RESEARCH ARTICLE

Partial Compatibilism: Free Will in the Light of Moral Experience

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Abstract: Partial compatibilism says that there are basically two kinds of freedom of the will: some free volitions cannot be determined, while others can. My methodological choice is to examine what assumptions will appear necessary if we want to take seriously—and make understandable—our ordinary moral life. Sometimes, typically when we feel guilty about a choice of ours, we are sure enough that we, at the considered moment, actually could have taken a different option. At other times, however, typically when we are aware of some unquestionable moral reasons for a certain choice, we may perceive our choice as voluntary and free in spite of the fact that it is, in the given situation, unthinkable for us to choose otherwise than we actually do (there are situations when responsible agents, because of their strong moral reasons/motives, cannot choose differently). The assumption that experiences of the first kind are not always mistaken excludes our world being deterministic. Yet free will and determinism go together in some of those possible worlds which contain only the second kind of free volitions. Partial compatibilism represents a 'third way' between standard compatibilism and incompatibilism, a way to solve that old dilemma.

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1. Introduction

When we feel guilty about a decision we have made, we normally suppose that we could have chosen otherwise. Such a kind of free choice seems to involve the existence of alternate possibilities. At other times, however, strong moral reasons drive us to make a wholehearted decision such that, although we perceive that choice as voluntary and free, it is unthinkable for us to choose differently. There seem to be some free choices such that the person in question can (under the same set of conditions) choose otherwise—and there seem to be some others, free as well, such that she cannot. Partial compatibilism, which I am going to propose and explicate, fully recognizes both kinds of situation.

This theory differs from both *incompatibilism* and *standard compatibilism*.[1] Unlike incompatibilism, partial compatibilism admits that there is a possible world where determinism[2] and existence of free will go together. Even in the actual world, arguably, we sometimes make our decision freely despite the fact that we are unable to choose otherwise in the given situation. There seem to be, therefore, some 'compatibilist' possible worlds, namely some of those in which *all* free volitions are of such determined character (I will consider such a world in several paragraphs preceding the conclusion of this paper).

On the other hand, the proposed theory admits, unlike standard compatibilism, that some instances of freedom that can be observed in our *actual* world, namely the cases of moral guilt, are of a kind *not* compatible with determinism. It means that not *every* but only *some* free volitions are

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[1]   Under the term 'standard compatibilism' I include all compatibilist theories which do not suppose the existence of some acts of volitional freedom incompatible with determinism.

[2]   Determinism in the broadest sense of the term says that "everything which happens, happens necessarily; it could not have happened otherwise" (Campbell 1997, 22). Causal or nomological determinism specifies that "every event is necessitated by antecedent events and conditions together with the laws of nature" (Hoefer 2016).

compatible with determinism. That is why I call this theory 'partial'[3] compatibilism.

Before I offer arguments in favour of the claim that some free volitions can occur necessarily, I shall explain my motivation for the thesis that some free volitions cannot be determined and cannot occur necessarily. Both steps, however, need the following preliminary remark on the problem of compatibilism.

The earlier form of standard compatibilism, classic compatibilism (born in the epoch of Enlightenment),[4] often claimed that your action is free if it corresponds to your volition (if you *do* what you *want* to do).[5] This is certainly an understandable account of free *action*. The only trouble is the persisting need to explain what makes *volition* free. Classic compatibilism offered its version of the principle of alternate possibilities.[6] Even if determinism is true, the free agent could have acted otherwise than he actually did. To say that I could have acted otherwise is to claim that I would have acted otherwise *if I had so chosen.*[7] But again, this kind of answer, although

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[3]   This label relates to the Aristotelian concept of 'partial statement'. "A partial statement (…) asserts that something holds of at least some part of a class, without specifying how large a part it might be…" (Whitaker 1996, 89).

[4]   By the term 'classic' compatibilism I generally mean those compatibilist theories which did not reject the principle of alternate possibilities. John Locke, David Hume, George Edward Moore or Alfred Jules Ayer (among others) can be considered protagonists of this kind of approach. Classic compatibilism was the predominant form of compatibilism before Harry Frankfurt's attack on the principle of alternate possibilities (Frankfurt 1969).

[5]   "By liberty, then, we can only mean a power of acting or not acting, according to the determinations of the will; that is, if we choose to remain at rest, we may; if we choose to move, we also may" (Hume 1975, VIII, 1, § 23, p. 95). Hume seems to follow John Locke who states: "[T]he Idea of Liberty, is the Idea of a Power in any Agent to do or forbear any particular Action, according to the determination or thought of the mind, whereby either of them is preferr'd to the other (…)" (Locke 1975, II, 21, § 8, p. 237).

[6]   The principle of alternate possibilities says that someone is morally responsible for what he has done only if he was able to do otherwise.

[7]   Derk Pereboom attributes such an account of freedom to G. E. Moore and A. J. Ayer (Pereboom 2013, 615). Cf. Ayer: "[T]o say that I could have acted otherwise is to say, first, that I should have acted otherwise if I had so chosen; secondly,

explaining how I could have *acted* otherwise, does not explain how I could ever have *chosen* otherwise.

With regard to this distinction I will speak hereinafter of 'choosing' or 'deciding otherwise', rather than of 'acting otherwise'. When freedom of the will is explored, I assess such terminology as more exact.

In the rest of my paper I will firstly explain why partial compatibilism is just *partial*, and, secondly, why it is still a *compatibilism*.

2. What 'ought implies can' implies

Although I believe (with standard compatibilists and some source incompatibilists) that the essence (or definition) of freedom cannot be found in the possibility of choosing otherwise (in the existence of alternate possibilities), I am still inclined to think (unlike standard compatibilists) that some ascriptions of freedom do entail also the attribution of the possibility to choose otherwise.

It has to be noted that I will not present here a fully developed defence of this latter proposition. The existing debate on the topic is extensive and includes (inter alia) the problem of Frakfurt-style counter-examples. Such questions could hardly be answered in brief; and a single paper cannot deal in detail with every question connected with its subject. Consequently, the idea of my paper (as a whole) is developed in a 'hypothetical' or 'conditional' way: the minimal sense is that *even if* freedom of some decision implies the possibility of alternative choice, free will is still compatible with determinism. In what follows, however, I will concretize the main motivation for taking the 'incompatibilist' protasis of this conditional sentence seriously into account.

To be guilty, and, thereupon, also blameworthy[8] for a choice, means that such a choice should not have been made. But whenever we *should*

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that my action was voluntary in the sense in which the actions, say, of the kleptomaniac are not; and thirdly, that nobody compelled me to choose as I did: and these three conditions may very well be fulfilled. When they are fulfilled, I may be said to have acted freely" (1972, 282). (Cf. Moore 1912, Chapter 6).

[8]   It is open to dispute whether the two predicates, "guilty" and "blameworthy", are interchangeable or not. Perhaps one may be blameworthy e.g. for her (innate)

have chosen to act in a certain way, and are guilty because we have not so chosen, we *could* have so chosen. We cannot, for example, fairly blame a person for failing to perform an act the person is, in fact, unable to perform (Mellema 2004, 40). In the case of some decisions—at least those which we assess to be morally wrong—we seem to inevitably suppose that the chooser in question *ought* and (therefore) *could* have chosen otherwise. In the case of morally wrong volitions we might renounce the principle of alternate possibilities[9] only if we were ready to give up the ought-implies-can principle[10] as well (Widerker 1991).

Now the question arises whether or not to believe in the ought-implies-can principle. And I admit that it does not apply universally. Let us remember the distinction, used in late scholasticism, between 'formal sin' and 'material sin'.[11] Formal sin involves guilt whereas mere material sin does not. (Let us hereinafter use the term "guilty" to describe a person who is not only legally, but morally responsible for a morally wrong choice.) Let us assume, for example, that an insane murderer has been—owing to his mental illness—unable to choose otherwise. Then his 'sin' was a 'material' one, but not a 'formal' one. And here we have a counterexample against the ought-implies-can principle. The transgressor in question arguably *should* have chosen otherwise (nobody is allowed to kill innocent and non-attacking people) despite the fact that he *could not* have decided so (owing to his psychological state).[12]

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bad character without being guilty of it. Our belief that people are blameworthy for their bad traits "does not commit us to holding (…) that people are responsible for [them]" (Sher 2006, 69). Nevertheless, even if it were true that blameworthiness does not always entail guilt, it would be still true that guilt (in the moral sense) entails some blameworthiness.

[9]   The principle of alternate possibilities is to be understood in the sense that someone is responsible for his choice only if he could choose otherwise.

[10]   The ought-implies-can maxime says that we can be obliged to make only those choices that we are able to make (there can be no obligation to do something one cannot do).

[11]   "Peccatum materiale", "peccatum formale" (Cathrein 1915, §98, p. 73).

[12]   Cf. the "psychopath case" considered by Julia Driver, i.e., "an example of an agent that is not a moral agent, though is morally appraisable, and the appropriate

In the range of 'formal sins', however, i.e., whenever we surmise that a personal guilt is involved, our assumption that the culprit should have chosen otherwise does imply that he also could have (or else he would not be guilty). In this specific sense I consider the ought-implies-can principle to be an intuitively acceptable axiom of moral theory.[13] And, furthermore, if ought implies can *and* if there are instances in which we 'formally sin' by *not deciding as we ought*, then there are instances in which we can choose otherwise than we actually do. In the actual world, therefore, there are some instances of freedom incompatible with determinism.

It may be further objected that the reason why people are sometimes unable to make an appropriate choice is that they simply lack the motivation needed. In such cases the transgressors, although they cannot take the right option, do usually seem (unlike the above mentioned insane murderer) to be guilty.

An answer can be that if we "know that at some time an agent could not have avoided lacking the motivation required for performing some morally exemplary action", then it would be mistaken to claim that she *ought* to have performed that action at that time (Pereboom 2014, 140). This answer, in my view, is not completely satisfactory. Even if we assume that the agent *at the moment of the considered decision-making* could not have avoided lacking the morally required motivation in question, it does not follow that it would not be possible *tout court* for her to avoid such motivational deficiency: she perhaps could have *in previous times* better formed her motivational moral character, her conscience and will (comp. Kane 2005, 129–131). It seems true, however, that in cases when a transgressor was not able to have done even this (consider e.g. an ill-bred child), or, generally, in cases when she never could *in any relevant sense* have chosen otherwise than she actually did, her fault is but a 'material' one. In other

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subject of blame, even though not morally responsible in virtue of lacking the relevant agential capacities…" (Driver 2015, 171).

[13]   Perhaps, it might even be argued that the ought implies can principle is as analytically true as, for example, the statements that blue is a colour and children are not adult. Negations of such "analytical" truths just "have no sense" (Grice and Strawson 1956, 150–151).

words, in the realm of 'formal sins' the essential link between 'ought' and 'can' remains untouched even within cases of motivational deficiency.

The ought-implies-can principle is famously threatened by Frankfurt's counter-example, by his story about Jones and Black (with which I assume my reader to be acquainted).[14] And contemporary standard compatibilism, such as John Martin Fischer's semi-compatibilism, heavily relies on this strategy.[15] It is "the basic intuitions elicited by the Frankfurt-type cases which show", in J. M. Fischer's view, "that the most natural justification of the ought-implies-can maxim is faulty" (Fischer 2003, 248).

Frankfurtian reasoning is, however, more disputable than conclusive. Its defenders have been asked, for instance, whether the scenario takes place in a deterministic world or in an indeterministic one. If Jones acts under indeterminism: how could Black ever learn (before Jones's decision is actually made) what Jones is going or not going to decide? If it is, on the contrary, under determinism, then a Frankfurtian compatibilist cannot show (without begging the question against the incompatibilist) whether Jones's freedom or his moral responsibility. (For a useful survey of the debate, see Garnett 2013; see further Kane 1985, 51; Widerker 1995; Ginet 1996; Goetz 2005; Fischer 2010; Palmer 2014; Cohen 2016.) Due to its questionable character, Frankfurtian reasoning does not seem to reliably rule out the ought-implies-can maxim. The question remains open; and it is, therefore, open to us to keep the 'partial' measure of compatibilism.

My partial compatibilism is in some respects similar to Susan Wolf's "asymmetrical" Reason View: Regarding the case in which the agent does just what she ought to do, the Reason View does not require that she have

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[14]   Let us suppose that Black wants Jones to carry out an action that Jones, morally speaking, certainly should not do. "If it does become clear", Frankfurt says, "that Jones is going to decide to do something else, Black takes effective steps to ensure that Jones decides to do, and that he does do, what he wants him to do." (Black has the power to "manipulate the minute processes of Jones's brain and nervous system".) Black, however, "never has to show his hand because Jones, for reasons of his own, decides to perform and does perform the very action Black wants him to perform" (Frankfurt 1969, 835–836). In such case Jones seems to be guilty despite the fact that he could not have chosen otherwise.

[15]   "My motivation for rejecting the 'ought-implies-can' maxim comes from the Frankfurt-type cases" (Fischer 2003, 248).

the ability to do otherwise in order to be free in her choice. But when the agent fails to do what she ought to do, the Reason View does require that she could have done otherwise, namely, that she could have done what she ought (Wolf 1993, 69). "The Reason View is thus committed to the curious claim that being psychologically determined to perform good actions is compatible with deserving praise for them, but that being psychologically determined to perform bad actions is not compatible with deserving blame" (ibid. 79).

There is, however, a difference between Wolf's Reason View and partial compatibilism. A determinism which excludes freedom of wrong actions is, in Wolf's view, *psychological* determinism, i.e., "the thesis that all psychological events are uniquely and wholly determined by a conjunction of laws and states of affairs that are capable of description at the psychological level of explanation" (ibid. 101). "Other forms of determinism", on the other hand, do not contradict the freedom of our choices, not even of our morally wrong choices (ibid. 101–112).[16] By this latter claim Wolf joins standard compatibilism. Unlike me, she believes that free will—also where we assess the volition in question to be morally wrong—is compatible with (global) determinism.[17] I have pointed out, by contrast, that—given the validity of the ought-implies-can principle—our moral responsibility for morally wrong choices requests the kind of freedom which is linked to the principle of alternate possibilities and excluded by whatever impossibility to choose otherwise.

3. Volitional necessity

Having explained in the previous section why partial compatibilism is *partial*, I will give reasons, in the remaining sections of this paper, why

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[16]   Susan Wolf surprisingly argues that physical determinism goes together with the belief in a real volitional indeterminacy on the psychological level. Her reasoning has been sharply criticised by John Fischer and Mark Ravizza (1992).

[17]   "Global determinism is the statement that the world in total is deterministic (however that may be defined) for all times past, present or future. Local determinism is the thesis that determinism does only apply to a certain restricted area, to certain types of processes or at certain times" (Backmann 2013, 11).

partial compatibilism is a *compatibilism*. I will argue that, even if the principle of alternate possibilities sometimes applies, there are still some cases of free volition such that their free character is not connected with any possibility of alternate choice; and, what is more, that there are some 'compatibilist' possible worlds (which are both deterministic and free will containing). The reasoning for this latter claim will constitute an opposition also to those versions of incompatibilism which are ready to renounce the principle of alternate possibilities.

In order to start such considerations, it will be useful to borrow from J. M. Fischer and M. Ravizza the following example of theirs: Matthew, due to his moral conscience, cannot but rescue a drowning child.[18] The example will appear acceptable especially if we expressly add the presupposition that Matthew cannot see *any reason* for not saving the child's life. There is no danger involved for the rescuer (imagine a situation when the best rescue operation consists just in reaching a safety torus at hand, or a swimming ring, down for the child). Nothing prevents or discourages Matthew from the action. He also continues to be a reasonable and conscientious person, not susceptible to panic, etc. Given all those conditions it seems acceptable to assume, with Fischer and Ravizza, that Matthew is not able to choose otherwise.

Although Matthew's choice is undoubtedly driven by significant emotions, such as compassion, desire, and acute worry, the psychological necessity in question does not consist *only* in a force of emotions. If it were so, we could hardly speak of freedom of the will. More likely, it will be useful here to follow on Frankfurt's concept of 'volitional necessity'.

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[18] "Here is a case in which an agent is morally responsible for a good action although he could not have done otherwise. Matthew is walking along a beach, looking at the water. He sees a child struggling in the water and he quickly deliberates about the matter, jumps into the water, and rescues the child. We can imagine (…) that if he had considered not trying to save the child, he would have been overwhelmed by literally irresistible guilt feelings which would have caused him to jump into the water and save the child anyway. We simply stipulate that in the alternative sequence the urge to save the child would be genuinely irresistible" (Fischer and Ravizza 1991, 259).

Harry Frankfurt differentiates volitional necessity from the psychological determination which is at work, for example, in the case of an unwilling addict who is forced by his desire to do what he does not want to do. The subject of volitional necessity, by contrast, definitely wants to do just what he is (also emotionally) driven to do. He is unwilling to choose otherwise and this unwillingness "is *itself* something which he is unwilling to alter". Such volitional necessity is not a weakness of the will and is compatible with autonomy and freedom (Frankfurt 1998, 86–88; Frankfurt 1999, 111). Frankfurt connects such volitional necessity mainly with our 'cares' (a care expresses what we love or what is important to us). I think, in addition, that volitional necessity can be linked to our (moral) convictions and judgements.[19] Frankfurt himself, after all, does not separate loves and cares from the broad realm of human rationality; he speaks of a 'volitional rationality': "Violations of volitional rationality (…) are unthinkable" (Frankfurt 2006, 31). It can be said in brief that "for Frankfurt, whereas we ordinarily think of irrationality in terms of transgressing the bounds of what's conceivable (which is delineated by logic), there is also a type of irrationality that amounts to transgressing the bounds of what's *thinkable* (which is delineated by love, or some other volitional necessity)" (Tognattini 2014, 668).

I suggest, in any case, the following general definition of volitional necessity: A person's choice (to act in a certain way) instantiates volitional necessity whenever it is true that even if the person could *act* differently if she had so decided, she would, nonetheless, not be able to *decide* to act differently.[20] My inquiry specifically concerns cases where such volitional necessity is based on the chooser's moral motives. Let us return, in this perspective, to the above presented rescue case.

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[19] Frankfurt says that "volitional necessity (…) does not derive from a person's moral convictions as such but from the way in which he cares about certain things" (1998, 90). I agree, however, with D. Shoemaker that our moral "self" consists both of our cares and our evaluative judgements (Shoemaker 2015, 115–140).

[20] A person constrained by volitional necessities "may well possess the knowledge and skill required for performing the actions in question; nonetheless, he is unable to perform them. The reason is that he cannot bring himself to do so. It is not that he cannot muster the necessary power. What he cannot muster is the will" (Frankfurt 1999, 111).

Fischer and Ravizza's assumption that Matthew cannot but rescue the child does not seem to contradict their moral appreciation of the case: "Apparently, Matthew is morally responsible—indeed, praiseworthy—for his action, although he could not have done otherwise. Matthew acts freely in saving the child…" (Fischer and Ravizza 1991, 259).

It is thinkable that Matthew chose to rescue the child *not only* under the pressure of emotions but also voluntarily and rationally, i.e., under the guidance of his intelligible value-system. Even if the emotional pressure had been 'overcomeable', he—as an accountable person—could not have forborne to his choice. It was obviously rational to do what he decided to do[21] and *it was evident to him that no other choice was acceptable* in the given situation. In this sense he was not just a 'victim' of his emotions but, despite the determined and necessary character of his choice, he expressed a kind of freedom sufficient for moral responsibility and praiseworthiness.

4. Role of rationality

What kind of freedom, then, is specifically at work in such 'compatibilist' cases? On J. M. Fischer's account of "guidance control" or "freedom"[22] there are "two chief elements": the volition that issues in action must be the "agent's own," and it must be appropriately "reasons-responsive" (Fischer 2007, 78).[23] Let us now consider (more generally) what can be called "rationalist compatibilism", i.e. the view according to which "our freedom is just an expression of our reason" (Pink 2004, 45–46).

Such 'rationalism' is surely open to dispute. Recall Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn and his friendship with the runaway slave Jim. Huck's moral

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[21]   "[O]ne explanation for why an agent might not be able to do otherwise is that it is so obviously rational to do what she plans to do and the agent is too rational to ignore that fact" (Wolf 1993, 70).

[22]   Fischer seems to identify guidance control with freedom: "[G]uidance control exhausts the 'freedom-relevant' (…) component of moral responsibility. (…) [G]uidance control is all the control (or freedom) necessary for moral responsibility" (Fischer 2006, 107).

[23]   The "regulative control", by contrast, "involves access to alternative possibilities (freedom to choose and do otherwise)" (Fischer 2012, 6).

convictions tell him that he should proceed to return the slave to his lawful owner. "Huck believes he is doing wrong in helping Jim escape (…) even though the personal attachment to Jim outweighs the mandate of his conscience" (Bassett 1984, 93). The case became popular among moral philosophers as a counterexample against rationalist accounts of moral responsibility. Huck's choice seems not to be reasons-responsive since it is based on affections and feelings and directly contradicts Huck's normative believes. And yet "there is a strong intuition that Huck is very much praiseworthy for what he does, something that would be impossible if he were not morally responsible for what he does" (Sripada 2016, 1214; Cf. Arpaly and Schroeder 1999).

While I recognize the weight of the objection I still believe that rationality is an essential and defining ingredient of responsibility and freedom of will. If it were not, then the compatibilist should ascribe freedom and moral responsibility also to a dog that voluntarily rescues a child (and, in so doing, perhaps expresses its 'true self':[24] manifests being a good or faithful or friendly dog). Notice, however, that the classic (Aristotelian) concept of voluntariness does not necessarily refer to freedom. A cat chooses to drink milk—rather than tea—quite voluntarily, and yet it lacks freedom: cats are wholly directed by instincts and do not live a moral life.[25] Voluntarily means willingly and intentionally.[26] Although it is true that a dog may rescue a child quite voluntarily, we nonetheless do not take dogs to be free moral agents and do not attribute a *distinctively moral kind* of responsibility to them.[27]

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[24] An ethical concept of self-expression has been presented e.g. by Chandra Sripada (2016).

[25] "On Aristotle's telling, animals and children 'share in' voluntary action (EN 1111b8-9), but presumably at least the former do not bear responsibility for their actions" (Klimchuk 2002, 3).

[26] In our context, "intentionality" concerns volitional or affective directedness to a cognized end. Thomas Aquinas says: "It is thus that voluntary action is attributed to irrational animals, in so far as they are moved to an end, through some kind of knowledge." Summa Theologiae Iᵃ-IIae, q. 6, a. 2, ad 1.

[27] There is a historical case of a dog worshiped for its (allegedly moral) merits. Such a cult, however, was rather a case of superstition. See Schmitt (1983).

A plausible way for the compatibilist how not to burden animals with moral accountability is to admit that a higher than sensorial knowledge, namely intellective knowledge, essentially concerns that kind of freedom which is needed for moral responsibility. Consider two alternative stories: in one it is Matthew who saves a child in danger whereas in the other one it is a dog. Matthew and the dog may be similar in various respects: both see the child, both feel compassion with her, both cannot but rescue her… Matthew, however, basically differs from the dog in having intellect and knowing (also) intellectively the leading values of his decision.

Although the aim of this paper is not a detailed development of a 'definition' of free will, it will be useful now to outline three defining elements which can be labelled as ownness, voluntariness, and rationality. Firstly, in order for any choice to be considered free it must, from a *psychological* perspective, be the *decider's own*. 'Source compatibilism' wants more: if my choice were a deterministic consequence of the past and the laws of nature, it would not be truly mine (and could never be an instance of free volition).[28] The 'ownness' I am speaking about, by contrast, simply means that I am the chooser in question. Secondly, the choice must be voluntary (unlike, for example, a choice caused by the drug addiction of an "unwilling addict").[29] These two conditions exclude that the *free* decider be a victim of constraint, violence, hypnotic suggestion, and the like. But without adding a further (third) element, the kind of freedom which is linked to moral responsibility should be attributed also to animals and their voluntary choices. So, the moral agent and free decider must, on top of that all, know the leading value of her option not only by the senses, imagination and instincts, but—at least in some measure—also by her intellect.

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[28] "The source incompatibilist's position is that this sort of ownership is still not enough. If our motivations are (…) deterministically produced by events to whose occurrence we have not causally contributed—they do not belong to us in the manner required for moral responsibility…" (Shabo 2010, 375).

[29] Voluntariness contradicts not only external constraints but also some internal ones. "If (…) a person is aware of a good reason to do x and still follows his impulse to do y, then he can be said to be impelled by irresistible impulse and hence to act involuntarily. Many kleptomaniacs can be said to act involuntarily…" (Arrington 2001, 121).

When Huck decided to help Jim, he presumably opted for friendship (and perhaps also for some other values: human dignity, solidarity, liberty…). Although Huck lacked the exact value vocabulary, he did not lack some knowledge of his friendship (and other relevant values). And such knowledge was not merely an 'animal' one; Huck's intellect was somehow involved. This can be true independently of what moral premises and conclusions Huck adopted.

The three-membered definition of volitional freedom (as ownness, voluntariness and rationality of volition) is neutral with respect to contingency and determination; it fundamentally permits us to ascribe freedom *both* to contingent and necessary decisions. Your (own voluntary) choice need not be always contingent, i.e., endowed with alternate possibilities, in order to be free; the intellective nature of such a choice is sufficient, according to the 'rationalist' account of freedom, for its being free.

5. Free and yet necessary volitions

In what follows I will offer a more complex argument in favour of the claim that a choice can be psychologically inevitable and yet free.

Let us take for example two persons similar to the poor student Raskolnikov described in Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. Let us call them Ivanov and Travkin. Both differ from Raskolnikov by their choice not to kill the avaricious old woman. The first deliberator, Ivanov, makes his decision out of his dilemmatic mental state of incertitude and perplexity. He could have chosen otherwise (was able to murder). His final good decision, due to its contingency, is quite similar to a random result. Conversely Travkin, let us suppose, understands the sense of moral principles so clearly and adheres to them so wholeheartedly and stably that he makes his good decision with necessity.

Since it seems that Travkin's morality surpasses that of Ivanov, my point is that the alleged *universal* validity of the principle of alternate possibilities in some cases divorces, or even puts in conflict, morality and freedom: The more the person, namely Travkin, is virtuous, the less he is free (so it would be, if the necessity of his volition excluded freedom of that volition). And—correspondingly—the less Ivanov is moral, the more he is

free. Indeed, he would be free *in contrast* with (the putatively unfree) Travkin if it were true that freedom *always* needs alternative possibilities. This is a queer rule of proportion. Partial compatibilism avoids such queerness. As can be seen from our example, the principle of alternate possibilities is not universally valid. Consider the range of cases similar to Travkin's choice. From the principle of alternate possibilities it would follow that the higher the ethos of a person who makes a morally obligatory choice is, the lesser her freedom is. Virtuousness deprives us of freedom. This consequence of the principle of alternate possibilities seems to contradict our basic idea of well developed personality in which the morality and the inner freedom constitute a unity and grow together. Partial compatibilism allows for such a harmony.

Now I shall answer two objections that my argument provokes. Firstly, the story of Ivanov and Travkin (unlike the above quoted case of Matthew) seems to be about omissions rather than actions—and the problem of moral responsibility for omissions is not an easy issue.[30] The second objection is Robert Kane's claim that freedom of psychologically inevitable volitions always depends on some preceding undetermined choices.

Regarding the first question, notice that volitions, choices or decisions are not omissions. I have drawn above a distinction between volitions and corresponding actions. It is, however, important to note that volitions, even if they are not actions, are a sort of acts. When Ivanov after a moment of deliberation decided not to perform the action in consideration, he still did perform an act. His final volition itself was an act (namely an act of the will), not an omission; and we are responsible for such acts.

According to the second objection (drawn from Robert Kane's work), the freedom of a decision can be accompanied by an incapacity to decide otherwise exclusively in cases where the psychological necessity of a choice is a consequence of the agent's past "self-forming actions" (Kane 1996, 74) or "self-forming willings" (p. 125), i.e., undetermined will-setting acts in her life-history. Kane describes the "self-forming actions" as "the actions in our lives by which we form our character and motives (i.e., our wills) and make ourselves into the kinds of persons we are" (Kane 2005, 129–131).

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30   See the debates between Frankfurt (1994), Fischer (1997), and Clarke (2014, 119–132).

In this sense Kane treats the Martin Luther case. Luther's decision to pursue his ideas in spite of the ecclesiastical opposition was presumably a token of free will—and yet we should take seriously Luther's statement "Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise".[31] Robert Kane recognizes the possibility of such situation, and yet he insists on the essential connection of freedom with volitional indeterminacy: if Luther's choice were truly free, it must have been preceded by some Luther's *undetermined* "self-forming" or "will-setting" actions.[32]

In Luther's concrete case I am inclined to agree. I do not see, however, why the experience of freedom should not be equally respectable where the psychological necessity in question is a result e.g. of one's natural inclination towards the good or of an innate (and educationally developed) intuition of moral laws,[33] or simply of one's innate (and educationally developed) character, rather than of one's 'libertarian' (undetermined) past self-formation. The Libertarian may argue that our character is *up to us* only to such an extent as it is a result of our own past undetermined self-formation. And moral responsibility must be linked to what is *up to us*. But the Compatibilist may answer back that one's innate moral character is not always an 'excuse from responsibility'. You may, therefore, sometimes express who you are, in a morally relevant sense, regardless of whether or not you have created (or co-created) the character-traits in question by any undetermined self-forming acts.

Interestingly, both conflicting views are well founded on some common moral intuitions. What kind of intuitions, then, should take priority? Perhaps we can observe, with Fischer, that the debates "have issued in what

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[31] The words may be genuine (see Bainton 1978, 182).

[32] "All actions done of our own free wills do not have to be undetermined self-forming actions (SFAs) of this kind. (Luther's 'Here I stand' could have been uttered 'of his own free will' even if Luther's will was already settled when he said it.) But if no actions in our lifetimes were of this undetermined self-forming or will-setting kind, then our wills would not be our own free wills and we would not be ultimately responsible for anything we did" (Kane 2005, 130–131).

[33] See the quasi-intuitionist interpretation of Aquinas's natural-law theory developed by John Finnis (2011, 59–99).

some might consider stalemates (…).” We probably cannot “expect knock-down arguments in this realm” (Fischer 2006, 119).

There is, however, a special and yet very common kind of human moral experience which speaks finally in favour of the compatibilist party. There are some voluntary decisions such that *although* the decider was not able, for strong moral reasons, to choose differently, she felt fully free in making her choice or keeping her volition. And *even if* she had learned at that time, or got to believe, that the volitional necessity in question had not been a result of her past 'libertarian' self-formation, she still hardly could have been stopped by such a belief from feeling free in her choice. As philosophers, then, we should opt for respecting the way people actually experience freedom of will.

6. A 'compatibilist' possible world

Now imagine (or rather think) a world composed only of a kind of pure spirits. Each of them makes only one choice in his lifetime, namely, whether to love and please others for the rest of his life or to hate and harm them. Let us suppose furthermore that, albeit the spirits do deliberate and decide the question, their volitional nature is so constituted that they *necessarily* opt for the first alternative. Moreover, they are not, in any sense, originators of this necessitating nature. Yet their actual option seems, without a doubt, to be morally much better than its opposite, and this is true regardless of whether it is made necessarily or contingently.

According to Thomas Aquinas the “natural necessity” of a volition “does not remove the freedom of will”,[34] because “freedom (…) contradicts the necessity of coercion but not the necessity of natural inclination” of the will.[35] This is the view I defended in the forgoing sections. In the possible world just described, then, *there are* free volitions in spite of the fact that

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[34] Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, Iᵃ, q. 82, a. 1, ad 1: “Necessitas autem naturalis non aufert libertatem voluntatis (…).”

[35] Thomas Aquinas, De veritate, q. 22, a. 5, ad s. c. 3: “[L]ibertas (…) opponitur necessitati coactionis, non autem naturalis inclinationis.”

it is a deterministic world. (Indeed, since everything is governed by natural necessity there, a sort of nomological[36] determinism holds in that world.)

Compare the inhabitants of that world with similar creatures in a similar (but non-deterministic) world. These spirits differ from the former ones by being able to take the evil option instead. It perhaps makes sense to say that spirits of the first kind are morally better beings than those of the latter even if we suppose that everybody happens to take the same good decision. In any case, it is sure that spirits of the first kind are morally better compared with a spirit taking the evil option. But importantly, such judgements make sense only if those spirits are endowed with moral responsibility and, consequently, also with the free will which is necessary for being morally responsible. In their world, therefore, we observe both determinism and free will together.

Such a fictional comparison is just a philosophical transcription of a common intuition. Consider two (possible) colleagues who both understand that it is wrong to offend people for no reason. One of them is so good-hearted that, when he deliberates upon the question, he finds himself definitely unable of unjustly offend you. He seems to be a morally better person than the other colleague who, although fortunately refraining from wanton offences, is nonetheless a kind of man able to purposely take such an option. In any case, the first man is (in the relevant respects) morally better compared with a colleague who actually does take that evil option. And again, such moral judgements make sense only if the (determined) volition of the first colleague exemplifies the kind of freedom which is necessary for being morally responsible.

We can sometimes non-mistakenly feel free in making a choice even though this choice is a necessary consequence of our intellective and moral character. And, moreover, if my entire possible world reasoning holds, it is possible, in principle, to be free in such moments *regardless of whether or not we are causally responsible for that character or for its causes*, i.e., whether or not our choice is ultimately determined by something we can control. That is to say, we can non-mistakenly feel free even when the

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[36]   Laws are not peculiar "Platonic" entities manipulating the behaviour of things; they are descriptions of ways the things regularly function thanks to their dispositions (Cf. Mumford 2004).

freedom relevant requirements of incompatibilism (or source incompatibil-
ism[37]) are not met.

7. Conclusion

Partial compatibilism says that there are basically two kinds of freedom
of the will: some free volitions—at least all 'formally sinful' volitions—can-
not be determined, while others can. The assumption that experiences of
the first kind are not always mistaken probably excludes our world being
deterministic (no possible world is both deterministic *and* moral guilt con-
taining). Yet free will and determinism go together in some of those possible
worlds which contain only the second kind of free volitions.

Is such possible world discourse just an 'ivory tower' theory divorced
from reality? I think it is not. The methodological choice standing behind
my inquiry has been to examine what assumptions will appear necessary if
we want to take seriously our ordinary moral life. As Charles Taylor (in a
different context) says, "What we need to *explain* is people living their lives
(…). How can we ever know that humans can be explained by any scientific
theory *until* we actually explain how they live their lives in its terms?"
(2001, 58).[38] Partial compatibilism is suitable for the ethicist who does not
feel attracted to radical revisions of our 'default intuitions' on morality and
freedom.

Sometimes, typically when we feel guilty about a choice of ours, we are
sure enough that we, at the considered moment, actually could have taken
a different option. Standard compatibilism, however, allows that such con-
sciousness may always be false. I have tried to corroborate, by contrast, our

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[37]   According to source compatibilism your choice is free only if you are the ultimate
source or first cause (though not the sole cause) of the choice in question. S. Shabo
further explains: "According to source incompatibilists, we can be ultimately respon-
sible for a causally determined decision only if we are ultimately responsible for
enough of its causal determinants; responsibility for the former derives from respon-
sibility for the latter…" (Shabo 2010, 358).

[38]   Cf. the phenomenological methodology as "hermeneutics of the fundamental phe-
nomena of human life" (Patočka 2016, 127).

intuitive belief that no person really bears *moral* guilt for her choice unless she could have chosen otherwise.

At other times, typically when our moral motives for a choice are strong and unequivocal, we are quite sure that we cannot (*ceteris paribus*) avoid a certain choice; and yet we can in some of those moments experience our choice as voluntary, wholehearted, and free. Incompatibilism cannot explain such a kind of experience without introducing various superfluous assumptions (such as necessity of our past relevant self-formation, or metaphysics of 'ultimate sourcehood'). I argued, contrary to incompatibilism, that our choice sometimes can occur necessarily due to the fact that we are the kind of persons we are; and yet it can, at the same time, be free regardless of whether or not we are originators of that 'determining' nature (or of its causes).

Partial compatibilism, unlike standard compatibilism and incompatibilism, has the advantage, in my view, of neither casting doubt on nor overly conditioning any of the ways we actually experience our use of free will. I am aware that partial compatibilism may look like a compromise seeking or a 'double-faced' theory, as it is located somehow between standard compatibilism and incompatibilism. I tried to show, however, that it is a sufficiently simple, consistent and defensible position; and that its 'doubleness' is useful if we want to make sense of our moral life and be, as theorists, loyal to the variety of human moral experience.

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