Free Will And Determinism Essay, Research Paper

In my paper I will present the argument that without a strong concept of Free Will it makes no sense to say that persons are responsible for their actions. Determinism states that the freedom, which is a condition of moral responsibility, is not compatible with the truth of universal determinism (everything is caused). Universal determinism is true; we do not have the freedom which is a condition of moral responsibility. Free will does not exist.

There are two different types of freedom. Let s call them Freedom A and Freedom B. Freedom A is the freedom of personal realization, it is circumstantial. Freedom B is the freedom of self-determination and power, it is the original cause of the action, the power to choose. Freedom A is necessary for moral responsibility but is not sufficient, you also need freedom B and we don t have freedom B therefore there is no moral responsibility. In life there are countless cases of caused happenings. Some examples would be that wind causes trees to bend, hunger causes people to eat, and biology tells us that hereditary determines what kind of persons we will be. The free-willist position does not agree with this claim, stating that nothing but your own power to choose would cause you to buy a mystery novel instead of watching TV. But everything is caused and the reason that you bought the mystery novel was probably because you liked mysteries, therefore even something simple like this has a cause.

It is legitimate to infer that on the basis of our observations up until now causation is reasonable to believe. For example we know that all human beings will die. This explains random acts; perhaps we just don t have the information or technology to realize the causes of the event. The failure to predict is because of human ignorance.

In the text Free Will and Determinism: A Dialogue the character Fredrick, the free-willist, makes some interesting comments about the term deliberation. Deliberating is the power to choose, think, front alternatives and causes us to be directly aware of ourselves acting freely. We deliberate everyday, I can chose to stay home and read a book instead of going out to go see a concert. But is this really free will? No, because as Daniel, the hard determinist suggests a neurosurgeon or psychologist could manipulate my brain to make me feel as though I was choosing and deliberating even though I am being caused to make the choices I made. Daniel says that we can have deliberation without having choice. Fredrick says that this is not possible and would not be called deliberation because deliberation means free choice.

If someone is free then they could not have chosen otherwise even if everything up to that point stayed exactly the same. Suppose I am walking home from school and there are two ways I could go. Each way is exactly the same: same length, same scenery, and neither one is less dangerous than the other is. There is nothing about one of the ways that would make me decide for it rather than the other. At this point I consciously make a decision about which way to go and am aware of it. I am aware of myself being able to do either one, and when I do chose I am aware that my choice has been free and unhindered. Fredrick suggests that this awareness is the key to free will, and speaks of his theory of introspection. In the dictionary introspection is defined as a looking into one s own mind, feelings, etc. If we can look into ourselves and find and believe in free will then you are free. In other words, if you do not know you are free you do not know anything at all. Introspection is like a 6th sense if you will. It is the experience of looking at yourself from the inside in and has privileged access as to who can see into it. Only I can look into myself and none other. Introspection exists in your mind and consists of no governing rules; it consists of a private language. This private language can recognize when or when not you receive a feeling or are making a choice. Suppose you have a stomachache, your private language would immediately recognize this and name it, let s call it a grube. Suppose later you had another stomachache, the problem is how would this private language be able to distinguish whether or not the pain in your stomach was again a grube? In a non-rule-governed language it would not be possible. Therefore it is impossible to have a private language. Therefore this introspection theory does not hold up too well, because there is no possible way that you could recognize that you have freedom and then be able to recognize it again as the same feeling as the one before.

Free will suggests that blame and punishment would have no legitimate point if universal determinism was true. But this is not the case; by blaming and punishing people we deter them from acting that was again and then deter other people from acting that was at all. It is the same with praise, by praising people for acting in an appropriate way it will cause them and others to act that way again. Free will suggests that if we do not have the power to chose then there is no point in punishing a person if they could not have done otherwise. But blame and punishment do not presuppose that the very action for which a person is blamed could have been avoided, it will cause them in the future not to act that way again.

In conclusion, I shall say again that all events are caused and we do not have the power to choose, therefore we do not have moral responsibility and free will does not exist. The free will theory has too many holes and unfortunately does not have enough evidence to support it.

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