



If your mind goes strolling in a forest, can it choose your direction?

Photo by Marina Priest via Morguefile.com

Are you free? Or is your life pre-determined?

Melrose Park Philosophy Club presents:

**Free Will and Determinism through History will be focus of Jan. 20, 2022
Philosophy Club meeting**

You know that you have Free Will because you feel it. And yet, so much of life seems dependent on chance or predetermined by birth, class, period of history and more. So, what is the true situation?

Philosophers and theologians have wondered about this for millennia. At the January 20, 2022 zoom meeting of our club, Prof. Jeff Berger will be speaking to the Melrose Park Philosophy Club.

in a fast-moving 15-minute tour of the discussions through the ages.

One highlight among many will be the vociferous debate between Martin Luther and Erasmus. He will also touch upon Abrahamic religions, Aristotle, Jean-Paul Sartre, Pereboom (a contemporary philosopher) and others.

Jeff Berger is a Professor of Philosophy at Community College of Philadelphia and a relatively long-time member of our club. After his presentation, there will no doubt be a lively discussion, and you are welcomed to join in!

See Prof. Berger's detailed introduction to the subject below, complete with readings and "watchings."

Here are the details:

Day and date and Time:	Thursday, January 20, 2022
Time:	7 pm
Location:	ZOOM LINK See farther below.
RSVP?	Please do - via email to albfcc@icloud.com

Jeff Berger's Resources on Free Will & Determinism

Prof. Berger suggests that you watch or read whichever of the items below interests you most. Do not be intimidated by how extensive these materials are. Consider it a buffet. Ingest what you like!

Introduction to readings and "watchings" by Jeff Berger:

The free will-determinism problem is a classic problem in philosophy that has a psychological and a theological version. We all believe that we freely choose our actions. But if that were true then we couldn't have a science of psychology. In order for psychologists to be able to predict our behavior, they have to assume that our actions are determined by some combination of genes and environment. But so far there is no problem. We are just wrong in our everyday beliefs.

The problem comes when we realize that without free will we can't hold people responsible for their actions. If our actions are determined by our genes and the environment then we are not responsible for our actions. Now we truly have a philosophical problem because we need to have free will for ethics and we need to have determinism for psychology. We can't have both. So, we are required to give up either ethics or psychology. But we don't want to give up either. In other words, the free will-determinism problem ties us into knots (aporia, which Aristotle claims are the basis for philosophical problems).

The theological version of the problem is dependent on the claim by the Abrahamic religions that God is all-knowing. If God is all-knowing then God

knows the future. In order for God to be able to know the future, the future must already be determined. (Notice that this does not mean that God determines what happens, only that God knows it, although some within the Abrahamic traditions also claim that God determines the future.) If my future is determined then there is only one way that I can behave. So, I only have an illusion of freedom.

Yet, all the Abrahamic religions believe that God judges our behavior, which would be inconsistent with my actions being determined. So, either God doesn't know the future or God can't judge my actions. The Abrahamic religions have to either give up Divine foreknowledge or God's judgment of individuals. However, theology requires that we believe that both are true. Again, we are tied in knots.

In an attempt to unravel this aporia, I will discuss the contributions to the debate of Aristotle, St. Augustine, the Erasmus-Luther Debate, Jean-Paul Sartre, and the contemporary philosopher, Derk Pereboom.

Pereboom.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNqjR33gGNU&ab_channel=SeriousScience

Free will and moral responsibility Derk Pereboom 11:42

Also of interest: Pereboom: (episode 1309)
Does Moral Responsibility Require Free Will? | Episode 1309 | Closer To Truth (26:46)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AMJL22fh-OY>

Aristotle:

Nicomachean Ethics, Book 3, Chapters 1-2.

<http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/nicomachaen.html>

Augustine on Free Will: (an article on free will by Brandon Petersen). 13 pp.

https://sites.nd.edu/ujournal/files/2014/07/Peterson_05-06.pdf

The Luther-Erasmus Debate – see the attached pdf

Jean-Paul Sartre: Existentialism is a Humanism – a powerpoint about Sartre's views on free will

<http://homepages.wmich.edu/~baldner/ehnotes.pdf>

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Albert Fried-Cassorla is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Philosophy meeting on Free Will & Determinism

Time: Jan 20, 2022 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82121600740?pwd=eENoSIVrZ2tOZTFhMUUp6OUF5Rzh4QT09>

Meeting ID: 821 2160 0740

Passcode: 332268

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