

Libertarianism

Campbell, C. A. *In Defense of Freewill*

Three Views on Freewill

View / Thesis	Hard-Determinism	Libertarianism	Compatibilism
Freewill	N	Y	Y
Determinism	Y	N	Y

- Incompatibilism: freedom and determinism are not compatible
 - Hard-Determinism: no action is free, all actions caused
 - Libertarianism: some actions are free, but not caused
- Compatibilism: freedom and determinism are compatible

Hard-Determinism Argument

- Review from yesterday: Argument for Hard-Determinism (Blatchford)
 1. A free action =df an action that is contrary to heredity and environment
 2. All action is caused by **deterministic** laws of heredity/genetics, environment **only**
 3. So, no action is contrary to heredity and environment from 2
 4. So, no action is free; freewill is an illusion from 1, 3

Does Indeterminism allow for Freedom?

- Reject premise 2?
 - Blatchford assumes that actions are governed by deterministic laws of heredity and environment only. One reason to reject 2 is that some laws are indeterministic.
- If a Law is probabilistic then it is indeterministic
 - E.g. If one inherited gene G then one has a 60% chance of being incarcerated later in life
 - If one knew this law, and someone's genes, they would not be able to determine whether that person will commit a crime later in life. This indeterministic law does not allow us to predict exactly what would have happened.
 - Many psychological laws, quantum mechanics laws are in fact probabilistic
- If psychology is governed by indeterministic laws, are we really free?
 - Suppose I have gene G, and, so, I am more likely to commit a crime. So, when I do end up committing a crime, we can say that there was a 6/10 chance for me to do it, **but the rest was chance**. Since it is partly chance that I did do commit a crime, can I be blamed? As long as some chance is part of the reason why I ended up doing what I did, it seems that I am not in control, and so I am neither fully free, nor can I be blamed for the crime.

Campbell's Response

- Campbell: reject 2, but for a different reason.
 - The fact that we deliberate and trace back a person's history (including environmental factors) when evaluating their moral character suggests that we are trying to separate external influences and the person's own self determination; some of our actions will be influenced by heredity and environment, others will be self-determined *only*
 - Our actions are caused by genetics, environment *and choices* [**← Campbell's addition**]

Campbell's Libertarianism

- an act is a 'free' act in the sense required for moral responsibility if
 - (a) the agent is the sole cause of the act (self-caused, self-determined) and
 - (b) the agent could exert his causality in alternative ways
- Here some applications of Campbell's definition that work well
- Free action: Choose to go to UFL instead of FSU
 - (a) the student is the sole cause of the act (only they decide where to go); (b) the student could have exerted their causality in alternate ways by going to FSU. So, this act, on Campbell's view, is a free act
- Action not free: agent is not the sole cause (violate condition a)
 - Physical Constrain (e.g. a guard physically prevents you from leaving the prison)
 - Psychological Threat (e.g. someone with a gun and demands your wallet)
- Action not free: agent has no alternatives (violate condition b)
 - Psychological Compulsion (e.g. obsessive compulsive disorder, addictions)

Experience of Choices

- Campbell doesn't just give the definition, he also give a reason why this definition is correct.
- Evidence of one's own internal experience of making significant decisions (such as moral decisions) is the experience of directly bringing about the act itself. We feel this pull and the act of picking one of the alternatives.
- “Let us ask, why do human beings so obstinately persist in believing that there is ... self-originated activity ... they do so ... because they feel certain of the existence of such activity from their immediate practical experience of themselves.” (285)

Onus of Proof

- **Science has not proven determinism of all actions:** Science has not confirmed the hypothesis that all of our actions are caused by heredity and environment *only*. It is still a long way away from proving that.
- Campbell points out that we have experience of ourselves making choices i.e. that are not caused by heredity and environment only, but by the person acting. This, he thinks, is strong evidence in favor of the existence of free actions
- Campbell places the burden of proof on science: until science proves that only heredity and environment determine actions and agents' never make choices, we are justified in believing that we have choices.
- “Until cogent evidence to the contrary is adduced we are entitled to put our trust in a belief which is so deeply embedded in our experience as practical beings as to be ... ineradicable”

Objection 1: Predictability of Action

- Objection: How is it that we can, after becoming acquainted with someone's personality and character, consistently predict their behaviour?
- Reply:
 - prediction is compatible with freedom since prediction only shows that an act is not capricious or wholly out of character.
 - Free acts only cover a small range of one's acts. The rest may be caused.

Objection 2:

- Suppose we grant Campbell that the self causes actions.
- How did the event ‘I self-caused X to happen rather than Y’?
- Explanation 1: I believed in X and desired to do X that I chose to do X.
 - But, this explanation is deterministic – the beliefs and desire determine what the choice is – and so still it looks like it wasn’t up to us
- Explanation 2: nothing caused ‘choosing to do x’
 - If nothing caused this event, then it seems to be random. My choosing to do X just ‘popped’ into existences. But, then we are not in control of the choices we make, and we surely aren’t responsible for the choice.
- So, it seems that the event of self-causing an act is either deterministic or only chance; either way, the agent is not in control, so the agent is not free.

Compatibilism

- If one is an incompatibilist i.e. that freedom and determinism is not compatible then it looks like there is no easy solution either way:
 - Accept Hard-determinism, but accept that freewill and our choices are an illusion
 - Accept Libertarianism, but then the trouble is how to make sense of self-determination i.e. the idea that agent cause the actions they perform
- Compatibilism is another popular view, which we did not talk about
- Compatibilism attempts to combine both determinism and freewill, by redefining 'free' in a way that is consistent with determinism but

What is the Mind?

- Our next topic in the course:
 - What is this thing that is supposed to be free?
 - What is the mind? What is to have a soul?
 - What are mental events in general?