

Daniel Greco

1 More Compatibilism

Here's an argument for incompatibilism:

1. You only act freely if you could've acted otherwise.
2. If determinism is true, then it's never the case that you could've acted otherwise.
3. So if determinism is true, then you never act freely.

How might the compatibilist respond? Frankfurt tries to motivate rejecting premise 1. Here's a Frankfurt-style example (lifted from wikipedia):

Example text removed due to copyright restrictions. Available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frankfurt_counterexamples.

How could the incompatibilist (in particular, the libertarian) respond?

1.1 Fancier Versions of Compatibilism

Frankfurt argues that someone has free will just in case they have desires about what to desire, and these second-order desires are effective (when they desire to desire something, they end up desiring that something).

Why introduce this complication?

- It lets us distinguish regular people (who Frankfurt thinks have free will) from children, animals, etc.
- It lets us distinguish the unwilling drug addict who wants to quit but can't (and who Frankfurt thinks does not have free will) from the person who could resolve to quit if she wanted (i.e., the person who would stop desiring drugs, if she desired to stop desiring them).

Worries: just as actions are manipulable by external forces, so are first-order desires, and second-order desires, and any other psychological state you might use to try to give a compatibilist characterization of free will. We seem to face a dilemma:

1. Either allow that a sophisticated enough hypnotist/neuroscientist/whatever could not only ensure that you perform some action if she so desired, but could ensure that you performed the action of your own free will (even if right now you are firmly set against performing it).
2. Or instead deny compatibilism and opt for hard determinism (no free will) or libertarianism (indeterministic free will).

2 Scientific Challenges to Free Will

A few strategies for arguing that there's scientific evidence against free will: (Nahmias)

- Science is showing us that determinism is true, and that rules out free will.
- Science is showing us that mechanism is true, and that rules out free will.
- Science is showing us that human actions do not derive from conscious reasoning, decisions, and intentions, and that rules out free will.

Why accept the third claim?

- Libet experiments with interpretation—behavior and conscious deliberation have a common cause (readiness potential), but conscious deliberation doesn't cause behavior. Responses:
 - Alternative interpretations on which consciousness deliberation is playing important role in producing behavior.
 - Alternative interpretations on which deliberation/intentions are playing roles, but consciousness is not.
 - These experiments have limited scope—there's a wide range of cases about which they tell us little to nothing.

A different sort of challenge (still Nahmias):

1. Free will requires that one's actions properly derive from decisions or intentions that one has at some point consciously considered, or at least that one would accept, as one's reasons for acting.
2. Science is showing that our actions do not properly derive from decisions or intentions that we have consciously considered or would accept as our reasons for acting. Rather, our actions are produced by other factors, and we rationalize them after the fact.
3. So, science is showing that we do not have free will.

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