Free Will and Determinism:

A New Approach

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Abstract

In this dissertation I consider the question: Is Free Will compatible with Determinism? I argue that there is something appealing but also inherently inadequate about both Compatibilism and Incompatibilism. I go on to argue that this suggests that the traditional debate between Compatibilists and Incompatibilists rests on a mistake, and the proper resolution of the problem consists, in part, in identifying this mistake and repudiating it. I argue that the mistake underlying the debate between Compatibilists and Incompatibilists is the assumption that both Free Will and Determinism are truth-apt and thus that the compatibility issue is one of *logical* compatibility. I explore the suggestion that both Free Will and Determinism are, in Wittgenstein's terminology, grammatical propositions. I examine this suggestion, and defend it against a number of criticisms. I argue that this supposition leads one to formulate a different and more complicated taxonomy of positions on the compatibility question than that associated with the traditional account. One position in the taxonomy is particularly attractive in the light of the need to vindicate the spirit of both Compatibilism and Incompatibilism – a position I call Pluralism. The Pluralist position is, roughly, that Free Will and Determinism are grammatically incompatible but that nonetheless we can independently accept both propositions. Therefore there is a sense in which the two propositions are incompatible but also a sense in which they are compatible. I examine and explore the implications of Pluralism as an approach to the problem and defend it against a number of objections. Lastly, I compare and contrast Pluralism as an approach to the problem with two different approaches associated with P.F. Strawson.

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Introduction

The literature on free will typically discusses what is often referred to as the compatibility question: is free will compatible with determinism? But the question as posed is rather unclear. Determinism, if anything, is a thesis of a certain kind. It is generally taken to be a proposition capable of being true or false. Free will, or freedom on the other hand, if it is anything, seems to be a property which human beings may or may not possess. So what sense can we make of the question of the compatibility of free will (a property) with determinism (a proposition)? It seems that we must either interpret the problem to be a question of the compatibility of propositions, *or* to concern the compatibility of certain properties. For the purposes of this dissertation I will take the compatibility question to concern the compatibility of certain propositions.

Free Will: (Some) human agents have free will.
Determinism: There is at most one physically possible future given the past and the laws of nature.
(**Indeterminism** is the proposition: There is more than one physically possible future given the past and the laws of nature.)

The formulations of the propositions are not meant to beg any questions against either side of the debate, and this is why they are fairly vague and unclear as they stand. In addition, with respect to Free Will, while acknowledging the unclarity of this proposition as it stands, I do not propose to offer any 'analysis', or further disambiguation of the proposition at this stage. The reasons for this will become apparent in Chapters 2 and 3 where I explore a radically new approach to the problem.

In relation to these two propositions there are traditionally, two main positions.

Incompatibilism: It is impossible for both Free Will and Determinism to be true.
Compatibilism: It is possible for both Free Will and Determinism to be true.

In approaching the compatibility issue of Free Will and Determinism I will take as my starting point, Nagel's suggestion that:

> "...nothing that might be a solution has yet been described. This is not a case
> where there are several possible candidate solutions and we don't know which
> is correct. It is a case where nothing believable has (to my knowledge) been

proposed by anyone in the extensive public discussion of the subject." (Nagel 1986, p. 112)

Nagel, in contrast to many writers, sees the problem of free will as largely independent of Determinism, relying only on an "objective view of actions as events in the natural world (determined or not)" (pp.111-112) to motivate a "sense of impotence and futility" with respect to what ourselves and others do. However Nagel is the first writer I have encountered who suggests that there is something wrong with *both* Compatibilism and Incompatibilism:

> "Compatibilist accounts of freedom tend to be even less plausible than libertarian ones." (p.113)

Nagel believes that Compatibilist accounts are (inherently) inadequate, and Incompatibilist accounts are (inherently) either inadequate or incoherent, and thus neither can be a satisfactory approach to the problem. Nor does he conclude, as we might expect him to, that Free Will is merely self-contradictory or incoherent, and so we can jettison it. His thought seems to be this: Incompatibilist accounts capture the *essence* of the problem, that is, of what we feel Free Will must be, but somehow, when they are formulated clearly, they turn out to be incoherent. Nonetheless we are stuck with this apparently incoherent idea of freedom. Hence we are compelled to "want something impossible" (p.113).

I do not propose to defend Nagel's approach to the problem. Instead, I intend to focus on a significant idea which Nagel points to (though does not carry to its logical conclusion): the idea that no position yet defined within the debate seems to both capture the essence of the problem and provide an account which is coherent. In addition, there is the suggestion that none of the traditional positions in the debate, however refined, has the resources to achieve this.

Nagel seems to me to be absolutely right when he expresses dissatisfaction with both Compatibilism and Incompatibilism (and their associated accounts of Free Will), a dissatisfaction which is not confined to the vagaries of specific accounts, but extends to the very nature of the positions themselves. Nagel's response to this thought - that we are compelled to believe in something incoherent - seems to me to be inadequate, but his motivation is sound. He remarks in closing, that it is not just that the *truth* has not yet been formulated, but rather that "nothing *approaching* the truth has yet been said on this subject" (p.137, my italics).[1] This naturally suggests something radical, namely that the traditional approach to the problem is fundamentally ill-conceived, and what is needed is a different conception of the problem.

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[1] By which I take him to mean that no account of the conditions necessary for Free Will, Compatibilist or Incompatibilist, has been given which is remotely plausible and coherent. Presumably this remark is not intended to extend to his own account of the problem!

However Nagel does not explore this interesting idea further. It is the aim of this dissertation to do just that.

My methodology in formulating a new approach will be as follows. I believe that there are a number of features of the debate which are significantly correct, or point in an important direction. I shall call these features 'clues', as I will take them as pointing to the formulation of the new position. I outline these four 'clues' in Chapter 1. The conclusion of that Chapter is that there is something appealing but inherently inadequate about both Compatibilism and Incompatibilism.

In Chapter 2 I argue that the four clues suggest that both sides of the debate share a mistake which is responsible for its antinomous quality. I explore the suggestion that this mistake is that both propositions are truth-apt. I go on to explore the suggestion that the two propositions are not truth-apt, but are, in Wittgenstein's terminology, grammatical propositions. This leads me to formulate a different and rather more complex taxonomy of positions on the compatibility issue than that associated with the traditional debate.

In Chapter 3 I explain how this new approach, and one position in particular, enables one to explain the four clues without incoherence. I elaborate this position, which I call Pluralism, and defend it against a number of important objections.

In Chapter 4 I briefly comment on the relationship between Pluralism and Kant's approach. I then go on to consider two approaches to the problem suggested by P.F. Strawson's writings. I argue that neither of Strawson's approaches are satisfactory, and that they are in fact misguided attempts to formulate something like Pluralism.

Chapter 1: The Four Clues

In this chapter I give an overview of the debate between Compatibilists and Incompatibilists. I discuss the four clues to the resolution of the problem which will prove important as a background to the formulation of the new position in Chapter 2. I argue that there is something importantly right about Incompatibilism and yet it does not seem an adequate approach to the problem. Equally, I argue that there is something strongly appealing about a reconcilation of Free Will and Determinism, but that Compatibilism is inadequate.

Firstly let us consider the nature of the debate between Compatibilists and Incompatibilists. The structure of the debate between the two sides seems to me to be this. Given that it is not *obvious* that the two theses are incompatible, and it is difficult to demonstrate a universal negative (i.e. that none of the implications of the Free Will thesis rule out any of the necessary conditions for Determinism), the preliminary onus has been on the Incompatibilists to try to demonstrate that the two theses are incompatible[2]. Incompatibilists have attempted to do this although their success in achieving this aim is, of course, controversial. Van Inwagen (1983) is the writer who has done the most in modern times to legitimise this claim. Incompatibilists have tried to show that it is a necessary condition for the Free Will thesis to be true that Determinism is false, and hence that it is impossible that both theses are true. Those Incompatibilists who believe in the truth of Free Will (the Libertarians[3]) have then gone on to try to provide a plausible analysis of Free Will which incorporates an essential element of indeterminism. Compatibilists have typically done two things: They have 1) attacked the suggestion that Indeterminism is necessary for Free Will, arguing instead that it undermines any desirable notion of free will, and 2) suggested analyses of Free Will none of whose conditions implies the falsity of Determinism (and therefore none of which involve any essential reference to Indeterminism).

A few important caveats are in order before I proceed. The formulation of the four 'clues' is intended to be an overview of the main features of the debate as they strike me (and I hope, as they strike many others), but it is *not* intended to be a summary of my definitive answer / resolution of the problem. My primary concern in this chapter is to be faithful to, but critical of, the traditional debate, and this must not be confused with my *endorsing* any specific position associated with the traditional debate. Thus, criticisms which rest on the *inconsistency* of the views expounded in the remainder of this chapter are essentially irrelevant. My concern is to

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[2] It may be that there has been a change in relation to where the perceived onus lies in the debate. It is possible that the view that the onus lies with the incompatibilist is due, in part, to the popularity and prevalence of Compatibilism since Hume. (See Hume 1978, Dennett 1984, Ayer 1954, Davidson 1973)
[3] I will take Libertarianism to be the conjunction of Incompatibilism and a belief in the Free Will thesis. Hard Determinism is the conjunction of Incompatibilism and a belief in Determinism.

represent the debate accurately even if this seems to involve inconsistency.[4] The most helpful summary of my overall attitude is that I am sympathetic to the *spirit* of both Incompatibilism and Compatibilism but do not accept the *letter* of either position. For readers who feel that such a position is untenable I can only urge them to postpone judgment until I have formulated my own positive view in Chapters 2 and 3. The ensuing discussion must, therefore, be viewed with circumspection in the light of the place of these arguments in the overall strategy of this dissertation.

With this in mind, let us now turn to consider the clues to the resolution of the problem.

I. Clue 1: The Power of the Incompatibilist Intuition

I believe that as a matter of fact most philosophers and lay people who encounter the problem of Free Will and Determinism are, initially, natural Incompatibilists. That is, when one encounters the problem one's first thought is that Free Will is incompatible with Determinism, that Determinism is a threat, a significant threat, to Free Will. Now of course this is not conclusive. Plenty of philosophical problems or paradoxes, which nevertheless have a clear resolution, are very perplexing when first encountered. There is no reason why the fact that there seems, to a person untutored in Compatibilist arguments, to be an incompatibility between Free Will and Determinism to conclude that therefore Incompatibilism is *prima facie* the favoured view. However, it is more serious than that. Not only does the Incompatibilist intuition have power when one first encounters the problem, but it seems to me that the intuition survives acquaintance with the sophisticated and persuasive arguments of Compatibilists.

The intuition can be motivated in a number of ways. The underlying idea is extremely simple and appealing. In contemplating activity of some kind we think of ourselves and others as in possession of some choice about what to do. That is, we conceive of ourselves and other agents as having alternative courses open to us, courses we may or may not choose to embark on. For example we think it is, for example, true of a person at a given time both that he can raise his arm or keep it by his side. Such an ability seems to be absolutely basic to our notion of human activity. However, the truth of Determinism would seem to reveal such a conception to be fraudulent. It is not the case that the person can both raise his arm, and can keep his arm at his side since the physical state of the world together with the laws of nature ensure (say) that his hand will rise. Determinism makes it the case that we can never do otherwise than we in fact do, and this is at odds with our conception of ourselves as choosing from and deciding to pursue courses of actions which we might nevertheless have refrained from pursuing.

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[4] If, as I hope to argue, the debate rests on a mistake, then it is hardly surprising that one finds that inconsistency is endemic.

Here is Van Inwagen's famous consequence argument:

> "If determinism is true then our acts are the consequences of the laws of
> nature and events in the remote past. But it is not up to us what went on before
> we were born, and neither is it up to us what the laws of nature are. Therefore,
> the consequences of these things (including our present acts) are not up to us."
> (Van Inwagen 1983, p.56)

Determinism seems to rob us of freedom and responsibility for what we do; it seems to show our attributions of freedom and responsibility to be shallow and unsubstantiated. Kant expressed similar sentiments when he said:

> "If I say of a human being who commits a theft that this deed is, in accordance
> with the natural law of causality, a necessary result of determining grounds in
> preceding time, then it was impossible that it could have been left undone; how
> then can appraisal in accordance with the moral law make any change in it and
> suppose that it could have been omitted because the law says that it ought to
> have been omitted? (Kant 1997a, 5:96)

It seems likely that some philosophers have really believed that Free Will and Determinism are perfectly compatible, that there is no antagonism whatsoever between the two propositions.[5] I do not wish to assess such accounts here, however one uncontroversial point can, I think, be insisted upon. Even Compatibilists, if their resolution is ultimately to be appealing and not to "wear an appearance of superficiality" (Wiggins 1965, p.33) must explain the strong appeal of the Incompatibilist intuition.[6] Not only this, but the Compatibilists need to explain the appeal of the Incompatibilist intuition *in such a way that the intuition loses its force*. It may be that such an intuition is ultimately based on equivocation or confusion of some kind, but this needs to be shown carefully and not merely assumed. It does not seem at all plausible that the Incompatibilist intuition is *obviously* mistaken.

In addition, Compatibilists are wrong if they think that the Incompatibilist intuition is the product of an absurd philosophical demand, quite foreign from ordinary considerations about what would rob a person of free will. The reason why the Incompatibilist intuition is so powerful, even to a lay person, is precisely because Determinism seems to be the generalisation

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[5] See Davidson 1973 for an uncompromising denial of the power of the Incompatibilist intuition.
[6] See Dennett 1984 for an attempt to describe a number of the 'intuition-pumps' at work in Incompatibilist writings.

of a condition which is normally deemed to demonstrate that what was done was not done of a person's free will. Here I agree with Nagel once again:

> " When we first consider the possibility that all human actions may be determined by heredity and environment, it threatens to defuse our reactive attitudes as effectively as does the information that a particular action was caused by the effects of a drug – despite all the differences between the two suppositions." (Nagel 1986, p.125)

I would supplement this with noting that the characteristic and appropriate response given to a person who suggests that a person's action (say something like committing a terrible crime) was determined by his genes and the environment is not: "Surely it's just irrelevant that his action was determined by his genes and environment? You seem to be confused about the sort of things that render an action unfree." The characteristic and appropriate response is in fact to deny what is being suggested: "Surely you don't really believe that his action was determined by his genes and environment? Perhaps they made it more likely that he would do such a thing, but he didn't have to do it." So, it seems that the Incompatibilist intuition is faithful to our ordinary way of thinking about what sort of things render an action unfree. Any resolution of the problem of Free Will and Determinism must sufficiently explain the force of this intuition.

II. Clue 2: The Inadequacy of Incompatibilism

In the light of the fact that the Incompatibilist intuition has a sound basis, and is very powerful it seems that Incompatibilism must contain the resources for a resolution of the problem. Incompatibilists believe that if Determinism is true then the Free Will thesis is false, so the truth of the Free Will thesis requires the falsity of Determinism. So, Incompatibilists who accept the Free Will thesis (Libertarians) must believe that Determinism is false. In particular, it is incumbent upon them to explain why some element of indeterminism is essential for free will. This requirement has, however, been misdescribed in some of the literature. For example, Galen Strawson argues that:

> "no theory can be properly counted as a libertarian theory unless it gives an account of action-production which shows in detail how and why some sort of actual indeterministic occurrence is a necessary feature of the production of any and every free action." (Strawson 1995, pp.17-18)

It is correct to say that no theory can be properly counted as a libertarian theory unless it shows how and why Determinism must be false for free will to be possible. But this is *not* equivalent

to the requirement to show that every 'free action' involves an 'indeterministic occurrence'. All that the Libertarian is committed to demonstrating is that for there to be free will Determinism must be false. The Libertarian need not be committed to the view that in *every* case of free action there is an 'actual indeterministic occurrence', nor that the only way Determinism could be false is for there to be at least one 'indeterministic occurrence'. Nevertheless, Incompatibilists must provide an analysis of free will that involves some essential element of indeterminism, or implies the truth of Indeterminism. This particular requirement has typically been the flaw in Incompatibilist accounts.

It is a familiar objection to Incompatibilist accounts of free will that the sort of indeterminism they claim is necessary for actions to be truly free (and typically for us to be morally responsible) is precisely the type of factor that would normally count as an excusing-factor. That is, some element of indeterminacy or randomness (Compatibilists often equate the two), far from being essential for free will or moral responsibility, seems to be precisely what robs us of free will or responsibility. This criticism has been ably countered in the writings of a number of Incompatibilists.[7] Whether or not this particular objection is decisive is controversial. However it is not, in any case, the most serious problem with Incompatibilism.

Incompatibilism is inadequate because all Incompatibilist accounts of free will fail to make a convincing case for the claim that the proposed analyses of free will is in fact an analysis of that concept at all. The reason for this is as follows.

Incompatibilists must show that the truth of the Free Will thesis requires the falsity of Determinism and so the truth of Indeterminism. Indeterminism is the view that there is more than one physically possible future given the laws of nature and the past. Thus, Incompatibilists must show that it is a necessary condition for Free Will that certain events are not determined by laws of nature and facts about the past. If such events are undetermined, then there is no explanation of why those events occur rather than others given the past and the laws of nature. And why *this* should be an essential aspect of Free Will seems completely mysterious. One way of putting the worry is that it is hard to make out how the fact that certain events are undetermined should make it easier to see how the Free Will thesis could be true. Or another way of putting this is that Free Will requires *self-determination*, but this seems to be impossible even if Determinism is false.[8] The threat that Determinism most obviously seems to pose to Free Will is that it removes the ability to do otherwise than we actually do. But the ability to do otherwise in such a way that what we do constitutes *exercising agency* seems no easier to understand on the supposition that certain events which take place are *not* determined by

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[7] See Foot 1957, Ginet 1990, Van Inwagen 1983 , and Wiggins 1965 for some persuasive responses.
[8] See [G.] Strawson 1986, pp. 28-29.

antecedent conditions and the laws of nature, than that those events which take place *are* determined by antecedent conditions.

Incompatibilism requires that we analyse Free Will in terms that permit us to see that Indeterminism is essential for its truth. But any analysis of Free Will in such terms seems not to be an analysis of Free Will at all.

III. Clue 3: The Appeal of Some Form of Reconciliation

I have argued above for the power of the Incompatibilist intuition, but it seems to me that in addition, some kind of reconciliation of Free Will with Determinism is highly plausible and persuasive. The first aspect of this is that one is struck by the apparently highly disparate contexts from which Free Will and Determinism are drawn. When we attribute free will to a person we are usually engaged in a familiar range of activities which include explaining and justifying actions, praising, blaming, exonerating, reproaching, criticising, advising and so forth – what I shall call the scope of personal interaction. On the other hand, when we are concerned with Determinism we are usually involved in thinking about people and events from what one could call a *theoretical* perspective. Discussions about Determinism arise out of scientific discussions about the relationship between scientific laws and the events they govern. Such considerations are, on the face of it, quite foreign to the kind of considerations that are normally at the fore when we are engaged in personal interaction.

This needs to be tentative since the sort of considerations psychologists might bring forth, on the face of it belonging to what I have called the theoretical perspective, are often relevant in relation to the range of activities involved in personal interaction. For example, knowledge of early childhood abuse and the strong relationship between such treatment and subsequent delinquency will affect our attributions of responsibility to a person who has committed a crime. Or consider the discovery that a person who has apparently done something very wrong had a brain tumour which is responsible for his odd and erratic behaviour. In both cases the way in which we respond to the person is altered by such discoveries.[9]

However, the point remains that when we are considering whether Determinism or Indeterminism is true, it very quickly begins to look rather *irrelevant* to issues about freedom or responsibility. For example it seems implausible to many that whether or not they have free will or are responsible for what they do might hinge on quantum indeterminacies for example. When we are trying to elucidate what we mean by free will we will appeal to such important features as

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[9] See [P.F] Strawson 1962 and Klein 1990 for more on this.

'choosing', 'deciding', 'intending', and so forth and it is not at all clear that any of these concepts bears *any* relation whatsoever to Determinism or Indeterminism. Hence the Compatibilist's point that a reflection on what we consider as normally necessary or sufficient for free will cannot reveal that Indeterminism is an essential condition for it.

So there is an inclination towards the view that whatever the truth about Determinism, people still have free will and are sometimes responsible for what they do. Thus I think that there is both a strong Incompatibilist intuition *and* a strong Reconciliatory intuition.[10] On the one hand, considering Determinism does produce a strong intuition that it is a threat to Free Will. On the other hand, when one reflects on Free Will one finds oneself strongly inclined to the view that the truth of Free Will does not bear any particular relation to Determinism or Indeterminism. These conflicting intuitions are precisely what makes the problem so interesting, but also so intractable.

IV. Clue 4: The Inadequacy of Compatibilism

If one is interested in some kind of resolution of Free Will and Determinism, and almost all philosophers are, then it seems that Compatibilism is the only game in town. What's more, Compatibilism has formulated some significant attempts to resolve the problem.

One tactic Compatibilists have used is to provide an account of the sort of 'excusing conditions' which are normally taken to render an action unfree, and then to try to show that Determinism does not bear on any of these conditions. One classic version of this tactic was provided by Ayer:

> "It is not *causality* that freedom is to be contrasted with, but *constraint*...from
> the mere fact that an action is causally determined it does not follow that I am
> constrained to do it." (Ayer 1954, p.19)

And again:

> "It is not when my action has any cause at all, but only when it has a special
> sort of cause that it is reckoned not to be free." (Ayer, 1954, p.21)

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[10] I say 'Reconciliatory' rather than 'Compatibilist' since Compatibilism is the name of a specific view, namely that it is possible for both Determinism and Free Will to be true. However I think that Compatibilism is not the only way of providing some sort of reconciliation of the two theses. I return to this point throughout the dissertation.

Compatibilists have tried to illustrate that everything that is important about assessments of whether an action is free (and derivatively, attributions of moral responsibility) depends not on actions being undetermined by antecedent causes, but rather on the *type* of causes that resulted in the action. So Compatibilists believe that, for example, an action is free when it is caused in one way, and unfree when it is caused in another (e.g. through compulsion, constraint, mental or physical interference and so on). Thus there is no requirement for free actions to be uncaused or undetermined by antecedent causes.

Now, we can agree that for some form of freedom, it is compulsion or constraint which is the excusing condition, but how does this suggestion answer the Incompatibilist intuition? It does not. The suggestion does nothing to account for the fact that it seems that if an action was causally determined, or there were sufficient antecedent conditions for its occurrence then the action was unfree. Ayer's resolution misses the force of the Incompatibilist intuition that determination by antecedent conditions is sufficient to render an action unfree.

Another tactic Compatibilists have used is to offer an interpretation of 'ability to do otherwise' which does not seem to require the falsity of Determinism.[11] The most popular suggestion is that 'A could have done X' = 'A would have done X if A had chosen to do X.' The problems with such analyses are many and serious, and have been extensively discussed elsewhere.[12] I do not propose to discuss them again here. However, I think that one point worth asking oneself when considering such an analysis is: "How does this bear on the Incompatibilist intuition?" It may be that the very fact that it makes the Incompatibilist intuition utterly lacking in foundation may itself be reason for rejecting such an analysis.[13]

The fundamental problem with Compatibilism is that it cannot possibly provide even a *partial* vindication of Clue 1 (The power of the incompatibilist intuition). Any explanation of this clue that Compatibilists offer must involve positing a high level of confusion to those who are persuaded by the clue, and such an explanation is simply not plausible. It is a matter of philosophical charity to suppose that there is *something* importantly right about any intuition with such enduring power and appeal, which has been supported by philosophers as great as Kant. If any satisfactory account of the problem must at least vindicate the spirit of Clue 1, then Compatibilism can never be a satisfactory position.[14]

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[11] Such suggestions can be found in e.g. Ayer 1954, Davidson 1973, Dennett 1984, and others.
[12] See e.g., Austin 1961, Broad 1952, Chisholm, 1964, Davidson 1973, Kane 1996, Klein 1990, and Van Inwagen 1983
[13] Van Inwagen suggests such a strategy in his 1975.
[14] Of course the Incompatibilists, in the same vein, cannot do justice to the power of the Reconciliatory intuition (Clue 3), and if accounting for this is also a necessary condition for any successful approach to the problem then Incompatibilism is also unsatisfactory for this reason. The problems for the two positions are in this respect symmetrical.

This relates to a further and final reason for thinking that Compatibilism is unsatisfactory, which is based on the sort of support Compatibilists can claim for their position. Although Compatibilism is a free-standing position in the debate that does not logically require any further supplementation, it seems to me that no Compatibilism can be worthy of its name without some attendant analysis of the implications of Free Will. A substantive and convincing Compatibilism needs to *demonstrate* that Free Will and Determinism are compatible. It is not sufficient for Compatibilists merely to refute Incompatibilist analyses of free will, (nor vice versa).

Now, it might be said that this is to ask rather too much of Compatibilists since, again, it is difficult to demonstrate that no implications of a thesis are incompatible with another thesis. Compatibilism is, after all, not the position that Free Will implies Determinism, but just the position that Free Will is compatible with Determinism. Compatibilism, it might be said, is a much more modest position than Incompatibilism. In a certain sense this is fair, but in another sense it is problematic. For if a Compatibilist proposes an analysis of free will, and then goes on to say that it is 'obvious' or clear that none of its implications rule out the truth of Determinism, then such a view is open to the objection that it is not at all 'obvious' that this is the case. The problem for the Compatibilist is to justify his position *vis-à-vis* a position which could be called 'Agnosticism': the view that "it is not apparent that the two propositions are incompatible". That is, the truly modest view seems to be Agnosticism, not Compatibilism.

There are a number of strategies available to Compatibilists to justify their position *vis-à-vis* Agnosticism. They are as follows.

1) A demonstration that Free Will entails Determinism (coupled with a demonstration that Free Will is not self-contradictory)
2) A demonstration that Determinism entails Free Will (coupled with a demonstration that Determinism is not self-contradictory)
3) Independent demonstrations of the truth of Free Will and Determinism.
4) A demonstration that Free Will and Determinism are both entailed by some other thesis which is not self-contradictory, or a set of theses which are consistent.

If a Compatibilist does not believe that he can offer at least one of 1) – 4), then it is not clear that he can give any substantive reason for preferring Compatibilism as a view of the problem to Agnosticism (even if he has given reasons for preferring Agnosticism to Incompatibilism).

Again, it might seem that I have been rather unfair to Compatibilism, since there does not seem to be anything wrong with the following reasoning. "Incompatibilist arguments fail, and their analyses are flawed, so the two propositions are not Incompatible. Either the two propositions

are Compatible or they are Incompatible. They are not Incompatible, therefore they are Compatible." But I think that this argument is rather too ambitious. A demonstration that Incompatibilist arguments fail and their analyses are flawed falls short of a demonstration that Incompatibilism is false, and therefore of a demonstration that Compatibilism is true. The strongest conclusion warranted from the failure of Incompatibilist arguments is Agnosticism, i.e. "It is not apparent that the two theses are incompatible." But this thesis does not entail Compatibilism. Equally the conclusion that Compatibilist arguments fail and their analyses are flawed does not entail Incompatibilism. It cannot be ruled out that *both* Compatibilist and Incompatibilist arguments and analyses are flawed.[15]

So what then of the prospects for a demonstration of Compatibilism? Let us first consider the prospects for 2). They seem to be worse than bleak. No one, as far as I am aware has ever claimed to have demonstrated anything resembling such an entailment. Nor does it seem remotely possible that it could be established. Momentary reflection leads one to the conclusion that it is perfectly possible that Determinism is true but Free Will is false, since e.g. no human beings might exist. If such a world is possible then Determinism most certainly does not entail Free Will.

Suppose we consider 3). If this were established it would establish Compatibilism since if both theses are true, *a fortiori* it is possible that they both be true, and hence Compatibilism is established. However, there seem to be a few significant problems for this strategy. First, the truth of Determinism is at least controversial, indeed some would say that it is false.[16] If it is false then strategy 3) is not available to the Compatibilist. Even if one could argue for the truth of Determinism it is doubtful whether its truth could be based on any premises whose truth is any *more* certain than the truth of Determinism. But even if Determinism is true and there is a plausible argument for this conclusion, I suspect that Compatibilists (and Incompatibilists) do not feel that there is much scope for an independent argument for the truth of Free Will. Of course, many (probably all) Compatibilists believe in the truth of Free Will, but I have yet to encounter many *arguments* for its truth. Provided that it is open to someone to cogently deny the truth of Free Will (as many have done) then this strategy must lack force. So I am inclined to say that this strategy is highly unpromising.

How about strategy 4)? Again, I have not encountered any attempts at such a demonstration in compatibilist writings. The reasons for this seem to be as follows. First, there just does not seem to be any such thesis. Second, even if one could formulate such a thesis, one would need to demonstrate that the thesis was not self-contradictory. But *this* task looks no more promising

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[15] Or that in some sense they are both sound. This will be returned to later.
[16] See e.g. Van Inwagen 1983, p.197: "it still seems reasonable to say that science shows determinism to be false."

than the original task, of demonstrating the compatibility of Free Will and Determinism. The same can be said of any set of theses which entail Determinism and Free Will. So it seems unlikely to offer the Compatibilist a promising line of argument.

Lastly, let us consider strategy 1). Compatibilists have indeed flirted with this strategy although lately it has fallen out of favour[17]. However, I believe that there are significant reasons for thinking that such a strategy must fail. Anyone who wishes to argue for this conclusion must show how the truth of Determinism is essential for the truth of the Free Will thesis. So they must show that the Free Will thesis implies that all physical events are determined by antecedent conditions and the laws of nature. But once the argument has been made it looks completely mysterious *why* these events must be determined but could not instead by undetermined.[18] Indeed it seems to be bizarre to suggest that the Free Will thesis implies any such thing. The Free Will thesis seems to bear no connection whatsoever with the determination or undetermination of events by antecedent conditions and laws of nature. In addition, of course, is the problem that this conclusion makes the Incompatibilist intuition utterly lacking in foundation. The Incompatibilist intuition must be *extremely* confused if not only were it not the case that Free Will implies the falsity of Determinism, but actually that it implies the truth of Determinism. But it is implausible that the intuition is confused in quite such an extreme way. Thus, this strategy also looks pretty hopeless.

So it seems that Compatibilists have not plausibly provided us with any of (1)- (4), nor is there much hope of them doing so. Therefore one reason for thinking that Compatibilism is inadequate is that it seems to lack the resources for a substantive justification of its own position. It seems to me that the only legitimate grounds Compatibilists can cite in support of their own position are the following:

a) The inadequacy of Incompatibilism. (Clue 2)
b) The strong intuitive appeal of the idea that Free Will and Determinism can be reconciled. (Clue 3)

The question then is whether these consistitute good, or reasonable grounds for being a Compatibilist rather than an Agnostic. I have argued that a) is not sufficient to justify Compatibilism rather than Agnosticism. So if these conditions constitute grounds for accepting Compatibilism and not merely Agnosticism it must be because of b). But is an intuition of this kind good grounds for accepting Compatibilism (rather than Agnosticism)? The issue seems to be finely balanced. However, I think it is right to say that *if* Compatibilism is a reasonable

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[17] See, e.g. Ayer 1954, Hobart 1934, and the *locus classicus,* Hume1978.
[18] Here, the problem with this version of Compatibilism precisely resembles the problem with Incompatibilism formulated earlier.

option in the light of a) and b) it is so only because it seems to be the only position that could vindicate a) and b).

Similar things can be said about Incompatibilism. We need to ask whether Incompatibilism is reasonable in the light of the following:

c)   The inadequacy of Compatibilism (Clue 4).
d)   The power and appeal of the Incompatibilist intuition. (Clue 1)

If a) and b) are sufficient to make reasonable a belief in Compatibilism then it seems that c) and d) are sufficient to make reasonable a belief in Incompatibilism. Incompatibilism is reasonable in the light of c) and d) because Incompatibilism seems to be the only position which can vindicate those clues.

So, what makes each position reasonable is the belief that only Compatibilism (Incompatibilism) can vindicate the respective pair of clues. But suppose that there were available some new account of Free Will and Determinism which could explain a)-d) (all four clues), then *both* Compatibilists and Incompatibilists would have good reason to accept this new account. It would not merely be that it would be open to them to maintain their Compatibilism (or Incompatibilism) *or* accept this new approach. There would be a genuine pressure to abandon their position in favour of this new approach. This is because of the following reason which was mentioned at the outset of this chapter. I am assuming that one task of any satisfactory account of Free Will and Determinism is to explain why able philosophers have held both sides of the debate. If a new approach can explain a)-d) then it can fulfil this task and this is a reason to favour it over either Compatibilism or Incompatibilism. Neither Compatibilism nor Incompatibilism has the resources to explain (in a way which at least partially vindicates) the persistence and cogency of the opposing position. So both positions must be missing something.

Of course for Compatibilists and Incompatibilists to *accept* this new position would involve paying a price, namely, accepting the failure of both Compatibilism and Incompatibilism. This new position could not genuinely hope to vindicate the *letter* of both Compatibilism and Incompatibilism and remain coherent. But if it can genuinely vindicate the *spirit* of both, at the cost of sacrificing the *letter* of both, then I think that ought to be a good reason to accept it.

So, to summarize: Compatibilists do not have strong support for their position, but their position is reasonable *given* that there is no alternative position which can explain the failures of Incompatibilism and the appeal of a reconciliation.   Equally, Incompatibilists lack strong

support for their position, but it is reasonable *given* that there is no alternative position available which can explain the failures of Compatibilism and the power of the Incompatibilist intuition. But if there were a position which could explain all four of these motivating factors then that would be a reason for both Compatibilists and Incompatibilists to jettison their positions and accept this new one. But, as it stands, apparently there is no such position.

So one of the reasons I think both Compatibilism and Incompatibilism are inadequate is because I believe I can formulate a new approach which can fulfil the required task. Whether or not this is a reason for abandoning Compatibilism or Incompatibilism will therefore depend, unsurprisingly, on whether or not this coherent alternative can be formulated, and therefore on the remainder of this dissertation. So ultimately, the case for the inadequacy of Compatibilism and Incompatibilism rests on the availability of an alternative approach which can explain the four clues as I have presented them. But that is as it should be. The formulation and defence of this alternative will be the main preoccupation of the remainder of the dissertation. For the time being, my primary concern is to have convinced the reader of a hypothetical: If a new approach can be formulated which is coherent, and can both explain and partially vindicate the four clues, then that constitutes a strong reason for accepting this new approach.

The situation, then, as I see it, is this. The Incompatibilist intuition is powerful and appealing, but Incompatibilism seems unsatisfactory. The Reconciliatory intuition is powerful and appealing but Compatibilism seems unsatisfactory. But Incompatibilism and Compatibilism look to be mutually exclusive alternatives. How can a position be formulated which could possibly explain the appeal of all four clues? I will attempt to go some way towards fulfilling this task in the next chapter.

Chapter 2: Developing a New Approach

In this chapter I trace out the implications of the conclusions of Chapter 1. I argue that they lead one to make a radical departure from traditional thinking on the matter. I examine and explore the suggestion that Free Will and Determinism are grammatical propositions having a primarily normative, rather than descriptive, role. This suggestion enables me to formulate a new taxonomy of positions on the compatibility issue. Finally, an examination of the nature of the conflict between Free Will and Determinism lends further support to the suggestion that they are conflicting grammatical propositions, rather than (consistent or inconsistent) truth-apt propositions.

Consider once again the propositions concerned and Compatibilism and Incompatibilism as defined:

Free Will: (Some) human agents have free will.
Determinism: There is at most one physically possible future given the past and the laws of nature.

Incompatibilism: It is impossible for both Free Will and Determinism to be true.
Compatibilism: It is possible for both Free Will and Determinism to be true.

I. Exclusivity, Truth-Aptness

The substance of Chapter 1 was that there is something appealing and powerful about both Compatibilism and Incompatibilism but that both positions are inherently flawed. Given that according to the traditional debate Compatibilism and Incompatibilism are mutually exclusive alternatives, and one or the other *must* be the truth, this suggests two things:

A) The traditional debate rests on a mistake shared by both Compatibilists and Incompatibilists, and (directly related to this), that

B) The proper understanding of the compatibility issue rests (in part) in identifying this mistake and repudiating it.[19]

So, insofar as the reader is sympathetic to the four 'clues' outlined in Chapter 1, then *ipso facto* I believe that they have good reason to explore both A) and B) as formulated above. They

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[19] In many ways my argumentative strategy here is very similar to that adopted by Kant. See Kant 1997c, Book II, Ch. II, "The antinomy of pure reason" and in particular the 'Third Conflict" p.484.

therefore have good reason to be sympathetic to a radical departure from traditional thinking on the matter, especially if embracing such a departure allows one to explain the four 'clues' without inconsistency. If a novel approach can be established and described in such a way that is not incoherent and permits such an explanation to be given then I will take that to be evidence for the accuracy of such an approach.

What, then, is this mistake which both Compatibilists and Incompatibilists have been making? What assumptions do both sides of the debate share? On reflection there are two main candidates:

1) That both Free Will and Determinism are capable of being true or false. ('Truth-Aptness')

2) That if one recognises that Free Will and Determinism are incompatible then rationally one can accept at most one of them. ('Exclusivity')

Firstly, let us consider proposition 2). Is this a promising candidate? One reason, in the light of Chapter 1, for thinking that Exclusivity could be where the mistake lies is as follows. It is Exclusivity that is responsible for the general *structure* of the traditional debate. According to the traditional debate, if one is an Incompatibilist then one must jettison at least one of Free Will or Determinism. In addition, the only position that enables one to rationally accept both propositions is Compatibilism. But supposing that Exclusivity does not hold for Free Will and Determinism then we have the following interesting possibility: that Free Will and Determinism are incompatible and yet one can rationally accept both. One could thus see something both importantly right and yet partly misguided in both Compatibilism and Incompatibilism. If such a position were coherent, it would seem to be a good candidate to enable one to explain all four clues outlined in Chapter 1. So *prima facie* this is a good reason for thinking that Exclusivity is the mistake on which traditional debate has rested.

However, there are good reasons for thinking that we cannot repudiate Exclusivity. It might be put as follows. "If Free Will and Determinism are capable of being true or false, then either they are incompatible, i.e. the truth of one implies the falsity of the other, or they are compatible, i.e. it is possible that they both be true. If they are incompatible then there is no possible world in which both propositions are true and thus one could not rationally accept two propositions one knew to be incompatible." This is an extremely forceful idea. Exclusivity is seen to be derivative of a general principle of logic – the law of non-contradiction. If Free Will and Determinism are incompatible, then it follows that at least one of them is false, so one cannot accept both since to accept both would be to believe that they are both true, which is impossible.

This defence of Exclusivity reveals an important assumption shared by both Compatibilists and Incompatibilists, namely that both Free Will and Determinism are truth-apt, that is, a commitment to 1). Since they are truth-apt, the propositions are subject to the law of non-contradiction and our acceptance of them is governed by Exclusivity. So if we want to repudiate Exclusivity then we must, it seems, deny Truth-Aptness.

Philosophical tradition is also likely to be resistant to repudiating Truth-Aptness. It would seem to involve a quite extreme reversal of point of view to repudiate the view that Free Will and Determinism are capable of being true or false, at least in some sense of 'true' and 'false'. It might seem especially unattractive to repudiate Truth-Aptness *if* one is sympathetic to the view that the epithets 'true' and 'false' are legitimately used to signal the propositions to which one is or is not committed. It seems clear that one can legitimately signal whether or not one is committed to Free Will or Determinism, and therefore one can say of the two propositions that they are true or false.[20]

This retort reveals that an important remark is necessary here. I will explore in this chapter, and subsequently defend an approach to the problem which repudiates Truth-Aptness. However, I am sympathetic to a form of 'minimalism' about truth which holds that truth and falsity, at least in some domains, are merely devices for signalling our commitments. It might be that Free Will and Determinism are not in the *first instance* best understood as being truth-apt, since this assumption is apt to obfuscate a proper understanding of the problem. Nonetheless we may 'end up' saying that Free Will and Determinism are 'true', or 'false' where these are intended merely as devices for signalling our commitments.[21] My denial of Truth-Aptness is *intended* to deny whatever notion of truth-aptness brings with it the law of non-contradiction and, derivatively, Exclusivity. So in the ensuing discussion it is important for the reader to bear in mind what does and does not follow from a denial of Truth-Aptness.

One might think at this point that a denial of Truth-Aptness can do nothing to establish a position which both Compatibilists and Incompatibilists might be sympathetic to, so it is not an option worth considering. This might be put as follows. "If Free Will and Determinism are not truth-apt then there is no question of compatibility or incompatibility since they can bear no logical relations to each other. Far from enabling one to formulate a position which vindicates the spirit of both Compatibilism and Incompatibilism, the conclusion would seem to be that there is *nothing* to be said for either Compatibilism or Incompatibilism since they rest on so fundamental a mistake."

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[20] It is notable that repudiating 1) may be unattractive precisely because one embraces a fairly 'minimalist' view of truth.

[21] For a similar approach in ethics see Blackburn 1988.

This thought is ill-founded. If Free Will and Determinism are not truth-apt then any compatibility or incompatibility between them is not best understood as logical compatibility or incompatibility. But it does not follow that therefore the whole issue of compatibility falls by the wayside. Statements which are not truth-apt may nonetheless be assessed in terms of compatibility or incompatibility, in *some* sense of compatibility or incompatibility. To illustrate this, consider the two orders "Turn left" and "Turn right". There seems to be at least one sense in which these orders are incompatible. A person could not simultaneously obey both. Nonetheless *this* incompatibility is not best modelled through a *logical* incompatibility since orders are not truth-apt. The same might be said about rules or maxims. Take the two rules "Bishops can only move diagonally" and "Bishops can only move horizontally". These two rules cannot both function as rules in the same game. They are incompatible. But, again, this incompatibility is pretty obviously not to be understood in terms of logical incompatibility. Rules and orders or imperatives can in a meaningful way be said to be compatible or incompatible but nonetheless these relations are not, it seems, best understood as relations of logical consistency or inconsistency. To attempt to force these cases into that particular mould can only lead to distortion and confusion.

What this shows is that statements which are not truth-apt may nonetheless bear relations of compatibility or incompatibility to statements of the same kind (in a sense which is yet to be explored in detail). So a denial of Truth-Aptness in relation to Free Will and Determinism by no means rules out the possibility of partially vindicating the spirit of both Compatibilism and Incompatibilism.

So how might a denial of Truth-Aptness enable one to repudiate Exclusivity? I have argued that a denial of Truth-Aptness does not necessarily thereby render all questions of compatibility irrelevant or meaningless. However, the compatibility/ incompatibility of imperatives, or rules does not seem to be exactly analogous to the consistency / inconsistency of statements which are truth-apt. There does not seem to be a correspondingly powerful requirement that the imperatives one issues, or the rules one accepts are compatible, as there is in the case of our acceptance of statements which are truth-apt. To illustrate this, consider the following case.

Suppose that we have the following two ethical propositions: "All men over 6ft tall are bad men." and "All men called 'Bob' are good men." Let us also suppose that ethical propositions (or at least *these* ethical propositions) are not best characterised as truth-apt. Let us say that they are best understood as laying down norms of behaviour, marking the speaker's determination to treat men over a certain height or with a certain name in distinctive ways. They are, we shall say, *normative* propositions. There is nonetheless a sense, a perfectly straightforward sense, in

which these two propositions are incompatible. Supposing that there is a man called 'Bob' who is over 6ft tall then the two propositions will require incompatible attitudes towards the man. One will require us to think of Bob as a good man, praise and admire him; the other will require us to think of him as a bad man, condemn him and so forth. But we cannot treat Bob in *both* ways. Thus, the two propositions are incompatible (in this sense). But does it follow that we cannot rationally accept both these propositions?

I do not believe that it does. It is *a* desideratum of the norms that we accept that they do not get us into these sorts of difficulties, but it does not seem to me that it is, in all cases, an over-riding consideration. Suppose that we had the best possible support for both norms and could not really countenance the idea of abandoning either of them. We might then just reconcile ourselves to the fact that they may sometimes unavoidably conflict and when they do we will just have to make a judgment-call. Bernard Williams has made this point forcefully:

> "In the case of rules or of imperatives coming from one source we can see *in general* good reasons for consistency being observed; but these do not eliminate the possibility that **it might on occasion be more trouble to change the rule than to put up with inconsistency, so that we can have an adequate pragmatic justification for staying as we are.** No account of the need for consistency with assertions will be adequate which leaves the situation merely like this." (Williams 1973b, 201, my bold.)

Thus, Williams argues that the significance of consistency is different depending on whether the two propositions are considered to be assertions (truth-apt), or whether they are to be considered as rules or imperatives (having a normative role). So, to re-cap: the overwhelming plausibility of Exclusivity rests on Truth-Aptness. But if Truth-Aptness does not hold then it is much less plausible that Exclusivity holds.

This suggests the following line of thought. Both Compatibilists and Incompatibilists in the traditional debate have revealed a commitment to Exclusivity. However the plausibility of Exclusivity rests on Truth-Aptness. Granted that we are assuming, in the light of Chapter 1 that the debate rests on a mistake, it is plausible that Truth-Aptness (and derivatively, Exclusivity) is the culprit. One obvious idea would be that one or the other of the propositions is in fact an ethical proposition (ethical propositions being taken to be not truth-apt). This strategy has in fact been explored elsewhere.[22] However, this is not the only way of repudiating Truth-Aptness.

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[22] Double in his 1991 explores the idea that Free Will is an ethical proposition.

II. Grammar, Grammatical Propositions

Another way of repudiating Truth-Aptness is to suppose that the two propositions are, in Wittgenstein's terminology, *grammatical* propositions[23]. But what does it mean to say that the two propositions are grammatical propositions?

Before we tackle this question, some introductory remarks are in order. Wittgenstein's concern with language and derivatively with grammar developed first in the Tractatus. There he argued that any possible language embodies rules governing its logical syntax. The rules distinguish sense from nonsense and thus are antecedent to truth. The rules determine both the combination of atomic propositions into molecular propositions and the combinatorial possibilities of names, or representatives. In both cases the rules reflect the metaphysical structure of the world.[24]

Wittgenstein's later work is in many ways directed against this earlier view but his preoccupation with language and grammar remained. He never altered his view of language as governed by rules, rules which determine the 'bounds of sense'[25], and which are antecedent to truth, although in his later work he did reject the view that such rules reflect any metaphysical necessities. Instead he insisted that in an important sense the rules governing language-use are *arbitrary*. For the later Wittgenstein grammar consists of all the rules that govern the correct use of language.

He also makes use of the idea of a 'grammatical proposition'. Grammatical propositions enable us to distinguish sense from nonsense, not truth from falsity. They tell us what counts as a correct (meaningful) utterance and what does not. Among the propositions Wittgenstein thought were grammatical are the following[26]:

"Red is a colour"

"What is red must be coloured"

"Every proposition is either true or false"

"Every event must have a cause"

"White is lighter than black"

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[23] In the remainder I defend the view that *both* Determinism and Free Will are grammatical propositions, but it is worth remembering that an alternative view worth considering would be that only *one* of the propositions is grammatical. This would also seem to involve a repudiation of Exclusivity and the traditional taxonomy.

[24] See Wittgenstein 1974.

[25] Baker and Hacker 1994, p.34.

[26] A useful discussion and collection of examples can be found in Baker and Hacker 1994, pp. 263 –347 and in particular, 263-273.

"The sum of the angles of a triangle add up to 180 degrees"

"One cannot hear a colour."

The role of grammatical propositions is not descriptive, that is, they are not empirical propositions. They are not the kind of propositions for which we have procedures to determine their truth or falsity - whose truth or falsity we establish e.g. by performing experiments or carrying out observations. Grammatical propositions are not used to tell people what state the world is in, but rather to tell people what counts as a grammatically correct statement about the world. Grammatical propositions are not even descriptive of grammar. They are not to be understood as of the form "It is a rule of grammar that..." They are not *reports* that there is such-and-such a rule. They are formulations of the rule itself. The rule can be a standard of correctness for us, but the *fact* that people operate with such a rule cannot.

Let us consider for the purposes of clarification an example of a grammatical proposition explicitly provided by Wittgenstein.

> "458. " 'An order orders its own execution.' So it knows its execution, then,
> even before it is there? – But that was a grammatical proposition and means: If
> an order runs "Do such-and-such" then executing the order is "doing such-and-
> such"." (Wittgenstein, 1997, 133e)

The proposition "An order orders its own execution" is somewhat misleading since we are apt to misunderstand it as a declarative sentence. 'How *can* an order order something? What makes *that* true?', we might ask. But properly understood, its role is merely to clarify the rules governing language use in this context, hence it is a grammatical proposition. It tells us that if we have an order "Do X" then what is legitimately called executing the order just is "Doing X". This is an explanation of what orders, and their execution consist in. We might say this to someone who seemed confused about how to use the language of ordering and execution. The confusion or misunderstanding is removed by citing the grammatical proposition. In this respect:

> "One might say: an explanation serves to remove or to avert a
> misunderstanding – one, that is, that would occur but for the explanation; not
> everyone that I can imagine." (Wittgenstein, 1997, 41e)

To illustrate the idea further, consider the proposition "Every event must have a cause". As a grammatical proposition, it expresses a rule for the correct use of language. It tells us that if something is an event, then it always makes sense to talk of the "cause of the event". It also

tells us that it does not, on the other hand, make sense to talk of an "uncaused event", or "an event without a cause". Similarly, "One cannot hear a colour" expresses a rule according to which it is meaningless to say of anything that is a colour that one "heard it". In a similar way, the grammatical proposition "Electrons are particles" expresses a rule which tell us that if something is an electron then we can say of it e.g. that it is a particle, has a physical location, velocity, mass and so forth. Negatively, if we understand the rule, it tells us that it does not make sense to say of an electron e.g. that it smells funny, or plays chess, or goes to Church.

Grammatical propositions express rules which enable us to connect our concepts in the appropriate ways, and to help us to avoid saying things which are meaningless. The primary use of grammatical propositions is to license transfers from one sort of locution to another[27], for instance from "X is red" to "X is coloured", and to rule out certain other transfers, e.g from "X is a colour" to "X is noisy". They also, in a related way, specify certain utterances as meaningful, e.g. "The colour of the object is red", and rule out other utterances, e.g. "The colour is noisy".

One might be tempted to ask: "What is the fundamental *form* of a grammatical proposition?" It might be thought that if grammatical propositions express rules then the fundamental form of grammatical propositions must be imperatival, e.g. "Do A if X." Such a view could be bolstered by reflecting on certain rules, e.g. "If the light turns green, go", "If you have a question, put your hand up", "When speaking to his parents, use 'please' and thank you'". One might also reflect that if all rules, and therefore grammatical propositions, are fundamentally imperatival, then this helps explain why grammatical propositions are not truth-apt, since imperatives are certainly not truth-apt.

Attractive though this line of thought may be, it is certainly to be resisted. First, there is no reason to think, *without investigation,* that all rules are fundamentally imperatival.[28] Indeed there is no reason to think, in advance, that all rules must share any particular form at all. The concept of a rule may well be a family resemblance concept.[29] Furthermore examination of a number of examples of rules tends to lead one to the conclusion that although some rules may be put in the form "Do A if X", many would be distorted by doing so, and for some it may be quite impossible. To illustrate this, consider the following rules.

1) "Bishops can only move diagonally"

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[27] But, according to Wittgenstein, not the only use, since some grammatical proposition are used to teach certain concepts through ostensive definition, e.g. the proposition "*That* is red". I will not devote any further attention to this aspect of Wittgenstein's account.
[28] Here Wittgenstein's injunction "Don't think - look!" is pertinent.
[29] Cf. Wittgenstein 1997, remarks 67, 77, 108, 164, 179.

2) "The loser is the person possessing the ace at the end of the game."

3) "If the lights turn red, you must stop."

One might think that perhaps rules 1) and 3) could be formulated as imperatives, e.g. "Move your bishop diagonally when playing chess", and "Stop when the lights turn red", respectively. However, this is a distortion since obeying the imperative "Move your bishop diagonally when playing chess" would not constitute following the rule that "Bishops can only move diagonally". One might interpret it as akin to "Always have a cup of coffee when playing chess." If so, one would fail to understand the role moving one's bishop diagonally plays in the game of chess. Similarly one might obey the imperative "Stop when the lights turn red" without realising that this is a rule that must be adhered to, generally. One might think that it was like "Smile when passing pretty ladies." Assimilating rules to imperatives distorts the nature of rules since in the case of rules the fact that the rule has been expressed / formulated is non-essential, whereas in the case of imperatives it is absolutely essential. I cannot follow an imperative unless I have been given one, but I can follow a rule without it ever having received expression. In addition, rules are cited in a number of normative practices (training, criticism, commentary and so on), and the role they play in those practices is in *justifying* various types of behaviour, and judgements. Not so for imperatives. Imperatives might help explain, but do not essentially play a role in justifying behaviour, as rules do. When we teach or criticise others, imperatives play at best a minor and unnecessary role, whereas the appeal to rules is absolutely indispensable. Furthermore I see no way of formulating rule 2) in the form of an imperative without losing its sense. So it cannot be right to consider all rules to be fundamentally imperatival. As Baker and Hacker put it:

"The range of sentence-types which may be used to state rules is very wide. Deontic sentences...imperatives, ordinary declarative sentences, sentences in what Bentham called 'the dominative tense' ('The prime minister shall form a cabinet within a week of being appointed') can all be used to specify rules."
(Baker and Hacker, RGN, 1994, p.41)

Furthermore it is not just that the form of a sentence is not necessary for identifying whether it expresses a rule, it may even be positively *misleading*. Consider the two sentences: "You cannot travel north-east of the south pole." and "You cannot travel before the station opens." The former expresses a rule, namely that nothing counts as going north-east of the south pole, whereas the latter expresses a contingent fact of the matter. However, their *form* appears to be the same.

The lesson is an important one. We are not to identify rules, and grammatical propositions, by looking at the apparent *form* of the sentence-type. Rather we must look at what the sentence or proposition is being used to achieve, what role it plays for us. We identify grammatical propositions by asking ourselves not "What is the form of this proposition", but rather "How is this proposition *used*? What role does it play for us?"

So if a proposition has a certain use then it is grammatical. But what use must it have to be a grammatical proposition? Well, it must be used as a rule, one which specifies what is a correct use of language in a given context. A correct use of language in a given context is one which is meaningful, and therefore capable of assessment in terms of truth and falsity. The proposition is used as a rule if it is used as a standard of correctness: something against which what we say can be deemed legitimate (meaningful) or illegitimate (meaningless). It is being used as a rule if we cite it when explaining the meaning of words, training or teaching people how to use language, or when we use it to criticise what someone has said. It is not used as a rule if we treat it as the sort of thing whose truth or falsity we might be able to determine. Rules are open to revision and change but if they are revised it is not because they have been discovered to be false, but rather because they have ceased to play a significant role for us, and other rules will do better.

So understood, why should we believe that there are any grammatical propositions? I cannot hope to offer an exhaustive defence of the view that there are grammatical propositions here, however I will give some reasons for thinking that it is very plausible. First, it is very plausible, indeed hard to deny, that language is governed by rules, rules which determine what is meaningful and what is not. Anyone who wished to deny this would have to explain why we deem certain language-formulations as meaningless, and others as meaningful in a way which did not presuppose that there are rules at work. (I am not, here, presupposing anything about what these rules are, where they come from, how they are supported or anything else, merely that there *are* such rules.) Second, if language is governed by such rules, then it is very plausible that we will need to cite these rules from time to time. In particular we will need to do so when teaching someone language, identifying mistakes, or, arguably, when doing philosophy. But in order to cite these rules we must use language, we must produce a sentence of some kind. Certain sentences will therefore have this role (the specification of a rule of language) as their primary or only use. But that means there must be grammatical propositions, since grammatical propositions just are sentences which are used in this way.

There is an objection here which must be faced. It can be put as follows. "Sure, there are such rules and we cite such rules, and certain sentences are characteristically used to do so. But these are all the familiar rules of grammar such as "One says "The men are digging" not "The men is digging." That is, they are sentences in which the terms being explained are *mentioned* and not

used. But Wittgenstein's grammatical propositions are propositions in which the terms being explained are *used* not just mentioned. And no specification of a grammatical rule works in that way. So, although there may be good reasons for thinking that there are sentences which are used primarily for specifiying the rules of language, amongst them are not Wittgenstein's grammatical propositions."

This is an important objection which fails for the following reason. The assumption is that anything that plays the role of specifying a rule of language can, properly, only mention the terms being explicated, it cannot use them. But this assumption is questionable, indeed false. Consider the following counter-examples:

1) "Aunts are female"
2) "Parallel lines do not meet at infinity."
3) "Red is a colour."
4) "A legitimate contract is one which has been signed and witnessed by both parties."
5) "One cannot travel north-east of the South pole."
6) "One cannot hear a colour."
7) "Electrons are particles."

My contention is that the above (or at least *some* of the above) are best understood as specifying rules of language in which the terms being explicated are being used and not mentioned, and therefore that the above objection is unsound. Therefore it is mistaken to think that the fact that Wittgenstein's grammatical propositions (typically) use rather than mention their terms disqualifies them from being grammatical propositions.

The most obvious line of opposition to this way of thinking is that actually 1)-7) are necessary truths, not grammatical propositions. There are a few things worth saying about this. First, anyone who believes that they are necessary truths owes an account of why this is so. In particular they must offer an understanding of this which does not rest on their being specifications of linguistic rules. This seems to be a very hard task. Indeed, arguably, philosophy has not provided any account of this which has gained an established consensus.

Second, the assertion that they are necessary truths does not *in itself* give one any reason to abandon the view that they are grammatical propositions. Grammatical propositions are not properly thought of as conceptually opposed to the class of propositions some call 'necessary truths', in the way that, arguably, the class of 'contingent truths' is. Rather, the term 'grammatical proposition' belongs to a different approach to philosophy, one fundamentally different from that which utilises the term 'necessary truth'. The view might be expressed as

follows. The contention is not that these propositions are *not* necessary truths. Rather, the contention is that that is not a helpful way of characterising them. They are *better* characterised as grammatical propositions. Many, if not all, of 1)-7) function (outside philosophy!) only in the training and explanation of language-use and so it seems that the suggestion that they are grammatical propositions is therefore very plausible. The suggestion that they are 'necessary truths' does not explicate this feature of their use, nor is it clear that it explicates *anything*, rather than just generating mysteries.[30]

The proponent of the view that they are necessary truths must think that they are *best* viewed as necessary truths, not as grammatical propositions. I therefore do not have to accept that the entire burden of proof that they are grammatical propositions lies with me. The proponent of the alternative view must also explain why *his* view is to be preferred. So, ultimately, whether or not the insistence that they are necessary truths and not grammatical propositions has any weight depends on the strength and appeal of these opposed approaches. That debate is not for me to adjudicate. Be that as it may, I have given reasons for thinking that there are grammatical propositions and that this approach is a fruitful one. In addition, *if* the suggestion that they are grammatical propositions allows one to explain the four clues outlined in Chapter 1, that will be a reason for accepting that they are best viewed as grammatical propositions, rather than as necessary truths.

In summary, grammatical propositions express rules which distinguish sense from nonsense. Their primary function is to license transfers from one sort of locution[31] to another sort of locution, and to rule out other such transfers. In addition, they specify as legitimate certain locutions, and rule out other such locutions. They express the connections between our concepts, and we cite them to remove or avert misunderstandings or mistaken use of concepts. Generally, then, we can say that a grammatical proposition, G1, expresses a rule which licenses transition from a certain class of locutions, U1, to another class of locutions L(G1), and rules out as illegitimate transfers to some third class of locutions, I(G1). For instance, "Every event has a cause" expresses a rule which licenses transfers from locutions which use the concept of "event" to locutions which use the concept of "the cause of the event" but rules out the use of the notions of "an uncaused event" or "event without cause". For the remainder of the dissertation I will take this to be the central idea at work in Wittgenstein's notion of a grammatical proposition.

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[30] For instance, what metaphysical necessity is responsible for the 'truth' of the statements about legitimate contracts or the South Pole?

[31] Note that the term 'locution' here is a broad term meant to include both sentences and phrases in a given context.

III. Acceptance

Another important question to ask before we can proceed is the following. What is it to accept a grammatical proposition? Relatedly, what is it to jettison, or reject a grammatical proposition? It is important to be clear about this question in order to be clear about the relationship between compatibility and acceptance / rejection of grammatical propositions.

Wittgenstein emphasised that language-use was closely bound up with, and inextricably linked to, various human activities, purposes, and interests. Our language-use structures and is structured by the complex network of purposes, conventions, and deep contingencies to which we are subject as social beings. Wittgenstein referred to the fact that our language-use is embedded in such a context, by means of the concept of a *language-game*. The rules of our languages are bound up with the precise nature of the language-games from which they are drawn. Language-games have their own particular activities, modes of assessment, forms of criticism and so forth. Grammatical propositions are an integral part of the language-games from which they are drawn. They specify the rules that govern the language-game. In as much as one engages in a given language-game one implicitly accepts the grammatical propositions that are essential to it.

One accepts a grammatical proposition if one undertakes to follow the rule expressed by that proposition. In order to undertake to follow the rule it expresses one must typically operate with and enter into the language-game from which the grammatical proposition is drawn. In addition, one must, as far as possible, seek to follow the rule when operating within that language-game. But what is it to follow a rule?

This is a question which greatly preoccupied the later Wittgenstein. To *accord* with a rule is to exhibit behaviour which is legitimate according to the rule, and not to exhibit behaviour which is illegitimate according to the rule. (What is or is not in accord with the rule is determined by the rule itself.) Whether or not someone counts as *following* a rule is to be assessed by reference to the extent to which they exhibit the following features: having been trained in the appropriate way, teaching others by citing the rule, using the rule to explain what others are saying and doing, using the rule to justify what is done, using it as a standard of correctness against which behaviour can be assessed, and so on. In as much as the behaviour of a person exhibits (some of) the above features we will be warranted in saying of them that they are following the rule. Of course there will be borderline cases. (For example does someone who criticises others using a certain linguistic rule, but violates the rule himself on occasion count as following the rule?) But by and large the distinction between those who accept a grammatical proposition and those who do not should be a robust one.

There is therefore, we can note, the *weak* possibility that someone might accept a grammatical proposition, whose rule they have never followed, since e.g. the circumstances had never arisen in which they had the possibility of following the rule. I say 'weak' possibility since if there is a linguistic practice which involves following the rule (as there must be if there is to be such a rule), then this begs the question of why the person who 'accepts' the rule has not entered into that practice and followed it. It is as if I say that I accept that 'All aunts are female' and yet haven't followed that rule since I've never used the term 'aunt', not even in relation to others' language use, language-training, commentary or criticism. It would take quite exceptional circumstances to make *this* claim cogent.

This relates to what it means to reject / jettison a grammatical proposition. To reject a grammatical proposition would be to undertake *not* to follow the rule expressed by that proposition. This would not necessarily involve violating that rule, but it would specifically involve not utilising the rule in any of the various linguistic practices one enters into. In other words, undertaking *not* to use it as a standard of correctness, or to train others, and so on. If one rejects a grammatical proposition, one would have to be *open* to breaking the rule, even if, as it happened, one did not do so.

To accept a grammatical proposition is to undertake to follow the rule specified by that grammatical proposition, and to undertake to enter into and engage with the language-game from which it is drawn. Therefore in practice, acceptance of a grammatical proposition requires that the person engages in a practice which involves his following the rule, but does *not* require that he is *always* engaging in that practice. The following of the linguistic rule may be said to be reasonably limited to a given context and language-game. Thus I think the following is an accurate representation of what it means to accept a grammatical proposition (given the above understanding of what is involved in following a rule).

Singular Acceptance:
A person accepts a grammatical proposition just in case he engages in a linguistic practice which involves following the rule specified by the grammatical proposition (although is not necessarily always engaged in such a practice).

Given this, it is worth asking what it means for a person to be said to accept two (or more) grammatical propositions. It seems that the following is correct:

Dual Acceptance:

A person accepts two grammatical propositions just in case the person engages in the linguistic practices involved in following both rules specified by the grammatical propositions concerned.

But this latter formulation seems to me to be ambiguous between two different ideas:

Independent Acceptance:

A person *independently accepts* two grammatical propositions just in case he engages in two or more broadly distinct linguistic practices, each of which can be said to, respectively, involve following the rule specified by the grammatical proposition concerned.

Additive Acceptance:

A person *additively accepts* two grammatical propositions just in case he engages in a linguistic practice which can be said to exemplify following both rules specified by the grammatical propositions.

These two important ideas need to be kept separate. Consider the two grammatical propositions "An object cannot be both red all over and green all over at the same time" and "Objects are coloured." It seems plausible that one's acceptance of these two grammatical propositions could be an example of *additive* acceptance, since they seem to be rules which one can follow as part of the same linguistic practice or language-game (that involved in colour ascription). Consider now, the propositions "Parallel lines meet at infinity" and "Objects are coloured." When we say that a person accepts both propositions we do not mean that his acceptance is *additive*. Indeed it is quite clear that one's acceptance of these two grammatical propositions is not additive since they are drawn from and belong to two basically distinct linguistic practices. It does not seem that any *one* language-game which the person engages in could exemplify *both* grammatical propositions. But this does not seem to undermine the claim that the person accepts both grammatical propositions since he exemplifies the appropriate rules in the (broadly distinct) language-games from which they are drawn.

IV. Compatibility Revisited

We now have some understanding of what grammatical propositions are, and of what accepting them involves. Granted this, how are we to understand the *compatibility* and *incompatibility* of grammatical propositions?

Suppose that there are two grammatical propositions, G1 and G2, and they specify, with respect to some class of locutions U1, respectively, L(G1) and I(G1), L(G2) and I(G2). That is, G1 specifies a class of utterances as legitimate, and a class of utterances as illegitimate, as part of the language-game from which it is drawn, and similarly for G2. I will say that G1 and G2 are *g-incompatible*[32] if and only if one or both of the following conditions obtains:

1) At least one of L(G1) is also in I(G2),
2) At least one of L(G2) is also in I(G1).

An example of two g-incompatible grammatical propositions would be the following:

G1) Every event has a cause.

G2) Some events have no cause.

G1 specifies a rule according to which for anything which we consider an event, it always makes sense to talk of the cause of that event, but is illegitimate to talk of an 'uncaused event'. G2, on the other hand, expresses a rule according to which the locution 'an uncaused event' or 'event without a cause' is perfectly meaningful. They are thus g-incompatible since for some class of locutions they yield incompatible conclusions as to their meaningfulness.

We can say, contrastingly, that G1 and G2 are *g-compatible* if and only if neither 1) nor 2) holds.

I now wish to explore the notion of compatibility in more detail. Let us suppose that we have two grammatical propositions, G1 and G2. The first question worth asking is: Are these propositions drawn from the same language game, or broadly different ones? Or, another way of putting the same idea: Do the propositions have broadly independent normative roles, or are they to be thought of as both specifying the rules governing language use in the same linguistic practice?[33]

Let us suppose that they are to be thought of as being drawn from the same linguistic practice, or language-game. Now, the important question to be asked seems to be: Are the two propositions g-compatible, or g-incompatible? Supposing that the two propositions are g-

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[32] I have adopted the terms 'g-incompatible' and 'g-compatible' to mark the fact that these terms are specific to the issue of *grammatical* compatibility in contrast to the 'compatibility' and 'incompatibility' of the traditional debate.

[33] I am aware that the question of whether two language-games are 'the same' or 'different' is a sometimes a hard question to assess, and to some extent it will be a matter of degree. Some guidance can be given by reflecting on the following: the extent to which they a) have their own specific context of application, b) utilise different concepts, activities, modes of behaviour and c) are used for different purposes.

compatible, then it seems to me to follow that one can *additively accept* both propositions. This is because they are both part of the same language-game and are g-compatible, thus one can be said to be following the rules specified by both propositions by entering into and exhibiting the correct linguistic behaviour. This much seems clear.

Suppose on the other hand that the two propositions belong to the same language-game, but are g-incompatible. What follows with respect to acceptance? It may seem that it is not possible for a person to accept additively two grammatical propositions which are g-incompatible. The argument would be as follows. "If two grammatical propositions are g-incompatible then there is at least one utterance which would be in accordance with one rule and yet a violation of the other. If I accept both propositions then I must undertake to accord with the requirements of both rules. But if they are g-incompatible then this is impossible. I can therefore accept at most one of two grammatical propositions which are g-incompatible".

This argument seems to be overly-ambitious for the following reason. Supposing that two propositions are g-incompatible, then it follows that there is some utterance which is legitimate in relation to one proposition but illegitimate in relation to the other. But this does not rule out the possibility that I could exemplify the range of linguistic behaviour required for it to be true of me to be said to be following both linguistic rules without even producing the problematic utterance in question. The utterance which forms the locus of the conflict between the two grammatical propositions may be exceedingly obscure and quite unnecessary for me rightly to be said to be following the linguistic rules specified by the two grammatical propositions. If so, then it seems to me that even if the two propositions are g-incompatible, it is still possible that I could additively accept both. The mere fact that there is at least one proposition whose utterance would be in accordance with one proposition but not with the other falls short of a demonstration that I could not follow the rules specified by both propositions.

What this illustrates is that the problematic nature of grammatical incompatibility is, to some extent, a matter of degree. Following a linguistic rule does not necessarily involve expressing *all* the utterances specified as legitimate, and so it is possible that there is an incompatibility between two grammatical propositions and yet it never becomes problematic in practice.[34]

However, suppose now that it is impossible for it to be true of me that I follow one linguistic rule *unless* I produce utterances which are a violation of the other linguistic rule. That is, the overlap of disputed utterances is large enough for it to be impossible to follow one rule without breaking the other. I will call such a case, a situation in which the conflict is *urgent*. Does it

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[34] Cf. Williams' comments cited in the earlier part of this chapter.

follow that I cannot rationally accept both grammatical propositions if the conflict is urgent in this way?

If the conflict is urgent in this way then following one of the linguistic rules implies that I cannot be following the other. Seeing as they are rules (supposed to be) governing the use of language in a single linguistic practice, it seems that I cannot rationally accept both propositions. That is, given that these propositions are (supposedly) drawn from the same language-game, the only version of acceptance available here is *additive* acceptance. But it seems clear that I cannot additively accept the two propositions since nothing could count as undertaking to follow *both* rules since those rules are g-incompatible, and this g-incompatibility is truly urgent.

The options available to the person at this point seem to be the following: Either the person jettisons one or both of the propositions (linguistic rules), or he ceases to operate with that language-game at all, on the grounds of its internal incoherence. What the decision will be seems to me to depend on a number of pragmatic factors, e.g. how important the language-game is, what role it plays for us, how damaging the conflict is, which if any of the propositions enables the language-game to operate as effectively as possible and so forth. Nonetheless it follows that if the two propositions are drawn from the same language-game, are g-incompatible, and this g-incompatibility is urgent in the sense described that one cannot rationally accept both propositions.

Let us now return to consider what follows if the two propositions are drawn from broadly distinct language-games. In this case the two propositions both have a normative role to play, but they have this role as part of distinct language-games. Once again, we wish to know whether or not the two propositions are g-compatible, or g-incompatible. (It is important at this point to emphasize that the fact that the two propositions are drawn from distinct language-games does not *ipso facto* reveal that the two propositions are g-compatible. Two propositions are g-incompatible if they are rules which conflict in the sense of yielding differing conclusions about the meaningfulness of certain utterances. Two propositions may be drawn from broadly distinct language-games and yet be g-incompatible in this sense. There may be some further sense in which g-incompatible propositions drawn from distinct language-games can be said to be 'compatible', but this is not the sense I have captured with the term 'g-compatible'. But more of this anon.)

Let us suppose that the two propositions are g-compatible. That is, they do not yield any conflicting verdicts about the meaningfulness of any utterances. Then it seems clear that one could rationally accept both propositions, but in this case, one's acceptance would be
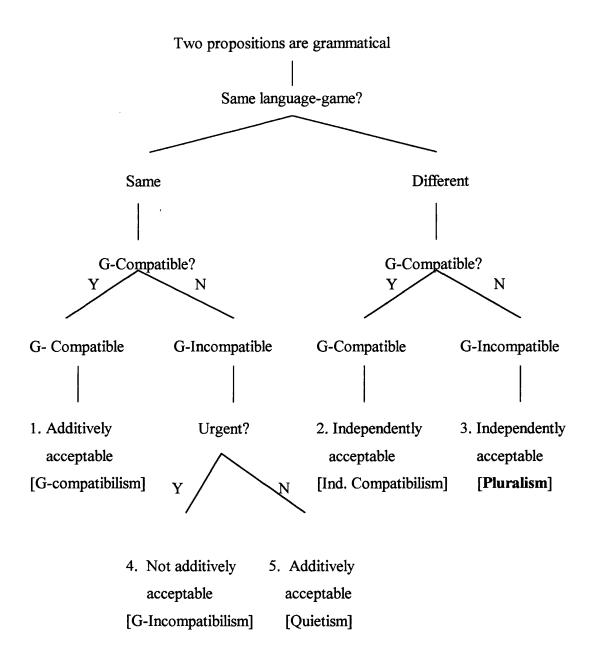
independent acceptance. One could undertake to engage in both language-games and, as part of each language-game obey the respective linguistic rules.

What though, if these two propositions, are g-incompatible? That is, suppose that the two propositions, drawn from broadly distinct language-games, nonetheless yield conflicting verdicts about the meaningfulness of certain (token) utterances. What follows with respect to acceptance of the two propositions? It seems to me that the person could nevertheless *independently accept* both propositions since he could undertake to follow the rules specified by both propositions, as part of their broadly distinct language-games. This person would *when operating within one language-game* follow one rule, and *when operating within the other language-game* follow the other rule. From the perspective of one of the language-games, and one of the propositions, his linguistic behaviour in the other language-game would seem to be a violation of sense, that is, meaningless, and vice versa. But granted that each rule has a legitimate normative role as part of its broadly distinct linguistic practice I see no reason why it should follow from this fact that the person must make a choice between one rule or the other. It is fair to insist on a reasonable relativity of the rules to their respective language-games. The two propositions are g-incompatible since they invoke conflicting linguistic standards of sense. But once the role of grammatical propositions has been understood properly; as specifying the correct use of language in a given context, and as part of a particular set of practices, not as specifying rules meant to govern all language-use in all contexts; g-incompatibility does not render the propositions mutually exclusive. Thus one can independently accept two grammatical propositions which are g-incompatible provided that they each play a normative role as part of broadly distinct linguistic practices.

Thus, with respect to any two grammatical propositions, we have a taxonomy of positions as follows. (See Fig.1)

Fig. 1

A New Taxonomy

Two propositions are grammatical

|

Same language-game?

Same   Different

G-Compatible?   G-Compatible?

Y   N   Y   N

G- Compatible   G-Incompatible   G-Compatible   G-Incompatible

1. Additively   Urgent?   2. Independently   3. Independently

acceptable   acceptable   acceptable

[G-compatibilism]   Y   N   [Ind. Compatibilism]   **[Pluralism]**

4. Not additively   5. Additively

acceptable   acceptable

[G-Incompatibilism]   [Quietism]

We are now in a position to assess the relationship between the supposition that two propositions are grammatical and Exclusivity.

Exclusivity: That if one recognises that Free Will and Determinism are incompatible then rationally one can accept at most one of them.

Supposing the two propositions to be grammatical propositions, then our version of Exclusivity is as follows:

Grammatical Exclusivity: That if one recognises that Free Will and Determinism (being grammatical propositions) are g-incompatible then rationally one can accept at most one of them.

But our examination of the taxonomy reveals that Grammatical Exclusivity is false. The strongest exclusivity thesis we can derive from our taxonomy is the following: That if Free Will and Determinism are g-incompatible then if they are drawn from the same language-game and the conflict is urgent, then they are not additively acceptable (indeed nothing could count as accepting both propositions). However, it is possible for one to admit that they are g-incompatible and yet accept both (that is, to embrace one of the positions I have called 'Quietism' or 'Pluralism'.)

So, an examination of the implications of the supposition that Free Will and Determinism are grammatical propositions has led us to formulate a rather more complex taxonomy than that associated with the traditional debate. Such a taxonomy does not support Exclusivity as formulated. This new approach thus permits a position which looks attractive in the light of Chapter 1: that Free Will and Determinism are grammatical propositions which are g-incompatible but nevertheless we can accept both.

However, it is not enough to make this new approach viable merely to show that it would seem to permit a rather attractive compromise of compatibility and incompatibility. It must be shown, for independent reasons, that this is the best way of characterising the relationship between the two propositions. The next section is devoted to this end.

V. Free Will and Determinism: A Grammatical Disagreement

In this section I provide what I take to be a typical and representative exchange of the debate between the 'Free Willists' and the 'Determinists'. I argue that the traditional debate has misinterpreted the disagreement as a factual (empirical) disagreement, or a disagreement about truth-conditions, when actually it is best viewed as a *grammatical* disagreement. I thereby aim to give strong support to the view that Free Will and Determinism are (conflicting) grammatical propositions.

Consider a typical example of the debate between Free Willists (F) and Determinists (D). I will number the lines in order to aid subsequent discussion.

1. F) He could have done otherwise, and so is morally responsible for what he did.

2. D) No he's not.

3. F) Why not? I mean he wasn't coerced or deceived or constrained in any way. He killed the guy of his own accord. So he could have done otherwise, and he is morally responsible for what he did.

4. D) Yes, you're right, he wasn't coerced, or deceived or anything of the kind. But nonetheless he couldn't have done otherwise since, given Determinism, his action was the necessary result of antecedent conditions and the laws of nature. So he is not morally responsible for what he did.

5. F) Do you mean that he could only have done otherwise if his action *was not* the result of antecedent conditions and the laws of nature? Surely not.

6. D) No, I don't mean that. I mean that no one could have done otherwise, given Determinism.

The following seems to be a faithful description of what is going on in this exchange.

Lines 1-2: Here a disagreement becomes apparent. D is denying something that F has said.

Line 3: Here F exhibits understandable puzzlement. He wonders whether D believes that some of the standard conditions which would excuse the person are present.

Line 4: But, to F's surprise, in fact D admits that none of the 'standard' excusing conditions are present. But nonetheless D insists that, given Determinism, the person could not have done otherwise, nor is he morally responsible for what he did.

Line 5: Here, F wonders, quite reasonably, whether D is proposing some *alternative* view of the conditions under which people 'could have done otherwise' or under which people are 'morally responsible' for what they do, one that involves some aspect of *indeterminism.*

Line 6: Here D compounds F's puzzlement by insisting that that is *not* what he meant, but nonetheless reaffirms his disagreement with F.

The traditional debate exhibits everything as far as (and including) Line 5. The disagreement has tended to focus on the 'necessary conditions' for Free Will, with Incompatibilists insisting that Indeterminism is essential, and Compatibilists denying this. I argued in Chapter 1 that Incompatibilists are wrong if they insist that some element of indeterminism is essential for Free Will. Nonetheless this is not the whole story. D can retain his opposition to F without having to insist on the implausible view that F is applying *his* (F's) concepts *incorrectly.*

In fact what explains the debate is the suggestion that the disagreement between F and D is a grammatical disagreement, not a disagreement about the facts or the truth-conditions. Consider the following exchange as an analogy.

1. A) Your birthday is on the Sabbath.

2. B) No, it's not.

3. A) Hang on, your birthday is three days from today and today is Wednesday. So it must be on the Sabbath.

4. B) Yes, it's three days from today, but three days from today is Saturday, not the Sabbath.

5. A) You mean, the Sabbath is not actually the day after Friday, but some other day during the week?

6. B) No, I don't mean that. I mean that *Saturday* is the day after Friday.

This, admittedly rather odd (even perverse), disagreement seems to me to exactly parallel the debate between the Free Willist and the Determinist.

Lines 1-2: B) denies something A) says.

Lines 3-4: A) wonders whether B) has some different view of the facts to him. But B) apparently does not, nonetheless he insists that his birthday is on Saturday, not on the Sabbath.

Lines 5-6: A) wonders if B) is proposing some different and contrary account of the day on which the Sabbath falls. But B), rightly, denies that he is doing that, but nevertheless reaffirms his contrary insistence.

I think that the explanation of this disagreement is in fact obvious. A) and B) are in agreement about the facts, and B) accepts that A) is applying the concept of the 'Sabbath' correctly. (He does not have an alternative view about *that*.) But nonetheless there *is* a disagreement here, and I think it is best seen as a disagreement about *grammar*. A) affirms the grammatical proposition that "The day after Friday is the Sabbath", whereas B) affirms a different, and incompatible grammatical proposition, namely that "The day after Friday is Saturday". What is going on in the discussion between A) and B) above is that A) is misinterpreting B)'s disagreement as either being about the facts, or about the application of the concept of 'Sabbath'. In fact, what is happening is that we have is a clash of incompatible grammatical propositions.

Given the evident parallels with the debate between the Free Willist and Determinist, I think it is highly plausible that the best interpretation of that disagreement is that it, too, is a disagreement concerning incompatible grammatical propositions. D affirms the grammatical proposition, Determinism, which, *inter alia*, specifies as illegitimate the locutions 'could have done otherwise' and 'morally responsible'. F affirms an incompatible grammatical proposition, Free Will, which specifies as legitimate the application of the concepts of 'could have done otherwise' and 'moral responsibility'. Their disagreement is thus best viewed as a grammatical disagreement, i.e. a disagreement about the appropriate grammar to apply.

An objection to this view would be as follows: "The debate between the Free Willist and the Determinist is *not* like the debate between A and B above. The exchange between A and B is highly artificial and indeed would never occur in practice because A and B would realize that essentially they are talking at cross-purposes, and so their disagreement is just verbal. So understood, they are not really disagreeing at all. The debate between the Free Willist and the Determinist, on the other hand, seems to be urgent and real, not merely verbal. It is therefore a distortion to interpret it as a grammatical rather than factual disagreement."

There are a number of things worth saying in response to this. The debate between A and B would probably not occur in practice because very little seems to *hinge* on establishing an agreement between A) and B). There are few conceivable circumstances in which A) and B) would have to establish an agreement about whether his birthday falls on 'Saturday' or the 'Sabbath', and even fewer in which we would be inclined to think that the issue of what we say in this regard particularly matters. (Nonetheless we could imagine that this exchange occurred between an orthodox Jewish father and his son whose commitment to the religion had lapsed. The disagreement would then take on the form not merely of clash of grammars, but of a clash of fundamental values and ways of life. The son's refusal to admit that his birthday falls on the 'Sabbath' might symbolise his rejection of his father's religion and way of life. A clash of grammars can, in this way, be a clash of what Wittgenstein called 'forms of life'.) When people say that the issue between A) and B) is 'merely verbal' I think what they mean is that "It doesn't matter what we say, since nothing of importance hinges on it." In some cases this will be true, but in many cases, clashes of grammar are not 'merely verbal' but extremely urgent and important matters. Grammatical disagreements have a very real impact on what we will say and therefore what we will be prepared to do. It is clearly a matter of tremendous importance what sort of ethical grammar we embrace[35].

If we accept Free Will then we will conceptualise the situation in a certain way and, intimately related to this, will be praising, blaming, rewarding and punishing people for what they have done (these activities are essential aspects of this language-game). If we conceptualise it in quite a different way then we will see people instead as objects of social policy, to be manipulated and controlled through causal mechanisms, but little else. Hence the disagreement between F and D is of absolutely fundamental importance. It is intimately related to a real, practical and moral disagreement, about how to respond to the actions of a certain person. Thus it makes perfect sense for the issue between F and D to seem to be forceful, significant, and urgent. But this is quite consistent with the issue being a grammatical disagreement. Indeed its being a grammatical disagreement *explains* this feature of it.

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[35] Consider the disagreement about whether or not we should call a foetus a 'person'.

The conclusion to be drawn is that the nature of the debate between Determinists and Free Willists is better explained by the suggestion that the two parties accept g-incompatible grammatical propositions than by the suggestion that they accept incompatible truth-apt propositions.

So, in this lengthy chapter I have argued that Chapter 1 suggested that the traditional debate between Compatibilists and Incompatibilists rests on a mistake shared by both sides. I argued that the most plausible candidate is a commitment to Truth-Aptness (and derivatively to Exclusivity). I have explored the notion of a grammatical proposition and its acceptance, and have shown that the compatibility issue is more complicated for grammatical propositions than it is for ordinary truth-apt propositions. Finally, I argued that the most plausible diagnosis of the debate between Free Willists and Determinists supports the contention that the issue concerns g-incompatible grammatical propositions.

However, the real test for the cogency of this suggestion is how this new approach to the problem may permit one to explain all four clues outlined in Chapter 1, and how convincing a case can be made for one or more of the positions outlined in Figure 1.

Chapter 3: Pluralism Developed

To re-cap, the suggestion was this. The traditional debate and taxonomy of positions rests on a mistake, and that mistake was the assumption I have called Exclusivity. Supposing the two propositions to be grammatical propositions enables one to repudiate Exclusivity. Furthermore, the suggestion that Free Will and Determinism are (conflicting) grammatical propositions also turned out to be the best explanation of the debate between 'Free Willists' and 'Determinists'. If this new approach can enable one to explain the four clues of Chapter 1, then I will take that as evidence of the correctness of this new approach. In this Chapter I try to show how one position in particular contains the resources to explain the four clues, and therefore in the light of these clues that there is good reason to be sympathetic both to this new approach and to this one position in particular. I elaborate this position and defend it against a number of objections.

I. Explaining the Clues

Well, how could this new approach explain the overall structure of the debate; namely that there seemed to be something importantly correct about both Compatibilism and Incompatibilism but nonetheless that both positions were flawed? First, the traditional debate can be seen as an *over-simplification* of the actual complexity of the issue. The issue between Compatibilists and Incompatibilists has been misleading in as much as it seems to have been conducted as if positions 1 (Grammatical Compatibilism) and 4 (Grammatical Incompatibilism) are mutually exclusive alternatives and exhaustive when in fact there are a range of positions (2, 3 and 5) that have been largely neglected (see Fig. I).

Second, if there is a position in this new taxonomy which enables one to explain the four clues then that will be evidence both for the correctness of this new approach and the correctness of that new position. Given Clue 1, (The Power of the Incompatibilist Intuition), it seems that positions 1 (Grammatical Compatibilism) and 2 (Independent Compatibilism) are not very promising. They do not accept any incompatibility between the two propositions and are thus not good candidates to explain the enduring power and force of incompatibilist arguments. On the other hand, given Clue 3 (The Appeal of Some Form of Reconciliation) one is bound to feel that position 4 (Grammatical Incompatibilism) is unpromising too. If one cannot rationally accept both Free Will and Determinism then this is to accept that no such reconciliation is possible, and so any position that has this consequence cannot explain Clue 3.

Attention is thereby focussed on positions 3 (Pluralism) and 5 (Quietism). Both positions accept g-incompatibility and thus seem to be in a position to explain Clues 1 and 4. In addition, both positions also allow one to accept both propositions, thus explaining Clues 2 and 3.

However, I think there is good reason to favour Pluralism over Quietism for the following reason. Clue 1 emphasises the power and appeal of the Incompatibilist intuition, that is, it emphasises how intuitively appealing incompatibilist arguments are. One can be brought to think that there is some problem in reconciling Free Will and Determinism rather easily, *not* by formulating some obscure propositions which seem to be the locus of a dilemma. But Quietism emphasises that for all practical purposes there is no real problem in accepting both Free Will and Determinism since the conflict between the two only arises with respect to obscure and quite abstruse utterances. But Clue 1 was based on the idea that Determinism seems to be a threat to utterances which seem to be absolutely *basic* to Free Will, namely the notions of choice, ability to do otherwise and so forth. So, although Quietism might seem at first blush to be able to explain Clue 1, really it doesn't really explain its appeal at all. Thus Quietism does not genuinely manage to explain all four clues.

What then of, our last resort, Pluralism? Can it explain all four clues? I believe it can. It can explain Clue 1 in a genuine sense, since it can accept that the conflict between Free Will and Determinism concerns absolutely basic utterances. From the perspective of the language-game from which Determinism is drawn many of the utterances involved in following the rule specified by Free Will will be meaningless, and vice versa. It can therefore allow that there is *no hope whatsoever* that both Free Will and Determinism could be unified as linguistic rules governing the same language-game. They can be considered to be essentially incompatible ways of operating with language. Nonetheless it can explain what is wrong with Incompatibilism (Clue 2). Traditional Incompatibilism is wrong since it mistakenly accepts Exclusivity, failing to appreciate the possibility of a position such as Pluralism and thus unnecessarily rejecting either Free Will or Determinism.

It can also explain Clue 3 (The appeal of some form of reconciliation) since it emphasises two features Compatibilists have traditionally made appeal to. First, Pluralism emphasises that Determinism and Free Will are operative in broadly distinct language-games, language-games with different purposes, having a place in different contexts, and so on. It also emphasises that both propositions have an important role to play as part of their distinct language-games, and can be independently accepted. But it can also explain the problem with Compatibilism. Traditional Compatibilism lacks the resources to do justice to the appeal of Incompatibilism (Clue 1) and thus can never be a satisfactory position. Pluralism, on the other hand can explain, and embrace a form of incompatibility (g-incompatibility). So, I believe that the fact that Pluralism allows one to explain the appeal of the four clues is both evidence for the soundness of this new approach and evidence that this position is plausible.

There are a number of other features of the debate I have alluded to which Pluralism has the resources to explain. I took as my starting point the idea that any resolution of the compatibility issue between Free Will and Determinism would have to in some sense at least partially vindicate both sides of the debate. That is, any satisfactory position would have to explain the apparently antinomous nature of the debate. Pluralism has the resources to do this. The essence of Pluralism is that Free Will and Determinism are g-incompatible and cannot be additively accepted, but nonetheless can be independently accepted. So it is easy to see why there is both something right and something wrong with Compatibilism and Incompatibilism as traditionally formulated. Incompatibilism is right in as much as we understand it to imply that the two propositions are incompatible (g-incompatible) and cannot be additively accepted. But equally Compatibilism is right in as much as we understand it to mean that nonetheless the two propositions are *independently acceptable*. Incompatibilists are right to oppose the Compatibilist suggestion that there is no conflict whatsoever between the two propositions. Equally, Compatibilists are right to oppose the Incompatibilist suggestion that we can rationally accept at most one of Free Will or Determinism. Thus, Pluralism can explain the antinomous character of the debate and provide a way of resolving that antinomy.

I also suggested that Incompatibilism is inadequate because it seems implausible that for our commitment to Free Will to be warranted we must deny Determinism and embrace some variety of Indeterminism. The approach I have canvassed can explain this mistake. If two propositions are g-incompatible it does not follow that one can accept at most one of them, or that if one accepts one, one must accept the negation of the other. So one can accept g-incompatibility and Free Will without having to deny Determinism. It also explains the idea, suggested by many writers, that there is a similar sort of incompatibility (or at least some sort of incompatibility) between Free Will and Indeterminism as there is between Free Will and Determinism. The traditional view of the problem has no way of explaining this. If Determinism and Indeterminism are mutually exclusive and exhaustive metaphysical propositions then one or the other must be the case. So if Free Will is coherent, then it must be compatible with at least one of Determinism or Indeterminism. There is no way of understanding the idea that Free Will might be incompatible with both without concluding that it must therefore be incoherent, or necessarily false. But with this new approach there is nothing incoherent about the suggestion that Free Will might be g-incompatible with both Determinism and Indeterminism while insisting that Free Will is nevertheless coherent.

I argued in Chapter 1 that Incompatibilism is inadequate because no argument aimed at showing that Indeterminism is a necessary condition for Free Will is at all plausible. In addition I argued that no argument aimed at demonstrating Compatibilism was remotely likely to succeed. This new approach can explain why neither type of argument can possibly succeed. If both Free Will

and Determinism are grammatical propositions, then it is a confusion to think that they are propositions with 'truth-conditions' and therefore which bear relations of logical dependence to other propositions. If they are specifications of linguistic rules then they are internally related to the locutions which they specify as meaningful or meaningless, but they do not 'entail' any propositions. This is because they are antecedent to truth – they do not say anything about the way the world is, but rather about what counts as a correct description of the world. If they do not say anything about the way the world is then they bear no relationships of entailment to other propositions. So it follows that Free Will neither entails Indeterminism nor Determinism. (But, of course, it is misleading to say that it is therefore compatible with both). Therefore any argument aimed at demonstrating such an entailment must be flawed. So this approach can explain why the *arguments* of both Compatibilists and Incompatibilists trying to defend their positions have failed. They have failed because they *must* fail.

In Chapter 1 I also insisted that there was something very appealing about a reconcilation of Free Will and Determinism partly because in ordinary attributions of free will we never seem to appeal either implicitly or explicitly to Indeterminism. Compatibilists have insisted that we are warranted in saying of someone that they have free will just in case they are adults of normal intelligence, who are neither compelled, coerced, or constrained, and act intentionally. They go on to insist that none of these conditions bears any intrinsic relationship to Determinism, and therefore Free Will is compatible with Determinism. Pluralism can explain both what is right and what is wrong with this line of thought. Pluralism can admit that our ordinary attributions of Free Will are warranted precisely in the circumstances the Compatibilists ordinarily describe. That is, the Pluralist can accept a Compatibilist account of the truth-conditions for individual attributions of free will. But the Pluralist denies that this is all there is to say on the compatibility issue. The Pluralist insists that there is a conflict between Free Will and Determinism at the level of grammar, although not at the level of truth-conditions. The Compatibilist, on the other hand, because of his beliefs about the nature of Free Will and Determinism, does not have the resources for accepting *any* incompatibility between the two propositions once he has denied it at the level of truth-conditions. Thus, the Pluralist can explain the appeal of a reconciliation without embracing Compatibilism.

It is also worth revisiting at this point Nagel's fertile but baffling remarks which I cited at the beginning of Chapter 1. The central problem, as Nagel sees it, is that no account can be given of what Free Will involves which is coherent, but that nonetheless we cannot jettison our commitment to it. He also suggested that there is something very unsatisfactory, inherently unsatisfactory, with the accounts both Compatibilists and Incompatibilists have provided. How might this approach help explain Nagel's bafflement?

The explanation is as follows. If the problem, as Nagel sees it, is the need to give something like truth-conditions for Free Will in such a way that we can settle the compatibility question, then in the light of this approach we can see exactly why this problem seems to him to be insoluble. It is insoluble since Free Will is a grammatical proposition and it does not make sense to seek the truth-conditions for a grammatical proposition. The search to 'spell out' truth-conditions for Free Will is essentially doomed to failure since grammatical propositions have no such conditions. This explains the failure of Compatibilist and Incompatibilist accounts of Free Will since they have both (misguidedly) attempted to provide such conditions. Nagel accepts the essential failure of both Compatibilist and Incompatibilist accounts, but fails to draw the obvious conclusion: that they are bound to fail since they mistakenly believe that Free Will has truth-conditions. Rather he seems to hold on to the essential correctness of the search for such conditions, and yet insist (correctly) that all accounts of those conditions are hopelessly inadequate or incoherent. Hence, this approach can shed light on Nagel's suggestions and explain why his account was far from sufficient.

II. The Pluralist Account Developed

So, this approach, and in particular Pluralism, has very powerful resources for explaining the four clues, and for accounting for a number of persisting features of the debate. However, more needs to be said about this position I have called Pluralism. The preceding discussion has been at a level of great abstraction and it may remain unclear what it really means in terms of the relationship between Free Will and Determinism. Let us suppose for the sake of argument that one class of locutions which are the locus of dispute with respect to Free Will and Determinism is the class of locutions of the form "could have done otherwise"[36]. That is, the rule specified by Free Will requires that these locutions are legitimate. On the other hand, the rule specified by Determinism specifies, *inter alia* perhaps, that such locutions are illegitimate. The Pluralist accepts that these rules are straightforwardly g-incompatible, and there is no hope of manifesting linguistic behaviour that can rightly be said to be a case of following *both* rules. But he also insists that we can keep both rules (and therefore propositions) in play since both can perform a valuable role for us as part of broadly distinct language-games. It follows that the two language-games in question are, as it were, in practical conflict. They are, so to speak, competing for conceptual space.

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[36] Pluralism as a position is, of course consistent with a number of different views about the exact locus of the conflict (e.g. 'could have done otherwise', 'morally responsible') and I am not concerned here to argue for one view rather than another but merely to illustrate the nature of Pluralism through a concrete example.

Nothing can tell us which language-game to use, or when are the appropriate circumstances in which to invoke, for example, Free Will. These are matters we can only decide by reflecting on the value, nature and interest of the language-games concerned. It cannot be decided by asking oneself "Well which of Free Will or Determinism describes the world as it really is?" since this question is meaningless if the two propositions are grammatical rather than empirical or metaphysical.

If the two language-games *both* play a valuable and important role for us but we recognize that they are fundamentally incompatible, the course that would be selected (and I think the course it would be *rational* for us to accept in as much as rationality is an issue[37]) would be to retain both language-games and our commitment to both propositions, but accept that they are in practical conflict with each other. When we are engaging in the language-game of attributions of Free Will we must reject any appeal to Determinism. Determinism would be excluded from this particular language-game. But it does not follow that Determinism is therefore excluded from all language-games. In another language-game Determinism may have a crucial role to play, and Free Will will be excluded from *this* language-game.

Given this, we can see that one can concede a strong type of incompatibility to Free Will and Determinism without it being the case that one must either embrace Indeterminism or jettison Free Will. If many Compatibilists are motivated by the hopelessness of either Libertarianism or Hard Determinism (as I believe they are) then, providing this approach is correct, in fact would-be compatibilists have little or nothing to fear from conceding g-incompatibility since it does not have the terrible consequences they believe it to have. This bears out the suggestion made earlier, that the structure of the debate reflects the commitment of both sides of the dispute to Truth-Aptness. But viewed as grammatical propositions, incompatibility has a quite different significance than it does for propositions which have a primarily descriptive role.

At this point it may be worth considering an analogy which could help to shed light on Pluralism. Consider the propositions: "Parallel lines always meet at infinity" and "Parallel lines do not meet at infinity." These two propositions figure as different axioms in distinct geometries. The two propositions are g-incompatible. There is no linguistic practice which could exemplify following the rules specified by both propositions, and therefore they cannot be *additively accepted.* Nonetheless, there is obviously no particular requirement to jettison one proposition or the other. They cannot *both* be axioms of the same geometry since the conflict between the two would then be truly urgent. We would not know how to go on with a geometry which embraced both propositions. However, granted that they play an important role in

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[37] This remark relates to [P.F.] Strawson, 1962, p.13 (footnote). See also my discussion of Strawson in Chapter 4.

distinct geometries, there is clearly a sense in which they are compatible. That is, we can independently accept both propositions. The conflict between the two geometries and the two propositions, in as much there is a conflict, is merely a practical one over which geometry we should adopt, i.e. over which one suits our purposes best. There is no reason to say that we cannot retain both geometries since they serve (in their own way) different purposes.

This analogy may seem to be unfair since it may seem to gain unwarranted credibility due to certain features of mathematical discourse which are not available to us when we are in the business of 'describing empirical reality' as is arguably the case in the discourses from which Free Will and Determinism are drawn. This is a reasonable concern. To go some way to meeting this concern I would like to consider another analogy, no less controversial, but somewhat closer to 'empirical reality' than mathematics. Consider the two propositions, drawn from physics, "Electrons are particles" and "Electrons are waves". These two propositions are certainly g-incompatible. The former proposition permits certain descriptions of phenomena which are ruled out by the latter, and vice versa. For instance, the former tells us that if something is an electron then we can say of it e.g. that it is a particle, has a physical location, mass and so on (but we cannot say e.g. that it has an amplitude, or frequency). On the other hand, the latter tells us that if something is an electron then we can say of it e.g. that it has an amplitude, and frequency (but cannot say of it e.g. that it has a mass or physical location).

The situation in physics with respect to these propositions, as I understand it, is as follows. Both the wave-approach and particle-approach have their own merits and demerits. The wave-approach permits certain descriptions which are not available to the particle-approach and vice versa. There is a practical conflict between the two approaches since in certain circumstances some people will feel that one approach is appropriate but others will endorse the conflicting approach. Nevertheless there seems to be little reason for jettisoning either approach (and therefore either proposition) since they both play a valuable role in science. Once again, we can keep both in play without inconsistency if they both play a valuable role for us as part of broadly distinct linguistic practices.[38]

There is at this point likely to be a worry which might be expressed as follows. "When we attribute free will to people we are engaging in one language-game, and when we consider the actions as events necessitated by preceding causes we are engaging in another. But are we dealing with the same subject matter here, or not? Either we are talking about the same subject matter, in which case there does seem to be a need to assess whether or not what we are saying

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[38] It may be that there is a higher-order norm in science which requires scientists to seek to unify all existing accounts, or provide a new account in lieu of conflicting accounts. Be that as it may, nevertheless the point remains that it is *coherent* to accept independently both grammatical propositions, and related approaches despite the fact that they are grammatically incompatible.

is compatible, or we are dealing with different subject matters, in which case the issue of compatibility simply does not arise. Does a Pluralist think that these different ways of talking concern different subject matters, or the same?"

This is an important challenge. When we say of a person "He did it of his own free will, he could have done otherwise" and say of him "His action was determined by antecedent conditions and the laws of nature" are we dealing with the same action? If we are, are we then saying things which are compatible or incompatible? Or do we want to say (contrary to what seems to be the case) that we are actually saying things about different subject matters with these different utterances? It may seem that the Pluralist has located the conflict at the level of grammar when the conflict seems rather to be at the level of the empirical propositions involved. If the Pluralist has to accept that the empirical propositions are compatible then it seems he has embraced Compatibilism, but if he has to accept that they are incompatible then, contrastingly, it will seem that he has embraced Incompatibilism. So it seems that Pluralism will just collapse into a variant of Compatibilism or Incompatibilism.

To get clear about this, consider as an analogy two physicists, one of them describing what has happened in terms of the particle-theory of electrons, and the other in terms of the wave-theory of electrons. There will be many claims that one will make that the other will eschew and vice versa. But there will be a class of claims that they will agree on as well. They will agree e.g. that the event being described is something that occurred between times t0 and t1, that it was a physical event, that it concerned electrons, and so forth. Let us now ask: Are they dealing with the same subject matter or different subject matters? The sense I derive from this question is that if one answers in the affirmative then for all statements made, if one physicist says (correctly) of the event E that it was F, and the other says (correctly) of the event E that it was G, then we are able to say without incoherence that the event was both F and G. Contrastingly, if they are deemed to be dealing with different subject matters then all statements made by one are deemed to be of the type 'E1 is F', and the other of the type 'E2 is G' and there are no claims of the form 'E is F and G' which can be echoed by both parties without incoherence.

So the assertion "Either they are dealing with the same subject matter or a different subject matter" amounts to the assertion that either the situation is the former or the latter, it cannot be anything else. But this looks to be a false dichotomy. The two physicists can agree on some statements of the form 'E is F' e.g. that the event occurred between t0 and t1, that it concerned electrons and so on. But it is not the case that if it makes sense to say that 'E is F' and 'E is G' that we are always in position to say that 'E is F and G' without incoherence. One physicist will say of the event that it involved the collapse of a certain quantum wave, and the other will say that it involved a particle emitting a certain photon (say). But it is not the case that one could

say *both* without incoherence. This is because they are operating with essentially incompatible conceptual resources. A physicist can operate with each, but not with both, so he cannot affirm both that the event was the collapse of a quantum wave *and* the emission of a photon, although there is nothing faulty about affirming *either*.

Similarly in the case of saying of a person both that "He did it of his own free will and could have done otherwise" and "What he did was causally determined" it may be that there are reasons for saying that these deal with the 'same subject matter' and reasons for saying that they do not, as in the case of the physicists. The two people uttering these statements will be able to agree on some things about the event in question e.g. that it occurred at 2pm, involved John and Mabel, and the death of Gertrude. But there are certain things that one person will say that the other will eschew and vice versa, for instance "He is morally responsible for what he did" or "He could not have done something else, his action was inevitable." So there are both reasons for saying that they are dealing with the same subject matter and reasons for saying that they are dealing with different subject matters but it is not incumbent upon us to say that it must be *one or the other*. Thus the insistence that either we are dealing with the same subject matter, or different ones, is really ill-founded.

The fundamental incompatibility at stake between Free Will and Determinism is a grammatical one, not an empirical one. Thus the Pluralist does not see a *contradiction* between the *empirical propositions* a proponent of Free Will produces and those a proponent of Determinism produces. The Pluralist does however locate a conflict between the empirical propositions in as much as they embrace (conflicting) grammatical propositions. The empirical propositions at stake are incompatible in the sense that they embody grammatical propositions which conflict but they are not incompatible in the sense that one or other must be false.

Consider the following sentences:

'F': He could have done otherwise.
'D': What happened was causally determined by antecedent events.
'F and D': He could have done otherwise and what happened was causally determined by antecedent events.

The Pluralist wants to say the following: 'F' and 'D' may both be true and yet it does not make sense to say 'F and D' . To make use of a distinction developed by (the early) Wittgenstein: perhaps we want to say that 'F and D' can be *shown* but cannot be *said*.[39]

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[39] See Wittgenstein 1974 for the development of the saying / showing distinction.

III. Objections and Replies

This approach to the problem is likely to generate a host of objections and concerns. In this section I hope to both raise and respond to the most significant of these.[40] Doing so will hopefully enable me both to clarify the position and illustrate its cogency. The way in which I will present the charges will be in the form of a dialogue with an interlocutor.

1. *To deny that Free Will and Determinism are empirical or metaphysical propositions capable of being made true or false by the way the world is means that you must think that it is 'up to us' whether or not these two propositions are true.*

This is not correct. To say that the two propositions are grammatical propositions is most certainly *not* to embrace the view that they are made true or false by anything we do. They are grammatical rules which we may or may not assent to but nothing we do or say can *make* the propositions 'true or false'.

2. *But if they are grammatical rules then whether or not we have free will depends on whether we assent to such a proposition, and whether or not the world is causally determined depends on whether we assent to Determinism.*

Grammatical propositions are not made true or false by whether or not we assent to such a proposition. Nothing I have said about them commits me to any hypothetical of the form "If human beings thought or felt differently, or had a different language then we would not have free will." Free Will is not equivalent to the proposition "Human beings attribute free will to each other" or "It is a linguistic rule that we can say of people that they could have done otherwise."[41] Nor is Determinism equivalent to the proposition "Human beings operate with deterministic scientific theories" or "It is a feature of grammar that all events are necessitated by preceding causes." Grammatical propositions do not report that human beings do such-and-such nor do they *report* that in English grammar *this* is a certain rule. Grammatical propositions are expressions of the linguistic rules themselves.

3. *But doesn't it follow that there is no sense to the idea of our 'going wrong' in accepting such grammatical propositions, and thus no sense to the idea of our 'being right' to*

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[40] Unfortunately I have had to omit some objections due to limitations on space.
[41] To echo Wittgenstein 1997, 226e: "'But mathematical truth is independent of whether human beings know it or not!' – Certainly, the propositions "Human beings believe that twice two is four" and "Twice two is four" do not mean the same. The latter is a mathematical proposition; the other, if it makes sense at all, may perhaps mean: human beings have *arrived* at a mathematical proposition."

accept such grammatical propositions? There is therefore no grounds for criticism of our grammatical commitments.

This is rather confused. There is of course no sense to our 'going wrong' or 'being right' in our acceptance of our grammatical propositions if this is meant to express something like 'fails to / succeeds in describing reality'. But there are many dimensions on which we can criticise our commitment to such grammatical propositions. One would be that the propositions express no clear grammatical rules. Another would be that there is no value or interest in entering into and adopting such a grammar. Thus it is not the case that there is no grounds for criticism of our grammatical commitments.

4. *But surely our attributions of free will and our descriptions of scientific laws/causality are capable of being more or less faithful to an independently existing reality?*

Grammatical propositions express our commitment to certain linguistic rules. They do not 'describe reality'. But we do describe reality when we say of a person that 'he could have done otherwise' or that an event 'was determined by antecedent causes'. These phrases *do* succeed in expressing empirical propositions capable of being true or false. We determine whether or not they are true or false by considering empirical evidence. Thus I can be fully 'realist' at the level of ordinary attributions of freedom and determination. So I can accept that our descriptions in this way are 'capable of being more or less faithful to an independently existing reality'.

5. *What is the Pluralist account with respect to the following concern? All human actions supervene on the motions of physical particles. How then is it possible for these particles to be causally determined and yet for human actions to be free?*

This concern is about supervenience – the relation between the properties of particles and the properties of human actions. A supervenience claim of this kind amounts to the following: It is not possible for properties of human actions to differ without their being a corresponding difference in the properties of physical particles. The worry is that human freedom requires an 'openness' of action which would not be available to us if Determinism reigns at the level of physical particles and all properties of human actions supervene on the properties of physical particles.

There are a number of moves a Pluralist would want to make with respect to such a challenge. First, Free Will and Determinism are themselves grammatical propositions and as such there is no question of issues of supervenience with respect to those propositions themselves. There *are*

no metaphysically deep relationships between grammatical propositions. If the idea is that if we are committed to Free Will then the supervenience claim requires us to eschew Determinism when describing the motions of physical particles, then I do not accept supervenience (*if* it has this implication). But I think supervenience is only an issue if one views Free Will and Determinism as metaphysical or quasi-empirical propositions – a view I reject.

6. *But is there not still a problem about the relationship between empirical propositions of the form "That action was free" and "The motion of the particles (composing his body) was causally determined"?*

Well in as much as these are empirical propositions then the 'problem' is (perhaps) that they have as their background conflicting grammatical propositions. Perhaps the *further* problem is that of explaining *how* both claims can be true, and supervenience is a way of highlighting this problem. So perhaps what seems bothersome is how one can explain how statements of the form 'That action was free' can be true if a statement of the form 'The motion of the particles (composing his body) was causally determined' is also true.

If we want to explain how "That action was free" can be true then we will need to operate with concepts such as choice, decision, reasons, intentions and so forth. We can then explain and adduce evidence for the truth of such a statement. If we want to explain how "The motion of the particles (composing his body) was causally determined" can be true then we will need to operate with the concepts of events, laws of nature, and so forth, and similarly investigate the relevant evidence. I see no reason to rule out that we can explain how *each* can be true. What I *doubt* and indeed, as a Pluralist, *deny,* is the possibility of explaining how *both* can be true where this involves providing a (perhaps long and complicated) story which jointly explains how the two propositions can both be true. Any story of this kind would have to somehow bridge the two different vocabularies and conceptual frameworks involved. But this is impossible and indeed incoherent if, as I maintain, they embody conflicting grammatical propositions. So if invoking supervenience is a way of expressing a worry over how we could possibly produce such an explanation then in part I concur in that I am *sceptical* about the possibility of such an explanation. But I don't think that the fact that no such story can be told in any way undermines the validity of either claim. Pluralism both explains why no such story can be told and explains why the fact that no such story can be told is no threat to *either* set of claims.

In this chapter I hope to have shown how the Pluralist approach can explain the four clues and indeed a number of perplexing features of the traditional debate. In addition, I have argued that

the Pluralist approach enables one to evade a number of difficulties and provide an account which is persuasive, plausible and coherent.

Chapter 4: Pluralism, Kant and Strawson

In the last two chapters I tried to motivate as strongly as I could a new approach to the problem and in particular to argue for Pluralism as the most faithful account of the compatibility issue. The approach formulated in this dissertation is, I believe, original, in that such an approach has never before been described or suggested. It is undoubtedly a radical departure from traditional thinking, but it has its roots in writing both historical, and more recent in origin. In particular, Pluralism bears important similarities, but also important differences, to the accounts provided by Kant and P.F. Strawson. In this chapter I briefly note the similarities between Pluralism and Kant's account but also what I see as the main problem with his account. I then go on to consider two broadly Strawsonian approaches to the problem; one which is his explicit account, and another which is suggested by his strategy in *Skepticism and Naturalism*. I try to show that neither approach is satisfactory and that Pluralism is a superior approach.

I. Pluralism and Kant: A Brief Note

Readers familiar with Kant's writings on the subject of Free Will and Determinism will have noticed that there is a strong structural similarity between Pluralism and the sort of approach to the problem Kant tries to define. For want of space I have been unable to include here a discussion of Kant's views and how they compare with a Pluralist view. Although regrettable, this is not disastrous since Kant's views have been discussed extensively elsewhere. Furthermore I believe that the important points of comparison between Pluralism and Kant's attempted reconciliation will be fairly clear to the reader already familiar with Kant's writings.

In addition, I think that the comparison of Pluralism with Strawsonian approaches is, ultimately, both more interesting and illuminating. Before going on to discuss Strawson's writings I will merely summarize here, without argument, why I believe that Kant's account is inferior to Pluralism. Kant never repudiates truth-aptness for either proposition and so he never gives any reason for denying Exclusivity. But without a denial of Exclusivity there is no hope of formulating a position which somehow embraces both a form of compatibility and incompatibility, without incoherence (as seemed to be Kant's aspiration). So Kant's approach lacks the resources to provide a coherent vindication of the spirit of both Compatibilism and Incompatibilism. It thus cannot be a viable alternative to Pluralism.

II. Pluralism and Strawson

In this section I consider P.F. Strawson's approach to the problem, and compare and contrast it with Pluralism. I consider both the approach formulated in 'Freedom and Resentment' (what I call 'Strawsonian Naturalism') and an approach suggested by his later writings in *Skepticism and Naturalism* (what I call 'Strawsonian Relativism'). I argue that Strawson's writings embody great insights but also mistakes characteristic of the traditional debate. The identification of the important insights and errors helps me both to clarify how Pluralism relates to Strawsonian approaches and to explain how it avoids various pitfalls inherent in these accounts.

A. Strawsonian Naturalism

P.F. Strawson, in his classic 1962 paper,[42] attempted to provide an approach to the problem of the compatibility of Free Will and Determinism which aimed at reconciling the two sides of the dispute. On one side of the dispute were the 'Pessimists', who "hold that if the thesis [Determinism] is true, then the concepts of moral obligation and responsibility really have no application, and the practices of punishing and blaming, of expressing moral condemnation and approval, are really unjustified."(1974,p.1) On the other side were the 'Optimists' who "hold that these concepts and practices in no way lose their *raison d'etre* if the thesis of Determinism is true. Some hold that the justification of these concepts and practices requires the truth of the thesis."(1974,p.1)

Strawson's attempt at a reconciliation of the two sides took the following form. Firstly, Strawson emphasised the enormous importance and range of attitudes and responses he called "reactive attitudes"(p.6), which include but are not limited to, resentment, forgiveness and gratitude. He contrasted these attitudes with those associated with the "objective attitude" (p.10) those related to seeing someone as an object of social policy or treatment. Secondly, Strawson argued that in those cases in which we suspend the reactive attitudes in favour of the objective attitude it is never because of a belief in the truth of Determinism (p.13). Thirdly, he argued that in any case it is not practically conceivable that we ever *could* suspend reactive attitudes in favour of a thoroughgoing objectivity of attitude. Fourthly, he argued that even if we *could* suspend reactive attitudes we could only decide to do so on the basis of an estimation of the gains/losses to human life, and the truth or otherwise of any thesis of Determinism does not bear on *this* choice. Strawson also insisted that both sides of the debate were making a significant mistake with respect to the pertinence of questions of justification. He argued that:

> "Inside the general structure or web of human attitudes and feelings of which I
> have been speaking there is endless room for modification, redirection,

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[42] 'Freedom and Resentment', reprinted in Strawson 1974, pp. 1-25

criticism, and justification. But questions of justification are internal to the structure or relate to modifications internal to it. The existence of the general framework of attitudes itself is something we are given with the fact of human society. As a whole it neither calls for, nor permits, an external 'rational' justification." (p.23)

What are we to make of this account and how does it relate to that offered by Pluralism? I think we can grant to Strawson the enormous importance and range of those attitudes he calls 'reactive attitudes'. What then of the claim that whenever we suspend our 'reactive attitudes' it is never because of a belief in the truth of Determinism? Well, the 'Pessimist' is likely to make at least two points in relation to this claim. Firstly, he will argue that even if the suspension of reactive attitudes is never based on a belief in the truth of Determinism, the real question is whether there is, underlying our adoption of reactive attitudes, a belief which is *incompatible* with the truth of Determinism. The 'Pessimist' will argue that there is such a belief and it is the belief in Free Will. The 'Pessimist' will *accept* that a number of other factors are, in practice, what determines the suspension or adoption of these attitudes. He, after all, thinks that the truth of the belief in Free Will is a *necessary* condition for the appropriateness of these reactive attitudes, but he need not (and does not) accept that the truth of this belief is *sufficient* to justify reactive attitudes. It is not clear that Strawson has said anything that ought to lead the Pessmist to jettison his position. The second point the Pessmist will make is that even if the suspension of reactive attitudes is in practice never based on a belief in Determinism that nonetheless the real question is what it would be rational or appropriate to do were we to come to believe in Determinism.

Strawson was aware of this challenge and tried to provide a response to it. His response was twofold. Firstly he argued that jettisoning our reactive attitudes *en bloc* is practically inconceivable. That is, we cannot conceive of a possible situation in which the whole range of such attitudes is absent from the scene. Secondly, he argued that even if (*per impossibile*) this were a possibility, that whether or not we decided to make this radical change would be based on quite pragmatic considerations and would not be decided merely by the truth or otherwise of any thesis of Determinism.

With respect to the first point, I believe that Strawson overstates his case. If the 'reactive attitudes' Strawson is concerned with were akin to e.g. the reaction of disgust directed towards faeces then the point might be more acceptable. It is plausible (although by no means overwhelmingly so) that such a reaction (namely this reaction of disgust) is so deeply entrenched in our nature as biological beings that it would be practically impossible to train

human beings not to respond in this sort of way. [43] If so, then any argument aimed at showing such a reaction to be 'irrational' or based on a false belief would, perhaps, be idle. But Strawson's reactive attitudes are not plausibly of this kind. They include, to reiterate, resentment, gratitude and forgiveness. Now these attitudes do not seem to be based (merely) on a deeply entrenched biological response. They are based on a complex web of beliefs not a mere brute response. It seems to be perfectly plausible that we could train children such that they *never* developed the propensities to react in these ways. Such training could be bolstered by the sort of arguments the 'Pessimist' would want to bring to bear e.g. that Determinism implies that free will and responsibility are illusory. This response to Strawson could be strengthened by an anthropological study which could show that societies had existed in which such reactive attitudes, e.g. resentment were wholly absent. (In particular one might argue that many of the reactive attitudes are strongly related to Christian-Kantian moral thinking, and such moral thinking is a relatively recent development in the Western world.)

So I do not think that it is 'practically inconceivable' that we could bring it about that no one exhibited 'reactive attitudes' of the kind Strawson describes.[44] But we must now confront Strawson's second argument, which is that even if it is possible to eliminate these reactive attitudes then whether or not we ought to do so would be based on pragmatic considerations *not* on the truth or otherwise of Determinism. This argument relies on a conclusion Strawson believes he has already established: that the appropriateness of reactive attitudes is not dependent on any belief whose truth is incompatible with Determinism. This is clear from the following. Suppose that the appropriateness of reactive attitudes *is* dependent on a belief whose truth is incompatible with Determinism. Then if we accept the truth of Determinism, and we accept that the truth of Determinism is incompatible with the belief underlying our reactive attitudes then *ipso facto* this amounts to jettisoning the underlying belief. The belief in Determinism and the acceptance of incompatibility determines that antecedently we are inclined to jettison the underlying belief, and the associated attitude. If the reactive attitudes are based on this underlying belief then they can be expected to wither away, perhaps over time. Thus Strawson's suggestion that we decide on pragmatic grounds whether or not to jettison the reactive attitudes comes one stage too late if the appropriateness of reactive attitudes is dependent on Determinism in the way I have described. The acceptance of incompatibility and Determinism *antecedently* requires us to jettison the incompatible belief and with it the reactive attitudes.[45]

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[43] In fact, as I understand it, distaste is innate but disgust is acquired, so culturally relative.
[44] Buddhists might be said to have that as one of their aims. It is uncharitable and unconvincing to assume that this aim is *impossible* to obtain.
[45] At this point I am indebted to Adrian Moore for a related discussion.

Consider an analogy to demonstrate this. Suppose there is a generally established reaction of fearing Alsatians. Now suppose that this fear is based on the belief that Alsatians are capable of harming human beings should they attack them.[46] This belief is incompatible with the thesis that the tooths and claws of Alsatians are made of paper. Now suppose we come to accept this thesis and we accept the incompatibility. Then this is tantamount to jettisoning the belief that Alsatians are capable of harming human beings. Now it may well be plausible that we would retain some residual wariness of Alsatians (out of habit) despite our lacking the belief that they are capable of harming us. But it is reasonable that we could expect our fear to be eliminated entirely over time, especially in as much as we go on to train our children that Alsatians are not capable of harming human beings. It would be of no use to interject that we ought to consider the pragmatic gains or losses of ceasing to fear Alsatians since this interjection *comes to late*. If the attitude is based on the belief cited and we come to jettison this belief through accepting that it is incompatible with a belief which has strong support then the attitude can be expected to disappear or 'wither away' of its own accord. Pragmatic reasons for retaining such an attitude are simply irrelevant.

So if Strawson's argument is to have any force it can only be because he believes himself to have established the conclusion that our reactive attitudes are not based on any belief whose truth is incompatible with Determinism. But this argument is meant to have *additional* force against the Pessimist who insists that the erosion of our reactive attitudes *is* a possibility. But it can have no additional force since the force of the argument depends on the Pessimist accepting that our reactive attitudes are not based on any belief whose truth is incompatible with Determinism. So the argument could only have force for someone who had already ceased to be a Pessimist. Therefore it cannot lend any *additional* support to an argument aimed at undermining the Pessimist's position – it will only be persuasive to someone who has already accepted that the Pessimist's position is mistaken. So I am inclined to think that this argument of Strawson's does not have any additional weight against a recalcitrant Pessimist.

But in any case it is not altogether clear what weight such an argument could have. Strawson accepts that the appropriateness of our reactive attitudes is dependent on the truth of some of our beliefs, but not beliefs whose truth is incompatible with Determinism. But then what are we to make of the suggestion that even if we could jettison the whole range of our reactive attitudes our decision about whether or not to do so could only be based on pragmatic considerations? Surely whether or not an attitude is appropriate is determined by whether or not the beliefs on which it is dependent is true and that's all there is to it? How do pragmatic considerations enter the picture at all?

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[46] Let us say that an attitude A is based on a belief B if were we to cease to believe B we would also be inclined to cease to exhibit attitude A.

I think the best way of understanding this is as follows. An attitude can be considered to consist of a certain response, and certain grounds for that response. So an attitude can be 'represented' as it were by a [response, belief] pair, say [R,B]. As an example, resentment consists of a certain response (elicited in the characteristic actions and utterances of a resentful person) and certain beliefs which make such a response appropriate (that the person wronged one, did so of his own volition and so on). What determines whether or not resentment is appropriate is whether or not the beliefs are true. But then there might seem to be a question about what justifies the range of the attitudes we embody in our practices: [R1,B1], [R2,B2]...[RN, BN]. In other words, what justifies the *fact* that the beliefs that make the reactions associated with resentment appropriate, do indeed make such a reaction appropriate? Another way of putting this is that we can envisage an alternative situation in which the same beliefs do *not* warrant the reactions they warrant for us, e.g. a world in which the various beliefs that support resentment for us, do not support the same reaction. The question then is, supposing we could respond in different ways given the same beliefs, what justifies the fact that we respond *in the way that we do* to those beliefs? It is at this point that Strawson insists that supposing such an option to be available to us, it is only on a pragmatic basis that we could justify our practices of resentment, forgiveness, praise, blame and so on. The truth or otherwise of any thesis of Determinism cannot bear on such a justification.

This helps to make sense of Strawson's otherwise cryptic remark cited above. The 'general structure or web of human attitudes and feelings' or 'general framework of attitudes' must refer to the [response, belief] pairs that constitute our current moral practice. Questions about whether a response is justified (internal questions) are assessed by determining the beliefs that justify the response. Questions about whether the [response, belief] pairs themselves can be justified (external questions) are basically ill-founded. It is just a brute fact that they are the [response, belief] pairs we have.

So Strawson's position can be seen to be a two-tier approach to the problem. What justifies our reactive attitudes, e.g. resentment? Strawson's answer: The truth of various beliefs, none of which are incompatible with Determinism. What justifies the fact that these beliefs do justify the attitudes they justify? Strawson's answer: There is no question of justifying this fact, it is just a given. But if we were presented with the possibility of embracing a different set of [response, belief] pairs the only basis on which we could decide between them would be in relation to the gains or losses to human life. The truth or otherwise of Determinism would *not* bear on this decision.

The introduction of a two-tier approach to the problem is, in my view, a major step forward and indeed anticipates the approach defended in this dissertation. There is some reason to admit a *prima facie* similarity between Strawsonian Naturalism as a position and Pluralism. Strawson introduces an important distinction between 'internal' justification, and 'external' justification, arguing that pragmatic considerations are foremost in the latter case. Similarly, the Pluralist insists on a separation of empirical propositions and grammatical propositions and emphasises that different considerations apply in the latter case, including pragmatic ones. Strawson emphasises the important role the realm of 'reactive attitudes' plays in human life and discourse. Similarly, the Pluralist will want to insist that the conceptual framework or language-game in which we attribute free will and moral responsibility can be seen to play a vitally important role for us. Thirdly, Strawson refutes the claim that there is any 'internal' conflict between Determinism and our reactive attitudes. The Pluralist also denies that there is any straightforward contradiction between attributions of free will and responsibility and Determinism.

However there are also crucial differences between the two approaches. Strawson denies any conflict with Determinism with respect to either 'internal' or 'external' questions. As already mentioned Strawson does *not* think that our reactive attitudes are based on any belief which is inconsistent with Determinism. He also denies that Determinism has any relevance at the level of 'external' justification of our attitudes and practices. As such, Strawson is really a thoroughgoing Optimist – at neither level does he perceive any genuine conflict with Determinism. Given this, he fails to do justice to the concerns of the Pessimist in such a way that could possibly provide the reconciliation between the two parties his paper was aimed at effecting. Strawson's 'Freedom and Resentment' is a strong and persuasive defence of the Optimist position bringing forth some new difficulties for the Pessimist, and introducing greater sophistication into the Optimist's arguments, but it does not provide an alternative position which could possibly be acceptable to both the Optimist *and* the Pessimist.

Contrastingly, I believe that Pluralism is much better equipped to provide the sort of reconciliation between the two camps which Strawson was so keen to bring about. Unlike Strawsonian Naturalism, Pluralism admits that Free Will and Determinism are in conflict at the level of *grammar*, but denies that there is inconsistency at the level of ordinary attributions of free will or determination. Such a position has the resources for winning over both Optimists (Compatibilists) and Pessimists (Incompatibilists) as its two-tier distinction allows one to embrace a variety of Compatibilism and a variety of Incompatibilism. Unlike Strawsonian Naturalism it therefore has a genuine claim to have partially vindicated *both* sides of the dispute.

I hope to have shown both what is problematic about Strawsonian Naturalism and also why Pluralism is a stronger position, capable of really providing the reconciliation Strawson was so keen to bring about. I now wish to turn to consider some of Strawson's later writings which also seem to suggest both a way of resolving the compatibility issue, and one which seems to bear an interesting similarity to that offered by Pluralism.

B. Strawsonian Relativism

In *Skepticism and Naturalism* (1985) Strawson considers a number of different traditional philosophical conflicts. In each case the conflict presents itself as a difficulty about reconciling one view of ourselves or the world (perhaps the manifest image, for want of a better name) with another, perhaps more scientific, view. The problem seems to be that the latter view in many cases seems to show up as fraudulent or ill-founded the claims made by the former view. In each case, Strawson's method of reconciliation is the same. He sees the opposition as fundamentally concerning an opposition of *standpoints*, e.g. "the human perceptual standpoint" which is contrasted with the "standpoint of physical science" (p.44). Strawson's method is to accept that the standpoints are opposed in some very real sense:

> "Standpoints and attitudes are not only different, they are profoundly opposed.
> One cannot be whole-heartedly committed to both at once. It will not do to say
> that they are mutually exclusive; since we are rarely whole-hearted creatures.
> But they tend in the limit to mutual exclusion." (p.36)

The standpoints are opposed and incline us to claims which *seem* to conflict, but once it is seen that the claims are implicitly relativized to the standpoint from which they are made, the conflict is shown to be illusory. Thus we can continue to maintain our commitment to both standpoints and the claims made from each.

So much for Strawson's general strategy. How does it relate to Free Will and Determinism? Well, Strawson does not explicitly apply his approach to this problem but he does apply it to a very closely related problem: that of a naturalistic view of human actions, and a moral view of human actions. His view is that:

> "Relative to the standpoint which we normally occupy as social beings, prone
> to moral and personal reactive attitudes, human actions, or some of them, are
> morally toned and propertied in the diverse ways signified in the rich
> vocabulary of moral appraisal. Relative to the detached naturalistic standpoint

which we can sometimes occupy, they have no properties but those which can be described in the vocabularies of naturalistic analysis and explanation (including of course, psychological analysis and explanation)." (p.38)

This approach *invites* the following view of the conflict between Free Will and Determinism: Relative to the standpoint which we normally occupy as social beings, prone to moral and personal reactive attitudes, human beings, or some of them, have free will. Relative to the detached naturalistic standpoint which we can sometimes occupy, they are not free, but rather causally determined. I will call this approach to the problem Strawsonian Relativism.[47] How does Strawsonian Relativism fare as an approach to the problem, and how does it relate to Pluralism?

To get clear about Strawsonian Relativism it is necessary first to ask some preliminary questions. How are we to understand the notion of a 'standpoint'? Given the notion of a standpoint, how are we to understand the relativism? With respect to this first question I think the rough answer is that a standpoint includes both conceptual resources, associated attitudes and roles, and methods and techniques of a given discourse. Such standpoints are embedded in a certain context, structured by certain human aims and purposes. They are therefore very closely related to the language-games or conceptual frameworks so important to the formulation of the Pluralist position. So far so good. Given this understanding, we can readily grasp how there are such things as *different* standpoints. We can make sense of the idea that in different contexts and when different aims or interests are at stake we utilise different conceptual resources to understand the world.

However, there is greater difficulty in making sense of how there is any *opposition* between standpoints that might make it seem that the claims made from one standpoint contradict those made from another. We can understand that standpoints may be incompatible in the sense that it is *psychologically impossible* to adopt both simultaneously. For example, it could be psychologically impossible to embrace the standpoint of *biological investigation* and the standpoint of *mathematical investigation* (supposing there are such standpoints) simultaneously, but this gives no credence to the idea that the claims made from one standpoint are opposed in any way to those made from another. The notion of standpoints, so introduced by Strawson, does not *in itself* make it any clearer how apparent contradictions arise and how they are reconciled by indicating the relevant standpoints from which the claims are made. Strawson has given no satisfactory answer to the question: What is it that makes it the case that two standpoints are opposed or incompatible?

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[47] The name is justified although it is not explicitly Strawson's later view on Free Will and Determinism since it is merely an application of the same reconciliation-procedure Strawson adopts throughout the book.

The Pluralist, of course, has an answer. His answer is that two standpoints (in as much as he wants to avail himself of this terminology) are opposed or incompatible just in case they embody g-incompatible grammatical propositions. This suggestion helps to explain why two standpoints may be *fundamentally different* (and so psychologically impossible to embrace simultaneously) and yet wholly compatible, and equally why two standpoints may be quite similar and yet 'opposed'.

So, Strawson does not give an adequate account of what a standpoint is, nor of how they can be opposed. However, granted that the Pluralist's explanation is correct, there seems good reason to think that Strawsonian Relativism is on the right lines in focussing on the standpoints concerned. What then of the idea of relativization to the standpoint concerned? In Strawson's discussion, the distinction between grammatical and empirical propositions is elided and this brings unclarity into his account. Distinguish the following versions of Strawsonian Relativism:

Empirical Relativism (ER): Only relative to the human standpoint, is it true that Bob has free will, true that Mabel has free will....
Grammatical Relativism (GR): Only relative to the human standpoint, do (some) human agents have free will.

Empirical Relativism can be seen to make empirical propositions relative to the human standpoint, whereas Grammatical Relativism can be seen to make grammatical propositions relative to the human standpoint. What sense can be made of either relativism? Let us consider GR first. Given that "Some human agents have free will" is a grammatical proposition it is not clear what the relativizing move amounts to. I suppose it means that the grammatical proposition that is Free Will only holds from the human standpoint, that is, from the conceptual framework or language game from which it is drawn. Is this a significant claim? Well, it depends on what is meant by 'only holds'. If this is just a reminder that grammatical propositions only have their role as part of a given language-game or conceptual framework then that is true, and quite innocuous. Suppose it is intended to mean something like the following "the grammatical proposition of Free Will is only true or valid if human beings adopt and operate with a certain language-game or conceptual framework". Again, it is not clear what it means to say of a grammatical proposition that it is 'true' or 'valid'. The only sense I can make of this claim is that "If human beings did not operate with a language-game or conceptual scheme in which the grammatical proposition Free Will played an important role, then the grammatical proposition that is Free Will would not play an important role in that language-

game." I am inclined to agree with this claim, but again, it is not philosophically interesting. So I think that GR turns out to be just a trivial claim, and not philosophically significant.

Let us now consider ER. What does this relativizing move amount to? Well it seems to say something like the following: "If human beings did not adopt the conceptual resources associated with the human standpoint then it would not be true that Bob or Mabel has free will." But this claim is false. One cannot make sense of the idea that whether or not Bob or Mabel has free will depends on human beings having a certain language *unless* in general it is a necessary condition of a person having free will that people are operating with certain conceptual resources. But our understanding of what is necessary to have free will *does not* involve this bizarre supposition. So on this reading ER is plain false. The most that I think can be milked out of ER that might be true is the following: "If human beings did not adopt the conceptual resources associated with the human standpoint then they would not *say* "Bob has free will", or they would not *think* that "Bob has free will"" But again, this claim looks to be true but philosophically uninteresting. Any attempt to make *facts* about free will relative to human linguistic conventions seems to me doomed to incoherence.

Strawson pretty clearly sees his reconciliation-procedure as being effective at reconciling (apparently) inconsistent empirical propositions, so it must be ER rather than GR which is the relativist thesis. But that thesis, on any reasonable interpretation, is either trivial or false[48]. So Strawsonian Relativism is untenable. It cannot provide a plausible account which could genuinely resolve the compatibility issue.

It is useful, however, to consider what motivates Strawsonian Relativism since it also helps to illuminate the nature of Pluralism. Strawson is led to the unfortunate refuge of relativism through his answer to a certain question:

> "How natural it is, then, to ask the question; "Which is the correct standpoint?
> Which is the standpoint from which we see things as they really are?"(p.36)

He goes on:

> "What I want now to suggest is that error lies not one side or the other of these
> two contrasting positions, but in the attempt to force the choice between them.
> The question was: From which standpoint do we see things as they really are?

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[48] Of course this problem affects not only Strawsonian Relativism as a view about Free Will and Determinism, but the cogency of the strategy as a whole.

And it carried the implication that the answer cannot be: from both. It is this implication that I want to dispute." (p.37)

Strawson believes that the claims made from the two standpoints conflict, i.e. it is not possible that they are both true. But he also wants to say that they *are* both true, i.e that 'we see things as they really are from *both* standpoints'. However, obviously, as it stands, this is just an incoherent position. Something has to give, and for Strawson it is the notion of 'truth' or 'reality' which he relativizes to the standpoint from which the given claim is made. He can then say that both claims represent things 'as they really are' since 'as they really are' just means 'as they are from the standpoint from which they are made'. The problems with this sort of relativism are many and serious and have, in part, been outlined above.

Strawson is right to question the insistence of the interlocutor on an either/or answer to his question. The correct answer to the question "From which standpoint do we see things as they really are?" is indeed "From both". What is needed then, if we are to avoid the incoherence of Strawsonian Relativism is some way of making sense of how claims can conflict without being logically incompatible. This is, of course, precisely what Pluralism offers. If the claims are grammatical propositions then they may conflict in the sense of being g-incompatible, and yet be independently acceptable since they both play an important role as part of their broadly distinct language-games. If the claims are empirical propositions then they may conflict in the sense of reflecting or embodying g-incompatible grammatical propositions, while not being logically incompatible. This approach affects the subtle compromise of compatibility and incompatibility which Strawson was so keen to achieve without the heavy burden of accepting some untenable form of relativism.

Both Strawsonian approaches can be seen as powerful but essentially misguided attempts to formulate something like Pluralism – a position distinct from both Compatibilism and Incompatibilism, but embodying the spirit of both. Their failure to do so derives from continuing to locate the compatibility issue at the level of logical consistency. Thus, indirectly, their failure is also strong support for Pluralism. This discussion has illustrated that there is something inherently wrong with trying to provide an alternative to Compatibilism and Incompatibilism without repudiating that on which both positions are based – Truth-Aptness. If one is attracted by the possibility of such a position, but sceptical about the accounts both Kant and Strawson provide, then the approach defended in this dissertation, and in particular, Pluralism, is to be taken seriously.

Conclusion

I have argued that the traditional debate between Compatibilists and Incompatibilists is antinomous and rests on a mistake. That mistake is the assumption that Free Will and Determinism are truth-apt when in fact they are best viewed as grammatical propositions which are antecedent to truth. I have explored the impact of the supposition that they are grammatical propositions for the traditional debate about compatibility. This new approach, and in particular, Pluralism, enables one to explain the appeal of the four clues outlined in Chapter 1. According to this approach, Free Will and Determinism are g-incompatible grammatical propositions which one cannot additively accept, but which nonetheless can be independently accepted. There is thus something importantly right (but also, importantly wrong) about both Compatibilism and Incompatibilism. Pluralism has definite advantages not only over Compatibilism and Incompatibilism but also over the more complex resolutions which both Kant and Strawson aimed to provide.

I have therefore hoped to have motivated this new approach to the problem by demonstrating that it is coherent, attractive, and philosophically fertile.

In this conclusion I offer some reflections on the philosophical debate surrounding the compatibility issue.

Why has the problem of free will been a major object of philosophical preoccupation? The answer is, of course, that the issue has been seen as foundational for ethics. That is, it has been thought that a satisfactory answer to the questions: 'What is Free Will, and do we have it? Is it compatible with Determinism?' will enable us to lay to rest (or vindicate) certain sceptical worries about the basis of ethics. The idea, roughly, is this. Certain (if not all) of our ethical practices seem to depend strongly on an assumption that people have free will. Therefore, in order to be sure that our ethical practices are 'justified' we need to know that we have free will. If it turned out that they rested on free will, but in fact free will is non-existent, or an illusion then they would be wholly unjustified and we would have to jettison them. Hence philosophers have worked very hard at trying to establish what free will is, whether or not we have it, and if so, whether that means it cannot be the case that we inhabit a 'deterministic universe'.

What does a Pluralist approach to the problem have to say about this general philosophical project? Does it generate sceptical worries of its own, or does it somehow imply a relativism about ethics? Well, firstly a Pluralist will tend to agree that many of our ethical practices rest on Free Will. But he is apt to understand this in a different way. Ethics rests on Free Will in the

sense that the grammatical proposition of Free Will plays a crucial, probably indispensable, role in many of the linguistic practices in which we appraise and criticise people's actions in moral terms. In the same way, our practice of e.g. colour ascription 'rests on' the grammar of that discourse, the grammatical propositions which play a crucial role in that area. But ethics does not rest on Free Will in the sense that Free Will is a foundational hypothesis of that discourse which might end up being falsified. That picture *is* systematically misleading. So the philosophical project of seeking to establish the 'truth' of this 'hypothesis' is fundamentally ill-conceived.

So in an important sense a Pluralist approach puts sceptical worries to bed. It is wrong to think of Free Will as a proposition which might be discovered to be false, and thus something in need of epistemological validation. Thus, we can rest easy in the knowledge that our ethical practices do not rest on a 'mistake'.

But here another sceptical worry might be invoked since if Free Will cannot be 'false', equally, it cannot be 'true'. It might be put as follows. "If Free Will is a grammatical proposition, not truth-apt, then there is nothing faulty about a discourse which does not embody Free Will. Therefore our ethical discourse, and its associated practices does not rest on any more solid a foundation than that of any other society."

There is an important sense in which this worry is absolutely sound, but there is also some confusion. First, it is wrong to think that along with Pluralism comes some sort of relativist approach to ethics. Nothing about Pluralism implies that there is anything illegitimate about the condemnation, say, of Somalian practices of female circumcision. In addition, we can perfectly well say that other people ought to embrace *our* linguistic practices, and associated ethical practices. We could say this of a society which did not embrace Free Will. That would be a legitimate ethical view. So it does not follow that we must admit that 'there is nothing faulty about a discourse which does not embody Free Will'. Sure, there is nothing 'faulty' about such a discourse in the sense of it 'resting on the false belief that there is no free will'. But its proponents may be wicked, cruel or inhuman, and that would be a good reason to condemn it.

There is also something generally confused about the philosophical desire to provide a *non-ethical* justification of our ethical discourse. There is a desire that our practices be somehow underwritten by the world itself, and that is misguided. Our practices must be understood, and accepted insofar as they seem appropriate and serve our purposes. They are certainly open to criticism and revision but it is neither sensible nor cogent to seek for them a complete 'justification'. Nevertheless, if we could be brought to think that such a linguistic practice is absolutely indispensable as part of any form of life human beings might enjoy then that would

be as strong a vindication as one could possibly attain. A demonstration of this, if possible, would be a confluence of both Kantian and Wittgensteinian ideas.

Nonetheless it seems to be too strong an aspiration. It is *conceivable* that one day 'free will' will be to some people what the concept of 'original sin' is to many already. That is, it may cease to be utilised or play a significant role in our practices. We may one day see human behaviour as a class of events to be prevented or discouraged but not to be praised or blamed. Some might view this prospect with alarm, others with enthusiasm. In any case, if that happens, then it will not be because Free Will will have been discovered to be false, but rather because we will have ceased to be persuaded that that is the best way of conceptualising people's behaviour.

We stand on our own feet when we enter into and engage in the linguistic practices associated with Free Will, when we hold people praiseworthy or blameworthy for what they do. We cannot expect the world to underwrite our commitment to these practices – that would be a form of *abnegation* of responsibility. It is, it seems to me, an elegant consequence of the view canvassed here that we, and we alone, are responsible for our acceptance of Free Will. That is, in part, because we have free will.

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