

Free will



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

28 May Free Will A human being is the most intelligent life form on the planet capable of taking rational decisions on the basis of intelligence and knowledge, which in turn are dependent upon the level of education, religious indoctrination, and the social and economic factors prevalent in the immediate environment. 'Free will' is the capability of taking independent, rational decisions based upon a dilemma or situation faced in one's life. 'Free Will' has also been defined as 'a philosophical term of art for a particular sort of capacity of rational agents to choose a course of action from among various alternatives' (Timothy, 2011). The lower living forms' in the animal kingdom have hitherto been considered as not being capable of exerting an action based upon free will as their behaviors' are thought to be guided more by animal instinct, rather than intelligence. For a human being, true exercise of 'free will' is associated with multiple determinants such as physical/causal, psychological, biological and theological, which affect the decision for the ultimate action (Timothy, 2011). Personal, moral and societal constraints may thus affect the true exercise of free will. Free will has also been associated with the concept of moral responsibility for one's actions by most philosophers', who have commented on the topic in history, shifting the onus to the individual being wholly responsible for taking an informed and educated decision when confronted with a peculiar situation or aspect of life (Timothy, 2011). However, there have been contentious issues on understanding the concept of 'free will' as philosophers agree, and at the same time disagree on its relationship with determinism (Vargas, 2006). Some philosophers believe that the two are compatible, while others' swear to the contrary. The problem one encounters when handling issues related to philosophy is that unlike physical sciences, philosophical analysis lacks

verification through experimental models' which provide consistent, verifiable results leading to the formulation and analysis of particular hypotheses' and laws', which become readily acceptable in scientific circles due to the stark truth of the evidence presented. The concept of ' free will' is therefore surrounded by much debate and discussion about its rationality as well as feasibility. However, with increasing levels' of knowledge and insight into various biologic and physical mechanisms determining human behavior and thought processes, rational decisions' can be taken by the modern human being. A well educated and informed person is fully capable of analyzing, discussing and taking an action in one's life driven either by one's own desire, guided by the societal and community compulsions or within the precincts of feasibility and rationality. As a little child, or at the beginning of life, one is not mentally and biologically trained or equipped enough to handle inevitable situations', but as one grows up, learns and masters the arts of survival and living, one can exercise actions compatible with the appropriateness of decisions for a likely situation. The changing conditions', one encounters while growing up are obstacles in one's life which have to be overcome in order to ensure survival and continuation of one's progeny (Dennett, 2003). There is therefore, a successive harnessing of the complications' of increasing levels of complexity presented in one's life through the exercise of ' free will' decisions undertaken employing a rational basis. A human being may be a great evolutionary success as compared to the other mammals and lower animals, but basic biological instincts and life span continue to remain within the confines of defined limits. It is only the ability to exercise ' free will' which distinguishes humans from other animals. ' Free will' can therefore be identified as a human prerogative, although its

concept will continue to be debated and discussed in future. Works Cited

Dennett, Daniel. " Free will, but not as we know it." *New Scientist* 178. 2396 (2003): 39. Academic Search Premier. EBSCO. Web. 25 June 2011. O'Connor, Timothy, " Free Will", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2011 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = . Vargas, Manuel. " Philosophy and the Folk: On Some Implications of Experimental Work For Philosophical Debates on Free Will." *Journal of Cognition & Culture* 6. 1/2 (2006): 239-254. Academic Search Premier. EBSCO. Web. 25 June 2011.