FREE WILL XIII

Wolf: Rejection of the Real Self View and the Autonomy View

Wolf's article 'Sanity and the Metaphysics of Responsibility' precedes her book Freedom *Within Reason* (on reserve) by several years. Both take a broadly similar line, but it will be helpful to refer to the book from time to time to fill out the ideas. Wolf starts by rejecting two views which she sees as the main orthodoxies. The autonomy view comes from Kant:

> It seems then, that in addition to the requirement that the agent have control over her behavior (that she have a potentially effective will) and the requirement that she have control along the right lines (a relevantly intelligent will) there is a requirement that the agent's control be ultimate—her will must be determined by her self, and her self must not, in turn be determined by anything external itself. This last condition I shall call, after Kant, the requirement of autonomy. (*Freedom Within Reason* p. 10)

Autonomy seems unavailable: we can always push further back an explanation of why an agent acted as they did, until we get to some feature that stands outside of the agent. So Wolf investigates an alternative that tries to explain responsibility without invoking autonomy: The Real Self View. In the article the exemplars are Frankfurt, Watson and Taylor; in the book she starts with David Hume. Hume was a compatibilist, but rather than characterizing free actions positively (those that stem from desires, or whatever) he characterized them negatively: free actions are those that are not influenced by 'force, violence or constraint'. (For a recent attempt at the same approach, se Ayer's article in the Watson collection.) Wolf then tries to use the Real Self View to give a positive characterization that explains this negative characterization. The problem that she finds with it is that even if an action comes from an agent's Real Self (i.e. even if they fully identify with it) we might still not hold them responsible for it, since we might think that, give their circumstances, they are not responsible for their Real Self. (It was this idea that the autonomy condition was trying to get at.)

Wolf: the Sanity Condition

This piece was written before *Freedom Within Reason*, but it provides a good introduction to the main lines of her positive view, presented in a rather different way. Wolf asks us to imagine the case of Jo-Jo, the son of a vicious dictator. Jo-Jo grows up to inherit his father's power; and he also comes to inherit his desires and values. Jo-Jo identifies with his desires and values; but Wolf argues that he is not free in that his upbringing makes him unable to perceive the just and the true. Freedom requires that the agent be able to act in accordance with the demands of reason: what Wolf in her book calls the Reason View. There she analyses the capacity into two parts: the agent must be able to perceive both the *true* and the *good*.

Some worries: Firstly, there are the worries that Wolf herself raises at the end of the paper: that the view assumes a certain moral objectivity (can Scanlon help us with this?), and seems to collapse rationality too easily into truth. (Ordinarily we think that a person can be fully rational, and sane, but, through bad luck, come to form false beliefs about the world). Secondly, we might wonder whether Wolf's view is as convincing about freedom as it is about responsibility. We might concede that Jo-Jo is on some sense not responsible, whilst not conceding that he fails to be free. (Be careful here. There are various different senses in which we might think that some one fails to be free. Does Jo-Jo really lack *free will*?)