Kayla Bilyard

Instructor Name

Course Number

Date

Free will and Determinism

Since ages, a long debate has been taking place on free will vs determinism. Free will describes the ability to apply our own judgments to certain actions. How people react to different situations or act according to the restraints. However, determinism says that reactions or behavior are due to some cause. The action or reaction of a person has some reason or logic behind it. It also presents the idea that free will is just a delusion because our behavior is somehow greatly affected by external and internal factors. Sometimes, we do not have control over things and our further actions are based on such factors thus predicting our next move.

The concept of free will says that a person has the choice of his acts and behavior according to his own willpower. A person has a capacity to perform actions according to his own choice regardless of the factors and environment he surrounds. Free will can also be apprehended as self-determination; the choice of controlling his life according to his own destiny.

Basis of science is shaped by the laws of determinism. If we study the factors deeper, external forces are described as the factors which are not a part of any individual, rather are the outside causes which directly affect the performance of a person. They can be influence of parents, friends, media or the environment. Internal forces are the factor that has an angle based on biological viewpoint. A specie can perform actions against his nature due to mental and physical health conditions. Personality traits plays a significant role in affecting one’s behavior. The neurological and hormonal process in one’s body can trigger many actions which a part of someone’s personality and nature are not usually not.

It is assumed that a person has make his own decisions and are completely self-determined. Let’s suppose, a person has full authority over his actions to commit a crime.

For better understanding, here is an example. Someone visits a bakery to buy cake to complete festival preparations of a national holiday. The important note is that person is left with only 10-dollars bill and the cake available is 10 dollars too. There are other shops open at this hour, suggesting that if that person wills to buy a cake, this is his only option available to spend all he had and buy the last cake at only open shop. As that person takes steps towards the shop, he sees a person sitting outside the door with a box in his hands. He is collecting donations for the famine victims. The persons stop on seeming him. He is clear with the idea that he can choose as he likes. He can choose to eat or donate. Now the note-worthy point here is that whatever option he chooses, to eat or donate, he is free to decide but whenever he decides, he will be held morally responsible for it. This argument is called Basic Argument and according to which, there is not concept of determinism. The central idea to it is people perform action for a reason when it comes to free action. Also, it is must for a person to be in a critical mind state to make a decision, for which he can be held morally responsible. However, no one can be held absolutely morally responsible. (Rosen et al.)

We can observe that someone who gives an excuse that he had to do something and had no other choice, actually wanted to do that very act and did not consider other options. Thus, theory of alternate possibilities suits to apply here. It suggests that one cannot be held responsible for an act he did if he had no other option. (Frankfurt)

**Works Cited**:

Frankfurt, Harry G. *Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibilities*. https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly\_fs/1.101502!/file/frankfurt-alt-poss.pdf. Accessed 14 Nov. 2019.

Rosen, Gideon, et al. *The Norton Introduction to Philosophy*. W. W. Norton & Company, 2015.