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Free Will

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so forth. In short, rebel compliance is found to be a complex issue, which makes strategic sense to some rebels. Interestingly, the author contends on the basis of the empirical study that rebel groups can, and must, be engaged (270). Contrary to much of the current public rhetoric on the prospects of engaging Islamist groups, she argues that legitimacy-seeking Islamist groups exist and thus should be engaged with. In an environment where being an Islamist group is equated with terrorism or extremism, Jo's research adds important nuance to the debate. It is important that the international community does not close all doors to Islamist groups before properly exploring whether they can be fruitfully engaged with to comply with international law. As Jo points out, these groups do exist.

Compliant Rebels is predominantly a quantitative inquiry into norm compliance, and causality is an important part of the book. Indeed, the author highlights that generalizability is important for a political scientist. This is a potentially contentious statement for more constructivist-minded scholars. For instance, how much is gained by looking for causal pathways between legitimacy and compliance, when compared to locating each group in their specific contexts and cultural grammar? There are also questions concerning the central puzzle of the book, namely the costliness of rebel compliance. It is assumed that compliance is costly and that disregarding international law may be one of the few advantages that rebel groups have. This reader was left with an impression that rebel groups are, as a rule, somehow exogenous to the context in which they operate. Rebels groups, of course, exist for a reason, but it could easily be imagined that slaughtering civilians or using child soldiers were not even considered to begin with. In other words, complying with international law on these issues could have been part of the group's makeup from the beginning. As such, compliance would be costless. Such nuances could only be explored through a thorough case study, and yet the lack of in-depth knowledge does present some important challenges to the book's overall argument.

Compliant Rebels addresses an important gap in the literature with many potentially significant policy implications; and although this reader was left unconvinced of the causal pathways between legitimacy and compliance, it still brings important data and arguments to the discussion of whether and how we engage with rebel groups.

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Free Will, by Mark Balaguer, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 2014, xii + 139 pp., $40.00 (cloth)

Mark Balaguer's *Free Will* is an elegant and accessible book concerning current discussions on whether human beings have free will. According to the author, advances in contemporary neuroscience, as well as in philosophical arguments, seem to have delivered deadly blows to our belief in the existence of free will, understood as the ability of an agent to be the conscious free cause of her non-predetermined decisions. There are now two main points of view, he argues, under which the nature of the agent can be conceived. According to the "spiritual, religious view of humans… every person has an immortal soul, or a nonphysical spirit, that's distinct from the physical body and that somehow 'drives' the body, or 'tells the body what to do'" (3–5). On the other hand, according to the "the materialistic, scientific

view of humans… there is no more to a human being than his or her physical body. … Everything about you that makes you who you are can be found in your brain. Your beliefs and desires, your hopes and fears, your memories, your feelings of love and hate—these are all in your brain, coded by neural pathways" (5). Balaguer intends to provide a response to anti-free-will arguments that is acceptable for both perspectives. "My idea here," he writes, "is that if we can find a way for materialists to respond to the anti-free-will arguments, then advocates of the spiritual, religious view should be able to respond in a similar way" (6–7).

Balaguer begins his inquiry by analysing the philosophical view known as "determinism." "Determinism is the view that every physical event is completely caused by prior events together with the laws of nature. Or, to put the point differently, it's the view that every event has a cause that makes it happen in the one and only way that it could have happened" (12). Thus, he argues, determinism provides the "classical argument against free will," insofar as determinism postulates that everything happening in the world is always determined to occur by antecedent causes (17). However, he affirms, contemporary science does not provide sufficient evidence to maintain determinism at all levels of physics: "Our best physical theories don't answer the question of whether determinism is true" (18). He refers to quantum mechanics as an example of a science based on a probabilistic reading of nature, which allows the conceivability of non-predetermined events. Whether either reading of the world, determinist or non-determinist, is true in a strong sense, however, is still an open issue. "The debate between determinists like Einstein and indeterminists like Heisenberg and Bohr has never been settled. We don't have any good evidence for either view" (21).

Balaguer then considers two different arguments, which seem to prove the impossibility of free will in a more sophisticated way. The first anti-free-will argument is a sort of *a priori* demonstration, based on philosophical assumptions. He calls it the "random-or-predetermined argument" (22), which consists in claiming that both determinism and non-determinism rule out the possibility of free will. "Our decisions are either caused by prior events or not caused by prior events. If they are caused by prior events, then they're not the products of our free will because they're predetermined by prior events. And if they're not caused by prior events, then they're not the products of our free will because they happen randomly, and it makes no sense to say that we have free will if our choices just randomly appear in our brains" (32). The second argument is a scientific argument based on recent findings in neuroscience. The author assumes as paradigmatic (and, to some extent, sufficient for his purposes) two different cases, Benjamin Libet's studies on "readiness potential" (Benjamin Libet, et al., "Time of Conscious Intention to Act in Relation to Cerebral Potential," *Brain* 106, n. 3 [1983]: 623–42), and John-Dylan Haynes's recent investigation on the predictability of conscious decisions ("Decoding and Predicting Intentions," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 1224 [2011]: 9–21). These studies "support the claim that our conscious decisions are completely caused by events that occur before we choose, that are completely out of our control, and indeed, that we're completely unaware of" (32).

Once the problematic background has been provided, Balaguer proceeds first to explain, then to rule out the philosophical hypothesis known as "compatibilism." Balaguer considers the kind of free will we want as incompatible with any kind of determinism. Accordingly, he defines "not-predetermined free will" as such: "For a decision to be a product of my free will… two things need to be true. First, it needs to have been *me* who made the decision; and second, my choice needs to have not been predetermined by prior events. In other words, it needs to be the case that (a) I did it, and (b) nothing made me do it" (75–76). This formulation excludes both determinism as well as the threat represented by the philosophical argument against free will. A free decision can be completely undetermined, without being completely random, insofar as it still depends on the agent's conscious choice. "If our torn decisions are uncaused, then when we make these decisions, nothing makes us choose in

the ways that we do, and so they are the products of our free will" (84). Having refuted the argument against free will, Balaguer focuses on the scientific argument. Regarding Libet's experiment he argues that "it just assumes that the readiness potential plays a certain kind of causal role in the production of our actions. But, in fact, we have no idea what the purpose of the readiness potential is. We don't know why it occurs, and we don't know what it does" (98). As to Haynes's studies, he considers it possible to provide a different interpretation based on the same data, which is compatible with the existence of not-predetermined free will. "The pre-choice brain activity that Haynes found… was actually not very good at predicting the outcomes of his subjects' choices. Indeed, it was only 10 percent more accurate than blind guessing" (103). The increase in predictability is determined by the subjects who failed to rightly perform the experiment. "A significant percentage of the subjects in Haynes's study (say, 20 percent of them) unconsciously failed to make truly spontaneous decisions. … They genuinely wanted to follow Haynes's instructions, but for whatever reason, and without realizing it, they unconsciously formed prior-to-choice plans to push one of the two buttons" (109). This unconscious activity would correspond to that recorded by Haynes's experiment. "If this is the right interpretation of Haynes's results, then there is no problem here for free will. All these results show is that sometimes our decisions are influenced by unconscious factors. … To establish that we don't have free will, you would have to argue that all of our torn decisions are predetermined by unconscious factors" (110). To conclude, Balaguer regards the problem of free will as a scientific problem, to be settled by future research in the field of neuroscience. "Neuroscience has made some truly amazing strides in the last few decades. But this science is still in its infancy. We just aren't ready right now to answer the question of free will" (125).

The book is tailored to a non-specialist audience, which is emphasized by the very short bibliography. I would not describe it as an introduction to the topic, because Balaguer does not limit himself to exposing various aspects and theories tied to the problem but provides a definition of free will and argues explicitly for the possibility of its existence. The professional philosopher will surely find *Free Will* a pleasant reading and a telling book, and might be prompted to study Balaguer's position in further detail by referring to his *Free Will as an Open Scientific Problem* (MIT Press, 2010). On the other hand, the neophyte will draw from the book much food for thought, as well as a useful summary of the main arguments employed in the current debate.

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Models of the History of Philosophy, Vol. III: The Second Enlightenment and the Kantian Age, edited by Gregorio Piaia and Giovanni Santinello, Dordrecht, Germany, Springer, 2015, xxxii + 1000 pp., $349.00 (cloth)

Models of the History of Philosophy is the English edition of *Storia delle storie generali della filosofia* (edited by Giovanni Santinello, Brescia: La Scuola, Roma/Padova: Antenore, 1979–2004). The Italian original is a monumental work in 5 volumes (7 tomes overall), devoted to the history