

The Compatibility of Free Will and Determinism in Modern Western Compatibilists and Mulla Sadra

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Abstract:

The significance of determinism/ free will dilemma is clear by all enlightened mind as our approach in this regard has a straight influence on our theoretical worldview and scientific orientations in individual and social life. Determinism in general is a theory according to which human activities are necessary and so not free. Determinism (or causal determination) is one of the most important type of determinism which challenges human freedom by appealing to causal order of universe: all events in the universe – and among them all human acts- are exposed to causal rules, and also causation requires effects to be necessitated by their preceding conditions. And if this is the case, our freedom and responsibility for all our acts will be nullified; and now the problem is that if we are really free and responsible?

Throughout the history of ideas different answers have been given to this question: libertarianists have sided by freedom and therefore declared determinism wrong and groundless at least in the domain of human actions; against them determinists relying on the findings of modern sciences like biology, biochemistry and neuroscience, have envisaged the universe under the authority of an absolute determination and thus rejected freedom and responsibility in favor of determinism; and compatibilists try to prove compatibility and reconcilability of determinism and freedom by any means they can.

In this essay we have accounted for the point that at an overall glance we can trace the history of free will/determinism dilemma back to the history of controversy on meanings and requirements of determinism and freedom in general; whereas deterministic and Libertarianistic approaches are after proving or rejecting a maximal freedom (freedom from all limitations even the necessities of human genes and environment), compatibilists have regarded this absolute freedom unintelligible and illusory, and improved and modified our expectations for being free and tried to explain a moderate notion of freedom which stands somewhere between the two extremes, i.e. between the minimalistic and maximalistic notions of freedom. Having analyzed the requirements of freedom into two general requirements of "Alternative Possibilities" and "Ultimate Responsibility", the author has turned to the aforementioned triple positions about this requirement (by highlighting the

approaches of three western influential compatibilist Frankfurt, Peter Strawson and Wallace); by total or partial rejection of the mentioned requirements of freedom and then displaying replacements for it, compatibilists have revealed that probable governing of determinism on universe is not in conflict with human freedom. After analyzing different sides and points of this compatibilistic model of freedom, we turn to the analysis of the Islamic moderate notion of freedom and point out the accuracy and elegance of Mulla Sadra's interpretation of this type of freedom.

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