

CHAPTER 1

FREE WILL

In the broadest sense, Free Will is the ability to do whatever you want, uncontrolled.

Limits to Free Will are facts. Choices are between predetermined options. I would fly across the universe to see the other side, but I realize I must have:

1. air
2. water
3. food
4. shelter
5. exercise
6. time
7. love.

Just as a science will only work because of predictability, earth is where I dwell. I try to imagine the other side, but I seem limited by the synthesis of what I already know.

However, there is hope for Free Will. The plain proof of Free Will is the feeling of choices made, and thoughts had, which no one could foresee. This alone does not prove Free Will, but determinism cannot be complete without complete predictability.

Today's scientific arts are far from perfect predictors, especially when forecasting the roots of thought. Pure Determinism is theory. Compatibilism describes what I actually experience. Many of my thoughts correlate with my desire, and often there is no other information regarding the roots of those thoughts to consider.

MAKING CHOICES WITH MATTER

A will is a desire. A desire is a type of thought. Just like a reason or a purpose, a will is not matter. The agent capable of contemplating desire is the mind.

The mindful defy the laws of physics. Lifting one's hand against gravity proves the presence of a mind, and therefore a will.

Science describes the mind as matter existing within the laws of physics, but science also ascribes the mind as having the power of neuroplasticity. Neuroplasticity includes the brain's ability to make connections between points of brain matter by consciously thinking about certain subjects. If valid, this means that there is a loop between matter in the brain, and the consciousness created thereby. They both affect each other.

COMPELLED BY PHYSICS

One day I wanted to quit smoking, but it seemed that my will was subdued by villainous tobacco. I heard of a medication which would help me quit. I took it and I quit smoking.

In the process, I noticed that part of me wanted to quit smoking, and another part did not want to quit. There were 2 distinct and opposite "Wills" in my mind: both believed to be caused by the same laws of physics.

One Will within me used medicine to subdue and compel another Will within me. The fact that there were two opposite desired "Wills" indicates that there could not be a uniform control. The Will that subdued the smoking desire, is potentially free.

While it can be argued that logic itself compelled me to quit smoking, I had ignored logic for many years before I chose to quit.

THE TIE BREAKER

I had steak for lunch. *Because* I had steak for lunch, I want vegetables for dinner. I believe my desire for a vegetable dinner is controlled by physics. But consider if Free Will exists when choices are equally compelled by physics.

Here is the banal choice between the left door and the right door. I comb my memory to help me remember which door I have chosen before, and which door renders more positive outcomes. For this to help me choose wisely, my memory must be accurate. My memory is not accurate.

Undaunted, I make a choice. My choice between the 2 equal doors is either the product of randomness, or the product of Free Will. Neither one can be excluded. Randomness is not a cause. It is the absence of a cause. I surmise that Free Will is the cause of such a choice.

CHAPTER 2

BENJAMIN LIBET'S DOUBLE BLIND PLACEBO CONTROLLED SCIENTIFIC STUDY ON FREE WILL

Free Will was scientifically studied by Benjamin Libet in the 1980's. He brilliantly showed that electromagnetic brain activity increased before a conscious decision to move was made by a person. By studying this brain activity, Libet accurately predicted when a person was going to have a conscious decision to move a finger. However, even if the movement of matter in the brain makes one move, this does not negate Free Will. While a Will is not matter, matter can have a Will.

Even if the vast majority of our behaviors are otherwise predictable, it would be an error to now conclude that there is no Free Will. This is not the current state of the science. We are not able to predict all behaviors in a placebo controlled double-blind experiment, or any experiment. Until all behaviors are accurately predictable, I cannot surmise that there is no Free Will.

My empirical analysis of scientific study on the issue of Free Will, shows that there is a great degree of determinism, but Free Will has not been eliminated.

THERE CAN'T BE A NEFARIOUS CONTROLLING BEING

Some people believe that another being controls human thoughts, and therefore there is no Free Will. This notion is impossible because a person can have an absolute sincere desire for Free Will. If a being were controlling my will, my desire for Free Will is the opposite desire of the controlling being's desire. Even if the controlling being wanted me to desire Free Will, the controller's purpose for causing that desire in me is

not honest. Conversely, my desire for Free Will is sincere. Having the opposite desires means having your own unique will.

THE DEFENSE OF FREE WILL

In deciding whether or not any Free Will exists, consider the two elements of life which can be responsible for behaviors and actions:

1. the self (Free Will) or
2. the mechanics of the Universe (determinism).

Consider that the self is the only entity which is absolutely known to exist. When Rene Descartes coined his maxim, “I think, therefore I am,” the self is regarded as one’s thoughts, not one’s body. It is only thoughts which are known to undoubtedly exist and a “will” is one of the thoughts that we have.

When ascribing responsibility for personal behaviors and thoughts, people’s Wills are either controlled by their own thoughts (which are known to certainly exist) or physical mechanical forces (which may not exist as matter could be a figment of thought). As a general rule, when deciding between two factors which may be a cause of an effect, the cause which is sure to exist should take precedence over a cause which may not exist altogether. Since only the self is sure to exist, the default position should be to ascribe thoughts and ambitions to the self, and not anything else whose entire existence is questionable.

THE CHOICES WE ARE COMPELLED TO MAKE

The more I learn the more I can predict things, but I can’t predict everything, and that will continue. Some like to respond to this by opining

that all things could be predictable if we had enough information about the Universe. This may be true, but we won't know if this is true, unless that actually happens.

Until then, I must call it as I, and everybody sees it:

People's thoughts and behaviors aren't predictable.

The subjective feeling of Free Will may be flawed at times, but the feeling exists, and everything that exists is part of the answer.

Any theory of a purely deterministic world remains unproven and Compatibilism is the only model that explains everything observed in the lab and in everyday experience. Consider the path of a hurricane and the way people will react to learning about it: the major events for the people in the way of the hurricane could be predicted, but every thought an individual had during the event is not predictable, even using the finest instruments and strictest logic. Unless science proves that it can, in fact predict all thoughts and behaviors, Compatibilism is the choice response to the question of Free Will.