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Chrysippus, Cylinder, Causation and Compatibilism[1]

Draft! Final version: Suster, Danilo (2021). "Chrysippus, Cylinder, Causation and Compatibilism." In Vezjak, B. (ed). *Philosophical Imagination. Thought Experiments and Arguments in Antiquity*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. pp. 65-82.

1.

The compatibility of *fate* with human responsibility was one of the dominant themes in Stoicism, the debate is still with us and it is not likely to go away (according to contemporary "mysterianism" the solution might even be beyond our understanding). Terminology has changed, "fate" is out of vogue in serious philosophy, and causal or even general determinism is more in accordance with modern usage. But modern interpreters suggest that Chrysippus (c. 280—207 B.C.E) already maintained a universal causal determinism in a more or less modern sense. Frede (2003, 184; fn10) in her survey article on Stoic determinism states that "No distinction between fatalism and causal determinism will be made here, in view of the fact that the Stoics etymologically derived heimarmenê, their standard term designating fate, from eirô = 'to string together'". I claim no expertise on Stoicism, here and elsewhere I will defer to experts. I do not have much to say about the notorious "providential" dimension of Stoic determinism either. Everything that happens in the world is according to Stoicism a coordinated network of causes, effects, events, and objects – "it all occurs in accordance with the plan of Zeus, and it is all bound to occur, by the bonds of Necessity" (cf. Brennan 2005, 235).

I will work with the most general causal interpretation of the fate principle (Bobzien 1998, 10): "Everything happens in accordance with fate." On this view, every state and event – including our actions and their psychology – is necessitated by prior causes (Salles 2005, xiii). Given that there are no motions without causes the fate principle dictates that "if in identical circumstances someone will act differently on different occasions, an uncaused motion is introduced", which is metaphysically unacceptable (O'Keefe 2016, 242). And modern determinists would agree with Stoics that, when a person acts, if the internal as well as external conditions of the person are the same, the person will invariably act in the same way. If the outcome is different in seemingly identical circumstances, there must be some hidden difference either in the external conditions or in the person's inner makeup (Frede 2003, 193).

The familiar question is then raised: if everything happens by fate, then our actions are also "bound to occur, by the bonds of Necessity" and not up to us so "neither praise nor blame, nor honors, nor punishments are just"(Cicero *Fat*. 40; Bobzien 1998, 245). Chrysippus' reply as reported by Cicero is the central topic of my discussion and these passages contain the core of Chrysippus' compatibilism according to Bobzien. Chrysippus uses the illustration of the cylinder and cone and I will try to situate this analogy in the wider context of thought experiments. Historically the analogy was not interpreted as a particularly convincing way to defend compatibility of responsibility and causal determinism. Even some contemporary compatibilists (cf. Dennett 1984, 2) would very likely say that together with other imagery of the allegedly Stoic origin (a person is "dragged" by her destiny like a dog tied to a cart) it is hardly more appealing than the dire prospect they are supposed to keep at bay (crude fatalism and its denial of moral responsibility). Yet I think that the analogy is still a valuable compatibilistic tool, it invites us to perform a certain "mental distillation" in which we *separate* in imagination the causal factors which are relevant for moral responsibility from those which are not. I will propose, somehow anachronistically, but in line both with contemporary compatibilism and Chrysippian views on the causal structure of agency that the actions of an agent are "fated" from the theoretical point of view, but they are up to her from the practical point of view.

2.

The causal drama of morality takes place in our minds, so let me first very briefly summarize the stoic theory of action (Salles 2005, 34-36). The sequence leading to an action begins with an external impressor which causes the formation of the corresponding impression. The impression must subsequently be given (the internal) assent of the agent, the act of assent then constitutes (or causes) an impulse for acting in a certain way. The practical impulse finally leads to the action itself. Crucially (Bobzien 1998, 240) – the power of either confirming the impression, i.e. giving assent or withholding such confirmation is situated between the impression and our final reaction. Sometimes the internal structure is described as an assent to an impression that leads to an impulse to act (O'Keefe 2016, 240), but according to other sources, every impulse actually *is* an assent (Sorabji 1980, 80). These finer distinctions will not be important, in accordance with the tradition I will discuss the sequence: an (externally induced) impression leads to assent (impulse) and assent leads to action. Any attribution of moral responsibility for our actions presupposes assent and if all of the "motions" of our mind are fated, how could we be held responsible? To give an example, if the sight of beauty by necessity provokes love in an uncontrolled man how could his actions be up to him (cf. Frede 2003, 192)?

As reported by Gellius (Bobzien 1998, 259): "He <i.e. Chrysippus> then uses an illustration of this point which is quite suitable and witty." The example of the cylinder and the cone ("C & C" for short) is usually described as an *analogy* (O'Keefe 2016, 240; Bobzien 1998, 258; Salles

2005, 44; Frede 2003, 194), and more rarely as a *simile* (Eliasson 2008, 88). Let me quote Cicero (*Fat*. 41-3; Bobzien 1998, 258-59):

> For when it is said that assents happen by means of preceding causes, Chrysippus believes that he can easily explain how this works. For, even though an assent cannot occur unless set in motion by an impression, none the less, since the assent has this impression as proximate cause and not as principal cause, it has the reason, as Chrysippus holds, which I stated earlier: it is not the case that assent can happen without being prompted by some force from outside—for it is necessary that an assent be set in motion by an impression but <in order to make this clear> Chrysippus returns to his cylinder and cone, which cannot start moving without being pushed. However, when this has happened, he believes that from then on the cylinder rolls and the cone spins by their own nature.

> Thus, he says, just as the person who shoved the cylinder gave it the beginning of its motion, but did not give it its rollability, so likewise, an impression, when encountered, will imprint and so to speak stamp its form on the mind, but assent <to it> will be in our power; and, just as was said in the case of the cylinder, being pushed from outside, for the rest it will move by its own power and nature.

The analogy suggests that the movement of the cylinder is a result of two types of causal factors – one is our pushing the cylinder to make it move (the initiating or "auxiliary and proximate cause" often described as the *external* cause). And the other is the cylinder's being round, its "nature" (usually described as "the perfect and principal" cause), the "internal" causal factor. In the same way our assents and consequently, our actions, are the product of two causal factors, external stimuli from the environmental circumstances ("impressions") and internal reactions determined by the state of our minds, our characters. The impression (not "up to us") is the externally induced antecedent causal factor of the act of assent. Different human beings might be presented with the same *stimulae* (the external antecedent cause, e. g. "the sight of beauty") but they will react differently, according to their mental dispositions. So, the nature of the objects at which the effect takes place (geometrical bodies, human beings) must be causally responsible for the differences in effect.

The finer mechanics of the causal web is not so clear, however. Cicero (*Fat*. 41) reports (quoted from Frede 2003, 187):

> Among the causes some are complete and principal[2], others auxiliary and proximate. For this reason when we say that everything happens by fate through antecedent

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[2] "Perfectae et principales" in Latin – "perfect and principal" according to Bobzien (1998, 256); "perfect and primary" according to Salles (2005, 42).

causes, we do not want this to be understood as if it were through complete and principal causes, but through auxiliary and proximate ones.

According to the standard interpretation, a distinction between the antecedent or *external* and the principal or *inner* cause explains how human beings are part of the universal causal web in a way that leaves room for personal responsibility. The C & C analogy is supposed to limit the role of the external *antecedent* cause in the mechanism that leads to the assent and subsequently to action. What is responsible for the rolling of the cylinder and spinning of the cone is their nature manifested in their disposition to move in a particular way. Although antecedent causes initiate every process, they are only necessary and never sufficient, they are not involved in the ensuing activity itself. The characterizations of causes as antecedent / external / proximate / auxiliary go together and so do principal / perfect (complete) / internal / the main causal factor. But several questions immediately emerge: are complete (perfect) and principal (primary) always paired or not? How about auxiliary and proximate? Are there any further subdivisions? Can an antecedent cause also be the principal cause (and not just auxiliary)? And how do necessity and fate qualify the nature of links in the causal web?

The relevant passages from *De Fato* are not easy to understand. Bobzien (1998, 332) even remarks "… structurally, Cicero's *On Fate* is rather a mess … (drawing from several sources, perhaps in some haste and without final editing)." According to the dominant interpretation (Frede 2003) the Stoic compatibilism consists in making the internal causes the *principal* causes in determining the action. Two determining factors *cooperate* in bringing about the effect (the act of assent). The *internal* determining factor is a perfect and principal cause which produces the effect in cooperation with the *external* auxiliary and proximate cause. The opponent is depicted as saying that fate (operating through "uncontrollable" impressions) is a necessitating and constraining force external to the agent. Chrysippus agrees that "everything comes about by fate according to antecedent causes." But antecedent causes are auxiliary and proximate only and as such they do not render their effects *necessary* (at least in the cases at issue). The actions depend on the agent because that which determines the quality of the relevant effect (assent, action) is the inner nature of the agent's mind. Assent can be withheld and the C & C analogy suggests that different people will react differently to comparable externally induced stimuli (the cylinder and cone can be seen as representing good and bad moral characters). In the determination of human action fate works *through* human beings – the dispositions of our minds are subject to fate in a particular way, namely 'in such a way as to accord with their characteristic quality' (Bobzien 1998, 251). The subsequent action is not necessary because it is not externally forced, but it remains "fated" – like everything else it has antecedent causes in its causal history.

3.

The passages from *De fato* (41-5) present historically the most discussed text on Stoic "compatibilism." The prevailing view was that the C & C analogy is not a very convincing way to defend compatibility of responsibility and causal determinism. The reluctance to see ourselves compared to rolling cylinders and spinning tops is perhaps understandable. True, there are also some assenting voices, regarding "the cylinder of Chrysippus" Leibniz remarks: "He is right in saying that vice springs from the original constitution of some minds" (*Theodicy* §335; quoted by Forman 2016, 232). But Leibniz and the idea that I am free whenever the cause of my action is within me is famously ridiculed by Kant as a "wretched subterfuge" (Kant 2002, 123): "… and if the freedom of our will were none other than the latter [kind] (say, psychological and comparative freedom, not simultaneously transcendental, i.e., absolute, freedom), then it would basically be no better than the freedom of a turnspit, which, once it has been wound up, also performs its motions on its own."

This type of criticism based, apparently, on the mechanistic nature of the analogy began (probably) with Alexander of Aphrodisias – to him the very fact that the model applies to nonrational and rational beings alike represents its major flaw (Frede 2003, 193). But I think that this diagnosis is based on a misapprehension of the role of the C & C analogy. Analogies are often the basic ingredient of a thought experiment (TE), so how should we understand the imaginary scenario used by Chrysippus in relation to TE? Let me start with a very minimalistic characterization of a TE: "to perform a thought experiment is to reason about an imaginary scenario with the aim of confirming or disconfirming some hypothesis or theory" (Gendler 2004, 1155). We begin with a question or a hypothesis to be tested. The challenge faced by Chrysippus is easy to formulate: how is it possible for an action to be fated (by way of antecedent causes) and still up to us (in a morally relevant sense)?

Well, in his reply "Chrysippus returns to his cylinder and cone" (*Fat*. 42.3; Bobzien 1998, 259). Is the analogy exploited as an *argument* aimed at confirming or disconfirming some hypothesis or theory? Perhaps: "Case #1 (the movement of the cylinder) is like Case #2 (our assent); in Case #1 the movement is explained by the nature of the body rather than by the initial push, so in Case #2 our assent is explained by the disposition of our own mind rather than by external causes." The argument is rather short, to be sure, but argumentative analogies can be very short. Govier (2016, 1) quotes from a letter to the editor about gun control: "guns are no more responsible for criminal deaths than forks are responsible for obesity". Forks (in the Western world, at least) are part of the causal background leading to but not responsible for obesity. *So* guns are not responsible for criminal deaths either. The problem with C & C is not its shortness but something else: if you are not *independently* convinced that the cylinder moves because of its own nature (and not because of the initial push) then the analogy offers little to persuade you. This is a *figurative* analogy (Waller 2001, 200) and figurative analogies illustrate and (sometimes) elucidate but they do not offer any reasons or argue for a conclusion.

There are at least two types of analogies: argumentative and figurative but there are further subdivisions. Let me bracket argumentative analogies (deductive and inductive) and consider just the figurative variety. A figurative analogy typically uses more familiar images (the source case) to help us understand something that is complex, confusing, or unfamiliar (the target case). But not all figurative analogies are alike, some of them are *illustrative* only, they offer compelling images, while others are also *explanatory*, the source displays some important structural features of the target. The distinctions are often blurred, in a certain sense all figurative analogies are illustrative, but some are just more or less elaborate metaphors or comparisons which make more vivid certain characteristics of the target in accordance with the working definition of a *metaphor*: "seeing, experiencing, or talking about something in terms of something else" (Ritchie 2013, 8). In *Averroes' Search*, for instance, Borges (1999) discusses how Zuhair (Arabian poet) compared destiny to a blind camel. The story tells us that "in the course of his eighty years of pain and glory many is the time he has seen destiny trample men, like an old blind camel" and then gives a more elaborate explanation: "every man has surely felt at some moment in his life that destiny is powerful yet clumsy, innocent yet inhuman. It was in order to record that feeling, which may be fleeting or constant but which no man may escape experiencing, that Zuhair's line was written" (Borges 1999, 240).

Let us compare this metaphor about destiny to another famous (and depressing) Stoic simile – when a dog is tied to a cart, if it wants to follow, it is both pulled and follows and if it does not want to follow, it will be in any event necessitated. And the same holds for human beings – even if they don't want to, they will be compelled to follow what is destined. The simile is open to several interpretations but one can easily understand that historically it provoked the resistance against stoic doctrines – with advocates like that, why do *compatibilists* need any enemies at all? Bobzien actually thinks that there is no reason to assume that the dog-cart analogy is Chrysippean at all (Bobzien 1998, 357). But I am only interested in the structure of the comparison: it seems to me that the dog and the cart image functions like the Borges' "blind camel" metaphor: an illustration that draws our attention to aspects of the phenomenon that we try to elucidate by means of the comparison and perhaps records "a certain feeling".

Not so with the C & C analogy – very modest from the artistic point it still succeeds in displaying the relevant structural properties of the target case. Let me introduce another famous case. When trying to understand the mysterious world of quantum phenomena and the nature of light (the wave-particle duality) one sometimes encounters as an illustration a *cylinder* that we cannot perceive globally "as it is" but only in one of its aspects. A cylinder is circular as seen from one angle (base), and rectangular from another angle (looked from the side). The *quantum* object, by analogy, is one that we can perceive *via* experiments that show only one of its aspects, but in reality, it is something more complex, more than just a circle plus a rectangle. The authors of a typical textbook on modern physics remark, rather dryly: "This metaphor is very interesting, but it does not explain anything scientifically and

logically" (Yadav et al. 2014, 52). Well, in the area of moral responsibility, we do not really expect scientific equations and we are satisfied with explanations displaying the relevant causal structure and this is precisely the merit of the C & C analogy.

The Stoic distinctions in the area of causality are perhaps confusing but it seems clear that the causal background of the act of assent consists of (at least) two types of causal factors. In terms of modern discussions, we often want to distinguish causes from mere conditions. Mackie introduced a useful notion of a causal field (Mackie 1980, 34). Causal statements are commonly made against a certain background and a causal statement is the answer to a causal question of the type "What caused this X?" This question can be expanded into "What made the difference between those times, or those cases, within a certain range, in which X did not occur and the case when X did occur?" But how to differentiate between real, active causes and mere background conditions in the causal field? David Lewis is famous for saying (Lewis 1986, 162):

> We sometimes single out one among all the causes of some event and call it "the" cause, as if there were no others. Or we single out a few as the "causes," calling the rest mere "causal factors" or "causal conditions." Or we speak of the "decisive" or "real" or "principal" cause. We may select the abnormal or extraordinary causes, or those under human control, or those we deem good or bad, or just those we want to talk about.

Apparently we choose the most *salient* features as the real causes and the question arises as to whether there is any objective difference between causes and conditions. Suppose we agree that the choice is contextual, dictated by our explanatory interests. It does not follow that the selection is made in a totally capricious manner. Mackie gives an example of a fire "produced" by a combination of a short circuit and the presence of oxygen. Most speakers will distinguish between the short circuit as "the cause", and the presence of oxygen as a mere "background condition". Such a selection is also integral to our moral and legal practices. We know whom to blame if the old electric installation was preventively checked a week before. What made the difference in the case of fire was, say, a careless examination of the installation and not the poor condition of the wires by itself. In their classic work on causation (in law) Hart and Honore stipulate that *abnormal* factors are treated as causes – a digression within a presupposed normal causal field as Mackie would say (oxygen is *usually* something to be expected and a short circuit is not). They also maintain that free deliberate actions are always (proper) causes, while normal conditions and non-agential factors are conditions only (Hart and Honore 1959, 31).

In our case Chrysippus was faced with the challenge – if everything happens by fate and antecedent causes, then we would have to say that our choice is caused by something not in our power. As a reply he offers an explanatory analogy exactly in line with Hart and Honore: the external antecedent causes form only a part of the causal field, the inner, agential factor (our mental dispositions) is the *explanatory* superior factor that leads to the effect. The

analogy is persuasive in the sense of making more vivid the characteristics of that aspect of the target object or phenomenon (mental processes that take place in the mind) that we try to illustrate by means of the comparison (a succession of physical events on the level of perceptible everyday objects). TEs are often based on arguments from analogy, but they also exploit the explanatory features of analogies. One of the main features is exactly the one exhibited by the C & C analogy: "mental" filtration of ingredients of the causal field into distinct elements and separating in the imagination of the morally relevant aspects (cf. Miščević 2012, 202). This "separating" in "experiment with our mind" of elements that normally go together is the reason that the simple C & C analogy functions as more than a plain metaphor.

I think that the mechanical, "turnspit" interpretation of the C & C analogy misses the point of the *explanatory* analogy. Bobzien (1998, 260) is right to observe that not every detail of the *explanandum* level has a parallel on the *explanans* level of the analogy or vice versa – the nonrational mechanic nature of geometrical bodies is just irrelevant. Moreover, Chrysippus does not offer an *argumentative* analogy. If a thought experiment is an imaginary scenario explored for the purpose of acquiring knowledge (Rescher 2005, 61–72) then the C & C analogy is clearly not a TE. It is not as if we *mentally* roll a cylinder and then draw a certain conclusion about the target case (a child can easily roll a tin can on an inclined surface). One would have to give *independent* reasons for the special treatment of the internal, agential factors. Hart and Honore, for instance, just take for granted the existence of free deliberate actions when they claim that free agents should always be treated as proper causes in the causal background. Explanatory analogies are persuasive in the sense of making more vivid the characteristics of that aspect of the target object or phenomenon that we try to illustrate by means of comparison. The analogy separates the main causal factor from the total causal mixture (causal field), so to speak. We are led to "see" the "roundness" of the cylinder as the primary *explanation* of its rolling and in the same way the assent (action) is explained by the disposition of our own mind rather than by external causes. Thus the foolish "go astray through their own impulse and are harmed by their own purpose and determination" (Chrysippus according to Gellius, as quoted by Forman 2016, 232).

4.

What is the modern relevance of Chrysippian compatibilism? Bobzien (1998, 276) remarks that the analysis of the relevant texts "has yielded little that bears any resemblance to *modern* arguments for the compatibility of causal determinism with freedom." No Greek word for freedom is used in the passages. According to influential modern interpretation to say of someone that she "has free will" or "has a choice" with respect to a certain action at a given time is to grant her an ability to act in that way and an ability to do otherwise (van Inwagen 1983, 162). But "we have no reason to assume that Chrysippus, or his opponents, were involved in a debate about the compatibility of freedom to do otherwise and causal

determinism, nor that they based moral appraisal directly on the idea that the agent could have done otherwise" (Bobzien 1998, 279).

The diagnosis is surprising, just consider the famous passage (*Fat*. 40; Bobzien 1998, 245):

> If everything happens by fate, everything happens by way of an antecedent cause. And, if impulse, so too those items which follow impulse, hence also assents. And, if the cause of impulse does not lie with us, neither does impulse depend on us. But if this is so, those items, too, that are the effect of impulse do not lie with us; therefore neither assents nor actions depend on us. From which it follows that neither praise nor blame, nor honours, nor punishments are just.

The causal sequence: "impulse, thereafter assent" is confusing since we earlier treated the act of assent as constituting or causing an impulse for acting in a certain way. Bobzien thinks that we actually have a sequence: (i) external object; (ii) impulsive impression; (iii) assent to the impulsive impression; (iv) action (Bobzien 1998, 247). I must once again defer to the experts, but it seems clear that the passage presents an argument for incompatibilism which is surprisingly similar to the main contemporary argument for the compatibility of free will and determinism (van Inwagen 1983, 56):

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

Antecedent causes are now explicated more generally in terms of laws of nature and the state of the world in the distant past. The central notion in the antique debates was "that which depends on us", "that which is in our power" and they would not explicate "that which is up to us" in terms of our ability to act otherwise. Still, the raw structure of the two arguments is basically the same:

> X is not up to S.
> S's action is a causal consequence of X.

So,

> S's action is not up to S.

Next, consider the *main* compatibilist response to this argument. Distant past and laws of nature are unavoidable (not up to us) because they are independent of our beliefs and desires. There is nothing we can do to change them, they transcend our causal abilities where the latter are defined as, say (Kapitan 2002, 134):

> S is *causally* able at t to bring about *p* iff there is a course of action K such that at t (i) S is able to do K, and (ii) S's doing K would make it the case that *p*.

The premises (unavoidability of the past and laws of nature) are true in *this* sense of ability, but the conclusion (unavoidability of our actions) does not *follow*. S's action is causally dependent upon S's motives, upon her internal makeup. Well, this is precisely the Chrysippian reply: an action can truly be said to be "up to the agent" if the agent's "nature" is the main causal explanation of her action, never mind the "fate" and the fact that the external antecedent causes are not up her.

The incompatibilists usually disagree with the causal definition of ability and perhaps describe it as contrived and *ad hoc* (van Inwagen 2002, 167) or claim that the validity of the argument for incompatibilism is much more obvious than any compatibilist analysis of the ability (van Inwagen 1983, 222-223). They are particularly critical of once popular conditional analyses: to say that, at the time of acting, S could have done Y and not X is just to say that, had she wanted (chosen, willed, or decided) to do Y and not X at that time, then she would have done Y. This line of debate was then more or less driven to a stalemate with each side accusing the other of begging the question with respect to the relevant notion of (in)ability. No wonder that many contemporary compatibilists prefer to bypass the impasses of (in)ability to act otherwise and welcome the idea promoted by Harry Frankfurt (1969) that moral responsibility does not require alternative possibilities at all. The Stoic approaches to free will are then often claimed to be strikingly similar to Frankfurt's theory of moral responsibility.

According to Frankfurt the responsibility for the action derives from the agent's decision to perform it and from that decision's being based on a previous all-things-considered practical reflection. "Similarly, the responsibility for the action in Chrysippus derives from the agent's exercise of an impulse for it (or his assenting to the impression where the action is presented as valuable), but also, and crucially, from the impulse's being fully rational, which involves a reflection concerning the all-things-considered desirability or appropriateness of the action" (Salles 2005, 66). The C & C analogy illustrates the fact that an agent may be responsible for her action even if the whole sequence is set in motion by external factors (the proximate, antecedent causes). Compare the often-quoted passage from Frankfurt (1988, 54):

> To the extent that a person identifies himself with the springs of his actions, he takes responsibility for those actions and acquires moral responsibility for them; moreover, the questions of how the actions and his identifications with their springs are caused are irrelevant to the questions of whether he performs his actions freely and is morally responsible for performing them.

The internal factors are the locus of responsibility and the agent's autonomy is not diminished by the fact that the inner realm is also subject to "fate" (causal history). Lack of external coercion and the fact that the agent acts on the basis of her best practical reflection explain the agent's responsibility.

This historical swing brings us back to the tradition which does not base moral appraisal on the idea that the agent could have done otherwise. This might suggest that instead of desert-based accounts of moral responsibility (roughly, an agent is morally responsible for X, if and only if she is deserving of praise or blame in virtue of having freely brought about X) a Chrysippian should opt for consequence-based accounts of moral responsibility (an agent is morally responsible for X just in case praising or blaming her for X would produce good consequences, cf. Klampfer 2014). But I am not sure how stoicism as a system of virtue ethics fits with modern utilitarianism, so I prefer to avoid these dilemmas. Especially since neither Chrysippus nor modern compatibilists give up the idea that an action has to be up to the agent for her to be morally responsible. But then the agent should have an option, in a certain sense, to act otherwise. Let me explain this with the help of a rather unusual (and one would say totally anti-stoic) example. Sartre (1992, 37-38) discusses the following ordinary situation:

> The alarm which rings in the morning refers to the possibility of my going to work, which is my possibility. But to apprehend the summons of the alarm as a summons is to get up. Therefore the very act of getting up is reassuring, for it eludes the question, "Is work my possibility?" Consequently, it does not put me in a position to apprehend the possibility of quietism, of refusing to work, and finally the possibility of refusing the world and the possibility of death. In short, to the extent that I apprehend the meaning of the ringing, I am already up at its summons; this apprehension guarantees me against the anguished intuition that it is I who confer on the alarm clock its exigency – I and I alone.

It is (reasonably) clear what he means: the alarm clock goes off and I get out of bed as if I had no choice but to obey "its summons" and avoid the existential anguish of having all the options open. But what if I do not elude other possibilities and freely consider my staying in bed as an option? Is my staying in bed any less determined?

Consider the case of cozy Clara, woken up by an alarm clock but, say, "apprehending the possibility of quietism", she remains in her bed. Though she has no reason or inclination to arise, she is perfectly able to do so, according to Watson (2004, 91). We can imagine the following causal sequence: (external) comfortable impressions making Clara overwhelmed by the impulse characterized as "one's great desire to persist in the state of rest" thereby giving her reasons to stay in bed. She is unwilling to get up, she has no reason or inclination to arise, but this action is still up to her because she stays in bed because of her own "nature." And she *has* other options: had she decided or intended to act otherwise, she would have arisen.

She would act otherwise had certain internal conditions been different. Why concentrate, with Chrysippus and modern-day compatibilists, on her mental make-up and its potential in the entire causal background of an action? Clara's *actual* inclination is just a part of the total causal field, one of the necessary conditions of her staying in bed like other *sine qua non*

concerning the conditions of her limbs and muscles and central nervous system (cf. Watson 2004, 92). From the *theoretical* viewpoint, from the perspectives of prediction and control all of the factors that are co-responsible for her action are equally part of the overall causal network. Making Clara very comfortable may be just as effective a means of preventing her from getting to work as chaining her to the bedpost or paralyzing her. Compare: once set in motion, the cylinder will roll according to its own nature. Once set comfortably in her cozy environment, Clara will stay in bed, the "impressions" lead her to laziness.

But in practical contexts (deliberation, agency, responsibility) we understand what someone can do in terms of a dependency relation between the individual's motives and her behavior. In these contexts, not all of the necessary conditions in the causal background have equal force. There is an important difference between Clara not coming to work because she was externally prevented (chained, locked, or perhaps just ill) or whether she stayed at home for her own reasons. We can agree with Watson that Clara is not rendered *impotent* by her lack of interest in leaving her comfortable environment: "… it would show confusion about the meaning and role of the ordinary notion of ability to say of lounging Clara that she can't get out of bed just because one of the necessary conditions of her doing so is absent—namely, her (actual) intending to get up" (Watson 2004, 93). I take it that our *ordinary* notion of ability captures the idea of what is up to me ("I can do X" corresponds to "doing X is up to me"). Clara's lack of will does not imply her lack of autonomy (in the sense relevant to moral responsibility) usually associated with one's disabilities. The unwilling Clara is perhaps unable to get up from the *theoretical* point of view, but this action is still up to her, it depends on her will.

Consider the familiar point, attributed to Spinoza, that one cannot both intend to do something and predict that one will do it at the same time (Bilgrami 2006, 251). The purpose of the *theoretical* point of view is description, prediction, and explanation. Given Clara's actual state of mind her (in)action is predictable (and in this sense necessary) given *all* of the antecedent conditions (cf. also Bok 1998, 62-65). The purpose of *practical* reasoning is to determine one's will, and determine what we have reason to do. Clara, when deliberating whether to arise, is not trying to predict her future from the "third person" point of view but determine it as an agent from the "first person" perspective on herself. She is trying to determine what to do in view of her options – those courses of action whose realization she sees as depending on her decision, choice, or intention (her "nature"). Generally speaking, when I consider various courses of action in my practical reasoning, I ask myself what would be the case if I were to choose X or not. I am not trying to predict my action, so I do not assume anything about what I will in fact choose, I am trying to make up my mind about what I have reason to do (cf. Watson 2004). This bracketing of actual intentions opens up the space of possibilities for the agent – Clara is not limited to the course of action determined by the antecedent conditions of her actual choice (precisely specified past and fixed laws of nature).

I would propose the theoretical / practical standpoint (Bok 1998), the viewpoint of intention or performance conditions / the viewpoint of prediction or enabling conditions (Watson 2004), or first and third-person points of view (Bilgrami 2006) as distinctly modern developments of the stoic "fated, yet still up to us" solution of the puzzles of free will. This might look anachronistic, but I think it helps us appreciate the stoic perspective on the causal structure of agency. I think that the general contours of the conditional analysis of ability are in line with Chrysippus and his view that the act of assent is non-necessary:

> "I assent to this impression" could in principle be false and is not externally prevented from being false. /… / because although the impression entered my mind, there would be no external force or hindrance that prevents the act of assent from not happening. /... / The quality of the response depends on the nature of the agent's mind (Bobzien 1998, 312-13).

Clara's responses to the alarm clock are not externally forced, they depend on her will and her responsibility is judged by the question: could she come to work had she chosen to do so? Was this an option?

5.

If an action depends on the agent, it is up to the agent and not externally forced, so not necessary but it is still fated (or necessitated but not *necessary*, for this interpretation cf. Bobzien 1998, 126 and 312). Still, the necessity of fate applies to every detail, in accordance with the famous remark made by Heraclitus, "Character is fate" also. This is unacceptable for libertarians. Sartre, for instance, would deny any type of necessitation or the relevance of theoretical contexts (bad faith!), there is only the reality of agents and their unconditional ability to act otherwise. The pessimists will point out that if one's action results from a deterministic causal process that traces back to factors beyond one's control, then one is not free in the sense required for moral responsibility (Pereboom 1995).

Well, a monarchist is committed to defending a monarchy and Chrysippus, I think, is committed to (what seem to be) analytic consequences of Stoic determinism (every state and event is fated). But I do not agree that "… the most one can say (with Oenomaus II 978) is that, if Democritus makes the soul of man a slave, Chrysippus makes it a half-slave" (Gould 1971, 151). I think that what grounds these pessimistic conclusions is a misunderstanding of determinism as involving threats that suggest that our rational, conscious mental activity is *bypassed* in the process of our making decisions and coming to act (cf. Nahmias 2011). I think that the C & C analogy has a real explanatory value in addressing those fears. The cognitive role of this simple analogy is to "isolate" the salient causal factor and help us understand the idea of responsibility as demanding the autonomy of the agent as the cause of her own actions.

In the spirit of stoicism the universe and everything is just matter and motion (with or without *logos*). In the realm of agency one could say that it is all about control and control is about causation. Chrysippus pointed out that the most important node in the causal chain of our action is what we *identify* with (our intentions and our character). But we aspire for more – as agents we want to be the "prime mover unmoved." The compatibilist solution sketched above which combines the first-person point of view of a free agent and a theoretical, third-person point of view of an agent as the object of causal and motivational histories looks paradoxical. But so does the strange world of quantum phenomena (the wave-particle duality). The example of a cylinder (circular from one angle and rectangular from another) can perhaps help us understand the mysteries of quantum reality. And so, too, the old and simple image of a cylinder and a cone may still help us comprehend the causal drama of human responsibility.

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