

Peer Review

Review of: "Unfettered Compatibilism"

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The article depicts a detailed analysis of the main theories of free will and opts for an original position which is labeled as “unfettered compatibilism”. This theory is inspired by the words of Gandhi, who thought that man is the creator of his own destiny and has its historical roots in Stoic philosophy.

The author aims to demonstrate that unfettered compatibilism manages to escape the most classical objections from incompatibilist perspectives and says that technically “self-rule” as human free will resembles a *leeway free will*. The main difference between those views lies in the definition of the *power of choosing*. According to leeway views, freedom is conceived as the ability to do otherwise, whereas for unfettered compatibilism, one is free to resist or to follow their own impulsive impressions to act. So, man has the power of choosing but not in the *libertarian* sense. Indeed, the presence of a power of choosing is the main element that both unfettered compatibilism and a leeway view have in common. For unfettered compatibilism, we don’t have the possibility to choose between multiple and alternative courses of actions, but we have a unique power to assent to, or to resist, an impulsive impression to act. The absence of the ability *to do otherwise* is what distinguishes this idea from a traditional idea of free will. However, the conception of a kind of freedom that is based on a power of choosing which prevents us from acting in two or more alternative ways could be controversial.

The main problem is to decide whether free will can be considered as the capacity to choose between different and mutually excluding options to act, or if it is merely the capacity to assent to, or to resist, an impulsive impression to act. It can be argued that even the two alternatives (resistance and assent) available to the self-rule are similar to the options considered by a *fork freedom*. As leeway views contend that one has the ability to choose between multiple courses of actions, there also exists a bifurcation at the origin of choice between the acts of resistance or assent to an inclination, since each of these acts can determine different courses of actions.

The problem is far more complex if we consider that one can have two conflicting desires or inclinations, and the choice between two equal impressions to act can eventually determine two different courses of actions. Sometimes, in our life, multiple impulsive inclinations and desires are competing with each other at the very same time. In this regard, our power of choosing as a self-rule might be pretty similar to the libertarian ability to do otherwise. There might be a certain degree of leeway free will at the very first level of choice between the resisting or assenting reactions. Consequently, the power of choosing between different impulsive inclinations, or to resist or assent to the same impulsive inclination, can cause different courses of the world within one's personal existence. It seems that before the act of choosing, we are torn between multiple choices that are equally balanced and sometimes competing with each other, albeit our choice will not be random in the final outcome.

Thus, the author should investigate more if his view can be included in the field of the classical perspectives of free will (as he honestly seems to admit at the beginning of the article) instead of considering it as a form of semi-compatibilism.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.