From a bird's-eye view, the central argument of *A Theory of Determinism* appears as follows: (A) The mind is the brain; every mental event (including every decision and every framing of intention) is intimately related to a neural event. (B) Probably all neural events are deterministically caused, so thanks to the intimate relation, determinism is likely to be true of our decisions and actions. (C) Does this mean that there is no free will? Incompatibilists say yes, Compatibilists say no, and Ted Honderich says they are both wrong. Both schools fail to recognize that we have no single conception of free will, but rather several, and the prospect of determinism appropriately evokes different "families of attitudes", depending on which conception of freedom one is attending to or embracing. Three different responses to these conceptions are available: dismay, intransigence and affirmation. Affirmation is ultimately recommended.

Now swoop down lower and visualize an army of ants attacking this central argument at the details: What exactly is the intimate relation between a mental event and a neural event? Is it identity, or causal dependence, or co-occurrence, or something else? What exactly is causation, and what is determinism? (And what are events and what are attributes and what does "freedom" mean and what does "mean" mean in this context, etc?) The army is composed about equally of real ants (published philosophers) and imaginary ants (holders of logically possible, but not yet occupied, positions), clever ants and obtuse ants. And now look closely - how heroic and how appalling! - Honderich is apparently taking them all on single-handedly, one at a time.

Just as a biologist can learn a good deal about the niche an organism inhabits by examining its defences, and particularly the way it budgets them, so a reader can learn about the intellectual world a writer inhabits by seeing whose work gets short shrift, whose objections are carefully rebutted, and which issues are "too obvious" to need defence. I am unsettled by the discovery that there can be a distinguished writing in the same language as I, working on the same topics - the nature of mind, the problem of free will, the relation of our everyday conceptions to the world view of science - arriving at very similar conclusions, and yet living in such a different niche.

My first reaction was dismay; here was Honderich lavishing hundreds of pages on pointless reiterations of positions I would never even mention, so unconvincing would their demolition be for the reader, while at the same time I found him seriously misreading.

Picasso's "Tete d'Homme" will be auctioned at Christie's sale of drawings, sculpture, prints and posters from the Douglas Cooper Collection on Wednesday, November 30 at 7.00 pm. It is expected to fetch between £15,000 and £20,000.

Agreement is a rare and cherished commodity among philosophers, but it is the disagreements that can lead to discovery. From what substrate can we draw differences spring? Part of the explanation is probably geographical. For instance, the ambient attitude towards science among philosophers (in Britain) is now apparently quite unlike that in the United States, where positions expounded in defiant ignorance of the relevant science are no longer taken seriously. It is striking to an American eye to see how hard Honderich thinks he must work to persuade the general run of his colleagues of the inescapable bearing of the neurosciences and physics on their jealously guarded topics, and hence on the untenability of certain perennially tempting positions. I suspect that this appearance owes more to eccentricities in Honderich's judgment than to the actual state of play in British philosophy, this. (3) "Arguably it is with respect to our conception of our own future lives that a determinism is most challenging to us, least tolerable", but the appropriate response to this upsetting prospect is to recognize and appreciate the varieties of free will that are unscathed by it, and adjust our institutions and attitudes to fit this clear sighted vision of our circumstances; enough survives to sustain our life-hopes without the dubious crutch of the "obscure and panicky metaphysics" (P. F. Strawson) of indeterminism. somewhat different terms in our two nations, and the British version encourages, or at least permits, Honderich's project.

More specifically, it encourages Honderich to explore the implications of a dramatically conservative view of what parts of common sense are immune to scientific overthrow. For instance, his argument about the "intransigence" of a certain position (that he calls "completely free will") is based on a cherished respect for science, and aspires to resolve the conflict all we can see between what Wilfrid Sellars calls "the manifest image" of common sense and the scientific image, he is not remotely convinced by some of the philosophical campaigns that have carried the day on my side of the Atlantic. The conflict is deeper than we have thought, Honderich believes, and so he has attempted his own resolution, giving fewer hostages to science from the outset.

Central among the truths he declares to be self-evident and non-negotiable is the axiom [sic] of mental indispensability: "earlier mental events are eliminable parts of any full explanation of many mental events and also actions". What this implies is that no satisfactory account may swallow up the illusion to specifically mental events - for instance by identifying them with neural events, or with functionalist characterized events. Thus, the "full" explanation of Tom's pulling the trigger invokes *inter alia* the earlier mental event of Tom's suddenly thinking that the thing in the bushes is a tiger, then identifying this sudden thought as some purely physically described brain event would permit the trigger-pulling to be "fully explained in physical terms with nothing to no mental terms - violating the axiom. Honderich is unpersuaded by the various doctrines of co-existing levels of explanation, supervenience and emergence that have helped American "functionalist" philosophers in the cognitive science movement to satisfy both their intuitions and their respect for physical science. On this point Honderich joins forces with his colleague Colin McGinn (and the Americans, John Searle and Thomas Nagel) in insisting that these doctrines, by forsaking the primacy of the first person point of view", simply fall to "deal with half of the subject-matter."

This sets him the task of defining - not yet defending - an alternative, and the result, after 258 pages of definitional thrust and party, is the Union Theory, and its attendant doctrine of the "causation of psychoneural pairs". The "theory" looks, not surprisingly, a lot like an identity theory. For all goods lack a dual
Honderich is of those who still firmly believe, with Einstein, that the indeterminacy of quantum mechanics will eventually be made to evaporate; and whether or not he is right about that, he is certainly right to refuse to be overwhelmed by the physicists' rather impressionistic and loosely argued interpretations of the quantum-theoretical formulations, whose success is quite beyond reasonable doubt. As he success, "The end of interpretation... quantum mechanics is large part philosophical in nature. Still, it must be that some significant weight is to be given to the views of those who have a firm grip of the formulation." Honderich is not such a one (as he acknowledges) nor am I, rather than criticize his tenacious but modest attempts to undermine and restrict the physicists' near-unanimous verdict in favor of indeterminism, I will comment on his motivation for such a brave stand. It stems from his faith in an un-bendingly strict concept of causation, which he believes to be part of self-evident common sense, and which rules out, a priori, all merely probabilistic visions of causal connection. In Honderich's eyes, the burden of proof lies with the physicists and their interpreters to show indeterminism to be so much as coherent, let alone empirically supported, and he finds the standard accounts unpersuasive.

One of the virtues he sees in his defence of determinism is that it clears the air for the neuroscientists who are tackling the terrible difficult problems of causation in the nervous system, but it is ironic -- and a sign of Honderich's somewhat skewed understanding of science -- that he should thus try to save determinism for the neuroscientists just as they are discovering the vistas of noise in the nervous system, and rushing to develop probabilistic models of neural net activity. But still, suppose the physicists are wrong, and that determinism, with all its implications, is the final truth of the matter.

What are those implications? Once again Honderich upholds more of common sense, and hence sees a deeper conflict, than others have done, but in at least one regard I think he is demonstrably in error. In support of his contention that determinism definitely does cast shadows on what he calls our life-hopes, he offers, among others, the following reflection:

If things have gone well for a person, there is more to hope for in what follows on the assumption that the entire run of his or her life is fixed... If things have not gone well, or not so well as was hoped, it is at least not unreasonable to have greater hopes on the assumption that the whole of one's life is not fixed, but is connected with the activity of the self... Given the wartime premises of our reasonableness, there is reason to think that we do not tend to the idea of a fixed personal future.

This passage displays a fundamental error that probably underlies the thought of many people about determinism. Determinism does not imply or even render probable any of the following: all trends are permanent, character is by and large immutable, I am less likely to change my ways, my fortunes, or my basic nature in the future. After all, many phenomena are classically understood to be determined to be changeable, chaotic, unpredictable! The implications of having a fixed personal future are entirely distinct from the implications of having a fixed personal nature. It is the latter that is cause for dismay, perhaps, but not the former, for it may be one's fixed personal future to have a protean personal nature, highly responsive to the "activity of the self"; among the fixed personal futures are all the triumphant futures that include victory over adversity, the overcoming of weakness, the reformation of character and, for that matter, a change of luck. It could be just as determined a fact that you can learn an old dog new tricks as that you can't. The general thesis of determinism has no implications about such matters -- though the individual fields of biology and social science might on their own have either die or reassuringly messages on those scores for us -- whether or not they are themselves deterministic sciences. But perhaps once again I have underestimated the challenge; if so, Horderich will have shown that a certain valuable conception of life-hopes is still consistent with determinism.

In the course of defining and defending his theory, Honderich presents detailed discussions of virtually every topic debated in the vast recent literature on free will, and some of these discussions make valuable new contributions. In the end, the message of this book is that no matter how conservatively you cling to the home truths of the manifest image, you will never find a good use for indeterminism in support of a doctrine of free will, and hence must make your peace with determinism. But a good peace can be made, Honderich argues, and I agree. Since he reaches this gratifying conclusion after treating the antipathy and resistance to science much more patiently than I (for once) have done, and since he resolutely defends much of the common sense that reigns in his intellectual niche, he probably stands a better chance than I of being believed. But if after such an effort he finds his audience still unpersuaded, I invite him to switch niches.