The Critical Role and Impact of Axiology in Understanding the Interaction Between Consciousness and Culture

Qiaohua Liu*

Department of Philosophy, Florida State University,United States
qliu57@126.com

Abstract: Free will and moral responsibility are complex concepts with diverse philosophical and cultural interpretations. Our study seeks to expound on the aspects of free will, moral responsibility and compatibilism based on consciousness and culture. Our main objective is to examine the relationship between free will and moral responsibility, and also, compare externalist compatibilism and internalism compatibilism. We adopted textual analysis as the basis of our methods for data collection by focusing on the philosophical works of Harry Frankfurt, Gary Watson, P.F. Strawson, A.J. Ayer, F.H. Bradley, John Stuart Mill, David Hume, Thomas Hobbes, Aristotle, and John Fischer. In addition to our textual analysis, we examined cultural artifacts from various Chinese contexts to gain firsthand insights into how values shape consciousness and cultural expression. Our findings showed that philosophers present diverse stances on free will, influenced by social context, individual desires, and higher-order preferences. Cultural expressions showcased the influence of values on free will and responsibility with traditional Chinese art emphasizing harmony and collective responsibility while modern art prioritizing individual expression, and regional folk dances highlighting community values. Cultural values such as harmony with nature foster interconnectedness and peace, while individualism promoted self-awareness, and collectivism shaped consciousness towards fulfilling societal roles.
Keywords: Free will, Moral Responsibility, Philosophical Arguments, Cultural Expressions, Individual Consciousness

1. INTRODUCTION

Existential axiology has significantly developed with a focus on the important priorities of an individual's activities and the levels of influence on their lives in the global society. Axiology allows the maintenance of spiritual personal freedom without the influence of levelling cultures, economic monopolies and the drama of the sociopolitical life (Baeva, 2012). The significance of understanding and studying values in modernity involves dealing with the practical applications of its possibilities and theoretical implications in solving the modern and fundamental anthropological issues of the world (Baeva, 2022).

There exists an intrinsic relationship between axiology and

consciousness. According to Harris (2011), in his works "*The Moral Landscape*", he suggests that science has the capacity to estimate and shape human values by noting that "We can know, through reasoning alone, that consciousness is the only intelligible domain of value" (Harris, 2011). Similarly, Siewert (1998) proposed that an individual's capacity to have feelings is critical for values and a positive life experience based on consciousness (Siewert, 1998). Moreover, Siewert (1998, p. 329) stated that a life devoid of consciousness and relevant experiences is little or no better than death (Siewert, 1998). A study by Tegmark (2014, p. 391) proposed that the universe is an enormous mathematical object and therefore the conditions of values and their meanings can be realised through human beings and extra forms of life because the Universe was increasingly aware of itself (Tegmark, 2015). All these studies share fundamental views and thoughts with Ross (1930/2002, p. 140) who showed that all the intrinsic goods constitute all states of the mind or relationships between states of the mind and intrinsic goods (Ross, 2002). Therefore, values are inseparable from consciousness because the experience of things occurs by or the present of consciousness creates the existing value for anyone or anything.

Empirical research by psychologists on the levels of character virtues (Richardson, 2012) have emphasized on the meaning of life and examined the role of psychology in influencing societal values (Heintzelman & King, 2014; Kendler, 1999). However, psychologists have failed to elucidate the intrinsic relationship between an individual's mind and the values. The relationship between values and the mind forms the fundamental connection with consciousness. In contrast to philosophy, psychology is based on inquiries into values and it is a discipline shaped by making values. Psychologists have always assumed that the discipline of science must be neutral on values or free of values and there should be reasonable basis of allowing personal and political values or ideas and opinions to distort clinical research and other endeavours (Aguilar et al., 2020; Kendler, 1999).

We can argue that psychology cannot dictate the morals and ethical values to a greater extent based on the existing fundamental views of axiology and philosophy (Findlay, 1961, 1970; Kraut, 2009; Taylor, 1989). Although, psychology is also involved with the ethics and morals and forms an intrinsic connection with the normative values of judgments. According to Findlay, (1970) axiological philosophy is associated with interrelationships, variety and nature of values (Findlay, 1970). Therefore, the focus on axiology is based on values and becomes relevant to the morals and ethics. Furthermore, an axiological analysis of values

contributes to the independent analysis of morals, virtues and ethics. This independent analysis is important form a psychological perspective because several things in life can be valuable while being supererogatory such as satisfaction of sexual desires and achievement of material success, power and influence without having ethical obligations and virtues. Axiological philosophy and themes have undergone significant development since the early and 20th century philosophers (Findlay, 1961, 1970; Hartmann, 1932/2002; Ross, 2002; Scheler, 1973; Whitehead, 1978/1929). Taylor (1989) showed a significant relationship between values and their psychological significance (Taylor, 1989). Taylor established an inherent relationship between the good and the self and perceived good as a composition of ethics and a wide range of values that adds meaning to life.

Human beings naturally think of themselves as "normal" and "free", implying that we assume that we have a specific different set of controls. Freedom of the will (free will) refers to the nature of freedom or control that is presupposed to be possessed by human beings and linked to the significant patterns ascribed in the moral responsibility. Free will does not imply that human beings have a have a unique faculty of the will, rather it implies that humans have a specific type of freedom or control (Fischer, 1985, 1986; Yarahmadian et al., 2022).

Naturally, it is feasible to reason that a typical human being has freedom based on the sense that humans have the freedom to select or refrain from certain course of actions. Course of action is regarded as a deletion and an activity that is narrowly construed (Fischer & Ravizza, 1998). Therefore, a human being has the freedom to a particular course of action by either refraining or undertaking it. Thus, it is taken that humans often have different alternatives which in some cases it is invariable untrue. Although, humans can choose and undertake particular actions, it is in their power or could have been in their power to select and undertake a different course of action. Furthermore, humans recognize and appreciate that they can be compelled and coerced in choosing or acting, and therefore, some people do not always have control over their actions either due to external conditions such as brain damage or mental illness. The basic assumption is that the adult human being has multiple paths according to the Borge's phrase of the future being a garden of several forking paths (Xu, 2020).

Compatibilism refers to the belief of free will and determinism that are considered mutually compatible and the belief in these ideas should be logically consistent (Coates & McKenna, 2024; McKenna & Pereboom, 2016). Compatibilism believes that the existence of free will and moral responsibility is aligned with the truth of determinism. In several scenarios,

compatibilists have attempted to realize reconciliation through weakening and altering the common sense associated with free will.

Compatibilism has existed in ancient history and has been acknowledged by several philosophers in one form or another. In medieval philosophy, free will was grounded on a theological basis with God viewed as the foundation and first cause of all events in the universe such as the actions of human beings (Scardigli et al., 2019; Stratton, 2020). However, if the universe was deterministic, then we can postulate that the actions of human beings are never free. These arguments are grounded on the basis that humans cannot do what God has not enabled them to do and the moral responsibility of their activities. In the later stages of the 4th and 5th centuries, Saint Augustine of Hippo redefined Greek philosophy in the context of Christianity and attempted to reconcile human freedom with the Christian views of divinity. According to Saint Augustine, God was a perfect, omniscient and omnipotent being that existed outside the realm of time. There is temporal direction for God that is similar to humans. Therefore, it is not sensical to attribute the future knowledge of human choices to God. Similarly, after 1000 years, Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) faced similar challenges between Christianity and Greek philosophy. Particularly, Saint Thomas Aquinas lived during the western intellectual history when there was a re-examination and analysis of the relationship between religion and philosophy. In his works "*Summa theologiae* (1265/66–73), Saint Thomas Aquinas suggested that if humans did not possess free will, then all aspects of counsels, exhortations, prohibitions and punishments would be in vain (Aquinas, 1911). In responding to the differences between freedom and the role of God as the supreme being of human wills, Aquinas postulated that God was indeed the true source of human freedom because God moved humans based on our voluntary nature

Compatibilists holds the view that freedom can either be present or absent in certain situations for various reasons that are not associated with metaphysics (Coates & McKenna, 2024). Thus, the causal determinism is independent of the truth of any future outcomes. Free will is considered a prerequisite for moral responsibility and therefore, compatibilism is applied in supporting the relationship between moral responsibility and determinism. Political liberty is not a metaphysical idea and therefore statements about political liberty such as the Bill of Rights in the United States assume moral liberty in choosing to perform otherwise than what actually one ought to do (Locke, 2015). Some compatibilists are internalists or structuralists whose views propose that whether an agent is morally

responsible for their actions is dependent on their psychological structure at that particular time. In contrast, externalist compatibilists or historicists holds the view that an agent's history can form a difference as to whether or not they are morally responsible. Although, compatibilists agree on certain aspects of moral responsibility and that determined agents may not be morally responsible; they have divergent views on how the history of an agent affects their moral responsibility (Barnes, 2016). According to Cyr (2020), the fundamental challenge for internalists is based on several incidences of manipulation (Cyr, 2020). There is a constant worry that as long as an agent's account of moral responsibility has a time-slice perspective (internalist), then it is necessary for their actions on moral responsibility to be justified by manipulated agents who appears not to be morally responsible for their actions and behaviours. The main response by internalists such as Harry Frankfurt and Gary Watson is to assume that a commitment to compatibilism is similar to a commitment to internalism (Frankfurt, 1982; Watson, 1999). According to Mele (2016; 2019), this popular response by internalists is untenable and cannot be defended (Mele, 2016, 2019). The elements of determinism and freedom have been combined with moral philosophy and other components. It is based on reasoning about what an individual ought to do and holding them up accountable for their actions based on the principle that they can be judged for performing or no performing what they ought to have performed. Our study seeks to expound on the aspects of free will, moral responsibility and compatibilism based on consciousness and culture. Our main objective is to examine the relationship between free will and moral responsibility, and also, compare externalist compatibilism and internalism compatibilism.

2. METHODS

2.1 Study Design

Our study adopted a mixed methods approach based on the focus on axiology, consciousness, and culture. Qualitative methods were based on thematic analysis allowing us to uncover the subjective experiences, values, and interpretations that shape consciousness within cultural contexts. In contrast, quantitative aspects allowed us to examine prevalent cultural values and their distribution across different populations.

2.2 Textual Analysis

We adopted textual analysis as the basis of our qualitative technique for

data collection by focusing on the philosophical works of prominent thinkers who have grappled with the complex questions surrounding free will and moral responsibility such as Harry Frankfurt, Gary Watson, P.F. Strawson, A.J. Ayer, F.H. Bradley, John Stuart Mill, David Hume, Thomas Hobbes, Aristotle, and John Fischer (see Figure 1) (David, 2018; Fischer et al., 2024; Frankfurt, 2018; Macdonald & Krishnan, 2005; Strawson, 2008; Watson, 1999).

Closely reading and re-reading the works of Aristotle ("*Nichomachean Ethics*"), Thomas Hobbes ("*Leviathan*"), David Hume ("*Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*") (David, 2018), F.H. Bradley ("*Ethical Studies*"), A.J. Ayer ("*Freedom and Necessity*"), Harry Frankfurt ("*Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility," "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person*") (Frankfurt, 1982, 2018), P.F. Strawson ("*Freedom and Resentment*") (Strawson, 2008), and John Fischer ("*Four Views on Free Will*") formed the basis of our textual analysis (Fischer et al., 2024). We examined their arguments, terminology, and the nuanced use of language to ensure a comprehensive understanding of their individual perspectives. Then, employing thematic analysis, we analysed the texts, identifying recurring themes and patterns. Initial codes were retrieved organically to capture central concepts such as compatibilism, determinism, moral agency, and the influence of values. Through refining and grouping, these initial codes coalesced into broader themes representing distinct schools of thought and perspectives on free will and moral responsibility.
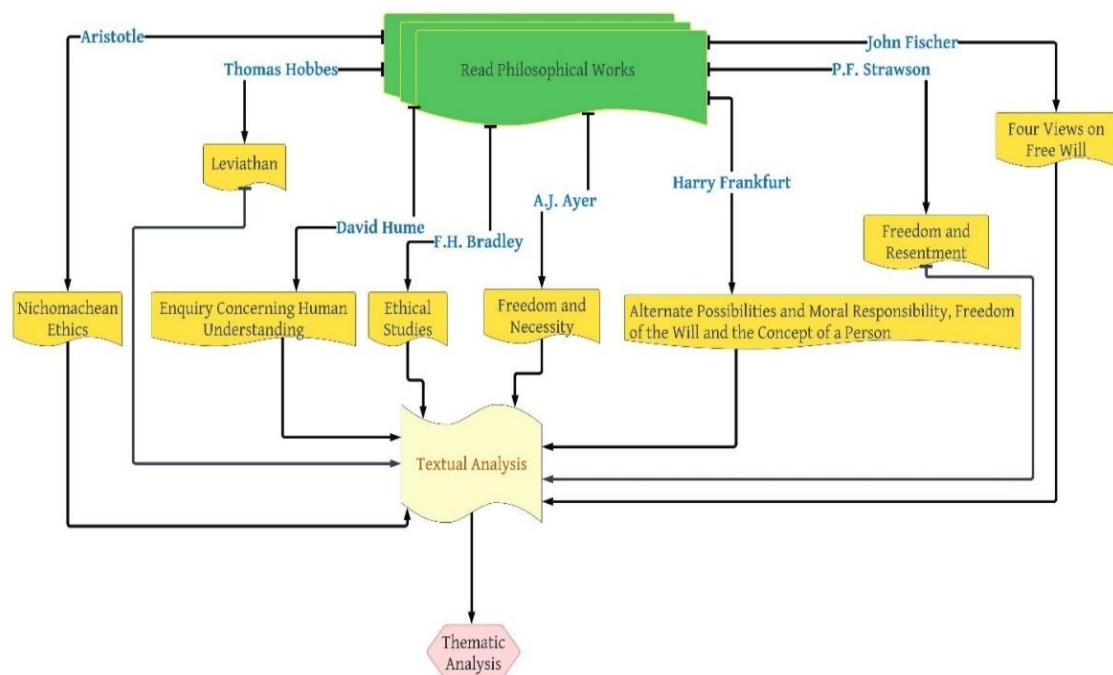

Figure 1: Illustration of Textual Analysis of Selected Philosophical Works

2.3 Thematic Analysis

Aristotle's "*Nichomachean Ethics*" unveiled a virtue-based approach to moral responsibility. Hobbes' "*Leviathan*" offered a stark contrast, presenting a society governed by laws and sovereign power, where free will becomes synonymous with the absence of external constraints. Hume's "*Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*" challenged traditional notions of free will by highlighting the causal chain of events shaping our choices (David, 2018), raising questions about the very existence of genuine freedom. Bradley's "*Ethical Studies*" examined the complexities of moral judgment while Ayer's "*Freedom and Necessity*" tackled the logical implications of determinism. Frankfurt's "*Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility*" and "*Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person*" introduced the influential concept of "second-order desires.'' Strawson's "*Freedom and Resentment*" explored the interplay between reactive attitudes and moral responsibility. Fischer's "*Four Views on Free Will*" provided a contemporary overview of the major debates in the field, offering a valuable platform for comparative analysis. In addition to our textual analysis, we examined cultural artifacts from various Chinese contexts to gain firsthand insights into how values shape consciousness and cultural expression. We closely studied traditional Chinese paintings and calligraphy, appreciating how the emphasis on balance, brushstrokes, and subject matter reflected the underlying values of harmony with nature and the pursuit of inner peace. We also analysed modern art movements such as the 85 New Wave which challenged traditional values and explored themes of individual expression and social critique. Lastly, we examined the captivating world of Chinese opera and its elaborate costumes, symbolism, and storytelling. Additionally, we investigated folk dances from various regions, each imbued with distinct values related to local traditions, ethnic identity, and community spirit.

2.4 Data Analysis

All analyses were conducted in MS Excel. Identification of recurrent themes and concepts was performed in NVivo software and the frequency of themes was graphed or tabulated. All qualitative and quantitative data were screened carefully before triangulation to ensure accuracy and consistency.

3. RESULTS

Across various philosophical perspectives, diverse arguments for and

against compatibilism emerge highlighting the complexity of free will and responsibility debates (see Table 1). While Aristotle and Hobbes emphasize external influences on choices and differing in their stances on individual agency. Hume argues for determinism while Bradley and Frankfurt present conditional compatibilism based on internal coherence and higher self-alignment. Ayer remains neutral focusing on responsibility within a deterministic framework. Additionally, Strawson's reactive attitudes theory challenges compatibilism with its emphasis on limitations to responsibility.

Table 1: Compatibilism in Selected Philosophical Works

Philosopher	Externalist Arguments	Internalist Arguments	Overall Stance
Aristotle	Social context and upbringing influence character, impacting choices	Reason and virtue shape individual will	Compatibilist (Virtue Ethics)
Thomas Hobbes	Social contract limits freedom, deterministic laws govern actions	Individual reason within societal constraints	Soft Determinism (Social Contract Theory)
David Hume	Determinism due to causal laws, no free will in traditional sense	Psychological factors like desires and beliefs influence choices	Incompatibilist (Empiricism)
F.H. Bradley	Higher self-embodies true self, aligning with good leads to free will	Individual desires and motivations may conflict with higher self	Conditional Compatibilist (Ethical Idealism)
A.J. Ayer	Logical limitations prevent meaningful discussion of free will	Focus on responsibility within deterministic framework	Neutral on Compatibilism (Logical Positivism)
Harry Frankfurt	Lack of "wanting to want" undermines free will and responsibility	Internal coherence and second-order desires essential for free will	Conditional Compatibilist (Frankfurt's Compatibilism)
P.F. Strawson	Freedom from external coercion, but reactive attitudes limit responsibility	Internal desires and motivations influence responsibility	Skeptical of Compatibilism (Reactive Attitudes Theory)

In Table 1, externalist arguments exemplified by Aristotle and Hobbes emphasized the influence of social context, upbringing, and societal constraints on individual choices. Internalist arguments represented by

Hume and Frankfurt focused on internal factors such as desires, beliefs, and second-order desires as determinants of free will. Additionally, conditional compatibilist perspectives of Bradley proposed an alignment with a higher self for free will, while skeptical stances of Strawson questioned compatibilism due to external influences.

Table 2: The different views on the arguments of compatibilism

Argument	Explanation	Strengths
Externalist Compatibilism: Focuses on external factors like social conditioning, upbringing, and brain states shaping choices	Acknowledges societal and environmental influences on free will	May downplay individual agency and responsibility
Internalist Compatibilism: Focuses on internal factors like desires, beliefs, and second-order desires determining free will	Emphasizes individual control over internal states and choices	May neglect the impact of external factors on shaping those internal states
Frankfurt's Second-Order Desires: Agrees with internalist view, but emphasizes need for higher-order desires aligning with true self to achieve free will	Provides a nuanced understanding of internal coherence and authentic choices	May be difficult to determine when second-order desires truly represent the "true self"
Strawson's Negative Liberty: Freedom defined as absence of external coercion, limiting free will debates to external constraints	Offers a clear and practical definition of freedom relevant to legal and social contexts	May neglect the internal complexities of choice and responsibility in compatibilist discussions

In Table 2, externalist compatibilism acknowledges the impact of social factors on choice, but it risks downplaying individual agency. Internalist compatibilism emphasizes individual control, yet neglects the external influences shaping our desires and beliefs.

Frankfurt's second-order desires offer a nuanced view of authentic choices based on higher-order preferences, but face challenges in identifying the "true self." Finally, Strawson's negative liberty provides a clear legal and social definition of freedom, but overlooks internal complexities of choice and responsibility within the compatibilism
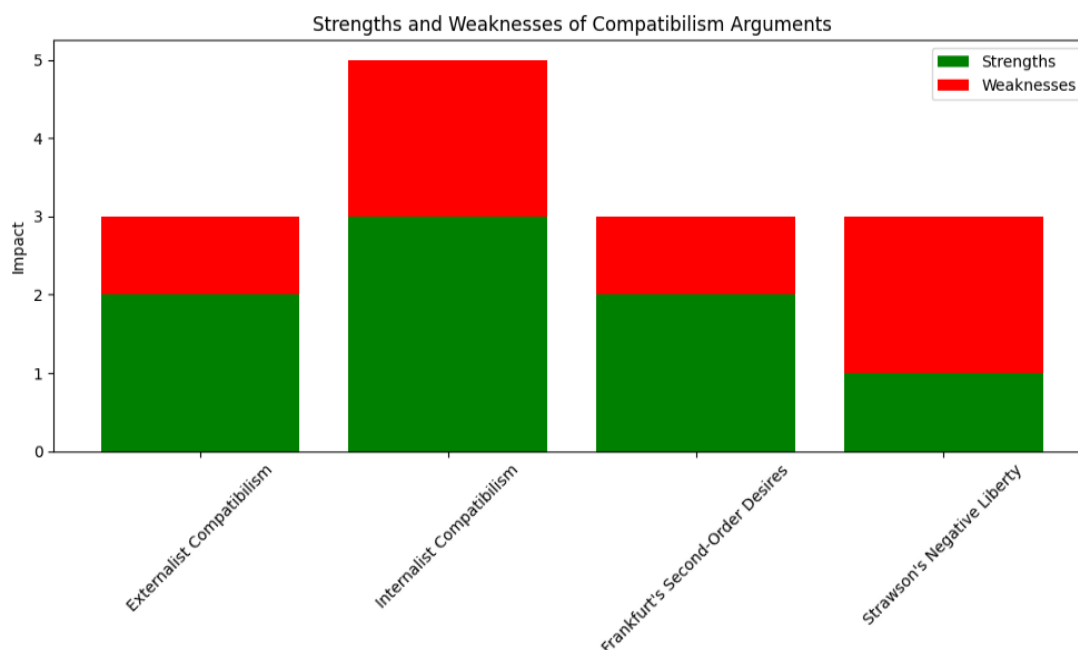
framework (see Figure 2 and 3).

Figure 2: The different views on the arguments of compatibilism focusing on impact scores between strengths and weaknesses.
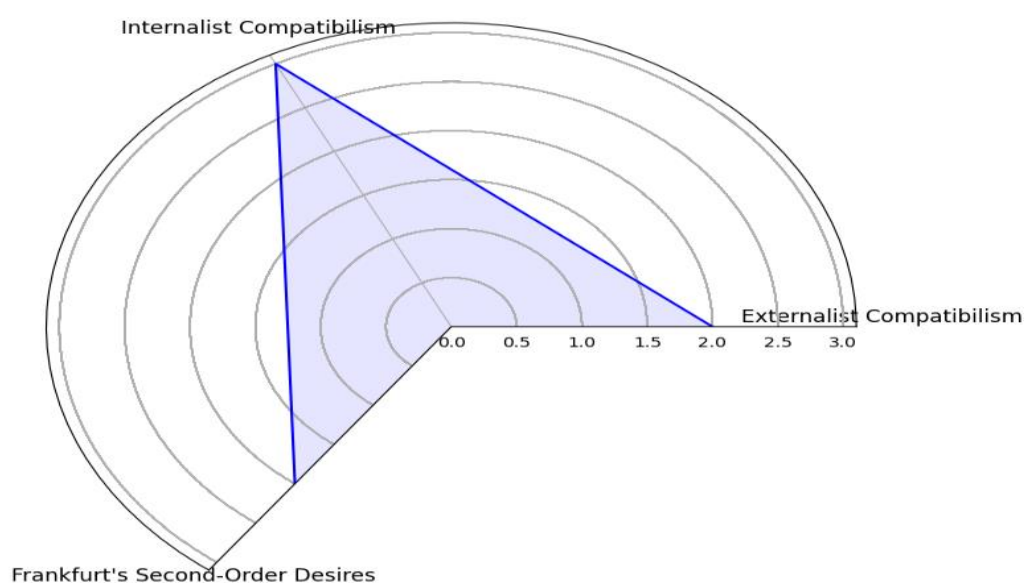

Figure 3: A radar chart showing the strengths of internalist compatibilism, externalist compatibilism and Frankfurt's second-order desires.

In Figures 2 and 3, the strengths outweigh the weaknesses with externalist compatibilism examining the impact of social factors on choice while Internalist compatibilism emphasizes individual control. Frankfurt's second-order desires offers a view of authentic choices based on higher-order preferences.

Table 3: Free Will and Moral Responsibility in Cultural Artifacts

| Artifact	Cultural Context	Free Will Depiction	Moral Responsibility Emphasis
Traditional Chinese Painting	Harmony with nature, inner peace	Limited individual choice, focus on following natural order	Collective responsibility for maintaining balance
Modern Chinese Art (85 New Wave)	Individual expression, social critique	Emphasis on individual choices and consequences	Questioning traditional notions of moral responsibility
Chinese Opera	Confucian values, filial piety	Limited individual agency within social hierarchy	Strong emphasis on fulfilling societal and familial duties
Regional Folk Dances	Local traditions, ethnic identity	Expression of community values through shared movement	Collective responsibility for upholding cultural traditions
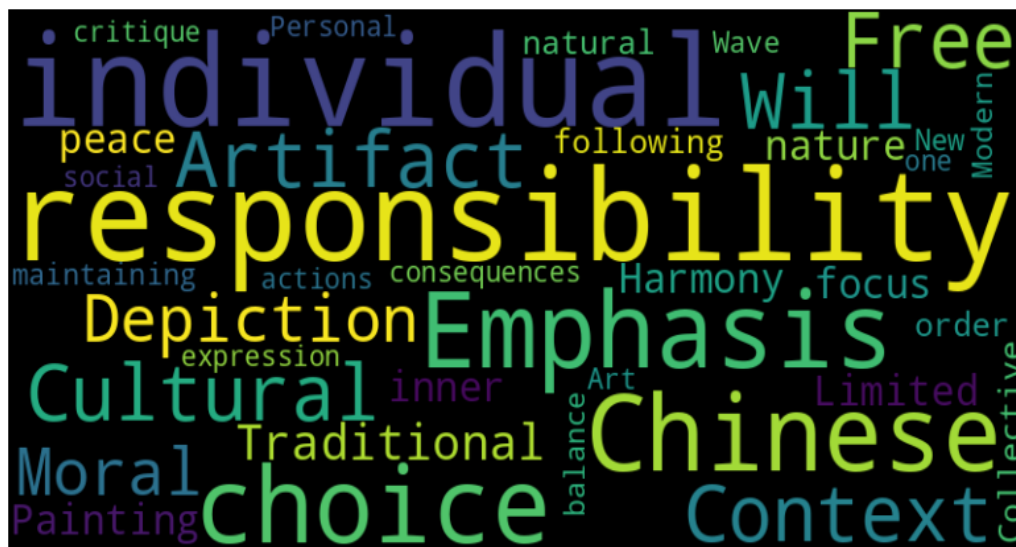
Figure 4: A word cloud of frequent themes in Free Will and Moral Responsibility in Cultural Artifacts.

In Table 3 and Figure 4, the relationship between free will, moral responsibility, and cultural expression through various artifacts was examined. In traditional Chinese painting the emphasis lies on harmony with nature and inner peace with limited individual choices and a focus on following the natural order. Collective responsibility for maintaining balance underscores the importance of aligning oneself with the larger cosmic harmony. In contrast, modern Chinese art, exemplified by the 85 New Wave advocated for individual expression and social critique. This shift prioritizes individual choices and their consequences and often questioning traditional notions of moral responsibility. Chinese opera was

rooted in Confucian values and filial piety depicting limited individual agency within the social hierarchy. Strong emphasis rests on fulfilling societal and familial duties, highlighting the primacy of collective responsibility over individual desires. Finally, regional folk dances draw on local traditions and ethnic identity expressing community values through shared movement. Thus, collective responsibility takes centre stage as individuals uphold and transmit cultural heritage through their coordinated actions.

Table 4: Axiological Influences on Consciousness and Cultural Expressions

Cultural Value	Impact on Consciousness	Example
Harmony With Nature (China)	Focus on interconnectedness, awareness of surroundings	Feeling of peace and belonging in natural spaces
Individualism (Western Culture)	Emphasis on self-expression, unique perspectives	Increased self-awareness and exploration of personal desires
Collectivism (Eastern Cultures)	Prioritization of group needs over individual desires	Focus on social norms and fulfilling societal roles
Cultural Value	Expression in Art and Literature	Example
Filial Piety (Confucianism)	Emphasis on respect and obedience towards elders	Stories highlighting family loyalty and sacrifice
Social Justice (Western Ideals)	Critique of inequality and advocacy for social change	Protest art and literature addressing societal issues
Spiritual Enlightenment (Buddhism)	Pursuit of inner peace and understanding	Meditative practices and artistic expressions of mindfulness

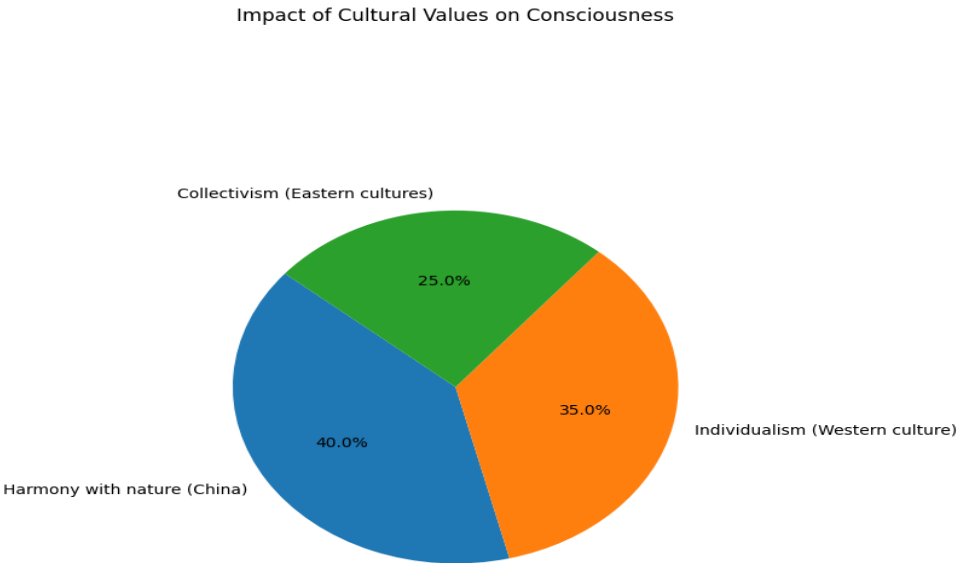Impact of Cultural Values on Consciousness

Figure 5: A Pie-chart comparing the cultural values and impact on consciousness in China, Eastern and Western values.

In Table 4 and Figure 5, Harmony with nature was prevalent in China and fostered a sense of interconnectedness and awareness of surroundings leading to feelings of peace and belonging within natural spaces. In contrast, individualism was prominent in Western culture and emphasized self-expression and exploration of unique perspectives and fostering increased self-awareness and introspection. Collectivism was a characteristic of Eastern cultures that prioritizes group needs over individual desires and shaping consciousness towards social norms and fulfilling societal roles.

4. DISCUSSION

Our study established that philosophers throughout history have presented diverse viewpoints with each highlighting different influences on our choices. Aristotle emphasizes the role of social context and reason while Hume, argues that determinism negates the very possibility of free will. Intriguing perspectives of Bradley's conditional compatibilism and Harry Frankfurt's "wanting to want" principle offer understandings of how internal factors shape our actions. Interestingly, A.J. Ayer remains neutral due to perceived logical limitations, while P.F. Strawson questions compatibilism altogether due to the influence of external factors.

Our analysis explores how cultural values manifest in various artistic expressions. In traditional Chinese painting, harmony with nature and inner peace take centre stage with limited individual choice giving way to a focus on following the natural order and collective responsibility for maintaining balance. In stark contrast, modern Chinese art exemplified by the 85 New Wave embraces individual expression and social critique while prioritizing individual choices and their consequences while often challenging traditional notions of moral responsibility. Chinese opera steeped in Confucian values and filial piety and depicts a societal structure where individual agency is limited within the hierarchy emphasizing the fulfilment of societal and familial duties over individual desires. Regional folk dances further showcase the power of collective responsibility as individuals uphold and transmit their cultural heritage through shared movement, expressing community values in vibrant artistic forms.

According to Fischer (2024), the existence of free will based on alternative possibilities creates challenges and skeptical views among scholars due to the doctrines of causal determinism (Fischer et al., 2024). Causal determinism is a concept that states that every event accompanied

by a choice and behaviour is inherently and deterministically caused by particular past events and therefore, the choice and behaviour accompanying it is a process of the causal chain that is deterministically linked to some previous aspects. Particularly, an individual can suggest that causal determinism is a doctrine that involves a complete set of laws of nature and descriptions about the "genuine" and non-relational facts about the world. If causal determinism is true, it implies that the past and the natural laws consist of a unique and specific present and future path of the world. Thus, it is plausible to assert that when an individual has access to the past and a statement of the laws, then, they can precisely state what will happen in the future. However, it does not ascribe to the truth of the metaphysical doctrines of causal determinism that any individual has access to truths about the universe and its laws.

We contend that no individual has the knowledge of whether or not the doctrine of causal determinism obtains these elements. Physicists suggest that examination of physical phenomena at the basic micro-level makes it feasible to conclude that causal determinism is false, therefore, indeterminism is true. However, indeterminism is a metaphysical idea rather than an epistemic doctrine. It implies that causal indeterminism deals with the indeterminacies of nature and the incompleteness of our perception and understanding of nature. In contrast, some philosophers and physicists believe that causal determinism is true and what is currently perceived as genuine metaphysical indeterminacies is a basic reflection of the deficiency of our knowledge about the world.

In our study, we cannot ascertain that causal determinism is false and therefore, it is important to acknowledge what would follow and the consequences if causal determinism was actually true. Thus, it is a worry that there are strong arguments using aspects of common sense that seeks to show that causal determinism is actually true and no human being possess the free will in the sense that incorporates the alternative possibilities. Thus, these arguments propose that the future does not consist of a garden of forking paths as proposed in one of the assumptions of causal determinism. Basically, if causal determinism is true then no individual possesses the free will of alternative possibilities, freedom of choosing or doing otherwise, or the capacity to choose a path from all the "genuine" or "open" paths.

Aristotle (384-322BCE), in his works "*Nichomachean Ethics*" suggested that human beings should be held accountable for their actions that they have freely selected to do based on voluntary actions (McClure, 2022; Smith, 2020). However, we must acknowledge that "the dispositions of

human beings are involuntary in a similar sense to their actions", thus, Aristotle postulated that humans possess the free will because they are free to select their actions within the limits and boundaries of nature. In line with this argument, we propose that human beings have the freedom to choose among the limited alternatives issued to them based on their dispositions. Additionally, human beings have a unique ability to shape their dispositions into moral characters and responsibility. Therefore, human beings have a freedom derived from two senses; Initially, humans can select between the limited alternatives resulting from their dispositions and alter or develop their dispositions when presented with these limited alternatives. Secondly, another perspective is that the capacity of self-determination and reflection suggested by this freedom presupposes the existence of something in individuals that lies beyond causal order. Hence, the Aristotelian view of compatibilism is actually a hidden form of libertarianism.

Our findings propose that the emergency of classical learning during the Renaissance led to a philosophical shift from compatibilism to the divinity of an individual. According to Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), the only fundamental suitable condition for free will and moral responsibility was a relationship and interdependence an individual's choices and corresponding actions. In his works "Leviathan (1651), "Hobbes argues that free will was the liberty of a man to perform whatever he had the will or desire or inclination to do (Sagar, 2018). He stated that if individuals were capable of doing the things they chose, then they would be automatically free (Sagar, 2018). Similarly, during the Enlightenment period, Scottish philosophers such as David Hume (1711-1776) asserted that the clear incompatibility between determinism and free will was based on the existing confusion on the form of causation (David, 2018; Frederick et al., 2020). Hume was a staunch compatibilist and believed causation as a feature used by human beings to project onto the world. He believed that particular things (X) were the cause of other things (Y) was similar to stating that things of X evoked in the mind, the expectations and ideas of things related to Y. Thus, in nature, there was nothing that corresponded to the required connections and thought to have existed between the two causally related things. There exists a regularity and consistency between the actions and choices of humans which allows us to postulate that human activities are a consequence of their choices which forms a basis for all that is required by free will. In the works of Hume in 1748 "*Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*", he proposes that through liberty, individuals can only infer a power of actions or non-actions based on the determinants of

their will (Boeker, 2023; David, 2018).

John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) advocated for compatibilism in the 19th century and proposed that an individual who can be considered free based on their habits or temptations and independent of their masters (Vela Serrano, 2022). In contrast, unfree individuals, are those who are considered to follow their desires or wishes even when they have genuine reasons not to do so. Mill's view is that the compatibilist thoughts are consistent and aligned with Kant's views on the reliance of reasoning as the basic path of freedom and anticipating the notions of contemporary compatibilism that an individual who is free is one whose internal wishes and desires do not differ with reason. In Bradley's (1846-1924) works on "*Ethical Studies*" in 1876, he postulated the "vulgar notion" of moral responsibility was independent of compatibilism and libertarianism (Skorupski, 2012). We propose that determinism does not permit free will since it postulates that human beings are not considered the ultimate sources of their actions. Furthermore, indeterminism only implies that human beings can make random decisions. However, it is intuitively obvious that human beings possess a free will and there is no philosophical basis that has proven otherwise. Bradley championed for common sense because the philosophical theory and basis of determinism conflicted with the underlying moral intuitions of an individual and thus, it was considered a better option to abandon the basis of determinism as opposed to moral intuitions.

Although, Bradley's arguments were outstanding, compatibilism was evidenced in the 20th century philosophers such as GE Moore (1873-1958) who reconciled the elements of free will and determinism based on a conditional interpretation of freedom. Based on Moore, to suggest that an individual had acted freely was to say that "I should" have acted contrary "if I had chosen" to do so, or "if I had done a particular act of will, then I ought to have performed something which I did not do." On the basis of this interpretation, the fact that an individual is capable of not being in a position to select otherwise does not undermine their free agency. Our findings showed that the notion of acting otherwise was examined by Ayer (1910-1989) in his works on "Freedom and Necessity" in 1946 where he suggested that "to say that an individual could have acted otherwise is to say that they should have acted otherwise if they had so chosen." Thus, the ability to act otherwise is dependent on a difference in the past actions that permits an individual to act differently (Macdonald & Krishnan, 2005).

However, our study found that Ayer's account of freedom is very weak despite being completely determined by the past. Also, it raises several

questions about the sufficient and detailed explanations of the intuitive basis of free will. Some scholars and philosophers have alluded that such type of freedom is worthy while others have suggested that it is closely aligned with the provision of free agency desired by human beings. It is because it does not imply that human beings can be morally responsible for their actions resulting from free will.

Our findings were consistent with Mickelson, K. M. (2023) in proposing that contemporary compatibilists have opposed the hard determinist's arguments based on different perspectives (Mickelson, 2023). For instance, in the works of Harry Frankfurt on "*Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility*" in 1969, he questioned whether an individual's ability to do otherwise is significantly required for freedom (Frankfurt, 2018). In cases where the capacity to perform otherwise is not necessary and required, Frankfurt shared similar ideas with Hobbes and Humes in suggesting that freedom solely relies within the self. In his works "*Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person*" in 1971, Frankfurt suggested that possessing free will was an issue of identifying with an individual's desires in a particular sense. Philosophers such as Strawson (1919-2006) published in their works "Freedom and Resentment" in 1962, a different perspective of compatibilism that was based on psychology (Strawson, 2008). According to Strawson, people would show their emotions of anger, gratitude and resentment in response to the activities of others. Furthermore, he argued that making individuals morally accountable for their actions is similar to having these feelings or reacting towards these feelings (Heyndels et al., 2023).

Our analysis suggests that the internalist views of Frankfurt have been widely accepted and influential compared to the accounts of others such as Watson. Frankfurt's views on agents' histories suggest that, to the extent that an individual identifies themselves with the consequences of their actions, then, they assume responsibility for these actions and acquire moral responsibility. Furthermore, the questions of how their activities and identification with their consequences is irrelevant to whether their performed actions freely or there are morally responsible for their actions (Frankfurt, 1982).

According to Frankfurt (1988), If the action of an agent or how they identified with the actions is irrelevant to their morally responsibility, then it becomes immaterial whether the agent had been manipulated by another into assuming that identity and performing the corresponding action. These views by Frankfurt have been to be counterintuitive by several philosophers who required a response based on this. In his response,

Frankfurt suggested that, if an individual performed something that they wanted to do and had no reservations about it but is fully behind their actions, then he assumes moral responsibility and it does not matter how they got that way. Moreover, he added that a person's desires and attitudes must be properly integrated into their general psychic conditions, otherwise, their actions are not genuinely theirs. As far as there are interrelationships, it implies that their actions are fundamentally attributed to them and thus, there is no difference in examining their moral responsibility and how their achieved it (Frankfurt, 2002).

In cases of manipulation, Frankfurt observed that a manipulating agent can succeed based on their interventions in offering an individual with specific feelings, thoughts and a new character. Then, that individual becomes morally responsible for their actions based on where this new character leads them. Human beings are fundamentally fashioned and sustained by circumstances beyond their control. Also, the causes of these circumstances can change a human being radically without necessarily being involved as morally responsible agents. Hence, it is immaterial whether these causes are operated by the virtue of natural forces that alter our environment or whether they are operated through the deliberate manipulations by other human agents (Frankfurt, 2002).

According to Frankfurt (2002), there is no basic differences between an individual being caused to adhere to his internalist views on moral responsibility by another's agency or natural forces (Frankfurt, 2002). Thus, if Frankfurt is accurate and correct, then there are no relevant differences and internalism should be interpreted from compatibilism because compatibilist agree that agents caused by the past and natural forces may not be morally responsible. According to Watson (1999), the conditions constituting free agency for a compatibilist is not conceptually dependent on their source (Watson, 1999). Thus, in this perspective, free and morally responsible agent is not based on a historical perspective. Consequently, compatibilism is concerned with the conceptual view that a free and responsible agent should exercise their agency as the products of extremely potent designers. For instance, a compatibilist account of free agency in X makes it possible for X to have a causally deterministic world. If it is possible, then a super-powerful being created the X world by combining all antecedent conditions based on relevant laws (Watson, 1999). The views of Watson are similar to Frankfurt in suggesting that if compatibilism was indeed true, then it is possible for agents to achieve satisfaction of any accounts of compatibilism based on moral responsibility and free agency despite the presence of super-powerful beings (Double, 1990).

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, our analysis revealed differences in the philosophical perspectives on free will, highlighting the influence of social context, individual desires, and higher-order preferences. While Aristotle emphasized reason and social upbringing, Hume argued for determinism's challenge to free will. Intriguing ideas like conditional compatibilism and the "wanting to want" principle offered nuanced understandings of internal influences. We explored how cultural values manifest in artistic expressions. Traditional Chinese art was steeped in harmony with nature and showcased collective responsibility, while modern art prioritized individual expression and challenged traditional norms. Harmony with nature fostered interconnectedness and peace, while individualism promoted self-awareness and exploration. Collectivism emphasized group needs and shaped consciousness towards social norms and fulfilling societal roles.

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