

**PLATO'S PHILOSOPHY ON FREEDOM AND DETERMINISM:  
A CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE**

**BY**

**ERUGO FORTUNE CHUKWUEBUKA  
ART1901714**

**DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY  
FACULTY OF ARTS  
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN  
BENIN CITY**

**SEPTEMBER, 2023**

**PLATO'S PHILOSOPHY ON FREEDOM AND DETERMINISM:  
A CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE**

**BY**

**ERUGO FORTUNE CHUKWUEBUKA  
ART1901714**

**AN ORIGINAL ESSAY SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT  
OF PHILOSOPHY, FACULTY OF ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF  
BENIN, BENIN CITY, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR  
OF ARTS (B.A. HONS.) DEGREE IN PHILOSOPHY**

**SEPTEMBER, 2023**

## CERTIFICATION

This project work on Plato's Philosophy on Freedom and Determinism: A Contemporary Relevance was carried out by ERUGO FORTUNE CHUKWUEBUKA with Matriculation Number ART1901714 in the Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, Benin City, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Honours Degree in Philosophy.

---

**DR. JEKO OGHENEOCHUKO VICTOR**  
*(Project Supervisor)*

---

**DATE**

---

**DR. WESLEY T. OSEMWEGIE**  
*(Head of Department)*

---

**DATE**

---

**EXTERNAL EXAMINER**

---

**DATE**

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to the Almighty God and to all who strive to uphold the value of human dignity.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My special thanks and appreciation go to God. God kept coming through for me. Without Him, this work and its author would not have been.

Special thanks to my project supervisor, Dr. Jeko Ogheneochuko Victor, I appreciate your time and effort in making this project successful.

I extend my gratitude to my Head of Department (HOD), Dr. Wesley Osemwengie and to all my Lecturers, Prof. P. Omozejele, Dr. Tony Asekhuano, Dr. George Ukagba, Dr. Felix Airoboman, Dr. Emmanuel Asia, Mr. Osemwengie, Mr. Odigie Joseph, Mr. Christopher Osawaru and Mr. Paul Micheal.

I want to express my gratitude to my parents, Mr. Erugo Ikechi and Mrs. Erugo Gina for their massive support throughout my years of being. Also to my siblings, Victory, Favour and Honour. You all really had my back.

Lastly, to my friend, Etinosa, I appreciate you too. I pray God continues to bless you all.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                            | <b>Page</b> |
|----------------------------|-------------|
| TITLE PAGE- - - - -        | i           |
| CERTIFICATION - - - - -    | ii          |
| DEDICATION - - - - -       | iii         |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS - - - - - | iv          |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS- - - - - | v           |
| ABSTRACT - - - - -         | viii        |

### **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| 1.1 Background of the Study - - - - -   | 1  |
| 1.3 Statement of the Problem- - - - -   | 3  |
| 1.3 Purpose of the Study - - - - -      | 6  |
| 1.4 Significance of the Study - - - - - | 6  |
| 1.5 Methodology - - - - -               | 8  |
| 1.6 Literature Review - - - - -         | 8  |
| Endnotes - - - - -                      | 14 |

## **CHAPTER TWO: PLATO'S PHILOSOPHY OF FREEDOM AND DETERMINISM**

|     |  |   |   |   |   |    |
|-----|--|---|---|---|---|----|
| 2.1 | Plato's Life Work and Ideologies   | - | - | - | - | 17 |
| 2.2 | 2Plato's Concepts of Freedom   | - | - | - | - | 23 |
| 2.3 | Plato's Concepts of Determinism  | - | - | - | - | 28 |
| 2.4 | The Relationship Between Freedom and Determinism in<br>Plato's Philosophy -  | - | - | - | - | 35 |
| 2.5 | Criticism of Plato's Philosophy of Freedom and Determinism                   |   |   |   |   | 39 |
| 2.6 | Contemporary Relevance of Plato's Philosophy of Freedom<br>and Determinism - | - | - | - | - | 46 |
|     | Endnotes -   | - | - | - | - | 51 |

## **CHAPTER THREE: CONTEMPORARY PERCEPTIONS ON FREEDOM AND DETERMINISM**

|     |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 3.1 | Modern Philosophical Theories on Freedom and Determinism                        |   |   |   |   | 56 |
| 3.2 | Differences Between Classical and Modern Theories on<br>Freedom and Determinism | - | - | - | - | 60 |
| 3.3 | Criticism of Modern Theories of Freedom and Determinism                         |   |   |   |   | 65 |
| 3.4 | Contemporary Debates on Freedom and Determinism                                 | - |   |   |   | 70 |
|     | Endnotes -  | - | - | - | - | 74 |

## **CHAPTER FOUR: EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION**

|     |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|-----|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 4.1 | Synthesis of Plato’s Philosophy on Freedom and Determinism |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|     | with Contemporary Perspective -                            | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 77 |
| 4.2 | Recommendations -  | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 85 |
| 4.3 | Conclusion -   | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 85 |
|     | Endnotes -   | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 87 |
|     | BIBLIOGRAPHY -   | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 89 |

## **ABSTRACT**

This project delves into Plato's profound philosophical inquiries into the concepts of freedom and determinism, exploring their contemporary relevance. Plato, a foundational figure in the history of Western philosophy, grappled with the tensions between human agency and external constraints. This study seeks to bridge the gap between ancient philosophical thought and modern concerns by examining Plato's ideas on these fundamental issues. Moreover, this research considers the implications of Plato's philosophy for contemporary issues such as artificial intelligence, ethical decision-making in technology, and the role of government in shaping individual freedoms. It explores how Plato's insights can inform and enrich modern ethical frameworks and public policies. Ultimately, this project asserts that Plato's exploration of freedom and determinism remains remarkably pertinent in today's complex and interconnected world. It underscores the enduring value of ancient philosophical inquiries in addressing contemporary ethical and societal challenges, encouraging a deeper appreciation of the timeless relevance of philosophical thought.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Plato builds upon a nascent concept of metaphysical freedom present in some early Greek poets and tragedians, who approach the topic of freedom and fatalism through their particular genres. These authors begin to draw out a more individualized concept of personal freedom in tension with the religio-poetic concepts of fate. Fate (moira) is broached in the works of Homer, Pindar, Aeschylus, Euripides, Sophocles; however, it is difficult to extract a rigorous philosophical position from these non-philosophical sources.<sup>1</sup> A crude form of determinism seems to have emerged with the Atomists, Leucippus and Democritus, who were contemporaries, and apparently nemeses, of Plato.<sup>2</sup> The Atomists theorized that processes in the universe are a result of the interactions between different types of atoms.<sup>3</sup> The atomists seem to allow some room for freedom, as they recommended mastering pleasure<sup>4</sup> and suggested that teaching reshapes a person's character.<sup>5</sup> In addition, around the time of Plato's birth a debate was emerging in the public arena regarding nomos

(custom, law, convention) and physis (nature, natural order).<sup>6</sup> Within this debate the rudimentary concepts of necessity and freedom to resist nature come to the fore. Plato enters this debate with his theory of the nomos of ideal society in the Republic and his Laws. Physis is also championed by Thrasymachus in the Republic and Callicles in the Gorgias. A theme of the dialogues is the naturalness of the order of reason in the cosmos and the individual. The nomos-physis debate emerges when a concept of political freedom appears in classical Athenian society. The advent of democracy coincided with the invention of a concept of political freedom, which entailed liberty from tyranny as well as the ability to engage in political decisions. Plato is the first philosopher to engage extensively with these new ideas of political and metaphysical freedom. He attacks democratic and tyrannical concepts of freedom. At the same time, he confronts traditional beliefs about fatalism through his eschatological myths. After Plato the debate starts to take on more explicit shape starting with Aristotle.<sup>7</sup> It takes a decisively new turn when the Epicureans<sup>8</sup> and Stoics introduce a version of hard determinism. With the work of Chrysippus, in particular, the debate enters a phase that sounds

surprisingly modern. The debate is further expanded by the Middle Platonists through to early Christianity.<sup>9</sup> Nonetheless, I argue Plato provides the first serious attempt to introduce and resolve the debate about individual metaphysical freedom in the Western philosophical tradition.

In contemporary philosophy, there are three main positions on the free will question: determinism, libertarianism, and the synthesis of the two, compatibilism, also called soft determinism. The first two positions are versions of incompatibilism, meaning that they find determinism and freedom of the will to be incompatible with each other. Most versions of the above positions posit claims about whether rational agents can will actions freely, that is without constraint.<sup>10</sup> Willing is thus distinguished from acting on one's will because factors external to one's will may impede the full completion of the desired action. Plato is likewise focused on choice (*prohairesis*), rather than on action.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The relevance of Plato's philosophy of freedom and determinism in contemporary society raises important questions about the nature of human agency, responsibility, and the limits of individual choice. Plato's

philosophical ideas on freedom and determinism, rooted in his metaphysical and ethical theories, continue to resonate in modern discussions on personal autonomy, moral decision-making, and societal structures.

However, reconciling Plato's notion of freedom with the concept of determinism presents a complex challenge. Plato argued for a hierarchical cosmos where everything has a preordained purpose and is subject to divine or natural laws. According to this perspective, human actions and choices may be seen as predetermined, implying limited personal agency. On the other hand, Plato also explored the concept of freedom as an essential aspect of the human condition. He posited that individuals possess an inherent capacity for reason and introspection, allowing them to reflect on their desires and exercise self-control. This concept of freedom suggests that individuals have the ability to transcend external influences and make autonomous decisions. The tension between these two philosophical positions creates a significant dilemma: How can we reconcile the idea of an orderly, predetermined universe with the existence of individual freedom and moral responsibility? This problem

becomes even more relevant in modern times, as our understanding of causality and determinism has evolved through scientific advancements.

Moreover, Plato's philosophy of freedom and determinism also has implications for contemporary societal structures. If human actions are predetermined, it raises questions about the fairness of systems of justice, social inequality, and the distribution of resources. Does the concept of personal responsibility still hold if individuals are bound by a predetermined fate? How can societies strike a balance between individual freedom and collective governance?

Exploring the relevance of Plato's philosophy of freedom and determinism in the context of contemporary society requires a careful examination of these complex philosophical concepts. It demands an exploration of the compatibility of personal agency and determinism, as well as an examination of the ethical and societal implications that arise from these perspectives. By engaging with these questions, we can gain deeper insights into the nature of human freedom, responsibility, and the construction of just societies.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The primary purpose of this study is to investigate the relevance of Plato's philosophy of freedom and determinism in contemporary discourse. By analyzing Plato's arguments and examining their implications, we aim to assess their enduring value and potential contributions to the current understanding of human agency and moral responsibility.

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The philosophy of freedom and determinism, as put forth by Plato, offers valuable insights for individuals seeking personal freedom, ethicists, social and political theorists, psychologists, philosophers of mind, educators, and students.

Plato's philosophy of freedom emphasizes the importance of self-mastery and self-determination. This philosophy empowers individuals to take responsibility for their actions and strive for personal growth and freedom. It encourages individuals to examine their desires, emotions, and beliefs critically, allowing them to make conscious choices that align with their true values and aspirations.

According to Plato, true freedom is not merely the absence of external constraints but also entails acting in accordance with reason and virtue. Ethicists and moral thinkers would benefit from Plato's ideas by exploring how individual freedom and determinism intersect with ethical decision-making. It encourages a deeper understanding of the ethical implications of human actions, providing a framework for moral responsibility and accountability.

Plato's ideas can contribute to discussions on the balance between personal freedom and social order, the nature of political authority, and the role of education in shaping a just society. By studying Plato's philosophy, social and political theorists can gain valuable insights into the complexities of human freedom and its relationship to social structures.

Plato's philosophy has relevance for contemporary discussions in psychology and philosophy of mind, particularly concerning the nature of human agency and free will. Plato's dualistic view, which separates the immaterial soul from the physical body, raises questions about the extent to which individuals have control over their actions and thoughts.

Finally, Plato's philosophy has significant implications for education. His emphasis on the cultivation of reason and virtue aligns with the goals of comprehensive and holistic education. Educators would incorporate Plato's ideas into their pedagogical approaches, promoting critical thinking, self-reflection, and personal growth among students.

## **1.5 Methodology**

This study will employ a comprehensive literature review of Plato's dialogues, secondary sources, and scholarly articles on the topics of freedom, determinism, and moral responsibility. The analysis will involve a systematic examination of key passages and arguments from Plato's works, such as "The Republic," "Phaedrus," and "Phaedo," among others. The study will also draw upon interpretations and critiques provided by contemporary scholars to ensure a balanced and well-informed analysis.

## **1.6 Literature Review**

It has been held by some scholars<sup>14</sup> particularly who have been groomed in modern liberal tradition, that in the notion of ideal city as developed in Republic, there is little or no space for freedom. Taking

evidence from Republic (551b-558c) they lampooned him as someone who strangled democracy and freedom.<sup>15</sup> However, a close and integrated study of Republic, statesmen and Law would reveal that Plato was nowhere indifferent or hostile to the idea of freedom as such. Though it is a fact that he was dissonant to the type of freedom as advocated by the modern exponents of democratic liberal tradition, it would be wrong to conclude that he is an enemy of freedom. As a matter of fact, the concept of freedom plays an important and crucial role in his socio-ethnopolitical thought.

In Republic Plato through the mouth of Socrates asserts that to be just is beneficial. In other words, a just man is truly free. Refuting the claims of Thrasymachus that the tyrants who rule the city and do what he wants to do is really happy, stronger freer than the weak (Republic 343c -344c).<sup>16</sup> Socrates holds that both the unjust city and unjust men are weak and powerless as they are driven by dissension. On the contrary the just man is happier, wiser and more powerful. Here, the point of difference between Socrates and Thrasymachus however on the question whether a just man or the unjust one is truly free. The discussion was

further animated when Glaucon tried to reformulate Thrasymachus position that people obey the law and try to become just as prudence but not willingly. In other words, he holds that people obey the law and behave justly either due to the fear of punishment or with the prospect of some rewards ipso facto, no one is willingly just and people prudently escaping punishment are truly free.

When Plato speaks about justice in the Republic he uses the language of freedom with all its favourable overtones. But this does not establish that he developed a systematic doctrine of freedom. However, in Plato's exposition of freedom one may find two major difficulties. The first is that those who act against the demands of reason are not doing what they really want. He considers himself as a tyrannical man. This kind of fellow is compared with a drug addict, who is not able to resist his passion. It could be conceded that if the picture was accurate the tyrannical man would not be free. But clearly the tyrant admired by Thrasymachus is nothing like this. Tyrant's main concern is to satisfy his appetite and he aptly uses his intelligence to achieve his goal. Also, similar reference may be made about oligarchic man described in the

Republic. For example, it could be said that the oligarchic man is free when he pursues his goal by accumulating money and thus he is free when he endeavors towards this.

The second objection is that Plato mixed up two distinct arguments viz firstly, the just man is completely free to direct his own life and that of his community in accordance with the demands of reason and secondly, philosopher is free to contemplate the truth .Though it seems that in both the cases appetite plays a role of constraints from which we should seek liberation but they apparently point to two different conclusions .Just man is free to lead his life along with other in the most satisfactory way .In other words , we can say that the philosopher is free to overcome the hassle of this life to contemplate the reality of forms. This objection Republic IX seeks to prove that the life of the just man is more genuinely pleasant than that of the unjust (580 c-586e). The above arguments stem from the idea that the philosopher's life has truer pleasure than those of other lives. But it seems that the lacuna lies with the fact that the pleasure of philosophy has any relevance to the claim that the life of justice is pleasantest. According to Annas there is a gap here which is due to the

failure to distinguish different kinds of rationality.<sup>17</sup> The just man through the exercise of practical rationality achieve the greatest satisfaction of which he is capable whereas the philosopher on the other hand achieves pleasures unknown to others because he puts emphasis on theoretical rationality.

Plato's philosophy does not explicitly address the concepts of freedom and determinism in the same way that modern philosophers do. However, certain aspects of Plato's philosophy can be interpreted and related to these concepts. Plato's metaphysical view emphasized the existence of an eternal realm of Forms or Ideas, which he believed to be the ultimate reality. According to Plato, the material world we perceive is a mere reflection or imperfect copy of these ideal Forms. In this context, one might argue that Plato's philosophy leans towards a form of determinism, as the world of Forms represents a fixed and unchanging reality that determines the nature of the physical world.

Furthermore, Plato's theory of Forms suggested that human beings have an innate knowledge of these Forms, which can be recollected through the process of philosophical inquiry.<sup>18</sup> This notion of knowledge

as a recollection of preexisting truths can be seen as limiting human freedom to some extent. If knowledge is predetermined and already present within us, it may imply that our choices and actions are constrained by the knowledge we possess.

On the other hand, Plato's concept of the soul, as described in his dialogue "Phaedrus," offers a potential perspective on freedom. Plato described the soul as being composed of three parts: reason, spirit, and desire. The rational part of the soul, which is associated with intellect and wisdom, is considered the highest and most divine aspect. Plato argued that true freedom lies in the rational part of the soul ruling over the other parts, allowing individuals to achieve harmony and virtuous living.<sup>19</sup>

In this sense, Plato's philosophy suggests that freedom can be attained through self-mastery and the pursuit of wisdom and virtue. The rational part of the soul, through philosophical contemplation and understanding of the Forms, can liberate individuals from the influence of their desires and passions. Thus, Plato's notion of freedom is tied to the cultivation of reason and the transcendence of base instincts<sup>20</sup>.

## Endnotes

1. Fischer, J. and Ravizza, M. *Responsibility and Control: A Theory of Moral Responsibility* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
2. Nahmias, E. and Murray, D. “Experimental Philosophy on Free Will: An Error Theory for Incompatibilist Intuitions.” *New Waves in Philosophy of Action*. Eds. J. Aguilar, A. Buckareff, K. Frankish (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, Forthcoming, 2009).
3. Kane, R. *The Significance of Free Will* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996). “Responsibility, Luck, and Chance: Reflections on Free Will and Indeterminism,” *Journal of Philosophy* 96/5, 1999, 217–40.
4. Van Inwagen, P. *An Essay on Free Will* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983).
5. Smilansky, S. *Free Will and Illusion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
6. G.M.A. Grube, Republicrevd. C.D.C. Reeve in Cooper, J. (ed), *Plato: Complete Works* (Indian Polis, Hackett, 1997).

7. Julia Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 310313.
8. Plato. "Laws". In E. Hamilton & H. Cairns (Eds.), *The Collected Dialogues of Plato* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961a), 1225–1516.
9. Plato. "Phaedo". In E. Hamilton & H. Cairns (Eds.), *The Collected Dialogues of Plato* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961b), 40–98.
10. Nietzsche, F. (1989). *Beyond good and evil* (W. Kaufmann, Trans.). New York: Vintage Books. (Original Work Published, 1886).
11. Vergote, A. *La psychanalyse a l'e'preuve de la sublimation* [The Psychoanalytic Examination of Sublimation] (Paris: Cerf, 1997).
12. Modell, A. "Commentary. Discussant for Panel: Neuropsychology and the Future of Psychoanalysis: Adebate." Annual spring meeting of the American Psychological Association, Div. 39, Psychoanalysis (New York, NY: 2011).

13. Hartmann, H. Psychoanalysis and the concept of health. In *Essays on ego psychology* (New York: International Universities Press, 1939), 1–18.
14. Harry G. Frankfurt, “Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person; 1971, *J. Phil*, ix viii 5-20; reprinted in *Waston*, 1982, 81-95.
15. Jones, E. Free Will and Determinism. *Essays in Applied Psychoanalysis*, 2, 178–189, 1924.
16. Aristotle. *The complete works of Aristotle* (J. Barnes, Ed.) (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984).
17. Mellor, D.H. *The Facts of Causation* (London: Routledge, 1995).
18. Hume, D. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (3rd ed.; L. A. Selby-Bigge, Ed.) (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1975) Original Work Published, 1748.
19. Mills, J. *The Unconscious Abyss: Hegel’s Anticipation of Psychoanalysis* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2002).
20. Harry G. Frankfurt, “Identification and whole heartedness” in Schoeman, F.D (ed), *Responsibility, Character and Emotions* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987), 27-45.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **PLATO'S PHILOSOPHY OF FREEDOM AND DETERMINISM**

#### **2.1 Plato's Life Work and Ideologies**

The dates of Plato's life are usually based upon Eratosthenes' calculations- according to these, he was born in 428-7 B.C. and died at the age of eighty or eighty-one at 348-7BC. Plato came from one of the wealthiest and most politically active families in Athens. One of Plato's uncles (Charmides) was a member of the notorious "Thirty Tyrants," who overthrew the Athenian democracy in 404BC. Charmides' own uncle, Critias, was the leader of the Thirty. However, his stepfather Pyrilampes was apparently a close associate of Pericles, when the latter was the leader of the democratic faction.

Plato's real name was apparently Aristocles, after his grandfather. "Plato" seems to have started as a nickname (for Platos, or "broad"). He came under the influence of Socrates while a young man, and was obviously very deeply influenced by him and by his 'Socratic method' of inquiry. This method was based on what was called an 'eristic' fexercise,

apparently introduced to Athens by Protagoras – this was a kind of a debate in which the aim was to demolish the opponent's position by exposing logical or other flaws in the arguments. Doubtless used a form of training for lawyers and politicians, it was transformed by Socrates and others into a means of inquiry into the general nature of concepts. Very little is reliably known about Socrates. He apparently lived from c. 470-399 BC, during the Athenian golden age of Pericles, and then during the Pelopponesian War with Sparta. In 399 BC he was found guilty of both corrupting the young, and believing in false Gods. The former charge referred to his use of dialectic inquiry, and Socrates had many young followers apart from Plato. He was sentenced to death, and took his own life by poison while in the company of his colleagues and friends.

After the death of Socrates, Plato left Athens for Megara, and then went on to travel to Cyrene, Italy, Sicily, and even perhaps Egypt (Strabo claims that he was shown where Plato lived in Heliopolis in Egypt). While in Syracuse, in 387 BC (at the age of about 40yrs), he became the instructor to Dion, brother-in-law of the tyrant Dionysius I. At some later time, Dionysius became annoyed with Plato, and tried to sell him into

slavery. Having escaped this fate, Plato returned to Athens and founded a school, known as the Academy, whose name came from its location roughly 1.5km outside Athens – a grove of trees left by Academus/Hecademus to the Athenian citizens for gymnastics. This location turned out to be ideal for Plato's purpose, which was to found a school of philosophy and turn his teachings into practice. It was surrounded with a wall made by Hipparchus, and contained statues, temples, and sepulchres of illustrious men, and it was planted with olive and plane trees. The olive trees, the story goes, were reared from cuttings from the sacred olive in the Erechtheum. Within this enclosure Plato had inherited a small garden, in which he opened his school.

Except for two more voyages to Sicily, the Academy was Plato's base and residence for the rest of his long life. These two trips are rather noteworthy. The first came after the death of Dionysius I died and his son, Dionysius II, took over. His uncle/brother-in-law Dion persuaded the young ruler to invite Plato, with the purpose of teaching him become a philosopher-king of the kind described in Plato's 'Republic'. This trip, like the last, ended in failure- within a few months the younger Dionysius had

Dion sent into exile and put Plato under house arrest as a "personal house guest". Plato eventually succeeded in returning to Athens in 365BC, where the uncle Dion was already installed in the Academy. Four years later Dionysius summoned Plato back to Syracuse, but Plato refused the invitation – in response Dionysius sent a ship, with Archedemus, one of Plato's Pythagorean friends, to fetch him. Once again, however, Dionysius imprisoned Plato in Syracuse, who was only able to escape with help from his Tarentine friends.

The idea of free will was introduced by Plato in his Republic dialogue (Plato1997a [4th Century BCE]), and later echoed in Kant's Critique of Practical Reason<sup>1</sup>. Plato argued that the will, as an aspect of the human soul, could be disciplined to choose and act freely; that is, without regard to the demands of Mankind's inherently flawed passions. The philosopher and theologian Thomas Aquinas characterized Plato's vision as meaning that "free will implies indifference to alternatives"<sup>2</sup>. A free will would enable rulers to choose, based upon ideal forms, ends that the rulers' inherent passions otherwise might neither will nor desire. Perfect rulers could be trusted with the task of subjugating the will and

passions of other (lesser) free men for the overall good of society, the passions of women and slaves already being constrained by prevailing social norms and laws. While Plato held that such indifference needed to be cultivated, the Romans saw it arising as a natural consequence of inherited wealth, the philosopher John Locke saw it being achieved through the rule of law, and Gandhi sought to achieve it through veganism.

Plato's philosophy is in line with the pre-Socratics, sophists and artistic traditions that underlie Greek education, in a new framework, defined by dialectics and the theory of ideas. For Plato, knowledge is an activity of the soul<sup>3</sup>, affected by sensitive objects and internal processes. Platonism has its origins in Plato's philosophy, although it is not to be confused with it. According to Platonism, there are abstract objects, a different notion from that of modern philosophy, which exists in another realm distinct from both the external sensible world and the internal world of consciousness, and is the opposite of nominalism<sup>4</sup>. His philosophy is the theory of forms, a distinction between perceptible but unintelligible reality (science) and imperceptible but intelligible reality (mathematics),

Geometry was Plato's main motivation, and it also shows the influence of Pythagoras. Forms are perfect archetypes whose real objects are imperfect copies<sup>5</sup>.

In *The Republic*, the highest form is considered to be the Form of Good, the source of all other Forms that could be known by reason. Glaucon classifies the three kinds of good and asks who is right: those we accept for their sake without regard to consequences, those we accept both for their own sake and for the sake of their consequences, and those we do not accept them for their sake but we accept them for the sake of their consequences. Socrates attributes justice to the second kind of good.

Plato's dualism between truth and appearance, soul and body, is also found in the political conception. A state that assigns to its citizens functions incompatible with their level of wisdom risks easily degenerating. Plato interprets society by analogy with a living organism<sup>6</sup>. The task of harmonization belongs to those who manage to reach the essence of the idea of Good: philosophers, whose function is identical to that of the rational component of the human soul, which harmonizes the other two components of the soul, the intellectual and the lust.

Plato's political conception is based on the idea of justice, the same as that of his professor, Socrates. The city, according to Socrates, in Book II of the Republic, arises from the need of people to associate to produce and the need to resort to a division of tasks<sup>7</sup>. For Alexandre Koyré, solidarity is the main driving force. And in order to be defended, a new social class appears: the warriors, the guards of the Republic. In Book I of the Laws, Plato appeals to the myth of puppets to represent the soul as a reality made up of parts that are not spontaneously in harmony, thus justifying the role of politics<sup>8</sup>. The purpose of a well-established city is the conformity of its citizens with the Good.

## **2.2 Plato's Concepts of Freedom**

It has been held by some scholars<sup>1</sup> particularly who have been groomed in modern liberal tradition, that in the notion of ideal city as developed in Republic, there is little or no space for freedom. Taking evidence from Republic (551b-558c) they lampooned him as someone who strangled democracy and freedom.<sup>9</sup> However, a close and integrated study of Republic, statesmen and Law would reveal that Plato was nowhere indifferent or hostile to the idea of freedom as such. Though

It is a fact that he was dissonant to the type of freedom as advocated by the modern exponents of democratic liberal tradition, it would be wrong to conclude that he is an enemy of freedom. As a matter of fact, the concept of freedom plays an important and crucial role in his socio-ethicopolitical thought.

As far as the injustice is concerned for Plato it is a kind of inner slavery. For example an oligarchic ruler would value wealth over anything else and reduce reason and spirit to a periphery. But he allows reason only to count his money and plans how to make more money and spirit to honour nothing but wealth (Republic 533c). It is quite apparent that in democracy people do seem to be happy enjoy freedom of speech and expression and full of varieties. Socrates however rejects this kind of freedom as democracy does not care who is there in power. It lacks rational direction. The ruler in democracy act not willingly but in ignorance .He does not have control over his desire and guided by opinion only (Republic 565b). In fact the excessive freedom of democracy would lead to tyranny in which a single man will control the whole city .Plato asserts that the tyrannical ruler would be the symbol of injustice and the

unjust man is far worse than the just one (Republic 580a-c). So the contrast between justice and injustice is that between those who are free or they are ruled by reason and those who are totally unfree as they are slaves to appetite.

When Plato speaks about justice in the Republic he uses the language of freedom with all its favourable overtones. But this does not establish that he developed a systematic doctrine of freedom. However, in Plato's exposition of freedom one may find two major difficulties. The first is that those who act against the demands of reason are not doing what they really want. He considers himself as a tyrannical man. This kind of fellow is compared with a drug addict, who is not able to resist his passion. It could be conceded that if the picture was accurate the tyrannical man would not be free. But clearly the tyrant admired by Thrasymachus is nothing like this. Tyrant's main concern is to satisfy his appetite and he aptly uses his intelligence to achieve his goal. Also similar reference may be made about oligarchic man described in the Republic. For example, it could be said that the oligarchic man is free when he

pursues his goal by accumulating money and thus he is free when he endeavors towards this.

The second objection is that Plato mixed up two distinct arguments viz firstly, the just man is completely free to direct his own life and that of his community in accordance with the demands of reason and secondly, philosopher is free to contemplate the truth. Though it seems that in both the cases appetite plays a role of constraints from which we should seek liberation but they apparently point to two different conclusions .Just man is free to lead his life along with other in the most satisfactory way. In other words, we can say that the philosopher is free to overcome the hassle of this life to contemplate the reality of forms. This objection Republic IX seeks to prove that the life of the just man is more genuinely pleasant than that of the unjust<sup>10</sup>. The above arguments stem from the idea that the philosopher's life has truer pleasure than those of other lives. But it seems that the lacuna lies with the fact that the pleasure of philosophy has any relevance to the claim that the life of justice is pleasantest. According to Annas there is a gap here which is due to the failure to distinguish different kinds of rationality.<sup>11</sup> The just man through the

exercise of practical rationality achieve the greatest satisfaction of which he is capable whereas the philosopher on the other hand achieves pleasures unknown to others because he puts emphasis on theoretical rationality. However, Plato responded to these criticisms by holding that there is no distinction between practical and theoretical wisdom. In creating a rational order within the soul, reason will have to curb some desires altogether while others it will allow to a moderate degree. In this way all parts of the soul will attain the truest satisfaction of which they are capable<sup>12</sup>. But this does not mean that goodness of the soul consists in any form of gratification.

Since the philosopher could comprehend the form of the good, only he can create order within his own soul and thereby genuinely virtuous. Others may have a secondary virtue based on true belief about what is good. Similarly, the philosopher is free not because he has some faculty of free choice, but because his decisions are a response to a true vision of the good.

Here, we got to notice that there are fairly large connections between Plato's account of freedom and those given by some recent

philosophers. They have pointed the difficulties in the traditional account of moral freedom as the ability to do what one wants to. They refer to notice the problem that drug addicts, kleptomaniacs want to do what they want – at least they act on their desires but would not normally be regarded as free. The reason for this is that they do not identify with the desires in question. The drug addict may wish that he did not have his desire and struggled to get rid of it. It is clear that the bad man who is seriously dominated by appetites does not act freely and so needs treatment in Plato's view. Hence, although Plato believes that the wicked are unfree, he can still regard such people as responsible in the sense that they can take the blame or are liable to punishment.

### **2.3 Plato's Concepts of Determinism**

The metaphysical problem of free will and determinism arises from the difficulty of reconciling two seemingly unavoidable, but mutually contradictory, core beliefs about ourselves as human beings and the wider world of which we are a part. The first is that it is free will that distinguishes human beings from all others; the second is that human

beings are wholly natural creatures, embedded in the ongoing causal order of the universe.

Free will, as conceived by the theorists cited in note 2, consists paradigmatically in the ability to choose an action from a range of possible alternatives, thence to enact the chosen alternative. This ability is phenomenologically familiar to everyone.<sup>13</sup> As reminds us, if one reflects on “any situation of rational decision making and acting,” one will elicit the experience of facing “alternative possibilities” of action. From this first-person standpoint it certainly seems to be the case that, whatever action one did perform, one could have acted differently. However, from the third-person naturalistic standpoint it can be hard to see how this experience of freedom corresponds to something real.

Naturalism is the metaphysical assumption that the universe contains no non-natural or super-natural entities, substances, powers, forces, or events. Thus human beings are creatures made up solely of physical, chemical, and biological materials and processes. Human actions are, therefore, natural events, occurring in space and time. Because human actions are natural events, and if every natural event has a

cause, or a set of causal conditions, as most philosophers believe to be the case, then human actions must also be causally generated. Every human action is, then, preceded by a set of events and conditions (typically taken to consist in an admixture of beliefs and desires) that brought about its occurrence.

Plato, the ancient Greek philosopher, had a complex and nuanced view on determinism, which is the philosophical idea that all events, including human actions, are causally determined by preceding events or conditions. Determinism posits that everything in the universe unfolds according to an unbroken chain of cause-and-effect relationships, leaving no room for genuine free will.<sup>14</sup> Plato's concept of determinism can be understood through the following key aspects:

**The Realm of Forms:** In Plato's metaphysical system, he posited the existence of two realms: the sensible world and the world of Forms (or Ideas). The sensible world is the physical world we perceive through our senses, full of change and imperfection. On the other hand, the world of Forms is a realm of perfect, unchanging, and eternal archetypes or abstract concepts (e.g., Justice, Beauty, Equality).

**Eternal and Unchanging Forms:** Plato believed that the Forms were eternal and immutable, serving as the ultimate reality. They were the blueprints from which all sensible things in the physical world derived their existence and properties. This implies a fixed and predetermined nature to the universe, where everything has its place and purpose.

**Divine Reason (Logos):** Plato believed in the existence of a divine principle or intellect (Logos) that governs the cosmos. This divine reason imposes order and harmony upon the world, ensuring that events occur in accordance with a grand design or plan. In this sense, determinism is a consequence of the divine reason's guiding influence over the universe.

**Pre-existence of the Soul:** In Plato's dialogues, particularly in the "Phaedo" and "Meno," he discusses the idea of the soul's preexistence. According to this notion, souls existed before birth and will continue to exist after death. Souls, in their preexistent state, may have acquired knowledge of the Forms. Once they are born into the physical world, they forget this knowledge, but philosophical inquiry can help them recollect it. This idea implies that the path of an individual's life is predetermined and influenced by the knowledge acquired in the preexistent state.

**Theory of Recollection:** Plato's theory of recollection (anamnesis) suggests that learning is not the acquisition of new knowledge but rather the process of remembering what the soul already knows from its preexistent state. In this context, determinism plays a role as the soul's prior knowledge determines what it will remember and how it will shape the individual's life choices and actions.

**Ideals and Virtue:** Plato believed that by understanding and embodying the Forms (Ideals), particularly the Form of the Good, individuals could cultivate virtues and improve their lives. This pursuit of virtue is an essential aspect of living a fulfilling and meaningful life, but it is shaped by the predetermined nature of the Forms and the divine order governing the universe.

It's important to note that Plato's ideas on determinism were intertwined with his broader metaphysical and epistemological theories. While he emphasized the existence of an ordered and rational structure in the universe, the specific implications for human free will and determinism remain a subject of ongoing philosophical debate. Some interpreters argue that Plato's ideas might have allowed for a limited form

of free will within the confines of the larger deterministic framework, while others see his views as more deterministic, leaving little room for genuine human autonomy<sup>15</sup>.

Plato's thoughts on determinism can also be understood through his metaphysical and epistemological views:

**Metaphysical Determinism:** Plato's metaphysics revolved around the idea of a dual world – the world of Forms (or Ideas) and the physical world. In the realm of Forms, there exist eternal and unchanging archetypes that represent the true reality of things. The physical world, on the other hand, is a mere reflection or imperfect copy of these Forms. Plato believed that the physical world is subject to deterministic principles because it is a shadow of the perfect and unchanging Forms. The Forms serve as the ultimate cause or blueprint of everything we observe in the physical realm. Therefore, in a sense, everything that happens in the physical world is determined by the eternal and unchanging Forms<sup>16</sup>.

**Epistemological Determinism:** Plato's theory of knowledge, known as the theory of recollection or anamnesis, suggests that learning is actually a process of recollecting knowledge that the soul possessed in a previous

existence. According to Plato, the soul existed in the realm of Forms before being embodied in the physical world and it acquired knowledge of the Forms during that pre-existence. In this context, determinism can be seen as the idea that what we learn and know in our current life is predetermined by what our soul already knows from its past existence in the realm of Forms. This implies that our knowledge and understanding of the world are not the result of free choices but rather a process of remembering what is already determined by our soul's previous experiences.

**Fatalism:** Some interpretations of Plato's works also suggest fatalistic elements in his philosophy. Fatalism is the belief that all events and outcomes are predetermined and inevitable, regardless of human actions or decisions. Plato's concept of fate and the belief in the existence of a divine order (as expressed in his work "Timaeus") might imply that certain events are destined to occur, and human beings have limited control over them.

However, it is important to note that while Plato's metaphysical and epistemological ideas have deterministic elements; his works do not

necessarily lead to a strict and absolute determinism that denies any form of human agency or free will. Plato also acknowledged the role of human reason, ethical choices, and personal responsibility in leading a virtuous life. Overall, Plato's concepts of determinism are intertwined with his broader philosophical framework, which includes his theories of Forms, knowledge, and ethics. These ideas continue to be subjects of debate and interpretation among scholars of ancient philosophy<sup>17</sup>.

## **2.4 The Relationship Between Freedom and Determinism in Plato's Philosophy**

In Greek antiquity the idea of free will was clearly derived from the difference between free individuals and slaves, in modern times from the political structures of rising democratic electoral systems. A whole lineage of philosophers tried to reconcile the idea of determinism, the theological one in particular, with that of free will as uninhibited intentional action. Early Greek thought regarded free will as the denial of all intrinsic limitations upon the pursuit of voluntary goals. Plato shows in the Republic that social structures and moral conventions can be masterminded and manipulated at will. Both Socrates and Plato shifted

the locus of freedom from the power to affect external events to the inner exercise of will and conviction. For Aristotle the power of free will lies in the capacity of thought to harmonize itself not only with God but with the good and the good life.<sup>18</sup> To be free meant to be rational. According to Augustine of Hippo (*On Free Will*), God's foreknowledge of events does not curtail the capacity to choose and indeed the necessity of doing so, since God's knowledge of eternity is somewhat akin to that of a ubiquitous present. The will is certainly free and there is no reason to believe that God's knowledge of the object of the will should impair its freedom in any way. Humanity's freedom is to love God and act upon its own will. In accordance with the same line of argument, Boethius (*On the Consolation of Philosophy*) defined eternity as "the simultaneous and complete possession of infinite life." Thomas Aquinas similarly held that God's eternal vision could in no way cause one's actions<sup>19</sup>.

Modern philosophers struggled with the dilemma of divine foreknowledge and human freedom by redefining the latter, for instance, as "lack of constraint" (Hobbes); others, for example, Descartes, emphasized the infinity of the will in espousing the true and rejecting the

false even though human understanding may be limited. Spinoza conceived of human free will as self-determination; Leibniz, as a form of uncaused spontaneity, which was later to be equated with "freedom from indifference." It followed from these views that God could never be blamed for human errors. Yet this concept of a mind causally undetermined, inexplicably free, was found unsatisfactory and was replaced by Locke's concept of preference as cause (opposed to the previous idea about the irrelevance of judgments to one's will), and by Hume's argument that a free action is one that could have been avoided. For Kant, determinism is phenomenal and freedom is noumenal, since the pure practical reason upon which one freely acts lies outside the realm of causation and makes up the essence and autonomy of moral life. Hegel and his left-wing followers looked upon freedom and necessity as two sides of the same coin, two ideas dialectically interconnected through "knowledge" or "understanding": Freedom is necessity understood. Other nineteenth-century idealists, called libertarians, tended to postulate a special entity, the "self," which uses the body as a causal instrument while being itself immune to causation. The materialists, to the contrary, had

avored since antiquity an almost total subordination of freedom to the necessary or contingent play of natural and social forces outside of both individual and divine control<sup>20</sup>.

The principle of determinism, which claims that the states of the universe, including human volition, are to be rigidly deduced from previous causes, and that nothing could be other than it is or was, is a negation of free will. To the extent that they involve moral responsibility, all religions must recognize that a human being is a free agent. However, the presupposition of monotheistic religions that the one God is not only omnipotent but also omniscient seems to annul the power of free decision in humanity, which leads to the contradiction of one being held responsible for some courses of action for which one is actually not responsible.

Avowedly the relationship between free will and determinism is one of paradox, that is, of mutual implication and repulsion occurring simultaneously. This paradox can more or less be dissolved by relegating free will to the realms of spiritual awareness, psychologically lived reality, and practical (moral) action; whereas determinism and predestination

would belong to the actual ontological and existential givenness of things and events in the world. Attempts at solving this paradox have led some theistic process philosophers and theologians (e.g., Charles Hartshorne) to want to weaken the divine attributes of omniscience and omnipotence. It is not God's unsurpassable power but his monopoly on it that is denied. This should allow for openness and indeterminacy in the future in which humanity's options can be exercised freely. The present stage of the philosophical discussion of free will and determinism in relation to both cosmology and individual existence involves sophisticated epistemological arguments from the theory of explanation, causality, the symmetry of past and future, and the theory of human action.<sup>21</sup>

## **2.5 Criticism of Plato's Philosophy of Freedom and Determinism**

Thoughts about freedom and determinism have engaged philosophers since the days of ancient Greece. On the one hand, we generally regard ourselves as free and autonomous beings who are responsible for the actions that we perform. But this idea of ourselves appears to conflict with a variety of attitudes that we also have about the inevitable workings of the world around us. For instance, some people

believe that strict, universal laws of nature govern the world<sup>21</sup>. Others think that there is an omnipotent God who is the ultimate cause of all things. These more global views suggest that each particular event – including each human action – is causally necessitated, and so they suggest a conflict with the claim that we are free.

Hence, the problem of freedom and determinism is, at base, a problem about reconciling attitudes we have toward ourselves with our more general thoughts about the world around us. It is a problem about locating our actions within those streams of events that make up the broader universe.<sup>22</sup>

Freedom is usually discussed within the context of theoretical concerns about the nature of moral responsibility. For it is a basic assumption that some kind of freedom – call it “moral freedom” – is a necessary precondition for our being accountable for our actions. Moreover, even those who endorse moral nihilism, the claim that no one is ever morally responsible for anything, usually do so because they also believe that we lack moral freedom.

Consequently, the assumption of freedom plays a role in our beliefs about the appropriateness of moral praise and blame. We find it absurd to blame a rock that happens to crash through our living room window but acceptable to blame the child who threw the rock. And we would consider such blame more legitimate were the rock knowingly and intentionally thrown by an adult with normal cognitive capacities. In trying to uncover the basis for these differences in attitude, we encounter other, more fundamental distinctions in moral psychology between action and passion, belief and desire, reason and emotion, and control and compulsion. Not surprisingly persons in the fields of ethics, philosophy of psychology, and philosophy of law all share an interest in understanding the nature of moral freedom. This remains true for moral nihilists since some understanding of the nature of moral freedom is implicit in its denial.

According to Plato's philosophy of freedom and determinism, like any philosophical theory, has faced criticism from various perspectives.<sup>23</sup>

Some of the main criticisms are as follows:

**Lack of Empirical Evidence:** One of the primary criticisms of Plato's philosophy is its lack of empirical evidence. Plato's views on freedom and

determinism are largely theoretical and metaphysical in nature, making them difficult to verify or falsify through empirical observation. Critics argue that a philosophical theory should be grounded in empirical evidence or at least be compatible with observable phenomena.

**Overemphasis on Ideal Forms:** Plato's philosophy heavily relies on the concept of ideal forms, which are perfect and immutable abstract entities. Critics argue that this emphasis on abstract forms can lead to an overly rigid view of reality, ignoring the complexities and diversity of the real world. It may also raise questions about the applicability of these forms to the realm of human freedom and moral responsibility.

**Incompatibility with Moral Responsibility:** Plato's theory of determinism, which suggests that everything is predetermined by abstract forms and a divine intelligence, raises questions about moral responsibility. If everything is determined, individuals might be absolved of their moral choices and actions. Critics argue that this undermines the notion of personal responsibility and accountability for one's deeds.

**Rejection of Free Will:** Plato's deterministic worldview seems to reject the existence of genuine free will. According to his theory, human actions

are predetermined by higher forces, making it challenging to justify the idea of individuals having the power to make autonomous decisions. This denial of free will can conflict with common intuitions about human agency and autonomy.

**Ignoring Social and Environmental Influences:** Plato's focus on abstract forms and metaphysical principles may downplay the role of social and environmental factors in shaping human behavior and choices. Critics argue that human actions are influenced by various external factors, such as culture, upbringing, education, and societal norms, which may not be adequately addressed in Plato's determinist framework.

**Metaphysical Speculation:** Plato's philosophy often relies on metaphysical speculation and complex metaphors, which can be challenging to interpret and subject to multiple interpretations. Critics argue that such speculative reasoning may not be sufficient to explain complex human behavior and the nature of freedom.

**Exclusion of Individual Differences:** Plato's philosophy tends to generalize human behavior and attributes, assuming that all individuals are guided by the same universal forms. Critics argue that this approach

neglects individual differences and the uniqueness of human experiences, which are essential considerations when discussing human freedom and determinism.

**Limited Role of Personal Choice:** Plato's deterministic worldview suggests that individuals have limited control over their lives and actions. Critics argue that this diminishes the significance of personal choice and self-determination, which are vital aspects of human existence and the development of character.<sup>24</sup>

There are a variety of kinds of determinism that have been offered as potential threats to our freedom. For instance, there is logical determinism, the view that all propositions – including those reporting our future actions – are either true or false. There is also theological determinism, according to which an omniscient God knows about the future in complete detail.<sup>25</sup> notes a problem between freedom and temporal determinism, which claims that time is another dimension like any of the other three spatial dimensions, so that the difference between what is in your past and what is in your future, is a lot like the difference between what is to your left and what is to your right. Lastly, there is

causal determinism, which claims that the past facts, together with the laws of nature, entail all future facts.<sup>26</sup> Each of these determinisms is a global thesis, making a claim about all propositions. It is then suggested that this global property carries with it the kind of necessity that is itself a threat to our freedom.

In this sense, metaphysical freedom seems more fundamental than the other, merely negative freedoms.<sup>27</sup> Metaphysical freedom may be even more fundamental than moral freedom, for as the problems noted in the previous paragraph indicate, threats to our freedom can be presented without mentioning attributions of moral praise or blame. On the other hand, each of the determinisms noted above is also a potential threat to our moral freedom. By and large, folks in the twentieth century are concerned with moral freedom – the freedom-relevant condition necessary for moral responsibility – and causal determinism.

## **2.6 Contemporary Relevance of Plato's Philosophy of Freedom and Determinism**

Determinism and free will are often thought to be in deep conflict. Whether or not this is true has a lot to do with what is meant by determinism and an account of what free will requires. First of all, determinism is not the view that free actions are impossible. Rather, determinism is the view that at any one time, only one future is physically possible. To be a little more specific, determinism is the view that a complete description of the past along with a complete account of the relevant laws of nature logically entails all future events.

Indeterminism is simply the denial of determinism. If determinism is incompatible with free will, it will be because free actions are only possible in worlds in which more than one future is physically possible at any one moment in time. While it might be true that free will requires indeterminism, it's not true merely by definition. A further argument is needed and this suggests that it is at least possible that people could sometimes exercise the control necessary for morally responsible action, even if we live in a deterministic world.<sup>28</sup>

It is worth saying something about fatalism before we move on. It is really easy to mistake determinism for fatalism, and fatalism does seem

to be in straightforward conflict with free will. Fatalism is the view that we are powerless to do anything other than what we actually do. If fatalism is true, then nothing that we try or think or intend or believe or decide has any causal effect or relevance as to what we actually end up doing.

But note that determinism need not entail fatalism. Determinism is a claim about what is logically entailed by the rules/laws governing a world and the past of said world. It is not the claim that we lack the power to do other than what we actually were already going to do. Nor is it the view that we fail to be an important part of the causal story for why we do what we do. And this distinction may allow some room for freedom, even in deterministic worlds.<sup>29</sup>

Plato's philosophy of freedom and determinism remains relevant in contemporary discussions about human agency, ethics, and the nature of reality. While some aspects of his ideas may not directly align with modern scientific discoveries and philosophical developments, his core insights continue to provoke thought and debate. Here are some

contemporary relevant points of Plato's philosophy of freedom and determinism:<sup>30</sup>

**Ethical Responsibility and Free Will:** Plato's ideas on freedom and determinism touch upon the concept of free will and moral responsibility. Contemporary discussions on ethics, crime, punishment, and personal accountability often involve debates about whether individuals have genuine freedom of choice in their actions or if their decisions are merely predetermined by factors such as genetics, environment, or societal influences.

**The Nature of Reality and Knowledge:** Plato's allegory of the cave and his theory of Forms raise questions about the nature of reality and how we come to know what is true. In the age of information and advanced technology, questions about the nature of knowledge, truth, and the reliability of sources remain pertinent.

**Political and Social Philosophy:** Plato's political philosophy, as presented in works like “The Republic”, discusses the ideal state and the role of governance in promoting justice and societal harmony. These

ideas are still relevant today, as societies grapple with issues of governance, power, and the pursuit of justice.

**Education and Intellectual Development:** Plato emphasized the importance of education and intellectual growth in shaping individuals and societies. In modern times, debates on educational systems, the purpose of education, and the role of critical thinking continue to draw inspiration from Plato's thoughts.

**Metaphysics and Philosophy of Mind:** Plato's concept of an immaterial realm of Forms and the relationship between the material and non-material world has connections to contemporary debates in metaphysics, the philosophy of mind, and theories about consciousness.

**Compatibilism vs. Incompatibilism:** Plato's philosophy offers insights into the ongoing debate between compatibilism (the idea that free will and determinism can coexist) and incompatibilism (the belief that free will and determinism are fundamentally incompatible). Contemporary philosophers continue to explore the nuances of this issue, considering the implications for human freedom and moral responsibility.

**Criticisms and Reinterpretations:** Contemporary philosophers and scholars often reexamine classical philosophical ideas like Plato's, analyzing their strengths, weaknesses, and potential applications in light of modern understandings. These reinterpretations contribute to ongoing philosophical dialogue and development. While Plato's ideas may not align with contemporary scientific understandings of the physical world and causality, his contributions to the realms of ethics, epistemology, political philosophy, and metaphysics continue to inspire critical thinking and remain essential in philosophical inquiries. As with all philosophical discussions, interpretations may differ, and scholars constantly reevaluate and refine their understanding of ancient texts and their relevance to present-day concerns.<sup>31</sup>

## Endnotes

1. Aristotle. "The Metaphysics." <https://www.amazon.com/Metaphysics-Great-Books-Philosophy/dp/0879756713>, 1991.
2. Plato and Benjamin Jowett, *The Republic: The Complete and Unabridged Jowett Translation* (Vintage Books, 1991).
3. Plato, Bernard Williams, Levett, M.J. and Myles Burnyeat, *Concerns of Freewill* (Theaetetus: Hackett Publishing, 1992).
4. Brisson, Luc, and Jean-François Pradeau, *Dictionnaire Platon*. Ellipses, 2007.
5. Busa, Roberto. L'enciclopedia multimediale delle scienze filosofiche, 1995.
6. Campbell, Douglas R. "Self-Motion and Cognition: Plato's Theory of the Soul", *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 59 (4), 523–44, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1111/sjp.12429>
7. Plato. *The Laws of Plato* (University of Chicago Press, 1988).
8. Weber Max. "Politics as a Vocation." In *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, edited by Gerth H.H., Wright Mills C. (London: Routledge, 1970), 77-128.

9. G.M.A. Grube, *Republic* ed., C.D.C. Reeve in Cooper, J. (ed), *Plato: Complete Works* (Indian Polis: Hackett, 1997).
10. Julia Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 310-313.
11. Harry G. Frankfurt, '*Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person*, J. Phil, ix viii, 5-20; reprinted in Waston (1982), 1971, 81-95.
12. Harry. G. Frankfurt, "Identification and whole heartedness", in Schoeman, F.D. (ed), *Responsibility, Character and Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 27-45.
13. Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), see also Taylor, Responsibility for self in Amelie Oksenburg Rorty (ed), *The Identities of Persons* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 281-99, reprinted.
14. J.M.E. Moravcsik Op. Cit., 9-12. Mariomion, *Athenian Democracy: Politicization and Constitutional Restraints*, History of Political Thought, 7, 1986, 219-238.

15. R.W. Sharples, "Plato on democracy and expertise", *Greece and Rome*, Vol. xii, 1994, 54.
16. M.S. Warman, *Plato and Persuasion*, Greece & Rome, Vol. XXX, 1, 1983, 51.
17. Wight Colin, *Agents, Structures and International Relations: Politics as Ontology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
18. Williams Bernard, "Deciding to Believe," In *Problems of the Self* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 136-51.
19. G. Klosko, "Persuasion and Moral Reform in Plato and Aristotle", *Review International de Philosophie*, Vol. 47, 184, 1993, 152.
20. J. Wild, *Plato's Modern enemies and the theory of natural Law* (Chicago Press, 1953), 58-9.
21. Christopher Bobonich, "Persian Compulsion and Freedom in Plato's Law's", *Classical Quarterly*, 41, 1992, 365-388.
22. Platon and Luc Brisson, "Timée – Critias de Platon - Editions Flammarion", 2001, <https://editions.flammarion.com/timee-critias/9782081421561>.

23. Platon and Jean-François Pradeau, *Les Mythes de Platon* (Paris: Flammarion: Flammarion, 2004).
24. Platone, Giovanni Reale, and Matteo Andolfo. Fedone. Testo greco a fronte. S.l.: Bompiani, 2000.
25. Popper, Karl R. *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (Princeton University Press, 2020).
26. Pradeau, Jean-François. *Platon et la cité*. Presses Universitaires de France, 2010.
27. Reale, Giovanni, *Il pensiero antico*. Vita e Pensiero, 2001.
28. Rosen Gideon, “Abstract Objects”, July, 2001, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2012/entries/abstract-objects/>
29. Rowan, R.J. “A Guide to Plato’s Republic: The Writing and Speeches of Bob Rowan.” BC Civil Liberties Association, May 28, 2014. <https://bccla.org/2014/05/a-guide-to-platos-republic/>.
30. Ryle, Gilbert, ed. *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Philosophy, held at Oxford, England, September 1-6, 1930* (London: H. Milford, 1931).

31. Saffrey, Henri-Dominique, “Ἀγεωμέτρητος μηδὲὶς εἰσίτω. Une inscription légendaire”, *Revue des Études Grecques*, 81 (384), 1968, 67–87. <https://doi.org/10.3406/reg.1968.1013>

# CHAPTER THREE

## CONTEMPORARY PERCEPTIONS ON FREEDOM AND DETERMINISM

### 3.1 Modern Philosophical Theories on Freedom and Determinism

The problem of determinism and free will was regarded as a central in different philosophical and philosophic-religious theories. The authors of the paper try to take a new look at the formulation and solution of this long-classic problem from the standpoint of the ontological unity of social determinism, manipulation, and freedom<sup>1</sup>.

The deterministic conception of the world underlies the classical rationalism and European culture as well. A detailed analysis of the deterministic conception is not the purpose of the paper. It should be noted that in the Russian literature determinism was analyzed in broader and constitutive context: the understanding of determinism was not limited to the recognition of Laplace-type determinism (dynamic determination) but included the recognition of various connections-genetic, correlation, mediated, teleological, functional, etc.; the importance of probabilistic determination, randomness was actualized.

Determinism is considered to be a methodological principle of science. The introduction of synergetic into scientific circulation allowed overcoming the fatalistic-deterministic logic, to accept the thesis about the emergence of "order from chaos"<sup>2</sup>. It should be noted that the concepts of "order", "chaos" have mythological roots. So, the problem of determinism is connected with the question of, whether being is an ordered formation (order) or it is a chaos. The origins of the understanding of determinism come from the idea of fate, God's Providence, natural necessity. In the ontological sense determinism includes the principles of substantiality (the world is one or multiple); development (the world is identical or is changing); separateness and interrelationship. If we explore the world, it is impossible to know it without recognizing the substantiality of human existence. Thus, the problem of determinism cannot be understood outside of connection with the existence of human being, and this inevitably raises the question of relationship of fate, Providence, predestination, and human freedom. Historic-philosophical reconstruction shows the following existential forms of freedom which have become the

subject of philosophical reflection: freedom-chaos, freedom-arbitrariness, and freedom –responsibility.<sup>3</sup>

There were several modern philosophical theories on freedom and determinism. These theories often grapple with the age-old philosophical debate regarding the compatibility of human freedom with the idea of determinism, which suggests that all events, including human actions, are determined by antecedent causes. Some of the key modern philosophical theories on freedom and determinism<sup>4</sup> include:

**Compatibilism:** Compatibilism, also known as soft determinism, argues that freedom and determinism are compatible concepts. Advocates of this view, like Thomas Hobbes, David Hume, and John Stuart Mill, believe that even if our actions are determined by external factors or causal laws, we can still be considered free if we act in accordance with our own desires and internal motivations. In other words, freedom is not the absence of determination but rather the absence of external coercion.

**Incompatibilism:** Incompatibilists argue that freedom and determinism are fundamentally incompatible. Within this view, there are two main subcategories:

- (a) **Libertarianism:** Libertarianism posits that humans have free will, which is understood as the capacity to make genuinely uncaused choices. According to this view, human decisions are not determined by prior causes or laws of nature, and individuals have the power to act independently of external influences.
- (b) **Hard Determinism:** Hard determinists assert that everything, including human actions and choices, is causally determined. They reject the notion of free will, arguing that our actions are entirely determined by prior causes and conditions, leaving no room for genuine freedom<sup>5</sup>.

**Semi-Compatibilism:** Proposed by Harry Frankfurt, this theory attempts to reconcile determinism and moral responsibility. Semi-compatibilists argue that moral responsibility and freedom are compatible even in a deterministic universe. They suggest that freedom is not necessarily the ability to do otherwise (as in classical libertarianism), but rather the absence of coercion or external constraints. In Frankfurt-style cases, even if a person's actions are causally determined, they can still be morally

responsible for their actions if they act in line with their second-order desires or volitions.

**Existentialism:** Existentialist philosophers, such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus, propose a nuanced understanding of freedom that goes beyond determinism. Existentialism emphasizes individual responsibility and the idea that individuals create their own essence through their choices and actions. Sartre's concept of radical freedom suggests that individuals are condemned to be free, meaning that even in the face of determinism, we are ultimately responsible for our choices<sup>6</sup>.

### **3.2 Differences Between Classical and Modern Theories on Freedom and Determinism**

There are widely recognised problems focused on the idea of free will. People generally understand themselves to be making choices and exercising responsibility. This perspective may then be confronted with the notion that the universe is a deterministic system, which is taken to mean that its condition at any time is controlled by its condition at an earlier time, and so on backwards in an indefinitely extended way<sup>7</sup>. The

notion of “control” within a deterministic system is taken to mean that, given the laws of nature, later states necessarily follow from earlier states<sup>8</sup>.

It is easily felt that the two ideas of freedom and a deterministic system are in tension, even to the point of incompatibility<sup>9</sup>. The notion of freedom implies we are taking decisions and choosing between alternatives; it is of the essence that we could act in ways different from how we do in fact act. Against this, the deterministic system model has us necessarily controlled by earlier events which could stretch back even before we were born. Are we free if our choices and actions are in principle determinable in advance?

In the attempt to make progress in overcoming the problem, it is not infrequently asserted that there are elements of randomness in the system; at least in some respects, it may be claimed that what happens involves indeterminacy. To sharpen the point recourse is most often had to quantum theory. Within that body of ideas, random events are posited at a subatomic level, although it is unclear whether this gives rise to randomness at the aggregate level of macro-events and objects. Nevertheless, quantum theory is now believed to be involved in the

understanding of life processes such as metamorphosis in the butterfly and the behaviour of the robin<sup>10</sup>.

It seems possible that it may also be needed to understand processes internal to the human brain. So, the notion that the character of quantum theory (within which probability is an essential element) has implications for human thought and action cannot remotely be ruled out. However, the positing of pure indeterminacy may in itself be no more helpful to the idea of free will than is determinacy. This is because nothing can determine the outcome of a system governed by pure indeterminacy; therefore, that outcome cannot be said to be the responsibility of a human agent exercising free will.

Classical and modern theories on freedom and determinism represent contrasting philosophical perspectives on the nature of human agency and the extent to which individuals can make free choices. Key differences between the two<sup>11</sup>;

## **Classical Theories of Freedom and Determinism:**

- Philosophers like Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas adhered to classical theories of freedom and determinism.
- These theories are often compatible with the concept of "compatibilism," which suggests that freedom and determinism can coexist.
- According to classical thinkers, freedom is not the absence of causation or determinism but rather the ability to act in accordance with one's own nature, desires, and rationality.
- They believed that human beings have a unique capacity for rationality and moral agency, allowing them to make choices that are consistent with their values and goals.
- Classical theories often emphasize the role of virtues and character development in shaping a person's capacity for making autonomous decisions.
- The classical view of freedom does not necessarily require the absence of external influences or factors, as long as the individual's actions are in line with their own values and inner motivations.

## **Modern Theories of Freedom and Determinism:**

- Modern theories of freedom and determinism have emerged with the advent of Enlightenment philosophy and the rise of scientific understanding.
- Some modern thinkers, such as Immanuel Kant, developed "libertarian" views, which emphasize a more absolute form of free will. They argue that human freedom requires the ability to make choices independent of any external or internal determining factors.
- Others, like the determinists, influenced by scientific discoveries, have taken a more skeptical stance on the idea of free will, arguing that human actions are entirely determined by prior causes, including genetic, environmental, and social influences.
- The rise of neuroscience and psychology has led some modern theorists to question the traditional notion of free will, suggesting that our actions and decisions might be products of unconscious processes and neural activity rather than conscious, self-determined choices<sup>12</sup>.

### **Perspective on Responsibility:**

Classical theories often emphasize moral responsibility and hold individuals accountable for their actions based on their voluntary choices and intentions. Modern theories, especially those that deny or limit free will, may present challenges to traditional notions of moral responsibility. Some argue that if our actions are entirely determined by factors beyond our control, then it becomes difficult to hold individuals morally responsible for their behavior<sup>13</sup>.

### **Role of Science and Causation:**

Classical theories typically do not conflict with scientific explanations of causation and are more focused on moral and ethical considerations. Modern theories, especially determinism, engage with scientific ideas and evidence to support their claims about the causal nature of human behavior.

### **3.3 Criticism of Modern Theories of Freedom and Determinism**

Determinism is the family of theories that takes some class of events to be effects of certain causal sequences or chains, more particularly certain sequences of causal circumstances or causally

sufficient conditions. One of these theories, universal determinism, associated with much science and philosophy, concerns the class of all events without exception. Another theory concerns physical events. Determinism in a third and important sense is human determinism<sup>14</sup>. It is the theory that our choices and the many other antecedents of our actions, and the actions themselves, are effects of certain causal sequences. Lesser theories, usually associated with Freud and given no philosophical attention to speak of, concern themselves with particular sorts of conscious or otherwise mental causes of choices and actions, notably early sexual desires<sup>15</sup>.

It is explicit or implicit in any of the above theories that the events in question are effects as more or less standardly conceived. An effect is an event such that an identical event follows every counterpart of the causal circumstance in question, or an event such that because the circumstance occurred, the event was in a stronger sense necessitated or had to happen<sup>16</sup>. A theory of our choices and actions, in contrast, that has to do with effects so-called say, for example, effects conceived as events preceded by merely necessary conditions, or events merely made probable

by antecedents would not ordinarily be taken as a determinism. Indeed, weaker ideas of effects have often enough been introduced by philosophers precisely in order to avoid something else explicit or implicit in determinisms that they may be inconsistent with or pose a challenge to beliefs in human freedom.

Criticism of modern theories of freedom and determinism has been an ongoing philosophical debate for centuries. While modern theories have evolved to address various shortcomings of classical views, they are not without their critics. Some common criticisms of these theories<sup>17</sup>:

**Compatibilism's Conceptual Confusion:** Compatibilism attempts to reconcile freedom and determinism by arguing that they are compatible. Critics argue that this theory may rely on equivocal or ambiguous definitions of freedom and determinism, making it difficult to provide a clear and coherent account of how they can coexist.

**Illusion of Free Will:** Some critics, particularly from the hard determinist camp, argue that the modern theories of freedom merely offer an illusion of free will rather than genuine freedom. They contend that the

deterministic nature of the universe ultimately restricts our choices and actions, leaving no room for true autonomy.

**Insufficient Causal Explanation:** Determinism posits that all events, including human actions, are determined by preceding causes. Critics argue that this deterministic view might oversimplify the complexity of human decision-making and behavior, failing to account for the intricacies of consciousness, intentionality, and moral responsibility.

**Quantum Indeterminacy:** Some critics argue that modern determinist theories fail to account for the indeterminacy observed at the quantum level. If quantum events are genuinely random, they might introduce unpredictability into the deterministic framework, challenging the notion of an entirely causally determined universe.

**Limited Scope of Compatibilism:** While compatibilism attempts to reconcile determinism with a form of freedom, some critics contend that it might offer a concept of freedom that falls short of what people intuitively consider as genuine free will. For example, if the only freedom compatible with determinism is simply acting according to one's desires, it may not address deeper questions of self-determination and autonomy.

**Ignoring External Factors:** Determinist theories often focus on internal factors that influence human behavior, such as genetics and upbringing, but they might overlook the impact of external factors like socioeconomic conditions, cultural influences, and systemic inequalities. These external factors can significantly limit the available choices and opportunities for individuals, impacting their perceived freedom.

**Moral Responsibility Challenges:** Both determinism and compatibilism can raise concerns about moral responsibility. If actions are fully determined by preceding causes, it can be argued that individuals are not morally responsible for their actions. While compatibilists try to address this, critics question whether their solutions are sufficient.

**Epistemological Limits:** Some critics argue that humans might lack the epistemological capability to know whether determinism or freedom is the true nature of reality. The complexity of the universe and the limitations of human understanding could make it impossible to definitively resolve this issue.

### **3.4 Contemporary Debates on Freedom and Determinism**

The free will debate has taken off in recent decades, driven largely by Peter van Inwagen's revitalization of incompatibilism, Harry Frankfurt's ammunition for compatibilism, interesting libertarian theories, and well-developed compatibilist theories. In the last few years this work has been collected into numerous volumes.<sup>18</sup> The latest is *Freedom and Determinism*, edited by Joseph Keim Campbell, Michael O'Rourke, and David Shier, and drawn from papers presented at the 2001 meeting of the Inland Northwest Philosophy Conference.<sup>19</sup>

There is not too much overlap in content with the other recent collections on free will, and many of the important positions and arguments in the current debates are covered, with the notable exceptions of agent-causation theories and recent skeptical positions about the existence of free will and moral responsibility.<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately, however, the book is not ideal for either of its two potential markets. Many of its selections are too narrow and technical for non-specialists (including most students) who want an introduction to the contemporary debates. And for more advanced audiences, most of its review pieces cover familiar ground,

limiting the book's primary appeal to the new work, some of which is tangential to the more central debates. Having said this, there is still much to offer both of these audiences, and several essays are indispensable for philosophers engaged in the free will debate, including a few that discuss tangential issues that should be more central to the traditional debates.

Debates on freedom and determinism have been ongoing for centuries and continue to be a topic of intense discussion among philosophers, scientists, and scholars across various fields. These debates revolve around the fundamental question of whether human actions and choices are the result of free will or are determined by prior causes, such as genetics, environment, or other factors.<sup>21</sup> Some contemporary perspectives and debates on freedom and determinism

1. **Compatibilism vs. Incompatibilism:** Compatibilists argue that freedom and determinism are compatible, meaning that even if our actions are determined by various factors, we can still be considered free as long as we act according to our desires and motivations. Incompatibilists, on the other hand, assert that freedom

and determinism are fundamentally incompatible; if our actions are determined by prior causes, then we cannot be truly free.

2. **Neuroscience and Free Will:** Advances in neuroscience have raised questions about the existence of free will. Some researchers argue that our brain processes and neural activities influence our decisions and actions to such an extent that genuine free will might be an illusion. This perspective challenges the traditional notions of free will and responsibility.
3. **Quantum Indeterminacy:** Quantum mechanics introduces a level of indeterminacy at the fundamental level of reality. Some philosophers and physicists suggest that this indeterminacy might allow for a limited form of free will or at least challenges determinism at the subatomic level. However, the extent to which quantum indeterminacy influences macroscopic systems, such as human decision-making, is still a topic of debate.
4. **Moral Responsibility:** Discussions on freedom and determinism often intertwine with debates on moral responsibility. If our actions are determined, some argue that we cannot be held morally

responsible for them. However, others contend that moral responsibility can still be meaningful even in a determined universe, as it can be linked to factors like social consequences, societal norms, and pragmatic considerations.

5. **Empirical Research:** Some studies have tried to investigate whether people's intuitions about free will align with philosophical theories. Research in psychology and cognitive science explores how people perceive their own agency and how they ascribe responsibility to themselves and others based on their beliefs about determinism and freedom.
6. **Practical Implications:** The debate on freedom and determinism also extends into various fields like criminal justice, ethics, and public policy. Understanding the extent of human agency and the role of determinism influences how we structure legal systems, hold individuals accountable for their actions, and design social institutions.

## Endnotes

1. Brandon, R.N., & Carson, S. *The Indeterministic Character of Evolutionary*, 1996.
2. Theory: No “No Hidden Variables Proof” but No Room for Determinism Either, *Philosophy of Science*, 63, 315-317.  
<https://doi.org/10.1086/289915>  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/188099>
3. Britannica. *Determinism*. Encyclopedia Britannica, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/determinism>
4. Eagle, A. *Chance versus Randomness*. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2021, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2021/entries/chance-randomness/>
5. Earman, J. *A Primer on Determinism*. Reidel, 1986.
6. Hobbes, T. “Of Liberty and Necessity”, In V. Chappell (ed.), Hobbes and Bramhall, *Liberty and Necessity* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), 15-42.

7. Hofer, C. *Causal Determinism*. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2016, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2016/entries/determinism-causal/>
8. Laitinen, A., Sandis, C., & D'Oro, G. (eds.). *Reasons and Causes: Causalism and Anti-Causalism in the Philosophy of Action* (Palgrave: Macmillan, 2013).
9. O'Connor, T., & Franklin, C. *Free Will*. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2021.
10. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2021/entries/freewill/>
11. Gilinsky, Y.I. *Criminology. Theory, History, Empirical Base* (St. Petersburg: Peter, 2002).
12. Jung, K. *On Modern Myths*, (M.: Practice, 1994).
13. Kant, I. *Works in 6 Volumes* (M.: Thought, 1965).
14. Losev, A.F. *Philosophy. Mythology* (Culture, M.: Politizdat, 1991).
15. Mayer-Schonberg, Victor, Cukier, Kenneth, *Big Data: A Revolution That Will Transform How We Live, Work, and Think* (M.: Mann, Ivanov, and Ferber, 2014).

16. Meshcheryakova, N.A. *Determinism in Philosophical Rationalism: From Thales to Marx* (Voronezh State University Press, 1998).
17. Peter L. Berger and Samuel P. (eds.), *The Multi-Faceted Globalization. Cultural Diversity in the Modern World* (Huntington, M.: Aspect Press).
18. Pervushina, V.N. *Modern Ethics: Problems of Determinism and Free Will* (Voronezh State University Press, 1993).
19. Pentland, A. *Social Physics* (M.: AST, 2018).
20. Yanovsky R.G. (ed.), *Social Practice and Social Relations* (M.: Thought, 1989).
21. Stephens-Davidowitz, Seth. *Everyone Lies* (M.: EKSMO, 2018).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

#### **4.1 Synthesis of Plato's Philosophy on Freedom and Determinism with Contemporary Perspective**

Synthesizing Plato's philosophy on freedom and determinism with a contemporary perspective requires us to understand Plato's views and then connect them with modern ideas. Keep in mind that interpreting ancient philosophers' ideas can sometimes be challenging due to historical and contextual differences. However, I identified key aspects of Plato's philosophy and explore how they relate to contemporary discussions on freedom and determinism.

##### **Plato's Philosophy on Freedom:**

In Plato's works, particularly in his dialogues, he often explored the concept of human freedom. For Plato, freedom was connected to the idea of living a virtuous life in harmony with reason and the eternal Forms<sup>2</sup>. According to him, true freedom lies in self-mastery and liberation from

the tyranny of the appetites and desires, which cloud the rational mind. Plato believed that individuals could achieve freedom by cultivating wisdom, courage, and temperance. By understanding the nature of reality and attaining knowledge of the Forms, one could achieve inner freedom and liberation from ignorance and irrationality. Plato's notion of freedom was not about doing whatever one pleased but about aligning oneself with the higher truths of the universe<sup>3</sup>.

### **Plato's Philosophy on Determinism:**

Determinism, on the other hand, is the idea that all events, including human actions, are determined by pre-existing causes and cannot be otherwise. While Plato's views on determinism might not have been explicitly developed as a distinct theory, some interpretations suggest elements of determinism in his philosophy.

For example, Plato's theory of Forms implies a determinism of sorts. The Forms are considered to be timeless, unchanging, and the true reality. In this view, everything in the physical world is merely an imperfect reflection of these eternal Forms. This suggests a predetermined structure to reality, where the physical world is shaped by the transcendent Forms.



## **Synthesis with Contemporary Perspective:**

In contemporary discussions, the debate on freedom and determinism remain relevant, particularly in the context of philosophy of mind, neuroscience, and psychology<sup>4</sup>.

**Compatibilism:** Some contemporary perspectives attempt to reconcile freedom and determinism through compatibilism. This view argues that free will can coexist with a deterministic universe. In this interpretation, freedom is seen as the ability to act in accordance with one's own desires and motivations, even if those desires are influenced by prior causes.

**Cognitive Freedom:** Contemporary notions of freedom often focus on cognitive freedom – the ability to think critically, question, and make informed choices. Cognitive freedom aligns with Plato's emphasis on cultivating wisdom and reason as a path to true freedom.

**Neuroscientific Insights:** Modern neuroscience has shed light on the neurological basis of decision-making and human behavior. Some researchers argue that our actions might be influenced by subconscious processes, which may raise questions about the nature of free will and determinism.

**Moral Responsibility:** Discussions on freedom and determinism also involve considerations of moral responsibility. Contemporary discussions explore the relationship between causal factors influencing actions and the attribution of moral responsibility for those actions.

### **Synthesis of Plato's Philosophy with Contemporary Perspective<sup>5</sup>**

To synthesize Plato's philosophy on freedom and determinism with contemporary perspectives, we can find parallels in the following ways:

- a. **Internal Freedom and Autonomy:** Both Plato's concept of self-mastery and modern autonomy theories emphasize that genuine freedom comes from understanding oneself and having rational control over one's choices and actions.
- b. **Determinism and Causality:** While Plato's determinism was more metaphysical, contemporary perspectives acknowledge that certain factors, whether physical or psychological, can influence human behavior. However, this determinism doesn't negate the possibility of freedom in decision-making.
- c. **Harmony and Values:** Plato's emphasis on harmonizing the different parts of the soul aligns with contemporary notions of

aligning actions with one's values. In this sense, freedom emerges from living in coherence with one's authentic self.

- d. **Choice and Responsibility:** Plato's philosophy doesn't absolve individuals of responsibility for their actions. Instead, it highlights the significance of making choices that lead to a flourishing life, a concept that remains relevant in contemporary ethical discussions.
- e. **Implication of Synthesis for Understanding Freedom and Determinism Today:** A free action is an action that a man chooses to perform and which he could also choose not to perform. If a man chooses to perform an action when he could also alternatively decide not to perform it, his action is a free action. This means that he was under no compulsion to perform that action since he could have done otherwise if he had chosen to do so. He's therefore responsible for the action – whether it's a bad action or a bad one. Freedom can be defined as the capacity of self-determination, that is, the capacity to decide what to do<sup>5</sup>. Man is by nature free; freedom is part of his very nature as a rational being, and to lose one's rationality (e.g. by insanity) is to lose one's freedom. Hence,

actions performed in the state of insanity cannot be free actions since the agent does not know what he is doing. This shows that knowledge is essential to the concept of free and voluntary actions. No action can be said to be free or voluntary if the doer is not aware of what he is doing. The concept of synthesis, in the context of understanding freedom and determinism, can have significant implications for our perspectives on these philosophical concepts in the present day. Synthesis refers to the integration or reconciliation of seemingly opposing ideas or perspectives. In the case of freedom and determinism, they have long been considered diametrically opposed, leading to intense debates about the nature of human agency and the extent to which our actions are governed by external forces or our own free will<sup>6</sup>.

f. **Implications for Understanding Freedom**

**Compatibilism:** Synthesis can lead us to consider compatibilism, a philosophical position that attempts to reconcile freedom and determinism. Compatibilists argue that freedom is compatible with determinism, meaning that even if our actions are determined by

various factors (such as genetics, environment, and past experiences), we can still be considered free as long as our actions align with our desires and motivations. This perspective acknowledges both the influence of determinism on human behavior and the subjective experience of freedom.

**Recognition of Degrees of Freedom:** Synthesis encourages us to recognize that freedom might exist on a spectrum rather than being an all-or-nothing concept. Even if some aspects of our lives are determined by external factors, there could still be areas where we exercise a significant degree of freedom. By understanding this nuance, we can have a more comprehensive view of human agency and autonomy<sup>7</sup>.

g. **Implications for Understanding Determinism:**

**Soft Determinism:** Synthesis allows for the consideration of soft determinism, which is compatible with free will to some extent. Soft determinism posits that certain aspects of our lives may be determined, but there could be room for choice and agency within those determined boundaries. This perspective recognizes the

complexity of human decision-making and the interplay between internal and external factors.

- **Complex Interactions:** By embracing synthesis, we acknowledge that the relationship between determinism and freedom is not as straightforward as a simple binary opposition. There might be complex interactions between factors that influence our actions, and understanding this complexity can lead to more nuanced discussions about human behavior and responsibility.

In the modern context, the implications of synthesis for understanding freedom and determinism can help bridge the gap between seemingly irreconcilable perspectives. This can foster more productive discussions and debates about the nature of human agency, moral responsibility, and societal implications. Moreover, developments in neuroscience and psychology continue to shed light on the intricate workings of the human brain and behavior<sup>8</sup>. As we gain a deeper understanding of the neurological basis of decision-making and how external factors influence our choices, the synthesis of freedom and determinism becomes even more relevant in navigating the philosophical,

ethical, and legal implications of these findings. Overall, embracing synthesis in the context of freedom and determinism allows us to move away from rigid dichotomies and encourages a more holistic perspective that appreciates the complexity of human nature and the multiple factors that shape our actions and choices.<sup>9</sup>

## **4.2 Recommendations**

The researcher has done well to examine Plato's philosophy of freedom and determinism, a contemporary relevance. Using several journals and historical paper works, further research should be carried out on;

- Compatibility of Free Will and Determinism
- Societal Implications of Belief in Free Will: behavior, attitudes, and societal structures
- Historical Perspectives on Freedom and Determinism

## **4.3 Conclusion**

A discourse on Freedom and Determinism is no doubt a contentious issue. The issue is made more complex given the fact that man is an

embodiment of spirit and matter. It is the mind and body that makes a real man. It therefore follows that any effort to establish the degree of freedom a man enjoys has to take into cognizance the interactions between mind and body.

If determinism is true, then our acts are the consequences of the laws of nature and events in the remote past. But it is not up to us what went on before we were born, and neither is it up to us what the laws of nature are. Therefore, the consequences of these things (including our present acts) are not up to us.”

Again, if (i) no one is morally responsible for having failed to perform any act, (ii) no one is morally responsible for any event, and (iii) no one is morally responsible for any state of affairs, then there is no such thing as moral responsibility.

## Endnotes

1. Lawhead, William F. *The Voyage of Discovery: A Historical Introduction to Philosophy* (USA: Wadsworth Group, 2nd Ed. 2002).
2. Lawhead, W.F. *The Philosophical Journey: An Interactive Approach*, Second Edition (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003).
3. Omoregbe, J.I. *Ethics: A systematic and historical study* (Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Limited, 1993).
4. Chisholm, R. "Human Freedom and the Self." The Lindley Lecture. Lawrence, Kans: University of Kansas, Department of Philosophy. Reprinted in Pereboom (1997), 1964.
5. Fischer, J.M., and M. Ravizza, eds. *Perspectives on Moral Responsibility* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1993).
6. Fischer. "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person." *Journal of Philosophy*, 68, 1971, 5–20. Reprinted in Fischer (1986).
7. Campbell, Joseph, "Free Will and the Necessity of the Past," *Analysis*, 67, 2007, 105–11.

8. Kane, Robert, *The Significance of Free Will* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).
9. Roth Paul. Beyond Understanding: The Career of the Concept of Understanding in the Human Sciences. In *The Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, edited by Turner S., Roth P. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 311-33.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Books

- Aristotle. *The complete works of Aristotle* (J. Barnes, Ed.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984.
- Brandon, R.N., & Carson, S. *The Indeterministic Character of Evolutionary*, 1996.
- Brisson, Luc, and Jean-François Pradeau. *Dictionnaire Platon*. Ellipses, 2007.
- Britannica. *Determinism*. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/determinism>, 2021.
- Busa, Roberto. *L'enciclopedia multimediale delle scienze filosofiche*, 1995.
- Campbell, J. "Free Will and the Necessity of the Past." *Analysis*, 67, 2007.
- Charles, T. *Sources of the self*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989, see also Taylor. *Responsibility for self in Amelie Oksenburg Rorty* (ed.), *The identities of persons*, Berkeley University of California Press reprinted, 1976.
- Chisholm, R. "Human Freedom and the Self." *The Lindley Lecture*. Lawrence, Kans: University of Kansas, Department of Philosophy. Reprinted in *Pereboom* (1997), 1964.
- Christopher, B. "Persian Compulsion and Freedom in Plato's Law's", 1992, *Classical Quarterly*, 41, and Hal, R.W., 1981, *Plato*, London, 1964.
- Earman, J. *A Primer on Determinism*. Reidel, 1986.
- Epistles – Seventh Letters. Good Press, 2021.

- Fischer, J. and Ravizza, M. *Responsibility and Control: A Theory of Moral Responsibility*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Fischer, J.M., and M. Ravizza, eds. *Perspectives on Moral Responsibility*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993.
- Gilinsky, Y.I. *Criminology. Theory, history, empirical base*, St. Petersburg: Peter, 2002.
- Grube, G.M.A., Republic and C.D.C. Reeve in Cooper, J. (ed) Plato: Complete works, Indian Polis, Hackett. 1997.
- Harry, G. Frankfurt, "Freedom of the will and the concept of a person", 1971, J. Phil, ix viii, 5-20; Reprinted in Waston (1982).
- Harry, G. Frankfurt, 'Identification and whole heartedness' in Schoeman, F.D. (ed), Responsibility, Character and Emotions, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Hartmann, H. Psychoanalysis and the concept of health. In *Essays on ego psychology*. New York: International Universities Press, 1939.
- Hobbes, T. *Of Liberty and Necessity*. In V. Chappell (ed.), *Hobbes and Bramhall on Liberty and Necessity*. Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Hofer, C. *Causal Determinism*. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2016, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2016/entries/determinism-causal/>
- Hume, D. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (3rd ed.; L. A. Selby-Bigge, Ed.). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, Original Work Published 1748, 1975.
- Jones, E. Free will and determinism. *Essays in Applied Psychoanalysis*, 2, 1924.

- Julia, A. *Introduction to Plato's Republic*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1981.
- Jung, K. *On Modern Myths*. M.: Practice, 1994.
- Kane, R. *The Significance of Free Will*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996
- Kant, I. *Works in 6 Volumes*. M.: Thought, 1965.
- Klosko, G. "Persuasion and Moral Reform in Plato and Aristotle", *Review International de Philosophie*, Vol. 47, 184, 1993.
- Laitinen, A., Sandis, C., & D'Oro, G. (eds.). *Reasons and Causes: Causalism and Anti-Causalism in the Philosophy of Action*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.
- Lawhead, W.F. *The Voyage of Discovery: A Historical Introduction to Philosophy* (2nd Ed.). USA: Wadsworth Group, 2002.
- Lawhead, W.F. *The Philosophical Journey: An Interactive Approach* (2nd Ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003.
- Losev, A.F. *Philosophy. Mythology. Culture*, M.: Politizdat, 1991.
- Mayer-Schonberg, V., Cukier, K. *Big Data: A Revolution That Will Transform How We Live, Work, and Think*. M.: Mann, Ivanov, and Ferber, 2014.
- Mellor, D.H. *The facts of causation*. London: Routledge, 1995.
- Meshcheryakova, N.A. *Determinism in Philosophical Rationalism: From Thales to Marx*. Voronezh State University Press, 1998.
- Mills, J. *The unconscious Abyss: Hegel's Anticipation of Psychoanalysis*. Albany, NY: Suny Press, 2002.

- Modell, A. Commentary. "Discussant for Panel: Neuropsychology and the Future of Psychoanalysis: A Debate". Annual Spring Meeting of the American Psychological Association, Div. 39, Psychoanalysis, New York (NY), 2011.
- Moravcsik, J.M.E. *Mariomion, Athenian Democracy: Politicization and Constitutional Restraints, History of Political Thought*, 1986.
- Nahmias, E. and Murray, D. "Experimental Philosophy on Free Will: An Error Theory for Incompatibilist Intuitions." *New Waves in Philosophy of Action*. Eds. J. Aguilar, A. Buckareff, and K. Frankish. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, Forthcoming, 2009.
- Nietzsche, F. *Beyond good and evil* (W. Kaufmann, Trans.). New York: Vintage Books (Original Work Published 1886), 1989.
- O'Connor, T., & Franklin, C. *Free Will*. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.
- Omogbe, J.I., *Ethics: A Systematic and Historical Study*. Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Limited, 1993.
- Pentland, A. *Social Physics*, M.: AST. 1989. "Social Practice and Social Relations" (ed.), Yanovsky R.G., M.: Thought, 2018.
- Pervushina, V.N. *Modern Ethics: Problems of Determinism and Free Will*. Voronezh State University Press, 1993.
- Phaedo. Cambridge University Press. 20; reprinted in Weston (1982), 1993.
- Plato, and Benjamin, J. *The Republic: The Complete and Unabridged Jowett Translation*. Vintage Books, 1991.
- Plato, Bernard, W., Levett, M.J., and Myles B. *Concerns of Freewill*. Theaetetus. Hackett Publishing, 1992.

- Plato. "Laws". In E. Hamilton & H. Cairns (Eds.), *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961a.
- Plato. "Phaedo". In E. Hamilton & H. Cairns (Eds.), *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961b.
- Plato. *The Laws of Plato*. University of Chicago Press, 1988.
- Plato's Meno. Lindhardt og Ringhof, 2020.
- Platon, and Jean-François, P. Les Mythes de Platon. Paris: *Flammarion*: FLAMMARION, 2004.
- Platone, Giovanni, R., and Matteo Andolfo. 2000. Fedone. Testo greco a fronte. S.l: Bompiani.
- Popper, K.R. *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. Princeton University Press, 2020.
- Pradeau, J.-F. Platon et la cité. Presses Universitaires de France, 2010.
- Reale, G. *Il Pensiero Antico*. Vita e Pensiero, 2001.
- Rosen, G. "Abstract Objects," July. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2012/entries/abstract-objects/>, 2001.
- Roth, P. "Beyond Understanding: The Career of the Concept of Understanding in the Human Sciences". In *The Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, edited by Turner S., Roth P. Oxford: Blackwell, 2002.
- Ryle, G. (ed.). "Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Philosophy", held at Oxford, England: September, 1930. London: H. Milford, 1931.

- Sharples, R.W. "Plato on Democracy and Expertise", Greece and Rome, Vol. xii, For Popper's Criticism of the Relation Doctor-Patient, See K.R. Popper, Op. Cit., 167-8, 1994.
- Smilansky, S. *Free Will and Illusion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Stephens-Davidowitz, S. *Everyone Lies*, M.: EKSMO, 2018.
- The Multi-Faceted Globalization. *Cultural Diversity in the Modern World*" (eds.) Peter L. Berger and Samuel P. Huntington, M.: Aspect Press.
- The Symposium. Penguin Publishing Group, 2003.
- Timaeus. Hackett Publishing, 2015.
- Van Inwagen, P. *An Essay on Free Will*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983.
- Vergote, A. *La psychanalyse à l'épreuve de la sublimation* [The Psychoanalytic Examination of Sublimation]. Paris: Cerf, 1997.
- Warman, M.S. *Plato and Persuasion*, Greece & Rome, Vol. XXX, No. 1, 1983.
- Weber, M. "Politics as a Vocation." In *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, edited by Gerth H. H., Wright Mills C. London: Routledge, 1970.
- Wight, C. *Agents, Structures and International Relations: Politics as Ontology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2006.
- Wild, J. *Plato's Modern Enemies and the Theory of Natural Law*, Chicago Press, 1953.
- Williams, B. "Deciding to Believe." In *Problems of the Self*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973.

## Journal/Articles

- Campbell, D.R. “Self-Motion and Cognition: Plato’s Theory of the Soul.” *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 59 (4), <https://doi.org/10.1111/sjp.12429>, 2021.
- Fischer. “Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person.” *Journal of Philosophy*, 68, Reprinted in Fischer (1986), 1971.
- Kane, R. *The Significance of Free Will*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. “Responsibility, Luck, and Chance: Reflections on Free Will and Indeterminism.” *Journal of Philosophy*, 96/5, 1999.

## Internet

- Aristotle. “The Metaphysics.” <https://www.amazon.com/Metaphysics-Great-Books-Philosophy/dp/0879756713>, 1991.
- Eagle, A. “Chance versus Randomness: The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.” <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2021/entries/chance-randomness/>, 2021.
- <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2021/entries/freewill/>
- Platon, and Luc, B. “Timée – Critias de Platon - Editions Flammarion.” <https://editions.flammarion.com/timee-critias/9782081421561>, 2001.
- Rowan, R.J. “A Guide to Plato’s Republic: The Writing and Speeches of Bob Rowan.” BC Civil Liberties Association, May 28, 2014. <https://bccla.org/2014/05/a-guide-to-platos-republic/>, 2014.
- Saffrey, H.-D. “Ἀγεωμέτρητος μηδεὶς εἰσὶτω. Une inscription légendaire.” *Revue des Études Grecques* 81 (384): 67–87. <https://doi.org/10.3406/reg.1968.1013>, 1968.

Theory: No “No Hidden Variables Proof” but No Room for Determinism  
Either. *Philosophy of Science*, 63, <https://doi.org/10.1086/289915>  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/188099>.