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Maturational voluntarism

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MATURATIONAL VOLUNTARISM

A Thesis

Presented To

The Faculty of the Department of Philosophy

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Edward Louis Buchanan IV

August 2004

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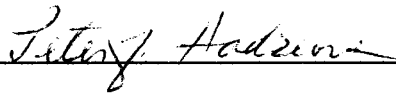
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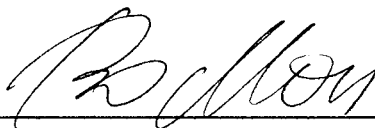
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ABSTRACT

MATURATIONAL VOLUNTARISM

By Edward Louis Buchanan IV

This thesis addresses some of the issues found in metaphysical determinism. It argues against psychological determinism, which claims that people's desires are determined by the uncontrollable factors of genes and the environment infringing upon the will by taking the maturational voluntarism stance. This is the belief that the determined factors of genes and the environment influence the will but do not determine it. People have the ability to deliberate, voluntarily make decisions and control their desires through reasoning. Therefore, people can be held morally accountable for their actions.

This subject is linked to various metaphysical topics like: dualism and the absolute. Although it is a metaphysical issue, it permeates inquiry in fields such as epistemology, ethics and religion. But for the purpose of this paper, the issues addressed will be of ethical, epistemological and metaphysical concern.

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Chapter One

Maturational Voluntarism and Its Relevance

Metaphysics is a field in philosophy which is concerned with the nature of being and reality. It postulates that scientific theories should be questioned, empirically examined and that science is not the ultimate authority for understanding human nature. Various philosophers within the field of metaphysics have attempted to answer questions such as, what separates people from other living creatures? Are people self-autonomous? What is man's purpose on this earth? Do people cease to exist after death? And, do human beings have free will over their actions? This thesis will focus on this last question, which is also in the realm of epistemology because it examines the level of control humans have over their ability to question their beliefs and knowledge.

The debate on free will considers whether or not people have autonomy over their actions. Human autonomy means self-rule or the ability to govern and dictate actions through the will. A will is one's intent and purpose. A person is a self-governor if he or she is the author of his or her actions. A self-governor is free from the constraints of the universe on their will. This means that constraints such as nature, the past or an individual's psyche do not determine human behavior. Rather, people have the ability to control their actions through reasoning.

The question of whether or not people have free will over their actions is linked with personal perception of self. This means that people can either see themselves as the architect of their actions or that their actions are strictly a

product of nature. Many people believe that what separates humans from other sentient creatures is the ability to voluntarily will their actions through reasoning. When making decisions, many individuals view themselves as the primary determiner of their future. This includes the ability to deliberate about choices, to reason and to will actions. Deliberation is "weighing the options" or "making choices" (Thorton 112). If human beings lack free will, and decisions are solely the result of environmental, biological, and social factors, then the perception of being the primary authority over their destiny is incorrect. But, if humans have the ability to voluntarily make choices, which are not completely determined by sociological, environmental, and biological factors, then people are the primary captains of their destiny.

If people do not have the ability to control their actions then the uniqueness of humanity is diminished because individuality can be seen strictly as a manipulation of the genes and the environment, instead of individuals acting out of their own ambition, desire, power and choice.

If people are not the authors of their actions then their actions should not be morally praised or condemned. This means that people should not be seen as being moral creatures or having the ability to choose to do right or wrong because they are not using a free will to choose their actions. Rather the actions that people take should be seen as a product of nature and outside forces.

The assumption of this thesis is that, in order for people to be able to have freedom over their actions, there are several conditions that must be met. First, the person must know that they are actively making a choice. Second, the person

has deliberated over the options. Third, the person is not forced internally or externally to make a choice. Fourth, the person should make a choice based upon his or her own criteria for choosing. Thus, for an action to come from a will that is not compelled, an action must be voluntary, deliberated and not necessary. A voluntary action is one that is not compelled. The agent is not coerced internally or externally to do an action. Rather, the agent chooses to do an action based upon his or her desire or preference for that action. Deliberation is the process of choosing which course of action will be most beneficial to the agent or the collective society. An action chosen from one's preference(s) is free. An involuntary action is one that necessarily occurs from a sufficient condition. For example, if a man is compelled to throw a rock at his neighbor's window due to the conditions of being a manic-depressive, growing up in a violent household and not being able to control his anger, then the action is not free.

Aristotle, who will be considered later in this thesis, distinguishes the difference between people and other sentient creatures. He claims that the difference lies in the ability that people have to exercise virtue in accordance with reason. This means that people can deliberate about their choices, practice and develop virtue through the use of reasoning and develop values.

This thesis supports Aristotle's view that what separates humans from other creatures is the ability to govern actions through reasoning. The term maturational voluntarism will be used to describe this position. Maturational voluntarism is a view, which supports the adaptability and self-autonomy of people. This view claims that people have the ability to adapt and can change

their mindsets and control their actions through reasoning. The ability to reason actions is an indication of free will. If actions are not questioned and vice is allowed to dictate the will then freedom over actions is lost. Thus, freedom of the will matures or develops through the use of reasoning. This thesis maintains the view that human beings have values and the ability to place their values in hierarchical order. Values are used in all human endeavors, and are a primary dictator of the actions pursued. The values that individuals have are based upon their desires. Genes and the environment are uncontrollable factors that help determine desires. But individuals have the ability to control their desires and practice virtue through the use of reasoning, which develops over time.

As previously mentioned, there are determined factors in each individual's life such as, genes, the environment and natural physiological responses to stimuli. This thesis will refer to these natural physiological responses as primal passions. Passions are "[...] perceptions or sensations or excitations of the soul which are referred to in particular and which are caused, maintained and strengthened by some movement of the spirits" (Descartes 23). These passions guide each individual with how to interact within the environment. They are essential for survival and are tied to situations and contexts. For example, if a person sees a bull up close and in person for the first time, certain chemical reactions may develop such as an accelerated heart rate, body tremors and hot flashes. These are natural reactions attributed to reflexes, feelings, and emotions stimulated by sensory data. Other examples of natural reflexes are blinking, crying, screaming and yawning. Blinking is a natural reflex because when

something foreign or potentially aversive comes towards a person's eye they naturally blink. A newborn baby does not have the ability to communicate with words but communicates by other means. Newborn babies typically cry or scream and communicate through their emotions that they are hungry, tired, thirsty, sick or upset. Individuals naturally yawn when they are tired or feel light-headed. These involuntary behaviors are only a subset of the human behaviors that exist. People can control their primal passions through habituating their emotions.

Humans are able to habituate their primal passions by using preventive methods. For example, individuals will set meal times and eat around a time when their body needs energy to avoid feeling weak or light-headed. They will rest a certain amount of hours so that they do not feel irritated or tired. As humans grow older, they are able to use reasoning to control their thoughts to a greater degree. For example, a young child may naturally scream at the sight of something that scares them. But, as they get older, what initially scared them may not scare them anymore because they can use reasoning to control their emotions to a greater degree and develop different associations with their thoughts.

Human beings are not the only creatures that can reason but their ability to reason is more sophisticated than that of other sentient creatures. For example, non-human sentient creatures do not have the ability to make long-term plans. When creatures such as, gorillas, monkeys, dogs, whales, etc. reason about what they are going to do, they do so in their immediate time frame and surroundings. On the other hand, humans not only have daily goals but also

yearly and multi-yearly goals. Often, children at a very young age are encouraged to consider thinking about their future occupations through the assistance of their parents, teachers, or friends. Common examples include children who want to grow up to be athletes or dancers and their parents enroll them in sports or dance classes. A less common example would be the famous composer Mozart, whose talent was spotted and developed at a very young age. He had the ability to create whole symphonies within an hour. At the age of three, Mozart conducted his first orchestra. He eventually became known as one of the most brilliant musicians of all time. Plato believed that children should be placed in schools so that their talents could be seen and developed. He claimed that those children who have the potential to be future rulers should be given more nurturing while in school in order for their talents to be developed. This is to ensure that people know their societal roles and develop abilities that can be contributed to society.

The intent of the maturational voluntarism position is to show that people have autonomy over their actions. There are uncontrollable aspects in individual's lives that influence who they become, such as innate reflexes, genes and the environment. But these factors do not wholly determine the will because individuals have the ability to reason about their desires, change their world-views and control their actions.

The intent of this position is also to show that people should be held morally accountable for their actions because they have the ability to choose how they live. People act based upon their will. The will of an individual is a reflection

of his or her character. Thus, actions should be condemned or praised because they are a reflection of individual character. The values that people learn at a young age often change as they grow older and develop different world-views.

As people become more exposed to the world, they develop different values and mindsets.

Overview

The purpose of this section is to introduce some of the pertinent arguments and viewpoints in the free will versus determinism debate. It will be shown how these viewpoints do not sufficiently explain the controversy surrounding the human ability to freely make decisions when factors appear to determine and control human behavior. In an attempt to more sufficiently explain some of these issues, the position of maturational voluntarism will be defended. The primary question that will be addressed and expanded on in this thesis is whether or not people have free will over their actions although there are uncontrollable factors that influence the will. As previously mentioned, maturational voluntarism is the view that there are certain events and factors outside of human control such as, birth, talents, environmental upbringing, etc. which influence the criteria used in human decision making but do not determine it. Decisions can be freely made through the ability to reason. And, since humans have the ability to deliberate and make choices they can be held morally accountable for their actions.

As previously mentioned, Maturational voluntarism is a view, which supports the adaptability and self-autonomy of human beings. Humans have the ability to adapt. They can change their mindset and control their actions through reasoning. Each person is the author of their actions and has self-autonomy. Each individual has the power to will and control their actions. People are not robots, but are responsible for their lives.

In contrast to maturational voluntarism, determinism posits that decisions are not freely made. There are various types of determinism such as, hard, soft and psychological which will be briefly discussed but only psychological determinism will be fully expanded on and argued against in this thesis. Psychological determinism is the viewpoint that genes and the environment are uncontrollable factors that determine human desires, values and interests. Individuals' behavior is based upon their desires, values or interests. Thus, actions are determined because people cannot control the factors, which produced their desires. Maturational voluntarism, however, maintains that people can question their desires. Humans have the ability to examine their beliefs, desires and emotions as well as the events that have lead up to these feelings and thoughts. Before an individual acts, they deliberate and choose actions based upon their volition or desires.

Hard determinism expresses the view that human conduct is the result of a causal relationship with the universe. Nature governs desires, alternatives, viewpoints, genes and environmental backgrounds. Humans are mere machines programmed to think, feel, and act. Nature is the author of people's actions because people do not have the ability to rationally will their own actions. Hard determinism has a skeptical account of human potential. Individuals are viewed as strictly mechanical and bounded by the laws of nature. The human will is devalued because preferences or desires are strictly the result of nature infringing upon it. In a sense, individuals are placed in the same realm as a computer or

other machine because individuals are programmed to act. There is no moral accountability for actions because there is no human entitlement to preferences.

Maturational voluntarism differs from hard determinism regarding its stance on human autonomy. According to maturational voluntarism, people are more than just a byproduct of their genes and environment. Although individuals are not completely free from the constraints of the universe on their will, they can still work within determined criteria (genes and the environment) through reasoning to produce voluntary actions from a free will. Individuals deliberate about their choices and choose actions based upon the order of their volition. People have certain natural emotions. But, individuals can change their feelings through the use of reasoning. Self-perceptions change as a result of questioning, examining and acting upon desires. Hence, if an individual decides to live a life of doing good deeds and of altruism, he or she will develop the virtues of empathy, and generosity. But if an individual chooses less noble goals and prefers more self-serving goals of acquiring wealth at whatever the cost then he or she is more likely to develop vices of dishonesty and untrustworthiness. Therefore, individuals should be held accountable for their actions because they can choose to practice virtue or vice.

Soft determinism is often labeled compatibilism. This view claims that all factors in an individual's life such as, genes, the environment and the past are determined. As a result an individual's desires, emotions and will are determined. The actions that an individual takes stems from his or her will which has been

Maturational voluntarism is opposed to this view because it believes that people have a higher degree of freedom. Individuals are not compelled to act by their desires or emotions. The human will is influenced by their desires but not determined. Individuals are not compelled to act because they have the ability to reason about their emotions and desires.

In contrast to determinism, libertarianism is a view posited by those who believe that people do have free will. This view claims that people voluntarily choose their actions. People choose an action based upon their desires, which are not wholly determined by social, biological, and environmental factors. Human beings have a rational nature, which includes the ability to judge and decide which actions to pursue. If people are not able to use judgement or exercise free will, then they are just creatures that act merely instinctually and do not make volitional decisions. People are able to reflect on their desires and beliefs and then to form judgements concerning these desires and beliefs. For example, if a person wants to go to the movies, but has a test the next day, the decision that this person makes will ultimately be based upon his or her own volition. This person may want to go to the movies, but studying may take precedence over going to the movies because performing well on the test will be more beneficial to him or her in the future.

Maturational voluntarism does not agree with libertarianism.

Libertarianism maintains that being both determined and having free will are not compatible. They believe that human decision making is entirely free, and, if

exist. Seemingly, people make choices that are rational, conscious and voluntary. Therefore, people are entirely free to make the decisions that they make. Maturational voluntarism disagrees with this view and upholds the view that despite some of the factors that influence human behavior, free will exists because of the human ability to reason. People have free will because they are able to make conscious, rational decisions.

In summary, this section introduced the reader to some of the various viewpoints that are in the free will versus determinism debate. Maturational voluntarism is the view taken in this thesis, which supports the claim that there are determining factors that influence human decision-making such as genes, natural abilities and the environment. However, these factors do not control the decisions that people make because they have the ability to reason about their desires. Human beings voluntarily will their actions and must take moral responsibility for the consequences of their actions.

The remainder of this paper will further explore this debate and explore the position of maturational voluntarism. There will be examples given from the Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle's virtues and Descartes' Passions, to argue against psychological determinism and to support the claim that people are able to control their emotions or desires through their ability to reason about their emotions and exercise virtue. Second, arguments against Humean empiricism will be presented to show that people can deliberate about options and voluntarily

Chapter Two

Aristotle's Habituation of Virtues

The purpose of this section is to argue against psychological determinism by using Aristotle's view on ethics to support maturational voluntarism. Aristotle holds the view that people can control their desires through their ability to reason. Although people have certain inherited emotions or desires, people can control their desires and determine who they become through their choices. According to Aristotle, individuals develop their dispositions through voluntary actions. He claims that people should be held morally accountable for their actions because they choose to become either good or evil by practicing virtue or vices. Actions can be seen as praiseworthy or condemnable because they are a reflection of personal character. It is the choice of the individual to decide how he or she wants to live his or her life. A person's actions are not determined because they stem from individual will and reasoning.

Aristotle claims that people can reason about their emotions and exercise virtue. Aristotle speaks of two types of virtues: intellectual and moral. Both of these virtues require time, study, and effort to be developed. To Aristotle, living a virtuous life is one of excellence. He believes that every art and inquiry aims at some good. For example, the art of weight-lifting aims at gaining strength, the art of shipbuilding aims at voyaging, and the art of medicine aims at health. Every human being aims at well being. Well-being for humans differs from other creatures because they have different functions. The function of man is an

within reason. "Putting all this together then, we find that the good of man is an activity of his soul in accordance with virtue, or if there be more than one, in accordance with the best and most complete virtue" (Biffle 27). Thus, Aristotle is proposing that not only do people have free will, but also free will is an essential quality to being human and using this free will to develop human dispositions. It is the ability to rationally choose to follow or weed out desires by using free will, which separates people from other creatures.

As previously mentioned, maturational voluntarism upholds the belief that people have free will because they can deliberate among options. Similarly, Aristotle claims that in order to practice virtue, people must be presented with options. People must be able to deliberate and then voluntarily choose. If people do not have the choice to make moral decisions because their values are determined, then virtue does not exist. A moral choice is the decision to avoid evil or accept good. It involves prior deliberation and conforms with right reason. Aristotle claims that in order to become virtuous, one must practice virtue. The virtues that Aristotle considers includes: courage, temperance, confidence, generosity, and patience. One must practice these virtues within reason, avoiding excess or deficiency to become virtuous. Virtue is moderation between the two extremes of excess and deficiency. In practice, excess or deficiency constitutes vice. For example, if an individual practices courage to excess, then he or she will become fool-hearted because he or she will get involved in unnecessary dangerous situations. However, if an individual practices courage deficiently,

are called for. But, if one practices courage in moderation then one will become brave.

As previously stated, in order to become virtuous one must train. Those who are able to practice virtue in moderation, develop good dispositions. In order to have a good disposition and a strong moderation, one must sacrifice immediate pleasures. For example, if a human being wanted to be a giving type of person but gave everything they owned away, then one would not be able to live comfortably. But, if one gave nothing away or only thought about oneself, then one would become self-centered and thrifty. Thus, one must sacrifice some extra accessories if they want to develop a reasonably giving character.

Aristotle speaks of appetites and aversions, which draws a person to act. An appetite is something that a person is drawn to through their rational element. An aversion is something that a person draws away from due to their rational element. To Aristotle, the rational element is the intellect of the soul. The soul is what a person thinks, reasons, and practices virtue with. A person can exercise his or her rational element with true excellence through habituating virtues. This is why it can be shown that people are not forced to internally make a choice and make choices based upon their criteria for choosing, which are two criteria necessary for a choice to be free as stated on page three of this thesis. It is the ability to choose, which allows others to deem individual's actions as praiseworthy or condemnable. "Now praise or blame is given only to what is voluntary; whatever is involuntary receives pardon and sometimes even pity" (Biffle 72).

accountable for their actions because they do not have autonomy over them. "We must contend that man is not the originator and the parent of his actions as he is parent of his children" (Biffle 64). Thus, according to this reasoning, no person can be blamed for any wrongdoing or praised for any good action. People are just a byproduct of their environment and genes. But, it can be shown, that sometimes actions are deemed praiseworthy because the person has gone through heavy adversity or a great amount of pain in order to get their desired results. And, at other times, people's actions are condemnable, because they act either out of ignorance, pride, hatred, greed, or selfishness.

Aristotle claims that for an act to be voluntary, it entails having knowledge of the circumstances, the deed, and of oneself. If any one of these factors is missing, then the act is not voluntary. A person will always know who they are unless one of the following conditions occurs: they are comatose, they are heavily sedated (drugged) or they are unconscious. This is why it can be shown that people have the ability to know that they are making a choice and can deliberate over the options, which are two necessary criteria for a choice to be considered free. If a person were under one of these conditions, he or she would not be able to perform an action in the first place. If a person is conscious and chooses among options, then the act is voluntary. A person, who voluntarily chooses among options, has some knowledge of the choices and the circumstances while making those choices. "A voluntary act is one that is initiated by the doer with knowledge of the particular circumstances of the act" (Biffle 73). If a person does

not voluntary because they do not really understand the choice they are making. This is not saying that a person has to know the full circumstances of an action while making a choice. For the agent still has an understanding that the action(s) he or she may take can have either positive or negative consequences. Instead, it is claiming that the agent has to have an understanding of the possible risks or advantages an action may reap.

To Aristotle, people who use practical and theoretical reasoning exercise the highest form of happiness. It is through practical and theoretical reasoning, that one recognizes the reality of metaphysical objects and of the human ability to discern truth. Using practical and theoretical reasoning is divine to mankind, because exercising virtues within reason is man's highest ability. "If, then reason is divine compared with man, the life that consists in the exercise of reason will also be divine in comparison with human life" (Biffle 140). It is only through practical and theoretical reasoning that individuals can fulfill their primary function, which is living to improve their souls by practicing virtue. Practical and theoretical reasoning helps people to see their purpose and instructs them on how to fulfill their purpose.

As previously mentioned, maturational voluntarism upholds the belief that human behavior is not wholly necessitated by nature because people rationally choose their actions. Similarly, Aristotle does not believe that people's actions are inevitable. He claims that people have the power to say "yes" or "no" to an action. It is within a person's power of choice to decide which action to

that shapes his or her own disposition. For example, if a person wills to drink everyday, then this person will become an alcoholic. Or, if a person wills to do unjust things, then they will become unjust. To Aristotle, nature does not determine a person's character. Rather, it is the individual's will that determines who he or she becomes.

To Aristotle, there is a difference between "desire" and "willing." Aristotle believes that desire is what leads to willing an action. Desire is a person's appetite or inclination towards something. There are natural desires that people are born with, such as, desires for food, water, sleep, and shelter. But a person is not born with their moral desires. Instead, moral desires are formed by habit. To the moral or noble man, what the non-virtuous person desires is ignoble. For it is a person's character, which is formed by either the virtues or vices they practice, which determine what they desire. A person, who does not practice virtue, follows their desires and does not exercise control over them. But even the desires that a certain individual has can change based upon the activities that he or she chooses to pursue. The virtuous person is able to exercise control over their desires and is able to choose those actions, which they find to be most beneficial. The ignoble person does have the ability to choose to obey their desires or not. However, it is harder for them to turn down their desires because they are not disciplined.

Aristotle believes that people have powers of reasoning and can evaluate their reasoning. As mentioned above, he believes that being able to reason and

commit certain acts, they are able to evaluate their actions. They look at their actions, and the circumstances that led them to act in the manner in which they acted. People often look in retrospect and feel anger or guilt for acting in a certain way. This is one reason why Aristotle claims that people can control their passions and practice virtue. People are able to put their volitions in order of importance. Thus, the personalities that people have can be attributed to the development of certain traits that have been habituated. For example, a person may have the desire to rob a bank to get money. But, this person may also have the desire to want to be a good role model for his or her younger brother. So, this person opts to not rob the bank because he or she finds that it is in their best long-term interest to not do so.

When people continually make choices that are in their long-term best interest, this leads to the development of virtue. Virtue enables a person to live a productive life that is beneficial to him or herself and to society. For example, if a person has the virtue of generosity, then they will benefit society because they will work to improve it and assist others who are needy.

Psychological determinism claims that the actions that people choose are inevitable because people cannot control the factors that led to the desires that they have. Thus, people cannot control their futures. However, psychological determinism fails to mention the above arguments of maturational voluntarism and Aristotle against inevitability: people's ability to deliberate, reason about their volition and change the order of their volition. If the future is independent

And according to this reasoning, it is nature that is the ultimate authority of people's lives. This means that a person's actions are futile and pointless. If this is the case, then human activity is not to be blamed for what occurs in the world because people cannot control their desires. However, it is shown that people can change their desires and the order of their desires. For example, there are many people who are recovering alcoholics. Prior to alcohol recovery, a person usually suffers physical, mental and social hardships. In fact, some people lose their families, jobs and get physical illnesses due to alcohol addiction. However, some people are able to overcome their alcohol addiction through willing to overcome it. Some of these people do this by choosing that it is more important for them to have control over their drinking than over their desire for alcohol. Similarly, there are other people who are obese and enjoy eating a lot of unhealthy foods. But there are some obese people in when the desire to eat a lot of unhealthy foods is outweighed by the desire to lose weight. Many of these people are able to change their lifestyles by exercising and eating healthful foods.

To Aristotle, one human determinant is seeking pleasure. He believes that people physiologically pursue pleasure because they are hard wired to want to be happy. People want to be in their natural states and pleasure based activities leads them to this state. But, people do not pursue the same activities to get to that state. Each person is a unique individual, with different interests. Some people enjoy playing instruments, while others read novels or play sports to be in their natural states. Having the desire to seek pleasure may be determined, but

being able to choose activities in which people gain pleasure is individual. People also share the ability of being able to reason about their emotions. But as mentioned above, Aristotle claims that a person's character is formed by the virtues or vices he or she practices, which then determine desires. But desires often change and the activities that people engage in change, as well. For example, a child may enjoy playing video games the most to get to their natural state. But as this child grows older, he or she may enjoy another activity the most to get to their natural states such as reading a book, playing video games or playing a sport. Desires change as people reason about their desires and how beneficial their desires are to them.

Through considering Aristotelian analyses, this section showed that despite determined factors in an individual's life a person still has the ability to voluntarily choose how he or she wants to live. People can change their desires and preferences based upon reasoning of what type of person they want to become. This in effect shapes the will, leads to action, and determines the individual disposition.

René Descartes' - Controlling Passions

The purpose of this section is to further argue against psychological determinism by presenting Descartes' views on the human ability to control desires or passions through reasoning, which is similar to the maturational voluntarist stance. Through reasoning, people also have the ability to develop

their dispositions and decide who they want to become. The primal emotions that people feel towards certain objects are determined. But, people have the ability to reason about their emotions and develop new associations with their desires through habituation, which changes the emotions and thoughts linked to these desires. Only people who have the desire to want to control their passions will choose to habituate their emotions and develop virtues.

Like Aristotle, René Descartes believes that people can control their passions through their ability to reason. Descartes is a dualist, which means that he believes that there are two separate realities: the mind and the body. The mind and the body are separate substances but interact and affect one another. The mind is of spiritual substance and the body is of physical substance. The dualist uses the mind and soul interchangeably. The mind is the center of consciousness. The body is divisible, but the mind is not. Descartes believes that people can question the existence of their bodies, as well as that of sensory objects because a demon may be deceiving them into thinking they live in a world in which they do not. But to Descartes, people are not deceived with their ability to think. An individual's existence is confirmed through their ability to think.

René Descartes claims that the separate entities of the mind and the body interact at the pineal gland. The pineal gland is affected by animal spirits, which alters motion in the brain and affects the body. The motions in the brain that people feel become passions. Passions are emotions and sensations, which have been produced through sensory objects. Passions stem not only from sensations,

but also from imaging and memories. Passions appear within people's thoughts and produce physiological responses. For example, if a person sees a bull for the first time, he or she may become fearful. The emotion of fear will produce changes, such as causing a person's heart to beat faster than normal, sweaty hands, muscle tension, glazed eyes, and shaking. These are natural physiological responses that are produced in an agent when a sensory object appears to the person that may endanger them. Another example is when adrenaline is produced when people are about to engage in a physical altercation or a daring act. Adrenaline functions to stir excitement, block some elements of both fear and pain, as well as increase physical strength by almost two times the normal limit.

Descartes believes that people are conscious of their immaterial emotions. He states that physical processes conjure up passions. The physical process of passions occurs through the working of animal spirits moving from the brain to the heart and throughout the blood stream. This in effect produces the passions that people feel.

Descartes holds a view on controlling passions similar to that of maturational voluntarism. As previously mentioned, maturational voluntarism is the belief that people can change their desires through questioning and examining their emotions or beliefs through reasoning. Descartes does not argue that the physiological responses produced are natural, but he does argue against people not being able to control their passions. He claims that people can habituate their emotions. The process he describes is similar to a theory in

psychology called classical conditioning. "And here it is useful to know that-as had already been said above although each movement of the gland seems to have been joined by nature to each of our thoughts from the beginning of our life, one can nevertheless join them to others by habituation" (Descartes 48). Thus, people have the ability to control the associations that they have with certain objects and subsequently their actions.

Classical conditioning is an adaptation of stimuli-response to certain objects through new associations with those objects. For example, a person likes to eat sweets and so salivates at the sight of ice cream. If this person begins to associate gaining weight and unhealthful of eating with ice cream, then he or she will associate new negative thoughts and emotions with eating ice cream. This will produce different physiological responses within the person. Isaac Pavlov did a stimuli-response study with dogs using classical conditioning. He rang a bell, which told the dogs to come and eat. The dogs became so conditioned to eat by the sound of the bell, that they began to salivate at the mere sound of it. Similarly, Descartes gives an example of classical conditioning with dogs. He speaks of the ability to train a dog's emotions through habituation. People have the ability to train their dogs to obey their commands, such as to sit, shake hands, stop and walk when told to, etc.

Just as Descartes speaks of being able to habituate the emotions of dogs, he also speaks of the human ability to habituate their own emotions. He claims that the generous man is able to control his passions. The generous man does not let

his passions overtake him or dictate his life. He is able to reason about his emotions and follow those passions that are useful to him. As mentioned above, humans are able to reason about their emotions through habituation. A generous person, who is educated and wise, knows which passions are useful. This person can habituate their thoughts with positive associations of useful passions, and then practice these passions. Thus, they do not become victims of their own passions.

Descartes mentions that people not only reason about their emotions, but exercise virtue as a remedy for their passions. Those who are able to reason about their emotions, exercise virtue. People who are virtuous tend to be generous. This means that they are not overtaken by their desires, due to their intellect and self-control. In fact, this type of person helps society because they find it in their own best interest to help others. "They are masters of their passions, and use their desires for both their own benefit and for the benefit of society. And along with this, they are entirely masters of their Passions..."(Descartes 105). Their passions are tools that they use for their own pleasure. Thus, people have the ability to control their passions if they choose to.

If psychological determinism is correct about people not being able to control their desires then the judicial system is not just because people cannot be morally held accountable for their actions. People can just be considered the summation of a determined-naturalistic world and have no sovereignty over their lives. Individuals should no longer be considered rational beings, because they

do self-reflect, deliberate, make judgements or reason. It is nature that does all of these things for people.

Like René Descartes, the judicial system models its laws under the assumption that people can reason about and control their passions and are socially responsible for their actions. In criminal law, there are premeditated, voluntary and involuntary manslaughter laws. Premeditated crimes are those in which the assailant planned out or devised a murder, before it was committed. Voluntary manslaughter is not always premeditated, but is a wanton and willful act. This means that the person with his or her own autonomy and will chose to take the life of another. Involuntary manslaughter is a killing done unwillingly. For example, a drunk driver may kill a car-full of people not willingly but due to being intoxicated and reckless driving. This person under the court of law, would not be considered a murderer but guilty of the deaths of the people. This person would not be found guilty of murder because there is no proof of malice or a willfulness to kill.

There are times when people justify their criminal acts by claiming that they could not control their emotions at the time they committed the act. However, their emotions do not physically force them to act. Emotions may inspire or encourage people to act in a certain manner, but they do not cause involuntary action. People, who claim that their emotions forced them to act in a certain manner, are really saying that they chose to act out of compulsion. These people chose to let their emotions dictate their actions, rather than control them.

For example, a man accidentally throws a ball at another man's face and hits him while playing a baseball game. Out of retaliation, the man who was first hit with the ball hits the other man and knocks him out. Later, the man who retaliated is apologetic about his actions, but defends his actions by saying that he did not know whether or not the man accidentally hit him and that his uncontrollable rage led him to retaliate. This man is proposing that his rage blinded his ability to keep his composure and reason about his emotions. However, there is an inconsistency in this statement because he claims that he is conscious of what led to his anger. He understands that the sufficient condition of the ball hitting him led to his anger and retaliation against the man. This shows that he has both an understanding of his emotions and a consciousness of them. It also shows that he chose to exercise his rage and hit the man, rather than control his anger.

The psychological determinist premise that emotions compel people to act involuntarily assumes that emotions are beyond human control. However, people respond to the same situations in different ways. For example, in the previous case mentioned, there are people who would not have hit the man or would have asked, "what is going on?" Others would have waited a few moments to think about what to do or even may have done nothing at all. In fact, the same person does not always respond to the same situations in the same manner. For example, say that some person hits the man in the baseball case mentioned above, again the following week. This man is not going to necessarily act out violently the next

time around. He may not do anything at all. Instead, he may reflect on his behavior from the previous week and chose to react differently.

There are times when people commit certain acts that do not seem to match their character. A plausible reason is that prior to action, there are different desires that a person is battling with and a person does not necessarily always act from the same desire. For example, when a crime is committed, a person chooses to risk receiving possible punishment, in order to fulfill a present desire. But, others may commit crimes for other reasons.

As stated above, one can have free-will despite determined antecedent causes. For example, a man takes a subway to work everyday. One day, a robber encounters this man and tries to take his wallet. In self-defense, this man gets out a gun and kills the robber. In court, the man may claim that he was not rational because he was filled with fear of losing his life, which overran his ability to reason. But, prior to this incident, the man knew the consequences of manslaughter. He also knows the potential risks involved in public transportation and in carrying a gun. Furthermore, he was deliberating at the time of the crisis what to do. Thus, it is shown that the man could have avoided killing the other man.

The government takes the stance that people have the ability to reason about their passions. There are people with varying problems such as anger-management, alcohol abuse, and emotional disturbance. These people often seek counseling or therapy to control their problems. For example, there are people

who have anger problems but seek professional help to cope with their anger. An adult may still feel a lot of resentment and anger towards being abandoned by their parents as a child. This person may be able to decrease some of their feelings of anger and resentment through psychotherapy. Psychotherapy is a process of investigating unconscious mental processes. It is also the "treatment of psychological distress techniques that rely heavily on verbal and emotional communication and other symbolic behavior" (Freud 365). A psychotherapist helps people to alleviate feelings of anger and resentment through various techniques such as relaxation, breathing, and avoiding situations that trigger anger. There are various anger-management classes that people go to help in the following manner: coping with anger, focusing on the positive aspects of misfortunes and speaking coherently and logically about problems.

There are many people who had alcohol abuse problems who were able to stop their dependency. Many of these people have been able to fight their addiction through strong will power. These people have habituated their thoughts of enjoyment of alcohol to thoughts of its harmful affects. The fight to overcome addiction is hard because people often go through withdrawal symptoms. People will develop these symptoms because their body has developed a dependency to that drug. However, the body fights dependency through abstinence and low levels of alcohol use. The less a person drinks, the lower that person's dependency of that drug becomes.

This section argued against psychological determinism by showing that people have the ability to control their desires through a renewal of thought(s) linked to certain objects. This is a very crucial point in the argument of free will because it is intended to show that people have the ability to develop their characters through willing their actions and deciding who they want to become. Humans can change the associations that they have with objects or thoughts through habituation. Habituation is a process whereby people train their will to develop their desired virtues or character traits. Individuals reason about their desires and think about how beneficial their desires are to them. Afterwards, people will their actions, which determine who they become.

Chapter Three

Humean Empiricism-A Criticism Against Its Account Of Reasoning

The purpose of this final section is to argue against Humean empiricism, which is a view similar to psychological determinism. Humean empiricism claims that human beliefs and desires have been developed by nature. This view will be argued against by supporting maturational voluntarism, which states that people have the ability to question beliefs and form new perceptions. Humans have the ability to change perspectives by examining their thoughts, values and ideas. Nature is foundational in shaping human perception of objects. But human beings have the ability to examine perceptions and develop new ideas. Thus, nature does not limit a person's free will or inhibit an individual's ability to

reason about beliefs. Rather, people can freely think about their desires and are responsible for their actions.

David Hume argued against necessary connection. He is famous for arguing against cause and effect. His views support the existence of human freedom because of his denial of a necessary connection between events. Thus, according to his view, there is no link between a prior event and a subsequent one.

David Hume has beliefs similar to psychological determinism because he places heavy emphasis on an individual's beliefs and desires being formed by habit. He is an empiricist. Empiricism is the belief that all knowledge originates in sensory experience. People have impressions of the objects that they see but not accurate ideas. People receive sensations or impressions in their souls once they interact with external stimuli. David Hume gives a physiological account of passions. He divides impressions into two kinds: those of sensation and those of reflection. People receive impressions through their interaction with the environment, reflect on these sensations, and then generate ideas about them. The judgements that people make about these objects will either lead to an aversion or desire for these objects. Depending upon the individual, the judgements of these objects will differ.

Hume believes that morality is subjective and cannot be discovered in nature. Morality does not derive from intuitive reasoning but from active passions. People decide what they feel is good or evil based upon what they feel

nature is telling them. Depending upon the individual, nature will have different accounts of what is good or evil. This is because people have different dispositions. One individual will find stealing to be morally permissible, while another individual will find it reprehensible. It is individual sentiment and inward emotions derived from personal perception that make an action right or wrong. Therefore, to condemn or approve character is a matter of taste. "To approve of one's character, to condemn another, are so many different perceptions" (Hume 29).

Vice and virtue is based upon individual perception. There is no universal ethical code because there is no moral correlation that exists among individual passions and that of external objects. Furthermore, it cannot be shown that the affects of this relation of ideas will universally be the same. Thus, moral good and evil belong only to the perception of an individual's mind.

Although David Hume does not believe that objective morality exists, he believes that people are not entirely victims to their passions and can control some of the reflective passions they have through reasoning. The original impressions or passions that people receive arise in the soul by sensory data. Reflective impressions occur in the mind as a result of the received sensory data. Hume divides the reflective passions into two kinds: calm and violent. Calm passions produce little emotion in the mind, whereas violent passions produce great emotions. Some examples of calm passions are the sense of beauty and composition. Examples of violent passions are love and hatred, or grief and joy.

Calm passions derive and proceed from the faculty of reason. People can control and reflect on these calm passions and make decisions based upon reasoning. For example, a person may decide to help a person who is blind cross the street. The decision that this person makes is based upon his or her own moral character.

Some people can control or combat their violent passions with their calm passions. The moral basis that people have is influenced by what they perceive to be true or false. What is perceived to be true or false is derived from how individuals feel nature is telling them to act.

Maturationism disagrees with Humean empiricism because it gives a very limited account of the human ability to reason about passions. The feelings or emotions that people have towards certain objects, situations or thoughts are very complex and can undergo change. David Hume's account of how people reflect on their impressions is strictly physiological. People receive impressions and reflect on them once they have interacted with the environment. This view leaves out the ability that people have to change their perspectives and feelings towards objects that they have encountered. For example, hypothetically speaking, a nine-year old girl encounters a dog and feels frightened. A year later, this girl may encounter a dog and her feelings of fright may change to joy. This girl may even just think about the encounter she had with this dog and her feelings toward it may change. David Hume's account of passions also does not mention that there are times when people feel various emotions towards an object

that they first encounter. For example, a child may feel both scared and excited about going on a roller coast ride.

In a contemporary context, Daniel Dennett, believes that science is an important frame of reference for understanding the freedom that people have over their actions. This is similar to maturational voluntarism because both espouse the human ability to control actions through reasoning. Daniel Dennett claims that people can monitor and control their desires and behavior. He believes that genetics and the environment influences behavior but does not necessitate human actions. People are constantly questioning their desires and the reasoning behind those desires, which is why some people's desires change over time. "...We are the authors and executors of those policies, even though they are compiled from parts we can only indirectly monitor and control" (Dennett 99). Thus, Daniel Dennett is claiming that people's actions derive from their desires, which can be controlled by reason.

Maturational voluntarism postulates that people are not limited to their genetic makeup or environmental upbringing. These are facets that makeup individuality, but do not necessitate actions. Human desires are constantly changing. As people grow older, they grow in knowledge and their world-perspectives change. As a result, their perceptions change, as well as, desires. A child may desire to play with toys and eat candy. But, as the child grows into an adult, they may desire to have a good income and live in a nice neighborhood

with a beautiful family. Thus, it is shown that people's desires do not remain constant but change as their mental framework changes.

Maturational voluntarism does not deny that people develop perceptions of the world at an early age; and, the environment in which one grows up in, has a huge influence on the perception that is developed. But, this does not mean that a person can not develop a new perception or world-view. One example, which, supports this view is Eva Hoffman, the author of the book Lost In Translation. In this book, Eva speaks of her early childhood growing up in Poland during a time of war. Eva speaks of her experiences in Poland and the difficulties of moving to Canada where she has to adjust to a brand new culture. It is difficult for Eva to adjust because the English language and the perception attached to the words are completely different from the Polish she is accustomed to speaking. She does not understand the connotation of words from a Canadian perspective because she has not grown up within that environment. Eva can only look at words such as "river" or "snake" and identify them from a Polish connotation. Yet, she is in Canada and is developing a new perception of the world. Eva is in an internal conflict because she wants to develop a Canadian world-view so she can understand her environment; yet, she does not want to lose her Polish voice, as well. Thus, she expresses her discomfort for not being able to understand the Canadian connotation of words and decides to try to reconcile her Canadian and Polish voices.

Eva Hoffman is able to reconcile both her Canadian and Polish voices after she moves to America. Throughout the course of her life, she daily re-examines her feelings and beliefs. She relives each of the moments in her life to try and better understand who she is, her feelings, and her life perspectives. She sees the beauty of her past and how it has helped her become who she is. She is able to take control of her past by reconciling her beliefs and reasoning about them. Eva feels confident and comfortable with whom she is because she understands the difference between her own voice and that of societies. "I learn to measure myself against no one and to feel at home everywhere" (Hoffman 142). It is through contemplation that she understands who she is and why she looks at the world as she does. She is at peace because she does not feel that she has to become like any other person to feel confident and happy about herself.

Maturational voluntarism holds that the Humean empiricism view of human reasoning is not compatible with what is experienced daily of people being able to continually change their beliefs and test them. In science, theories are constantly being tested, re-tested and built upon by other scientists. For example, Copernicus discovered that the earth rotates daily on its axis and revolves yearly around the sun. But, both Aristotle and Ptolemy, prior to Copernicus, claimed that the earth was fixed and stable, which led Copernicus to use his reasoning to see the flaws of their theories and discover his own. Both Galileo and Kepler accepted the Copernican system. His system enabled both Galileo and Kepler to make their scientific contributions. Galileo discovered sunspots, lunar mountains

and valleys and the four largest satellites of Jupiter. Followed by this was Kepler, who discovered that planets move in ellipses around the sun.

There are many other examples of people questioning their beliefs or those of the majority. For example, during the fifteenth century, a great majority of the world thought that the world was flat. But, Christopher Columbus questioned this view and discovered that the world is not flat. Another example is during the early nineteenth century, scientists had a shared standard of light as being propagated as a transverse wave. They claimed that there was a medium called ether that allowed for the transmission of waves. Currently, the standard of light has changed through the work of scientists such as Albert Michelson, Edward Morley, and James Maxwell who were able to study the old theories of light and present a more accurate theory of light. Today, it is viewed that there is no need for ether in order for light to pass on and through objects because light is believed to travel in wave motion and vibrate in right angles to the direction of travel. Light is also seen both as a series of emissions of particles and as wavelengths.

Maturational voluntarism also disagrees with David Hume's account of human reasoning because his view is not sufficient enough to explain how people are able to anticipate the future. Hume claims that people's beliefs are shaped by habits. But he does not speak of how people are able to change their perceptions. As stated above, maturational voluntarism postulates that people can question their beliefs and the consensual beliefs of society. Science demonstrates one way

in which people have the ability to reason about beliefs or theories and have the ability to anticipate the future. Daniel Dennett claims that science is a human aide in living in this world. Science helps people to be able to speak of the world and shows the value of using reasoning. Science enables people to not only speak of the world but also to anticipate the future. "But it should still be obvious that the innovations of science-not just its microscopes and telescopes and computers, but its commitment to reason and evidence are the new sense organs of our species, enabling us to answer questions, solve mysteries, and anticipate the future in ways no earlier human institutions can approach ..." (Dennett 23). Science aides in human reasoning by informing people of the world that they live in, their ability to question it and anticipate what the world may be like in the future.

Maturational voluntarism believes that science should help people with their moral lives because it serves as proof of the freedom that people have over their thoughts and subsequently their actions. Daniel Dennett also claims that science can help people with their moral lives because it shows them the freedom that they have. People are free to act, as they will because they are not coerced or compelled to act otherwise. " The self-understanding we can gain from science can help us put our moral lives on a new and better foundation, and once we understand what our freedom consists in, we will be much better prepared to protect it against the genuine threats that are so regularly misidentified" (Dennett

99). Thus, Daniel Dennett sees science as a tool in confirming an individual's freedom to act as they choose.

Maturational voluntarism also disagrees with Humean empiricism's account of morality. Humean empiricism claims that objective moral principles do not exist because each individual decides what is good or evil based upon their disposition. Maturational voluntarism upholds the belief that there are objective moral principles and that without the existence of these principles, society would cease to exist. Two universal principles that exist are the belief in the sanctity of human life and the necessity of child rearing. A society in which people do not hold valuable human life is a society that will cease to exist. For example, in Nazi Germany during World War II, genocide was being practiced against the Jews, Gypsies, Polish people and others. If Hitler and the Third Reich had not been defeated by the Allied Powers, then complete genocide of the Jewish people may have occurred. If society as a whole did not see the sanctity in human life, then there would most likely be more killings. People would not restrain their behavior because they would not bear the consequences of their actions.

Another universal principle is child rearing. Child rearing is absolutely essential for humans to continue to flourish. A society in which parents do not rear their children is a society that will die out because children need their parents to provide for them. Children need things such as food, shelter, clothing, and basic survival skills. Children cannot survive, nor can society without the aide of their parents. Societies and societal values are actually transmitted from

one generation to the next. Humans live and are able to exist because of social units.

In summary, this third chapter defends the view that the knowledge that people have of sensory objects is not strictly subjective and nor is morality. Humanity is able to flourish because society as a whole follows for example, the universal principles of child rearing and the belief in the sanctity of human life. Society also continues to flourish because people know how to respond to sensory objects in the environment and have an understanding of the physical laws of nature. It is up to people to decide how they want to live, given an understanding of the environment and its laws.

This final chapter also shows that even though human beings develop perceptions of the world at a young age, they can examine their thoughts and change their world-views or perspectives as they mature in reasoning. Through the use of examples such as Eva Hoffman it has been shown that people can question normative knowledge and develop their individual beliefs. Humans can think of what their values and perspectives are and question the reasoning behind these values. Individuals can decide what their values are and act based upon these values, which determine what type of people they become.

Conclusion

The metaphysical question regarding free will is very controversial. It deals with the human ability to control actions. Determinists, who are opponents

of freewill claim that there are too many factors such as genetics, the environment, the past and false ideals of the world given to people which limits the ability to choose. While Libertarians, who are proponents of free-will, claim that people have the ability to reason, deliberate and choose options based upon their desires. Thus, determinists believe that each person is not the captain of their destiny, while Libertarians uphold this view.

This thesis argued against Humean empiricism and psychological determinism. Psychological determinism is the belief that people act based upon their desires. And, desires have been determined by the uncontrollable factors of genes and the environment. Thus, individual actions are determined because humans cannot control the factors that determined their desires.

This thesis also examined the philosophical positions of Aristotle and Rene Descartes. In contrast to psychological determinism, these philosophers uphold the view that people are able to control their desires through reasoning. Individuals have the ability to practice virtue or vice and consequently develop their moral character. Therefore, human character is not determined by nature but by the choices that people make.

The position of contemporary compatibilist, Daniel Dennett was also examined in this thesis. He offers strong support showing that science can be used to better understand and explain free will. People have the ability to question, examine and test their beliefs. This provides support that human beings can reason and make choices.

The primary position presented in this thesis, which argued against psychological determinism is maturational voluntarism. This position is similar to the views just mentioned of Aristotle, Rene Descartes and Daniel Dennett regarding human autonomy over actions. Maturational voluntarism espouses that individuals cannot control certain factors in their lives such as genetics, environmental upbringing, and the past. However, people still can deliberate, reason about their desires and voluntarily choose among options. Individuals can affect the future by the actions that they voluntarily take. Humans have the ability to practice virtue and to reason about their passions. The choices that people make come from a free will that has been influenced by genes and the environment but are not determined by these factors. People can control their desires through reasoning, develop their dispositions and be held morally responsible for their decisions.

Terms Of Significance

Antecedent: prior, before or ahead.

Choice: an alternative, selection, decision or preference.

Compatibilism: the view that two things can co-exist. In regards to metaphysical determinism, it is the belief that both determinism and free will co-exist. This view maintains that although some human events such as, birth, environmental upbringing and natural abilities are not within human control, people can voluntarily make choices and are not coerced to act. The choices that people make come from their ability to deliberate and choose from among options.

Determinism: the view that human conduct is determined by causes such as, the past, heredity and the environment in which humans have no control over. Human behavior is determined by these causes, which infringe upon the human will. These factors determine the human will and an individual's desires and choices, which consequently lead to human conduct.

Free will: the human capacity to voluntarily make choices. People have the ability to question and examine their desires through their ability to reason. Neither the actions that people choose are necessary nor the result of a causal relationship with the universe.

Hard determinism: the view that human conduct is the result of a causal relationship with the universe. Individuals do not have the ability to voluntarily choose their actions because their actions are the result of pre-existent factors in which they have no control over. Since all events are caused, people are not morally responsible for their actions.

Libertarianism: the belief that people are not compelled to act. People are morally responsible for their actions because they have a free will in which they voluntarily act.

Maturational voluntarism: the belief that that there are uncontrollable factors such as, genes, the environment and primal emotions which influence the will but do not determine it. People have the ability to control their desires through their ability to reason. Individuals are morally responsible for their actions because they make voluntary decisions from a free will.

Psychological determinism: the view that an individual's actions are determined by his or her interests. Interests are determined by the uncontrollable factors of genes and the environment. Therefore, free will does not exist.

Reason: to calculate, think, formulate or examine.

Soft-determinism: the belief that the uncontrollable factors of genes and the environment determine an individual's will. However, free will exists because people are not coerced to act.

Voluntary: without coercion, freely done. Something done or that occurs without internal or external force upon an individual.

Will: an intention, to act based upon an intention or motive.

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