

Review of: "Unfettered Compatibilism"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

I agree with Joe Campbell that unfettered compatibilism is an interesting position that has not been topic of discussion recently. I do have a couple of questions and issues that came up when I was reading the piece.

My main worry with unfettered compatibilism is that I am not sure to what extent it can ground what we are typically interested in when we talk about free will, for example when it comes to flourishing. I do not get the impression that this kind of free will offers agents the ability to choose whether they are leading a flourishing life. They can only reject the fact that they are not flourishing, in the same sense that they can fail to be responsible for evading taxes. But maybe I am using a different conception of flourishing?

What is more, if it just about the ability to willfully assent to or resist (and resisting does not mean that the action will not take place, right?), which does not have any impact on whether the event will happen or not, then couldn't the woman being pushed in the pool also be 'acting' freely? Or, what exactly is the difference between evading taxes and being pushed in the pool? To put it differently, in my view an account of what it means to act is missing from the account, because of which it may not help us make the right distinctions.

What I also found interesting, is that I first interpreted Gandhi's quote as claiming that we have control over our actions, but not over all the things that may be happen as a result of our actions, i.e., that we choose a job that is further away which may lead to a break-up. Even though it is clear to me now that this is not what Gandhi meant, I do think this also is an under-appreciated aspect of free will and control that requires further research.

Furthermore, I am not completely sure whether "self-rule" is the right term for the concept that Campbell is interested in, because I associate it with autonomy and Kant's philosophy of free will, according to which we make our own rules and follow them. So I would think this account is about a specific kind of self-rule.

Overall, I found it a really inspiring read that made me think about free will in a different way.