

First essay assignment

Business



Introduction This paper contributes to the free will debate by defending compatibilism, and presents compatibilism as the ideal solution to the free will debate, which relates to the contested incompatibility between determinism and freewill.

Compatibilism proposes that determinism is compatible with free will. Since free will is a prerequisite for moral responsibility, compatibilism can also be viewed in the light of compatibility between determinism and moral responsibility (Harald and Robert 45). This paper defends compatibilism by tying freedom and moral responsibility with compatibilism. The main argument is that “ free” is contrasted with “ coerced” or “ compelled”, whereby, in a free act, the agent could have selected a different option if he/she could have preferred otherwise. Therefore, the agent can be morally responsible even when determinism is true. First, I argue determinism is compatible with a specific meaning attached to the concept of freedom.

Soft determinists maintain that determinism is true, which implies that everything in the universe is subject to causal events that what happen in the present is influenced by past events. I perceive moral responsibility as a working social concept in the sense that it is a significant variable for regulating behavior. When defending soft determinist, I concede that the word “ freedom” has a meaning attached to it; however, it is not related to the indeterminate power often known as “ free will”. Instead, free will or freedom has a specific meaning, which refers to the form of deliberation takes place in a agent doing the action. According to Kane (125), there is no such thing or power that can be called free will; this implies that free will does not mean any power, but denotes the universe’s determinate powers.

When an individual states that he/she has undertaken a free will decision, it simply means that his/her decision is determined. The prerequisites for a free choice are: (a) the agent is self aware that he/she is doing the selection; (b) the agent has deliberated over the available choices; (c) the agent was not coerced externally or internally by causes that are likely to make him select one alternative over other alternatives; (e) and that the agent made the selection using his/her criteria for making a selection, in the sense that this criteria influenced him in selecting a given choice in preference to others. Therefore, for an action or choice to be considered free will, all of the above should have taken place. It is evident that the action was influenced by precursor events and that the criteria deployed by the agent to select a particular option are determined (Williams 145). The underlying argument is that the agent decided his preference using his deliberations is what constitutes free will choice. With this in mind, it is undeniable that the agent can be subjected to moral critique.

Consider this scenario: I choose to include a spelling error in this sentence. The mistake was made under the following circumstances: I was not forced by anything or anybody to make the mistake, I was aware of what I was doing, and I erred the spelling intentionally. I typed the misspelled word after deliberating on whether to type it or not. I made up my mind that this example would be a perfect one. In the light of the aforementioned criteria for a free will choice, it is evident that this process is exactly what we mean when something is said to be done out of free will. The events involved in the action and decision can be referred to; however, it is imperative to note that all of them were determined (Harald and Robert 123).

The compatibility between determinism and free will can also be looked at in terms of moral responsibility. Therefore, regardless of the fact that determinism is true, I argue that there is moral responsibility. Self-determinists assert that we should not be concerned about the existence of magical indeterminate free will; rather, we should be concerned whether the phrase “free will” has a practical meaning. According to self-determinists, “free will” does have a useful meaning. An individual is said to have to have decided freely and is morally accountable for his decisions and actions when all the preconditions for a free will choice have been satisfied (Kane 120). The individual should have deliberated over the existing alternatives; he/she should not have been subject to any form of internal or external coercion; nothing or no one is forcing him/her to pick one alternative over the other, and that he/she uses his own criteria when making the decision.

When all these prerequisites have been satisfied, then we can say that the individual is making a free will choice. Evidently, the result of the choice is therefore influenced by the criteria deployed by the agent; however, it is imperative to note that the criteria belong to the agent. There is no other meaning of making a free will choice except when we make use of our own criteria and that we deliberated over the existing options before deciding and acting. With this in mind, individuals can be held morally accountable for their decisions and actions. Therefore, moral responsibility and determinism are compatible, given this definition of freedom (Kane 102). When defending compatibility between determinism and free will, David Hume (1711-1776) provided a necessary and sufficient prerequisite for freedom: an action is considered free if, and only if, had the individual sought to act otherwise

than the act, and that the individual would have had the command do act differently than the act.

The strength of this point of view is that it sustains a reasonable link between actions and the desire by the agent to bring them about. This is somewhat consistent with determinism; therefore, if it can be used to define freedom, then there is reconciliation between determinism and freedom. This definition of freedom accurately elucidates some obviously unfree circumstances. For instance, if I am trapped in a lift, then this is not the case that I desired to leave the lift, it would have been within my authority to leave the lift. Incompatibilists refute the argument that determinism and free will can co exist, and therefore a not a good theory.

This critique of compatibilism posits that if our inner states initiate our decisions and actions, and that our inner states are subject to things that are external to us, then our actions are subject to things that are external and they cannot be free. However, this objection to compatibilism can be countered by distinguishing free action from free will. In this regard, I argue that an action or decision resulting from our inner states is free; however, the will resulting in the action is not free (Kane 145). In conclusion, it is undeniable that determinism is true in the sense that all events are often determined as well as processes taking place in our brains during decision making. In addition, moral responsibility has been shown to be a useful and meaningful concept. It is imperative to note that the choices we make are our own; however, they are influenced or determined by the manner in which we are "set up".