# JF22 – NC – Determinism

## 1NC

#### Permissibility negates:

#### [1] Semantics – Ought is defined as expressing obligation[[1]](#footnote-1) which means absent a proactive obligation you vote neg since there’s a trichotomy between prohibition, obligation, and permissibility and proving one disproves the other two. Semantics outweighs – A. it’s key to predictability since we prep based on the wording of the res B. It’s constitutive to the rules of debate since the judge is obligated to vote on the resolutional text.

#### [2] Safety – It’s ethically safer to presume the squo since we know what the squo is but we can’t know whether the aff will be good or not if ethics are incoherent.

#### [3] Logic – Propositions require positive justification before being accepted, otherwise one would be forced to accept the validity of logically contradictory propositions regarding subjects one knows nothing about, i.e if one knew nothing about P one would have to presume that both the “P” and “~P” are true.

#### Agents lack free will whether determinism is true or false. McGinn.

[Colin McGinn. British philosopher. He has held teaching posts and professorships at University College London, the University of Oxford, Rutgers University and the University of Miami, Problems in Philosophy: The Limits of Inquiry. London: Wiley, 1993. P. 80,. BRACKETED FOR CLARITY] SHS ZS

The argument is exceedingly familiar, and runs as follows. **Either determinism is true or it is not**. **If it is true**, then **all our chosen actions are uniquely necessitated by prior states of the world**., just like every other event. **But then it cannot be the case that we could [not] have acted otherwise**, since this would require a possibility determinism rules out. **Once the initial conditions are set and the laws fixed, causality excludes genuine freedom**. **On the other hand, if indeterminism is true**, then, though things could have happened otherwise, **it is not the case that we could [not] have chosen otherwise**, **since a merely random event is no kind of free choice**. **That some events** occur causelessly, or **are** not **subject to** law, or only to **probabilistic law, is not sufficient for those events to be free choices**. Thus one horn of the dilemma represents choices as predetermined happenings in a predictable causal sequence, while the other construes them as inexplicable lurches to which the universe is randomly prone. **Neither alternative supplies** what **the notion of free will** requires,, and no other alternative suggests itself. **Therefore freedom is not possible in any kind of possible world.** The concept contains the seeds of its own destruction.

#### Moral responsibility necessitates free will. van Inwagen.

[van Inwagen, Peter. “An Essay on Free Will.” Published 1983] SHS ZS

The answer to this question is a philosophical commonplace. **If we do not have free will**, then **there is no such thing as moral responsibility**. This proposition, one might think, certainly deserves to be a commonplace. **If someone charges you with, say, lying, and if you can convince him that it was simply not within your power not to lie, then it would seem that you have done all that is necessary to absolve yourself of responsibility for lying**. Your accuser cannot say, "I concede it was not within your power not to lie; none the less you ought not to have lied". Ought, as the saying goes, implies can. (Of course, it is unlikely that anyone would believe you if you said that it was not within your power not to lie, but that is not the point.) Similarly, if someone charges you with not having done something he maintains you ought to have done, he must withdraw his charge if you can convince him that you couldn't have done it. If, for example, he charges you with not having spoken up when a word might have saved Jones's reputation, he must withdraw his charge if you can convince him that you were bound and gagged while Jones was being maligned. (These simple facts are actually a bit too simple. An agent may have been unable to perform a certain act at a certain time, but—owing to his abilities with respect to acts that were or might have been performed at earlier times—he may once have been able so to arrange matters that he would have been able to perform that act at that time. For example, I may have been unable to contribute to a certain charity yesterday because I was locked in a bank vault that can't be opened from the inside. But if it should transpire that I had shut myself into the vault in order to avoid the representatives of the charity, few people would regard my having been locked in the vault as providing me with an adequate excuse for not contributing. The reason is easy to see: though there may be a sense in which it is true that I couldn't have contributed to the charity, there was none the less a time-- before I shut myself in—at which I could so have arranged matters that I should have been able to contribute to it when the time to do so rolled round. In the sequel, I shall ignore the possibility of cases like the "bank vault" case in order to avoid unnecessary detail in the statement of my argument.) It would seem to follow from these considerations that without free will there is no moral responsibility: if moral responsibility exists, then someone is morally responsible for something he has done or for something he has Ieft undone; **to be morally responsible for some act or failure to act is at least to be able to have acted otherwise**, whatever else it may involve; **to be able to have acted otherwise is to have free will. Therefore, if moral responsibility exists, someone has free will. Therefore, if no one has free will, moral responsibility does not exist.**

#### Thus, agents aren’t morally responsible for their actions. That negates:

#### [1] Permissibility – if agents aren’t morally responsible for their actions, all actions are permissible since moral obligations don’t exist.

#### [2] Textuality – the aff needs to prove appropriation unjust, but the NC proves entities cannot be unjust. That negates irrespective of permissibility – the aff has to prove an active instance of unjust action.

## 2NR

### Overview

#### Extend the NC. Either determinism is true, or it is not. If determinism is true, then all our actions are governed by the laws of physics, including the molecules that structure our brain, and since we can’t change or disobey the laws of physics, we lack the freedom to control our actions. Even if the universe is not deterministic, then probabilistic laws would govern these molecules, which still would not give us free will.

#### Without free will, we can’t be morally responsible for our actions. Imagine if somebody forced you to rob a bank by threatening to kill your family – we wouldn’t hold you morally responsible since you lacked the freedom to commit that action. Similarly, agents lack free will since they can’t control what actions they take, so they aren’t morally responsible for their actions.

#### That negates – without moral responsibility, agents don’t have moral obligations.

1. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ought> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)