

**THE CAUSATIONAL AND FREE  
WILL THEORIES OF VOLITION:  
BEING A REVIEW OF DR.  
CARPENTER'S "MENTAL  
PHYSIOLOGY", PP. 1-105**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649447947

The Causational and Free Will Theories of Volition: Being a Review of Dr. Carpenter's "Mental Physiology", pp. 1-105 by Malcolm Guthrie

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**MALCOLM GUTHRIE**

**THE CAUSATIONAL AND FREE  
WILL THEORIES OF VOLITION:  
BEING A REVIEW OF DR.  
CARPENTER'S "MENTAL  
PHYSIOLOGY", PP. 1-105**



*April 18 1877*

**THE CAUSATIONAL AND FREE WILL  
THEORIES OF VOLITION:**

BEING A REVIEW OF

**DR. CARPENTER'S "MENTAL PHYSIOLOGY."**

BY

**MALCOLM GUTHRIE.**

WILLIAMS AND NORGATE,  
14, HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON;  
AND 20, SOUTH FREDERICK STREET, EDINBURGH.

1877.

# ON THE CAUSATIONAL AND FREE WILL THEORIES OF VOLITION:

BEING A REVIEW OF DR. CARPENTER'S "MENTAL  
PHYSIOLOGY."

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	i
<b>PART I.—THE CAUSATIONAL THEORY.</b>	
<b>SECTION 1.—<i>On Causation.</i></b>	
Defined as Uniformity of Sequence . . . . .	1
<b>SECTION 2.—<i>Statement of the Causational Theory.</i></b>	
The law of Heredity—Adaptation to Environment—Special Tuition—General Tuition—The Education of Circum- stance—The Growth of Reason—The Developed Normal Man—Classification of kinds of Actions—Man and his Motives—The Grounds of Belief . . . . .	2
<b>SECTION 3.—<i>Dr. Carpenter's Objections.</i></b>	
Quotations—General Summary of Objections . . . . .	8
<b>SECTION 4.—<i>On the Identification of the Causational Theory with the Materialistic Hypothesis.</i></b>	
Only one kind of Causation—Classifications according to subject matter—Causational Theory independent of Materialism—"Residual Phenomena" as not included in Causation . . . . .	10

SECTION 5.—*Dr. Carpenter's Objections to the Materialistic Hypothesis.*

Argument from Abnormal States—Psychical Development dependent upon Physiological Cultivation—Argument from the Non-Equivalence of Force . . . . .	18
---	----

SECTION 6.—*On the Causational Theory as making Man an Automaton.*

Dr. Carpenter's Definition—Derivation of Term—Description of Automata Proper—Automatism and Evolution—Against the employment of Similes—Professor Huxley on Automatism—Automatism rendered into Causation—What is there special in Automatism?—Automatic identical with Involuntary—The Practical Reason—Muscular Activity as controlled—Motives as controlled—Practical Reason as controlling—Intermediate Summary—Choice the function of Practical Reason—Is the Rational Volitional Automatic?—The Practical Reason as a motive . . . . .	16
--	----

SECTION 7.—*On the objection that Choice is incompatible with the Causational Theory.*

Choice incompatible with Automatism—Choice compatible with Causation . . . . .	40
--	----

SECTION 8.—*Mr. Sidgwick on the Practical Reason and Free Will.*

The identification of the Practical Reason with Free Will not correct—Deliberation and Free Will . . . . .	43
--	----

SECTION 9.—*On the objection that Effort is incompatible with the Causational Theory.*

Effort inconsistent with Automatism—A special motive suggested—Supported by Mr. Sidgwick and by Dr. Bain—Examination of Dr. Bain's explanation—Characteristics	
--	--

of the Motive—The Will Motive in various combinations—The Will Motive and the Practical Reason—The Will Motive and Self-Control—Summary . . . . .	45
---	----

SECTION 10.—*On the objection that on the Causational Theory there can be no responsibility or blameability.*

Responsibility dependent upon Choice—The amount of the power of Choice—Blame and Approbation sympathetic—The natural feeling of Resentment—How it affects the argument as to Responsibility—The rationalisation of Resentment—The Causational Theory as affecting accomplished and contemplated actions—Summary . . . . .	53
---	----

## PART II.—THE FREE WILL THEORY.

SECTION 1.—*Examination of the terms employed.*

“Volition.” The predominant activity for the time being . . . . .	62
“The Will.” The aggregate of volitions . . . . .	62
“Power and weakness of Will” . . . . .	63
“Free.” Unconstrained and unobstructed . . . . .	63
“Free Will.” Involved in definition of “Volition” . . . . .	63
“Free Causation.” The adjective inapplicable . . . . .	64
“Free.” A superfluous and misleading word . . . . .	65
“Free Choice.” The predominance of Reason . . . . .	65
“Free Agent.” A term of no philosophical use . . . . .	65
“Self-Determining Power.” No meaning, unless a denial of uniformity of sequence . . . . .	66
“Fatalism,” and “Necessity” . . . . .	67

SECTION 2.—*On the Testimony of Consciousness.*

Mode of obtaining it—What it testifies—We cannot know entity, but only phenomena—We cannot be conscious of Non-Causation . . . . .	67
--	----



SECTION 3.— <i>On the Self-Determining Power.</i>	
Where is the breach of Continuity of Sequence?—Is it that the Self-Determining power has no definite nature?—Is it in the origination of the power?—The doctrine of Limitations—Ranks as an ordinary natural activity . . .	71
SECTION 4.— <i>On the Nature and Function of the Self-Determining Power, as explained by Dr. Carpenter, showing it to be identical with the exercise of Reason, the Reason Motive, and the Motive for the effectuation of Volitions</i>	
	77
SECTION 5.— <i>On the Self-Determining Power explained by Dr. Carpenter as subject to Law.</i>	
The Law of Heredity—The Laws of Education and Development—Dependence upon Bodily States . . . . .	81
SECTION 6.— <i>Development and Necessary Truths.</i>	87
SECTION 7.— <i>Recapitulation</i>	88

---

APPENDIX.

<i>Mr. Bradley on Free Will and Determinism.</i>	91
--	----

## INTRODUCTION.

---

Being attracted some time ago by the title of a book,—*Mental Physiology*, by Dr. W. B. Carpenter—and considering that the title indicated a peculiar treatment of mental phenomena, I bought it; the more readily as the author's name is widely known as one of deserved eminence in the scientific world.

I thought the position indicated by the title a good one, and that the book would afford instructive and interesting reading; anticipations fulfilled to the utmost, not only on account of the stores of information contained in it, but also because one of its principal objects turned out to be the demarcation of the realm of Law in human action, and the realm of Free Will.

That the Causational Theory and the Theory of Free Will are both true appeared to me clear, although the advocates of the former (principally men of science) always seemed to make man too much like a machine; while the advocates of the latter (principally theologians) used language incapable of being represented in thought, and therefore unintelligible. Now, I thought, when we have a man like Dr. Carpenter treating the subject impartially on both sides, we are getting on the right track. But the more I studied his Work, the more I became convinced that Dr. Carpenter had failed in the task he had set himself, and I embodied my criticisms in an Essay read before the Literary and Philosophical Society of Liverpool, April, 1877.

Having further pursued the study, by the perusal of other authors, the reading has had a tendency to sink Dr. Carpenter's Work, in this particular respect, to a rather subordinate position; but as it is one which, more than any other Work known to me, expresses popular and general views, and in which the juxtaposition of the two great bodies of opinion is most fully and fairly presented, I have thought it expedient in this Essay to retain the same title and method of treating the subject.

As some severe criticism will be found in the following pages, I take the opportunity to express here not only my admiration of

Dr. Carpenter's book in general, but my entire concurrence with what I conceive to be its special aim—viz., the vindication of the power of Self-rule.

The existence of such a power has been contended for by the great moral teachers of all ages; is a fact within the consciousness of most of us, however explained; and its cultivation to a higher degree is held to be within the means of almost every man; the attainment of it, as a commanding force, being regarded as a noble possession.

The opinions I have formed are expressed with more or less clearness in various books that I have read, though not grouped together for mutual support in the form in which I think they should be co-ordinated. This is my main reason for printing this Essay, together with the desire to assist in doing away with that obscurely fatalistic feeling that results to many from too much dwelling upon the sequences of Causation; a feeling as if the stamina of their moral constitution had departed, and as if they had been deprived of that lordly choice of Reason, and vigour of Will, which they had hitherto possessed, but must henceforward resign; an insidious and baleful influence, the more sinister in its effects because working in the innermost recesses of human thought—unexpressed to the world—and very often not properly recognised in its results by the individual himself.

81, STANLEY ROAD, BOOTLE,  
*August, 1877.*