國立交通大學

外國語文學系外國文學與語言學碩士班

碩士論文

獲選者的抉擇：論《星際大戰》與自由意志

The Choices of the Chosen One: Of *Star Wars* and Free Will

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碩 士 論 文

A Thesis

Submitted to Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures

College of Humanity and Social Science

National Chiao Tung University

in partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master

in

Foreign Literatures and Linguistics

July 2011

Hsinchu, Taiwan, Republic of China

中華民國一百年七月

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摘　要

《星際大戰》系列電影由諸多靈感而生，卻也帶出更多的啟發。在正義對抗邪惡的面紗下，「自由意志」和「選擇」的議題不僅僅存在於那遙遠銀河系，也存在於我們的生命當中。人類究竟有沒有自由意志來做出自己的選擇呢？這個如肉中刺的問題已存在了好幾世紀。試圖對此問題做出迴響，本文將以《星際大戰》中的「獲選者」安納金・天行者的一生及其抉擇作為論述主軸，並以沙特在《存在主義與人文主義》中對選擇和自由的觀點作為論述起點。縱然沙特主張人類擁有絕對的自由來做出選擇，並因而毅然決然反對神與決定論，自由意志的問題仍未被充分適切地解決。如自由意志辯論—人類歷史上最長最激烈的辯論之一—所顯示的，自由意志直至現在仍是個問題，且極可能在近期的未來中也不會有結論出現。因此，本文將介紹與討論在這活生生辯論中的四個主要觀點：相容論、不相容論、自由論、及決定論。在難以否認決定論和自由意志很可能不存在的情況下，我們或許會問：「那麼我為什麼要存在？」沙特聲稱即使神不存在，生命仍是有意義的；但若自由意志不存在，生命是否還能具有意義呢？我們要如何在沒有自由意志的生命中找到意義呢？或許安納金・天行者的故事可以給予這些問題一些啟發。

關鍵詞：星際大戰、安納金・天行者、自由意志、選擇、沙特、相容論、不相容論、自由論、決定論

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ABSTRACT

The *Star Wars* saga is a series created from various inspirations and creates more in return. Beneath the good-versus-evil veil, the problem of free will and choice is an issue in the galaxy far, far away, as well as in our daily life. Do human beings have free will to make choices? That's a question like a splinter in the mind for centuries. Attempting to provide some thoughts to the question, this thesis takes the life and choices of Anakin Skywalker—the "Chosen One" in *Star Wars*—as the central line of discussion and starts from Jean-Paul Sartre's ideas of choice and freedom in his *Existentialism and Humanism*. While Sartre contends that human beings have absolute freedom in his choices and thus refuted God and determinism resolutely, the problem of free will is not solved amply and aptly. As the free will debate—one of the longest and fieriest debates in the human history—shows, free will is still a problem and probably won't come to an end in the near future. Accordingly, four major views in this living debate—Compatibilism, Incompatibilism, Libertarianism, and Hard Determinism—would be introduced and discussed in this thesis. Seeing that determinism is hard to refute and that free will probably doesn't exist, we may want to ask, "Then why do I exist?" Sartre claims life is meaningful without God, but can life also be meaningful without free will? How can we find meanings in a life without free will? Mayhap the story of Anakin Skywalker can shed some light on these questions.

Key Words: Star Wars, Anakin Skywalker, Free Will, Choice, Sartre, Compatibilism, Incompatibilism, Libertarianism, Hard Determinism

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing this thesis is a long but enjoyable journey, yet without those helping hands along the way, the project would not have been possible.

I am especially indebted to Dr. Chia-Yi Lee, whose perspicacious remarks and constant encouragement not only helped shape my writing into a better form but also inspired my new interests in the free will issue. I am also deeply grateful to Dr. Ying-Hsiung Chou and Dr. Shun-Liang Chao for their keen insight and valuable suggestions; the thesis would not have reached this far without their great help. Sincere appreciation also to Dr. Eric K. W. Yu; the two years' TA job he provided me was a huge aid to my life, and the working experience was really a beneficial and pleasant one. Thanks also to Miss Lu-Ying Chen and Miss Ya-Ling Chen for helping me in various aspects for the past four years.

My genuine gratitude must go to my family. They didn't say much or ask much, but their tacit support and understanding for the nocturnal son/brother left me with no worries. Thanks also to Ms. Shu-Fen Wang and Mr. Zhi-Hao Lo and my working colleagues, who kept granting me convenience to my unfinished studies.

I'd also like to thank George Lucas for creating the incredible films and all the philosophers in the free will debate for bringing up a wondrous and inspiring discussion. Both the films and various theories have left a chunk of food for thought for the rest of my life.

Finally, I would like to express my special appreciation to Yu-Jung Yen. There were times when the road was rough and rugged, but fortunately I had you in company. You always listened to whatever I had in mind attentively, even when you didn't really understand what I was talking about, and you always stood up for me even when I had decided to bite my lips. Because of you, the writing journey was embellished with chromatic air and dulcet sounds. I was glad you were there, and I hope I can give you the same on your journey of writing.

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Introduction

Jedi versus Sith. Light versus Dark. In the *Star Wars* universe, nearly all of the characters can be easily categorized—they are either good or evil. Yet among them, one person is difficult to be morally judged. Like most of us human beings, he struggles to achieve his ideals, but he has defects, and he makes mistakes. This person is Anakin Skywalker, arguably the protagonist throughout the whole *Star Wars* saga. From the highly anticipated "Chosen One" to the avatar of terror, Darth Vader, Anakin through his predicaments and dilemmas epitomizes an issue that no one can avoid: the issue of choice. Not purely good, nor purely evil, ever since his encounter with a Jedi master, Anakin had never stopped questioning what he should do. On the one hand, he didn't want to disappoint those who laid great hope on him to restore balance to the Force, but on the other, he refused to give up what he believed he had to do. One is a high ideal; the other gives meaning to him. The two eventually conflicted, and choices were inevitable. The problem is, there seemed to be a power invisibly directing everything's occurring and proceeding. While Anakin thought he made his choices out of his free will, was the fact really as what he believed? Even though in the end it seemed to be that it is Anakin himself who fulfilled the prophecy, the question could still be legitimately asked: Was it Anakin who made the choices? Or the choices had already been made for him?

Anakin Skywalker's dissimilarities to the other characters, or his idiosyncratic and situational similarities to most of us human beings, make him not only a unique character in the *Star Wars* series, but a character worth probing into, especially the issue brought out with him: Is man free to create his own fate, or is the fate already determined? Ever since human beings' thinking reached a certain higher level, the discussion of the problem of free will has never stopped, and, contrary to the common belief, there are arguments and evidence showing it is probable that free will—the

thing whose existence most of us take for granted—may not actually exist.

Amidst the sundry discussions and explorations on the title of *Star Wars*, religions, myths, cultures, technology, and plots are the frequent topics; only a few tackle issues related to free will. Jason T. Eberl in his "'You Cannot Escape Your Destiny' (Or Can You?): Freedom and Predestination in the Skywalker Family" seems to assume the existence of free will, from which he concludes that since human beings are "radically free," they are responsible for what they choose to will; Jan-Erik Jones' "'Size Matters Not': The Force as the Causal Power of the Jedi" focuses on the omnipresent Force in the *Star Wars* series and treats it as a kind of causal power which, albeit its recognizablility as a "cause," distinguishes itself from other "causes" by its mysterious and unidentifiable nature; John Lyden's "Apocalyptic Determinism and *Star Wars*" deals with determinism in the *Star Wars* saga from an apocalyptic aspect, and Lyden links Anakin Skywalker's inevitable fate with the "predestinarian apocalyptic thinking" existing in the contemporary world—"an age of uncertainty"—where the idea that we are free is too strong for people to accept.

Inspired by Anakin Skywalker and the discussions mentioned above, in this thesis I intend to explore the issue of free will via Anakin—his life and death, his choices, and his fate. The thesis is divided into three chapters: in the first chapter, Sartre's main argument of absolute free will would be examined through the stories of Anakin and Orestes. While the human value Sartre keeps emphasizing lies in the existence of free will which in turn lies in the action of free choices, the premise is problematic. How can we know our action is really free? Even if God doesn't exist, there is still reason to believe that we actually don't have freedom of choices at all, for determinism exists as a more compelling controlling force than God. Without solving this problem, Sartre's absolute free will and absolute responsibility would have no ground to stand. Therefore, in chapter two, the threats and effects of determinism to

free choices and free will would be probed into, by viewing the four theories revolving around determinism: Compatabilism, Incompatabilism, Libertarianism, and Hard Determinism. Finally, in chapter three, we will see how human beings could lead their lives if absolute free will and absolute responsibility are impossible. Choices are what human beings face every day, how can we deal with the fact that there is no real freedom in choices? Perhaps without absolute free will, there is still a kind of “conditional” free will for humans to hold onto as the ground of responsibility. What this conditional free will is and how it could survive in a determined world will be addressed thoroughly. And with this freedom of will, mayhap Anakin’s life could be seen from another aspect, a life still of responsibility and meanings.

Chapter 1: "The Choice To Take It Is Yours Alone."

A Jedi will come

To destroy the Sith

And bring balance to the Force[1]

The two scenes in *Star Wars* that leave lasting impressions are when Anakin Skywalker chose to ally himself with the Sith Lord in *Episode III*, and when Darth Vader—the name given to the fallen Skywalker—chose to sacrifice himself to save his son in *Episode VI*. Viewers are obsessed with these scenes, not only because they served the turning points of the whole story, but because they stimulate our deep concerns about choice. In the end, beneath the seemingly gratifying redemption of Anakin, there was turbulence ready to overthrow the tranquility. Recalling the prophecy, we wonder, "Did he make the choices out of his free will, or was he manipulated by the mysterious Force all his life?" The question is like a splinter in our mind, for free will is not only about the freedom to do things we want, but also about whether we can be responsible for ourselves, which is a crux for a meaningful life.

Jean-Paul Sartre is one of the most ardent advocators of free will. In his work *Existentialism and Humanism*, Sartre expounds his ideas about freedom, choice, and responsibility, which could serve as a starting point for the discussion of free will.

Existentialism and Humanism

Throughout his life, Anakin Skywalker made several crucial choices, each having profound and significant influences not only on himself, but also on others, especially those surrounding him. Human beings face the same situation. Choices are

[1] Windham, Ryher. *Star Wars Jedi vs. Sith: The Essential Guide to the Force*. New York: Del Rey, 2007. 205.

inevitable, and one's choices are often not just about oneself.

The ability to choose, or more specifically, the "freedom" to choose, is a significant feature, as Jean-Paul Sartre contends, that marks humans as "free" beings. In his *Existentialism and Humanism*, the freedom of man is delineated under the premise that God doesn't exist. As Sartre articulates the tenet as thus, "Dostoievsky once wrote 'If God did not exist, everything would be permitted' . . . Everything is indeed permitted if God does not exist, and man is in consequence forlorn, for he cannot find anything to depend upon either within or outside himself" (33-4). Out of this atheistic premise derives the "absolute freedom" of man. Freedom is vital in Sartre's philosophy because only on the ground of freedom can man become his own master, shaping his life and giving it meaning *by himself*. Having no predestined purpose or meaning to fulfill, man is free to choose and to make his life according to his will. As Julian Baggini puts it, "If God does not exist, humanity has no creator, and if it has no creator it has no predetermined essence. Rather, humanity first exists, and then as its self awareness increases, the individual confronts herself, and is able to choose, to will for herself her own nature, purposes and values" (118). In other words, Sartre's absolute freedom is the absolute freedom "of will." Only with this absolute freedom of will can one choose what actions he would take.

When Sartre's says "*existence* comes before *essence*" (26; emphasis original), he clearly has in mind this absolute freedom. He says, "What do we mean by saying that existence precedes essence? We mean that man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world—and defines himself afterwards" (28). Christine Daigle gives a more elaborate account, specifying man's infinite possibilities coming along with his absolute freedom. She explicates that, "One can define a human being only provisionally as this human being lives. For, there is always a chance that this person will change radically. However, once life is over, once one ceases to exist, one can be

defined, and this definition will be true forever" (51). That is to say, man is always in the process of making himself. He continues to be an existence and only at the moment of death does he become an essence. The possibility of a change or changes, even if they are not "radical," indicates that no determined human nature is in an individual. Whatever and whoever he wills to be always depend upon his freedom to choose; his "nature" is only created by himself.

According to Sartre, following the non-existence of God, not only is there no determined nature in individuals, but no universal human nature: "[T]here is no human nature, because there is no God to have a conception of it. Man simply is" (28). Therefore, human "values," including moral values, are created along with one's essence, rather than "being there" for human beings to follow. For this reason, Sartre is against the so called "secular morality," which claims that even if God doesn't exist, there must always be *a priori* values inscribed in an intelligible heaven in order for this world to be moral and law-abiding. This is the view taken by the traditional humanists, who argue that "though God did not exist, or is nor worth believing in, there could still be *a prior* moral values which society could follow. Removing God would thus leave our moral framework more or less intact" (Baggini 122).

However, Sartre believes that fading with God are also the *a priori* values, a point where his existential humanism differs from traditional humanism. He contends:

> The existentialist, on the contrary, finds it extremely embarrassing that God does not exist, for there disappears with Him all possibility of finding values in an intelligible heaven. There can no longer be any good *a priori*, since there is no infinite and perfect consciousness to think it. It is nowhere written that "the good" exists, that one must be honest or must not lie, since we are now upon the plane where there are only men. (33)

Without any preset values to confine human beings' choices to a certain ground,

human beings, even if they don't like it, can only exercise their freedom to "invent" the values most suitable for them. Values are connected with human essence; both are yet to be created by each individual. This "subjectivity" in inventing values is crucial in Sartre's thoughts, for it distinguishes man from other objects. As Baggini says, "It is the fact that humans possess a subjective life which marks them out from other things and places on them responsibility for what they are" (119).

While being absolute free means human beings can choose without limits, it at the same time makes them have nothing to lean upon except for themselves. This state of "abandonment" puts human beings in "despair," the state in which human beings can find no one to rely upon and no *a priori* values to follow; they can only "act without hope" (39). "Hope" here means the "hope that things will come to pass without our making them so" (Baggini 125). Human beings cannot rely upon any kind of such hope, since there is no God and no universal human nature—since they are absolutely free. The seemingly paradoxical result is that, human beings must "limit" themselves to things he can be sure of, that is, what one can achieve through one's action.

While the argument that one has to limit oneself even though he has absolute freedom sounds paradoxical, it in fact is not. The point is, it is true that with absolute freedom, one can definitely choose to depend upon people or things that are not completely known to him, but beyond this "choosing," none is sure to him anymore. To spend one's freedom on people or things one has no complete control is to waste one's freedom. The freedom ought to be spent on what one can be sure of, and that is one's action. As Sartre articulates, "[O]ne does not rely upon any possibilities beyond those that are strictly concerned in one's action. Beyond the point at which the possibilities under consideration cease to affect my action, I ought to disinterest myself" (39). Here we can see the link between the absolute freedom of will and

actions. It is because one has the freedom of will that his actions are under his control. Without the absolute free will, even what one does cannot be what one is sure of.

That is the situation human beings face in this world: absolute freedom within oneself, with nothing and no one to cling to. Thus, when Sartre claims "man is condemned to be free" (34), it has at least two layers of meaning. One the one hand, "we are born without any say in the matter (hence condemned), but thereafter free to choose our own destiny"(Baggini 122). On the other hand, no matter we like it or not, freedom is something we cannot deny, which is a real trouble for those who are used to the guidance of God. As Daigle puts it, "freedom is not something that we can escape. It is a fundamental structure of the for-self: we are as free" (49).

Coming along with the absolute freedom is the "absolute responsibility," which concerns not just oneself, but also to other men. Sartre argues,

> If, however, it is true that existence is prior to essence, man is responsible for what he is. Thus, the first effect of existentialism is that it puts every man in possession of himself as he is, and places the entire responsibility for his existence squarely upon his own shoulders. And, when we say that man is responsible for himself, we do not mean that he is responsible only for his own individuality, but that he is responsible for all men. (29)

How is it that man is responsible for all men? Because, according to Sartre, when one chooses for himself, he simultaneously chooses for all men. The reason is, when a person chooses what actions he will take and what values he will endorse in order to make himself the man he wants to be, he is also shaping an "image of man" in accordance to his ideal image. His responsibility thus spreads out to all men. As Sartre says,

> If, moreover, existence precedes essence and we will to exist at the same time as we fashion our image, that image is valid for all and for the entire

> epoch in which we find ourselves. Our responsibility is thus much greater than we had supposed, for it concerns mankind as a whole. . . . I am thus responsible for myself and for all men, and I am creating a certain image of man as I would have him to be. In fashioning myself I fashion man. (29-30)

Facing several options, why we choose one way rather than the other is because we affirm the value of what is chosen. Although we cannot hope that all the other persons would do as we did when facing similar situations since there is no universal human nature, al least we can hope that our chosen actions would set up examples, examples that may have ripple effects.

What ensues from the absolute responsibility is "anguish," which is the anxiety one feels when facing a choice, owing to the realization that when he chooses he chooses for all. Sartre claims, "When a man commits himself to anything, fully realizing that he is not only choosing what he will be, but is thereby at the same time a legislator deciding for the whole mankind—in such a moment a man cannot escape from the sense of complete and profound responsibility" (30). The realization of the thorough responsibility causes anguish, and furthermore, since no one can ever avoid choices, no one can ever be rid of anguish. Those who do not show such anxiety are either "disguising their anguish or are in flight from it" (30), according to Sartre.

Sartre cites the story of Abraham, called "the anguish of Abraham" by Kierkegaard, to exemplify the unavoidable anguish. Abraham hesitated upon the message from an angel who told him to immolate his son. This was God's command; the angel told him so. Not knowing whether the angel was really an angel, whether the message was really from the divine, and whether he was really "that" Abraham to perform this task, Abraham could only decide all by himself. He must choose. The anguish derives not only from the fact that his choice would change his son's life, but also from the fact that in choosing he would be setting examples for all the mankind

to follow. As Sartre puts it,

> If a voice speaks to me, it is still I myself who must decide whether the voice is or is not that of an angel. If I regard a certain course of action as good, it is only I who choose to say that it is good and not bad. There is nothing to show that I am Abraham: nevertheless I also am obliged at every instance to perform actions which are examples. Everything happens to every man as though the whole human race had its eyes fixed upon what he is doing and regulated its conduct accordingly" (31-2).

Because of this the absolute responsibility for mankind, when making a choice, one should always ask oneself what would happen if everyone does the same as one is doing, rather than deceiving oneself that his choice has only to do with himself. In other words, being free, a person must always ask himself, "Am I really a man who has the right to act in such manner that humanity regulates itself by what I do?"(32). Only by keeping one's absolute freedom in mind and facing one's anguish can one be a truly responsible person.

However, this anguish is too heavy a burden that many seek to cut themselves from it by denying its source: absolute freedom. They deny their freedom by claiming that their acts and choices are determined by factors beyond their control. In Sartre's words, they appeal to "bad faith," embracing values prescribed by God, for instance, or seeking excuses from determinism. While Sartre has articulated the non-existence of God to ensure man's freedom in the very beginning, how about determinism, the belief, in short, that every thing has a cause and nothing can escape the cause-effect relation, including human beings? As he denies the existence of God, Sartre simply denies determinism. "[T]here is no determinism—man is free, man *is* freedom" (34; emphasis original). Sartre doesn't think anything would undermine man's absolute freedom, and thus he despises those who attempt to hide from it. Such people are

"cowards" in his eyes. He says, "Those who hide from this total freedom, in a guise of solemnity or with deterministic excuses, I shall call cowards" (52).

To this point, Sartre's main ideas are linked in this way: since God and determinism don't exist, human beings have absolute freedom (of the will); deriving from the absolute freedom is absolute responsibility, in the sense that when one chooses, one chooses for all; this responsibility for all men causes anguish, the necessary pain for free men to endure. However, Sartre's freedom isn't without boundaries. Some argue that, even if it is true that human beings possess the absolute freedom of the will so that we can choose without constrains, there are still limits put on us, limits that are not under our control—namely, the "condition" that humans are born with. The external limitations caused by the human condition can be divided into two kinds. There are variable historical limitations, such as being born as a slave or as a king, a proletarian or a bourgeois, and born on a country or a desert. And there are invariable ones like our mortality and physical needs.

But is the human condition "obstacle" to our freedom? Not necessarily. One must note that, while these external limitations are beyond our control so that they define each man's fundamental situation *a priori*, this doesn't mean that they are completely foreign matters to us and thus invade and threaten our freedom. According to Sartre, the human condition, or the limits put on humans, is not only objective, but also subjective. "Objective, because we meet with them everywhere and they are everywhere recognizable; and subjective because they are *lived* and are nothing if man does not live them—if, that is to say, he does not freely determine himself and his existence in relation to them" (46; emphasis original). In other words, these limits are objective because they apply to everyone, and subjective because our freedom of the will has to work in relation with them. It is the latter—the subjectivity of the human condition—that make human beings inseparable from the limits, either in a

good way, or in a bad way.

Because of these limits on us, our choices of how to live them can be totally different. One the one hand, we can be more positive in pursuing our purposes if we "choose to". It's true that there are external limitations on us, but *our will is still absolutely free*; we can still be masters of ourselves. If one chooses to surpass the limits, not only would his condition be no hindrance to him, but it can be a drive pushing him further toward his purposes. For example, though young Anakin was born a slave and lived on a desert planet, he never gave up his dream to become a Jedi. Rather, these limits make him a person who seized every opportunity, and that's the major reason why his encounter with Qui-Gon became "fatal." On the other hand, not every one has the resolution to exercise his freedom on the limits; some just choose to succumb to them and give up pursuing his purposes, either from an early stage of life, or from a later occasion of thwarting. They disclaim their freedom in this way.

Therefore, what those limits would be to an individual's freedom hinges on what he "chooses" to live them. They can be impetus or impediment, all depending on human beings' freedom of the will. Sartre says, "[E]very human purpose presents itself as an attempt either to surpass these limitations, or to widen them, or else to deny or to accommodate oneself to them" (46). The human conditions themselves don't deprive human beings of their absolute freedom; it's humans themselves who would choose to surrender it to the limitations, just as some surrender it to God or determinism.

Bringing out the human condition, Sartre's absolute freedom becomes more realistic and understandable. After all, even with the absolute freedom of the will, one still cannot do whatever he wills to do. While the various historical limitations could be troublesome enough, what really "limits" human beings is the fact that the human body is at the very beginning not a product of the "owner's" will. A part of an

individual is “not his” ever since, or before, he was born. But Sartre’s point is still valid: our absolute freedom of the will is not undermined by the innate limits, and who we will become can still be completely determined by ourselves. When he conceives the freedom of human beings, definitely he doesn’t consider the absolute “physical” freedom as a necessity. Absolute physical freedom is not only unreasonable, but also “inhuman.” Namely, that would make human beings close to the very concept that he rejects: God. It is because there are physical limits that human beings “are” human beings, and it is because there are physical limits that human beings’ free will is meaningful. As Michael Mckenna argues, “[A]ll of [the human acts] involve the prospect of failure and the demands of an effort of will forced up against the boundaries of what one can do” (236), and it is in “pressing the boundaries of what one is capable of, pressing the boundaries of the limits placed upon one” (236) that human acts and human freedom become meaningful. In other words, albeit a bit paradoxical, the value of freedom requires that we lack it somewhere.

Sartre emphasizes on freedom, and he even calls this freedom “absolute.” But the absoluteness doesn’t mean omnipotence. By introducing the human condition, Sartre demarcates the different freedoms, and the absoluteness stops at the freedom of the will. It is free will that truly matters, since it is this freedom that makes responsibility and the ensuing anguish possible. In the next section, along with Orestes from Sartre’s *The Flies*, we will see how Sartre’s idea of freedom sheds light on the choices of Anakin Skywalker, and where it might be insufficient.

The Chosen One and The Free Man

Anakin Skywalker was considered the “chosen one” who would restore balance to the Force, according to the ancient prophecy. On the other hand, Orestes was also

believed as the one who would end the pain of Argos. While these two seem to be "destined" to accomplish some tasks, there is a major difference between them: A mysterious power—the Force—seemed to have paved the way for Anakin, whereas Orestes created his own path, even God couldn't stop him. But was Anakin really unfree and Orestes really free? Before these questions are delved into, a whole picture of each one's life and an examination of each one's significant choices may give us some clue about their "freedom."

The ancient Jedi prophecy said, when there is an upheaval in the Force, a Chosen One would appear to restore balance to the Force. Anakin Skywalker was only a nine years old slave when he was found by Jedi Master Qui-Gon Jin on the desert planet Tatooine. Young as he was, Anakin was believed by Qui-Gon to be the Chosen One owing to the highest count of the midi-chlorians[2]—"a microscopic lifeform that resides within all living cells and communicates with the Force"(*Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace,* 1999). One of young Skywalker's dreams was to become a Jedi Knight; therefore under Qui-Gon's suggestion, he decided to go with him to receive the proper training. Although his age was considered by other Jedi Masters to be too old for training and his fate to be clouded, under Qui-Gon's insistence and his unexpected death, Anakin was eventually accepted by the Jedi and became the padawan (i.e. apprentice) of Obi-Wan Kenobi. Time went by, and Skywalker showed his great potential. However, unlike the other Jedi who dedicated themselves to the Jedi principles, Anakin had his own ideas about what kind of life he wanted to lead and what kind of person he wanted to be. Love, forbidden to the Jedi, was what he never gave up pursuing. But that was the seed of a tragedy. In order to save his wife,

[2] According to the official *Star Wars* encyclopedia, the medi-chlorian is defined as the following: "A microscopic lifeform that resided within all living cells and was capable of communicating with the Force. Symbionts found in all beings, midi-chlorians might be responsible for all life. They could reveal the will of the Force when one's mind was quiet. Those beings with a high concentration of midi-chlorians in their blood could become Jedi." See Sansweet, Stephen J and Pablo Hidalgo. *The Complete Star Wars Encyclopedia. Volume II.* New York: Del Rey, 2008. 311-2.

Padmé Amidala, from death, Anakin made his choice to ally himself with the Sith Lord who promised him what he sought, and became the Sith apprentice Darth Vader. After being terribly wounded by Obi-Wan, Vader was transformed into a half-machine. Learning Padmé's death, Vader's sole purpose was retribution—to hunt down all the remaining Jedi. Among them, his son Luke Skywalker was his foremost target. However, in the end, while witnessing Luke dying under the Sith Lord's lightning attack, Vader decided to sacrifice himself to destroy the master of the Dark Side. Balance was finally restored to the Force, and the prophecy fulfilled.

As to Orestes, he was the son of Agamemnon. His hometown Argos was plagued with the flies—the incarnation of the Furies—ever since the former king was murdered by Aegistheus and Clytemnestra. Back to Argos, Orestes, disguised as "Philebus," found that the city was remorse-stricken because the present king Aegistheus made them believe that they all shared the crime of the murder of Agamemnon. Wishing to find a place in his hometown and among his people, Orestes, after re-uniting with his sister Electra, planned to take revenge on the murderers. In the whole course of events, Zeus made continual presence in order to impede Orestes for fear that the result would render him powerless above the Argives, because "[o]nce freedom lights its beacon in a man's heart, the gods are powerless against him" (102). And the fact was, human beings were free right after God had created them. Zeus couldn't allow this realization; only the unfree actions—repentance and remorse—could serve his ends. He divulged Orestes' plan to Aegistheus, as well as dissuading Orestes with cajolement and threats, yet all to no avail. Orestes killed Aegistheus and Clytemnestra without remorse or the sense of guilt, because he knew he was free and he embraced his freedom. In the end, although Orestes couldn't save Electra, who fled to the shelter of Zeus owing to the desire to repudiate the responsibility of murdering her mother, he revealed the truth—human beings were

free—to the Argives, and took all their crimes upon his shoulders. Telling the story of the pied piper, Orestes left Argos with the Furies chasing after him.

The common ground between Anakin and Orestes is clear: both of them believed they were free, and thus chose in accordance with their intentions and purposes. Either the Force or Zeus cannot obstruct them from exercising their "absolute freedom." Some may argue that Anakin was "destined" to be the Chosen One because there was a prophecy waiting to be fulfilled. But, just as what Sartre points out when discussing Abraham's story, neither was there evidence that the prophecy was true, nor was there any proof that Anakin Skywalker was the real Chosen One. Everything is just out of sheer speculation. Therefore, there is no big difference between Orestes and Anakin Skywalker concerning their acts. Both of them acted freely and chose their values. However, while Sartre's ideas of freedom can sufficiently and straightly explain the choices and actions of Orestes, things are complicated in Anakin Skywalker. Take a look at the crucial choices in Anakin's life, and it would be obvious where the complication lies. These choices includes: to leave home to become a Jedi, to revenge the death of his mother, to ally himself with the Sith, and to save his son.

In the first case, it is not hard to see that it's a dilemma for young Anakin. His dream was not just to become a Jedi, but to free all the slaves on Tatooine. He once told Qui-Gon, "I had a dream that I was a Jedi. I came back here and freed all the slaves . . . ." (*Episode I*) He had the ambition, and was eager to achieve his goal. On the other hand, however, he didn't want to be separated from his mother, Shmi Skywalker, who raised him alone due to the direct conception from the midi-chlorians. He loved his mother. When learning that she wasn't freed like him, Anakin hesitated. He didn't know whether he should go or not. He told his mother, "I want to stay with you. I don't want things to change." And Shmi replied, "You can't stop change any more than you can stop the suns from setting. Listen to your feelings; Annie, you

know what's right."

In effect, it is a choice quite similar to that of Sartre's pupil, who was hesitating whether to join the army to fight for the country and avenge his brother or to stay with his mother whose only family left was the young man. Sartre's solution to this dilemma is also quite similar to what Shmi replied to his son. He says, "If values are uncertain, if they are still too abstract to determine the particular, concrete case under consideration, nothing remains but to trust in our instincts. That is what this young man tried to do; and when I saw him he said, 'In the end, it is feeling that counts . . .'" (36). Just as Sartre's advice to his pupil, Shmi didn't told Anakin what to do, but asked him to "listen to the feelings" and to choose "what is right." No more a slave, Anakin must free his mind as well; he had to make the choice according to his free will. In fact, it is not the first time Shmi gave her son such advice. When counseling his mother if he "could" go with Qui-Gon, Anakin received these words from Shmi: "This path has been placed for you, Annie; the choice to take it is yours alone." As a free person, with nothing and no one to depend upon, Anakin made his choice to go, and left this promise to his mother: "I…will become a Jedi and I will come back and free you, Mom…I promise." (*Episode I*) In making this choice, he also chose and invented the value that he was willing to endorse, rather than follow any existed value that was not and could never be his. But, can this exercise of one's free will be enough to guarantee a life without remorse, as Sartre contends?

Things went beyond expectation. In *Episode II*, Anakin, now a young man, dreamt that his mother was in suffering, and decided to go back to Tatooine. But what awaited him was the news that his mother was captured by Tusken Raiders. Anakin went on an immediate rescue, but only able to see his mother for the last time. This loss was barely bearable, and in front of the tomb of Shmi, Anakin said, "I wasn't strong enough to save you, Mom. I wasn't strong enough. But I promise I won't fail

again. Someday I will be the most powerful Jedi ever." (*Episode II*) Though these words seemingly suggest that Anakin was not regretful about the choice to leave his mother, no one could be certain what path he would choose if time should reverse. He didn't express repentance about his choice because originally he wished to achieve both goals—becoming a Jedi and free the slaves, and be with his mother. Both are right choices, differing only in the levels: one is unselfish, and the other is private. Therefore, Anakin didn't regret that he chose to become a Jedi, but, he did regret something. He regretted that he didn't choose to stay with his mother, and that's why he made the promise that he would not fail "again" in front of Shmi's tomb.

Sartre contends the individual is in despair; there's nothing and no one to depend upon, but the individual himself. From this, he claims, "[T]here is no reality except in action. . . . Man is nothing else but what he purposes, he exists only in so far as he realizes himself; he is therefore nothing else but the sum of his actions, nothing else but what his life is" (41). In other words, it is "actions" that define man. Therefore, to blame or regret something that one doesn't do is pointless, for how can he be sure he would definitely achieve the goal without actually doing it? As Baggini articulates, "On Sartre's view, one cannot blame circumstances for what one hasn't done. . . . Why attribute to someone the ability to do precisely what she hasn't done? . . . Because 'you are nothing else but what you live,' it is only by action that we make ourselves what we are" (123). In this light, Anakin's remorse about not staying with mother was pointless. How could he know if he had stayed, he would then have been able to protect his mother? To regret something one hasn't done is meaningless, according to Sartre.

But, this argument cannot really save one from such remorse. It is no doubt that when Anakin was considering which path to take, he was in anguish, not so much because he realized that he chose for all as because he wanted to make a "right"

choice, or a "relatively good" choice. As David Detmer contends, "Indeed, why should anyone feel anguish at the prospect of having to make a choice unless it *matters* a good deal whether or not I make the *right* choice, or at least, whether or not I make a relatively *good* choice?"(173; emphases original). And Anakin's remorse upon the choice he didn't make is just a continuation of that anguish. Indeed it is true that Anakin couldn't be certain he could have protected his mother if he had chosen to stay, but it is equally true that no one can be certain that he couldn't have done it. He was in remorse because he was wondering if the choice to stay with his mother was "better," since both the choices to leave or stay are "good."

Of course, a direct question comes from this point is about the "good" or "bad" and "right" or "wrong"? What kinds of choices are good/right and what kinds are not? And who set the standard? In terms of Sartre's contention, values are invented and every choice made out of freedom is "good" and "right." However, while Sartre's points can explain Orestes' actions and choices sufficiently enough, it fails to account for the more subtle situations as we see of Anakin. Orestes didn't face a similar dilemma as that of Anakin and thus had no anguish as to which right choice to make, let alone the remorse for what one didn't do. But from Anakin we see that even if every free choice is right, there are still cases in which one wish to know which choice is "better," and that's a fairly frequent reason for anguish. Perhaps it is pointless to dwell on the past since the responsibility one should take is that of prospection rather than that of retrospection; however, it is not pointless to try to figure out which choice was the better one, for that's one major way human beings prevent themselves from being remorseful again.

From this choice Anakin made, we know that anguish doesn't just derive from the realization that when one chooses, he chooses for all, but also from the fact that he wants to know which choice is better when being confronted with two or more good

choices. Furthermore, even if there are no *a priori* moral values, one would still be in repentance for his choice when he wants to find out whether it would be better if he had chosen the other option. These points concerning anguish and repentance are the phenomena we don't see on Orestes, and where Sartre's theory cannot explain adequately. The following choices of Anakin would show other situations of remorse, and the contrast between Anakin and Orestes would be more obvious.

The second crucial choice is the choice to avenge his mother. After Shmi died in his hands, Anakin out of sadness and anger took his lightsaber and went out the tent. What follows was a massacre; all of the Tusken Raiders were killed, including women and children. Later he confessed to Padmé his terrible deed in a voice mixed by anger and dolor and remorse. He trembled, shouting, "It's all Obi-wan's fault. He's jealous. He's holding me back. . . . I killed them. I killed them all. They're all dead, every single one of them. And not just the men, but the women and the children, too. They're animals, and I slaughtered them like an animal. I HATE THEM!" (*Episode II*). This time Anakin felt regretful not because he was wondering which choice—the choice to kill the Tusken Raiders and the choice to leave in peace—was better, but because he understood clearly he had made a wrong choice out of freedom.

Some may argue that he didn't make the choice out of his freedom because at that time he was overwhelmed by passions resulting from his mother's death. But can passion be a reason to rescind one's responsibility for a choice? For Sartre, passion is not an excuse at all, let alone a reason. He claims that, "The existentialist does not believe in the power of passion. He will never regard a grand passion as a destructive torrent upon which a man is swept into certain actions as by fate, and which, therefore, is an excuse for them. He thinks that man is responsible for his passion" (34). For Sartre, letting oneself fall into his passion is already a "choice," and the individual must be responsible for it and its consequences. As Baggini expounds,

> Many people claim that they could not help what they did, because they were swept away by passion of one sort or another. This is one way of saying that their actions were not freely chosen, but part of some causal chain over which they had no control. Sartre claims this is little more than an excuse. He follows a line of reasoning which echoes Aristotle, who claimed that we are doubly responsible for actions committed when drunk: we are to blame for putting ourselves into a drunken state and for the subsequent action. The same could be said for passion. By the time we have been swept away by passion, we have effectively already made our choice. Our choices put us in a situation where passion would take effect, but as we chose to put ourselves in that position, we cannot avoid responsibility. (123)

Therefore, anger and sorrow and whatever any other passion couldn't save Anakin from his responsibility for his wrong choice, for it is he himself who let him be swept away by the passions, not anyone else.

Anakin didn't attempt to find any excuse, actually. Though he mentioned Obi-wan, the person who he was really reproaching was himself. He knew clearly his deed was wrong and repentance derived from it. Repentance as a way of showing responsibility is another phenomenon we don't see in Sartre. "To choose between this or that is at the same time to affirm the value of that which is chosen; for we are unable ever to choose the worse. What we choose is always the better . . . ." (Sartre 29). And the most pertinent example for this argument is Orestes' killing his mother. In order to become one of the Argives and liberate the suffering citizens, Orestes performed his killing without hesitation, even when he raised his sword in front of his mother. And he showed no remorse, because, as he said, "I am free. Beyond anguish, beyond remorse. Free. And at one with myself. (111). This is a significant contrast between him and Anakin. Both performed killing, but the one who killed his own

mother walked away peacefully, whereas the one who killed for his mother was upset by the ensuing remorse. Are free actions really free from remorse? Apparently not. In addition to the fact that Orestes only killed the murderers whereas Anakin killed the innocent, it should also be noted that Anakin made the choice out of his freedom and he didn't refute the responsibility ensuing from it. And, it is this understanding of his freedom that makes him regret having made the choice.

Sartre's theory of freedom cannot give an account of this phenomenon. Or it can be said that he doesn't consider a wrong choice made out of freedom is possible. His logic is this: when one makes a choice out of his free will, he is willing to endorse this choice as well as the consequences. That is to say, if one feels he should not make a choice, then he just will not make it, since he is free. However, there are indeed cases where one doesn't consider his free decision wrong till later retrospection, as shown by Anakin. In fact, a character do present similar reactions in *The Flies*—Electra. Though the play depicts her as one who fled from her freedom and responsibility, aren't her reactions to the killing of her mother—fear, sorrow, and remorse—the reactions considered "human"? Further, while Sartre claims that remorse is a reaction to abandon one's freedom so as to repudiate one's responsibility, Anakin's remorse shows that remorse can also stem from a choice for which one is willing to take responsibility.

Therefore, Anakin's killing brings out two phenomena Sartre's freedom is unable to account for. First, a freely chosen decision can be a wrong one, and second, remorse can result from one's willing to take responsibility for a wrong act. Although contrary to the characteristics Orestes exhibited, these two phenomena are not merely exceptional. Why would one consider a freely chosen act wrong? Just because values are freely chosen, a former chosen value can be replaced by a newly chosen one, in the course when a human being's identity is never set or determined, but keeping

changing along with his choices. So, considering an action wrong in retrospection is not only possible but also reasonable; the later "right" choice doesn't have to guarantee the rightness of a former one or be in the same stream of thoughts.

And is it really required to consider remorse an unnecessary reaction, even in the case of killing one's mother? Of course, we cannot blame Orestes simply for his matricide. He has a more noble purpose to achieve, and that purpose is the value he freely chosen rather than the life of his mother. On the other hand, Anakin's killing is an action of revenge. But if it is true that when one chooses one chooses for all, wouldn't the agent's reaction be more like that of Anakin, namely, remorse not only for doing wrong, but also for fear that one's "action" set an example? After all, it is "actions" that define men, according to Sartre. Further, when Padmé, the person who supported Anakin the most, learned what he had done, what we saw on her face were shock and fear and pity. And, don't we find it uneasy when learning that Orestes had no remorse about his matricide? In respecting and promoting freedom, doesn't Orestes lose something crucial that makes him human? Robert Champigny argues, "Orestes asserts he has no excuse and can have no remorse. Was it necessary to make Orestes claim that? A spectator might look at the shadow cast by the gesture, and wonder what it is a symptom of" (43). Remorse has a necessity to exist, it seems, not as a reaction to disclaim one's freedom and responsibility, but as one to secure them.

The third choice to scrutinize is Anakin's choice to ally himself with the Sith. In *Episode III*, having the premonition that Padmé would die in childbirth, Anakin was seeking desperately the method to prevent it. Chancellor Palpatine, whose real identity was the Sith Lord, knew this, and was trying to take advantage of it to entice Anakin into joining the Sith. He, having been pretending to be a friend with Anakin ever since he came to receive the Jedi training, exercised his influences from two aspects. First, he attempted to shake Anakin's views on the Jedi and the Sith, or more specifically,

the views on good and evil. Seeing that Anakin was used by the Jedi to spy on him and that Anakin didn't feel comfortable about it, Palpatine began to present a compelling argument:

> PALPATINE: Remember back to your early teachings, Anakin. 'All those who gain power are afraid to lose it.' Even the Jedi.
>
> ANAKIN: The Jedi use their power for good.
>
> PALPATINE: Good is a point of view, Anakin. And the Jedi's point of view is not the only valid one. The Dark Lords of the Sith believe in security and justice also, yet they are considered by the Jedi to be…
>
> ANAKIN: …evil.
>
> PALPATINE: …from a Jedi's point of view. The Sith and the Jedi are similar in almost every way . . . .
>
> ANAKIN: The Sith rely on their passion for their strength. They think inward, only about themselves.
>
> PALPATINE: And the Jedi don't?
>
> ANAKIN: The Jedi are selfless…they only care about others.
>
> PALPATINE: [smiles]
>
> PALPATINE: Or so you've been trained to believe. Why is it, then, that they have asked you to do something you feel is wrong?
>
> ANAKIN: I'm not sure it's wrong.
>
> PALPATINE: Have they asked you to betray the Jedi codes? The Constitution? A friendship? Your own values? Think. Consider their motives. Keep your mind clear of assumptions. The fear of losing power is a weakness of both the Jedi and the Sith.
>
> ANAKIN: [deep in thought]

Palpatine was resorting to the thing that would strike a chord with Anakin the most:

freedom. Unlike other Jedi, Anakin always had his own ideas about what to do and whom to be. He chose the values he identified with; breaking the Jedi principle to marry Padmé in secret was just one example. However, under the Jedi codes and the prophecy, he was forced to abide by some ordinances and take some actions which he didn't really identify with, despite the fact that the Jedi was viewed as the icon of the Good. Therefore, Palpatine's plan was that, he didn't ask for an immediate response from Anakin, but he definitely wished Anakin to realize in time that he had his own path, and he didn't have to follow the "Good" of the Jedi but his own "good," just as Orestes realized that there was always "his path" when he saw the blaze around the stone. And now the seed had been sown in Anakin's mind.

In addition to taking advantage of Anakin's confusion, Palpatine also employed his fear. Knowing that Anakin was afraid of the death of Padmé, he told him the story of Darth Plagueis, who "had such a knowledge of the dark side that he could even keep the one he cared about from dying," and indicated that "The dark side of the Force is a pathway to many abilities some consider to be unnatural." (*Episode III*) Anakin eagerly asked, "Is it possible to learn this power?" Palpatine replied calmly and a bit scornfully, "Not from a Jedi." Another seed had thus been sown. What Palpatine was waiting for was the moment, hopefully not to far away, when both seeds broke through the dirt. Then Anakin had to make his choice.

From these, we can see that Palpatine was appealing to the core values Anakin had chosen: freedom and love. Though he had been immersed in the values of the Jedi, he never accepted them all without doubts. But freedom and love were what he believed in, and he was willing to sacrifice for them. In the light of it, Anakin's choice to side with the Sith Lord is not a surprise. However, it certainly is not an easy one; there were always conflicts in his mind. Palpatine cleverly revealed his true identity to Anakin in a proper moment—a moment that left little time for Anakin to think more,

for the Jedi Council was prepared to take actions.

Learning Palpatine's true identity, Anakin, in shock and anger, ignited his lightsaber. But he didn't take a step further; he was hesitating. At the same time, Palpatine told him, "I know what has been troubling you…Listen to me. Don't continue to be a pawn of the Jedi Council! Ever since I've known you, you have been searching for a life greater than that of an ordinary Jedi…a life of significance, of conscience." (*Episode III*) He was again touching Anakin's "freedom." Therefore, though Anakin claimed "You're wrong!" and could kill the Sith Lord on the spot, he took no action, only deciding to turn him over to the Jedi Council.

> ANAKIN: I am going to turn you over to the Jedi Council.
>
> PALPATINE: Of course you should. But you're not sure of their intentions, are you? What if I am right and they are plotting to take over the Republic?
>
> ANAKIN: I will quickly discover the truth of all this.
>
> PALPATINE: You have great wisdom, Anakin. Know the power of the dark side. The power to save Padmé.
>
> ANAKIN: [staring at Palpatine for a moment]
>
> PALPATINE: [turning and moving to his office]
>
> PALPATINE: I am not going anywhere. You have time to decide my fate. Perhaps you'll reconsider and help me rule the galaxy for the good of all… (*Episode III*)

Before Anakin left, what Palpatine flung to him was "love." In this brief confrontation, Palpatine appealed to Anakin's core values again and again to implant the idea that he was "necessary." Though Anakin seemed to follow the Jedi way to leave Palpatine for the Jedi Council, his leaving was actually a manifestation of conflicts in mind. He didn't know what to choose; he needed time to think about it.

But the time was not enough. Jedi Master Mace Windu was in a duel with the

Sith Lord. Anakin came at the right time: the two was in a stalemate. Each presented values he had once held, or still held dear. He had to choose now. Palpatine at this crucial moment appealed to Anakin's weakness: the fear to lose the one he loved. He cried out to him, "I am your pathway to power. I have the power to save the one you love. You must choose. You must stop him." (*Episode III)* As we saw above, in front of the tomb of his mother, Anakin made the promise that he wouldn't fail again to protect the one he loved. And now a similar situation was right in front of him: he could follow the Jedi way and made a selfless choice to destroy the Sith once and for all, in the price of a life—the life of his wife, or he could make a selfish choice to save her, in the price of many lives which would be destroyed by the Sith.

Although the situation is similar to the first choice when Anakin was to choose between becoming a Jedi and staying with his mother, the connotation is in effect a sheer contrast. In the first condition, both choices were concerned with the love for people, whereas in this condition, both choices indicated death. So it is proper to say that, this time, Anakin was not to choose a better way between two good choices, but to choose a "less evil" one. A corpse or a land of corpses. Anakin understood this, and he was in anguish. Eventually, in order not to make the same tragedy he once experienced, or trying to amend for the "mistake," he chose the latter. This fact made his crying "What have I done?" after Windu's death more lachrymose. He was not regretting that he had sided with the Sith; that was the value he chose. Yet he was regretting that he had made a selfish choice, and many people would die because of it. However, as mentioned before, Anakin knew he was a free person, and he was willing to take responsibility for his freedom. Now that the choice was made, he would not let himself be in remorse for what he had done, but keep walking along the path he chose, and take what would be on his shoulders. And the first order given to him, now called Darth Vader, was to kill all the Jedi, including the younglings, in the Jedi Temple. This

task was completed.

If we follow Sartre's logic, this choice of Anakin was a right one for him, but it is also a painful one. After wiping out the Jedi in the temple and the Separatists leaders on the lava planet Mustafar, Anakin stood on the bridge above the lava. He tossed a gaze, not toward any target, but to his mind. His eyes were stern, and sad. Stern, because he knew the bloodshed was the necessary consequence of his choice, and he was not regretting for it; it was the price he must pay in order to save Padmé. Sad, because he knew the blood was avoidable, and he realized how different the situation was compared to his dream: he dreamt to be a savior to the slaves, but now he was a butcher, killing without hesitation.

Anakin made a difficult choice, perhaps the most difficult one in his life. Compared to it, the most dramatic choice Orestes made—the choice to kill his mother—lacks conflicts in mind, and there are several points of contrast worth pointing out. First, while Anakin sacrificed others to save his wife, Orestes sacrificed his mother to save the Argives. Second, although both killed resolutely after making the decision, Anakin's emotion was disturbed by his action, whereas Orestes only showed longanimity. Third, in addition to freedom, we see on Anakin another equally strong core value for him—love, but on Orestes, freedom was the most important one. It can be put that, Anakin killed for love, and Orestes killed for freedom. Or in a more precisely way, Anakin sacrificed his freedom and killed for love, while Orestes sacrificed his love and killed for freedom, his freedom and that of the Argives.

The last choice to examine is Vader's choice to save his son. To see why this choice is significant, it is necessary to know what happened to Vader after he stepped onto the path of the Sith. The betrayal and massacre led to the dual with his former master and mentor, Obi-Wan Kenobi. Vader was maimed terribly and thus defeated. When Darth Sidious, the Sith Lord, found him, his body was charred by the fire from

lava, yet he was still alive. The reason he didn't give up the will to live was the desire to save Padmé. When he was being transformed into a half-machine due to the extremely serious wounds, Padmé on another planet was delivering twins. However, while the desire to save Padmé made Vader survive, Padmé lost the will to live because her heart was broken by what Anakin had become. She died after telling Obi-wan, "There…is good in him. I know there is… still…" (*Episode III*). In the dark surgery room, after Vader woke up, the first thing he asked was, "Where is Padmé? Is she safe, is she all right?" But the devious Sidious told him, "I'm afraid she died. …it seems in your anger, you killed her." The shock induced unbearable pain and anger in Vader. "I couldn't have! She was alive! I felt her! It's impossible! No!!!" (*Episode III*)

That is a critical blow to Vader's heart. He promised he wouldn't fail again to protect the one he loved, but he still failed. He changed dramatically thereafter. He became a loyal apprentice to the Sith Lord, performing whatever ruthless tasks given to him without any conflicts in mind, even the task to kill his son. It was as if, there was no purpose for him to live; he lived only for living's sake. It can be interpreted that Vader went from freedom to bad faith. He no longer believed that he could create himself; rather, he believed that he had been made what he was, by everything and everyone surrounding him, and even by the Force "before" he was born. This is his way to explain his failures and to evade his responsibility for them. It's like he was telling himself that, "if I was not made, how come I couldn't achieve my purposes? How come I would fail twice?" The value of love died along with Padmé, and freedom was nothing to Vader when love didn't exist. The idea that everything was determined made him feel better. For Vader, to follow was more acceptable and easier than to create. Sartre would call Vader a coward since he hid from his total freedom. But it would be more suitable to say that Vader was a coward not just because he chose to hide from his freedom; it is also because he didn't know how to face his

failures.

However, he was given the third chance. The final battle between Vader and Luke came to an end with Vader's right machine-hand severed. Perhaps it is as Luke pointed out, upon seeing his own son, something lost began to surface in Vader's mind. "Your thoughts betray you, father. I feel the good in you…the conflict. . . . You couldn't bring yourself to kill me before, and I don't believe you'll destroy me now." (*Episode VI*) Though denying that there were conflicts inside, Vader in fact didn't seem to exercise full strength to fight Luke. Yet, Luke was no opponent to Darth Sidious. The Sith Lord used his Force lightning, shocking Luke to the edge of death. Witnessing this, the long lost "love" surged again in Vader. He had promised he would protect the one he loved. And it was the opportunity he had always wished he could grasp. He was only able to see the last breath fading away from his mother, and he didn't even have the chance to see his wife for the last time. Now it is his son who was dying in front of him, begging him for help. As if suddenly "waking up," Vader stepped forward, grabbed the lightning-unleashing Sith Lord, held him above his head, and hurled him into the reactor of the Death Star. Darth Sidious died in the explosion.

Suffering from the lightning, Vader didn't have many breathes left since the machine-parts on him were all destroyed. He whispered to Luke, asking him to remove his helmet.

> LUKE: But you'll die.
>
> VADER: Nothing can stop that now. Just for once…let me look at you with my own eyes.
>
> . . .
>
> ANAKIN: Now…go, my son. Leave me.
>
> LUKE: No. You're coming with me. I can't leave you here. I've got to save you.

> ANAKIN: You already have, Luke. You were right about me. Tell your sister…you were right. (*Episode VI*)

What was Luke right about? He was right that there was good in his father; he believed so as firmly as his mother. Vader died, but he died as Anakin. Luke's believing in him and loving him aroused the long forgotten "love," the value Anakin once cherished so much and the value that made him human. With it Vader accepted his freedom one more time and made his last choice. This time he sacrificed no other, but himself. The success in saving the one he loved set Vader's heart at peace. Though he couldn't bring back the lives of his mother and his wife, he protected his son from death. And that was enough. It is the first time Anakin made a choice without hesitation, and it is the first time that from the bottom of his heart, he knew it was the best choice. Anakin had his salvation, and the balance of the Force was restored unnoticeably.

The crucial choices of Anakin Skywalker show that, while Sartre's theory is sufficient to account for the ideal of freedom, as in the case of Orestes, it fails to capture other significant elements in life. From Anakin Skywalker, remorse for something one didn't do, remorse as a proof of responsibility, anguish from a difficult choice, a wrong choice out of free will, and the importance of values other than freedom are presented. Orestes exemplifies Sartre's idea of absolute freedom amply, and he is indeed an ideal free man. But we wouldn't consider Anakin Skywalker inferior to Orestes. In Orestes the promotion of freedom is the highest value; the moment he claimed "I *am* my freedom" (117; emphasis original) in the face of Zeus, he became the "embodiment of the ontological absolute freedom" (Daigle 53). He promoted not only his own freedom, but also that of others. On the other hand, in Anakin, freedom is not the major focus. Rather, the difficulty of choices, and where the different kinds of difficulty lie in are highlighted. Choices made out of conflicts

owing to various values one cherishes make clear that freedom is not the sole core value for human beings. Freedom's significance lies not in itself, but in the fact that it makes other values possible for each agent to choose. That Sartre gives particular attention to freedom is understandable and reasonable. After all, freedom is the starting point. What the choices of Anakin Skywalker bring out are not the mistakes in his theory, but rather the points he intentionally or unintentionally leaves behind when promoting the absolute freedom of human beings.

However, there is an issue needed to be dealt with. Sartre seems to take human absolute free will for granted under the premise of the absence of God, but the God's non-existence alone cannot guarantee the existence of free will. The other threat comes from determinism. Although Sartre refutes determinism in his arguments as he refutes God, the fact is that determinism cannot be eradicated in this way. Whereas there is no solid proof that God exists, there is indeed evidence that determinism surrounds us. Therefore, the freedom of Anakin and Orestes, and the freedom of human beings, are not yet in their hands. Does free will exist? Can human beings be responsible for who they are and the choices they make if free will is just an illusion? The next chapter will devote to these questions concerning free will and determinism.

Chapter 2: "Nothing Happens by Accident."

"There is a disputation that will continue till mankind is raised from the dead, between the necessitarians and the partisans of free will."[3]

Sartre seems to take human freedom for granted under the premise that there is no God, and thus refutes arguments associated with determinism. However, God's non-existence cannot be guarantee of human free will, for there are other factors that can have deterministic effects on human life. Julian Baggini points this problem out:

> The problem Sartre has here is that he gives no argument against the deeper claims of determinism: he simply flatly denies it is true. . . . Sartre seems to be simply saying that determinists are making excuses. This doesn't address their deeper philosophical concerns about the nature of causation and human action (123).

Determinism is never merely related to God, and that's why Sartre's intention to drive determinism away simply by means of the non-existence of God is problematic. The fact is, the debate about whether human beings have free will or not has lasted for centuries, and it's probable that an end will not be met in the near future. Jalalu'ddin Rumi, a twelfth-century Persian poet and mystic, vividly depicts the situation in the epigram that starts this chapter.

According to Robert Kane, the debates of this problem in the modern era have been dominated by two questions. One is the "Compatibility Question"—whether free will is compatible with determinism, and the other is "Determinist Question"—whether determinism is true or not. With the two questions, four concerning views are born out of ardent debates and discussions. Compatibilism,

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[3] From Jalalu'ddin Rumi, twelfth-century Persian poet. Quoted by Robert Kane. *A Contemporary Introduction to Free Will*. New York: Oxford UP, 2005. 1.

Incompatibilism, Libertarianism, and Hard Determinism, these four views, rather than being separated from one another, are correlated and intertwined, revolving round the kernel theme—determinism. In this chapter, these views and their relations with determinism would be examined, to see to what extent determinism influences free will and responsibility.

Compatibilism

Compatibilism, as the name suggests, is the view that free will and determinism are compatible. Freedom in terms of compatibilism means "to have the *power* or *ability* to do what we want or desire to do, which in turn entails an *absence of constraints* or impediments" (Kane 13; emphasis original). Then in what way is the compatibilist freedom compatible with determinism? It is compatible with determinism in the sense that there would be no constraints or impediments preventing man from doing what he desires to do, *even if* it should turn out to be true that what he desires was determined by the past or the laws of nature. Whether one's choice or action is determined or not, as long as there is no constraint preventing one from doing it, he can still be considered free.

But what about the alternative paths into the future—the freedom "to do otherwise"—which is deemed as a requisite for real freedom? For compatibilists, the freedom to do otherwise can be explained in terms of the foregoing definition. One is free to do something else, they say, if one has the ability to *avoid* doing it. *If* one had wanted to do otherwise, and there is nothing that would prevent one from doing it, one could have done so. It is widely believed that Anakin was determined to walk onto the path of the Jedi, but did he really have no other ways to go? In the light of compatibilism, he undoubtedly had alternative paths because he had the ability to avoid becoming a Jedi. If he had wanted, he could have chosen "not" to go with

Qui-Gon; there was nothing and no one preventing him from making this choice. It is true that the choice to take the path of the Jedi, as Shmi Skywalker said, was Anakin's alone; it is also true that the choice of "not" taking it was also in his power. The freedom to do otherwise is therefore compatible with determinism because one would have done otherwise if one had wanted to, no matter whether one actually wants to and whether one's doing is determined.

One common objection to the compatibilist freedom is this: while it does make freedom compatible with determinism, the freedom in discussion is just the "surface freedoms"—the everyday freedoms to do whatever one wants to do without constraints, namely, the freedoms of "action." But what about the freedom of the "will," which is considered to be the "deeper" freedom? To this question, compatibilists provide two responses. The first explains the "freedom of the will" to be the "freedom of choice or decision," which in turn can be treated as "free actions (choosing and deciding)." The "freedom of the will" thus means the "unconstrained freedom of choice or decision" (Kane 15).

Of course, this explanation is not satisfactory enough for many people. After all, the freedom of will as viewed this way is no deeper than everyday freedoms. Therefore, compatibilists have the second response: a deeper freedom of the will is impossible. The reason is that, for those who believe in the existence of a deeper freedom, free will is an ultimate control over whatever one wills or wants. But the control is incompatible with the will's being determined by the past events or the laws of nature over which one has no control (15). This freedom of will requires indeterminism, which, for compatibilists, is logically incoherent and incompatible with their ideas. "No one *could* have a freedom of will of such a deeper kind" (Kane 16; emphasis original).

Why is the deeper freedom of will requiring indeterminism incoherent?

Compatibilists explain in this way: determinism means “same past, one future,” and thus the denial of it—indeterminism—must mean “same past, different possible futures” (Kane 16). But when free choice is the concern, bizarre consequences would stem from the idea of indeterminism. Anakin’s choice to go with Qui-Gon can serve as an example. After a long deliberation, Anakin finally favored the idea that he would leave his mother to become a Jedi. But if his choice is undetermined, he might probably suddenly choose to stay instead, to become a professional Podrace driver on Tatooine, or to nip the thought of disburdening the slave identity (different possible futures), on the basis of the same motives, the same desires, and the same process of deliberation that make him favor the idea of being a Jedi (same past). This turning to other choices on the same basis just makes no sense, and the choice thus made is not so much a result of freedom as that of chance.

Therefore, in terms of compatibilism, the freedom of will exists. Yet it exists not in the form of deeper freedom, but in that of freedom of action. As for the free will that requires indeterminism, it’s a wish which cannot be realized.

Incompatibilism

However, the compatibilist account of free will never lack challenges from other parties. The most direct confrontation comes from “Incompatibilism,” which holds the traditional belief that free will and determinism are incompatible. Among the incompatibilists arguments, a quite solid one is called the “Consequence Argument.” One of its proponents is Peter van Inwagen, who once stated the argument informally as follows:

> 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 we 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 own acts) are not up to us. (56)

If determinism is true, our present actions are the necessary consequences of the past and the laws of nature. Since we can't change the past and the laws of nature, there is nothing we do now that is not the necessary consequence of the past and the laws of nature. Other than what we actually do, we are now unable to do otherwise. "We can infer from it that *if determinism is true, no one can ever do otherwise*; and if free will requires the power to do otherwise, then no one has free will" (Kane 24; emphasis original).

Facing the challenge from the Consequence Argument, compatibilists draw out the hypothetical method to explain the freedom to do otherwise. This time, the concern is on the interpretation of "can," which is explained as "power" or "ability." In this way, the statement that "one can do something" would be "one has the power or ability to do that thing," which further implies that, as there are no constraints or impediments preventing one from doing it, so "one would do it, if one chose or wanted to do it" (Kane 27). It's worth noting that examples of the hypothetical kind don't suggest that one could have changed the past or the laws of nature; rather, they simply imply that "no constraints or impediments would prevent [human beings] from acting differently, *if* [*they*] *had chosen or wanted differently* . . . even though [they] did *not* in fact choose or want differently" (Kane 27-8; emphasis original).

In response to the objection, defenders of the Consequence Argument have found a point of counterattack in the same word: can. Incompatibilists' point is that, the hypothetical analyses of "can" and "could have done otherwise" are themselves problematic because there are cases that some people just don't even want to do otherwise. One could take cases of psychological trauma for example. Suppose a boy was once drowned in the sea, which nearly cost his life. His fear for water became

unconscious resistance to water as he grew up. Now in order to celebrate his birthday, his classmates asked him which place he preferred, the beach or the hilltop. He picked the latter without a moment of deliberation. In this case, can it be said that the boy could have done otherwise, *if he had wanted to*? The boy could not even form a *desire* to approach water, how could he make a different choice? Or take an example of manipulation: Suppose the Force in *Star Wars* is a power that actually could command people to obey its will through the midi-chlorians. When the midi-chlorians take actions, the target person's mind and body would be manipulated to the extent that he could not form a different desire. Now recall the scene in *Episode I* when Anakin first met Padmé. He was nine and she was fourteen, but obviously young Anakin had fallen in love with her at that moment. "Are you an angel?" he asked. "What?" Padmé was astonished. "An angel," explained Anakin, "I've heard the deep space pilots talk about them. They live on the Moons of Iego I think. They are the most beautiful creatures in the universe. They are good and kind, and so pretty they make even the most hardened space pirate cry" (*Episode I*). If it is the Force's will that the chosen one must fall in love with Padmé and would do anything to save her life, could it be possible for Anakin to not want to be together with her or not want to save her life (but to accompany her in her last moments, for instance) when he had premonitions that she might die in childbirth? He could not form a desire of not being together with Padmé and not saving her life, then how could it be said that he could have done otherwise, if he had wanted to?

To deal with this problem, compatibilists could only, as Kane points out, push "the question of whether the agent could have *done* otherwise back to another question of whether the agent could have *wanted* or *chosen* (or *willed*) to do otherwise" (30). However, the new hypothetical analysis—"One could have wanted or chosen to do otherwise, if one had wanted or chosen to want or choose

otherwise"—would face the same question about "could" caused by the hypothetical statement, and to answer the question requires once again pushing the question back to another "wanted or chosen." This endless regress will continue, without actually answering the original question about whether the agent could have done otherwise.

Libertarianism

For some incompatibilists, they not only believe that free will and determinism cannot be compatible, but affirm the existence of the deeper freedom of the will and deny that of determinism. Their view is hence called "Libertarianism." Yet, the libertarian free will, though considered a necessary existence to ensure human beings' ultimate responsibilities for their actions, is itself a predicament. This predicament is called by Kane as the "Libertarian Dilemma" (33) due to two problems. On the one hand, they have to prove that free will is incompatible with determinism, which, as the Compatibility Question shows, has not yet been a closed discussion; on the other hand, they have to show that free will is compatible with indeterminism, which has been analyzed by compatibilists to be incoherent. Compared with the first problem, the second one is thought to be an even harder one for libertarians to deal with.

The primary objection to the libertarian claim is this: "If choices or actions are undetermined, they may occur otherwise, *given exactly the same past and laws of nature*" (Kane 35; emphasis original). Isn't the choice merely a consequence of chance or randomness if whatever happens in the past and within the laws of nature doesn't matter? Imagine Anakin Skywalker had always wanted to be a Jedi, and then the day came when Qui-Gon intended to take him to the Jedi Order to receive the training, but Anakin just refused, *without any reason* because nothing could determine one's free will in terms of libertarianism. Anakin's choice is thus not so much the result of free will as that of chance or randomness. And "chance" and "randomness"

are never under the control of human beings. How can we say that the choices are "ours" if they are beyond our control?

Because on the level of reality there is no support for the libertarian free will, libertarians appeal to things outside the past and the laws of nature to bolster their view, which just "[invites] charges of obscurity or mystery against their view" (Kane 33). Even Immanuel Kant, as Kane mentions, "has argued that we need to believe in libertarian freedom to make sense of morality and true responsibility, but we cannot completely understand such a freedom in theoretical and scientific terms" (33). Those things transcending the past and the laws of nature are called the "extra factors," like a soul or mind independent of the body, for instance. But in critics' eyes, the "extra-factor strategies" (Kane 39) with their "mysterious" natures are just ways to avoid confronting the problems. As Kane cites Erwin Schrödinger words that "[a]t the price of mystery, you can have anything" (42), which can be further illustrated by Bertand Russel: "[Y]ou get it too easily, acquiring it by theft rather than honest toil" (42).

Even the theory that looks not as mysterious as the foregoing two—the "agent-causation theory"—cannot adequately deal with the problem of the libertarian free will. The agent-causation theory proposes that, the agent himself, not the past or the laws of nature, is the ultimate cause of his choices and actions. While free actions cannot be completely caused by the past and the laws of nature and cannot happen by chance, there is one factor that can help libertarianism burn a way out of the Libertarian Dilemma—the agent himself. Kane elucidates the idea of agent-causation clearly:

> [W]e can say that free actions are indeed caused, but not by prior circumstances, events, or states of affairs. Free actions are caused by the *agent* or *self*, which is not a circumstance, event, or state of affairs at all, but

> a *thing* or *substance* with a continuing existence. We do not have to choose between determinism by prior causes or indeterminism or chance. We can say that free actions are *self*-determined or *agent*-caused even though they are undetermined by events. (45; emphasis original)

In this light, free actions are "self-determined" and undetermined by other factors. The relation between the agent and his actions is very special, and it is this relation that counts as the "extra factor" in the agent-causation theory. This unique causal relation between the agent and his actions is "not reducible to, and cannot be fully explained in terms of, the usual kinds of causation by events, occurrences, and states of affairs, either physical *or* mental" (45; emphasis original).

However, while this explanation makes the libertarian free will compatible with indeterminism, why the agent can be the ultimate cause without he himself being determined by other factors is another issue the libertarians have to face. To explain why the agent himself can be a cause of his action, Roderick Chisholm borrows the sentence from Aristotle's *Physics*: "Thus, a staff moves a stone, and is moved by a hand, which is moved by a man"[4] (52). There are two kinds of causation here: "transeunt causation" and "immanent causation". Transeunt causation is "causation by an event" (Chisholm 55), like what the staff did to the stone and what the hand did to the staff, whereas immanent causation is "causation by an agent" (55) which is no more caused by any other event. The agent must be a "prime mover unmoved" (Chisholm 53) to shoulder the responsibility for his action.

However, this explanation doesn't free agent-causation from mystery and obscurity. As Kane indicates, "To say . . . that we are 'prime movers unmoved' or 'uncaused causes,' like God, does not help . . . .We *are* clearly moved, at least in part,

[4] Book VII, Chapter 5, 256a, 6-8.

by many physical, psychological, and social factors, some of which are beyond our awareness?" (47; emphasis original)

Hard Determinism

Finally, contrary to the claim of libertarianism is the view called "Hard Determinism," which holds the beliefs that free will and determinism are incompatible, and, more significantly, that free will in the incompatibilist or libertarian sense doesn't exist. The traditional hard determinism is defined by three theses: "First, free will is incompatible with determinism and, second, free will does not exist because, third, determinism is true" (Kane 70). This seemingly extreme view actually has a scientific basis. Benjamin Libet is perhaps the most famous one who takes experimental approaches to the free will problem. His experiment is like the following: A testee is wired up to an electroencephalogram which records brain activity. He is told to flex the index finger a few times at moments when he wills to, and to note the positioning of a clock hand at the time when he chooses to move the finger. (Rowlands 124-5)

What is the result? "Freely voluntary acts are preceded by a specific electrical change in the brain (the 'readiness potential,' RP) that begins 550 msec. before the act. Human subjects became aware of intention to act 350-400 msec. *after RP* starts, but 200 msec. before the motor act" (Libet 551; emphasis original). The result shows that, while it is not necessarily that humans have no free will since there is still room for volition, it is hard to say that the will is "truly free" because it seems to be caused by something unknown to the agents. As Libet says:

> [T]he conscious function could still control the outcome; it can veto the act. Free will is therefore not excluded . . . it could not initiate a voluntary act but it could *control* performance of the act. . . . But the deeper question still

> remains: Are freely voluntary acts subject to macro-deterministic laws or can they appear without such constraints, nondetermined by natural laws and "truly free"? (551; emphasis original)

To be truly free means that one has to be able to not only control his acts, but have a "full control" over his acts and will, which requires that he cannot be subject to other elements that may affect or determine his control. However, Libet's experiment indicates a crisis of free will: If everything of humans, including the will, is subject to determinism, defined by infinite chains of cause and effect, how could it ever be possible that humans may have true free will? It is on this foundation that hard determinists hold their view that libertarian free will is impossible.

However, modern thinkers who advocate the idea of hard determinism only accept the kernel of traditional hard determinism—theses 1 and 2: free will and determinism are incompatible, and libertarian free will doesn't exist. As for thesis three, the universal truth of determinism, they leave it to scientists. Since theses 1 and 2 reject both compatibilism and libertarianism, people who hold onto the kernel of traditional hard determinism are called "skeptics."

But how can modern skeptics assert that libertarian free will doesn't exist if they are not committed to the truth of determinism? The reason is that, "they think free will in the libertarian sense is *impossible, whether determinism is true or not*" (Kane 71; emphasis original). The most widely discussed argument to show the impossibility of the libertarian free will comes from the Basic Argument by Galen Strawson who enlists an ancient idea: "Having true free will of the libertarian kind would require that one be a *causa sui*—a cause of oneself. But being a *causa sui* is impossible, at least not for human beings" (71).

The Basic Argument thus goes as follows: man does what he does because of the way he is (his nature or character). And to be truly responsible for what he does, he

must be truly responsible for the way he is. Yet to be truly responsible for the way he is, man must have done something in the past for which he was also responsible to make himself, at least in part, the way he is. But if man was truly responsible for doing something in the past to make himself what he is now, he must have been responsible for the way he was at an earlier time. Then again, to have been responsible for the way he was at that time, man must have done something for which he was responsible at a still earlier time and so on backward (Kane, 71-2). This regress will continue, and eventually a point will be reached, say the early childhood or embryo, at which one's initial nature was not formed by oneself, but by factors that are beyond one's control, such as heredity and environment. As long as there is such a point at which human beings cannot be truly responsible for their nature or character, they cannot be truly responsible for whatever they would become and whatever they would do. This argument is valid no matter determinism is true or not. "Even if the property of being *causa sui* is allowed to belong (entirely unintelligibly) to God," contends Strawson, "it cannot be plausibly supposed to be possessed by ordinary human beings" (444). That's why modern skeptics believe that free will in the libertarian sense doesn't exist.

Perhaps it can be said that Anakin Skywalker's life is most similar to the condition described by skeptics. His miraculous birth with the incredibly high amount of midi-chlorians in his blood was undoubtedly beyond his control. This is the beginning of all the major events in his life: encountering with Qui-Gon on Tatooine, leaving home for Jedi training, falling in love with Padmé, joining the Sith, dueling with Obi-Wan, being transformed into a half-machine, hunting for his son Luke, and sacrificing himself to save Luke. All these events were connected, one causing another, at least partly. While Anakin seemed to be the one who had to be responsible for his choices and their consequences, hard determinism may put that fact in question. If

Anakin couldn't be held truly responsible for his birth and initial nature, how could he be held truly responsible for what he did and who he became later in his life?

Objections to this view come from compatibilists and libertarians, both claim that even though human beings are not the creators of their original natures and characters, they can nevertheless freely *change* the way they are as they mature. However, in the view of hard determinism, this common sense is impossible. On the one hand, compatibilists allow the fact that the way human beings change themselves can be *determined* by how they already are, but if that's the case, if the change is determined, human beings cannot be said to be truly responsible for their change. On the other hand, libertarians suggest that the way human beings change themselves is *undetermined* by whatever in the past, but in that case, the change cannot amount to a real change but mere chance or luck, for which human beings cannot be truly responsible either. So, it is very probably true that free will is just an illusion, as illustrated by Nietzsche:

> [T]he *causa sui* is the best self-contradiction that has been conceived so far; it is a sort of rape and perversion of logic. But the extravagant pride of man has managed to entangle itself profoundly and frightfully with just this nonsense. The desire for "freedom of the will" in the superlative metaphysical sense, which still holds sway, unfortunately, in the minds of the half-educated—the desire to bear the entire and ultimate responsibility for one's actions oneself, and to absolve God, the world, ancestors, chance, and society—involves nothing less than to be precisely this *causa sui* and, with more than Baron Münchhausen's audacity, to pull oneself up into existence by the hair, out of the swamps of nothingness.[5] (quoted in

[5] Nietzsche. "The Four Great Errors," §8. 1889.

Strawson 444)

What is worth noting here is the difference between skeptics and incompatibilists. While both contend that true free will is impossible, they base their arguments on different grounds. Incompatibilists assert that free will is impossible because determinism is true and it rules out any power to do otherwise, whereas skeptics don't depend on the truth of determinism, but on the fact that human beings can never be "*causa sui*." Thus, the problem waiting to be solved is this: if true free will is never accessible by human beings, how could we live meaningfully with this fact?

Free Will and Moral Responsibility

The most serious worry from the hard determinism is this: if we can never be *causa sui*, then how can we be truly responsible for ourselves and the choices we made? Indeed, that free will is important is not because it gives the agent the freedom to choose and do whatever he wants, but because it guarantees that the agent can be "responsible" for the consequences of his free choices, and for who he is and who he becomes. Immediately connected to our responsibility is the standard of right and wrong, namely, the "moral" responsibility for our deeds. Free will and responsibility cannot be treated separately. Without free will, no one can ever be responsible for anything. Now the gauntlet has been thrown down: is responsibility also an illusion as free will?

Interestingly, while Sartre refutes God and determinism and thus all the *a priori* values in order to ensure that humans are even free to create their own moral criteria, hard determinism also implies that there is *no a priori* moral standards. The difference is: the former is a state of total freedom, the later is that of no freedom at all. But before looking at some solutions to the problem of determinism, it's helpful first to see how different groups treat the issue of free will and responsibility.

It's a common belief that, to be responsible for one's deed, one has to have the "power to do otherwise." This "power to do otherwise" or "alternative possibilities" is, as shown above, not only a necessity for compatibilist freedom, but the pivot for the Consequence Argument. But, does free will really require the power to do otherwise? This principle is denied by many compatibilists, who are called "new compatibilists" because they intend to improve the defect of the classical compatibilism: the lack of account on the "deeper" freedom—the freedom of the "will." They question the necessity of alternative possibilities, arguing:

> [P]eople tend to believe that free will requires alternative possibilities *because* they assume that moral responsibility requires alternative possibilities. But if moral responsibility does not require alternative possibilities, then free will does not require alternative possibilities either. So the major reason for thinking that determinism is incompatible with free will (because determinism rules out alternative possibilities) would be undermined. (Kane 81; emphasis original)

How can one be responsible for his deeds when he can't do otherwise? And if alternative possibilities are not required, what is required by free will and moral responsibility?

The most famous examples to show that an agent is still held responsible for his act even when he cannot do otherwise are called "Frankfurt-type Examples," named after Harry Frankfurt who shows the falsity of the principle of alternative possibilities. The first Frankfurt-type example, however, is proposed by John Locke:

> Imagine that a man is locked in a room but does not know the door is bolted and that he cannot get out. The man is enjoying the company in the room, however, and he stays of his own free will to converse with the others there. It appears that the man is responsible for staying in the room, since he

> stayed of his own volition or free choice, yet *he could not in fact have done otherwise*. (Kane 83; emphasis original)

This example is not without some flaws. The man still has some alternative possibilities for which he can be held accountable for, such as the fact that "he could have *chosen* to leave or *tried* to leave" (83; emphasis original). Yet, Frankfurt improves Locke's example and provides one in which it seems that the agent could not even "think" otherwise:

> Someone—Black let us say—wants Jones to perform a certain action. Black is prepared to go to considerable lengths to get his way, but he prefers to avoid showing his hand unnecessarily. So he waits until Jones is about to make up his mind . . . and he does nothing unless it is clear to him . . . that Jones is going to do something *other* than what he wants him to do. If it does become clear that Jones is going to decide to do something else, Black takes effective steps to ensure that Jones . . . does what he wants. (169; emphasis original)

In Frankfurt's example, the agent, Jones, cannot do otherwise than what Black wants him to because Jones is denied any other options than the one Black prefers. While some may wonder whether it's a kind of coercion, Frankfurt eliminates this possible objection because Black will intervene "only" when Jones doesn't will in accordance with his wish; if Jones makes up his mind to do the thing Black wants, Black will not take any measure to affect Jones' decision. That is to say, if Jones makes the corresponding choice, it is still out of "his own" free will and thus he can be held responsible although he cannot do otherwise. This kind of example can prove the principle of alternative possibilities to be false.

The controller such as Black can be called a " 'global' Frankfurt controller, who controls all Jones's choices and actions throughout Jones's entire lifetime" (Kane 84).

It is possible that in all his life Jones' own acts happen to be in accordance with Black's wishes, and therefore Black would never intervene. In that case, "Jones could be responsible for many acts in his lifetime because he would have done them on his own, for his own reasons, and on the basis of his own choices. Yet Jones could *never* have done otherwise because the controller would never have let him do otherwise" (Kane 84; emphasis original).

But the question is, how can Black achieve his purpose? Who can possess such a power to affect a person's thoughts without being regarded as a compelling force? While it is possible that a neurosurgeon can have control over Jones' brain, it is hard not to attribute this kind of power to a mysterious subject, such as God, or the Force in *Star Wars*. According to what is known about the Force, it is safe to imagine the Force as a kind of "global Frankfurt controller." With the midi-chlorians in every living thing, the Force could impose its will on the targets through those tiny things. Suppose it is indeed the Force itself that wished Anakin to fulfill the prophesy, and it had a plan for this project: Anakin must go with Qui-Gon, must decide to confess his love to Padmé, must violate the Jedi principle to get married, must ally himself with the Sith Lord, must make up his mind to fight Obi-wan, must want to hunt down Luke, and must be willing to sacrifice himself in the end. If Anakin didn't will the way the Force allowed, it would intervene via the midi-chlorians and make Anakin's will conform to the planned path, blocking all the other possible choices. He would then never want to "try" a different way but choose the way he was allowed to choose. However, it is possible that the intervention never happened. Anakin might in all his life make choices which matched the Force's will, and thus not only would the Force never have to interfere, but Anakin would act on his own reasons, despite the fact that he actually could never do otherwise. He would be held responsible for his choices even though he had no alternative possibilities.

However, another question is, how can the "global Frankfurt controller," whether it is a human or some unknown power, know whether it should step in? Reasonably, there must be some sign for the controller to know how the target is going to do. A "prior sign" is needed, some contend. However, the prior sign implies that the agent might still have some alternative possibilities, for it is always possible that he may exhibit a different prior sign. For instance, suppose Anakin's heart beat would rise before he made the choice that would drag him close to the dark side. Yet he might probably show different signs such as sweating, frowning, and the slowing down of the heartbeat. When that happens, when a different sign shows up, it indicates a way of alternative possibilities, for he might as well follow the way that different sign indicates rather than go down the one the Force wanted.

To this objection, defenders of the Frankfurt-type examples have two replies: one is the "voluntary" prior signs, and the other is the "involuntary" ones. First, if Anakin voluntarily exhibits a sign, like frowning, indicating he would choose a certain path that the Force wanted, then it would not intervene. And when Anakin voluntarily exhibits a different sign, like fisting, indicating he would not choose the path the Force wanted, it would intervene and block that passage, only letting open the way it wished Anakin to go. In other words, Anakin actually would only be able to exhibit the sign that the Force allowed.

As to the signs that are "involuntarily" exhibited, defenders of the Frankfurt-type examples don't regard those signs as "real alternative possibilities." The reason is that even if the involuntary signs, like sweating, may indicate a possible different way, they are not under the agent's control. When an agent has no control over a choice, even if he does happen to follow the different path, that could only amount to chance or accident, and he could not be held responsible for it. These involuntary signs just cannot save the agent from the controller's control. John Martin Fisher, a defender of

the Frankfurt-type examples, calls this kind of alternative possibility a "flicker of freedom." To the objection against the original Frankfurt-type example in which Black is going to make sure that Jones vote for a certain candidate, he says:

> [I]t may be objected that, despite the initial appearance, Jones *does* have at least *some* alternative possibility. Although Jones cannot choose or vote differently, he can still exhibit a different neurological pattern in his brain . . .I have called such an alternative possibility a "flicker of freedom." The flicker theorist contends that our moral responsibility always can be traced back to some suitably placed flicker of freedom; our responsibility is grounded in and derives from such alternative possibilities. . . . the agent will always at least have the power to exhibit an alternative sign. But I contend that the mere involuntary display of some sign—such as a neurological pattern in the brain, a blush, or a furrowed brow—is too thin a reed on which to rest moral responsibility. The power involuntarily to exhibit a different sign seems to me to be insufficiently robust to ground our attributions of moral responsibility. (97-8)

This is similar to the common charge against the libertarian free will. The free will that is compatible with "indeterminism" cannot be regarded as the "true" free will because that kind of free will is not under the agent's control, but is mere chance or randomness. Likewise, the involuntary prior sign is not under the agent's control, "undetermined" even by the agent himself. This is not true freedom of will.

Another objection to the Frankfurt-type example is called the "Indeterministic World Objection" (Kane 87), which is made by incompatibilists and libertarians. Take Vader's final choice to save his son or not as an instance, the objection goes like this: Suppose Vader's choice about whether to save his son was "undetermined" up to the moment when it occurs. Then the Frankfurt-type controller, the Force, would have a

problem when it attempted to control Vader's choice. If the choice is undetermined till the moment when Vader actually chose, the Force could not know in advance which choice Vader was going to make. Of course the Force could wait till the choice was made to see what Vader was about to do, but it would be too late for it to intervene. In that case, Vader would be responsible for his choice, yet apparently he also had alternative possibilities because his choice to save his son or not was undetermined, suggesting he could have gone either way. However, if the Force wanted to ensure that Vader would make the choice it wanted, then it could not wait up to the moment Vader actually made the choice. The Force must act in advance to guarantee Vader chose what it wanted. But in that case, while Vader had no alternative possibilities, he could not be held responsible for his choice either. It is the Force that was responsible because it was its intervention in advance that brought out the outcome it wanted.[6]

The Indeterministic World Objection shows that if free choices are undeterminined, then the Frankfurt controller would have to actually intervene to ensure the result. In this respect, if the controller doesn't intervene, the agent will be responsible for his choice, yet he will also have alternative possibilities due to the "indeterminism" of his choices. On the other hand, if the controller steps in, though the outcome will be what the controller wants and the agent has no alternative possibilities, the one that is responsible for the choice is the controller, not the agent. Thus, the conclusion of the Indeterministic World Objection is that the principle of alternative possibilities "would remain true—moral responsibility requires alternative possibilities—*when free choices are not determined*" (Kane 88; emphasis original).

The Frankfurt-type examples aim to show that responsibility doesn't need the power to do otherwise, whereas the Indeterministic World Objection presents an

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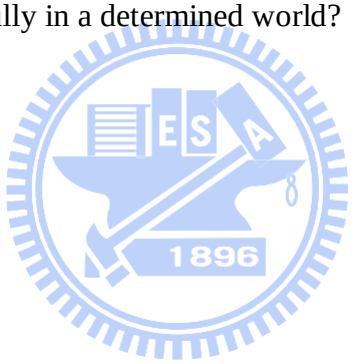
[6] Modified from Robert Kane's version of the Indeterministic World Objection. *A Contemporary Introduction to Free Will*. New York: Oxford UP, 2005. 87-8.

argument that in a world of indeterminism, not only does responsibility require alternative possibilities, but these possibilities are not the numerous options already there, but those out of the agent's "free will." However, how could it be proved that there is indeterminism in the world? And if there is, how can it really help rather than just provide randomness or luck? Without solving the pivotal problem—whether it is possible to escape determinism—the contention of indeterminists and libertarians cannot make the first step. Yet, we must ask, on the other hand, is determinism really that devastating? Does life mean nothing without free will? In the next chapter, following these questions, the focus will first be on different ways to live without free will, and then on a potential solution to the problem posed by determinism. Can human beings live meaningfully in a determined world?



Chapter 3: "Always in Motion is the Future."

"It was said that you would destroy the Sith, not join them. It was you who would bring balance to the Force, not leave it in Darkness"[7]

Anakin Skywalker was believed to be the Chosen One to end the Sith once and for all. Yet, in order to acquire the method to prevent the one he loved from death, he made his choice between Jedi and Sith—and the most powerful Sith knight in the universe he became. While it seemed that there must be something wrong about the prophecy—either that it was false or that Anakin was not the Chosen One—the death of the Sith Lord in the hands of Anakin restored the faith to the prophecy. Perhaps it was really as what Yoda suggested: The prophecy itself might not be wrong, but "misread." Despite the turbulent process, the prophecy was nevertheless fulfilled in the hands of Anakin Skywalker. Shouldn't this fact pleasing and satisfying enough?

Although the witnesses and bystanders of the whole event may be more than willing to accept and welcome this ending, when we think more carefully upon the life and death of Anakin, we might not feel so peaceful about it. We would wonder, if all of his choices and actions were inevitable, were "determined," how could we hold him responsible for his deeds, even his sacrifice in the end? And if we couldn't hold him responsible for all he had done, what was he? A tool for a specific purpose? We don't feel comfortable about this idea, not only because this would imply emptiness of Anakin's life, but also because this makes us wonder if human beings are just like him, never really possessing "free will."

Sartre asserts, "[T]here is no sense in life *a priori*. Life is nothing until it is lived, but it is yours to make sense of, and the value of it is nothing else but the sense that

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[7] Quoted from Obi-Wan Kenobi in *Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith*. Dir. George Lucas. Screenplay by George Lucas. Twentieth Century Fox, 2005.

you choose" (54). To freely choose your life, to make your own choices, is how your life would be meaningful, for in that way you are the master of yourself. But if free will really doesn't exist, as the skeptics claim, would Sartre's point still be valid?

Contrary to Sartre's view, skeptics contend that it is impossible for a man to be his own master, to be the "cause of himself." In that way, not only couldn't a man ever be held responsible for himself, for what he has done and who he has become, but he couldn't be said to possess free will. Actually, the inseparable relationship between free will and responsibility is mutual; one cannot be without the other. To say one has free will, it follows that he must be responsible for himself. To say one is responsible for himself, it is required that he has free will; otherwise the manipulated or behavior engineered people would also be regarded as "responsible" for themselves. In short, the threats brought out by skeptics undermine Sartre's view thoroughly: even if God doesn't exist, it is still probable that human beings are not free, and if human beings are not free, how can they be responsible for their lives? How can they make their lives meaningful?

Living Without Free Will

While some scholars keep endeavoring to prove that genuine free will exists, their theories are not yet fully tenable against challenges from determinism.[8] On the other hand, although contending it is impossible to live with free will in this world, many skeptics argue that living without free will is not as dreadful as many claim it to

[8] One example of these inspiring theories is Kane's attempt to bring in the modern science of "chaos." He argues that the combination of chaos and quantum physics in the brain would lead to the temporary screening off from influences of the past when we face difficult "soul-searching moments," and thus we would be the ultimate cause of our choices in such cases, resulting in our ultimate responsibility for our choices and the following outcomes. However, aren't the neurons, as parts of the body, also subject to determinism? If that is the case, how can we ever be sure that we are completely separated from determinism in those soul-searching moments? Despite the problems to be solved, Kane's theory still provides a possibility for genuine free will; one should never conclude too hastily. For the detailed discussion, please see: Kane, Robert. "Some Neglected Pathways in the Free Will Labyrinth." *The Oxford Handbook of Free Will*. Ed. Robert Kane. New York: Oxford UP, 2002. 406-37.

be, and they even provide various ways to live meaningfully without free will. The following are three different responses proposed by Ted Honderich, Saul Smilansky, and Derk Pereboom. Their attentions are especially paid to the meaning of life and treatment of crimes.

Ted Honderich[9], one of the skeptics, suggests that in the face of the non-existence of free will, human beings have to give up some important "life-hopes," such as regarding our successes and accomplishments as being up to us and believing wonderful virtues to be derived from our natures, to the extent that, as Kane puts it, "we had such characteristics, we would have to admit that we were merely lucky in our heredity and formative circumstances" (74). After all, they are never really in our control and thus we can never be responsible for having them. However, some life-hopes still remain. The remaining life-hopes are most of our everyday life-hopes, like desires to fulfill one's dream, to meet one's true love, to set up a home, and so on. These hopes that make life meaningful, from the viewpoint of Honderich, "would not be undermined by the belief that we are not the 'originating' causes of our own characters" because "[w]hat these everyday life-hopes require is only that, if we make the appropriate voluntary efforts, there is a good chance that nothing will prevent us from realizing our cherished goals. Even if our behavior is determined, we cannot know in advance how things are destined to turn out" (74). In other words, Honderich urges people to go on living in the same way as they would if free will in the libertarian sense does exist, for that's how the life could still be meaningful.

But this doesn't mean that we should deceive ourselves that everything is the same despite the non-existence of free will. As Kane points out,

> How does this skeptical view of Honderich's differ from compatibilism?

[9] The following theory of Ted Honderich is taken from Robert Kane's discussion in his *A Contemporary Introduction to Free Will*. New York: Oxford UP, 2005. 74-75.

> Honderich says that compatibilists try to convince us that if determinism were true, nothing of importance would be lost in the way of freedom and responsibility. But this, Honderich thinks, is mistaken. Life-hopes that depend on believing that we are the undetermined originators of our characters and actions *are* important to our self-image. We are in fact giving up something important when we take a hard determinist or hard compatibilist position. We should be honest and not deceive ourselves about that. But enough life-hopes remain . . . to permit us to go on living in meaningful ways. (75)

Human beings do lose some important life-hopes, especially those in which we consider ourselves to be the "undetermined originators of our characters and actions." This is inevitable, and we should not pretend nothing has changed.

An insightful point in Honderich's theory is worth mentioning: Even though our choices and actions are determined, what lies before us is still unknown. Indeed, unlike fatalism, which suggests that whatever is going to happen will definitely happen *no matter what we do*, determinism doesn't prescribe this consequence. The future is influenced and formed by the agent's choices and actions, and there is no definite future waiting for the agent. The fact that what an agent does is determined by the past and laws of nature only entails that what the agent does is inevitable, never that he is determined for a future, for no future would be formed until the agent arrives at the moment concerned. Most significantly, what an agent would do at a moment depends on the interweaving chains of cause and effect; one can only "experience" what happens when the moment comes, never "foretelling." Anakin's case can serve as an example. Even if his wish to save his wife from death was determined by his character and actions, no one, even Anakin himself, would ever know in advance what he would do when he had to choose between the Jedi and the

Sith. It is only from retrospection that we understand his joining the Sith was inevitable.

A direct question toward the acceptance of the skeptical view of free will is that, how can we deal with criminal behavior if it is agreed that no one can ever be responsible for his actions? Honderich contends, we have to give up the "retribution theory of punishment," which suggests "punishment of criminal behavior is right because it is *deserved*. The criminal has done wrong and must repay in kind for the wrong inflicted" (Kane 75; emphasis original). This retribution theory of punishment must be abandoned, because how would anyone truly "deserve" the punishment for his actions if no one could be considered ultimately blameworthy for his wrongdoing?

But criminal behavior is still a problem, even if everyone concedes that no one is ultimately responsible for his deeds. After all, crimes threaten lives of others, and a society in which anyone can harm whoever he wants to with no consequences to face is just too ridiculous. According to Honderich, while we have to give up the retribution theory, it doesn't signify we have to stop punishing criminals as well. Punishment has every reason to exist. We should not punish criminal for retribution's sake, but we should punish them to ensure safety and peace. Whereas retribution is not a legitimate motive where there is no free will, there are alternative justifications of punishment that remain valid and effective. The most common two alternative justifications are "deterrence" and "reform" (or "rehabilitation). Deterrence puts the emphasis not only on preventing criminal from committing crimes in the future, but also on preventing other people from committing similar crimes. As Kane puts it, "We also punish criminals to discourage them from committing future crimes and, even more important, we punish them to deter other persons from committing similar crimes" (75). For similar purposes, reform or rehabilitation is, as its name suggests, to do the best to change the thoughts and attitudes of the criminals so that they would be

productive members of the society once they are released from prison.

Both deterrence and reform are legitimate motives for punishment even if free will doesn't exist, according to Honderich. "So we need not fear that our prisons would be emptied if everyone came to believe that people lack free will" (75). It is Honderich's idea that once we accept the truth that human beings do not possess free will, we would make more efforts on the prevention of crimes via deterrence and reform rather than try to amend for what has already happened via revenge. Contrary to the worries that no society would be appropriate to live without the belief in free will, societies could actually be better with our putting emphasis on proper notions.

While Honderich suggests that human beings should live as if free will exists, Saul Smilansky takes a more radical position, claiming that human beings must live with *the illusion of free will* to ensure the integrity of responsibility.

Smilansky begins with the aspect of moral innocence to describe how a civilized moral order would be undermined if the fact that no one has free will becomes a widespread belief. He says, "Even in a world without libertarian free will, the idea that only those who deserve to be punished in light of their free actions may be punished is a condition for any civilized moral order" (498). Punishment for those who does not *deserve* to be punished—such as those who didn't perform the act and those who did without control over their acts (with a gun pointing at the head, for instance)—are on the other hand considered unfair. The senses of justice and injustice don't require the idea of libertarian free will; what they need is the idea that punishment should only be for those who deserve it, just as what the retribution theory of punishment prescribes. It is this idea that makes any moral system function well, not the libertarian free will. However, if our lacking the libertarian free will is internalized, the moral system would be in serious danger, for no one would ever be responsible for his wrong doing, since no one could ever be responsible for himself.

"Guilt" would lose its meaning.

The effects would be that notions of "good and evil," "right and wrong," and "innocent and guilty" would serve no purposes once the view of hard determinism is prevalent. Morality would then only exist in name. For every civilized society, the sense of morality is a necessity; otherwise how could a society be "civilized"? Therefore, to preserve morality, responsibility has to be first upheld; and to uphold responsibility, the idea that no one can ever be really responsible for their acts must be absent. Smilansky points out, "Psychologically, the attribution of responsibility to people so that they may be said to justly deserve gain or loss for their actions requires (even *after* the act) the absence of the notion that the act is an unavoidable outcome of the way things were—that it is ultimately beyond anyone's control" (498; emphasis original). This is what he calls the "Present Danger of Future Retrospective Excuse." And he further contends:

> To put it bluntly: people as a rule ought not to be fully aware of the ultimate inevitability of what they have done, for this will affect the way in which they hold themselves responsible. . . . We often want a person to blame himself, feel guilty and even see that he deserves to be punished. Such a person is not likely to do all this if he internalizes the ultimate hard determinist perspective, according to which . . . he could not strictly have done anything else except what he did do (498-99).

Smilansky's point is that, if most people take the hard determinist view, while some may become more humane and considerate in treating others on account of understanding that no one could be ultimately responsible for their deeds, most people would just become more selfish and take ultimate hard determinist perspective as an excuse for their immoral actions. Without the ethical foundation, the stability of civilized societies would be in severe danger. As Kane indicates, "Only force and fear

of punishment would keep people from breaking the law. As one of America's founders, James Madison, argues in Federalist Paper 10, if society has no ethical foundation, the law alone will not protect us" (78).

In addition to threat to responsibility and thus to the society, Smilansky points out another danger which is associated with the individual. People seek to find meanings in their lives, but with hard determinist view, this vital purpose is impossible to achieve. Not only would all people, regardless of the efforts and pains and sacrifices, be morally equal and in no way to generate any "real" moral values, but the notion of moral self-respect would also die out under the ultimate hard determinist perspective:

> There is a sense in which our notion of moral self-respect, which is intimately connected with our view of our choices, actions, and achievements, withers when we accept the ultimate perspective. From the latter any sense of moral achievement disappears, as even the actions of the "moral hero" are simply an unfolding of what he happens to be. *No matter how devoted he has been, how much effort he has put in, how many tears he has shed, how many sacrifices he has willingly suffered*. (Smilansky 499; emphases original)

If whatever a person has done and will do is just a determined product, how can anyone say there is meaning in his life? The same feeling strikes us while Anakin's free will is in doubt. If all of his efforts, sacrifices, sufferings, tears and blood are mere determined products, even though he saved his son and even restored the balance of the Force, nothing makes his life "worthy," for nothing can be attributed to him. "True appreciation, deeply attributing matters to someone in a sense that will make him worthy, is impossible if we regard him and his efforts as merely determined products" (499). This loss of moral value and moral self-respect is called by him as

the "Danger of Worthiness." Compared with being moral agents, finding one's meaning in life is no less vital for anyone. As Smilansky puts it, "[T]he concern is not only to get people to function adequately as moral agents; it also has to do with the very meaning we can find in our lives" (499).

The third danger that would follow the internalization of hard determinism is related to the individual as well. This time, the attention is paid to a significant notion: remorse. Unlike Sartre, who considers remorse to be an irresponsible reaction to one's free choice, Smilansky contends remorse is actually connected with one's sense of moral responsibility. "Feelings of remorse are inherently tied to the person's self-perception as a morally responsible agent" (499). That's why to think a person would still feel remorse once he realizes all of his choices in life are beyond his control is unreasonable: to feel remorse for things that one is not responsible for just doesn't make sense. "In retrospect, her life, her decisions, that which is most truly her own, appear to be accidental phenomena of which she is the mere *vehicle*, and to feel moral remorse for any of it, by way of truly *owning up* to it, seems in some deep sense to be misguided" (499; emphases original).

To be a man of integrity, therefore, the feeling of repentance must be maintained. However, it is another significant value that cannot survive under the realization of the non-existence of libertarian free will. Once free will is crumbled, repentance would be blown away with it. The third danger is thus called the "*Danger of Retrospective Dissociation*," which is "the difficulty of feeling truly responsible after action" (499-500). Smilansky contends that, if the belief of libertarian free will is not sustained, even if one doesn't use the ultimate hard determinist perspective as an excuse for his act or choice, it is still arguable that he won't hold himself *truly* responsible for what he has done. Or, even if he is willing to take responsibility in the sense of "willingness to pay," that is *not* the responsibility to make us agents of

integrity. The problem lies in the fact that, remorse is not an option for people who don't believe in free will anymore; yet the responsibility we need is the responsibility *connected with remorse*. As Smilansky puts it,

> One can surrender the right to make use of the "ultimate level excuse" for normative reasons and yet perhaps not be able to hold oneself truly responsible . . . if one has no grain of belief in something like libertarian free will. One can, after all, accept responsibility for matters that were not up to one in any sense, such as for the actions of others, for normative reasons. But here we are dealing with a different matter: not with the acceptance of responsibility in the sense of "willing to pay," but rather with feeling *compunction*. (500; emphasis original)

That is why there is difficulty in feeling truly responsible after action, for responsibility is no longer true once it can only be "accepted." Human beings are often anxious and perplexed when facing dilemmas of choices, and in retrospect, we wonder whether our choices are good or at least better than the other options. That's where compunction comes from, if we find out that a better choice could have been made. Although nothing can be done now, anguish is still piercing through our hearts like rain of arrows, because we care for our choices, and because we feel sincerely responsible for them.

Sartre's anguish ceases to exist once a choice has been made; after that, the agent just look prospectively. He is willing to take the responsibility, but he will not feel remorse. We have seen this phenomenon in Orestes. However, to make oneself a better person, it is in retrospect that we find out what mistakes we've made, and it is in compunction that we find the power to change for the better, as what we have seen on Anakin. Compunction is in this way a necessity in moral responsibility and personal integrity. Smilansky claims, "[S]uch genuine feelings of responsibility (and

not mere acceptance of it) are crucial to being responsible selves" (500). Realizing the truth of free will would render this facet ramshackle.

Building on the three dangers stemming from the internalization of the non-existence of libertarian free will, Smilansky purposes that the illusion of the existence of free will must be fostered: only with this illusion can people lead meaningful lives and can the foundation of civilization be secured. Focusing on the strictly "practical" point of view, he articulates:

> The ethical importance of the paradigm of free will and responsibility as a basis for desert should be taken very seriously. But the ultimate perspective threatens to *present* it as a farce, a mere game without foundation. Likewise the crucial idea of a personal sense of value and appreciation that can be gained through our free actions . . . . Illusion is crucial in pragmatically safeguarding the compatibilistically defensible elements of the "common form of life." *Illusion is, by and large, a condition for the actual creation and maintenance of adequate moral and personal reality*. (501-2; emphases original)

The illusion of free will must exist, not for some lofty purposes, but for the most practical reasons that concern every human being.

Not only does the illusion play a positive role, but, opportunely, the belief in the illusion is already in place, for most people have already considered themselves to be either compatibilists or libertarians. No extra labor has to be paid in order to plant the idea in people's minds. As to how the illusion would function, Smilansky contends that though contrary beliefs exist at the same time, most people are not fully aware of the differences of the opposite beliefs, and, moreover, seldom would delve into the question about the "ultimate control" of oneself which would prove threatening to the assumption of libertarian free will. In other words, "We *keep ourselves* on the level of

compatibilist distinctions about local control and do not ask ourselves about the deeper question of the "givenness" of our choosing self; revisiting threats to our vague, tacit libertarian assumptions" (Smilansky 502; emphases original).

Therefore, though Smilansky knows the conclusion doesn't live up to one of the most important goals for many people—pursuing the truth—he still contends that "keeping things veiled" is the most beneficial, if not the best, way for the status quo. And illusion in this condition serves to be the hinge that ties different beliefs loosely:

> The result is not philosophically neat, but that, after all, is its merit: the original reality was that we face practical dangers if we try to make our (incoherent or contradictory) conceptions *too clear*, but that we ought not to give any of them up entirely. Illusion, in short, allows us to have "workable beliefs." (502; emphases original)

Kane compares the theory to foster the illusion of free will to the words of a Victorian Lady, who responded to Darwin's theory that "If it is true, let us hope it does not become generally known" (Kane 78). However, we must ask, as Kane points out, what if one day all the people find out the reality they believe in is just a dream?

Unlike Smilansky who think the truth of the non-existence of free will has malevolent effects on persons and societies as a whole, Derk Pereboom doesn't consider the truth to be so devastating. Rather, like Honderich, he suggests that people should live with this fact, and he contends that not only can human beings live without free will, but this truth is even beneficial in certain aspect. While his position is quite similar to hard determinism, he doesn't endorse hard determinism itself, and therefore he calls his position "hard incompatibilism." Pereboom also aims at the core aspects—wrongdoing and meaning in life—to explain how human beings can live harmonically with the non-existence of free will.

It is our intuition, as Smilansky points out, that those who deserve

punishment—those who commit guilty acts—should be punished so. That is how a civilized society works. If this foundation of moral responsibility is shattered by hard determinist perspective, as far as practicality is concerned, how should we treat those who commit wrongdoings? Pereboom comes straight to the point in the very beginning, saying, "Accepting hard incompatibilism demands giving up our ordinary view of ourselves as blameworthy for immoral actions and praiseworthy for those that are morally exemplary" (479). He is asking us to give up the idea of moral responsibility, for no one can ever be responsible for himself when he doesn't even have free will. The intuitive reaction to this stance can be foreseen, just like the worries Smilansky indicates. Pereboom understands the trepidation clearly, saying there is always a tendency to treat people as blameworthy in order to keep moral reform and education even if moral responsibility should turn out to be false. Thus, "If we began to act as if people were not morally responsible, then one might fear that we would be left with insufficient leverage to change immoral ways of behaving" (479).

However, similar to the posture of Honderich, Pereboom doesn't regard punishment for retribution's sake is reasonable, for under the condition that free will doesn't exist, there is no people "deserving" to be punished, and when no one deserves punishment, punishing even criminals would seem "morally wrong." Therefore, the motives that can be considered "fair" are those which assume only that the offender has done something wrong, and never that he is responsible for it.[10]

Disagreeing both the reform[11] and deterrence theory[12] of punishment for their

[10] For Pereboom, the reasonable and fair ways to treat wrongdoers are moral admonishment and encouragement, not only because these methods can talk sense of what is right into the minds of the offenders, which would result in beneficial reform and prevent future wrongdoings, but also because they don't require the offender to shoulder more than he should.

[11] Whereas Honderich thinks that punishment of justifications other than vengeance must exist to ensure personal and social integrity, Pereboom considers every form of punishment as problematic. Moral education theory of punishment, or the reform theory, is not challenged by the position of hard incompatibilism—that is, it doesn't treat the offender as the responsible agent for the crime—yet it can still be considered "wrong" by punishment itself. The reason is, Pereboom contends that to employ harm in order to achieve good is in essence morally wrong if there is not sufficient evidence to prove

resorting to "punishment" as the method, Pereboom suggests a different way to deal with the issue of wrongdoing. In order to achieve crime prevention and at the same time not to violate the ground of fairness, his method is based on an analogy between treatment of criminals and quarantine policy. Following Ferdinand Schoeman's argument that "if we have the right to quarantine people who are carriers of severe communicable diseases to protect society, then we also have the right to isolate the criminally dangerous to protect society" (480), Pereboom believes applying the quarantine model to crime prevention would be better justified than any measure of punishment because it doesn't require the criminal to be responsible for what he shouldn't. The potential murderer is put in quarantine not because he should be responsible for his nature or character, but because it is for the general good of the society, just as the quarantined child with the Ebola virus.

Some may argue that quarantine can still be too harsh for those who are not as dangerous as potential murders, just as to isolate a patient with cold is more severe than needed. To this, Pereboom claims there are different measures within the quarantine model to fit various cases, and we should choose the most appropriate one case by case. For example, people with the threats of shoplifting should just be treated some degree of monitoring rather than detention. Of course, it is possible that some persons may be unfairly quarantined. After all, comparing with deciding who might have a dangerous communicable disease, to predict who might be a potential criminal

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that the harm can produce the good. Furthermore, even if it can be proved that punishment is effective in bringing out the desired results, and *even if we are morally responsible for our actions*, Pereboom argues we should still seek non-punitory methods to produce the same results.

[12] The deterrence theory, as the moral education theory, also faces problems. Although it is not challenged by the posture of hard incompatibilism either, its motives and foundations are questionable. If deterrence is on the utilitarian basis, it would eventually authorize using people merely as means. And if the deterrence is on the basis of the right to harm in self-defense, this justification for punishment is also disputable, for when a criminal is sentenced, he is usually not an immediate threat to anyone, whereas those who may legitimately be harmed on the basis of the right of self-defense are still beyond the law's reach. Therefore, while the motives and foundations seem to be out of the principle of fairness, the theory of deterrence would actually lead to the results contrary to the original purposes.

is much more difficult. Retributivists thus argue that, “If the focus is entirely on deterrence and protection rather than on retribution, injustices are bound to arise” (Kane 76). However, for Pereboom, if the quarantine model works quite well for most cases, the situation of some unfairness is what we have to live with if we accept free will doesn’t exist. “After all, those who are quarantined because they are sick are usually innocent as well” (Kane 76).

As for the meaning of life, Pereboom agrees with Honderich’s argument that some life-hopes still survive and are left intact under hard determinism, and develops the position further. Some argues that life-hopes cannot subsist without free will, because hard determinism or hard incompatibilism impairs an important factor of life—the aspiration for praiseworthiness. Life-hopes are associated with the aspiration for praiseworthiness in the sense that life-hopes are aspirations for achievement, and “it cannot be that one has an achievement for which one is not also praiseworthy” (Pereboom 481). Therefore, abandoning praiseworthiness would render life-hopes meaningless. However, Pereboom doesn’t consider life-hopes and achievements are connected in the manner as the objection states. He says, “If an agent hopes for success in some endeavor, and if she accomplishes what she hoped for, intuitively this outcome can be her achievement even if she is not praiseworthy for it—although the sense in which it is her achievement may be diminished” (481). In other words, achievement is not really connected with praiseworthiness as most people intuitively think. The fulfillment of a hope one wishes to succeed in is still an achievement, though not actually the achievement “of the agent.” In the world without free will, one must accept that he cannot be held ultimately responsible for everything his does; he must give up the idea of praiseworthiness and blameworthiness not only for others, but also for himself, for these concepts are built on the basis of one’s being responsible for them. Yet, an achievement is still an achievement, and this fact is

worth praise and respect. It might be a bit cruel for the agent that it is not his efforts and pains that are acclaimed, but at least he still accomplishes his hopes, and the fulfillment of the hopes are good in itself.

Yet, that reason is not enough for the individual to live and fight for his life-hopes. A further problem concerning the meaning of life without free will is that, if we accept the views of hard determinism or hard incompatibilism, it seems that it is meaningless for us to strive to fulfill our life-hopes, even though these hopes are good, because it is not within our control whether the hopes can be achieved. This argument is not "clearly true" for Pereboom. He contends that, even if we are creatures of our environments and dispositions, we can still "reasonably hope" to success in what we want to achieve, due to the fact that we *lack* knowledge of how the future will turn out. Therefore, a disposition considered by an agent to be a probable obstacle for achieving a life-hope might still be overcome by the agent himself, because, without knowledge of how the disposition will actually function, "it remains epistemically possible for him to have a further disposition that will allow him to transcend the potential obstacle" (481).

Pereboom's view resonates well with Honderich's indication that we cannot know what lies before us even if determinism is true. The point is not that there is a future out there yet we don't know, but that the future is yet to be created, not by us, but we are an element in the process. And if the future concerns me, I am a necessary part in the creation of that future, undoubtedly. This lack of knowledge of the future, or put it more precisely, this lack of a definite future, renders infinite possibilities.

That's why Pereboom says a further disposition may come and help the agent overcome the disposition considered an obstacle to his hope. It is true that we cannot change what we were born with and the laws of nature, but this doesn't mean that we are unable to make efforts to affect the future. As a necessary part of the process of

one's own future, it is certain that what the agent does matters, despite the fact that he is not the ultimate controller. A choice or an action can have effects of a ripple that changes the interweaving lines of cause and effect. It can be said that it is because the agent tries to overcome the obstacle that a further disposition shows up. As Pereboom puts it, "his achievement will not be as robust as one might naturally have believed, but it will be his achievement in a substantial sense nevertheless" (482).

Smilansky claims that the hard determinist's perspective would be extremely damaging the aspect of self-respect and self-worth, which he has termed the "Danger of Worthlessness," a danger that has a lot to do with the meaning people may find in lives. That's a crucial reason why the illusion of free will must be fostered. While conceding that the kind of self-respect which requires an incmopatibilist foundation would be sabotaged if hard determinism or hard incompatibilism were true, Pereboom questions the seriousness Smilansky suggests.

He argues that, the fact is, our sense of self-respect and self-worth don't actually derive from our belief that it's all by our making ourselves so; rather, our self-value comes to a very essential extent from the realization that it's by factors that are not produced by our choices that we become who we are. Of course, it is not saying that human beings don't value what comes from their voluntary efforts. People still value deeds deriving from our volitions, such as hard work and generous actions. But the question is, do we really care that our voluntary efforts must be "freely willed"?

"Smilansky overestimates how much we care" (482), says Pereboom. He takes the formation of moral character as an example to point out human beings do not care as much as Smilansky claims about how free they are in shaping themselves. He indicates that not only is it reasonable to say that good moral character has a lot to do with the function of upbringing, but it is a common belief in human society. Parents' attitudes can serve as evidence. "Parents typically regard themselves as failures if

their children turn out to be immoral, and many take great care to raise their children to prevent this result. Accordingly, people often come to believe that they have a good moral character largely because they were brought up with parental love and skill" (482). Furthermore, few people experience dismay at the realization that their good moral characters are not their own doing. Not only do we not tend to be despondent upon the truth, but, opposite to Smilansky's belief, we actually "feel fortunate and thankful for the upbringing we have enjoyed," and most noteworthily, we do not feel that "something significant has been lost" (482).

Similarly, the other important aspects to one's self-respect and self-worth, such as success in career and smoothness in life, wouldn't be undermined by the realization of the non-existence of free will. Realization of this fact, according to Pereboom, would rather give rise to a sense of gratitude to one's family, colleagues, society, and good fortune, rather than stimulate a sense of dismay or despair, just as the reaction to the reality of the formation of the moral character. Therefore, why suppose that we would become depressed if we accept the perspectives of hard determinism or hard incompatibilism? It is true that our beliefs that our characters and achievements are products of our free will and that we in this sense deserve respect would have to be forgone, but "given our response to the more commonplace beliefs in external determination, we have little reason to think that we would be overcome with dismay" (Pereboom 483). Some may argue that there are indeed people who would feel dispirited if it comes to them that their moral character and accomplishments in life are due to factors other than themselves. But Pereboom doesn't consider it a reason that makes justifiable the sustaining of illusion. "Most people are capable of facing the truth without incurring much loss, and those for whom it would be painful will typically have the psychological resources to cope with the new understanding" (483). Realizing and accepting that we don't have free will wouldn't actually damage our

self-respect and self-worth, therefore. We do not lose something essential in life; rather, we just transform our sense of achievement into the sense of gratitude. This transformation of internal value into external value wouldn't render the meaning of life fade away.

The Force As a Causal Power

The skeptics who hold a positive attitude toward living without free will, such as Honderich and Pereboom, seem to suggest that whereas responsibility no longer exists, morality can still be sustained. But can human beings really be so magnanimous to the idea that no one can ever be responsible for his choice and deed? This position requires people to care about behavior only, never the person behind it, to the extent that one's value and worth in life are not "of him," but are things that no one can claim. In *The Flies* we see that the crime in Argos is one that no Argive dare to claim, but can the same situation be applied to the values that are significant to people?

If we are unable to be ultimate responsible for ourselves, how can we ever have any claim for anything? Perhaps the skeptics miss the point here. What we want is not the ultimate responsibility for everything, which is not possible, but for "some" things, the things that are significant to us. Is that possible, if determinism is true?

Before delving into that question, an immediate question is, how "determined" are we in the world of cause and effect? From the Force in *Star Wars*, we might have some clues to it. The Force can be said to be the most confusing element in the *Star Wars* series. To examine the nature of the Force, we have to see how it is defined in the films. In *Episode IV: A New Hope* (1977) Obi-Wan Kenobi explained the Force as follows: "It is an energy field created by all living things. It surrounds us and penetrates us. It binds the galaxy together." And in *Episode I: The Phantom Menace* (1999), Qui-Gon Jin explained the Force further by introducing the "midi-chlorian,"

which is “a microscopic life form that resides within all living cells and communicates with the Force. . . . Without the midi-chlorians, life could not exist, and we would have no knowledge of the Force. They continually speak to you, telling you the will of the Force.” This new element—the midi-chlorians—is considered by many to be a scientific factor undermining severely the supernatural Force originally experienced in the first trilogy (*Episode IV, V, and VI*). However, it is not so much a failure in design as a key to clarification. Director George Lucas introduces the scientific midi-chlorian into the later trilogy (*Episode I, II, and III*) for a good reason. He wanted to make clear that the Force is not a divine power, and yet to keep its mysterious nature. Combining the two definitions above, it can be deduced that the Force is something related to life within every living form. Only one thing in the world has this feature: the Nature.

Matthew Woodring Stover in *Star Wars On Trial* even points out that midi-chlorians are just the equivalent of mitochondria in the universe of *Star Wars*; every living form has it. That’s why “everyone can touch the Force, and the Force can touch everyone” (61) because each living form is thus part of the Force, so is the Force part of each living form, just as every living thing is part of the Nature, so is the Nature part of every living thing. So the Force is “created by all living things” in the sense that without the living things which contain “parts” of the Nature/Force, Natrue/Force cannot exist.

As to the “will” of the Force, one can consider the words of Obi-wan in *EP IV*. When Luke asked him if the Force “controls your actions,” Obi-wan replied, “Partially, but it also obeys your command.” It is true that the Nature/Force controls our actions “sometimes,” for our physical forms must conform to the laws of nature. But man can ask his physical form to act by his own “will.” Therefore, the relation between an individual and the Nature/Force, as Obi-wan said, is mutual, formed by

the interweaving of two different "wills."

Finally, what about Anakin's miraculous birth? Can Shmi's conception be considered as "natural"? Indeed, Anakin's birth is perhaps the most "divine" element in *Star Wars*, for it reminds us of the birth of Jesus Christ. However, the focus should not be on "how" a person is born, but on the fact that no one can control or choose his birth. So, Anakin's birth shouldn't be an obstacle to the view that the Force is a Natural Power.

Once the Force is regarded as a kind of Nature in the galaxy far, far away rather than some divine power, it can be further considered as a "causal power." Nature controls and determines our lives through "laws" of nature, like gravity, electromagnetism, and inertia, and through the "natural needs." These elements are beyond our control, and it is due to this fact that hard determinists and skeptics contend that we cannot ever be ultimate responsible for ourselves. While hard determinists and skeptics claim that human beings cannot have free will because the will cannot avoid being a part of the cause and effect chain, we must ask, how thoroughly are human beings controlled?

Austin-Style Examples and The "I"

It's true that chance and luck and accidents are free from cause and effect, and that they are not out of the freedom of the agent. Yet, are they completely separated from the agent? J. L. Austin gives two examples, later called "Austin-style examples," to expound on free will and its relation to indeterminism: a man had to hole a three-foot putt to win a golf match, but due to a nervous twitch in the arm, he missed the putt. An assassin was trying to kill the president with a sniper, but owing to a brain

cross, he missed the target and accidentally killed the prime minister.[13]

Austin correctly articulates that, even though I did not miss the putt voluntarily or did not kill the prime minister intentionally, these were still things that I did. I cannot say I am not responsible for those mistakes or accidents because they are beyond my control. Kane expounds this point insightfully, saying, "We may sometimes be absolved of responsibility for doing them (though not always, as in the case of the assassin). But it is for *doing* them that we are absolved of responsibility; and this can be true even if the accidents or mistakes are genuinely undetermined" (125-6; emphasis original).

While Austin-style examples cannot manage to grab an opportunity for free will, it does bring to light a crucial notion: the importance of "I." In Anakin we see that he never pretended that he was unfree due to the will of the Force or his identity as the Chosen one. Although Anakin is not really free all his life, this fact doesn't eliminate the truth that it is, from his birth to his death, he himself who made those choices and took those actions. The laws of nature and chains of cause and effect make a person unfree, but they don't deprive him of his choices. Choices never disappear. And it is always "I" who choose; no one and nothing chooses for me.

Without "I," no choice would be possible, whether it's free or not free. It is by choosing some and sacrificing others that one's future is formed. And it is where a kind of "conditional free will" exists. We don't have absolute free will to decide our own futures, but this conditional free will—the freedom to choose according to one's own will within the limits posed upon it by the laws of nature – is an indispensable aspect of any meaningful life. Christopher Taylor and Daniel Dennett mention the significance of persons' presence. They contended that, "The thirst for originality and

[13] These two examples are taken and modified from: Kane, Robert. *A Contemporary Introduction to Free Will*. New York: Oxford UP, 2005. 124.

causal relevance is not to be quenched by abstruse quantum events: all that we require is the knowledge that without our presence, the universe would have turned out significantly different" (273). Our mere presence has already made a difference to the universe, not to mention our choices. Without the presence of Anakin Skywalker, the restoration of the balance of the Force would have indeed turned out to be significantly different, and even more so are his choices. In this sense Anakin not only had some "originative value" for what he accomplished, but also some responsibility for what he chose in his conditional freedom. It is true that he must not be ascribed the ultimate responsibility for his choices; however, it is also true that he played an essential role in those choices. It would be unreasonable to say he was responsibility-free in his choices just because he couldn't be ultimate responsible for himself. One should look from the present to the future, rather than the other way round.

Echoing this idea is the fact that determinism is not fatalism. While fatalism denotes that "a certain future will unfold *no matter what any person does or will do*," determinism indicates that "a certain future will unfold *precisely because of what does or what will take place* (which includes, among other things, what people actually do)" (McKenna 229; emphasis original). In other words, even if determinism is true, what we choose and actually do would still have influences on how things turn out.

It is always compatibilists' belief that determinism would not rule out our own influences on our characters, and the reason behind it is that a person's character is not completely formed by something or someone for him; his own desires to mold his character in his own way are among the circumstances that shape his character. John Stuart Mill once made this clear:

> A fatalist believes . . . not only that whatever is about to happen will be the infallible result of causes that precede it, but moreover that there is no use in

> struggling against it . . . [Therefore a man's] character is formed *for* him, and not *by* him . . . This is a grand error. He has, to a certain extent, a power to alter his character. Its not being, in the ultimate resort, formed for him, is not inconsistent with its being, in part, formed *by* him as one of the immediate agents. His character is formed by his circumstances . . . but his own desire to mold it in a particular way is one of those circumstances, and by no means the least influential.[14] (19-20; emphasis original)

Compatibilists' efforts in distinguishing between determinism and fatalism have the same appeal as Sartre's claim the man's existence is prior to his essence in spite of different premises: both put emphasis on the significance of humans themselves. Human beings are not tools as a paper knife that already has a specific meaning "for" it. They can always choose the way they will even with the deterministic elements in themselves. Our existence is enough to give us "some" freedom in shaping ourselves and creating our essences, no matter whether we are in face of God or determinism.

But is this conditional free will satisfying? Perhaps not. But it is enough, and more valuable mayhap than absolute freedom. When discussing the value of absolute freedom, McKenna makes a notion worth pondering upon: absolute freedom doesn't rock because "the property of rocking found in exercising one's agency comes when one is pressing the boundaries of what one is capable of, pressing the boundaries of the limits placed upon one" (236). It is true that our bodies are given to us beyond our choosing, and our wills are determined in certain ways, but it is equally true that it is in the possibility of failure and the demands of efforts of the will that our choices out of conditional freedom acquire value. With absolute freedom, the cease of one's efforts would lead to the cease of pursuits of any life-purposes considered valuable.

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[14] Quoted by Robert Kane in his *A Contemporary Introduction to Free Will* from: Mill, John Stuart. *A System of Logic*. New York: Harper & Row, 1874. 254.

So here comes the irony: the reason why human beings yearn for absolute freedom—the power to be the masters of ourselves—is just because we do not have it. Yet if absolute freedom is in our hands, everything we once hold so dear would lose all its appeal to us, and we would very probably lose our sense of gratitude, just as what we see on Orestes. Orestes didn't seem to care much about those surrounded him, for the reason that he was too free in will to really attend to people, even his own sister, other than himself. He was actually a little egoistic, taking actions for *his* purposes. The ultimate reason of his freeing the Argives from the flies is not so much to ease their pain or solve their problems as to seek to create his place of his hometown.

Similarly, if Anakin had had absolute freedom, if the Force put no limits on him, he would not have had to strive for anything with such a tremendous power. He would be the absolute master of himself to achieve what he willed. But in this case, would the love for his families still be so dear to him? The reason why he was in such great agony at the death of his mother is because he cared about her and loved her, yet he bumped up against his limits and failed to save her, and, furthermore, because he realized that there were always matters beyond his control, even though he had set his will upon them. But this failure brought not only anger and sorrow, but also the will of self-transcendence and deeper love and cherishment for his wife. While his striving yet again met failure, it left a similar wish in his mind which resulted in his self-sacrifice for his son. With absolute freedom, it is very probable the love would not develop in the first place—he might concern himself only with the idea to become the most powerful Jedi—let alone the other actions considered human. So it would be proper to say that, "the value of freedom and its place in our lives is partially a function of the manner in which we lack it" (236). And it is here the conditional freedom can be logically held more valuable than absolute freedom: in every choice

we make within limits of determinism, we are striving to make ourselves a better person.

In the light of determinism, although everything before and at the choice is set because each is an “inevitable” loop in the web of chains of cause and effect, the future remains unknown till one reaches it, as Honderich points out, because every point in the future can only be there when all the inevitable chains meet. This leaves some room for different futures: if one makes a different choice, the following consequences would be different, although one may never choose differently. Being “determined” is never the same with being “destined.”

True free will may be just a dream, but conditional free will survives in this determined world. We may not be the ultimate cause of our choices, yet we can always be responsible for them. We are always the makers of our own choices; that is what determinism can never take away.

Conclusion

Although Sartre repudiates determinism, his absolute freedom of human beings can actually be compatible with determinism in light of the Frankfurt-type examples. The Frankfurt-type examples are designed to show that the ability to do otherwise may not be really necessary for free will, which further suggests that free will can be compatible with determinism. But how to interpret the freedom within determinism?

Taking the various points into consideration, it is paradoxical that whether the "global Frankfurt controller" actually intervenes or not, there is chance that the result would be the same. However, the situation where the controller steps in might be called "fatalism" if we consider the Indeterministic World objection, whereas the situation where the controller doesn't intervene can be called "freedom," even though the agent has no ability to do otherwise than what the controller wishes. The latter is also the condition of determinism. So fatalism and determinism might be quite similar if we look retrospectively from the result, because there is no possibility of "no matter what the agent does," only the fact that "the agent cannot do otherwise." However, looking prospectively, it could be said that the two situations are different, because there is one clear result in fatalism, whereas the result is unknown until the appropriate moment in determinism. While it depends on which aspect we take to account for the relation of determinism and fatalism, what cannot be ignored is the fact that the Frankfurt-type examples incidentally bring out the paradox that determinism might be the same with fatalism, if a global Frankfurt controller exists.

Then what is the freedom within determinism? It is the freedom to choose out of the agent's own will, namely the "conditional freedom" illustrated in Chapter Three, despite the fact that alternative possibilities are not accessible. Sartre's absolute freedom can actually be interpreted in the same aspect. The main idea of Sartre's freedom is that man has the absolute freedom to choose according to his own will.

Determinism itself doesn't eliminate this freedom. Even if the agent can never do otherwise under the surveillance of a controller, he still has the freedom to choose according to his own will, just as the man in the original example chooses to stay without the knowledge that it is impossible for him to leave the room. There is always the possibility that the agent in his life always chooses what the controller wishes without the controller's stepping in. Of course, it might never be Sartre's wish to see his absolute freedom being under the framework of a global Frankfurt controller. But with the light shed by the Frankfurt-type examples, the seeming extreme absolute freedom could be more close to the "human condition," which is always infused with the influences of determinism.

Then how does *Star Wars* resonate with the condition of human beings? The reason why the story of Anakin Skywalker makes impact upon the audience is because it depicts the striving of a man who—like all of us—wished to transcend his limits and achieve his life purposes. The path is rough and tough, and failure comes one after another, but he never gave up devoting himself to what he held dear. What's relieving in the end is not the fact than the prophecy was fulfilled, but that Anakin left without regrets. The thought that he didn't have the genuine free will is disturbing, but knowing that he always chose what he willed gives us some warmth. Why being afraid of the fact that our wills are determined? Even though they are determined, they are still ours and parts of us. The chain of cause and effect is not dire; what would be more troubling is that we don't know where our wills would go without the laws of nature. In the light of it, the conditional free will that human beings have is no less valuable than true free will.

When Sartre refutes and despises God and determinism and connects human beings with absolute freedom, what's in his mind is "man," and that's why his existentialism is an existential humanism. As he said,

> This is humanism, because we remind man that there is no legislator but himself; that he himself, thus abandoned, must decide for himself; also because we show that it is not by turning back upon himself, but always by seeking, beyond himself, an aim which is one of liberation or of some particular realization, that man can realize himself as truly human. (55-6)

Only when freedom is a guarantee can one be "truly human" and lead a meaningful life, he believes. However, while this argument is logical, the ardent promotion of freedom ignores other significant aspects in life, as we see in Anakin.

Even though determinism is denied by Sartre, from the discussion of Anakin and Orestes, and from that of free will and determinism, those ignored aspects surface along with the possibility of free will. We see the anguish from having to choose from two or more good options, a wrong choice out of one's free will, remorse for something one didn't do, remorse as a way to show responsibility, and the importance of other values than freedom. Furthermore, we also see that Sartre's absolute freedom could be compatible with determinism and be interpreted as a kind of conditional free will. All of these are the aspects human beings live with. That's why we don't blame Anakin for avenging his mother, that's why we felt heart-broken when Anakin cried out upon leaning his wife's death, and that's why what we really care is not whether the prophecy is fulfilled or not, but whether Anakin lived his life freely. So it is not so much the death of the Sith Lord as the smiling of Anakin's spirit—the last scene of *Episode VI*—that gives us comfort.

And why is there the debate about free will? It is because those philosophers, just like Sartre, also put emphasis on "man." Whether they are compatibilists, incompatibilist, libertarians, or skeptics, they all devote themselves to finding ways for human beings to lead meaningful lives, even in a world without free will, as the theories of Honderich, Smilansky, and Pereboom show. But human beings still

wonder the probability of free will, the freedom Sartre describes. This is because life itself doesn't have meaning. The meaning of life lies in how and why life is important to us, that is, in what respect life is worth living. Although each person has different views about how and why life is important to him or her, a significant premise to guarantee a meaningful life is that one is not born as a tool to fulfill some purposes given. Rather, one must have the ability to fulfill purposes "chosen," not chosen *for* him or her, but chosen *by* himself or herself. And this is what we human beings have, the ability to make choices according to "one's own" will, the will that cannot exist without the agent concerned. This is where the essence of the "chosen one" lies in: only through the will and choices of the person concerned can a truly chosen one be forged. It is not anyone or anything else but he who really chooses himself to be the chosen one.

A point by Taylor and Dennett is worth noting here. Why must it be that changes are not allowed in a determined world? Why can't some things be "determined to be indeterministic" at least in some situations? They say, "[T]here is no paradox in the observation that certain phenomena are *determined* to be changeable, chaotic, and unpredictable, an obvious and important fact that philosophers have curiously ignored" (271). Even though no one can possess the libertarian free will, he is not a "dead" program destined to follow a certain pattern, and he is not deprived of the ability to decide for himself.

Therefore, we must choose, in this world where genuine free will may only be an illusion, what to believe in and what life to lead, and take the responsibility for the choice. How each person experiences his life and how he experiences the exercising of his agency lead to the different position he may take, as the debate of free will—the debate concerning the core of human experience—vividly shows. Yet whatever view a person may choose to believe in, a key notion is that "whether [one's position]

requires the falsity of determinism or not, a person's free will does not consist in her ability to actually cause laws of nature to be false or to be suspended just in order to bring about astounding miracles" (McKenna 234). The laws of nature surround us and penetrate us. Trying to negate or change or suspend it would be pursuing the extreme, which could bring in danger or tragedy, as we have seen in Sartre's promotion of human freedom and Anakin's attempt to prevent his wife from death. Accepting that free will may very probable be an illusion is hard, but only when we can accept it can we live with it and find our own meaning in it. Striving against limits is often frustrating, but it is within the efforts that our life-values are created.

Sartre says, "[W]hat man needs is to find himself again and to understand that nothing can save him from himself, not even a valid proof of the existence of God" (56). The free will problem probably won't have a conclusion in the near future; however, if we wish to take responsibility for what we choose and who we are, that problem should not be an obstacle to us. If free will is what helps us "find ourselves," we can choose it as a "value," if we cannot treat it as a truth. What does Sartre's "find oneself" mean then? It means one must know that one's existence is not a product of fate, and that one's efforts can make his life a difference. There is no born hero or coward. "[T]he coward makes himself cowardly, [and] the hero makes himself heroic; and . . . there is always a possibility for the coward to give up cowardice and for the hero to stop being a hero" (Sartre 43). Therefore, what makes the prophecy true in *Star Wars* is not the "trueness" of the prophecy itself. Rather, it is because Anakin Skywalker accepted the limits upon him yet still chose the path he was willing to devote himself to that the prophecy "became" true. McKenna makes a point well enough: it is significant to understand "it was not enough to know that you are The One, you have to *be* The One" (230; emphasis original). The chosen one is always chosen by oneself.

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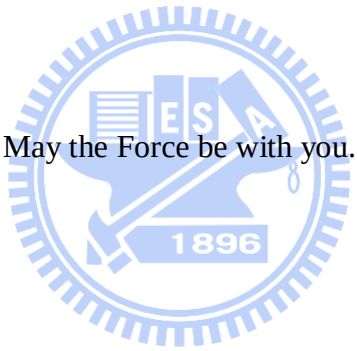

May the Force be with you.