

Review of: "Unfettered Compatibilism"

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Campbell offered a new compatibilist theory motivated by Stoic and Gandhian observations with respect to the issue of free will. He called it unfettered compatibilism, which can be pinpointed between the traditional compatibilist view — which used conditional analysis in an attempt to demonstrate that determinism and a certain aspect of the ability to do otherwise are compatible — and the source view — which renounces choice as an essential feature of free will. Unfettered compatibilism represents a semicompatibilist view. This means that its starting point is the claim that determinism and the ability to do otherwise are incompatible, so free will, determined as a function of this ability, would be classified as incompatibilist. However, Campbell argues that the ability to choose is an essential feature of free will, and that it is compatible with determinism. That is why this version of compatibilism is called unfettered, because determinism cannot restrain this human ability in any way. In fact, it is not so much a gift as it is a burden carried by man. To Campbell, having the ability to choose is an undisputable fact, and he makes no attempt to say anything more about it. He notes that anyone who wants to claim that we do not have freedom of choice must first prove that there is no voluntary participation in the world, or actions (if these are indeed actions) that are up to the subject himself (up to him) — that some segment of behavior is voluntary. Indeed, each of us, starting from the first-person aspect, has an awareness of our own ability to choose. However, the first intuition in relation to this observation boils down to a choice between existing alternatives, but this is not what Campbell means, because in a causally deterministic world thus interpreted free will cannot exist. A bit more should be noted in connection to this. The first association that pops up when it comes to the ability to decide is that it starts from the default options that the subject is deciding on — from alternative options among which the subject decides to choose one against some other or others. Yet, this is the precise fundamental difference between Campbell's determination of the ability to choose understood as free will and all conditional compatibilist and incompatibilist (libertarian) views. He believes that we only have the ability to accept or reject the determining impulses that drive us to action — wants that emerge and that strive to be satisfied. In a word, we are not blind observers of these determinants, rather we can take a position on them. That is why Campbell cites self-rule (autonomy, self-government) as an alternative name for free will defined as the ability to choose. Consequently, we have the ability to choose in the sense that we can accept or reject a determinant that compels us to act. Therefore, we should take caution here and note that practicing the ability to choose — even though it implies the ability to consider different options — does not necessarily entail their presence. However, it remains open to debate whether the subject would indeed consider the options if they knew that one of them was non-existent, and whether he would still act in line with the ability to choose. This relationship is a manifestation of the way we relate to something and in that sense it can be morally qualified, if it concerns moral options. Even though Campbell does not draw this conclusion, I believe that it is the only one representing an appropriate

consequence when we consider moral responsibility and freedom of will that grounds it, because otherwise, the statement of having the ability to choose would be trivial to ground moral responsibility in it, because, ultimately, this is the main reason why we are interested in the concept of free will. If it were not so, the trivial power of choice would be insufficient for moral qualification, and in turn for assessing moral responsibility.

As this is a compatibilist view, considering the concept of free will requires accepting certain constant conditions — above all that causal determinism is valid and that we also do possess of free will. Campbell says that all that is up to us is being able to choose or reject a want, for example, and that we cannot be responsible for the outcome of action, because it is not up to us, we have no control over it. In fact, we can add here that in a causally deterministic world we have no control over the causes that compel us to act, just as we have no control over the outcomes, and in this sense it is inappropriate to base moral responsibility on the causality of the subject understood as the initial driver and the like. In this sense, Campbell is absolutely right when he rejects this possibility in the argument.

The first question that arises is who or what is the subject that has the ability to choose, when in a deterministic scenario, everything that conditions us and what comes out is considered to be something that the subject has no control over. In other words, it seems necessary to explicitly state the notion of person that Campbell includes in his endeavor. This is important because it raises the question of what will is there under the described circumstances? Even though Campbell notes that the ability to choose is absolute, this is still not enough to explain the way in which thus defined will functions. Furthermore, is the will perhaps hierarchically structured and if so, how does it differ from Frankfurt's theory in *Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person*, because many observations very much resemble the idea thereof. A willing addict wants to take drugs and does so willingly, even though they cannot help taking drugs, while an unwilling addict takes drugs against their will, even though they have to take drugs. Here there are two different views on will, and in turn two qualitatively different wills. Both choose their will and that is why we can morally judge them. The question that arises is what exactly the subject chooses when they choose.

The second and perhaps main question is how can the ability to choose cope with the challenges of the manipulation argument? Campbell makes it clear that only our relationship to the impulses that condition us to act is significant; whether we agree with them or reject them, which makes the origin of these impulses is insignificant. However, is this really the case when we examine moral responsibility? Are we going to uniformly value a person who chooses in a habitual way and a person whose wants result from indoctrination, with the latter unaware of this and freely choosing to agree with them or not? There seems to be an additional condition that the assessment of moral responsibility depends on, and that the ability to choose might represent a necessary but insufficient condition.

Even though unfettered compatibilism can provide a compatibilistically adequate free will, the question is whether thus defined free will is sufficient when we look at it through the lens of moral responsibility.

Finally, referencing the Stoics certainly makes sense and the view of unfettered compatibilism actualizes the main Stoic ideas, however we should keep in mind that their universal determinism cannot be reduced to variants of causal determinism like those we come across in modern debates and that this fact can by and large shape the interpretation of free of will offered by the Stoics. This is important to keep in mind in order to avert anachronism in interpretation.

On balance, the work is intriguing and provocative, and we are certainly witnessing the unfolding of a new relevant compatibilist view.