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Lillestrøm vgs (Vg3 IB)

From the paragraph in task two, one can draw out the question of whether we live in a deterministic world or not?

Deterministic in the sense that all your actions are predetermined by external factors. Not in a simple way, such as how the gravity of a star binds a planet, but more as the butterfly-effect in chaos-theory, where even the slightest detail in a system may cause serious alterations of it at a later point.

This has intrigued humans for many centuries, whether we determine our actions ourselves and shape our futures, or if we don't have free will at all. It is a very basic human feature to seek freedom. But as humans have sought freedom, they have had time to stop and think, what is actually freedom? Is it the ability to do what you desire most? Is it the absence of something, no matter how it is kept away ("freedom from pain", "freedom from obligations")? Is it the freedom to be loved? And in the midst of this the question comes creeping up on you, what if there is no freedom at all? What if all my actions are predetermined? Early on one saw gods as possible explanations of determinism. Now science has taken much of that role. For what is actually under your influence, or rather, what can you freely influence? According to science, everything that happens has a given cause (even though some are still unknown, but it is believed that scientists work on finding those). And as even your thoughts are determined by chemical reactions, which must have a cause, which again must bottom in something else. If you go along like that you reach a line of reasoning which tells you that even what is believed to be the freest thing of them all, our thoughts, may not be under our influence at all.

This would imply that you cannot take any choices, or at least you cannot be blamed for making them. But this would undermine ethics as we know it, and most of our understanding of the universe. Ethics are founded on that you should be responsible for the choices you make yourself. Our understanding of the universe is mostly founded on the assumption that we are free to determine what features it has, and that we are freely able to develop so that we could understand more of it. Much of our understanding comes from development.

And so it seems to be. The problem of arguing against this view is that if you accept the premises, the conclusion has to follow, as it is reasonably based on the premises. And the premise is terrifyingly easy to accept. Everything has a cause. The premise seems impossible to attack. It fits with our way of seeing and thinking of the world. If you come home and find a cake in the kitchen you will expect there to be a cause for it being there. And you can go on finding causes for almost anything.

But this is still not entirely true, for if you then follow the chain backwards, what was the thing that caused it all to be? If you accept that everything has a cause, something must also have caused the universe, it cannot just always have been. What I'm getting at is that if you accept that everything has a cause you will end up nowhere. You will go infinitely backwards. Even if you accept the existence of a god or something like that, you can ask what caused him/the divine to be? And what caused that again? Going on like this would seem counterproductive, and it would seem a totally un-useful way of finding answers. Sooner or later you would have to accept a final cause. Just by doing that, you remove the assumption of that everything has a cause.

Another thing is whether everything has a specific cause? If you assume that there (in some cases) is no specific cause, you will also have to open up for influence. That you are actually able to at least alter these causes.

For would not you spontaneously deciding to move your finger cause alterations in the air, which could in turn affect something else, and that in the end would have some significance in the way that you by doing that may have caused another cause. At first this seems a nice solution, you can still say that everything has a cause, but you can at the same time say that you can alter the causes. Win-win! You get both freedom and a way to explain everything. But this leads you back to the inconsistency problem of *everything* having a cause seeming to be incompatible with addition and

alteration of the causes.

In the end one simply has to decide what one desires to put faith in. If you believe in determinism, then you also believe that you have not really made a choice, nor has anyone else that “chose” to believe something. On the other hand, if you reject the deterministic point of view, you would also have to say that what the determinist believes in is wrong. Or the interesting part would actually be a path in between. Saying that *most* or some things have causes, but not all, and that something is due to randomness. Would this alternative imply freedom? Not necessarily. Randomness does not imply control from your side. But it could be possible with freedom. It will limit the scopes of freedom a tiny bit, but most people do not believe in a system that gives them freedom to be all-powerful.

But no matter how you attack this, I don't think you will get any further. To tell whether this is a deterministic world we need tools beyond what I can supply here. It is a problem of vast complexity, that would take hours of finely inspecting the tiniest details of if the hope is to find a small contradiction to prove something one way or another. I believe we should not waste time being worried about our potential lack of freedom, for in the case we don't have it due to determinism, there is nothing we can do about it, and we would just waste our time being sad and frustrated. And if it is not true, well then there is nothing to worry about. Still it could be investigated a little bit further, to establish whether certainty is possible in this matter, as I have failed to establish.