

## Common Issues on the Freewill Exam

- (1) The best answers clarified that, in referring to a “cause,” determinism is referring to a *determining* cause. This should be defined as: conditions that *necessitate* the effect. The contrast is with a “key ingredient” cause, as when we say that “A lit cigarette was the cause of the forest fire.” In this latter case, the lit cigarette *alone* did not necessitate the forest fire. (People light cigarettes all the time without causing forest fires.) There had to be a forest, for one. The lit cigarette had to be in contact with something flammable, for another. Also, it couldn’t be pouring rain, there had to be oxygen present, etc. But if you take *all* those conditions together, it seems that the forest fire was *determined* to happen—so those conditions together constitute a determining cause.
- (2) The best answers made sure to separate the *three parts of the trilemma* from the *three possible solutions* to the trilemma (for a total of *six* different ideas). The trilemma, strictly speaking, was composed of the following three claims. Taken individually, each may seem plausible enough—but taken together, they contradict. (The contradiction means that at least one of them must be false, despite initial appearances.)
  - (i) Determinism: Every event [in time] has a [determining] cause.
  - (ii) Free Will Exists: Some of our actions are free.
  - (iii) Incompatibilism: (i) and (ii) are incompatible: they cannot both be true.

The three possible *solutions* to this inconsistent trio are as follows:

- (a) Deny (i), but affirm (ii) and (iii). This is Frederick’s solution, known as Libertarianism or “Free Willism.”
- (b) Deny (ii) but affirm (i) and (iii). This is Daniel’s solution, known *Hard* Determinism.
- (c) Deny (iii) and affirm (i) and (ii). This is Carolyn’s solution, known as *Soft* Determinism or Compatibilism.

The best sort of answer also clarified how the compatibilist view was not just flatly inconsistent. It is key here that ‘freedom’ means simply the absence of *external* interference on how one acts. This still allows that there might be some *internal* force that compels you to act in the way you did.

- (3) Some folks put Frederick’s Introspection Argument in too strong of terms. Frederick never suggests that our introspected feeling of freedom *proves* that we have free will. He’s entirely willing to admit that the feeling could be wrong. Nonetheless, he thinks that the introspected feeling can *justify* the claim that we have free will (even if it does not conclusively justify it). That’s because he thinks introspection is rather like sense-perception. A sense like seeing is also fallible—our eyes sometimes trick us. *Nonetheless*, we ordinarily trust what our eyes tell us, and we are right to do so. The same goes for introspection, says Frederick. (We indeed ordinarily trust introspection to tell us whether we are hungry, where pain is occurring in our body, etc.) We are especially right to trust our eyes when other people can corroborate what we are seeing. (In the book, they talk about different people testifying to seeing the same tree.) And for Frederick, other people indeed corroborate the sense of freedom that occurs in many cases of action.