

Review of: "Free Will Stands When Properly Explained and Correctly Defined and Neuroscience Shows This to Be the Case"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

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Review of the article "Free Will Stands When Properly Explained and Correctly Defined and Neuroscience Shows This to Be the Case" (Atina Knowles)

An author's claim about free will sounds to be very promising: human beings do have free will; and admitting this is initial point for further analyses of free will's specificity. Atina examines philosophical, psychological, neuroscientific etc. approaches and seeks for the adequate definition and theory of free will rather in terms of its possibility than explicating how free will is conditioned. The latter is the subject of her criticism. To illustrate and ground her position the author involves quotations of classical philosophical figures (Hume, Lock, Kant, Wittgenstein, Geach, Frankfurt etc.) as well as commonsensical ideas, definitions from dictionaries and articles from the press.

Atina's insistence that analysis of free will should not be reduced to analysis of other concepts arouses sympathy. Agent's intentionality and causation in the context of acting are not about agent's free will, but are related to it in terms of conditioning rather than its possibility. The question of what is free will is not the same the question of what does it mean to have free will. Agent's choosing to act or to prevent from an action manifests free will. It is an agent who is free, the will is an agent's attitude; the will itself is not free. The will is conditioned by desires, urges, wishes etc.; and is forming agent's volitions. Nevertheless the will can be conditioned by freedom and thus be free from the influence of different inclinations and even reason. The will conditioned by freedom cannot avoid being free. The definition of free will "*as a will unencumbered by impulses and inclinations which forms and executes volitions driven by rational considerations*" tries to recollect mentioned author's deliberations; and further she applies it to the notions of agency, choice, and action by showing that "agent always chooses its actions or inactions freely even when its will is not". There is "truly free choice between good and evil action for it is not encumbered by anything and therefrom, identifies an agent's actions as voluntary or involuntary". Finally Atina is using different versions of Libet's experiments to illustrate possibility of 'free will', 'free choice', 'free agency' etc.

The presented argumentation about free will of Atina Knowles can still be questioned. She tries to stand with her main points about possibility and not conditioning of free will, but possibility and not conditioning appear to be not just related, but inosculated. Obviously, the philosophical notions of 'will', 'free will' remain to be very complicated and differ from most others. There is no way to approach them in terms of criteria; it might be more fruitfully to treat them as performative. And the presented in the article approach can be seen to be such an attempt.

