

Are we free to do what we want?

Philosophy



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Are we free to do what we want? Humans are species with highly developed brain, intelligence, wisdom, and self-awareness. We do also have a free will.

Does it mean that we are free to do what we want? Does it give us ability and permission to act regardless of any other features? In the topic of this essay we can notice the construction of argument with its hidden premise.

The full argument can sound: 'If we have a free will, then we are free to do what we want and nothing can stop us in achieving whatever we want'.

Assuming, that we have a free will, argument can be true only if the conclusion is true, what means, that there is nothing that could stop us in getting what we want. In this essay I intend to refute the conclusion, proving that the argument itself is false. I shall argue that although we have a free will, we are not free to do what we want. I will establish falsity of conclusion by disproving thought, that we are free to do what we want and that nothing can stop us in getting what we want. These two sentences are strongly connected with each other. We cannot be free to do what we want without being unlimited in what we do, therefore being free to do what we want would mean that our actions are not limited by any restrictions or inabilities.

I will therefore assess arguments sufficient to prove the falsity of statement that we are free to do what we want. Morality as one of the main restrictions

First of all, one of the main restrictions is our morality. Each of us, whether we believe in God, any other form of absolute, or are atheists, has some basic knowledge of moral values. They can vary from country to country, and they do not have to be the same in every culture or each period of time, but every human being knows what is right and what is wrong according to their culture and times in which they live. Religion or morality is therefore a feature which does not let us be completely free in what we do. Morally

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forbidden action of one person does not have to be necessarily forbidden for another human being, who lives in different times or different country, but the other person has set of his own moral rules which he should obey. Even if we decide to break the moral rules, we will always know that what we have done was wrong and knowledge of doing the wrong things will be present in our mind. Though, that what we did was wrong, shows us that we are not totally free to do what we want, because there are always consequences, like for example a memory of doing something wrong. We cannot erase those memories and we cannot control our moral judgements, therefore we are limited by them. The problem with first argument is that it assumes that each human being has some morality. Suppose that there are also people who have no basic knowledge of what is right or what is wrong and that they do not believe in any moral values. However those people are still restricted by other features, which do not depend only on their free will. Economic and legal limits

The second argument holds that each human being is limited by what he possesses and, what is more, each person comes under the legal law. Everyone has bounded source of finances, even when we are rich, the money that we own is never infinitive, and therefore we are always restricted by our income. No matter how much money we will ever have, we will never be able to afford everything that we want to possess, also because not everything is for sale. Limited amount of money does not let us do everything we want, because at some point there will be something that we cannot buy, what means we are restricted in our actions. Another, but not less significant restriction is legal limit. No matter in which country we live, in which period of time, regardless the government or political system, we are always restricted by law. Everything we do is subject to legal rules. We are

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never unlimited in what we do, because every act of breaking the law will have some consequences. Even if we lived in a place with no government and no legal law, there would always be some norms and social standards we need to obey. Theoretically anarchy brings no rules that we should be restricted by. Anarchy, itself, means lack of publicly recognised authority. It may mean lawlessness or political disorder. Although in this form of political system, or rather no political system, no rules bind, however, we are still not free to do what we want, because our free will is limited by actions of others. If no one has to obey the law, everyone is free to do what he wants; therefore one individual can limit the other, what contradicts the statement that under circumstances of anarchy we are free to do whatever we want. We could skip this argument, supposing that our finances are so high, that they seem infinitive comparing to the length of our life. We could assume that we live on a desert island, where no human being can bring any restrictions to our life. However we can easily notice the fault of this thesis. If we want to spend our theoretically unlimited money, we need to interact with others. Every interaction brings some limits to our actions. Nevertheless, even if no human limited our actions, we would be still limited by other, important factors. Resources and abilities The most important, and sufficient for disproving the conclusion argument, is finiteness of the resources and our limited abilities. Even if our finances were unlimited and there were no law or moral restrictions, we would still be limited by the amount of resources available to us and our own abilities. Nothing in this world is infinitive; therefore we cannot do whatever we want, because some of sources may be eventually exhausted. We cannot get as much goods as we want; the amount of goods that we can buy is limited not only by our

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finances, but also by available resources of those goods. Moreover, we cannot do what we want, because our abilities are strictly limited. If a person cannot draw, regardless of how much he wants to be a good and appreciated painter, he will never become a famous artist. And if that person has no talent, no matter how much work and effort he puts in learning how to draw, he will never get close to perfection in his performance. As long as we could assume the lack of morality, theoretically unlimited finances and no law restrictions, nevertheless we can not contradict the finiteness of resources and abilities. No one in this world has access to unlimited sources and no one is infinitively able to do everything he wants; therefore no human being is free to do what he wants and there are always some restrictions which limit his abilities in achieving what he wants to achieve. It is not the case that we are free to do what we want. Each human being has got a free will, what we can take for granted. It means that our premise in this argument is always true. The only possibility where the argument is valid when all of the premises are true is when the conclusion is also true. We have to check the value of our conclusion. Is it true that we are free to do what we want? We are restricted by our morality, knowledge of what is right and wrong limits us in doing what we want. Even if we had no morality, we are bounded by economic and legal limits. Our finances are never infinite and we always come under the law. Supposing that we had nearly unlimited finances and no law would be able to stop us in doing what we want, the problem would still be limited abilities and resources. Being restricted contradicts the statement that we are unlimited in our actions, what makes the statement, that we are free to do what we want, false. Therefore the whole conclusion is false. True premise, that we have a free will, is followed by false conclusion. It makes <https://assignbuster.com/are-we-free-to-do-what-we-want/>

the whole argument invalid, as a result we can deduct that it is not the case that we are free to do what we want. If it is not the case that we are free to do what we want, then we are not free to do what we want. We are limited in our actions and we have to obey the rules, no matter how hard we try to break them and how much we try to always do what we want. It is impossible to do everything we want, thus we have just established the knowledge that we are not free to do what we want.