

Abstract, "Hard Determinism, Humeanism, and Virtue Ethics"
Southern Journal of Philosophy, Vol. 46, No. 1, 2008, pp. 121-144.

Ben Vilhauer, William Paterson University of New Jersey

Hard determinists hold that we never have alternative possibilities of action—that we only can do what we actually do. This means that if hard determinists accept the "ought implies can" principle, they must accept that it is never the case that we ought to do anything we do not do. In other words, they must reject the view that there can be "ought"-based moral reasons to do things we do not do. Hard determinists who wish to accommodate moral reasons to do things we do not do can instead appeal to Humean moral reasons that are based on desires to be virtuous. Moral reasons grounded on desires to be virtuous do not depend on our being able to act on those reasons in the way that "ought"-based moral reasons do.