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Felt, MAKING SENSE OF YOUR FREEDOM: PHILOSOPHY FOR THE PERPLEXED

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views in the sciences, the humanities, history, and the like. This is something Mitchell does not address in this book, though he has elsewhere, particularly in *The Justification of Religious Belief*. But we should realize that the issue lies just below the surface.

Otherwise, one might complain that the middle ground he favors is often characterized too unspecifically to give much useful guidance. Where we find partisans of opposite extremes it is always plausible to suggest that there must be some mediating position that accommodates the valid insights of both sides while avoiding the excesses of each. But actually doing the job is another matter. I have quoted Mitchell as presenting, on one or another issue, some suggestions as to the form a middle position might take, but one may be pardoned for wanting some more substantial working out of such a position. But such a reaction would amount to wishing the author had written another book instead. What Mitchell has set out to do in this book is to address fundamental questions concerning the relation of faith and criticism, not develop a formulation of the faith that results from the actual deployment of such criticism. This is, if you like, meta-critical faith, not the first-level article. As with all meta-inquiries, many will be dissatisfied with the level of abstractness it exhibits. But long philosophical experience clearly indicates that meta-investigations can guide and illuminate first level work in the trenches. So let us be thankful for the wise counsel contained in this book and profit from it when we undertake tasks of the sort upon which it is a reflection.

Making Sense of Your Freedom: Philosophy for the Perplexed by **James W. Felt**. S.J. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994. Pp. xiv and 110. \$28.95 (cloth); \$9.95 (paper).

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Professor Felt's work is a remarkably clear and sometimes brilliant exercise in what William James called popular philosophy. James himself often wrote or lectured in that mode, and probably nowhere more brilliantly than in his "The Dilemma of Determinism," which Felt cites and quotes. Felt's book, in its clarity, wit, and the vividness of its concrete examples, reminds me of that side of James. But to speak of *Making Sense of Your Freedom* as an exercise in popular philosophy means only that it is not addressed solely to an audience of professional philosophers. The book is clearly the product of a subtle mind, one that has managed to say something striking about many aspects of this difficult and important problem. The book has an admirable unity and pace, and it can be read with profit by professionals working in the fields of philosophy and religion.

The freedom that interests Felt, he tells us in chapter 1, manifests itself in the very act of choosing: it is, he says, the "characteristic or quality of a human act, specifically of the interior act of deciding to respond in some

particular way to the given situation" (p. 2). He calls this *internal* freedom and contrasts it with Locke's well-known freedom to do what one has decided (or what one wants) to do. Felt calls Locke's view *external* freedom. Internal freedom, he claims, is *evident*; "What is evident cannot strictly speaking be demonstrated," he remarks tellingly, "not because it is not the case, but on the contrary because it is evident" (p. 4). Acts that are free, in this internal sense, are those for which we are morally responsible—responsible because the act originates within the self.

Determinism is the doctrine which purports to show that freedom, in this internal sense, is impossible, so determinism becomes Felt's primary critical target. He defines it in chapter 2: "*Determinism is the doctrine that for every event E there is a previous event or set of events D that guarantees the occurrence of E*" (p. 7, emphasis in original). He distinguishes four varieties—physical determinism, psychological determinism, logical determinism (i.e., fatalism), and rational determinism—and sketches the arguments for each of them, noting that there is some overlap in his categories.

Before taking up the arguments against these forms of determinism, Felt turns aside, in chapter 3, to consider compatibilism—the doctrine that determinism is compatible with freedom and perhaps necessary for it. It is a rich chapter, and my treatment of it must be selective. Felt begins by dismissing summarily a form of compatibilism that does not insist that internal freedom (libertarianism), is compatible with determinism but only that Locke's external freedom is compatible with a determinism that excludes internal freedom. Felt's dismissal of this kind of compatibilism is straightforward and clear: the real issue is between internal freedom and determinism, so this form of compatibilism misses the point. He then discusses compatibilism of the kind which argues that though we are determined, we could in a certain situation have done otherwise if we had in fact wanted to. The assumption of that version of compatibilism is that if we can propound an alternative in terms of "might have been," then we have a viable sense of freedom to correlate with our determinism. Felt argues that this is an illusory sense of freedom. Granted the truth of determinism, which is necessary to compatibilism, any alternative we imagine involving different motives, different circumstances, or both, is no genuine alternative; at best it provides only the external freedom Felt has already dismissed.

Felt's account and criticism of the version of compatibilism which argues that there is no moral responsibility without determinism brings us in sight of his own position. Here he relies on a version of Aristotle's doctrine of responsibility, which hold that our acts do indeed follow from our characters but that our characters are in turn gradually developed by virtue of our responsible acts. This view of responsibility, Felt claims, is compatible with internal freedom. He also points out that compatibilists in general suppose that the only causal alternative to determinism is pure chance: they are unable to see that when one invokes freedom, one invokes a *causal* principle rather than pure chance—a more ample causal principle, however, than compatibilists are willing to recognize (pp. 28-30).

From Felt's arguments against his four kinds of determinism in chap-

ters 4 and 5, I single out the one against logical determinism, or fatalism. The topic has been much written about, often enough in terms of Aristotle's famous discussion of "the sea battle tomorrow" in *De Interpretatione*, which is also Felt's point of departure (pp. 41-42). He brings this difficult matter as close to his readers as it can be brought in so short a book: there are many concrete examples, and they are happily woven into the argument. The argument itself turns on (a) four assertions about truth and the future (pp. 43, 47, 49, 53) and (b) three principles of being and becoming (pp. 56-57).

The positive—as distinct from critical—part of Felt's book is a doctrine of causality designed to show that the agent's freedom consists in an exercise of causality rather than in the absence of causality (chaps. 6, 7, 9). The three principles just mentioned are central to that doctrine, so I give here the simplified version of them Felt gives in chapter 9: "(A) *The past is definite and settled....* (B) *The present creates the definiteness of new settled actuality out of a width of possibility for incorporating the past....* (C) *Only the activity of real agents creates the definiteness of settled actuality*" (pp. 101-2). Felt's use of the principles depends upon the distinction he makes, in chapter 6, between subject-time, the time experienced by agents, and object-time, the time of the physicist. This chapter owes something to St. Augustine and something to Bergson. The free causality of agency, Felt says, has the same temporal structure as that of lived time, or subject-time: it "takes time but is not itself temporally divisible" (p. 84). What Felt calls subject-time I prefer to call *act-temporality* and to insist on a metaphorical applicability of such temporality to the causality operative in nature in general. I do not think Felt would disagree with that, but the expression 'subject-time' suggests a more radical cleft between the causality of agents and the causality of the rest of nature than I think he has in mind. But this is perhaps no more than a terminological disagreement. As one who has argued, over many years, that if we are to understand human nature we must develop a more ample doctrine of causality, one in which human action itself is exemplary, I welcome the appearance of this compact and accessible book. An earlier version of chapter 8, "Becoming, Freedom, and the Problem of Evil," appeared in this journal (I [1984], 370-77).

The Metaphysics of Free Will: An Essay on Control, by **John Martin Fischer**. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1994. Pp ix and 273. \$21.95.

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John Fischer has been an active participant in discussions of freedom, determinism, foreknowledge, and moral responsibility for nearly two decades. Fischer's articles and anthologies on freedom and determinism, freedom and foreknowledge, and moral responsibility are a tremendous resource to philosophers working on these topics. In this wide-ranging and clearly written book, Fischer adds to this already impres-