

# Philosophy Assignment

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1.
  1. b) Appeal to unqualified authority
  2. d) Straw man
  3. d) False dichotomy
  4. b) No fallacy
  5. b) affirming the antecedent

2.
  1. b) Deductive , valid
  2. a) Inductive, weak
  3. b) Deductive, invalid
  4. a) Deductive, valid
  5. a) Deductive, invalid

## **3. Problem of Free Will**

Free will is the ability to choose between different possible courses of action unimpeded. I have experiences of making up my own mind, of deciding between genuine alternatives,

and of doing one thing, when I could easily have done something else.

But do I genuinely have free will, or is it only an illusion?

Descartes asked this problem because if we really have free will then how can the physical world be entirely determined as the physics of that time propose the physical world as a closed, deterministic system. This means every event that happens is determined by preceding physical events. So if we prove somehow that we have mental free will, it won't make any difference to the behaviour of my body, because the behavior of my body is caused by the preceding states of my body and the rest of the physical universe.

A widespread response to the problem posed by determinism is so-called 'compatibilism', according to which 'freedom' is (1) the ability to do something *and* (2) to be unimpeded in doing it. Thus, I am free to cook a soup if I have the ability to cook a soup, but I am not free to cook a soup if, for example, I do not have the time, ingredients, or equipment to do so, if I am called out in an emergency, or if an intruder is holding me at gunpoint. According to the 17th century philosopher Thomas Hobbes, who was a compatibilist, a person is free when 'he finds no stop in doing what he has the will, desire, or inclination to do'. And if this is freedom, then a person is free even if what he has the will, desire, or inclination to do happens to have been determined. Of course, it might be objected that freedom involves not just the ability to do something, but also the ability to do otherwise. The compatibilist response to this objection is to define 'the ability to do otherwise' in the same

way that he defined 'freedom': 'the ability to do otherwise' is (1) the ability to do otherwise and (2) to be unimpeded in doing it. If I had wanted to do otherwise than cook a soup, nothing would have impeded me from doing so. However, I did not want to do otherwise than cook a soup (because what I wanted to do had been determined), and in that sense I was free. As 'the ability to do otherwise' has a conditional or hypothetical meaning, it is not strictly speaking incompatible with determinism.

This problem is still with us today in a form just as acute as that of Descartes' time. Nowadays we think that quantum physics has shown an indeterminacy in the behavior of particles at the subatomic level. Not everything is determined in the way that classical physics supposed. But that seems to be no help with the free will problem, because the form of quantum indeterminacy is randomness, and randomness is not the same as freedom. The fact that particles at the microlevel are not completely determined, and therefore not completely predictable, but only statistically predictable, seems to give no support whatever to the idea that our apparently free actions are really free. Even if our decision making somehow inherited the indeterminacy of the quantum level events in our brains, that would still not give us free will, but only an unpredictable random element in our decisions and behavior.

Now let us try to solve a problem. Suppose there are two identical persons but one has the free will and other does not, for example one of them is a kind of artificial organism created in a lab and programmed to look and act like a

person in every superficial way but just without the free will part . Now the job is two know which one has free will and which one does not, assuming that you are given all the tools that you can think you might need for this work given those things exist (like you can't ask for a time machine). Also answers like the one with the soul has the free will is not acceptable otherwise we just have to repeat the entire experiment over again to figure out what a soul is and how to recognize one when we see it. One might define free will as the ability to chose between different possible courses of action without coercion which is fine until we realize that artificial intelligence are also perfectly capable of meeting that exact same criterion but one may then argue that robots are just collections of transistors and therefore cannot possibly have free will which brings us back two the question that how to find the difference between a thing with freewill and a thing without, why do sophisticated networks of neurons and human brains get to have free will but not sophisticated networks of silicon transistors. If you can't tell the difference then maybe free will does not exist.