

Free will vs. Determinism Essay

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Free will vs. determinism is an argument as complex, intertwined, and co-dependent as nature vs. nurture or the age-old question of whether it was the chicken or the egg that came first. Philosophers have contemplated the question for ages, and arrived at no satisfactory answer. While considering which topic to address for this assignment, I posed the question of free will vs. determinism to a philosopher friend, whose response was "I don't care." He feels that the question is not worth asking because it will not impact our actions anyway. Which ultimately makes him somewhat of a determinist I suppose, though I'm sure he would disapprove of being classified as such. In the end, I settled on the topic of free will vs. determinism because lately it seems I am often faced with situations where my ability to exercise my free will choice is thwarted when other individuals exercise their own free will. Although, on second thought, maybe I chose the topic because preexisting circumstances, such as having read *Walden Two* over the summer, caused me to do so. Or perhaps I settled on this topic because it is the topic the Universe meant me to address – which would also explain why I had previously read the Skinner book cited so often in our text. Free will proponents believe that we have total control over our actions, and that the actions we chose, not external causes, determine the outcome. Proponents of determinism deny free will, believing instead that every action we take is determined by preexisting causes. (text, pg. 144) Fatalism and predestination are extreme forms of

determinism that believe that God or The Universe have already determined what will happen, and the any action we take, or choice we think we make middle of paperould have made a different choice that would have changed the outcome. Throughout this course, I have engaged my oldest child in discussions on the topics covered. He is interested at first, believes he knows the correct answer, and then becomes frustrated when there is no simple or correct answer. His reaction is, I believe, entirely age appropriate. Unfortunately, it seems that many people do not move beyond this need for simple answers and dismissal of complexities. Socrates said, "the unexamined life is not worth living." He believed that the point of life was to learn from living. If we rigidly adhere to any one line of thinking, if we fail to examine and question our actions and thoughts, if we fail to examine our life, if we fail to learn from our mistakes, then what is the point indeed? Works Cited1) <http://www.drphil.com/shows/show/84>

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