

Article X: Free Will- My thoughts on it

I felt obligated to write an article on free will because often when people talk about consciousness free will is not long behind in the conversation. Though, note that when I gave my technical definition of consciousness and meta-consciousness in article 5, I did not include free will in the discussion. The reason was simple, I was giving specific definitions of consciousness which I believe could then apply to articulate and explain what people mean when they talk about free will. I was willing to simply let people come to that conclusion on their own without I having to spell it out. I then guilty that I had left behind those readers which might not be able to see how those definitions can easily be applied and explain free will so I decided make my thoughts clear and give some explanation.

Over the course of these articles I have used words and concepts in a way that some people might find vague because they would like their particular word or concept to have to particular aspect or definition that must be respected in its use. Unless necessary I have resolved not to overexplain or over defined myself in a way which to a seasoned academic might seem “unprofessional and showcasing my lack of training in technical philosophical discussions” since academics have a brevity of words which they have rigorously defined to aid in their very technical discussion. I did not want to take that path because I wanted to my articles to have wider appeal than a narrow academic audience. Furthermore, I have personally found many philosophical concept “too technical” to where I find them confusing to begin with and that their use harms communication rather than helping. In my undergraduate training, I found my philosophy of mind course the most difficult course of my undergrad courses. Even more difficult than my theoretical neuroscience course where we were taking Fourier transforms to model eye detection of motion!

Furthermore, if you have read my Alpha Space article, Article 3, then you would know that I feel that many words and concepts are not completely encapsulated in their dictionary definition. Therefore, the point of writing and communication in general is as an aid to develop the relevant connection to Alpha Space where the best meaning of their concept resides. Fundamentally, I view my writing as an aide in the sense I can communicate people where the stairs are, and what they could look like, but I cannot walk them up the logical stairs myself. That is something they would have to do on their own.

Lastly, I did not want to unintentionally back myself into a logical corner. Since a lot of the concepts I am tackling are both specific but every common (like consciousness) to give an overly specific definition for some of the concepts would have been backing myself into a corner that I never meant to go to anyways. One of the things other academics like to do to poke holes in another's argument is to take the definitions of one's argument and extend to a place where they then fail or become illogical and thus conclude the initial argument was false to begin with all along! I did not want to give people who would like to poke holes in my argument that logical and rhetorical space to undermine my point. As consciousness can be a very treasured idea to many people where they treasure some particular aspect of consciousness they can then be very opinionated.

Therefore, in a controversial topic of free will, I thought it initially better to give no answer and let people understand on their own.

There is one caveat, however, and this relies on my understanding of what it means to be unconscious as well as discussion I had with a pastor while attending Rice University. I went to a Christian group at Rice called RUF which would have weekly sessions of singing, social gatherings, and a sermon by the RUF pastor about some theological ideal. While I was attending Rice, I did not go to church often but I did attend this RUF session and get a weekly dose of church from there.

At one particular session, at the end of a sermons, I forgot what exactly the pastor said, but at the end it prompted me to ask a question along the lines of "Do you believe in free will?" and the pastor congratulated me on noticing the connection of the talk to free will and explained why he does not. As he explained it, a key conception of Heaven is that when people go there, they will be without the ability to sin. He further noted how this concept ran against the common modern view of free will where being good means having free will to choose, including that of immoral choices, and choosing the more difficult good path over the easy immoral one. In his description, being good in Heaven was not that one can sin and simply choosing not to, it is that they CANNOT sin. They are incapable of it.

In an aside but relevant note, let us determine that how "good" a person is equal to the extent they rejection the possibility of doing evil things. In a more mathematical language, if we take the phase space of the decisions a person can

make and their moral consequences and integrate the area of immoral choices then a person a moral morally “good” the bigger the area of immoral decisions are open to them but they do not act on them. In sense, a person who underwent tremendous temptation and rejected it would then be better than the person who never went through the temptation to begin with. This argument has a massive flaw in it as then some of the most “morally good” people in history are ones that in common understanding are the villains. In our modern day such a system would then determine that Vladimir Putin is one of the most morally good people alive simply because he could destroy the world with nuclear weapons but he chooses not to, therefore he is tremendously good. This form of logic would then apply to any leader with power as they would in effectively also be good even if they did commit atrocities. The reason being that even though they did horrible acts, since they could have been worse and they did not do the worse things they therefore “resisted” temptation and are good. Here the common notion of free will runs directly against what would commonly consider good.

Given the discussion in the last paragraph, the conclusion some to a simple but powerful point. What point is freedom if it is just means free to do more wrong? It is strange sentence to write as an American since freedom from government tyranny is such a strong tradition here. Therefore, when I was considering what it meant to be unconscious versus conscious versus meta-conscious a simple idea came to mind. If we think of a moral system as a set of rules and procedures that are invariant across time, i.e. they do change from the year 0 to the year 1000, then if one commits to a moral system into their phase space of actions, when coming to a situation where the moral decision is clear one based on the moral system adopted long ago, then in a true sense the person in question is not acting of own “free will” in a traditional sense if their moral system has been so integrated into them as to make the outcome of the situation pre-determined. In this example, the person effectively pre-programmed themselves on the decision they would make before the situation arose.

Now if one wants to hold onto a more common notion of free will where people can always make new overwriting choice then one can invoke my notion of meta-consciousness and simply give the acceleration of a person’s phase space a chaotic non-repeatable pattern which some mathematicians have already defined rigorously. The issue is that we would find this person to be very mercurial, crazy, and likely unmoored from reality.

The grand point of this part of the article is simply to inform how free will, freedom, and morality have a complex interplay that then restricts each other.

Part 2- Homeless, Mental Illness, and Personal Freedoms

Given how the previous discussion was about free will, it is relevant for how understanding the nature of homeless and mental illness and how as a society we should address some issue. The critical component here is treatment. Severe mental illness is a state of being I personally find worse than death as it attacks a person's grounding to reality and makes them confused. Mental illness has many forms and ways it manifests, and thus many ways to treat. I realize now I will need to do an entire article on the varieties of mental illness to better talk about the issue. What I wanted to bring up here is the moral dilemma of when a person rejects treatment out of their own "free will" but then ends up homeless again unable to a healthy self-sufficient member of society. At what point can the state, family member, or friend then intervene to over ride that "free will" choice to force treatment? Below I posit some questions and ideas on the matter that depending on one decision on them will inform where you lie on the policy line.

Q1) If a person breaks their arm, do they have lawfully protected choice to not repair the arm and reject care? If you answer yes to this question then a person who is homeless due to mental illness should be able to reject care and suffer the consequences.

Q2) Does a person have a protected right to suicide and self-harm? If yes, then the state should not have the power to coerce people in the personal choices at all.

Q3) Would an advanced AI have a right to reject treatment and self-delete? Given that I would consider advanced on a similar level as a pet and therefore be considered property of some owner that it would be the owner's choice in the matter. Since slavery is abolished in the US then this notion cannot apply to mental illness. It would be interesting, however, if you answer yes because you believe consciousness entity (note conscious in my definition of it as described in Article 5 not the common one) should have natural rights. I might be on board with this natural rights argument if it applied to meta-conscious system though since there is a fundamental issue of meta-consciousness and its relation to the divine that I will withhold judgement on such an idea until that relationship is better elucidated.

I find Q2 to be extremely morally repugnant so I would answer with a qualified no. Qualified no simply means that it cannot be used by the state as a loophole to work around constitutional protected rights. The simple reason being that to reject the divine gift of God that is in people with suicide is by a fundamental definition heinous. Given how I believe