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## DELIBERATION AND THE PRESUMPTION OF OPEN ALTERNATIVES

BY TOMIS KAPITAN

By *deliberation* we understand practical reasoning with an end in view of choosing some course of action. Integral to it is the agent's sense of alternative possibilities, that is, of two or more courses of action he presumes are *open* for him to undertake or not. Such acts may not actually *be* open in the sense that the deliberator would do them were he to so intend, but it is evident that he *assumes* each to be so. One deliberates only by taking it for granted that both performing and refraining from any of the acts under consideration are possible for one, and that which is to be selected is something entirely up to oneself.

What is it for a course of action to be presumed as open, or for several courses of action to present themselves as a range of open alternatives? Answering these questions is essential for an understanding of deliberation and choice and, indeed, for the entire issue of free will and responsibility. According to one common view, a deliberator takes the considered options to be open only by assuming he is *free* to undertake any of them and, consequently, that whichever he does undertake is, as yet, a wholly *undetermined* matter. Built into the structure of deliberation, on this theory, is an indeterministic bias relative to which any deliberator with deterministic beliefs is either inconsistent or condemned to a fatalistic limbo. An unmistakable challenge is thereby posed: is there an alternative conception of the presuppositions underlying deliberation more congenial to a deterministic perspective yet adequate to the data? Convinced that there is, I develop a partial account of deliberation which, though highly similar to the aforementioned view, diverges at a critical juncture.

### I

#### THE POSTULATE OF FREEDOM

That a deliberator presumes himself to be free to undertake any one from a range of alternatives seems undeniable. While such an attitude might not involve the agent's *knowledge* that there are undetermined actions, choices or deliberations, it is often thought to include his *belief* to this effect. Perhaps Kant had this in mind when he set forth his celebrated postulate of freedom:

It [Reason] must regard itself as the author of its principles independent of foreign influences. Consequently, as practical reason or as the will of a rational being it must regard itself as free, that is to say, the will of such a being cannot be a will of its own except under the idea of freedom.<sup>1</sup>

This passage has been interpreted as implying that agents must adopt an indeterministic stance with respect to their own practical thinking, or some portion thereof, that this is essential to the conviction that their choices are their own.<sup>2</sup> If freedom and agency are so mated within practical reason, it follows that any deliberator who also believes his future acts and choices to be (already) determined is *ipso facto* inconsistent.

My object is not an exegesis of Kant. Many contemporary philosophers *do* advocate this interpretation of the presumption of open alternatives, for example, Hector-Neri Castañeda, who writes:

One of the fundamental facts about practical thinking is that it hinges on the agent's *presupposition* that he can choose from several alternative courses of action open to him. This does not, of course, imply, as Kant firmly stressed, that the agent is free in the sense that his acts, or his volitions, are uncaused. Perhaps the presupposition is just a dialectical illusion (to use Kant's term) of practical thinking. If it is, the universe is *ugly*: given the biological and psychological primacy of practical over contemplative thinking, we are, thus, condemned to presuppose a falsehood in order to do what we think practically. We *must* in any case include the presupposition of freedom in our analysis of practical thinking . . .<sup>3</sup>

But what falsehood is it (if the universe is “ugly”) that an agent is condemned to presuppose in order to engage in practical thought – that he can choose from among open alternatives, that he is free, or that some of his own acts or volitions are uncaused? In the passage cited these disjuncts are conflated; Castañeda evidently holds that if someone assumes he can choose then he is

<sup>1</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals* (Bobbs-Merrill, 1949), p.65, translation by T. K. Abbott of *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, originally published in 1785.

<sup>2</sup> This interpretation is strongly suggested by what Kant says elsewhere in the same work, for example, pp. 63, 69–79, 73–78, and various commentators have urged this reading, e.g., H. G. Paton in the introduction to his translation of the *Grundlegung* (New York, 1964), pp. 46–48.

<sup>3</sup> Hector-Neri Castañeda, *Thinking and Doing* (Dordrecht, 1975), pp. 134–5. Again, on p. 312 of this work, he writes that “. . . to the consciousness of an agent making deliberations: (i) he appears free to choose from alternative courses of action; (ii) his choices appear uncaused . . .”

committed, *qua* rational being, to the presupposition that he is free and, thus, that some of his choices are uncaused and undetermined.

Richard Taylor and others arrive at the same conclusion by focusing on agency; one who deliberates about what to do must assume that his eventual undertaking is *his* to choose, “under his control” or “up to himself”. Were he to suppose that his choice will be the outcome of antecedent conditions over which he has no control, he could not take his eventual act to be up to himself. Taylor is insistent, in short, that assuming the latter is to suppose one’s choice *alone* will determine the undertaking, not some other conditions existing prior to choice. Consequently, a deliberator must take his choice to be undetermined.<sup>4</sup> With a slightly different emphasis, Nicholas Denyer argues that since determinism entails the future to be fixed and necessary, but that one deliberates only about what is taken as contingent, it follows that “a deliberator cannot then consistently believe that his actions are determined by events prior to his deliberations.”<sup>5</sup> Denyer stresses the modality embedded within the presupposition of freedom; to hold that one is free, that one both *can* perform an action and *can* refrain from performing it, is to assume that one’s future undertaking is as yet a *contingent* matter. This assumption, he claims, conflicts directly with the belief that one’s choices and actions are already determined by past or present conditions. Reflecting both approaches, Peter van Inwagen concludes that since we all believe in our own freedom,

... to reject free will is to condemn oneself to a life of perpetual logical inconsistency. Anyone who rejects free will adopts a general theory about human beings that he contradicts with every deliberate word and act.<sup>6</sup>

That a deliberator does not view himself at the mercy of an indifferent causal network is, to an extent, *unquestionable*; his assumption of self-agency, of his power to choose, is at once a recognition of his partial independence

<sup>4</sup> Richard Taylor has frequently advocated this position, e.g., in *Action and Purpose* (Englewood Cliffs, 1966), pp. 178–182 and in *Metaphysics* (Englewood Cliffs, 1974) 2nd edition, pp. 53–55. See also his “Deliberation and Foreknowledge”, *American Philosophical Quarterly* 1 (1964), pp. 73–80. Similar views are espoused by Carl Ginet, “Might We Have No Choice?”, in Keith Lehrer, ed., *Freedom and Determinism* (New York, 1966), pp. 87–104; J. M. Boyle, G. Grisez and O. Tollefsen, *Free Choice* (Notre Dame 1976); and J. W. Lamb, “On A Proof of Incompatibilism”, *Philosophical Review* 86 (1977).

<sup>5</sup> Nicholas Denyer, *Time, Action & Necessity: a proof of free will* (London, 1981), p. 5, and see also pp. 39–42 and 65–6. Central to his position is a denial of true future contingents, so that even if one does  $\phi$  at time  $t$  (when this is a result of his choice) it is not true beforehand that he will  $\phi$  at  $t$ . Cf. my review of Denyer’s book in *Noûs* 18 (1984).

<sup>6</sup> Peter van Inwagen, *An Essay on Free Will* (Oxford, 1983), p. 160.

from the flow of events and of his ability to shape an indeterminate future. The Kantian postulate of freedom, coordinating agency and contingency, is well-grounded in the phenomenon of choice, and there is no intent to oppose it here. Yet, what this presumption of freedom amounts to is not something which the data unequivocally reveal. The reading so far encountered, henceforth labeled the “Standard Interpretation”, must be measured against the overt dissent of those who, while deliberating, take their actions to be caused by their volitions, and these volitions, in turn, to be terminal points of deliberations whose every phase is determined. To believe in free will while taking it to be an illusion is not a comfortable position to be in. But for this very reason, the presence of deliberating determinists, while not refuting the Standard Interpretation, motivates development of and interest in a rival account.

## II

### THE PRESUMPTION OF EFFICACY

To fix intuitions, let us consider an example of a man on a leisurely hike through the countryside who unexpectedly comes to a fork in the path and stops to deliberate about which branch to follow. Suppose, as he looks down each path and weighs the advantages and disadvantages of taking it as opposed to the other, a companion asks him about what he is thinking. We can imagine the following exchange:

*Companion:* Do you feel that you can take either of the two paths?

*Hiker:* Certainly, I can take either of the paths, depending upon which one I choose.

*Companion:* Can you tell, at this stage, *which* path you will eventually take?

*Hiker:* No, not now; I’ve not yet made up my mind on the matter.

*Companion:* Are you aware of anything which will *cause* you to take, or to choose, either the path to the right or the one to the left?

*Hiker:* Well, I hadn’t thought about that, but now that you ask I guess that I must say no, I am unaware of any such thing; as far as I can tell it is entirely up to me which path I take.

*Companion:* Would you say, then, that you are *free* to choose either the path to your right or the one to the left?

*Hiker:* Indeed, haven’t I just told you that I can choose either?

Let us assume the hiker’s responses to be typical of what one might expect from a normal deliberator satisfying at least minimal conditions of ration-

ality, and so let us exploit the example as a springboard for conjectures about deliberation. His response to the initial question, for instance, immediately suggests an underlying attitude; he takes each alternative to be *open* only because he feels that he would perform it if he chose to and that, otherwise, he would refrain from so doing. That is, he assumes his will to be both necessary and sufficient for the action, *viz.*, that his choice would be *efficacious* in bringing about his performance or non-performance of any of the considered options. Generalizing, we propose a schema attributing what can be called a *presumption of efficacy*:

(PE) an agent presumes that his  $\phi$ -ing is an open alternative for him *only if* he presumes that he would  $\phi$  if and only if he were to choose to  $\phi$ .

A schema of this sort conceals much. A more detailed version would require temporal indices fixing the times of the presumption, choosing and doing, and, in many cases, probability qualifiers on the biconditional within the scope of 'presumes', when the agent does not think his intentional efforts will be guaranteed success. The term 'choose' may give way to 'decide', 'intend', 'undertake', 'try', etc., though in using 'choose' I assume that choice is a species of *intending to do* something or other. In addition, the occurrences of 'he', 'his' and 'him' within attitudinal scope should be taken to convey the agent's self or first-person reference, and hence are limited as to their possible substituends.<sup>7</sup> For the present, these refinements can be left implicit.

The embedded biconditional in the consequent of (PE) poses no special problem, whether construed subjunctively or indicatively. Obviously the assumed linkage between  $\phi$ -ing and choosing to  $\phi$  is not purely logical, but causal, and thus context-bound. That is to say, the agent takes his  $\phi$ -ing to be consequent upon his choice *given* circumstances as they are, a qualifier implicitly within attitudinal scope which could be more precisely exhibited by a restricted universal quantifier over circumstances. This reading allows the

<sup>7</sup> I am assuming, thus, that the presumptions are to be taken in what is sometimes called a *de se* sense, see David Lewis, "Attitudes *De Dicto* and *De Re*", in his *Philosophical Papers* (Oxford 1983), pp. 133–59. A view that I find congenial is Castañeda's where the latter occurrences of 'he' in (PE) are *quasi-indicators*, that is, devices we have for attributing indexical reference to others. See his "He: A Study in the Logic of Self-Consciousness", *Ratio* 8 (1966), pp. 130–57; "Indicators and Quasi-Indicators", *American Philosophical Quarterly* 4 (1967), pp. 85–100; and "Reference, Reality and Perceptual Fields", *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 53 (1980), pp. 763–822. He has argued in these and other papers that quasi-indicators cannot be replaced by third-person designations and, thus, that first-person reference is irreducible to third-person reference.

agent to be mistaken in his presumption of efficacy without saddling him with suppositions he might recognize to be inconsistent – as would be permitted on an external reading of the qualifier. An important feature of (PE), of course, is that the deliberator takes his choosing to be an *essential* factor in causal chains leading up to either his doing or refraining. This is crucial to the sense of agency; that the action is under his control stems partially from the supposition that he would do it *only* through his own conscious effort.

A word about ‘presumes’. It would be incorrect to think that a deliberator is always conscious, via some propositional attitude, that the alternatives he is weighing are open to him. More likely, certain dispositional states are involved, e.g. beliefs. But since ‘belief’ has calcified in the lexicon of some to imply an ability to articulate the content, perhaps what we want are lower-level doxastic states – better conveyed by terms like ‘feels’, ‘assumes’ or ‘takes for granted’ – states for which corresponding linguistic abilities may be lacking. For convenience, ‘presumes’ shall be used to indicate doxastic attitudes generically, allowing the character of the relevant dispositions to fluctuate among various doxastic levels.<sup>8</sup>

### III

#### THE PRESUMPTION OF CONTINGENCY

At first glance, (PE) might be thought to be all that there is to the presumption of open alternatives. Recalling the conditional analysis of freedom championed by G. E. Moore and others, why not say that a deliberator takes a course of action to be open just in case he believes it *possible* that he perform it and *possible* that he refrain, with the modalities unpacked conditionally as indicated by the consequent of (PE)? Unfortunately, even if one accepts the equivalence, the conditional analysis no more provides for the agent’s *sense* of freedom than it does for an account of freedom itself; to take a course of action as possible in that one would do it if one chose will not suffice for taking it as *open*. Nadia, upon entering the local ice cream shop, might believe that she would eat chocolate ice cream if she chose, but may also realize that if she did she would break out in a horrible rash. She might even dislike the taste of chocolate and have formed a belief that because of this and her fear of a rash she will be caused not to choose chocolate ice cream. Believing that her not eating chocolate ice cream is already determined, therefore, she no longer considers it an open alternative

<sup>8</sup> Compare Castañeda’s illuminating discussion of the locution ‘feels that’ in “Philosophical Method and Direct Awareness of the Self”, *Grazer Philosophische Studien* 7/8 (1979), pp. 1–58.

despite her acceptance of the conditional.<sup>9</sup>

It is tempting to say that a deliberator must also assume that it is possible for her to *choose* a considered alternative, and it is precisely this that Nadia lacks. It is evident, however, that applying the conditional analysis to this sense of possibility would merely postpone the difficulty besides raising familiar problems about choosing to choose.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps such reflections have led some to suggest that if an agent deliberates about  $\phi$ -ing then he assumes that his  $\phi$ -ing is still a *contingent* matter and that, consequently, nothing *yet* determines his choice either to  $\phi$  or not to  $\phi$ . Nobody, as Aristotle emphasized, deliberates about that which is impossible or necessary. Of course, to avoid a facile refutation of determinism it is essential to view the modality as within attitudinal scope, so that we have,

- (1) an agent presumes that his  $\phi$ -ing is an open alternative for him *only if* he presumes that his  $\phi$ -ing is contingent,

which implies that he also takes his *not*  $\phi$ -ing to be contingent.<sup>11</sup> Alternatively, one could speak of his choosing (intending, undertaking, etc.)  $\phi$  as contingent, and again add that the schema is to be qualified by temporal parameters, i.e., the agent assumes, while deliberating, that his  $\phi$ -ing at  $t$  is, *as of yet*, contingent.

The problem now is to give some account of the modality in (1), for it is certain that not just any sort of contingency will do. Mere logical contingency is not sufficient, nor, for that matter, any other sort of contingency fixed *solely*

<sup>9</sup> The literature on the conditional analysis of freedom is copious. Besides Moore's classic work *Ethics* (Oxford, 1912), ch. 6, echoing longstanding views of John Locke, Jonathan Edwards *et al*, there is also J. L. Austin, "Ifs and Cans", *Proceedings of the British Academy* 42 (1956), pp.109–132; R. Chisholm, "J. L. Austin's Philosophical Papers", *Mind* 73 (1964); K. Lehrer, "An Empirical Disproof of Determinism", in Lehrer, ed., *Freedom and Determinism*; K. Lehrer, "Cans Without Ifs", *Analysis* 29 (1968), pp. 29–32; D. Davidson, "Freedom to Act", in his *Essays on Actions & Events* (Oxford, 1980), pp. 63–82; and A. E. Falk, "Some Modal Confusions in Compatibilism", *American Philosophical Quarterly* 18 (1981) pp.141–8. It is generally conceded that Moore's attempt to construe 'I can' in terms of 'I shall, if I choose' fails, though it is disputed what this means for the larger questions of determinism, compatibilism and freedom.

<sup>10</sup> See Wilfred Sellars, "Thought and Action", in Lehrer, ed., *Freedom and Determinism*, who mentions not only the threat of a regress that such an analysis engenders but also that it mistakenly construes volitions as actions to be brought about by yet further acts of will. See, however, Lehrer's treatment of the regress in "Preferences, Conditionals and Freedom", in van Inwagen, ed., *Time and Cause* (Dordrecht, 1980), pp. 187–201, as well as Krister Segerberg's discussion of Lehrer in "Could Have But Did Not", *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 64 (1983), pp. 230–41.

<sup>11</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1112b, and see Richard Sorabji's endorsement of this reading in *Necessity Cause and Blame: Perspectives on Aristotle's Theory* (London, 1980), pp. 228 and 245. Compare Denyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 30, 40–2, and R. Burton, "Choice", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 42 (1982) pp. 581–6. In speaking of  $P$  as contingent I mean, throughout, the conjunction of the possibility of  $P$  with the possibility of not- $P$ .



by reference to a body of laws of nature. Instead, a modality which includes reference to the actual course of events, to the world of particular objects and conditions, is required, *viz.*, a relativized, concrete modality. Let us say that a state of affairs (event, proposition, etc.)  $P$  is *contingent relative* to a set of conditions  $S$  just in case neither  $P$  nor not- $P$  is a consequence of  $S$ . The contingency is *concrete* if  $S$  contains particular facts or conditions, and *unqualified* with respect to time  $t$  if  $S$  contains all conditions existing prior to and at  $t$ .<sup>12</sup>

For Taylor and Castañeda, the contingency in (1) is, at least, *causal* in that the agent assumes that there do not exist, nor have existed, conditions causally sufficient for his  $\phi$ -ing at the time in question. One could, alternatively, drop mention of causation, as van Inwagen does, and say that the agent assumes his  $\phi$ -ing is not a consequence of any set of conditions (plus laws of nature) antecedent to and including the time of deliberation. In either case, the agent takes the contingency to be fixed with respect to *all* standing conditions, past and present. Denyer, even more strongly, opts for a type of *absolute* contingency; in *no* sense is the agent's  $\phi$ -ing taken as necessary or impossible, or, in other words, it is not a consequence of *any* set of truths. A deliberator must, he contends, assume that neither the proposition that he will  $\phi$  nor the proposition that he will not  $\phi$  is already true, so that no truth about what happens in the future entails a proposition to the effect that he will  $\phi$  or that he will not  $\phi$ .

Each of these construals of (1) is a variant of what I have previously called the Standard Interpretation. In the present context its claim is that one who takes his  $\phi$ -ing to be open assumes it to be contingent relative to *all* conditions (facts, events, propositions) existing (obtaining, occurring, being true) prior to and including the time at which the assumption is held. This unqualified modality requires the deliberator to consider his  $\phi$ -ing to be, as yet, undetermined by those same conditions, hence, undetermined *simpliciter*.

To minimize complexities, define determinism broadly as the doctrine that each state of the world is fully determined by antecedent states, where  $P$

<sup>12</sup> This notion of a relativized modality must be handled with some care to avoid unnecessary confusion. My preference is to construe the relation of *consequence*, employed in the definiens, in a *generic* sense, not to be restricted to the narrower concept of logical consequence unless otherwise specified. This has a great deal to do with whether  $S$  includes laws or nomological propositions *or* laws are principles underlying the consequence relation. I refer the reader to my "On the Concept of Material Consequence", *History and Philosophy of Logic* 3 (1982), pp. 193–211, for an extended discussion of extra-logical consequence. For more about relativized modality, see Hans Reichenbach, *Elements of Symbolic Logic* (New York, 1975), p. 396; T. Smiley, "Relative Necessity", *Journal of Symbolic Logic* 28 (1963), pp. 113–34; and I. L. Humberstone, "Relative Necessity Revisited", *Reports on Mathematical Logic* 13 (1981), pp. 33–42. J. W. Lamb, *op. cit.*, and others have used the term 'categorical' instead of 'unqualified' in discussing a deliberator's assumption of freedom, though with much the same meaning.

is determined by  $Q$  just in case the existence (obtaining, occurrence, truth) of  $Q$  is sufficient for the existence of  $P$ . Following Denyer and van Inwagen, determinism implies that at any instance there is just one possible future – in the unqualified or causal sense of ‘possible’. Of importance is the fact that

- (2) a determinist assumes that whatever he will do (choose, undertake, etc.) is already determined.

To locate an inconsistency within the beliefs of a deliberating determinist now seems easy; for as a deliberator, by (1), he takes his future act to be yet undetermined, but as a determinist, by (2) he assumes the very opposite, that it is already determined.

But matters are not so simple. To say that a determinist who deliberates about a range of actions  $\phi_1, \dots, \phi_n$  supposes that whatever he will do is already determined is *not* to imply that he takes his  $\phi_i$ -ing to be determined, for any  $i$ ,  $1 \leq i \leq n$ . The quantifier ‘whatever’ in (2) falls *within* the scope of his assumption, so that he need not believe of any specific action that *it* is already determined. We cannot, then, automatically attribute to the determinist who deliberates about whether to  $\phi$  the bald inconsistency of both believing that his  $\phi$ -ing is determined *and* that it is not.

One could argue from the claim that it is impossible to deliberate about what one *knows* one will do.<sup>13</sup> If one knows one will  $\phi$  then there is no point in deliberating about whether to  $\phi$ ; the issue is already settled and  $\phi$ -ing is no longer open but closed. Indeed, *if* this is so it seems fair enough to generalize to *belief* as follows:

- (3) an agent presumes that his  $\phi$ -ing is an open alternative for him *only if* he does not yet believe that he will  $\phi$ .

Now it is implausible that the consequent of (3) be satisfied if one believes one’s  $\phi$ -ing is determined, that is, for minimally rational agents, (3) yields:

- (4) an agent presumes that his  $\phi$ -ing is an open alternative for him *only if* he does not yet believe that there are conditions sufficient for his  $\phi$ -ing.

So, the argument goes, satisfying the consequent of (4) renders inconsistent any determinist who believes he will undertake at least one of the alternatives about which he deliberates. But this reasoning is also deceptive. Schema (3) is plausible only if negation has larger scope than the attitude within the consequent and, if so, it ascribes *no belief at all* to a deliberator. (4), however,

<sup>13</sup> See Section IV below. R. Taylor in “Deliberation and Foreknowledge” and again in *Action and Purpose*, pp. 174–6, has contended that one cannot *know*, while deliberating, which course of action he will eventually undertake, a claim also endorsed in C. Ginet, “Can the Will Be Caused?”, *Philosophical Review* 71 (1962), pp.49–55; A. N. Prior, *Papers on Time and Tense* (Oxford, 1968), pp. 47–8; A. Goldman, *A Theory of Human Action* (Englewood Cliffs, 1970), p. 195; and Denyer, *op. cit.*, p. 48. Taylor’s argumentation, in particular, supports the stronger claim that a deliberator cannot have a *belief* that he will perform this or that alternative, as he himself realizes in “Deliberation and Foreknowledge”, p. 77.

generates the inconsistency only when negation has smaller scope, in which case it derives no support from (3). The confusion stems from the fact that expressions of the form ‘he does not believe’ are used to express both disbelief and nonbelief – an unfortunate ambiguity, but devastating for the argument at hand.

At the same time, this argument indicates where the inconsistency is to be found, if the deliberator is minimally rational and believes he will undertake one of the alternatives. For, by (1), he assumes of each alternative that his undertaking it is contingent and, thus, that there is, or will be, a future undertaking which is, as yet, undetermined. This consequence, on the Standard Interpretation, involves a belief which *does* conflict with that ascribed in (2), and the ascription of an inconsistency to deliberating determinists is secured.

A showdown with the Standard Interpretation over (1) is inescapable. That deliberation is wedded to a sense of contingency is manifest in our example of the hiker. But examine his response to the companion’s third question. Taken literally, the words ‘as far as I can tell’ suggest an interpretation of (1) in terms of *epistemic* contingency; a deliberator assumes his  $\phi$ -ing to be contingent relative to what he knows. However, more seems involved. I may, for instance, believe I will *not* fly to Copenhagen tomorrow and thus I do not deliberate about so doing, yet I may not know what I believe (perhaps some unforeseen emergency will call me to Copenhagen). The action is impossible relative to what I *believe* and so does not appear open to me, though it is contingent with respect to what I actually know. The words ‘as far as I can tell’, in fact, point to a broader construal of the modality in terms of *doxastic* contingency so that (1) would give way to something like

- (5) an agent presumes that his  $\phi$ -ing is an open alternative for him *only if* he presumes that his  $\phi$ -ing is contingent relative to what he then believes,

where ‘then’, occurring before ‘believes’, refers to the time of presumption. (5) says, simply, that the agent takes no set of his beliefs to be sufficient for his  $\phi$ -ing or for his not  $\phi$ -ing.

As a necessary condition on deliberation (5) appears uncontroversial, but before judging whether it captures the full flavour of (1) a further issue must be addressed. Given that the modality falls within attitudinal scope is the same to be said for the qualifier ‘relative to what he then believes’? If it has an *external* occurrence then the modality would be fixed by the entire body of the agent’s beliefs with the consequent of (5) reading: for every subset *S* of *x*’s beliefs, *x* presumes that his  $\phi$ -ing is contingent relative to *S*. The problem here is that since no one consciously rehearses all his beliefs while deliberating he may overlook what they entail or even what he believes they entail. Suppose at 10 a.m. Mr. Hawkins, having decided to take his son

bowling at 3 p.m., acquires the belief that he will take his son bowling then. At 2 p.m., temporarily overlooking his earlier resolve, he deliberates about playing golf at 3 p.m.. Given *all* that he believes (dispositionally) at 2 p.m. it is not true that he assumes it possible that he play golf at 3 p.m. and, so, (5) would fail to formulate even a necessary condition. Weakening the consequent to refer to only *some* subsets of *x*'s beliefs would saddle the condition with the same insufficiency that affected epistemic contingency. An external occurrence of the qualifier, in short, renders (5) unsuitable.

A solution is to insist upon an *internal* occurrence. This allows us to take the hiker's response at face value; by using the words 'as far as I can tell' he relativizes the modality to *what he then takes himself to believe*. As such, the occurrences of both 'he' and 'then' in the qualifier function in just the way that 'his' does within the scope of 'presumes', namely, as devices for attributing self-reference to the agent (see note 7).

A residue of ambiguity lingers. There are questions whether the scope of 'what he then believes' is to include that of the modal operator and whether 'what' indicates a quantifier occurring outside or inside the scope of 'presumes'. The first, I think, can be answered affirmatively since the qualifier specifies the character of the modality. The second turns on a choice between, roughly, (i) *x* presumes that if *S* is any set of his beliefs then his  $\phi$ -ing is contingent relative to *S*, and (ii) there is a set *S* such that *x* presumes that *S* is the set of his beliefs and his  $\phi$ -ing is contingent relative to *S*. (i) bears a structural accord to the Standard Interpretation where quantifiers implicitly occur within attitudinal scope; its satisfaction is a minimal requirement. (ii), on the other hand, would seem to imply that a deliberator consciously reviews all that he takes himself to believe whenever the dispositional presumption ascribed in the consequent of (5) is activated. Though (ii) is perhaps not to be ruled out, (i) is a more cautious reading. We arrive, thus, at a version of (5) which can be labeled the *presumption of contingency*:

(PC) an agent presumes that his  $\phi$ -ing is an open alternative for him *only if* he presumes that if *S* is any set of his beliefs then his  $\phi$ -ing is contingent relative to *S*.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Peter van Inwagen has suggested that the variable '*S*' in a principle like (PC) be restricted to sets of beliefs the agent takes to be consistent "since not everyone will be willing to assume that his own beliefs are consistent, and since, presumably, no proposition is contingent relative to an inconsistent set of beliefs," (in comments at the American Philosophical Association meetings (Western Division) April 1984). I have two reservations about accepting this qualification: (1) While it may be that there is someone who is not willing to assume his own beliefs to be consistent, it does not follow that he takes them to be inconsistent. He may simply be in a state of suspending judgment on the consistency of his own beliefs since few, if any, can rest content with a recognized inconsistency. (2) I do not rule out considerations of *relevance* in a proper account of logical consequence, thus, am reluctant to accept the view that every proposition is a consequence of an inconsistent set.

It follows immediately from (PC) together with (PE) that anyone who takes his  $\phi$ -ing as contingent relative to his beliefs thereby takes his *choosing to*  $\phi$  to be similarly contingent, assuming, once again, minimal rationality.

What, then, can be said to favour this *doxastic* interpretation over the Standard Interpretation of (1)? The issue is largely empirical, and a full-fledged defence of (PC) must await the presentation of additional proposals which *as a body* are to be measured against the data (see section VI). But three minor considerations merit attention here. First, (PC) does provide *a* sense of contingency useful for explaining some cases of non-deliberation, e.g., that of Nadia and the chocolate ice cream. Second, one must avoid defending the Standard Interpretation by appealing to (3) and its supposed derivative (4), even if these are conditions on deliberation. The derivative guarantees only that a deliberator *does not believe* his  $\phi$ -ing to be determined, not that he assumes it to be undetermined, and a confusion over the scope of negation in (3) and (4), I suspect, is one reason for the initial appeal of the Standard Interpretation. Finally, the very existence of deliberating determinists who deny holding indeterministic beliefs constitutes *some* evidence that they do not. Of course, this observation must be tempered by the notorious difficulty of establishing non-belief, particularly in this manner, but as inconsistencies are not to be lightly ascribed, it shifts the burden of proof to the opposition.<sup>15</sup>

#### IV

#### THE ANALYSIS

Both (PE) and (PC) formulate necessary conditions for a course of action to be presumed as *open* by an agent; jointly, they are sufficient. With temporal parameters implicit once again, we have:

- (PO) an agent presumes that his  $\phi$ -ing is an open course of action for him *if and only if* (i) he presumes that he would  $\phi$  if and only if he were to choose to  $\phi$ , and (ii) he presumes that if *S* is any set of his beliefs then his  $\phi$ -ing is contingent relative to *S*.

In yet other words, an agent takes his  $\phi$ -ing as open just in case he assumes that his will is efficacious and that he both can  $\phi$  and can refrain from  $\phi$ -ing. From this basic analysis the other properties of the presumption of open alternatives can be derived (see sections V and VI below).

Nothing has been said about the underlying action theory that a principle like (PO) might require, specifically, about what a *course of action* is. The

<sup>15</sup> None of the mentioned adherents of the Standard Interpretation, Taylor, Ginet, Castañeda, Denyer and van Inwagen, has, to my knowledge, seriously considered or, at least, directly discussed, an alternative explication of the modality involved in a deliberator's sense of an open alternative.

schematic letter ‘ $\phi$ ’ is intended to have expressions designating what are often called “action-types” as substituends, whether simple or compound. However, for a theory admitting compound courses of action though not compound action-types, (PO) is limited, and any attempt to extend or adapt the proposals would require more groundwork. An appraisal of (PO) must bear this in mind, but two points can be made here. First, if we view  $x$ ’s not  $\phi$ -ing at  $t$  as the *complement* of  $x$ ’s  $\phi$ -ing at  $t$  then it is not difficult to see that (PO) yields the desired result that a course of action is presumed as open by an agent if and only if its complement is as well. Second, it is plain that deliberation can also be *hypothetical*, as when one contemplates what to do if some condition  $P$  holds, e.g., whether to complain if one loses.<sup>16</sup> Courses of action deliberated about on the supposition that  $P$  holds may be said to be open-relative-to- $P$ . It is easy enough to construct an analysis of this notion, in turn, along the lines of (PO) with the obvious adjustments in both of the clauses (i) and (ii). Once accomplished, and we acknowledge conditional intentions, then the following should be a targeted theorem:  $x$  presumes that his  $\phi$ -ing is open-relative-to- $P$  just in case  $x$  presumes that “his  $\phi$ -ing if  $P$ ” is open for him.

Where  $(A_1, \dots, A_n)$  is a set of  $n$  distinct courses of action, then the central principle on the presumption of open alternatives is no surprise:

(POA) an agent presumes that  $(A_1, \dots, A_n)$  is a range of open alternatives for him *if and only if* (i) for each  $A_i$ ,  $1 \leq i \leq n$ , he presumes that  $A_i$  is open for him, and (ii) he presumes that not all of  $(A_1, \dots, A_n)$  are conjointly realizable.

Concerning (ii), it is allowed that an agent takes some of the members of the range to be conjointly realizable, e.g. one might debate whether to go to the butcher’s, go to the baker’s, or stay home while believing the first two to be compossible. Reference to the totality of the elements in the range is presupposed. If by *deliberative content* we understand a set of courses of action about which one deliberates, then a main assumption throughout has been: a set of courses of action is a deliberative content for an agent only if

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, van Inwagen, *op. cit.*, p. 155. The existence of hypothetical deliberation suggests that intentions and, thus, courses of action, can be conditional in form, a point that has long been urged by Castañeda. See, for instance, his *Thinking and Doing*, pp. 160ff., and also his “Reply to Sellars”, in *Agent, Language, and the Structure of the World* (New York, 1983), ed., J. E. Tomberlin, pp. 419–33, and compare D. Davidson, *op. cit.*, pp. 92–4. This underscores the previous assertion about the limited nature of (PO) in the form given. I might add that, according to the way (PO) is stated, the very item that is presumed open and deliberated about seems to be the same as that which is said to be contingent in clause (ii). I do not wish to be committed to this. Instead, I am inclined to accept Castañeda’s distinction between practical and contemplative thought-contents, *viz.*, between *practitions* and *propositions* to use his terminology, wherein the thing deliberated about is a *practition* and the thing viewed as contingent is a *proposition*. See Castañeda’s *Thinking and Doing*, *passim*.

he presumes it to be a range of open alternatives for him. The converse does not hold; a sense of the relative significance of the included items seems required to secure a place in any deliberative content. That is, the presumption of open alternatives is only a necessary condition for deliberation.

Some fine points can be touched upon. For one thing, it may be erroneous to speak of *the* deliberative content if an agent can carry on several deliberations simultaneously. Also, adjustments concerning temporal parameters are needed to cover cases where a course of action comes to be dropped from deliberative content during deliberation. Content can fluctuate and what appears open at the onset of a deliberation may lose this character as the process unfolds (or vice-versa). The failure of the main assumption mentioned in the previous paragraph shows that inclusion of a course of action in deliberative content does not guarantee inclusion of its complement. That is, one can deliberate about two “positive” acts, say, whether to study French or Arabic, without consciously considering the complements of either. (PO) demands only that if a course of action appears open then so does its complement, *not* that if it is deliberated about then so is its complement.

## V

### INDECISION AND UNCERTAINTY

With (PO) and (POA) we have an analysis of a deliberator’s presumption of open alternatives. The similarity of this account to the Standard Interpretation is apparent, but there is a fundamental divergence in the way each handles a deliberator’s sense of contingency. It remains to be seen whether (PO) and (POA) can be used to explain other features of deliberation, specifically, a deliberator’s state of uncertainty and his sense that he is free to choose. First, we consider the former.

Taylor, Ginet and others have argued that one cannot deliberate about doing something if one already knows one will do it (see note 13). Our hiker, for example, does not deliberate about the disjunctive act of taking the path to the right or the one to the left if this is something he has already decided upon and takes for granted he will do. His denial that he can tell which path he will take and his words ‘I’ve not yet made up my mind’ point not only to his ignorance or lack of belief about which alternative he will undertake but also to his state of indecision. More directly, there is a connection between deciding and believing what one will do which indicates that (3), if acceptable, should be accompanied by:

- (6) an agent presumes that his  $\phi$ -ing is an open alternative for him *only if* he has not already decided to  $\phi$ .

Initially, states of ignorance and indecision appear obvious as antecedents to decision and, thus, as ingredients in the presumption of open alternatives. However, objections have been raised against a requirement of ignorance and, *mutatis mutandis*, against proposals like (3) and (6).<sup>17</sup> For example, it might be thought that a person could decide upon a given course of action, believe he will succeed in his endeavour, and yet deliberate about it. The hiker, having made up his mind to go left, may continue to reflect upon his choice by considering likely benefits of going right or by attempting to locate justificatory grounds for his preference. Though still engaged in practical reasoning, he is no longer deliberating about *whether* to go left; taking the left path, by supposition, has already been settled. On the other hand, his subsequent thought *may* cause him to doubt the wisdom of his choice, deliberate anew about the action, or even abandon his previous decision. This possibility shows, at least, that (3) and (6) cannot stand in the form given. Modified versions might insist that one cannot take  $\phi$ -ing as open while at the *same* time intending to  $\phi$  and believing one will  $\phi$ . But even these amendments face difficulties. Take the case of Mr. Hawkins who at 10 a.m. not only decides to take his son bowling at 3 p.m. and acquires a belief that he will do so but also instructs his secretary to remind him of this at 2:45 p.m. At 2:44 p.m., preoccupied with the day's business and having temporarily overlooked his earlier resolve, he suddenly deliberates about whether to play golf or to treat his son to a few games of bowling at 3 p.m. Has he abandoned his previous decision? Not necessarily; that he sustains his intention is evidenced by his ready acceptance of his secretary's reminder at 2:45 p.m., which reveals his existing dispositions not only to *affirm* that he will take his son bowling but to have a *volition* to do so. Plainly, the contrast of occurrent with dispositional states applies to intentions as much as to beliefs and, when coupled with the fact that agents can overlook or forget what they have previously accepted, this renders (3) and (6) open to such counterexamples.<sup>18</sup> Schema (4) falls prey to these as well insofar as Hawkins, by satisfying (PE), views his decision as a determining factor, and, with further modifications, the example casts doubt upon the more restricted ignorance requirement.

<sup>17</sup> Ginet's advocacy of the ignorance condition in "Can The Will Be Caused?", for example, has spawned a number of critics including J. Canfield, "Knowing About Future Decisions", *Analysis* 22 (1962), pp. 127–9; J. W. R. Cox, "Can I Know Beforehand What I Am Going to Decide?" *Philosophical Review* 72 (1963), pp. 88–92; and M. Stoker, "Knowledge, Causation and Decision", *Noûs* 2 (1968), pp. 65–73. Richard La Croix has also advocated the ignorance condition in "Omniprescience and Divine Determinism", *Religious Studies* (1976), pp. 365–81, but Phillip Quinn has argued to the contrary in "Divine Foreknowledge and Divine Freedom", *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 9 (1978), pp. 219–40. I have also discussed the issue in "Can God Make Up His Mind?", *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 15 (1984), pp. 37–47, particularly as it bears on the La Croix/Quinn debate.

<sup>18</sup> In this context a distinction must be drawn between *formulating* a decision, i.e., making up one's mind, and *rehearsing* that decision, *viz.*, consciously affirming an intention already held. Castañeda's work on intentions is especially relevant here, see *Thinking and Doing*, pp. 275–8.



How, then, are we to interpret the hiker's response to the second question? That a decision terminates a period of *indecision* seems beyond doubt and lends immediate credence to Ginet's claim that decision involves change from a state of uncertainty into a kind of knowledge.<sup>19</sup> Restricting (3), (4) and (6) to *occurrent* beliefs and intendings might appear the best that can be hoped for. However, a different sort of problem follows upon this suggestion. The consequents of the conditions so modified still embody negation with larger scope than the (occurrent) attitude. Ascribing no *positive* attitude to deliberators, therefore, they add nothing to the content of the agent's sense of openness and, consequently, are of no assistance in analyzing the hiker's awareness that he has not yet made up his mind, i.e., his feeling of indecision. To capture the latter we need, not (6), but a more complex *presumption of indecision*:

- (PI) an agent presumes that his  $\phi$ -ing is an open alternative for him *only if* he presumes that he has not yet decided whether or not to  $\phi$ .<sup>20</sup>

This condition does not do full justice to the hiker's admission of ignorance. Being undecided falls short of a more encompassing state of uncertainty, for it is conceivable that a person might predict his own future undertaking without having yet decided upon it. Recalling our previous observations, a deliberator's prediction cannot be ruled out when construed dispositionally, and the mere exclusion of an *occurrent* attitude contributes little in analyzing the attitudes identified with a *state* of uncertainty. *Feeling* uncertain, while extending beyond a state of indecision, is not simply a condition of ignorance, and, for that reason, (3) is deficient. A more suitable means of accommodating the hiker's second response is a *presumption of uncertainty*:

- (PU) an agent presumes that his  $\phi$ -ing is an open alternative for him *only if* he presumes that he does not yet believe whether or not he will  $\phi$ .

So, we can avoid the difficulties attending (3) and its suggested modifications, yet provide an immediate account of the hiker's professed ignorance. What is essential to realize is that the consequents of (PU) and (PI) describe a state of uncertainty which, being sensitive to cases like those of Mr. Hawkins, preserves the core of Ginet's insight about decision.

<sup>19</sup> Ginet, "Can The Will Be Caused?", p. 51. Brian O'Shaughnessy in *The Will: A Dual Aspect Theory* (Cambridge, 1980), p. 297, also endorses a claim of this sort saying that a necessary condition of decision is that it resolves a state of uncertainty about what to do.

<sup>20</sup> I take it as obvious that the phrase 'whether or not' occurring in (PI), and also in (PU) below, indicates a conjunction of denials of belief falling within the scope of 'presumes'.

These proposals are not unrelated. A minimally rational agent understands that if something is or will be caused to occur then it will occur and, thus that if he does not yet believe that it will occur then he does not believe that it is or will be caused to occur. That is, on the rationality proviso, (PU) yields:

- (PS) an agent presumes that his  $\phi$ -ing is an open alternative for him *only if* he presumes that he does not yet believe that there are conditions sufficient for his  $\phi$ -ing or for his not  $\phi$ -ing.

By satisfying the consequents of both (PS) and (PE), in addition, a deliberator realizes he is not committed to the existence of conditions sufficient for his *choice* to  $\phi$  or not to  $\phi$ . If, by (PU), he presumes he does not believe (know) that he will  $\phi$ , then, by (PS) and (PE), he presumes he has not yet decided to  $\phi$ . That is, on the proviso, not only is (PS) a consequence of (PU), but (PI) follows from (PU) together with (PE).

What about (PU) itself; can it be established on the basis of (PO)? The answer, I think, is yes, assuming, once again, minimal rationality. Suppose that a deliberator satisfies (PC); if he takes his  $\phi$ -ing not to be contingent with respect to a set  $S$  then he will not regard  $S$  as a set of his own beliefs. Since he is rational, he does not think his  $\phi$ -ing to be contingent with respect to the set consisting solely of the proposition *that he  $\phi$ s* at the time in question. So, he does not view the latter as a set of his own beliefs, that is, he believes that he does not believe he will  $\phi$  at that time. Therefore, he satisfies (PU), and the sense of uncertainty emerges as a dimension of the contingency assumption.

What we have with (PU) and its derivatives (PI) and (PS), in sum, is not a deliberator's ignorance or indecision but, more cautiously, his disposition to affirm his own *non-commitment* to a specific alternative. This in no way implies that one who is conscious of being committed to  $\phi$ -ing feels *compelled* to  $\phi$ ; he may correctly assume that he is able to refrain from  $\phi$ -ing in that he would refrain were he to so choose. But while his  $\phi$ -ing may be seen as a *possible* alternative in this conditional sense, he still might not take it as open. To see this, we need only to remind ourselves of the frequent claim that one *cannot* do a certain thing because one has already decided to do something else, and not because one's will would not be efficacious as regards that act.

Finally, a new light is cast upon the hiker's statement that he is unaware of anything causing him to choose one way or the other, indeed, that he is "free" to undertake either; his presumption of freedom includes recognition of both his own uncertainty and lack of intentional resolve. As such, (PU) codifies an additional feature of a deliberator's assumption of an open future and causal independency from the past – without the more sweeping

imputations of ignorance and indeterministic beliefs. That it is a consequence of (PO), given a modest assumption of rationality, is an indication of the latter's strength.

## VI

## FREEDOM TO CHOOSE

The largest hurdle remains; does the foregoing do justice to Kant's insight that a deliberator's presumption of open alternatives is an assumption of *freedom*? Much depends upon what precisely is meant by 'freedom' here, but (PO) and (POA) *do* embody elements central to any reliable account of practical freedom, specifically, (i) of *ability* to act, (ii) of *contingency* of the *eventual* undertaking, and (iii) of *non-commitment* to a particular alternative. It is a deliberator's *sense* of (i)-(iii) – within a context fixed by what he himself takes to be the case – that *is* his presumption of freedom and self-agency. In this way, the above account presents a genuine philosophical contrast to the Standard Interpretation which construes freedom in terms of undetermined choice. Nevertheless, more is needed to show that the agent thereby takes himself as *free to choose* from among the alternatives before him.

It has already been remarked that (PO) explains certain cases of non-deliberation, e.g., why Nadia does not deliberate about eating chocolate ice cream, or, why a compulsive truth-teller – aware of his irresistible desires – does not consider lying to his best friend. In both, the agent takes himself as unable to choose, and it is failure to satisfy (PC) and (PS) that makes the difference. In other cases both (PC) and (PS) might be satisfied but (PE) not: consider a man in a room with a single door he believes to be locked but who knows that at 11 a.m. it will either be flung open or remain locked; he cannot deliberate about whether to open the door at 11 a.m. since he does not envision his will as efficacious in the matter. Van Inwagen describes a man in a room with two doors, one of which he believes to be locked and the other unlocked though he does not know which, suggesting that he cannot deliberate about which door to leave by. Failure to satisfy (PE), once again, can account for this, though it need not prevent the man from deliberating about which door to *try*. On the other hand, if deliberating about trying to  $\phi$  is, by that very fact, deliberating about  $\phi$  – thereby disputing the example – then the probability qualifiers implicit in (PE) lend it a desired flexibility.

How do we characterize the deliberator's presumption that he is free to choose, that he has both the ability to choose to  $\phi$  and the ability to choose not to  $\phi$  (or, to refrain from choosing  $\phi$ )? Consider Nadia who, having ruled out chocolate, is still faced with a decision about which of the remaining 32 flavours to order. Suppose that she satisfies both (PE) and (PC) as regards each alternative; does she, therefore, find herself *free to choose*? If at all

adequate, our analysis must sustain an affirmative response. But here comes a challenge. Imagine that Nadia consciously believes what the local astrologer told her, namely, there is a certain flavour such that it is already determined she will not choose it, though she has no idea which flavour this is. Assume, moreover, that she is not so irrational as to also believe her not choosing this flavour to be undetermined. Can she deliberate about which kind of ice cream to order? We come to a critical parting of ways; Nadia's deliberation is permitted as far as (PO) is concerned, but the Standard Interpretation must rule it out. That is, since Nadia now fails to believe of each alternative that not choosing it is undetermined, she does not take it as unqualifiedly contingent, and so, by the Standard Interpretation, her deliberation would be *pointless*; realizing that her choice is not entirely "under her control", Nadia must remain without ice cream.

This latter assessment seems unreasonable. Why shouldn't the following thoughts convince Nadia, and ourselves, that deliberation here *does* have a point? Look, I am hungry for ice cream and I want to select a kind that is both tasty and filling. I have definite likes and dislikes and I know I will order a given flavour just in case I choose to do so. Moreover, I will choose a flavour only *through a conscious effort on my part*, even if it is already determined, by the stars or whatever, that I will not choose one of them, whichever it might be. As far as *I* can tell the matter is entirely under my control: I *can* choose any one of the 32 flavours even though, at this stage, I am undecided as to which. I must, in any case, try something and it is only through deliberation that I will make the best choice.

In attributing to Nadia the belief that she is already determined not to choose one of the flavours we are not supposing that she will be, or believes she will be, *prevented* from so doing, i.e., that she would fail were she to somehow try to choose one of the flavours. At the same time, in analyzing her claim that she takes herself as *able to choose* we cannot simply ascribe a belief that there is no obstacle preventing her from carrying out her will, and in this, ability to choose differs from ability to *do* (which does involve such a belief). But certain analogies persist. That  $X$  *can*  $\phi$  is equivalent to its being possible that  $X$   $\phi$ s, and it is essential that what is said to be possible is an *action of X's*, as distinct from a mere bodily movement where agency is not so implied. Similarly, to say  $X$  *can choose* to  $\phi$  is to say that it is possible that  $X$  chooses to  $\phi$  and, with this,  $X$  continues to be viewed as an agent, a *maker* of choices, and not merely a passive object in some event or state-of-affairs.

The substantive claim concerns not agency but modality; when Nadia assumes it *possible* that she chooses any of the 32 flavours, the doxastic interpretation suffices to unpack the modality. Notice that her situation is not akin to one who feels he "has no choice" in the usual sense that his will would not be efficacious, e.g., one who does not deliberate about hovering

unaided above the floor. Nor is it that of the compulsive truth-teller who finds himself unable to lie to a friend; thinking that he cannot choose to lie because of his own internal condition he fails to satisfy the consequent of (PC). Nadia, on the contrary, retains a sense of an open future to be partially completed by actions resultant upon choices which she yet takes as contingent given circumstances *as she understands them*. Her sense of an ability to choose consists in her presumptions that (i) her choosing to order any of the 32 flavours is contingent relative to what she then believes; (ii) she does not believe of any flavour that there are conditions sufficient for her choosing it or for her not choosing it; and (iii) her choosing *is* a conscious effort of *her own*. Both (i) and (ii) follow directly from (PO), while (iii) is a result of her having a concept of what a *choice* (an intention) is. More briefly, Nadia's sense of the contingency of what she is to choose, together with her conception of a choice as a conscious effort on her part, *is* her presumption of an ability to choose. Coupling this with her belief in the efficacy of her will and her desires to have the future completed in this way rather than that, we have all that is needed to give deliberation a "point".

This conclusion remains in force even if Nadia assumes that her choosing precisely one of the flavours, whatever it might be, is already determined, *viz.*, even if Nadia is a full-blown determinist. At this point, no doubt, we arrive at a vivid clash of intuitions, perhaps, to a conflict that can only be settled by appeal to experimental psychology. But, at this level, the leap to the unqualified sense of 'can', or absolute contingency, has been premature. The doxastic characterization of the modality embedded in a deliberator's sense of ability cannot be disqualified if it has yet to be articulated and subjected to proper test.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> It might be charged that I have dealt unfairly with the Standard Interpretation inasmuch as its adherents do offer arguments in its favour. Arguments yes, but arguments whose inadequacy is due to a failure to explore alternative explications of 'possible' and 'determined'. In "Might We Have No Choice?" Ginét, for instance, has argued in the following manner: a deliberator must believe that his eventual choice is *effective*, i.e., that he "has" a choice (pp. 92–93); determinism, however, entails that our choices are always ineffective (pp. 90, 93); hence, anyone who believes in determinism either cannot choose at all or else is aware that he is constantly deluded – an "implausible" if not "impossible" condition to be in (pp. 93, 104). What is the meaning of 'effective' and 'has a choice' in this argument? From his examples of the prisoner and the child in an amusement park, one's choice to  $\phi$  is ineffective if one's choice is not an essential factor in determining whether one will  $\phi$ . But a determinist need not believe his choice is ineffective in *this* sense; if he satisfies the efficacy assumption then he obviously thinks that his intentions *are* essential components in causal chains leading up to his actions, and this is compatible with the belief that his intentions and actions are already determined. On the other hand, if an ineffective choice is, by definition, an *undetermined* choice, as the discussion on pp. 90–92 suggests, then it is the initial premise of Ginét's argument that demands further defence. In either case, the argument as it stands poses no obstacles to the proposed theory. On the contrary, since the position to which the deliberating determinist is forced by the Standard Interpretation is indeed implausible, it is a *virtue* of our proposals that they rescue the determinist from this doxastic quagmire.

Principles (PO) and (POA) can also be used to explain a deliberator's *awareness* or *feeling* of freedom. Of course, this feeling is not an invariant companion of deliberation; it emerges only when a measure of contemplative thinking overlays the process of practical reasoning, of deciding what to do, or how, or when to do it. This does not negate the fact that the feeling is *of* something that permeates deliberation all along. Of what? Not the act of choosing, for this is precisely what terminates awareness of indecision, contingency and an open future.<sup>22</sup> Instead, the agent's focus is now upon his ability to think and act within a context fixed by his own doxastic and intentional states; the feeling *is* the activation of the dispositions ascribed in (PO) and (POA).

Like its competitor, the doxastic interpretation preserves the indeterminacy of the future. More than this; it comprehends a factor that the Standard Interpretation cannot. A person who deliberates about whether to eat an apple, an orange or a peach may claim to be conscious that nothing causally necessitates his choice. Is there not some sense in which he is epistemically *justified*, by his experience, in saying that he is free to eat any of the fruit? An affirmative response not only provides grounds for distinguishing between the experience and the mere rehearsal of belief, it nicely explains the universality and conviction with which the assumption of freedom is held. This is no brute endorsement of indeterminism; the deliberator who says he is free *as far as he can tell* may very well be justified in so doing, for the contingency is there, detectable within his experiential content. But there is no reason to suppose that he can similarly be justified – by his experience – in claiming that he is free with respect to *all* past and present conditions, even if this latter claim is true. It is the doxastic interpretation that is on firmer footing here, and *if* the deliberator's choice is determined, then it is *this* view which avoids the uncomfortable conclusion that his *experience*, not just his belief, is purely illusory.<sup>23</sup>

## VII.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

Although the preceding discussion has centered on deliberation, it is likely that the proposals culminating in (PO) and (POA) have a wider applicability.

<sup>22</sup> Here I go against the suggestion offered by Douglas Browning in "The Feeling of Freedom", *Review of Metaphysics* 18 (1964), pp. 123–46, who writes: "The long sought feeling of freedom is no other than the experience of the act of choice itself as it is performed, as it must be performed, within the practical stance" (p. 145). Compare, Boyle, Grisez and Tollefsen, *op. cit.*, pp. 18–20.

<sup>23</sup> Boyle, Grisez and Tollefsen, *op. cit.*, pp. 20–3, are also careful to distinguish the *experience* of freedom from the *judgment* that one is free. That an awareness of freedom would be virtually impossible if freedom is analyzed in terms of unqualified contingency has been emphasized by J. W. Corman and K. Lehrer in *Philosophical Problems and Arguments*, (New York, 1968), pp. 131–47.

For one thing, they seem to pertain to all *choice*, even that which does not emerge from conscious deliberation, insofar as decision involves a selection among presumed alternatives. Perhaps they govern all *intention* as well; what is the point of intending something which is not taken as open at some time before intending it? If so, then each intention is a choice, minimally, between a course of action and its complement, and we can appreciate anew Kant's insistence that a presupposition of freedom underlies all practical thought. Additionally, the proposals imply that an omniscient being cannot deliberate, choose, or perhaps, intend – a consequence of no small theological importance if creativity, perfection, or omnipotence necessitate such abilities.<sup>24</sup> It remains to be seen what relevance they have for the overall free will controversy, though there is every reason to suspect a firm and fruitful linkage.

The spectacle of a determinist who deliberates is at first perplexing. What is the point of deliberating if whatever one chooses and does is already determined? What difference can one's own deliberations possibly make? Faced with such questions, some conclude that we are, by our very nature as rational agents, indeterminists – an idea which can only disturb the determinist who takes his actions and volitions to be the outcome of antecedent factors while retaining a passion for consistency. Agreeing that an agent has a sense of the contingency of his own future, I have urged that the modality is indexed to what he himself assumes to be the case; it need not be a presumption of the non-existence of any determining conditions whatever. No more is required to give deliberation a point than the agent's ends, his belief that those ends will not be realized except through his own intentional activity, and his sense of freedom based, in part, upon his incomplete grasp of the future. If forgetfulness, as Nietzsche once wrote, is a precondition of action, an imperfect conception of what will be is no less essential. Practically-minded determinists, haunted by the spectres of inconsistency and fatalism, can be encouraged by this account of the matter.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> I refer the reader to the papers by La Croix, Quinn, and myself listed in note 17 above.

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