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Freedom from the Libertarianism, Determinism, and Compatibilism Theories

The definition of freedom is different depending on the context of use and its applicability in any situation. People will tend to associate free will and the aspect of responsibility, whereas others are in opposition to the aspect of free will claiming that every situation is predetermined. Science, religion, environment, genetics, and even moral choices all play a part in the definition of freedom from different approaches. With freedom connoting free will, it is imperative to consider how much free will affects the aspect of responsibility.

Responsibility is an important part of the philosophical definition of freedom, since any action may affect another man's space. Only when individuals live in seclusion can they exercise ultimate freedom, as their actions affect only them. As psychologists continue to grapple with whether or not we are free, different theories related to freedom have come up with different definitions of freedom, which have both strengths and weaknesses. The actions that individuals engage in determine the definition of just and fair, as the moral outlook in every action differs in every individual. In order to understand the best possible theory from the above-mentioned three doctrines, it is necessary to analyze the theories of freedom, look at their strengths and weaknesses, and analyze their similarities and differences.

Determinism

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In determinism, philosophers state that one action determines the other in a chain of events and that one event is the consequence of a previous action. The determinism theory states that human beings have no free will, since their next actions are determined by their current activities. Determinism takes a causal cause and effect relationship between human actions. With claims that human actions take a cause and effect direction, human beings only act as causal agents in this relationship (Russell and Deery 235). Hard determinism states that human beings have no free will and that any form of free will is only an illusion. Since all human actions have a causal determination, there can be no account of moral responsibility for any action. In determinism, the only instance where human beings can state of being free is through the understanding and control of various antecedents that determine the next action.

Determinism has some philosophical connections to the nature/nurture debate, whereby determinism projects that the human behavior is predetermined. As such, the projection is that the human behavior can be traced to previous events that complete the cause effect relationship in biological determinism. The determinism theory also projects the rationality of the universe; once knowledge in a certain subject is available, it ensures future mistakes concerning that knowledge are avoidable. The rationality referred to hereby is that of human experience collected through interaction with different events throughout a lifetime.

The strength of the determinism theory applies in the classical sciences where the macro system or the universe is seen as a deterministic system. By this approach, science can easily explain the effect of a particular action. In turn, weaknesses in the deterministic theory are such as the claims that one can determine future actions by carefully understanding the current antecedents, yet human behavior is unpredictable. Determinism has been unable to foretell human behavior by looking at the current actions. In addition, the fact that human beings

deliberate prior to taking a particular action proves that humans are not just robots in the cause and effect relationship. The fact that human beings can deliberate an action prior to performance means that they do have a choice and moral responsibility.

Compatibilism

Compatibilism, also referred to as soft determinism, states that human beings have free will, but it exist in a deterministic universe. In the deterministic system, human beings have the capability to exercise free will only if their actions are internally motivated rather than being push factors from external forces. One has the freedom to choose an action, but fate determines the outcome (Velkley 7). The proponents of compatibilism claim that the only inhibitions to human freedom are the external constraints in the environment and nature that pushes actions and events to a particular direction. From this viewpoint, compatibilists are of the claim that free will or freedom is the ability to act upon one's own desires and motives facing no hindrances from any institutions or individuals.

Philosopher John Locke postulates that liberty comes about with thoughts and actions, even if one cannot achieve the desired outcome (Robinson 61). From Locke's perspective, human beings can be free only when they can express their thoughts, feel their actions, and be guided by personal attitudes. Even when the environment is against their actions, human beings can still be free through the expression of their inner desires. As such, freedom becomes an objective phenomenon, and only an individual can define his own freedom through his internal beliefs and attitudes.

The strength of the compatibilism view of freedom lies in the aspect of appreciating free will and causal determinism. Human actions can be free, but it does not imply that the results of their actions will be to their liking or expectation. As such, compatibilism appreciates the

existence of free will and fate. However, the major weakness in this theory is that it defines free will as having to do what we choose but fails to incorporate the aspect of desire. Desire means that if human beings have free will, then they should be able to choose their own desires and act on them rather than only being capable of acting according to their own desires.

Libertarianism

Also referred to as the indeterministic theory, the libertarianism theory states that the universe is not deterministic but appreciates the existence of free will. Determinism projects that one has freedom from a group of alternatives, but human character and other internal aspects determine the choices that an individual can have. Libertarianism states that each person has the right to actions in their own life in ways that do not interfere with the equal rights of other human beings in society (Boaz 1). An individual may come up with an action from his own self, but there may be limitations in undertaking that action due to aspects of the human character.

Libertarianism is against the aspect of determinism by stating that if psychological, social, and environmental factors are to blame for human actions, then human beings are not free. The projection by libertarians is that internal elements, such as beliefs and attitudes, are the only ones that can hinder performance of a particular action. By this proposition, it refutes any involvement of the external environment in the choices that human beings make.

The strength in this theory lies in the proposition that human beings have free will. The act of weighing up different options prior to taking up an action alludes to freedom, as well as the aspect of moral responsibility from the choice taken. Human behavior is unpredictable, and the libertarianism theory acknowledges this fact. In its weakness, the theory refutes any determinism in the universe thereby implying that actions and events within the universe are random. As such, human beings do not possess free will, if choices and events happen randomly.

Similarities in the Theories

The three theories attribute human actions to a particular influence that plays a role in every event. Environment, human nature, and social dynamics are among various influences that affect a particular choice in determinism. Even though events in the universe are determined, certain factors still influence a choice taken. Compatibilists also do appreciate the influence of self and internal motivation to affect a particular choice. In addition, compatibilism is similar to determinism in acknowledging that events in the universe are predetermined through fate. Libertarianism proposes the influence of self and character in every action. The internal aspects of self and character take effect in any choice depending on what internal need the human body wants to be fulfilled. All the three theories are similar in claiming that external or internal factors influence human choices.

Differences

While determinists claim that human beings have no choices and free will, since there is a cause effect relationship, libertarianists argue that human beings do possess free will. Libertarianism completely opposes the idea that human beings are mere robots in the universe, since they can have deliberations on what choices to make. Libertarianism is of the opinion that human beings control their choices, and experiences may shape future actions. In contrast to this theory, determinism lays claim on the cause effect relationship in the universe. In turn, the compatibilism theory incorporates both deterministic theory and the libertarianism theory through appreciating the existence of free will guided and affected by other internal factors, such as motivation and personal beliefs (Moreland and Craig 274).

In contrast to the determinism theory, libertarianism denies any involvement of other factors in the outcome of a particular event, so libertarianists view actions as having no causes.

The difference with the deterministic theory is that, determinists view any event as already predetermined, and there are prior events before the occurrence of another event. The theory again incorporates the two events by supposing that there exist predetermined events, but human morality exists too and allows exercising freedom. In contrast to determinism, compatibilism and libertarianism do argue out about the existence of moral responsibility in the choices people make.

Conclusion

All the three theories may be different and right in their own argument, but compatibilism offers the best possible explanation of events surrounding free will and choice. The strength of compatibilism theory lies in the fact that it appreciates the involvement of different events in the universe that determine fate, yet human beings can make their own choices. Beliefs, desires, characters, and values within human beings determine the choices they make in the universe filled with different end results (Moreland and Craig 274). The weakness of determinism is that the theory states that human beings are robots in the universe, whereas libertarianism ignores evidence from classical science that the universe is deterministic. Human beings argue out differently concerning the existence of free will, and some claim that free will is an illusion. Human beings may be free in the context that each choice leads to a different outcome, but these choices need to be fused with responsibility.

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