinks, that mind or the self is something distinct from the states of consciousness, it is a "sentient subject", "a mysterious something which has the thoughts but is not the thought", and which can be conceived of as "existing forever in a state of quiescence without any thought at all".[1]

Such a conception of mind, however dubitable if may be, is quite compatible with the idea of causal necessity of the motives and actions, on which Mill's theory of punishment rests. Mill says, "Punishment proceeds on the assumption that our will is governed by motives; if punishment had no power of acting on the will, it would be illegitimate however natural might be the inclination to inflict it. Just so far as the will is supposed free, that is capable of acting against motives, punishment is disappointed of its object, and deprived of its justification."[2]

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1. Logic Bk. 1 Ch.III, Sec.8, p.68.
2. An Examination of Sir W.Hamilton's Philosophy,Ch.XXVI.p.592

What Mill wants to mean here is, that the idea of moral responsibility implies the idea of punishment, but the latter does not imply free-will. On the contrary, without the principle of necessity, the idea of punishment will lose all its meanings.

Mill justifies punishment on the ground of two ends: (1) for the benefit of the offender himself, and (2) for the self-defence of the society. It is just to punish a man either for his own good or for the good of the society, Mill says, "Free will or no free-will, it is just to punish so far as is necessary for this purpose, as it is just to put a wild beast to death (without unnecessary suffering) for the same object."[1]

This is not only a theory of punishment based on causal necessity, but a typical expression of the utilitarian outlook, though Mill is "indifferent whether we are utilitarians, or anti-utilitarians." These two ends, so far as they are based on the consideration of the injury done by the offender to himself and to the society, are quite convincing, but Mill has overlooked another point which also demands consideration when we want to inflict punishment. This is the consideration of the nature of the cause and of the agent of the action. So far as our ordinary notion of justice is concerned, mere ideas of the

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1. Ibid., p.594.

benefit of the offender as well as of the society, cannot justify punishment unless these two factors are considered. And when they are considered, they imply the idea of free-will.

Mill has compared the offender with the wild beast, which for the benefit of others is to be sacrificed. This implies that an offender should be judged only by his action. But, in actual practice, we make discriminations among human beings, when we want to inflict punishment. We do not treat a sane adult, a child and a lunatic in the same way for the same sort of offence. We do not put the lunatic or the child on the electric chair for the benefit of the society or for their own benefit. This distinction shows that the two ends mentioned by Mill cannot justify punishment unless they are supplemented by an analysis of the nature of the cause and of the agent. So far as the agent is concerned, he must be a moral agent. So far as the cause is concerned, it must not be irresistible, i.e. the action can be otherwise leaving room for the operation of the free-will of a moral agent. If the agent is nothing but a helpless puppet tied up with the thread of causal necessity, he cannot do otherwise and hence he is not free to act.

According to Mill, all our actions are causally determined by our motives; our motives are determined by our characters; our characters are determined by our desires; our desires arise from certain situations which again are

caused by some physical or psychical factors. In the long run, the physical forces are the 'ultimate causes' whereas our desires and wills are 'intermediate agents' for the formation of our character. On Mill's theory, an action can never be otherwise, because when one cause is given, the rest of the causes and effects follow necessarily in a regular order. Under such circumstances, when a man commits a murder, it is irrelevant to ask whether he has done it intentionally; the fact is that he cannot help it, he has to do it. Hence, on Mill's theory, it is just to punish a man even though his offence is a necessary result of the causes beyond his control.

Mill himself would have surely objected to such a conclusion, as it leads to fatalism. Both in the 'Logic' as well as in 'An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy', he has clearly pointed out the distinction between fatalism and his causal determinism.

According to fatalism whataver happens must happen in spite of any effort to prevent it. Whereas Mill says that whatever happens must happen provided nothing happens to prevent it. "The true doctrine of causation of human actions maintains ... that not only our conduct but our character is in part amenable to our will; that we can, by employing the proper means, improve our character."[1] Mill

1. An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy, p.601.

recognizes "the power of the mind to cooperate in the formation of its own character". Mill says that it is true that the wish or will which induces us to form our character, is formed for us, but they are formed not only by our organization or education, "but by our experience - experience of the painful consequences of the character we previously had, or by some strong feeling of admiration or aspiration accidentally aroused."[1] "... This feeling of our being able to modify our own character, if we wish, is itself the feeling of moral freedom which we are conscious of."[2]

This is definitely a new qualification to the theory of freedom, which we do not find in Hume. But the question is how far can we really wish, if we wish to change our character.

Mill thinks that we can change our character by our "voluntary exertion". These voluntary exertions are not non-caused, but "like" all other voluntary acts, presuppose that there was already something in our character, or in that combined with our circumstances, which led us to do so, and accounts for our doing so."[3]

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1. Logic. p.426.
2. Ibid., p.427.
3. An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy, p.603.

In short, what Mill wants to establish is that, though motive determining action, is derived from our character, sometimes our character is determined by our own desire to determine it. But this desire itself again arises from our character and circumstances which compel us to desire so. For instance, I shall act honestly, when I have an honest motive which arises from my honest character; again, my honest character is determined or formed by my desire to be honest and my circumstances; and again my desire to be honest arises from my honest character and my circumstances, and so on ad infinitum.

This seems to be a vicious circle from where there is no way out. The so-called 'voluntary exertion' really means nothing, because in each case of such exertion, we have to wait helplessly for the mercy of the influence made by our character and circumstances. Unless they influence us, we cannot voluntarily exert ourselves to change our character. But their influence again depends on our desire to so influence, i.e. on our voluntary exertion.

Mill has prescribed a way for getting out of our bad character. But this should be equally meant for the goodness or badness of our character, as in both cases we are equally unable to exert ourselves unless some occasion arises. He says "If our character is such that while it remains what it is, it necessitates us to do wrong, it will be <u>just</u> to

apply motives which will necessitate us to strive for its improvement".

It appears that it is very easy to apply the right motives whenever we feel the necessity of changing our character. But in practice, it is not. Because, for the emergence of the right motive in our mind, we have to wait for the right occasion to be created by our character, circumstances and volition; and once we refer to these three factors we are involved in an endless vicious circle. Hence, we cannot justly apply the motive to set us right. Only , certain social or individual authority can do that by inflicting punishment or by some other means, which will act as a motive to set us right. According to Mill, it is just to punish a person for his own benefit. Hence, it is justifiable to say that, we must be punished at the very beginning before we start to exert ourselves to modify our characters in the right direction.

According to Mill the feeling of moral freedom consists of this feeling of our being able to modify our character, if we so desire. This sounds like the "consciousness of free will" or "the consciousness of being able to decide, before one has decided...", which Mill rejects at the outset of his theory.

Here ability to modify our character rests on our ability to wish. If we can really wish then we shall be able to modify our character. But our wishing or willing is not

a free act of desire. Rather, it is provoked or caused by some other factors like our internal character and the external circumstances - analysis of which, as we have already seen, involves a reasoning in circle. Since, Mill believes in a regular sequence of motive and action, the desire to modify our character is always necessitated by some causal factors in the presence of which, we can not say that we can modify our character, but we have to so modify. When the motive A is given, it is irrelevant to ask whether I can wish B, but I have to wish B.

Mill makes a few additions to this position. He says that "a person is morally free who feels that his habits or his temptations are not his master but he theirs."[1]

Here Mill makes a distinction between a person and his habits and temptations which are nothing but certain states of his mind. Regarding mind, Mill observes, that we can know only the states of consciousness, although he has not denied the existence of a conscious self distinct from these states. But this is unknown to us as such. Hence, when Mill says that our actions are caused by our motives, he means these states of consciousness. Temptations are nothing but different types of motives which can cause our action. In the regular sequence of motive and action, no question of the conscious agent arises. In his treatment of

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1. Logic. p.427.

the causal necessity, Mill has nowhere spoken of this conscious agent. Hence, this sudden remark is not in tune with his general view of regular sequence of motives and actions.

Further difficulty arises when Mill says that even in yielding to these temptations one knows that he could resist. This can be interpreted in two different ways: (i) either he knows that he can resist or (ii) he could resist if he preferred of if things were different.

As to the first: to say that while yielding to a temptation one knows that one can resist, is to say that both 'yielding' and 'resisting' can be the consequences of the same motive 'temptation'. But Mill thinks that the relation between motive and its consequent action is as regular as that of physical objects. Hence, given the motive i.e. the temptation, only one result follows from it - either resisting or yielding. If anyone yields to it, he cannot resist, or if he resists, he cannot yield.

The second alternative that he could, if things were different, describes a new situation completely different from what Mill exactly wants to mean. To say that 'he could, if things were different' is not to say that 'he can resist, while he is yielding.' The second alternative is not a true interpretation of Mill's view.

The proposition that 'he could do otherwise if things were different, or if he preferred' - seems to be a significant proposition in Mill's theory of freedom. He has frequently mentioned it in different forms. Although a necessitarian, he wants to leave room for free action, and that he has attempted to do by means of this proposition. He thinks that in the case of human action "the work is not so irrevocably done as to be incapable of being altered."

It is true that anyone could do otherwise, if things were different. The truth of the consequent depends on the truth of the antecedent. But in Mill's regularity version of causal necessity, there is no room for the alteration of the antecedent. Everything follows here in a regular sequence. The antecedent 'if things were different' never happens. Nothing happens which can enable one to do otherwise.

Mill, like Hume, does not distinguish between the mechanical causation observable in the case of physical objects and the mental causation of motive and action. Both, to him, are equally invariable, unconditional regular sequences of cause and effect. But in practice, in order to leave room for human freedom, he suggests that the human action is not irrevocably done. It could have been otherwise. This hopeful idea of Mill's is rather an empty idea. So long as we believe in the regularity theory of causation, things could never be different. This is also not compatible

with what he says in the beginning of his essay on liberty and necessity. There he believes that "the law of causality applies in the same strict sense to human actions as to other phenomena."

Mill has tried honestly to reconcile freedom with Determinism and thereby to make room for moral appraisal. But the propositions, by which he wants to do it, when analysed properly, reveal that his is also a position of the so-called hard determinist's and has little distinction with the "Asiatic Fatalism" which he has despised so much. To say that we shall not try to change our fate, as everything is determined and as we have no power to alter it, is not much different, than to say that unless we have some impetus to desire the alteration of our character, we shall not so desire, and for that impetus we have to wait for circumstantial influences. The arguments advocated by the later deterministsts, can be regarded as an effort to justify Mill's contention. They have tried to interpret the meanings of the verbs 'can' and 'could have' in favour of 'an action's being otherwise'. They say that actions are subject to moral appraisal only when they could have been otherwise. According to Moore, the real meaning of "it could have been otherwise" is "it could have been otherwise, if I had chosen." And as such it does not violate the law of causation. Moore also raises the question, "whether we ever could have chosen

what we did not choose, or ever can choose, what in fact, we shall not choose,"[1] and answers that we "often could have chosen, what, in fact, we did not choose." He gives two reasons in support of his contention: (1); we should have so chosen, if we had chosen to make the choice.

The phrase "choosing to make a choice" does not describe any intelligible mental experience or action. Either, it involves an infinite regress like: "I have chosen X", means, "I have chosen to choose X", means "I have have chosen to choose to choose X" and so on; or, it means simply I have chosen one of the possible alternatives.

Moore says that "there certainly is such a thing as making an effort to induce ourselves to choose a particular course;"[2] But 'effort to induce ourselves to choose', is not 'choosing a choice'.

(2) The second reason is: "Whenever we have several different courses of action in view, it is possible for us to choose any one of them... in such cases we can hardly ever know for certain beforehand, which choice we actually shall make."[3]

But this is not possible from Mill's standpoint. Mill believes in predictability of human action. So, if we know the conditions accurately, we also know which choice we are

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1. G.E.Moore: Ethics, Ch.VI, p.218.
2. Ibid., p.219.
3. Ibid., p.219.

going to make. And the possibility of the alternative actions is only due to our ignorance. The connection between cause and effect being regular and invariable, a cause can have only one effect. Under the circumstances, it is possible to choose (if it can be so called) only one of the alternatives, but not any one of them. In Mill's philosophy of causal regularity, there is no room for an action's being otherwise.

Like Hume, Mill also was not very successful in reconciling the two ideas of free-will and determinism, by removing the verbal confusions which both of them thought to be the only defect of the original problem.

CHAPTER III

F. H. BRADLEY

Hume-Mill empiricism is the background out of which Bradley's notions of freedom and predictability emerge. His view is a dialectical outcome of the theories of his predecessors and is not merely an incidental introduction of his ethical views.

In his essay "The vulgar notion of responsibility in connection with the theories of free-will and necessity",[1] he has seldom referred explicitly to his predecessors except for a few occasional references made towards Mill, though, in his careful exposition of the problem he has weighed each and every argument of his predecessors.

The philosopher whom he has specially in his mind, is J.S. Mill, as a necessitarian, and it is a legitimate question to ask whether Bradley has answered Mill.

For Hume and Mill, the problem of free-will is essentially a problem of the compatibility of free human action with the idea of causal necessity. The question of moral responsibility arises incidentally and is used as an argument in favour of causal necessity. Unless human actions

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1. Ethical Studies: F.H. Bradley. 2nd ed. 1927. Essay I.

are causally connected, the notion of moral responsibility becomes insignificant. The approach of Hume and Mill to this problem is psychological rather than ethical.

With Bradley, the problem starts from a different angle. He is not so much concerned with the question 'whether human action can be free from causal necessity', as he is with the question 'why we are moral' or 'what is the justification of so-called moral obligation?' He has shifted the issue from the region of causation to the domain of self-realisation which is an interesting combination of ethics with metaphysics.

Bradley's exposition of the problem of freedom, shows a clear Hegelian inclination. It proceeds in the form of a dialectical triad. He starts with the popular notion of moral responsibility; proceeds from it to the general philosophical theories of freedom and necessity; and then after showing their failure to explain the popular notion of responsibility, reaches the synthesis in the idealistic conclusion of self-realization. This entire development of thought exhibits his discursive attitude and displays his eloquent dialectic which Sidgwick has termed 'debating-club-rhetoric'.[1]

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1. Mind 1876: (Review of 'Ethical Studies' by H.Sidgwick), p.574.

Referring to these two distinctive features of Bradley's analysis of the idea of freedom, viz (1) his criticisms of Libertarianism and Necessitarianism, and (2) his suggestion that in terms of the notion of self-realization alone can it be shown how a man can be free, two questions can be raised:
(a) How far Bradley successfully differs from Hume and Mill in his treatment of the prevalent theories of freedom, and (b) how far his conception of self-realisation is a solution of the problem of free-will.

The discussion of the first question demands an analysis of Bradley's position with regard to Indeterminism and Determinism.

Bradley accepts the 'vulgar' on the popular notion of moral responsibility as the provisional criterion for judging the adequacy or inadequacy of a given theory. If any theory is consistent with the 'vulgar' notion, it will serve the purpose. This shows Bradley's affinity for the popular notion. He wants to keep his theory of free-will as close to the popular notion of responsibility, as it is possible.

The popular notion of responsibility arises from

the idea of punishment. In the naivé mind, responsibility stands for punishment. Where we have the one, we have the other. Bradley thinks that if a theory can justify punishment it should also be able to explain moral responsibility.

To the naive mind the conditions of one's becoming a subject to moral imputation are:

(1) One must maintain personal identity;

(2) The action must proceed from one's own will;

(3) One must be a moral agent and sufficiently intelligent to understand moral distinctions.

These criteria of responsibility have been applied by Bradley to the cases of Indeterminism as well as of Determinism. Bradley's first objection to Indeterminism is that it holds that a man is not free unless he has freedom of choice over and above freedom of action. But this is not consistent with the popular notion, according to which "a man can act freely without exercising choice."[1]

It is rather difficult to understand how one can act freely without exercising choice. Like other conditions of moral imputation the condition of freedom of choice is an important and indispensable one. This is what Kant means when he says 'ought' implies 'can'. To say that 'a person ought to have done otherwise', means that 'he could have

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1. ES. p.10.

done otherwise'. The moral appraisal loses its meaning unless the action is really within the range of the agent's abilities - unless there is a real possibility of alternative action.

It seems that Bradley wants to mean that sometimes people act without actually deliberating or choosing between alternatives. For instance, "going to the refectory for lunch" does not involve any positive deliberation. But still it is free in the sense that it follows from my will, and I am a moral agent retaining personal identity, and fully conscious of moral distinctions and of what I am going to do. These are sufficient to declare that "going to the refectory for lunch" is a free action for me.

But it must be pointed out that even in this case, there is an implicit choice of going or not-going, although I may not be conscious of it. It is difficult to find out an action which is free, but at the same time does not involve any choice or deliberation. The question of choice or deliberation is not so much important in the case of other actions, as it is of actions involving moral responsibility. Bradley has neither included this freedom of choice in his list of conditions, nor has he said anything definite about it although his entire metaphysical position is against it.

The second objection[1] which Bradley has brought against Libertarianism is that it is mainly negative in its implications and as such is incompatible with the vulgar notion of responsibility. Here free-will means chance or non-determinism. According to them, our volition or will is not determined by anything at all, they are the uncaused causes of our action.

Bradley, following Hume and Mill, takes this to mean that there is no rational connection between our volition and action. This is equivalent to saying that actions are in no case the result of a given character in a given position. "The self, or the will, of Indeterminism is not the man, not the character at all, but the mere characterless abstraction which is 'free', because it is indifferent."[2]

Such a doctrine fails to adjust itself to the popular notion of a moral agent. If the agent does not know what he is going to do next, and what his action will be, unless it is done, he cannot be held responsible for his action. No one will differ with Bradley in holding that the Libertarianism, in its strict sense, is an establishment of chance. The Libertarians hold that in order to be free, an action must be self-caused, whereas the self is not caused by anything else. If the self is determined by factors other

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1. ES. p.11.
2. ES. p.12.

than the self, then there will be a causal continuity, which means that the cause of the action, is not confined within the self, but can be traced further back and the action is not free in the sense of being caused by the self only. Hence, in order to have a free action, the self must not be caused or determined by something else. But this means a break in the causal continuity which is equivalent to chance.

It is true, that in our daily life we often admit some amount of chance. For instance, we take chance, when we stake money in the horse-race, or in football pool. Of course, in most of the cases, chance is based on our ignorance of the causal situation. But chance, in the sense of indifference, is really detrimental to the popular notion of moral appraisal.

If the Libertarians hold that freedom means freedom from causal necessity, then Bradley is right in criticising them. "And if it be true of any man, that his actions are matters of chance, and his will in a state of equilibrium, disturbed by contingency, then ... the question whether such a being is a moral agent, is answered as soon as raised."[1]

All this is introducing the conception of personal identity which is required for the infliction of punishment

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1. ES. p.13.

and accountability. Unless the agent is the same agent, unless there is a pervasive identity beneath his fleeting states of mind, he cannot be held responsible for what he did.

Here Bradley has not advanced much from his empirical predecessors. On the contrary, he agrees with them in holding that action must in some sense arise from the character. But he differs from Hume and Mill, in his formulation of the nature of self. The self, for him, is an all-inclusive self-determining coherent whole which realises itself in and through the moral actions. It is a continuing principle of action which makes decisions on moral grounds, and as such, is different from the Humean conception of self.

It is a common argument against Hume that his notion of the self, as a collection of fleeting mental states, cannot explain the idea of self-sameness demanded by our moral appraisal. Bradley holds that the Humean account of action following from character is inconsistent with his analysis of the self. The self, for Hume, is a perpetual flux. The contents of it are fleeting and temporary. There is nothing permanent in the self, which can maintain its identity. Bradley thinks that such a conception of the self engenders difficulties. In the ordinary conception of "collection", the whole is never conscious of itself. But

in the case of the self, it is. Moreover, a collection is not generally something other than its parts. But here, the self is other than the desires although it has the desires. Hence, to call a self a collection of mental states, is not to describe it correctly so far as the plain man understands it.

It can be argued in favour of Hume, that his two views, viz., the action follows from the character and the self is a collection of fleeting mental states, are logically independent of each other. What Hume wants to mean is that the action follows from a cause which is a motive or volition of the person concerned. In this sense, he thinks that the action is determined by the character. This actually has no connection with his notion of the self. The self may be a bundle of mental states, and at the same time a determining cause. But this argument cannot put Hume right. For, he not only insists that the action must follow from the character, but that it must follow from something "durable and constant". This durability and constancy is not obtainable in the Humean notion of self. Therefore it fails to be consistent with the idea of internal identity. In order to have the self-sameness, self must be continuous and identical.

The empirical theory of mind cannot explain the fact

of personal identity. I am conscious of remaining essentially the identical person as I was five years ago - this fact cannot be accounted for, by a bundle of discrete mental states. Mill has acknowledged this paradoxical character of the empirical conception and admits that here we are face to face with a "final inexplicability".

Bradley's conception of the self as an inherent abiding principle manifesting itself in desires and wills, is more appropriate for the explanation of the problem of personal identity. But once such a connection or continuity is allowed, the possibility of the prediction of human action creeps in. If there is a link between my character and action, one who knows my character, can predict my action. The Libertarianism holds that, human action, if free, is unpredictable, and if it is predictable, then responsibility has no meaning.

But the popular notion of responsibility is not always in contradiction with the idea of prediction. "A man of healthy mind has no objection to the prediction of any action which he looks on as issuing from his character."[1]

The same type of thinking we can find in Mill also, who in his logic, says "We do not feel ourselves the less free, because those to whom we are intimately known are

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1. ES. p.16.

well assured how we shall will to act in a particular case."[1]

That the common man believes in rational prediction, Bradley continues, is evident from the fact that even when he knows that he will commit something again and again, he does not doubt his responsibility.

This shows that the Libertarianism is not consistent with the popular notion of responsibility which supposes some amount of predictability.

Nor is the popular idea of responsibility consistent with the Necessitarianism, which supposes the total predictability of human action. The naivé man does not question the legitimacy of responsibility, so long as the prediction is made on the basis of the knowledge of his character. But if the idea of prediction can be traced further back soon it will be found to be derived from factors or elements not involved in one's own character.

Bradley is right here in pointing out that Determinism will contradict its own theory if it does not mean total predictability. It cannot stop short at a particular stage and thus makes itself coincide with the popular notion.

Bradley calls this total predictability rational prediction. By rational prediction he means calculation beforehand by certain laws, and from given data of a definite

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1. J.S.Mill: Logic: Bk.VI, Ch.II, p.422. 1875.

result. When such calculation is made in the case of human action, it means deduction of human action from factors which are not in human character, i.e. construction of oneself out of what is not oneself. It is this rational prediction that the plain man objects.

According to Bradley, total rational prediction contradicts the popular notion because of two reasons: (1) To say actions are foreknown is to say that they are pre-existent, and therefore they are not his,[1] and he is not accountable for them. This means that if something is known, it must exist. To know the actions beforehand, is to know them as existent.

Indeed, if something is before me now, it is not in the future, and knowledge of it is not knowledge of the future. But whether this is applicable in the case of future events is doubtful.

Firstly, the term 'fore-knowledge' means knowledge beforehand of the future or of something else which has not yet occurred, i.e. which is not yet existent, but will be so. There would be no question of fore-knowing the event or action unless it were in the future. If the term 'fore-knowledge' is used in the sense of 'pre-existence', then it will lose its meaning.

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1. ES. p.18.

Secondly, as A.J. Ayer says, "to pre-cognize something is to know, not what is happening, but what will happen, just as to remember something is, in this sense, to know, not what is happening, but what has happened. To argue that if one were to precognize a future event it would be not future at all, but present, is just as absurd as to argue that if one remembers a past event, it is present and not past."[1]

Later, in his definition of the will, Bradley says that, "Will is the self-realization of an idea with which the self is identified."[2] This means that to will something, the idea of an ideal form of it must be inside me, but not the thing itself. In a similar way, it can be said that the fore-knowledge of a thing is a knowledge of what it will be, not of its actual being. If it is a construction, it is an ideal construction.

Bradley's plain man does not think that the actions pre-exist, if foreknown, so long the prediction is made from factors involved in his character. His objection is directed only against predictions made on non-personal factors. But even when the action of an individual is predicted from certain non-personal factors, what is

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1. A.J.Ayer: The problem of knowledge: Ch.IV, p.187. Edt. 1956.
2. F. Bradley: Collected Essays. Vol.II. Ch.XXXVI. p.476. Ed.1935.

actually done is to formulate the future results from a certain causal principle. To know this causal principle and the particular data, is not to know the effect as co-existent with them.

It may be argued that if the effect is known, it must be known as true and once it is true, it must be true always, i.e. it is true in the present as well as in the past. But the point is that truth belongs to propositions and facts, whereas time belongs to events. When I predict that he will kill a man tomorrow, the proposition "he will kill a man tomorrow" claims to be true and therefore timeless. But the event to which it refers and which will make it true has a claim to time and date. It is this event which is still in future and has not occurred yet.

It appears from what Bradley says that if the actions are foreknown, then they would be existent, but not the individual to whom the actions belong. But there cannot be an action in isolation. It is an action with reference to an individual. If the individual is not existent, then the action cannot be there. If the actions are existent, then they must be the action of an individual, who is equally existent with them.

Bradley has pushed the idea of rational prediction

to an extreme that is not desired even by the determinists.[1] Hume speaks of the predictability of human action when one knows the character and the conditions of the man concerned. But he does not consider whether they are predictable even when the individual is not existent. Mill speaks of the desire to mould one's own character as one of the determining conditions. But this is not a pre-personal datum. The point is this. The Determinists do not claim (as Bradley thinks they do), that things are predictable even when they are not experienced. Determinism presupposes some amount of knowledge of the individual in order to predict his action. Neither Hume, nor Mill has supposed that an apriori construction of individual behaviour is possible even when the individual is not existent. That is, in fact, contrary to their empirical standpoint. Even when the elements are known, it is "their elements" which are known and not "elements" in abstraction.

(2) As to the second reason: It is difficult for a person to conceive himself as becoming. "How can he (there already) become himself and how can he (there still) be ceasing to be himself."[2]

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1. ES. p.17. "... The ordinary man would probably be little short of horrified to find that the whole of his history, everything which has gone to settle his character, every element in the evolution which has made him what he is, had been foretold in detail before his birth."
2. ES. p.19.

It is true that the plain man finds this difficult to grasp. The very word "becoming" is unfamiliar to him. But if it means change from one state to another, he does not find any difficulty to understand it. He can easily observe himself to become something which he was not before, e.g. he feels himself suddenly to become angry from a state of calmness; he observes himself to become an adult from a state of childhood.

Bradley says "That a man was accountable because he himself and no other, has acted; and ... the possibility of the explanation of his self means that his self does not exist at all, and therefore, of course, cannot act."[1]

Here, Bradley seems to be too hasty in drawing his conclusions. To take another example, 'water' can be explained in terms of Hydrogen and Oxygen; H_2O makes water. But this does not mean that water does not exist at all, and does not quench our thirst. Similarly, even when the self is explained, it does exist and does act. The only appropriate question to ask here is whether a person will be responsible for such and such an action.

The charge which Bradley brings against the necessitarians, is that they fail to interpret the popular

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1. ES. p.21.

belief. They fail because they ignore the rational self in the form of the will, in the act of volition, in the abiding personality, which is the same throughout all its acts, and by which alone imputation gets a meaning.[1]

He also rejects the idea of total rational prediction from pre-personal data on this ground. According to him, human behaviour is predictable when it can be brought under certain general laws. But such general laws cannot be formulated because "no two men are ever born the same", and such laws, since they are abstractions, will be mere empty opinions.

The crux of the whole problem seems to be lying here. There is no logical inconsistency in saying with the determinists, that if conditions are known then human action is predictable. It is true that sometimes correct prediction of human action can be made on the basis of the knowledge of dispositions and habits which are more or less permanent, and easy to detect. But the character itself is something more than one's disposition and it is always liable to be influenced by internal as well as external factors, and is thus changeable. To quote A.E.Taylor, "It is not a fixed unvarying quantity given once for all at some period in the individual's development, and thence forward constant; it is itself theoretically at least 'in the making' throughout

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1. ES. p.33.

life."[1]

To predict anything on the basis of this "varying character" cannot be absolutely certain. The practical impossibility of the prediction of behaviour from the knowledge of one's own character lies in the fact that what we call character is a developing structure which is never completely knowable. This is also true of our dispositions which sometimes remain latent barring the way of knowing them completely.

This idea of development or progress is an unique factor in the conception of self, which is totally neglected by the empiricists. The empiricists regard mind as a bundle of invariable atomic particles which can have external relations of co-existence and sequence with the actions. Just like material particles, their nature can be generalised, and expressed in terms of universal laws, which would enable one to predict.

But, as we have already seen, mental contents unlike physical particles, are not unvarying in nature. They are predictable to some extent and Bradley does not object to that; but the total rational prediction from pre-personal data or "the theoretical development of the characterized self "collides with popular morality, as it fails to

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1. A.E.Taylor: Elements of Metaphysics: p.374, 1924.

explain for the creative activities or actions exhibiting the idea of progress. This is what we cannot comprehend even when we know the elements of which an individual's character is composed of.

It must be pointed out that Hume and Mill do not use 'necessity' in this extreme sense. What they mean is "no more than the regularity of his volitions, the possibility of telling from his character", and this, Bradley thinks, is not in contradiction with popular notion. But Bradley is right when he points out that although Hume and Mill continuously insist on the special meanings of the terms 'cause' and 'necessity', in practice, they do not differ much from the popular usage of the terms. Even in their restricted sense, these terms are expected to produce the the same effects on human mind, which they do when taken in their popular sense. Bradley rightly remarks, that if we explain human behaviour in terms of regularity, men are no more free "than a candle or a coprolite".

The cause of the difference between the Humeans and Bradley, is that they entertain two different philosophical attitudes. For Hume and Mill, the problem of freedom arises from a non-ethical consideration. They try to explain

the mind in terms of regularity of sequence, the conception of which they have obtained from the physical world. Their aim is to discard the freedom of indifference. But Bradley refuses to explain the mind in terms of physical causation. He appeals to the common sense notion which differs from that of Hume and Mill. "The vulgar are convinced that a gulf divides them from the material world; they believe their being to lie beyond the sphere of mere physical laws; their character, or their will is to them, their thinking and rational self, and they feel quite sure that it is not a thing in space to be pushed here and there by other things outside it."[1]

To speak frankly this is not only the vulgar conception, but also of the Hegelians including Bradley. This is rather that characteristic of the idealistic thinking as such which has polemical differences with the psychological empiricism of Hume and Mill. They agree that the character is formed from our dispositions, habits and other factors. Hume and Mill do not believe that there is anything over and above the formed character of a man, whereas Bradley thinks that there is a 'self' over and above this formed character. It is true that our character governs our will, but Hume and Mill do not go beyond this, whereas Bradley thinks that the self is the ultimate source

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1. Ethical Studies. p.26. 25.

of action. The root of their difference lies in their different attitudes towards the idea of causation. For Hume and Mill mechanical causation is the paradigm of all sorts of causal enterprise and is the ultimate explanation of the world. For Bradley, the whole causal explanation centres round the notion of the self. His notion of self-realisation is not mechanical or atomic. It involves the notion of self-transcendence directing towards a final cause.

Bradley's next charge against Necessitarianism is that of the wrong interpretation of the notion of punishment, so far as the vulgar understands it.

To the vulgar there is a necessary connection between punishment and guilt. "Punishment is punishment only where it is deserved." "Punishment is the denial of wrong by the assertion of right,"[1] and since assertion of right is an end in itself, therefore punishment is also an end in itself.[2]

This view is essentially retributive and is in direct opposition with the utilitarian theory of Mill. As we have seen before there are two ends, which for Mill, are enough to justify punishment, viz. the benefit of the offender as well as the benefit of the society. For Mill and other

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1. ES. p.27.
2. ES. p.28.

Necessitarians, "punishment is avowedly never an end in itself, it is never justifiable except as a means to an external end."[1]

But Bradley thinks "that punishment is inflicted for the sake of punishment".[2]

Bradley is right so far as he conceives that the two ends, as prescribed by Mill, alone, cannot justify punishment unless they are supplemented by some other considerations. He is also right in pointing out that the Retributive theory is the true expression of the plain man's view. The desire for inflicting punishment upon the culprit, arises usually from the feeling of vengeance of the vulgar mind. But his Retributive theory has its own difficulties. Its practical difficulty is to fix the amount of physical punishment for a moral offence, as it has no measuring criterion - either internal or external. Just like Mill, Bradley has forgotten to consider the role of the individual as a moral agent and the nature of the cause of his action.

Punishment is justified because of what it does, i.e. what good effect it can produce on the society and on the individual. Without this end in view, punishment would be unjustifiable and meaningless. It is true that the vulgar demands retribution whenever he becomes a victim of offence,

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1. ES. p.30.
2. ES. p.28.

and he is not very conscious of the deterrent and reformatory aspects of punishment. Yet, to appeal to the vulgar opinions and to take it as an ideal expression of punishment, is not after all philosophical.

But all these are not enough for inflicting punishment. In order to punish a man for what he has done, we must go back and consider the causal factors - viz. whether the person is a moral agent, whether he was really free at the time of his action.

According to the Necessitarianism responsibility implies punishment and conversely. But Bradley thinks that it fails to explain punishment in the vulgar sense, and therefore it also fails to explain the vulgar notion of responsibility. "if ... on the theory of Necessity, I am not punishable in the ordinary sense then..., I am not responsible either."[1] Bradley has forgotten here that the necessitarianism of Hume and Mill does not claim to be a perfect interpretation of the vulgar opinion. If they have failed to explain moral responsibility in the popular sense, then that does not mean no responsibility at all, but responsibility is maintained in some other sense - say, in the utilitarian sense.

Later, Bradley remarks that "the doctrine of

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1. ES. p.32.

punishment is moral reaction, the reaction of the moral organizm against a rebellious member."[1] I think Rashdall is correct when he says to this, that without a purpose such reactions are meaningless. If the purpose is to produce certain good effects on the society then punishment is something other than retribution. If not, then it is wholly immoral.[2]

A phrase like 'reaction of the moral organizm' sounds like reflex action of the animate bodies and it seems there is an affinity between moral law and natural law. Natural laws are descriptive and they do not require any justification for their consequences. On the other hand moral laws are prescriptive and have always a reference to their effects. When punishment is inflicted it is inflicted according to some moral laws (legal laws are usually ~~also~~ morally justified laws). These moral laws on the basis of which punishment is inflicted, become justifiable only on the utilitarian ground - i.e. referring to consequences which they produce. The difficulty with the Retributive theory is that it does not consider these consequences which can justify the law.

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1. Bradley: Collected Essays. Vol.I. Ch.VII. p.153. 1935.
2. Rashdall: Theory of Good and Evil. Vol.I. Ch.IX, p.288 note: 1924.

Bradley also thinks that punishment is the 'denial of the wrong' and 'assertion of the right'. This clearly suggests some purposes for which punishment is inflicted. And once we have purposes other than guilt we cannot call it any more retributive.

Bradley thinks that punishment is punishment only when it is deserved. If so, then when the innocent person becomes victim of pain or sufferings, then that cannot be called punishment. Quinton has rightly remarked, that "the Retributive thesis ... is not a moral doctrine but an account of the meaning of the word punishment." Bradley's analysis of punishment stands more for the definition of the word, than for its justification. It is true that punishment always implies guilt, that is, punishment must be punishment for something. But ~~Pure~~ mere Guilt cannot be a sufficient condition of punishment.

Thus, though Bradley tries to interpret correctly the vulgar notion of punishment, he fails to justify it. Even if retribution is one of the aspects of punishment, it does not answer the fundamental question regarding responsibility, and that is, whether a man is really free in the sense of enjoying a capacity of doing otherwise than what he did.

According to Bradley then, neither Determininism nor

Indeterminism is consistent with the popular notion of morality. They fail because the former of them leaves no room for the conception of the self which is demanded by the vulgar notion of morality, and the latter separates completely the self from the principle of causal necessity. Both these are incompatible with the popular belief. The question which arises now is that if both of them fail to justify moral responsibility, how we could save it. What is the end that will justify morality.

Bradley says that there is only one answer to this question. Morality is an end in itself and this end is self-realization.

In the ordinary sense, self-realization not only means our ability to actualize our potentialities, but also that the realization of these potentialities is the objective of our lives. We have certain norms or goods which we have set for ourselves, and we act accordingly to realize those goods.

By self-realization, Bradley means something more. According to him all our efforts and actions are directed towards the realization of the self as a whole. All our small desires and wishes are connected with one another -

leading continuously towards an all-embracing whole. This idea of the whole serves as the end for us, guiding and directing our activities. The self manifests itself in a plurality of states and activities and in and through them realizes itself as a self-conscious, self-determining entity.

To this Bradley further adds that in order to will something, the ideal form of the thing must be within oneself with which his self is identified. Hence whatever is desired or wished, is somehow identified with the self and not something outside of the self and thus in that sense realization of the self as a whole.

To speak clearly, self-realization means systematization, and rationalization of the moral life discarding all inconsistencies and contradictions. The idea of moral responsibility is thus justified through an attempt to procure a good self rather than a bad self.

Such a conception of self-realization seems to be very high-sounding. But the problem is how far it can justify the popular notion of morality which Bradley is so keen to save. It is his opinion that if a philosophical notion falls short of the vulgar opinion, so much the worse for the philosophical opinion.

The freedom which Bradleyan philosophy can assert

consists of a gradual realization of one's own self, guided and determined by the conception of a whole. Here freedom is expressed in the form of degrees of realization of one's true self. But this is undoubtedly not a freedom which implies a freedom of choice, a capacity for doing an action otherwise. This latter type of freedom is that which is demanded by the popular notion.

The freedom which stands for the freedom of action or of choice is not possible from the Bradleyan standpoint. The very conception of a 'coherent whole' is incompatible with the popular idea of an action's being otherwise. The proposition 'can anyone do otherwise than what he has done' cannot be explained or justified from the standpoint of a rational all embracing coherent self, which realizes itself in and through our desires. All our desires are guided and determined by the principle of self-consistency.

How far this metaphysical notion of the absolute self is acceptable is a different question which does not arise here. But one thing is certain that such a conception is diametrically opposite to the ordinary mind. Bradley justifies himself for giving up the common sense position by saying that, "... vulgar are after all vulgar, we should not at pains to agree with their superstitions..."[1] But ultimately not agreeing with the 'vulgar' and

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1. ES. p.41.

introducing a completely different type of explanation than those of Hume and Mill, Bradley has avoided the main issue of the problem of free-will instead of answering it. His credit lies in unravelling the inconsistencies of Libertarianism and Necessitarianism, but so far as his theory is concerned, it is no better an explanation of the philosophical problem of free-will.

It is difficult to deny the operation of causal necessity in the case of motive and action. It is further difficult to deny the conviction of an immediate feeling of freedom in our action. To explain this irreconciliability by means of an absolute self-determining self or ego is to shift the problem from one sphere to another. Without such a presupposition of all embracing self, the irreconciliability remains as it is.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

We are now in a position to sum up the results of the preceding chapters.

The approaches of Hume, Mill and Bradley towards the problem of free-will, are made from two different metaphysical positions. But in spite of the differences of their philosophies, there occurs a considerable amount of common ground.

Their basic similarity lies in the fact that all of these three philosophers want to say something from the standpoint of commonsense. Each one of them has started his speculation from the popular conceptions of morality, responsibility, blame and imputation. The Hume-Mill explanation of free-will is nothing but the application of the same 'historical plan method' which Locke has applied for the clarification of philosophical problems from the standpoint of commonsense. It claims to be a consistent empirical analysis of what we 'ordinarily believe' and 'presumably think' of the notion of free-will. Neither Hume, nor Mill wants to go beyond the evidences of common experience.

On the other hand, Bradley, though he is not very keen on commonsense morality, because he thinks that Mill and other empiricists want to uphold common-sense view

and he is glad in showing that commonsense is in conflict with empiricist views of person and morality, he still takes the 'vulgar notion' as the criterion of moral responsibility. Even when he could no more retain the popular notion of moral responsibility and freedom, he wants to keep his idealism as close to it as is possible. His idealistic treatment of the problem of free-will, claims to be the most accurate interpretation of the popular notion.

The difficulty with all these three philosophers is that although they have started with the commonsense view, they cannot stick to it, and the moment they abandon the commonsense view, they become obscure and put forward views which are totally incompatible with the plain man's conception of free-will.

This is more conspicuous in Bradley, when he turns from the 'vulgar notion' to the notion of a rational absolute self which gradually realizes itself through the exercise of volition. When freedom, in the hands of Bradley, becomes a rational attainment measurable in terms of self-consistency, then it has little resemblance with the popular notion of free-will.

The same difficulty is also observable, however, in the Hume-Mill analysis. In their zeal for applying the causal principle to human action, they forget to keep room

for choice which is essentially connected with the ordinary notion of free-will.

Bradley's conception of self-realization is too abstract and philosophical to be comprehended by the ordinary men, whereas the Hume-Mill version is too mechanistic to do justice to the popular sentiments. Hence though they have attempted to have a true interpretation of the commonsense view, their philosophies stand in the way of having it.

The Humean as well as the Bradleyan analysis are equally deterministic. They do not want to deny the operation of the causal principle in the case of volition and action. Will is as causal for Bradley, as it is for Hume and Mill. But they differ so far as the interpretation of the causal situation is concerned, and this, of course, diminishes the similarity.

For Bradley, actions are caused by the self as a whole. The self may be formed from dispositions and circumstances; but so far as actions are concerned, the self has its own determination, and this determination cannot be totally accounted for by universal laws of behaviour and tendencies.

For Hume and Mill, the conception of causality is a necessary outcome of the mechanical science prevalent in

18th and 19th centuries, according to which events are discrete and separate and the relation among them is essentially relations of co-existence and sequence. When this principle is applied to the mind, we get what is called psychological atomism. The events of the mind become as separate, discrete and externally related as the physical particles of mechanics are. The causal relation among such mental events is nothing but an invariable sequence.

Such a mechanical interpretation gives us a very different picture of the mind than that of the idealists. Here, whenever we want to have a knowledge of the mind, we have the knowledge of this or that particular idea which is thought to be more or less atomic in character.

The mechanical interpretation of the mind helps the empiricists to uphold the principle of predictability. Prediction is only possible in terms of unchangeable units or elements which enter into relations with one another. Physical objects seem to have such claimed stability (though not always) and, therefore, are usually predictable.

If the contents of the mind, like physical elements, are separate units, entering into mechanical external relation with one another, then prediction of them would be easier. But they are far from being so. The mistake of Hume and Mill lies in interpreting motives and volitions as units

or elements which can co-exist with, and have the relation of sequence with actions in the way in which physical particles can.

The merit of Bradley lies in the fact that he has recognized this mistake of Hume and Mill. He accepts predictability only so far as it comes from the knowledge of the personal character. But absolute predictability of all human action, which both Hume and Mill admit, is never accepted by Bradley. He thinks that the mental behaviour or volition and action, although causal, demands a new analysis of cause rather than the mechanical interpretation of it. Bradley seems to be more logical and plausible than Hume and Mill in recognizing two other factors involved in the notion of free-will, which are either, overlooked by the Humeans, or their mechanical determinism does not allow them.

These two factors are the notions of self and progress involved in free action. The notion of 'self' occupies a very significant position in the ideas of freedom and predictability. Bradley is correct in recognizing the notion of a self in the 'vulgar's' conception of freedom. For Bradley, the self is a developing idea, a changing entity. It is not static enough to be completely

predictable. For, Bradley says that much is predictable, and follows Mill on that.

In a similar way, the concept of progress also occupies a unique position in human behaviour. In the physical world we find change, but human behaviour not only exhibits change, it also shows elements of progress. It is Bradley's suggestion, that things which are progressing or developing, do not come within the range of prediction. Bradley thinks that creative activities - the activities of the genius cannot be predicted. In 'The Presupposition of Critical History', he says:

"For a people only in the period of their stagnation, for a person only when character and the station have become fixed forever, and when man is made, is it possible to foreknow the truth of the fresh achievement, and where progress has its full meaning and evolution is more than a phrase, there the present is hard and the future is impossible to discern."[1]

This does not mean that, since the 'self' is a developing idea, it is absolutely unpredictable. It is predictable, so far as it does not change. The self has two aspects: the permanent aspect, built and stored up from the dispositions and circumstances, and the developing aspect

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1. F.H.Bradley: The Presupposition of Critical History: Collected Essays, Vol.I, p.5. 1935.

emerging from the former, but may be a total negation of it. Bradley says, "... the character of a person does follow, as a result, from his natural endowment together with his environment. If his self is the negation of all its particulars, that does not mean that it is not determined by them".[1]

The question which Bradley raises here is that the action or the character of the man or of the society would be predictable only when they are entities that could be inferred from given data. Hume and Mill have treated human character as an entity which, like actions of inanimate objects, can be inferred from certain fixed data with the help of certain laws. But Bradley says, "If the individual self and society are 'compositions' of that order that a knowledge of their elements gives you, apart from experience, a knowledge of the individuals, then you can 'compound' them and construe them apriori; but if they are not, you cannot."[2] Bradley's answer is that they are not, whereas physical objects are. Therefore, predictability in the case of physical objects does not offer a right to pronounce that mental behaviour is also predictable. "Give you what knowledge of 'laws' and what particular existing data you please, you cannot calculate the future."[3]

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1. ES. p.22.
2. ES. p.23.
3. ES. p.22.

The recognition of this idea, that the self is a developing entity, is missed by the empiricists. Their principle of mechanical causation fails to account for the notions of progress and development involved in human behaviour and the idea of the self which is the source of such dynamic activities.

This failure of the eighteenth and nineteenth century empiricists is due to their philosophical perspective. For them philosophy is essentially epistemological which again is closely connected with psychology. The philosophical problems for them ultimately lead to psychological analysis. Hence, the solution of any philosophical problem consists in finding out the actual mental process of the occurrence of the problem concerned, i.e. to give an accurate phenomenological description of the relevant activities of the mind. Thus, for them, most of the philosophical problems are genetic problems. As a result, when they turn to the problem of free-will, they take it as a psycho-genetic problem and show more interest in developing its psychological aspect than the logical one. Both Hume and Mill are equally engrossed in determining whether there is such a state of the mind as the direct consciousness of free-will. It is also why they try so much to find out the sources of such an idea.

Bradley's merit consists in segregating the problem of free-will from its psychological aspect. Of course, it is true that the Humean Empiricism is the foundation of Bradley's success. Moreover, it would be wrong to call the Humean empiricism totally psychological. It is mainly psychological, but behind the psychological approach lies the logical one.

The significance of the notion of 'self' which Bradley has recognized in the free-will problem, is in a way anticipated by Mill when he speaks of one's own desire to mould one's character.

With Hume and Mill the problem of free-will being a genetic problem is essentially connected with the idea of causal necessity. They are more concerned with the possibility or impossibility of the faculty of free-will. And after proving the impossibility of such an ability from their empirical standpoint, they declare the problem as a verbal one. But Bradley does not think that the problem is a pseudo-problem. Bradley points out that in dealing with freedom, we are actually dealing with moral responsibility which is the ground of our moral consciousness. The Hume-Mill theory, failing to account for the idea of 'self' and its determination, actually overlooks and minimizes this fact of moral responsibility.

Although successful in interpreting the naive conception of free-will, so far as it involves the conception of a self, Bradley can hardly be said to be successful in interpreting 'freedom' itself, as it is understood by the plain man. For Bradley, as we have already seen, a man can be called free only when his rational self dominates his actions and the freedom of actions is measurable in terms of self-consistency. According to this definition, freedom becomes a matter of degree. A man who works in accordance with his rational self, is more free than one who acts in accordance with his irrational self. But sometimes this gives rise to situations which cannot be called free action from the commonsense standpoint, although it may be a free action from the Bradleyan standpoint. For instance, the law of the country may force me to give up drinking which my rationality abhors, but my irrational self wants. From the commonsense point of view, here I am not free, but from the Bradleyan standpoint, I am. This is what ordinary men cannot understand. The commonsense notion of free-will is related not only with the idea of deliberation but also with choice.

In this respect, the Hume-Mill theory of freedom is more convincing to the common man. By freedom, Hume means a power of acting or not acting according to the

determinations of will, whereas Mill means one's desire to mould one's character. For the ordinary men, these deliberations of will are a fact of common experience. Psychologically there is nothing wrong in it, as we do feel this freedom of action irrespective of the fact whether it is an ability or a state of the mind. But when pursued logically, the mechanical explanation of causal regularity does not, in fact, allow any possibility for determining an action otherwise than what will be, or what it is.

In this connection it is legitimate to ask how far Hume and Mill are successful in their reconciling project. Hume, originally does not think that his is a reconciling theory, although later, he becomes much more compromising. He seems to be quite satisfied in distinguishing liberty of spontaneity from liberty of indifference, and regarding the former as the only type of freedom which men can enjoy in acting or not acting. The liberty of spontaneity does not contradict the law of causation and as such, human action can both be free and causally determined. The same thing happens with Mill. While admitting the full applicability of the law of causation to human action, he wants to retain the capacity of desiring otherwise. This does not tally with the notion of a regular invariable cause. The difficulty with Hume and Mill is that they do not consider the problem

as a real one. They think that if the verbal confusions could be removed, there would be a problem no more. But the problem creeps in again in the form of a regular cause, and predictability, which under no circumstances, allow even the elementary freedom of action, required by moral responsibility. Both of them prefer to be determinists and at the same time upholders of free-action. But in the context of their mechanical empiricism one cannot help being a strong or hard determinist who leaves no room for an action being otherwise.

Neither Hume and Mill, nor Bradley can really give us a theory of free-will which is a compromise between the law of causation and free action and at the same time, which is a good interpretation of the popular conception of moral responsibility. Either we have to remain confined to a more intelligible but mechanical type of empiricism which with its notion of regular causation does not allow freedom at all; or we have to develop a philosophy of the self which puts the entire problem in another form from that which is utilised by commonsense.

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