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Will

INTRODUCTION

THE great controversy over the freedom of the will tends to overshadow the theory of the will itself. For some thinkers the two notions are inseparable. As the word "choice" popularly connotes freedom in choosing between alternatives, so for them liberty belongs to the very nature of the will. But others who affirm that men can act freely or voluntarily also deny that the will itself is ever free.

Still others who distinguish between voluntary and reflex actions—on the part of brute animals as well as men—also distinguish between the voluntary and the free. They reserve freedom to men alone on the ground that men alone have wills. Far from identifying will with free will, they differentiate between those acts of the will which are necessitated and those which are free.

It would appear from this sampling of conflicting opinions that the issue concerning free will presupposes, and often conceals, diverse theories of the will—different conceptions of its nature, its various acts, and its relation to other faculties. Those who affirm and those who deny the will's freedom of action hardly meet on that issue if they proceed from different conceptions of what the will is and how it operates.

The matter is further complicated by different conceptions of freedom. Even those who define will in somewhat similar terms conceive its liberty differently. As the chapter on LIBERTY indicates, freedom has many meanings—theological, metaphysical, psychological, moral, natural, and civil. What is called free in one of these senses may not be so regarded in another. But one thing is clear. If, as Hobbes thinks, the only sense in which freedom can be affirmed is that of natural or political liberty—the sense in which a man can *do* what he *wills* without restraint or compulsion—then the will is not free, for its freedom depends on how its own acts are caused, or how it causes other acts, not on how the acts it causes are affected by outward circumstances beyond its control.

The problem of the freedom of the will seems, therefore, to be primarily psychological and metaphysical. It requires us to consider freedom in terms of *cause* and *necessity*. It appeals to such distinctions as that between the caused, the uncaused, and the self-caused, or to the difference between the predetermined, the contingent, and the spontaneous event. To this extent the problem is metaphysical. But it is psychological insofar as the kind of event with which we are concerned is an interior act of a living thing and, even more specifically, of an intelligent being, a being which has *mind* in some sense of that term. We do not ask whether stones and vegetables have free will because we do not usually suppose that they have will. Even those who, like Aristotle, attribute *desire* to all things or who, like William James, find a striving toward goals in at least all living things, do not refer to volition or the voluntary in the absence of imagination or thought.

The italicized words in the foregoing paragraph indicate ideas which have the most fundamental bearing on the discussion of will, and hence the relation of this to other chapters. The chapters on CAUSE and NECESSITY (and those on FATE and CHANCE) deal with doctrines which both affect and are affected by various theories of the will's freedom. But if we are to postpone the question of free will until the nature of will itself is considered,

we must begin with definitions which employ terms discussed in the chapters on MIND and DESIRE.

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN thought and action sets the stage for the discovery of a factor or faculty which serves to connect them. Acting may follow upon thinking, but not without the intervention of a determination or a desire to translate thought into deed. Plato, in *The Republic,* divides the soul into three parts, of which one, reason, is the faculty of thought and knowledge, and the other two, spirit and appetite, are principles of action. Both spirit and appetite need to be guided and ruled by reason but, according to Plato, reason depends also upon spirit, for without its support even wisdom must fail to influence conduct. Though he does not use the word, the role he assigns to spirit as the auxiliary of reason corresponds to the function performed by what later writers call "will."

The word "will" appears in the English translation of Aristotle. It is used less frequently than other words—such as "wish," "choice," "purpose," "impulse," "appetite," "desire"—to designate a motivating force, but along with them it signifies the factor which turns thought into action. Unlike Plato, who separates spirit and appetite, Aristotle makes appetite the generic notion, and treats will and desire as modes of appetite. But sometimes "desire" is used as a synonym for "appetite," and sometimes "wish" or "choice" is substituted for "will."

In his treatise *On the Motion of Animals,* we find Aristotle saying that "the living creature is moved by intellect, purpose, wish, and appetite. All these are reducible to mind and desire. For both imagination and sensation have this much in common with mind, that all three are faculties of judgment. However, will, impulse, and appetite are all three forms of desire, while purpose belongs both to intellect and to desire." But in the treatise *On the Soul,* we find him insisting that appetite be considered as the single "faculty of originating local movement," though if the soul were to be divided into a rational and an irrational part, he would assign wish to the calculative or deliberative reason, desire and passion to the irrational part. "Wish," he writes, "is a form of appetite, and when movement is produced according to calculation, it is also according to wish, but appetite can originate movement contrary to calculation, for desire is also a form of appetite."

What is said of purpose and wish is also said of choice. All three somehow combine reason and desire. Giving choice as the cause of specifically human action, and desire combined with deliberation as the origin of choice, Aristotle speaks of choice as "either desiderative reason or ratiocinative desire." Lacking reason, animals do not have choice, according to Aristotle, or for that matter wish or purpose either; but insofar as their appetites are stirred by sensation or imagination, and the desires aroused lead to action, animals behave voluntarily.

When the words "desire" and "appetite" are so used, not to name the generic faculty of originating movement, but to signify a motivation different in kind from wish, purpose, or choice, they correspond to what Aquinas later calls "animal appetite" or "sensitive desire." This is for him the sphere of the emotions or passions. He treats the impulses of fear and anger, for example, as acts of the sensitive appetite.

The kind of desire which, for Aristotle, depends upon practical reason, Aquinas calls "intellectual appetite" or "rational desire." Since "will" is for him just another name for the desire or appetite which is determined by reason rather than sense, he necessarily holds that irrational animals do not have will.

Aristotle says that "the apparent good is the object of appetite, and the real good is the primary object of rational wish." Aquinas distinguishes somewhat differently between the object of the passions and the object of the will. For each sort of appetite or desire, the object takes its special character from the faculty by which it is apprehended. The sensible good, perceived or imagined, stands to the sensitive appetite as the intelligible good, judged by reason, stands to the intellectual appetite or will.

In one place Aristotle differentiates between wish and choice by saying that we can

wish for the impossible, whereas choice is always of things within our power. But his more usual distinction is in terms of means and ends. "The end is what we wish for," he writes, "the means what we deliberate about and choose." Aquinas also divides the acts of the will according as they concern means or ends, but where Aristotle mentions only choice and wish, Aquinas enumerates three acts of the will with respect to ends (volition, intention, and enjoyment) and three with respect to means (consent, choice, and use).

According to Aquinas, each of these acts of the will responds to a distinct act of the practical reason and, except for the will's last acts, each may in turn be followed by further practical thought. This progressive determination of the will by reason goes on until the *use* of means leads to action, and action leads to the enjoyment of the end accomplished. As in practical reasoning ends come before means, so for the will the end comes first in the order of intention; but in the order of execution action begins with the means.

LIKE ARISTOTLE AND Aquinas, Kant and Hegel conceive will as a faculty of desire or activity founded upon reason, and so they attribute will, as they attribute reason, to man alone. But both Kant and Hegel go further and almost identify will in its pure state with reason.

"The faculty of desire," writes Kant, "in so far as its inner principle of determination as the ground of its liking or predilection lies in the reason of the subject, constitutes the will"; and he goes on to say that the will, "in so far as it may determine the voluntary act of choice . . . is the practical reason itself." Only man can claim "possession of a will which takes no account of desires and inclinations, and on the contrary conceives action as possible to him, nay, even necessary, which can only be done by disregarding all desires and sensible inclinations."

In this last statement, Kant seems to use the word "desire" in a sense which is opposed to will. The context indicates that he has in mind something like the distinction made by Aquinas between sensitive and rational desire. This indication is confirmed by his own distinction between brute and human choice. "That act which is determinable only by inclination as a sensuous impulse or stimulus would be irrational brute choice (*arbitrium brutum*). The human act of choice, however, as human, though in fact *affected* by such impulses or stimuli, is not *determined* by them; and it is, therefore, not pure in itself when taken apart from the acquired habit of determination by reason." But, according to Kant, the human act of choice can be determined solely by reason. Only then is it "determined to action by the pure will."

One point must be observed, to which we shall subsequently return. The pure will is for Kant a free will. "The act of choice that is determined by pure reason," he writes, "is the act of free will . . . The freedom of the act of volitional choice is its independence of being determined by sensuous impulses or stimuli. This forms the negative conception of the free will. The positive conception of freedom is given by the fact that the will is the capability of pure reason to be practical of itself." Insofar as pure reason is able to become practical, that is, to determine choices and direct action, independently of all sensuous impulses or inclinations, that reason is in itself the pure will, and that will is in its very essence free.

For Hegel also, freedom is of the essence of will. "Freedom," he writes, "is just as fundamental a character of the will as weight is of bodies. Heaviness constitutes the body and is the body. The same is the case with freedom and will, since the free entity is the will. Will without freedom is an empty word, while freedom is actual only as will, as subject."

Though the passions enter into the sphere of the subjective will, according to Hegel, will transforms them. "Subjective volition—Passion—is that which sets men in activity, that which effects 'practical' realization." When it is occupied with the passions, the subjective will, Hegel writes, "is dependent and can gratify its desires only within the limits of this dependence." The passions, however, are common to both men and animals. "An animal too has impulses, desires, inclinations," Hegel says, "but it has no will and must obey its impulses if nothing external deters it." Only

man, "the wholly undetermined, stands above his impulses and may make them his own, put them into himself as his own. An impulse is something natural, but to put it into my ego depends on my will."

Hegel explains this aspect of the will by reference to that "element of pure indeterminacy or that pure reflection of the ego into itself which involves the dissipation of every restriction and every content either immediately presented by nature, by needs, desires, and impulses, or given and determined by any means whatever." But indeterminacy is only one moment of the will, its negative aspect. The second moment occurs in "the transition from undifferentiated indeterminacy to the differentiation, determination, and positing of a determinacy as a content and object." Both of these moments are partial, each the negation of the other. "The indeterminate will," in Hegel's opinion, is "just as one-sided as the will rooted in sheer determinacy. What is properly called the will includes in itself both the preceding moments."

As the unity of both these moments, the will "is particularity reflected into itself and so brought back to universality, *i.e.*, it is individuality. It is," Hegel continues, "the *self*-determination of the ego, which means that at one and the same time the ego posits itself as its own negative, *i.e.*, as restricted and determinate, and yet remains by itself, *i.e.*, in its self-identity and universality." While the two previous moments of the will are "through and through abstract and one-sided," the third moment gives us the individual will and freedom in the concrete. "Freedom lies neither in indeterminacy nor in determinacy; it is both of these at once . . . Freedom is to will something determinate, yet in this determinacy to be by oneself and to revert once more to the universal."

IN THE TRADITION OF the great books, other writers place the essence of the will not in its freedom, but in its being the cause of the voluntary acts performed by animals and men. The students of physiology from Aristotle to William James distinguish the movements of the various bodily organs—the heart, the lungs, the organs of digestion, excretion, and reproduction—from those movements of the whole animal or of its members which are somehow based upon desire and imagination or thought.

Aristotle sometimes calls these physiological changes "non-voluntary" and sometimes "involuntary," though he has another meaning for "involuntary" when he describes the conduct of a man, compelled by fear, to do something contrary to his wishes, *e.g.*, the captain who throws his cargo overboard to save his ship. The completely nonvoluntary motion is one which occurs quite apart from any *knowledge* of the end, or without conscious desire, whereas the involuntary involves some conflict of desires. When the involuntary in this special sense is not considered, only a twofold division is made, as in James's distinction between reflex and voluntary movements, Harvey's distinction between natural and animal motions, or Hobbes's distinction between vital and animal motions.

"There be in animals," Hobbes writes, "two sorts of motions peculiar to them: one called vital . . . such as are the course of the blood, the pulse, the breathing, the concoction, nutrition, excretion, etc.; to which motions there needs no help of imagination. The other is *animal motion,* otherwise called *voluntary motion,* as to go, to speak, to move any of our limbs, in such manner as is first fancied in our minds . . . Because going, speaking, and the like voluntary motions, depend always upon a precedent thought of *whither, which way,* and *what,* it is evident that the imagination is the first internal beginning of all voluntary motion."

But the imagination, according to Hobbes, gives rise to voluntary motions through arousing desire or appetite. When desires and aversions, hopes and fears, alternately succeed one another, what Hobbes means by "deliberation" takes place; and, he declares, "in deliberation, the last appetite, or aversion, immediately adhering to the action, or to the omission thereof, is that we call the will; the act, not the faculty, of *willing.* And beasts that have deliberation must necessarily also have will. The definition of the will, given

commonly by the Schools, that it is a *rational appetite,* is not good. For if it were, then could there be no voluntary act against reason. For a voluntary act is that which proceedeth from the will, and no other."

Locke disagrees with Hobbes's view that willing is an act of desire. "That the will is perfectly distinguished from desire," he thinks, may be seen in the fact that desire "may have a quite contrary tendency from that which our wills set us upon." Desire, according to Locke, "is an uneasiness of the mind for want of some absent good"; whereas will is the "power to begin or forbear, continue or end, the several actions of our minds, and motions of our bodies, barely by a thought or preference of the mind ordering or, as it were, commanding the doing or not doing, such or such a particular action . . . The actual exercise of that power, by directing any particular action or its forbearance, is that which we call volition or willing."

Though volition is not an act of desire, Locke holds that it is the uneasiness of desire which "determines the will to the successive voluntary actions." And though Locke speaks of willing as if it were an act of thought, he distinguishes between the mind's power of understanding and of willing. The one is a passive, the other is an active power. Understanding or perceptivity is "a power to receive ideas or thoughts"; will or motivity is the "power to direct the operative faculties to motion or rest."

In this conception of the will as the power the mind has to control the faculties, or the motions of the body, which can be voluntarily exercised, Locke, like Hobbes before him and James after, explains the will's action in terms of thinking of the motion to be performed or the deed to be done. Discussing the theory of what he calls "ideo-motor action," James says that "a supply of ideas of the various movements that are possible, left in the memory by experiences of their involuntary performance, is thus the first prerequisite of the voluntary life." Reflexive or other innately determined movements do not depend upon consciousness of the movement to be performed. That is why "voluntary movement must be secondary, not primary functions of our organism"; or as he says in another place, the action which is performed voluntarily "must before that, at least once, have been impulsive or reflex."

The kind of idea which initiates a voluntary movement James calls a "kinaesthetic image"—an image of the sensations which will be experienced when the movement takes place. "In perfectly simple voluntary acts," he writes, "there is nothing else in the mind but the kinaesthetic image, thus defined, of what the act is to be." In certain cases, however, there must be "an additional mental antecedent, in the shape of a fiat, decision, consent, volitional mandate . . . before the movement can follow." This becomes necessary when contrary kinesthetic images vie with one another to initiate antagonistic movements. "The express fiat, or act of mental consent to the movement, comes in when the neutralization of the antagonistic and inhibitory idea is required.

"With the prevalence, once there as a fact, of the motive idea," James goes on, "the *psychology* of volition properly stops. The movements which ensue are exclusively physiological phenomena, following according to physiological laws upon neural events to which the idea corresponds. The *willing* terminates with the prevalence of the idea . . . We thus find that we reach the heart of our inquiry into volition when we ask by what process it is that the thought of any given object comes to prevail stably in the mind." The answer James gives is that it is "the essential achievement of the will . . . to attend to a difficult object and hold it fast before the mind. The so-doing *is* the *fiat* . . . Effort of attention is thus the essential phenomenon of the will."

Though Freud does not use the word "will," or analyze voluntary movements in ideomotor terms, he does attribute to what he calls "the ego" the function which Locke and James ascribe to will. "In popular language," he writes, "we may say that the ego stands for reason and circumspection, while the id stands for the untamed passions." To the ego is given "the task of representing the external world for the id," and so of protecting it from destructive conflicts with reality.

In discharging this function, "on behalf of

the id, the ego controls the path of access to motility, but," Freud continues, "it interpolates between desire and action the procrastinating factor of thought, during which it makes use of the residues of experience stored up in memory. In this way it dethrones the pleasure-principle, which exerts undisputed sway over the processes in the id, and substitutes for it the reality-principle, which promises greater security and greater success."

Treating the will metaphysically, not psychologically, Heidegger regards "will" as "the basic feature of the 'is-ness' of what-is," and, so conceived, it is "the equation of what-is with the Real, in such a way that the reality of the Real becomes invested with the sovereign power to effect a general objectivisation."

AS THE PROBLEM OF the will's freedom involves the question of whether or how its acts are caused, so the will's action raises a problem concerning how it causes the voluntary effects it produces. In Locke's view, we are equally at a loss to explain how one body moves another and how our own bodies are moved by our will. "The passing of motion out of one body into another," he thinks, "is as obscure and inconceivable as how our minds move or stop our bodies by thought; which we every moment find that they do."

If we could "explain this and make it intelligible," Locke says in another place, "then the next step would be to understand creation." Hume agrees that "it must forever escape our most diligent inquiry" how "the motion of our body follows upon the command of our will." That it does, he says, "is a matter of common experience, like other natural events. But the power and energy by which this is effected, like that in other natural events, is unknown and inconceivable."

No less mysterious to Hume is the coming into "existence of an idea, consequent to the command of the will," which seems to imply a "creative power, by which it raises from nothing a new idea, and with a kind of *Fiat*, imitates the omnipotence of its Maker." How "this operation is performed, the power by which it is produced," seems to him "entirely beyond our comprehension."

Spinoza and Descartes take a different view of the relation between the will and the intellect or understanding. Neither admits that the human will forms new ideas, or, as Spinoza says, that there are "mere fancies constructed by the free power of the will." Both conceive the will's activity as consisting in assent or dissent to ideas, their affirmation or negation. But beyond this point they part company.

For one thing, Descartes distinguishes between the will as a faculty of choice and the understanding as a faculty of knowledge, where Spinoza holds that "the will and the intellect are one and the same." Since Spinoza denies that will and intellect are anything except "the individual volitions and ideas themselves," it is more precise, he suggests, to say that the individual volition (*i.e.*, the affirmation or negation of *this* idea) and the individual idea affirmed or denied are one and the same.

In consequence, they differ with respect to the power of volition. Spinoza criticizes the supposition he finds in Descartes, that "the will extends itself more widely than the intellect, and is therefore different from it." Whereas Descartes thinks that "the faculty of comprehension which I possess . . . is of very small extent and extremely limited," Spinoza says, "I am conscious of a will so extended as to be subject to no limits." We can affirm or deny much more than we can know with certitude.

This difference between Spinoza and Descartes reveals itself most strikingly in their conception of God's will. According to Descartes, the omnipotence of God lies in the supremacy of his will—in its absolute independence even with respect to the divine intellect. "It is self-contradictory that the will of God should not have been from eternity indifferent to all that has come to pass or ever will occur . . . Thus, to illustrate, God did not will . . . the three angles of a triangle to be equal to two right angles because he knew that they could not be otherwise. On the contrary . . . it is because he willed the three angles of a triangle to be necessarily equal to two right angles that this is true and cannot be otherwise." Against Descartes's voluntarism, Spinoza declares it absurd to say that "God could bring it about

that it should not follow from the nature of a triangle that its three angles should be equal to two right angles."

Such different conceptions of the will or of its power necessarily lead to opposite conclusions concerning free will—in man or God. The human mind, according to Spinoza, "cannot be the free cause of its own actions." In each of its volitions, as in each of its ideas, it is determined by a cause. The supposition of an infinite will in God does not exempt that will from the need to be determined in its acts; nor can God "on this account be said to act from freedom of will." Yet Spinoza also affirms that "God alone is a free cause, for God alone exists and acts from the necessity of his own nature." Freedom does not reside in the will, nor in the absence of necessity or causal determination, but rather in self-determination. It does not consist in choice, but in the absence of compulsion by causes which lie outside one's own nature. Hence only an infinite being—a *causa sui* in Spinoza's sense—can be free.

Calvin also denies the freedom of the will, not because man is a finite being, but because his nature is corrupted by sin. "In the perverted and degenerate nature of man there are still some sparks which show that he is a rational animal, and differs from the brutes, inasmuch as he is endued with intelligence, and yet, that this light is so smothered by clouds of darkness, that it cannot shine forth to any good effect. In like manner, the will, because inseparable from the nature of man, did not perish, but was so enslaved by depraved lusts as to be incapable of one righteous desire."

Descartes, on the other hand, places freedom in the will and identifies it with the power of choice. "The faculty of will," he writes, "consists alone in our having the power of choosing to do a thing or choosing not to do it . . . or rather it consists alone in the fact that in order to affirm or deny, pursue or shun, those things placed before us by the understanding, we act so that we are unconscious that any outside force constrains us in so doing." Descartes seems to conceive the will as cause of itself in its acts of choice. But he does not attribute to the human will the autonomy Spinoza ascribes to God. "The knowledge of the understanding," he writes, "should always precede the determination of the will"; and in another place he says that "our will impels us neither to follow after nor to flee from anything, except as our understanding represents it as good or evil."

In order to be free, Descartes explains, "it is not necessary that I should be indifferent as to the choice of one or the other of two contraries; but contrariwise the more I lean to the one—whether I recognize clearly that the reasons of the good and the true are to be found in it, or whether God so disposes my inward thought—the more freely do I choose and embrace it." The will always retains "the power of directing itself towards one side or the other apart from any determination by the understanding." The human will is, in this sense, always undetermined from without, though it is not always indifferent to the alternatives confronting it. It is indifferent, Descartes holds, only when a man "does not know what is the more true or the better, or at least when he does not see clearly enough to prevent him from doubting about it. Thus the indifference which attaches to human liberty is very different from that which belongs to the divine."

THE DENIAL OF FREE WILL in the tradition of western thought seems to follow from the principle that every happening must have a cause. In the sphere of human conduct, voluntary acts are no less determined effects of prior causes than involuntary acts. Though both are equally necessitated, the difference between the voluntary and the involuntary, according to Hobbes, Locke, and Hume, consists in the fact that when a man acts voluntarily, he does what he himself has decided to do.

The fact that his decision to act in a certain way is itself caused, does not, in the opinion of these writers, abolish the freedom of his action, but only the freedom of his will. If freedom is attributed not to a man's will, but to the man who can do what he wills, then, these writers think, there is no conflict between freedom and necessity—or between freedom and the universal reign of causality.

For them freedom is abridged only by external forces which coerce a man to act contrary to his wishes or constrain him from acting as he wills. Freedom in this sense is incompatible only with exterior compulsion, not with the inner causal determination of every act of the will.

To those who deny free will, it does not seem to be an entirely satisfactory answer to say, as Descartes does, that we are immediately conscious of our freedom of choice. In the Third Set of Objections, urged by Thomas Hobbes against Descartes, Objection XII (which is directed against Meditation IV wherein Descartes discusses free will) contains this statement: "We must note here also that the freedom of the will has been assumed without proof, and in opposition to the opinion of the Calvinists." In replying, Descartes merely repeats his original statement of the evidence for free will.

"I made no assumption concerning freedom," he writes, "which is not a matter of universal experience. Though there are many who, looking to the divine foreordination, cannot conceive how that is compatible with liberty on our part, nevertheless no one, when he considers himself alone, fails to experience that to will and to be free are the same thing (or rather that there is no difference between what is voluntary and what is free)." To Pierre Gassendi who, in another set of objections, also denies "the indeterminateness of the will," Descartes replies: "These matters are such that anyone ought to experience them in himself rather than be convinced of them by ratiocination . . . Refuse then to be free, if freedom does not please you; I at least shall rejoice in my liberty, since I experience it in myself, and you have assailed it not with proof but with bare negations merely."

The experience of free will is no proof either, the opponents reply, for the experience is open to the suspicion that it is illusory rather than real. It may be, Hume suggests, only "a false sensation or seeming experience which we have . . . of liberty or indifference in many of our actions." We suffer this illusion, even foist it upon ourselves, he further suggests, because we are motivated by "the fantastical desire of shewing liberty." In the same vein, Freud later discounts objections to the determinism of psychoanalysis on the part of those who refuse to recognize the hidden causes which control their actions. "You have an illusion of a psychic freedom within you which you do not want to give up," he says. But this "deeply rooted belief in psychic freedom and choice" must be given up because it "is quite unscientific . . . It must give way before the claims of a determinism which governs even mental life."

Nietzsche dismisses the whole issue of determinism versus free will by saying, "What is called 'freedom of will' is essentially the emotion of superiority over him who must obey." Elsewhere Nietzsche lists the notion of the will's freedom as one of "the four great errors." In another place, Nietzsche writes: "It is certainly not the least charm of a theory that it is refutable: it is with precisely this charm that it entices subtler minds. It seems that the hundred times refuted theory of 'free will' owes its continued existence to this charm alone—: again and again there comes along someone who feels he is strong enough to refute it."

THE DILEMMA OF FREE WILL or determinism does not seem to other writers to be so easily resolvable. "All theory is against the freedom of the will," says Dr. Johnson; "all experience for it." Tolstoy states the dilemma in similar terms. "Regarding man as a subject of observation" by the rational methods of the sciences, Tolstoy writes, "we find a general law of necessity to which he (like all that exists) is subject. But regarding him from within ourselves as what we are conscious of, we feel ourselves to be free. This consciousness is a source of self-cognition quite apart from and independent of reason. Through his reason man observes himself, but only through consciousness does he know himself . . . You say: I am not free. But I have lifted my hand and let it fall. Everyone understands that this illogical reply is an irrefutable demonstration of freedom. That reply is the expression of a consciousness that is not subject to reason."

The problem cannot be solved, Tolstoy thinks, by ignoring one side of the question.

To do that is to put the problem "on a level on which the question itself cannot exist. In our time," Tolstoy continues, "the majority of so-called advanced people—that is, the crowd of ignoramuses—have taken the work of the naturalists who deal with one side of the question for a solution of the whole problem." But to admit that "from the point of view of reason man is subject to the law of necessity . . . does not advance by a hair's breadth the solution of the question, which has another, opposite, side, based on the consciousness of freedom." Not only does this "unshakable, irrefutable consciousness of freedom, uncontrolled by experiment or argument" constitute for Tolstoy "the other side of the question," but it is also for him that "without which no conception of man is possible."

James takes a somewhat different view of the dilemma of free will or determinism. Conceiving the act of free will in terms of the exertion of an effort on our part which is not determined by its object, James is willing to admit that our consciousness of freedom may be a delusion. "Even in effortless volition we have the consciousness of the alternative being also possible. This is surely a delusion here," he writes; "why is it not a delusion everywhere?" Hence it seems to him that "the question of free will is insoluble on strictly psychological grounds."

But if the existence of free will cannot be proved from experience, neither, in his opinion, can determinism be scientifically demonstrated. "The most that any argument can do for determinism," he says, "is to make it a clear and seductive conception, which a man is foolish not to espouse, so long as he stands by the great scientific postulate that the world must be one unbroken fact, and that prediction of all things without exception must be ideally, if not actually, possible." For those who accept this postulate, "a little fact like effort can form no real exception to the overwhelming reign of deterministic law."

Yet it remains a postulate, and postulation is not proof. Furthermore, there is "a *moral* postulate about the Universe . . . which would lead one to espouse the contrary view . . . the postulate that *what ought to be can be, and that bad acts cannot be fated, but that good ones must be possible in their place.*" As scientific law and prediction seem to call for the postulate of determinism, so moral responsibility and the genuineness of moral options seem to demand free will.

In *Pragmatism,* James has this to say about free will and determinism:

> Both free-will and determinism have been inveighed against and called absurd, because each, in the eyes of its enemies, has seemed to prevent the "imputability" of good or bad deeds to their authors. Queer antinomy this! Free-will means novelty, the grafting on to the past of something not involved therein. If our acts were predetermined, if we merely transmitted the push of the whole past, the free-willists say, how could we be praised or blamed for anything? We should be "agents" only, not "principals," and where then would be our precious imputability and responsibility?
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> But where would it be if we *had* free-will? rejoin the determinists. If a "free" act be a sheer novelty, that comes not *from* me, the previous me, but *ex nihilo,* and simply tacks itself on to me, how can *I,* the previous I, be responsible? How can I have any permanent *character* that will stand still long enough for praise or blame to be awarded?

Hume recognizes that "it may be said . . . that, if voluntary actions be subjected to the same laws of necessity with the operations of matter, there is a continued chain of necessary causes, pre-ordained, and pre-determined, reaching from the original cause of all to every single volition of every human creature." But he does not think that the assertion of "no contingency anywhere in the universe; no indifference; no liberty," requires us to give up our notions of moral responsibility, and to abstain from making judgments of praise or blame concerning human actions. "The mind of man is so formed by nature," he writes, "that, upon the appearance of certain characters, dispositions, and actions, it immediately feels the sentiment of approbation or blame. The characters which engage our approbation are chiefly such as contribute to the peace and security of human society; as the characters which excite blame are chiefly such as tend to public detriment and disturbance."

In Hume's opinion, "remote and uncertain speculations" concerning the causation of human character or conduct, or concerning the

general structure of the universe, do not affect "the sentiments which arise from the natural and immediate view of the objects . . . Why should not the acknowledgement of a real distinction between vice and virtue," he asks, "be reconcileable to all speculative systems of philosophy, as well as that of a real distinction between personal beauty and deformity?" James takes the exactly opposite view. A doctrine of necessity or determinism is for him incompatible with moral responsibility, or with the distinction between virtue and vice. Holding that free will is indispensable to the moral life, James chooses "the alternative of freedom." In doing so he confesses that "the grounds of his opinion are ethical rather than psychological."

He does go one step further into what he calls "the logic of the question." Since postulation is not proof—since a postulate is not an undeniable axiom but an expression of what James elsewhere calls "the will to believe"—the kind of dilemma which is formed by conflicting postulates can be resolved only by the exercise of free choice. The alternatives of free will and determinism constitute that kind of dilemma for James, and so it seems to him quite proper that the first act of free will should be to believe in free will.

"When scientific and moral postulates war thus with each other," he writes, "and objective proof is not to be had, the only course is voluntary choice, for skepticism itself, if systematic, is also voluntary choice." Hence belief in free will "should be voluntarily chosen from amongst other possible beliefs. Freedom's first deed should be to affirm itself. We ought never to hope for any other method of getting at the truth if indeterminism be a fact. Doubt of this particular truth will therefore probably be open to us to the end of time, and the utmost that a believer in free will can *ever* do will be to show that the deterministic arguments are not coercive. That they are seductive," James concludes, "I am the last to deny; nor do I deny that effort may be needed to keep the faith in freedom, when they press upon it, upright in the mind."

IN THE TRADITION OF THE great books, not all who affirm free will think that to do so requires them to deny the universal reign of causality in nature; nor do they base their affirmation on our immediate consciousness of free choice or make it an act of faith—a pragmatic postulate. Kant, for example, explicitly disclaims that freedom is a matter of faith. "It is the only one of all the ideas of pure reason," he says, "whose object is a matter of fact." This means for him that its objective reality can be proved. In contrast, "the existence of God and the immortality of the soul are matters of faith," by which Kant means that they must be postulated by the practical reason as conditions necessary for the conceivability of the *summum bonum* which the moral law commands us to seek.

In order to understand Kant's proof of freedom, it is necessary to remember that he conceives the freedom of the will in terms of its autonomy, and its autonomy in terms of the fact that the practical reason, with which the pure will is identical, legislates for itself in proclaiming, and obeys only itself in upholding, the moral law. "Autonomy of the will," he writes, "is that property of it by which it is a law unto itself . . . Now the idea of freedom is inseparably connected with the conception of *autonomy,* and this again with the universal principle of morality." The moral law, Kant goes on, "expresses nothing else than the *autonomy* of the pure practical reason," and "this *self-legislation* of the pure and, therefore, practical reason is freedom in the positive sense."

In saying that "a free will and a will subject to moral laws are one and the same," Kant thinks that he may be suspected of circular reasoning, in that he appears to make freedom a condition of morality and at the same time to infer freedom from the existence of the moral law. There is no question that for him freedom "must be the foundation of all moral laws and the consequent responsibility." But, he explains, no inconsistency results from calling "freedom the condition of the moral law" and also maintaining that "the moral law is the condition under which we can first *become conscious* of freedom," if it be understood that "freedom is the *ratio essendi* [ground of being] of the moral law, while the moral law is

the *ratio cognoscendi* [ground of knowing] of freedom."

We know that our will is free from knowing the existence of the moral law. We know that the moral law exists, for otherwise reason could never judge, as it does, that we ought to have done what we did not do. It is not freedom but the moral law "of which we become directly conscious (as soon as we trace for ourselves maxims of the will)." This, Kant says, "first presents itself to us, and leads directly to the concept of freedom." Whenever a man judges that "he can do a certain thing because he is conscious that he ought," then, according to Kant, "he recognizes that he is free, a fact which but for the moral law he would never have known."

The freedom which Kant thinks can be directly deduced from the moral law is a very special kind of causality. In the sensible world of nature, each cause is in turn the effect of some prior cause. None is the first or unconditioned cause, an uncaused cause. But for Kant freedom is "a faculty of absolute spontaneity" and consists in "the unconditioned causality of the cause . . . a causality capable of producing effects independently of and even in opposition to the power of natural causes, and capable, consequently, of *spontaneously* originating a series of events."

How are these two modes of causality—which Kant calls "the causality of *nature* and of *freedom*"—compatible with one another? To affirm both would appear to get us into the antinomy in which the thesis that "causality according to the laws of nature is not the only causality . . . a causality of freedom is also necessary," is contradicted by the antithesis that "there is no such thing as freedom, but everything in the world happens solely according to the laws of nature." Yet Kant thinks he can show that "this antinomy is based upon a mere illusion, and that nature and freedom are at least *not opposed*."

It would be impossible, he admits, "to escape this contradiction if the thinking subject, which seems to itself free, conceived itself in *the same sense* or in *the very same relation* when it calls itself free as when in respect to the same action it assumes itself to be subject to the laws of nature." But the contradiction is only apparent or illusory if man belongs to two worlds—the sensible world of natural phenomena and the supersensible world of intelligible beings or noumena. "The notion of a being that has free will," writes Kant, "is the notion of a *causa noumenon*"—of a cause which does not operate under the temporal conditions of natural causality. "The notion of causality as *physical necessity* . . . concerns only the existence of things so far as it is determinable *in time* and, consequently, as phenomena, in opposition to their causality as things in themselves."

To remove "the apparent contradiction between freedom and the mechanism of nature in one and the same action, we must remember . . . that the necessity of nature, which cannot co-exist with the freedom of the subject, appertains only to the attributes of the thing that is subject to time-conditions, consequently only to those of the acting subject as a phenomenon . . . But the very same subject," Kant continues, "being on the other side conscious of himself as a thing in himself, considers his existence also *in so far as it is not subject to time-conditions*, and regards himself as only determinable by laws which he gives himself through reason."

In the latter mode of supersensible existence, man exercises the causality of a free will. He is not in any way subject to the natural necessity which governs all physical things. Yet the two worlds—the moral world of freedom and the physical world of necessity—meet in the same act. "The rational being," Kant explains, "can justly say of every unlawful action that he performs, that he could very well have left it undone; although as appearance it is sufficiently determined in the past, and in this respect is absolutely necessary."

THE APPARENT CONFLICT between freedom and nature arises for Kant because he conceives the act of free will to be absolutely spontaneous. It is as uncaused as the swerve of the atoms (discussed in the chapter on CHANCE) on which Lucretius bases the existence of free will. There is another conception of freedom that does not attribute to free will any special

character which brings it into conflict with ordinary causality. It does not belong to liberty, Aquinas thinks, that "what is free should be the first cause of itself." Not only is God the ultimate cause of what a man freely chooses to do, as He is the first cause of every natural event, but the will as a natural faculty of man never moves itself to operation. It is always moved by the reason, even in its acts of choice, and so these acts, wherein the will is free, are also caused.

Where Kant identifies will with free will (which implies that the will is free in all its acts), Aquinas distinguishes between those acts of the will which are necessitated and those which are free. He quotes Augustine to the effect that "natural necessity does not take away the liberty of the will," for that liberty exists only in the will's choice of means, not in its volition of the end. "Just as the intellect naturally and of necessity adheres to first principles," Aquinas explains, "so the will adheres to the last end." And just as the intellect assents of necessity to those "propositions which have a necessary connection with first principles, namely, demonstrable conclusions," so the will adheres of necessity only to those things "which have a necessary connection with happiness." With regard to all else—the whole realm of particular goods which are merely contingent means—the will is not necessitated, and so its choice among them is free.

Although Aquinas says that unless man has free choice, "counsels, exhortations, commands, prohibitions, rewards and punishments would be in vain," he does not postulate free will as an indispensable condition of moral conduct. Rather he shows how reason in causing the will's choices at the same time leaves them free. "The root of liberty," he writes, "is the will as the subject thereof, but it is the reason as its cause. For the will can tend freely towards various objects precisely because the reason can have various perceptions of good." When, for example, "the deliberating reason is indifferently disposed to opposite things, the will can be inclined to either." The freedom of the will's choice with respect to particular means thus lies in the fact that, with respect to all contingent matters, "the judgment of reason may follow opposite courses, and is not determinate to one."

"In all particular goods," Aquinas writes, "the reason can consider an aspect of some good and the lack of some good, which has the aspect of evil; and in this respect it can apprehend any single one of such goods as something to be chosen or to be avoided. The perfect good alone, which is happiness, cannot be apprehended by reason as an evil, or lacking in any way. Consequently man wills happiness of necessity, nor can he will not to be happy, or to be unhappy. Now since choice is not of the end, but of the means, it is not of the perfect good, which is happiness, but of particular goods. Therefore, man chooses not of necessity, but freely."

Like Aquinas, Locke holds that "to be determined by our own judgment is no restraint to liberty." But where Locke thinks the "constant determination to a pursuit of happiness, no abridgment of liberty," Aquinas holds that because "man wills happiness of necessity," his will is not free in the volition of its natural end. Yet Locke does mention the case "wherein a man is at liberty in respect of willing"—the case in which "a man may suspend the act of his choice from being determined for or against the thing proposed, till he has examined whether it be really of a nature in itself and consequences to make him happy or not."

In this type of case Aquinas locates what is peculiar to the causality of freedom. Sometimes the judgment of reason is determined by its object, as when it contemplates the final end of actions. But when it deliberates about alternative means (which are both particular and contingent), reason can judge either way. What determines it to judge this way rather than that? Aquinas' answer is that such judgments of the reason are voluntary, in contrast to reason's involuntary assent to self-evident truths, wherein it is determined entirely by the object being considered. But if a voluntary judgment is one in which the will determines the reason's assent, and if reason's judgments concerning means are voluntary in this sense, then the act of the reason which causes the

will's act of choice is itself an act caused by the will. The will's choice is, therefore, not uncaused; but, as Aquinas conceives it, the way in which it is caused makes it self-determining, and to this extent free.

THE GENERAL THEORY OF the will figures most prominently in the theology of Aquinas and in the philosophy of Kant and Hegel. They not only present the most elaborate analyses of its nature and its relation to reason but, in the tradition of the great books, they are the most stalwart defenders of its freedom. Their differences in principle and in reasoning may, however, obsure the common ground they share.

This may be seen in their conception of freedom. Aquinas does not attribute autonomy or spontaneity to the will. Yet in his view of free choice as a self-determining act of the will, there is something analogous to Kant's autonomy; and where Kant makes the pure will essentially free and spontaneous, Aquinas holds that the will, with respect to willing or not willing, is always free and inviolable. It is absolutely within "the power of the will," he writes, "not to act and not to will." He does not try to explain such freedom of exercise in the same way as freedom of choice.

It is only with regard to the latter that Aquinas appeals to the causal reciprocity between reason and will to show how the will's act of choice can be both free and caused. The kind of causation which Aquinas thinks takes place in free choice—the will determining the reason to make the practical judgment by which it is itself determined—seems to involve a circularity, or perhaps simultaneity, in action and reaction. If this is possible only because reason and will are *spiritual* powers, then here too there is some likeness to Kant's theory of the will's action as belonging to the supersensible world rather than to the domain of physical movement.

On one other point, they tend to agree even more plainly. "Free choice," writes Aquinas, "is part of man's dignity." Man's dignity for Kant—his membership in what Kant calls "the kingdom of ends"—is "rendered possible by the freedom of the will." But though they share this opinion of the source of human dignity in rationality and freedom, they do not draw the same moral consequences from their affirmation of free will as pivotal in human life.

Aquinas, like Aristotle, does not find moral goodness only in the will. On the contrary, the rectitude of the will depends on the goodness of the end it adheres to and the means it chooses. But like the Stoics, Kant makes the will the sole repository of moral goodness.

As Epictetus says that all good and evil lie in man's will, and that the morally neutral sphere is "in the region outside the will's control," so Kant begins his moral philosophy with the statement, "Nothing can possibly be conceived in the world, or even out of it, which can be called good without qualification, except a Good Will." In his view, "a good will is good not because of what it performs or effects, not by its aptness for the attainment of some proposed end, but simply by virtue of the volition; that is, it is good in itself." In another place, he adds that "though not indeed the sole and complete good," the will, *good in itself,* "must be the supreme good and the condition of every other, even of the desire of happiness."

These fundamental issues concerning the will in moral philosophy are more fully treated in the chapter on DUTY. The problems of the will in political theory are considered in the chapters on LAW and STATE—especially those problems which involve the concept of the sovereign will and the distinction of the particular will and the general will, the majority will and the will of all. The strictly theological problems concerning God's freedom and man's freedom in relation to God's will are also reserved for treatment elsewhere.