

The Conflict of Free Will and Moral Responsibility

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Abstract. The purpose of this paper is to discuss whether the motivations of human moral behaviors are still driven by free will under the influence of society. The paper will discuss how free will affects morality through ideas about morality and free will gained from psychologists and philosophers. In addition to some arguments concerning the existence of free will, this article will look at the conflicts between moral responsibilities and free will. Individuals must abide by its moral laws, which occasionally go against free will, in order to exist. The essay will also contrast several instances of morality and free will in order to determine the various degrees to which free will influences one's obligation to uphold moral principles under the domestication of society. Influence depends on a person's actual free will and the stages they take toward moral development. This paper reviews and analyzes the original research and discusses the findings and future aims.

Keywords: Moral responsibilities; Free will; Psychology; Philosophy.

1. Introduction

There is a growing interest in exploring the inner workings of the human mind. Humans live in a society where they receive all of their education and are subjected to manipulation. Society instructs us on what is right and wrong, and most people accept their concept. Few people are able to express their true desires because humans limit themselves and follow moral norms. It seems that the following ethical objectives may be pertinent: Boost the general well-being of people. Consider abstract moral concepts like justice and respect for autonomy when acting. Fulfill the demands of social groupings like family. Obey a moral code or the rules of an individual's religion [1].

Free will is the capacity to behave at one's discretion and without being constrained by necessity or fate. The balance between morality and freedom is never balanced, moral weigh more than free will. Individuals must abide by the norms to remain in society since humans are social creatures. All people's moral and religious ideas are ultimately founded on how individuals relate to one another in society. In other words, society created man, not the other way around [2]. Moral responsibilities are equal to the rule of the societies since it is the same as cooperation; if one person wants to stay in the pack, that person has to obey reality.

Free will is described in a variety of ways by scientists, philosophers, and theologians. Theological presumptions are rejected by Thomas Hobbes, who restricts human experience to the realm of matter and motion. The author advocates for selfish self-interest, which is contrary to the Christian principle of "love thy neighbor." Hobbes believed that people are selfish and that their actions are driven by a need to satisfy their needs. Every man, according to Hobbes, is free, yet they lack free will [3]. This question leads to the inspiration of this paper-a movie called A Clockwork Orange. The protagonist is born to be wrong, evil is in his blood, and doing horrible things is the greatest joy in the protagonist's life, but the government uses aversion therapy to cure him. After the treatment, he changed, then became morally good just for a while. His violence which was deeply rooted in his mind, was lightened up again. This is also an excellent illustration of the two ways people can have a hazy understanding of free will: either they sense a desire deep within themselves, or they confuse it with a rebellious mood. There already existed the theory that Heisenberg argues that humans don't always need to be aware of options in order to be free. Independent actions are what count. Conscious awareness may help individuals change their behavior, while it is not required and may not always work [4]. According to Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory of personality, the id is the personality component made up of unconscious psychic energy that serves to state fundamental urges, wants, and desires. If humans have free will, then whether it combines with

morality such that decisions alter. The researcher also claims that free will can be practiced, which is confusing because if free will is a skill, does it mean free will does not free anymore [5]? In its most literal sense, free will should be an awareness without constraints, which implies that the individual has complete control over it. People are born with this. Prior to experiencing the presence and salience of anything else in its surroundings, an organism must be able to perceive its own existence as a conscious being. Awareness is knowing that one exists [6]. According to this, individuals must first have free will before the individuals experience the effects of society.

However, since every person is a member of society from the moment they are born, it is unclear how free will affects moral obligations. By reclaiming the concepts of morality and free will, the paper will analyze the effects of free will on morality. This article will examine the tensions between moral obligations and free will, as well as some discussions about the existence of free will.

2. The Meaning of Moral

2.1 Moral as Cooperations

The philosophical explanation for morals is the code of conduct, avoidance of harm, rational requirements, and character traits. A person's moral development is influenced by their genes, brain structure, and environment. The core function of morality is to promote and sustain cooperation [7]. As there are many variations in collaboration, it is a set of moral guidelines for diverse forms of cooperation. Cooperation is a tenacious quality that has survived evolutionary processes and improved lives. Cooperation offers additional advantages for survival because it is non-zero-sum in contrast to the competition. Morality incorporation dates back to a time before the existence of life. Morality is a collection of behaviors that people should engage in to uphold societal norms as proper in other individuals' eyes or even as profoundly ingrained beliefs in each individual's own mind. The foundation of moral psychology is an understanding of the interdependency of individual goods, which enables the kinds of interpersonal interactions and communal structures required for the advancement of social justice and the circumstances for human flourishing.

However, the absence of such sympathy allows for the kinds of thinking, feeling, and interpersonal interactions that result in injustice, which in turn causes and sustains apathy, pain, and suffering [8]. From an ontogenetic perspective, this moral sensitivity is innate and associated with relational competencies, including the capacity to feel empathy for others, feel responsibility for their well-being, comprehend others' inner states, and engage in prosocial action [9]. The author uses a conundrum about psychopathy to inform his account of moral judgment. The typical personality of a psychopath is that of an amoral person who yet understands the difference between right and wrong, albeit to a limited extent. This profile can be explained by the fact that a psychopath is aware of and capable of following moral guidelines but lacks empathy. In making empathy—what Hume called "sympathy"—a fundamental prerequisite for moral judgment, the explanation concurs with Hume. However, if it is possible to have a conscience without being able to empathize, as is now widely acknowledged, some varieties of autism serve as an example of this potential, then empathy cannot be a required prerequisite of moral judgment [10]. Ever since one individual is born, the individual is under the exposure to the morality of society. Humans have been domesticated by society from the dawn of time.

2.2 A Moral Growth Spectrum

The majority of people are in phases 5 and 6 in stages of moral development [11]. In stage 5, moral behavior in a given circumstance is determined by the logical application of universal, abstract moral principles rather than by reference to a list of rules. Natural or unalienable rights and liberties of the individual are prior to society and must be upheld by it. Repudiated is retributive justice. Justice is dispersed in accordance with the requirements and circumstances. In stage 6, a person who achieves this level behaves according to universal ideals that are founded on the worth and equality of every human being. People are never used as a means to an end; instead, they exist for their own sake.

Individual liberties are only one aspect of having rights. It implies that every person should have his interests taken into account in every circumstance and that those interests should be given the same weight as one's own [11]. Moral responsibilities become part of humans' life, and this is the ultimate shape of all societies. At that time, free will was supposed to be washed out from the humans' brains, and people were not allowed to do the things they wanted to do, what was laid down in their hearts. Free will will grow too. They become upset when their ability to choose is severely restricted, and when that eruption point is reached, people only behave in accordance with their instincts.

3. Free Will

3.1 The Definition of Free Will

In Book IV of *The Republic*, Plato declares that the human soul has rational, spirited, and appetitive elements [12]. The wise person aspires to a condition of internal "justice," or the capacity to govern one's actions, in which each component of the soul performs its appropriate purpose [12]. The person is held captive by their desires in the absence of justice. Therefore, in Plato's view, freedom is a type of self-mastery that results in one's emancipation from the tyranny of basic wants as well as the attainment of more accurate knowledge and uncompromising pursuit of the Good. [12]. The majority of people believe that morality is utilized to limit people's freedom of choice. While both Aristotle and Plato were concerned with cultivating virtues, his theoretical emphasis is more on the part that choice plays in motivating individual behaviors that, whether for good or evil, accumulate over time to form habits. Aristotle claims that, in contrast to nonrational agents, humans have the choice to decide what to do or not do in Book III of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. He also asserts that because they emanate from "us" and because humans are "aware of the unique conditions of the action," a sizable chunk of activities is voluntary [12]. An agent must have the mental abilities to choose, consider many courses of action, choose one, and govern her behavior in accordance with her choice to be considered the author of an individual's acts and to be held accountable for them [5]. Free will also refers to the ability to manage the environment and circumstances, as well as non-deliberative, unconscious brain activity, in order to act in accordance with goals even when not using conscious decision-making powers [5]. If free will is unconscious, how did people develop the concept and the phrase "free will"? It is still unclear what free will looks like. A distinction needs to be made clear since the emotion of rebellion is not related to free will; it may be a component of them, but it occurs between stages 4 and 5 of Lawrence Kohlberg's stages of moral development. A good illustration of this phenomenon is the hippie who did the things they liked mainly aimed to infuriate those conservative people or follow the trends [11].

3.2 The Existence of Freewill

Many other philosophers and psychologists have published their ideas about free will; the topics all serve one main argument, whether or not persons have free will. Aristotle appears to be aware of but does not satisfactorily answer the question of whether a person's choice in any given situation is entirely determined by his internal state—Perception of the environment and his pertinent beliefs, desires, and general character dispositions—and external circumstances [12]. Immanuel Kant's citation provided one widely accepted definition, concluding that someone acts freely if they take the necessary action of their own volition. Also figured, those discoveries in neuroscience—for example, the brain makes decisions up to seven seconds before people are aware of them [4]—along with the philosophical notion that any action must be dependent on prior causes, imply that behavior is never self-generated and that freedom is an illusion. The brain has a reaction time towards each thing individuals meet; no one knows what happens during this short period of time, and the process of those who make decisions is speedy. Benjamin Libet and his associates carried out among the most prominent scientific studies on free will in 1983. Electroencephalography (EEG) was utilized in this study to monitor the existence of brain activity both before and after individuals were instructed to execute a spontaneous and voluntary finger movement. The time of the recorded brain activity was

compared to the participants' first awareness of an impulse to act (W) or their first awareness that they had moved (M), depending on the trial (readiness potentials, or RP). Participants used a clock to self-report the time of W and M. Prior to W. T., by several hundred milliseconds, Libet et al. noticed RP [13]. Free will is defined as the

4. The Influence of Free Will on Moral Behavior

4.1 Theories

4.1.1 Presumptions on the influence of the free will

The reasons accounts theory assumes that ethical responsibilities and free will are two entirely different forces that compel agents to act [14]. As mentioned before, since humans adhere to the norms and place restrictions on themselves, very few people genuinely know what they want. Whether or not humans already have a moral code that developed naturally before being influenced by society is a principle that humans have developed to guide daily decisions. The social norms, however, have reshaped this structure. The first is that the moral standards of society have combined with free will to create ideas and personalities that are distinctive to each person. The second is that free will has eliminated moral obligations or social rules. The third is that the impact of free will on moral behaviors is small enough to ignore.

4.1.2 Reasons accounts

How can humans figure out what is acceptable and wrong? The predominance of reason in morality was not seriously challenged until the middle of the eighteenth century—during the so-called "Age of Reason," no less—in the writings of Scottish philosopher David Hume. Nothing is more prevalent in philosophy, and even in everyday life, according to Hume, than to discuss the struggle between reason and emotion, to favor reason, and to claim that men are only truly moral to the extent that they follow its rules. Hume pointed out that although desire was viewed as blind, unstable, and deceitful, the reason was seen as everlasting, unchanging, and divine. He made the point that reason alone can never serve as the driving force behind any act of the will and, secondly, that reason can never stand in the way of passion acting on the will (p. 460) [15]. The extraordinary high degree of the uniting of self and morality is what individuals highlight as one of the many fascinating insights they gleaned from these interviews. All these men and women have actively pursued their individual and moral goals at the same time, viewing them as one and the same. They define the self with a moral core as opposed to denying it. No one considered the moral decisions they made to be an act of selflessness.

In the article, multi-system moral psychology: towards a consensus view [16], one may claim that the thought problem is dissolved when the moral dilemma is solved as successfully as it was in these individuals. The will is strengthened, and the typical gap between belief and behavior is "healed" by the completeness of the personality when moral views are strongly held and personally "owned" when moral authority becomes independent. Because self and morality are so closely aligned as they are in these role models, temptation—in the traditional sense of giving in to selfish desires—simply ceases to be a consideration. It is not a matter of ego power conquering temptation. Now that the self has a moral core, its identifying desires are motivated by moral objectives [16]. Meanwhile, desires guide moral responsibilities.

4.1.3 The situationism

Situationism can maybe explain the conflict between moral responsibilities and free will. Social psychologists tend to diminish the impact of individual dispositions by highlighting the significant influence of the current situation on thoughts, feelings, and actions [17]. Another researcher offers a different perspective in contrast to the preceding scholar's acknowledgment of situationism's significant influence in the essay. The application of situationism does not prove that humans are invariably irrational or that external factors always prevail over will. Situationism does not pose a

threat as a result of those reasons [14]. As a matter of fact, they both concur that the environment has an impact on how free will is affected. The only difference is the level of the impacts. There are many viewpoints as well. People also frequently view reductive mechanisms as being incompatible with free will and moral responsibility because they frequently attribute these qualities to only those agents whose acts can be explained in terms of their mental states [18].

4.2 The Empirical Evidence

In one study [19], individuals who believed in free will and the virtue of altruism were shown a film depicting an interaction between an "active" and a "passive" person, both of whom were targets for theft. The "passive" participant was cheated out of the whole endowment (\$10) by the "active" participant. In one treatment, the outcome of this action was determined by a chance occurrence that was beyond the active person's control (a dice roll), but in the other treatment, the outcome was determined by an active choice made by the passive person. The authors observed that situations, where a deliberate decision was made, got more blame after asking the observer to rate the participant's blameworthiness. Similar to Fong [20] discovers that individuals, including those who believe they are absolute If they are aware that welfare beneficiaries are actively seeking help and altruistic, will contribute more to them. Searching for employment as opposed to waiting for a job to present itself. These findings imply that diminishing free will belief may also encourage prosocial conduct by heightening people's perceptions of other people's lack of control over their own life and; as a result, enhancing their desire to assist [21]. There is still no solid evidence to completely prove that; however, nowadays, just as the experiment shows, humans need to get rid of their free will so that they can live in society. One may assume that if the free will of humans is allowed to dominate them too much and they are without restraints like laws or other people's supervision, they will become more sociopathic.

Free will is thus accepted as a fact in contemporary culture. Humans can advance themselves if they choose wisely. A bad choice has repercussions, most obviously in the legal system, where crimes are viewed as an exercise of free will, as the offender had the option of committing the act or not (unless in cases of insanity). Humans may still exercise individuals' free will and be conscious of how the environment affects, if not dictates, actions despite the fact that other causes are influencing us, as noted by determinism [22]. Since the beginning of time, society has domesticated humans to enable the working of society, and free will is like the candlelight trembling in the wind, but it will never end.

5. Limitations and Future Direction

The human body is complex, especially the human brain. The human brain is known to contain about 86 billion neurons that can form trillions of contact points. The procedure and the outcomes of many studies will not be sufficiently natural to allow for conclusions to be drawn. Participants are often aware that they are participating in an experiment. Understanding the complexity of the brain involves knowledge of several sizes, ranging from the level of the genome, cells, and synapses to that of the entire organ, which requires digesting a lot of data [23]. There is no evidence showing that humans have the abilities or technologies to read others' minds. Mind and brain are closely connected to each other. Although the mind is a far larger entity than the brain [and as a result, it transcends the brain], it is essential to examine the brain in order to understand how the mind thinks. The vegetative brain, which regulates viscera and glands, the limbic brain, which is in charge of emotional conduct, and the cognitive brain, which is in charge of logical behavior, can be roughly split into three instances in the brain [24]. According to Jacob Feldman, a psychology professor at Rutgers University, the way that the human mind works is a conundrum that has perplexed people for many generations, partially because it is so intuitive, and yet it's challenging to program. According to stages of moral development, Growth is what moral development is, and all growth follows a predetermined pattern. It would be unrealistic to anticipate a person's overnight development into a person of good moral

character [11]. Despite the fact that the phases look thorough, deliberate, and compelling, morals will inevitably alter in the future, including their definitions. This type of study and experiment is unpersuasive since humans are unable to directly see people's inner thoughts and behaviors.

Future studies should concentrate on combining neurology, biology, psychology, and philosophy. Researchers should place emphasis on the notion that an individual's daily behaviors, whether voluntary or not, and the thoughts that constantly flood their mind might alter that person's brain. Investigations must be made into cognitive and sociocultural mediating factors. Understanding how individuals choose their acts, create the meanings for their actions, and create their self-identities—in particular, cognitive processes—is essential [25]. Future research on the final form of our civilization is necessary, and additional tests of humanity should be conducted better to understand the true nature of the human mind. More profound and more extensive study or scientific research is required to completely comprehend the activities of the human brain. And the tests on different ethnicities, ages, and genders must be implemented in order to get more convincing results. By fully understanding the mysteries of the human body, humans will gain significant progress in psychology. The question of the education of individuals decides the level of conflicts between moral and free will must be tested meanwhile.

6. Summary

After reviewing the definitions and debates on free will and morals, by analyzing the empirical research, the conclusion is that free will has an influence on morality; without any constraints, humans are powerless to withstand the effects of free will. Education in society is a method of domesticating humans so they can coexist with this vast pack of animals. In order for humans to survive in societies, their free will must be eliminated to become morally good. They resemble the scale's two sides. The other side will sink if one side is made lighter. The other side will sink if one side is weighted. It is now obvious that morality has gained importance while free will has decreased, but if the balance is substantially upset, the equilibrium will eventually be lost. Unfortunately, there are various theories on this subject, with a lack of reliable data and experimental studies.

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