



## Philosophical Review

---

Review: [untitled]

Author(s): John Martin Fischer

Source: *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 98, No. 2 (Apr., 1989), pp. 254-257

Published by: [Duke University Press](#) on behalf of [Philosophical Review](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2185289>

Accessed: 24/02/2011 13:32

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublisher?publisherCode=duke>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).



Duke University Press and *Philosophical Review* are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Philosophical Review*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

allow that the course of history is affected by chance events and the choices of individuals (p. 157). Such events are accordingly defined as those which “represent a conjunction of different lines of causation which are independent of one another and whose coincidence at any particular point in time could not have been predicted on the basis of what occurred in either of these lines alone, no matter how fully we understood them” (p. 149). Choices, “even though they be determined, must in many cases be said to be codetermined by the actual nature of the situation we face, rather than being the inevitable outcome of that which lies in the past and is therefore beyond our present control” (p. 142).

Although not fully developed, this view reflects a change of emphasis in Mandelbaum’s work, a move away from his lifelong insistence on the centrality of history to a concern with its limitations. Anyone wishing to reform a society, he tells us in his closing paragraphs, must have an understanding of its institutions and of the requirements of its inhabitants. But, “contrary to what has often been claimed, past history is not the best source of such knowledge. What is needed is an analysis of the actually present situation.” Theories of social change must therefore take account of the capacity for intelligent choice which, with a little help from Fortune, enable us to make and remake the social world.

SUSAN JAMES

*University of Cambridge*

*The Philosophical Review*, Vol. XCVIII, No. 2 (April 1989)

*THE MORALITY OF FREEDOM*. By JOSEPH RAZ. Oxford, England, Clarendon Press of Oxford University Press, 1986. Pp. ix, 435. \$55.00.

The project of this book is to develop an understanding of the moral basis of the rights and liberties associated with political liberalism. This core of rights and liberties limits the authority of the state, and Raz begins by developing a theory that attempts to justify the authority of the state.

Raz claims that authoritative directives (and thus, directives of the state) should be based on reasons which already apply to the subjects of the directives (p. 47). This is the “dependence thesis.” The dependence thesis is closely related to what Raz calls the “normal justification thesis”: “the normal way to establish that a person has authority over another person involves showing that the alleged subject is likely better to comply with reasons which apply to him . . . if he accepts the directives of the alleged authority . . . rather than by trying to follow the reasons which apply to

him directly" (p. 53). Raz claims that the dependence and normal justification theses are "mutually reinforcing," and that they imply the "pre-emption thesis": the fact that an authority requires performance of an action is a reason for its performance which is not to be added to all other relevant reasons when assessing what to do, but should exclude and take the place of some of them" (p. 46). Raz holds that the three theses articulate a "service conception of government": the view that the principal function of government is to assist individuals in advancing their aims better than they could without government. The service conception of government leads to the view that the authority of the state may be greater over some individuals than over others (p. 100).

Having given an account of the basis of government authority, Raz turns to the question of what justifies its limits. It is often thought that the liberal rights and liberties can be justified by appeal ultimately to the ideal of personal autonomy, and Raz concurs with this thought. But many philosophers have argued that the ideal of personal autonomy requires "anti-perfectionism," and that it is this anti-perfectionism that justifies liberalism. Anti-perfectionism claims that implementation and promotion of ideals of the good life are not a legitimate matter for governmental action. Raz distinguishes between various different forms of anti-perfectionism, and he rejects the claim that the liberal rights are justified by appeal to anti-perfectionism in any of its forms (Part II). Later in the book Raz argues that the liberal rights are justified by appeal to a certain conception of the good life, one involving the value of personal autonomy. Thus, Raz conceives of liberal rights not as ruling out governmental promotion of certain moral ideals, but as providing constraints on the manner in which government can promote these ideals.

In Part III Raz explores the question of whether political rights and liberties can be justified by an appeal to basic rights; he argues against such a "rights-based" approach. He argues that the ideal of autonomy can be fulfilled only in a society in which there exist certain options, which, Raz argues, are "collective goods." The ideal of autonomy thus entails that certain collective goods are intrinsically valuable (p. 206). Therefore, the ideal of personal autonomy is incompatible with "moral individualism," the doctrine that only states of individual human beings, or aspects of their lives, can be intrinsically good or valuable. It is perhaps the most important thesis of the book that liberal rights, although based on personal autonomy, are not based on individualism. And Raz proceeds from the denial of individualism to the denial that liberalism is based on rights (pp. 206–207). One's interest in being autonomous implies an interest in the existence of certain options that are collective goods, but Raz claims that others (either individually or collectively) are not duty-bound to se-

cure it. And thus, because rights imply duties, one does not have a *right* to the conditions necessary for one's autonomy (p. 207).

Raz departs from certain traditional defenses of liberal rights by departing from individualism and emphasizing the importance (even for personal autonomy) of certain collective goods. Also, he points out that a concern for personal autonomy should not just issue in protection of individuals against coercion. If a society wishes to promote the ideal of personal autonomy, it will also need to provide individuals with the resources necessary to have the opportunity to live autonomously. A concern for autonomy thus justifies not only certain "negative" rights (against coercive interference of some sorts), but also "positive" rights (to resources and conditions necessary for the capacity to live autonomously).

Raz is a traditional liberal insofar as he argues for the core of liberal rights from the ideal of personal autonomy. But he argues that this ideal of autonomy leads one away from moral individualism and the libertarian preoccupation with negative rights. His perfectionist approach, the rejection of moral individualism, and the emphasis on collective goods makes his theory similar to various communitarian approaches. But it is different to the extent that Raz does not argue for a strong central government. The role of government is confined to maintaining framework conditions conducive to autonomy and pluralism (p. 427).

Raz's book is stimulating, challenging, and insightful throughout. His basic theses are intriguing and important. His argumentation illuminates and ties together a wide range of issues in moral and political theory.

I do not have the space to evaluate various aspects of Raz's overall theory. I shall just say a few words about one component of his approach. Raz argues that placing value on personal autonomy requires acceptance of "value pluralism," the view that there are various incompatible and equally valuable forms of life. He says, "No one would deny that autonomy should be used for the good. The question is, has autonomy any value *qua* autonomy when it is abused? Is the autonomous wrongdoer a morally better person than the non-autonomous wrongdoer? Our intuitions rebel against such a view. It is surely the other way round [(p. 380)]. . . . Autonomy is valuable only if it is exercised in pursuit of the good. . . . A moral theory which recognizes the value of autonomy inevitably upholds a pluralistic view" (p. 381).

But I am not convinced that autonomy has no value *qua* autonomy. Raz points out that an autonomous wrongdoer is in some sense morally worse than a non-autonomous wrongdoer, and he concludes that autonomy is only valuable when exercised in right action and thus that placing value on autonomy implies value pluralism. Raz is talking primarily about political autonomy. But consider the parallel argument with respect to metaphysical autonomy—the notion of "acting freely." A person who freely does

BOOK REVIEWS

evil is morally worse than someone who acts as a result of thoroughgoing direct electronic stimulation of the brain. (The latter person does not act freely and is thus not morally responsible for his behavior.) But does it follow that there is no value to acting freely, even in doing bad deeds? It seems to me that I would prefer to be the person who freely does evil rather than the directly manipulated agent; I place a certain value on a life in which I act freely, even if I (always) act wrongly. The fact that I am morally more blameworthy when acting freely than when not does not show that there is no value in metaphysical autonomy *qua* autonomy. There is a clear sense in which rational agents would prefer to act with metaphysical autonomy than without it, even though we would judge the person who freely does evil to be morally worse than the person who behaves without freedom. And I do not see why a parallel point does not apply to political autonomy. Whereas a theorist who values autonomy might do so on the basis of value pluralism, I believe that one could coherently hold that autonomy is valuable while denying value pluralism.

JOHN MARTIN FISCHER

*University of California, Riverside*

*The Philosophical Review*, Vol. XCVIII, No. 2 (April 1989)

*THE PHYSICS OF WILLIAM OF OCKHAM*. By ANDRÉ GODDU. Leiden, The Netherlands, E. J. Brill Publishers, 1984. Pp. ix, 243.

Writing from a post-Scientific-Revolution point of view, historians have often attempted to categorize William of Ockham with empiricists who helped to undermine an overly *a priori* scholastic Aristotelianism, thus promoting the new science. According to Pierre Duhem, for example, Ockham, by denying that motion is an extramental reality, prepared the way for the eventual acceptance of the law of inertia: if the production of continued motion is not a new effect, then it requires no cause.

In this book, André Goddu, while admitting that Duhem's claims for Ockham were exaggerated, nevertheless hopes to show that Ockham's influence on later generations was positive and constructive (p. 13). This is a difficult task. Ockham had many, not always consistent, intellectual influences, and no one tendency arising out of Ockham's views has a special claim to be the "true" line of his historical influence.

Although Ockham limited the separately existing entities in the universe to substances and qualities, he generally assumed the truth of most of Aristotelian physics. If Ockham argued that motion is not a separately