Meghan Griffith
Free Will: The Basics.
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Meghan Griffith's *Free Will: The Basics* is composed of eight chapters, each approximately 15 pages, a glossary, and a suitable index. After the (1) Introduction, Griffith devotes chapters to (2) The Compatibility Question, (3) Moral Responsibility and Alternative Possibilities, (4) Some Current Compatibilist Proposals, (5) Some Current Incompatibilist Proposals, (6) Other Positions, (7) Free Will and Science, and (8) Where Does this Leave Us? Some Concluding Thoughts. Each chapter comes with a brief annotated bibliography pointing readers further into the relevant literature. Terms that are found in the glossary are bolded when used in the chapters, though there are some terms and phrases bolded in the chapters that are found in other glossary entries rather than having entries of their own (e.g., "exception regularities" is found in the glossary in the description of "laws of nature" [129]).

Griffith's working understanding of free will is "some sort of ability or power to choose" (3) or "the power to make choices" (2), which she distinguishes from free action. In the introductory chapter, she motivates interest in free will by its relation to moral (and legal) responsibility, divine foreknowledge, and authorship of our lives. As with much of the contemporary literature, the majority of the volume focuses on the debate between compatibilist and incompatibilist approaches to free will. In the opening chapter, Griffith notes that free will seems to be threatened both by determinism and indeterminism, since it would seem that "our choices become random or arbitrary in a troublesome way" (5). Chapter Two carefully explains determinism and the modal relationship between determinism and the existence of free will that forms the basis for the disagreement between compatibilists and incompatibilists. Chapter Three addresses compatibilist and incompatibilist understandings of the ability to do otherwise, as well as the challenge posed by Frankfurt-style counterexamples to the principle of alternative possibilities.

Chapter Four surveys the leading families of contemporary compatibilism: mesh theories (e.g., Frankfurt's), the Reason View (i.e., Wolf's), reasons-responsive theories (e.g., Fischer and Ravizza's work). The biggest worry she raises for such views is, perhaps not surprisingly, manipulation cases. The discussion here is pretty standard and straightforward, though I think she doesn't see one implication of Frankfurt's view that he has raised. The way Griffith puts it,

> According to Frankfurt's view, a person has free will so long as the action comes from the will the person wants to have. But imagine a case in which the person is brainwashed into wanting to want. Frankfurt's theory says that all that matters is the internal mesh. But doesn't it seem like we ought to care about where our wants come from? If I have been manipulated into having the desires that I have, am I really free? Frankfurt's theory would seem to have the result that I am. Perhaps Frankfurt could insist that those who have been manipulated are exceptions and should be counted as free. (57–58)

Frankfurt does indeed say this. Frankfurt himself countenances such a possibility:

> The only thing that really counts is what condition I am in. How I got into that condition is another matter. If I'm in the condition where I'm doing what I want to do and I really want to do it, i.e. I decisively identify with my action, then I think I'm responsible for it. It makes no difference how it came about that that is the case. ... If the person is wholehearted in the action, let us say performs the action because he wants to perform it and the desire to perform it is a desire that he really wants to have and there's no reservation, there's no imposition, no passivity: the person is completely, fully, wholeheartedly identified with what's going on. What more could there be? What more could you want? That's all the freedom that's possible for human beings to have, in my opinion. ('Discussion with Harry Frankfurt', *Ethical Perspectives* 5 [1998]: 15–43, at 32f.)

In an earlier article, Frankfurt similarly writes that "the degree to which his choice is autonomous and the degree to which he acts freely do not depend on the origin of the conditions which lead him to choose and to act as he does" (*The Importance of What We Care About*, Cambridge University Press 1988, 46). So perhaps this version of compatibilism is even more problematic than Griffith suggests.

Chapter Five focuses on the leading families of contemporary incompatibilist views. Among the libertarian views, she includes simple indeterministic views (e.g., Ginet), event-causal views (e.g., Kane), and agent-causal views (e.g., Chisholm and O'Connor). (She only notes in passing at 83 agent-causal compatibilist views.) The main objection she raises to the first two views is luck, which again is not surprising. She also raises a number of objections to agent-causal libertarian views but doesn't list luck, which suggests that she thinks that agent-causation (if coherent) helps with this worry. She also briefly treats hard determinism and hard incompatibilism. However, regarding the latter she seems to think that it is the same as free will impossibilism: "a hard incompatibilist … thinks that either way, [whether determinism is] true or not, we cannot have free will" (85; see also 27 and 129). But this isn't right for Pereboom, who gave the name hard incompatibilism to his view. Griffith does note that Pereboom "argues that only agent causation would allow for free will … but he claims that science rules out agent causation (or at least makes it highly improbable)" (85). But according to how Griffith defines hard incompatibilism, Pereboom's view wouldn't count.

Chapter Six treats "Other Positions" such as van Inwagen's mysterianism, Smilansky's illusionism, and Vargas's revisionism. These are positions which she claims "do not fall into the typical compatibilist/incompatibilist categories" (101). While it is good that Griffith treats these positions (and in general she treats them well), it's not clear to me that they in fact avoid being either compatibilist or incompatibilist views. Elsewhere, I have argued that Vargas's revisionism is best understood as a kind of compatibilism, though one on which we need to give up certain of our pre-theoretical beliefs about free will (K. Timpe, *Free Will: Sourcehood and Its Alternatives*, 2nd ed., Bloomsbury 2012, ch. 3). Insofar as "Smilansky argues that compatibilism and hard determinism are both true in important ways [and] we need to be partly compatibilists and partly hard determinists" (95), the same would seem to be true of illusionism. Van Inwagen's

mysterianism is, it seems to me, a kind of tentative incompatibilism, but one which is more committed to the existence of free will than it is to the incompatibility of free will and determinism. While I think there is something not quite right about treating these views as alternatives to compatibilism and incompatibilism, her treatment of these views is nicely done.

Chapter Seven addresses how recent issues in science (including neuroscience and psychology) impact our understanding of free will. It begins by briefly looking at scientific claims that chaos theory might support libertarianism and that recent studies with fruit flies might show that non-determinism does not entail randomness. Griffith rightly notes that those making these claims should "get clear on what is meant by free will" (106), but also calls for more mutual interaction between philosophers and scientists. Griffith also looks at claims that "neuroscience proves the absence of free will" (107), mainly focusing on Libet's work. She also shows (largely by using Al Mele's work) that the experiments to date do not prove what many neuroscientists claim they prove. Her discussion in this chapter is quite cautious and fair: while there are "many scientific issues that have bearing on free will… it is important to note that in every case, the philosophical issues need to be attended to" (114).

The final chapter is a brief recap of the volume as a whole. Here, Griffith is most clear that her treatment throughout has aimed at being impartial: "You will notice that I have not taken a stand on which view is right or which arguments are successful… [This book] does not tell you whether we have free will, what free will *really* is, or which view is correct" (116 and 118). This neutrality is one of the features which most distinguishes her book from the leading competitor texts which do, to varying degrees, take stands on the issues. She also addresses why the introductory student might find this frustrating, not only about this book in particular but about philosophical consensus in general. It contains a very helpful, even if short, discussion of the value and methodology of philosophy that would likely be helpful in many introductory courses, and not just those that address free will.

My only criticisms of the volume may seem like nit-picks, and nit-picks they may be. In addition to misdescribing hard incompatibilism, discussed above, she seems to equate determinism and fatalism (18), and she explicitly equates theological determinism with divine foreknowledge (22). The volume only has one paragraph in Chapter Two on the influential consequence argument, though it is briefly mentioned a number of other times in passing.

While the pace of the volume is quick, Griffith takes time to emphasize important distinctions that readers may otherwise be inclined to overlook. It is probably the easiest to read of the existing introductions to free will (and I say this as one who has written what I think to be a competitor text). Scholars will not find much of use in the text, but students certainly will. And given that that is the volume's goal, Griffith is to be praised for having achieved it.

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