

The blank-out and cover-up of the faculty of "volition" (free will)

(pre-print publication, December 2023)

As an introduction to a definition of the *metaphysical* concept of "volition", it is useful to mention many are more familiar with the closely related concept "free will". It pertains to human beings' power of choice (or the absence of such power). It is a metaphysical concept, because it pertains to the relationship of consciousness to existence – more specifically the question "whether Man has any *power of choice* as to how his life will 'unfold'?", i.e. "whether Man's chosen actions have any influence on the course of his life?" – and the preceding questions "whether Man is able to know *what* he is?" and "*where* he is?"

You cannot have free will if all of your actions are (pre)determined in a manner outside of your control. You cannot have free will if you cannot know (the nature of) who you are, nor (the nature of) where you are. You first need to reach certain conclusions about the nature of your consciousness and the nature of existence in order to be able to *recognize* a spectrum of alternatives, and in order to then be able to *evaluate* any choice between those alternatives.

The concept "volition" is formed via a conceptual chain that has defined a certain nature of existence, of consciousness and of the relation between those. It applies directly to a Man's psychological (inward) action, i.e. in his mind – and his existential (outward) action, i.e. in the physical world – in both regards he possesses a certain freedom of action (free will) and in both regards there exist aspects he *cannot* change nor influence.

In formal philosophical terms, this is termed the distinction between "absolutes" versus "volition" – or alternatively, the distinction between the "Metaphysical versus the Man-made".

The well-known, ancient variant of the blank-out of free will is the mystical concept "Original Sin", which amounts to the statement: no matter what you do, your actions will be evil because you *are* evil, by your *nature* as a human being (i.e. metaphysically).

History is filled to the brim with proponents who've put tremendous effort into trying to deny the existence of free will. A slightly dated, but still common version: you are born into (doomed to) a specific life by birth via your parents and family, which you cannot escape from.

A modern variant is often named 'hereditary sin' or similar terms, claiming the 'evil of Man' is located in his *genes*. 'Inborn' 'instincts' is what determines his actions.

These arguments all fall in the philosophical category of "theories of determinism".

The philosophical, metaphysical issue of this matter ultimately comes down to:

Either human action (behavior) is predetermined, or it is not.

It is *either-or* (this is formally expressed in the law of logic "The Law of Excluded Middle" – and this is its application to the issue of "volition" under discussion).

A broader scan of the contemporary forms of (implicit) negations (and cover-ups) of the concept "free will" might indicate the nature and scope of this phenomenon:

In contemporary psychology, one can observe the purported notions of "Mass Formation" (originated by *Freud*) and "Mass Formation Hypnosis" (a contemporary variation of the same idea). The whole spectacle hinges on the false claim that an individual's rational capacity would at a certain point somehow dissolve into a group-entity (losing their free will), from which point on will start acting as a single unit. The suggested pattern is: Stimulus → Hypnotized behavior.

Observe also its subsequent avalanche of clickbait article offshoots from "Are we being hypnotized?", "Manipulated Masses!" to "Mass Formation explained!", "New hot take on Mass Formation" and "5 things you need to know". (this is the kind of stuff the present day pseudo-intellectuals gobble up voraciously and prance around with. It is one thing to contemplate these thoughts in private, it is another when (making a living of) parading these notions in public.)

In slightly more scientifically oriented contemporary psychology, researchers claim estimates of human behavior, which they've inferred from how *mice* and *rats* behave in arbitrarily constrained and *gamed* environments (see for instance (interpretations of) the work by *John Calhoun*) – notice what it is that is being blanked-out: namely that a human being is *not* a mouse nor a rat (even though there might be a higher than 90% match in DNA between the species, this is not a decisive identifier). What *essential* distinguishes him? His *conceptual brain*.
The suggested pattern is: Stimulus → Instinctual behavior.

Any inference from the behavior of other animal species to human behavior in a manner such as the above is invalid, because it negates Man's essential and differentiating attribute: that he has the capacity to think rationally, and is not, as the other animal species, confined to a set of short-range, instinctual and habituated actions that follow as a direct response to environmental stimuli – in which they possess *no power of volition*.

In contemporary sociology (or what is being offered-up as such), they've claimed children will become violent as a direct consequence of playing computer games – which amounts to the statement: given a certain outside stimulus, there is a point at which a child will start acting violently in a manner the cause of which he/she is not aware of, nor is able to from then on offer any resistance to (meaning thinking his/her actions through).
The suggested pattern is: Stimulus → Violence.

In contemporary economics, they claim: Change an interest rate variable and people will buy more/less or save more/less (e.g. the policies of the ECB) – dropping all context, such as the spectrum of needs required by their nature as a human being, or its relation to (amongst others) the availability of goods in a certain environment.
The suggested pattern is: Stimulus → (non-)Consumption.

In contemporary politics, one could recently observe post-election rhetoric in the Netherlands where people were offering explanations as to why *Geert Wilders'* party won most seats, where some 'experts' claimed people voted for him because his hair resembles that of *Donald Trump*.(!)
The suggested pattern is: Stimulus → Vote for Wilders.

Of course, these reports instigated the production of more reports and 'hot new takes' based on comparisons of the physical appearance of these two politicians in relation to the ideas they hold. The suggested pattern here is the same as the pattern of *racism*: Physical traits → Behavior.

Racism is a primitive notion that crudely negates free will, either in the form where race predetermines behavior, or its variant, where one race is claimed to 'hold back' the choices of another race (of which its political 'solution' is often named "positive discrimination", which in a societal context is a vicious anti-concept aimed to eliminate the only *morally just* concept: "individual rights"). It belongs to the most brutish types of thinking (Physical traits → Behavior), which in the 21st century is still rampant in every society (including its logical political corollary: Physical traits → Rights.).

Another covert negation of free will in contemporary politics can be observed in the European Union's initiatives towards 'protecting people from misinformation', which erases the notion of the responsibility of thinking for yourself, and that of accepting/rejecting any idea presented to you. It rests on the notion that people are somehow irresistibly susceptible to false ideas, which denies the existence of an alternative: *an educated, rational populus* – that is able to resist any kind of nonsensical ideas by their virtue of *individual thought*, who never blank-out the fact that they possess the power of choice in regards to *any* idea; whether it pertains to *accepting* an idea, or to actually *acting* on a certain idea.
The suggested pattern is: Stimulus → Accepted ideas.

(As a preliminary hint, to which we'll return: notice the complete and total absence of the *individual human thought process* in all of the previous examples.)

One ultimately observes the corruption of the concept of free will lies *at the root* of most Western Philosophies:

- Christianity's "Original Sin" (your primary is temptation to evil, you cannot stop its innate tendencies)
- Nietzsche's "Will to Power" (your primary is will to power, you cannot stop its innate tendencies)
- Kant's blind, mindless robot, cursed to 'duty' (you cannot know anything, so you cannot know what you're doing, so you have no way of choosing how to act)
- Modern mystics' conception of the Universe as an 'acting agent' (e.g. the universe wants you to do x, such and such is a sign the universe doesn't want you to do x) in which your 'fate' is predetermined, and also nonsense such as "simulation theory", in which you have no agency over this world (because you are 'actually' in a *Matrix*-like pod somewhere, or something of that kind, which will always remain outside of your reach and control)...

A similar fallacy can be observed in certain interpretations of modern quantum physics, which claim that causality breaks down, the suggested pattern of which amounts to:
Action → Unpredictable response, negating the efficacy of acting on reason, and obliterating the concept of free will by proxy, i.e. as a second-order effect. This is an instance of the disastrous effects of holding contradictions.

(In this example, it is the metaphysical axiom of "causality" that is attacked, and free will is torn apart as a consequence – as its logical corollary. The overarching psychological pattern is the need to evade and subvert metaphysical axioms.)

The difference in views of action (of what causes an action) can be summarized in simple terms:
Does a human being a) act according to the pattern Stimulus → Response
or b) does he act according to the pattern Stimulus → *Thought* → Response

It is the "thought" part that is pathologically omitted, denied or smeared in all the variants of the anti-free will arguments and theories.

It is almost silly to have to argue in favor of something so *nearly* self-evident as "think before you act". It is actually *so* obvious, it is challenging to seriously discuss it. As each example can effortlessly be smeared by nonsense, remember *Brandolini's Law* and *Howard Roark's* "but I don't think of you". Those smearers are *not* the intended audience here. It will serve to illustrate the distinction between the Metaphysical versus the Man-made, to quickly list some obvious and undeniable experiences that involve the faculty of volition (which you can validate first-hand):

You *do* have choice in many spectra of alternatives pertaining to your life:

- the choice of which type of career you'll aspire towards;
- the choice of who you will pursue to be your life-partner (or whether you will at all);
- the choice to have children or not with said life-partner;
- the choice involved in every financial transaction you ever make (you could have always chosen *not* to do any given transaction, or bought something else for each amount spent);
- talking or remaining silent at any given moment or occasion;

These are just some basic illustrations of the many spectra of alternatives in which humans possess the power of volition.

This is contrasted for instance by "breathing", where volition is limited, or your glucose production level, or the wider function of your stomach, or the function of your lungs... over all of which you *do not* have any direct control.

The awareness of this distinction (and of the need to constantly think about – and make this distinction) is not automatic nor completely self-evident, meaning it is not always obvious what *is* and what *is not* inside the power of human volition – and the question arises from a legitimate need of a human consciousness, which means a specific type of consciousness that is *required* (by its nature, i.e. metaphysically) to figure out the answers to several existential questions: *who he is, where he is, how he knows it, and what he should do.*

The fundamental division line between what lies within the sphere of volition and what lies outside of volitional reach, is that between the "Metaphysical" versus "the Man-made". This means: those aspects of existence which are the given, over which human beings have no control (absolutes) – contrasted by those aspects of existence where human beings have a choice (volition). You have no choice over whether you have a brain, you have choice over which thoughts you think and which ideas you accept. No choice over that you have a physical body that needs sustenance, choice over all the actions that you initiate with that body to go and achieve those requirements. No choice about the nature of atoms and molecules as such, choice about how you can (re)arrange them.

Maybe some people at this point are inclined to ask "but what about acting on *feelings*?". To be short about this: feelings are not tools of cognition, nor primaries one should act on. The pattern suggested by many (which is most often merely an excuse to escape moral responsibility, as well as an excuse to escape the effort of thinking) is:
Stimulus → Feelings → Response.

This can be simply refuted, merely by pointing out that one could always *choose* to amend this pattern to be:
Stimulus → Feelings → *Thought* → Response. (which is actually quite proper in many situations)

At the root of all choices you'll find the fundamental choice each human being faces, preceding all other choices: *to think or not to think*. "To be or not to be", when translated into its concrete meaning, amounts to this fundamental choice: to assume the responsibility of thinking, or to forego it. To opt for the latter will result in a completely different type of human being than the former, *psychologically*.

In political terms: One premise (free will) leads to the Enlightenment, the birth of rational society, the Declaration of Independence, inalienable individual rights and the pursuit of happiness. The other premise (the denial of free will) leads to all forms of tyranny we've witnessed throughout history, and still witness in current times.

Rationality has to be *chosen*.

Free-will in all human individuals means that even when "what is true" or "what is right" is presented with full-proof, presented in the most eloquent and thoughtfully tailored manner, some people may still choose to simply ignore it, act in contradiction to it, in defiance... — or even default on the prior effort required to understand. It does not hinge on external stimuli, anyone's level of intelligence or -knowledge, or your dialectic ability, but on the volitional choices of each individual you might interact with. A human mind does not in any way, somehow 'automatically' converge to, or conform to the truth, meaning one needs to realize there exists not just *one possible type* of human psychology. There exist those who are geared to "what is", i.e. truth, facts (the rational), those who are not (e.g. the mystic, the skeptic and the nihilist) – and people of any mingled degree somewhere in between (the middle-of-the-roaders).

The metaphysically given, however, cannot be true or false, it simply *is* – and must be accepted if one's aim is truth of one's judgments. It's the *standard of judgment* for everything Man-made, including all of his knowledge (i.e. his Philosophy), as well as any choice a volitional consciousness makes.

Conclusion:

All human action is *chosen*. (one cannot perform an action that is 'outside the sphere of volition' – that is a contradiction in terms). And when a choice is performed in the form of an outward action (physically or verbally), such human actions become the facts of reality, by which standard we ought and should evaluate and judge one another.

Both any individual's and 'societal action' (meaning strictly the aggregate effects of all of the individuals' choices) rests on two *fundamental* choices: The first choice is accepting what is true. But just knowing what is true will not lead to automatic actions. It involves another choice: to *act on* what you know to be true. The first does not lead automatically to the second. A human being can know something to be true and still choose to act against it.

Man's volition is an attribute of his consciousness (of his rational faculty).

The only exception to possessing volition is when a person is *medically* "crazy", i.e. demonstrably not having the capacity for rational thought. (This medical context is the base for the *legal* concept "accountable"). Those who are in a state where they can no longer be held accountable for their actions, concerns only a *marginal* percentage amongst society's individuals.

People's choices need to be treated as *the facts*; meaning they are the result of their own volitional faculty, of a thought process (or the absence of it, but defaulting to think before one acts, *is still a choice*). Even when these choices proceed from conceptual errors, a faulty moral-code etc., they still proceed from a certain thought process and, no matter what the pertaining choice, people at all times retain the ability to *not follow through on a certain thought-up action or externally suggested action*. (There can be no concept of "justice" if there is no proper standard by which to evaluate people's actions.)

See through all those glaring examples of the conceptual attacks on "free will". Most importantly: you can choose to forego your reason and your volition: the contradictions (and the physical and mental consequences) will be *yours*. Volition is metaphysically given; it belongs to those aspects of reality which human beings have *no control* over. It does not matter how many people scream they 'couldn't help it', nor how many people wish for reality to be different from what it is. If the whole of society would start claiming $2+2=5$, would you start accepting it? If the whole of society would start claiming that they can name anything they want, to be anything they want, would you really believe that a cat would start barking, merely because people had renamed it to be called a dog? Do you really believe that you would start behaving like a primal savage, as soon as *enough* other people would? (or the much more primitive: that 'the devil could make you do it?') Obviously, the answer to each is: "of course not".

Why then does this blank-out, cover-up and attack of "free will" permeate society on such a dramatic scale? Because on society's current philosophical premises, there is a never-ending demand for (systems of) *rationalization*. If you want to quickly estimate whether someone is truth-oriented, or has a psychological stake in *covering up* certain truths, you may observe the difference between them when they are confronted by someone uttering the sentence: "But that is not true." One of them will not be able to hide a violent tendency to this statement (as they hold an existential stake in evading that very identification) – which will first show up in their initial facial expression, and may be followed by them acting on that emotion further.

(On an even deeper level, you may observe that it is not the morally evil or neutral they consider outside the power of any individual's choice, but that it is only the conscious choice towards the *morally good* they are out to disprove, negate, deny and destroy.)

Philosophy and the Humanities have systematically tried to exclude Man's consciousness from *The Law of Identity*. The giant, unmentioned blank-out they all dance around is the fact that Man's volition lies *outside the power of other men*. You cannot *force* others to think. You cannot change the nature of your consciousness, *nor that of anyone else* – yet our current social systems are configured to alter metaphysical facts with feelings and force. No Man can order the mind of another to function – *this* part of the identity of consciousness (*when* its identity is ever acknowledged at all) is what is most often blanked-out.

See it for what it *is*: it is a logical consequence, *necessarily* resulting from the premises behind the modus operandi of those who choose *not to think*, and the kind of "psycho-epistemology" this type of people develop. (see my essay "The Zombie Apocalypse") It is simply a logical consequence that present day pseudo-intellectuals constantly want to fancy themselves and prance around for their audience with new 'fuel' ("new interesting take!") of this type of nonsense – and those who seriously listen to it are openly flirting with the obscene idea of taking the pseudo-intellectuals' extended hand offering to pull them into an abyss of mindlessness, to evade effort and responsibility.

(I claim that deep down they *know* this – that a 'clever' excuse is being dangled in front of them, a social passkey allowing them to get away with saying: "See? I couldn't help it!")

Because daily life confronts any human being, no matter his/her level of intelligence, with an overwhelming amount of concrete examples and evidence of volition, and of the importance to human life to think (identify, evaluate) and choose between alternatives – that one course of action can (or will) lead to values and *life*, where another course of action may (or will) lead to destruction and *death* – the denials of free will *must* take on absurd forms and proportions.

If those pseudo-intellectuals were *actually* that smart, they would not (for instance) blank-out such a simple and undeniable fact that you cannot even safely cross the street without thinking before you cross. Nor that one cannot seriously deny that walking right in front of an incoming truck and get hit is indeed a serious possibility in the spectrum of alternatives that are relevant in the context of even such a relatively 'simple' issue such as crossing the street. No denial, wish or feelings will alter its consequences, nor will the Universe or the *supernatural* 'act' to save you. (In Metaphysics, the principle behind this is formally called the axiom of "The Primacy of Existence"). Anyone who has seen suicide victims who stepped in front of a truck or train, or the victims of traffic accidents, knows the existence and seriousness of this alternative.

So the response should not be: "geesh, this expert says I can be manipulated to start acting like a rampant, destructive monster, could it be true?", but the response should properly be "this 'expert' belongs to the category of people invested in a blank out of free will, he must have his reasons (which belongs and properly should stay between him and his psychiatrist), but I will not listen to it seriously any further".

An apt term to designate this type of people is "infantile adults", as their adult theories are just the result of an unprogressed mental state, which could already be observed in their answers when they were a child, when they were asked the question "*why* did you do this?", to which they would always answer by pointing at *someone else* with a pathetic whine: "because he/she did such and such". (i.e. "I couldn't help it")

The proper intellectual posture of a human being is not expressed by a Man helplessly down on his knees, nor by a Man sitting mindlessly in a lotus-position, nor by a Man incessantly in search of 'new interesting takes' from *other men* – looking outside himself and 'beyond' reality to guide his choices, i.e. for moral judgment.

To give your moral sanction to theories of determinism will also cause nothing but the erosion of morality, for it will lead, amongst others, to people claiming they are not responsible for violent

acts they have committed: such nonsense as a 'crime passionnel', or militant activists 'having *no choice* but to resort to force in order to make their point' (this, in Western societies where "free speech" is still essentially *intact*), all the way to the current denotations surrounding the conflict in the Middle East, where terrorism is labeled as 'an existentially inevitable action' and self-defense is labeled as 'war-crimes'. (It is not a coincidence the hotbeds and epicenters of the latter outcries can be observed to involve Humanities Departments of Western Universities.)

Philosophically, "volition" is the '*bridge*' between Metaphysics and Epistemology.

Only when Man is a being of volition, i.e. able to choose between alternatives, i.e. possesses free will, can he have the ability to gain knowledge. If Man possesses no volition, then he cannot choose to act to acquire knowledge, so a "theory of knowledge" would be a metaphysical contradiction.

Both Metaphysics and Epistemology are the foundation for Ethics, i.e. of morality, because if Man cannot acquire knowledge, then he cannot acquire any knowledge of what is right or wrong, i.e. of distinguishing the morally good from the evil. Morality falls immediately when Man's free will, i.e. Man's faculty of volition, is undercut (and Politics and Esthetics necessarily fall with it).

Volition is a metaphysical *axiom*: any attempt you would engage in to try and deny it, would necessarily involve and include its use.

Don't sell-out your mind and your character, nor betray the other volitional beings, i.e. the individuals you live with in your society, for *so basic* a metaphysical fallacy as "Rewriting Reality".