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Major Historical Contributions 1. Indeed, on this matter, as with so many other major philosophical issues, Plato and Aristotle give importantly different emphases that inform much subsequent thought. In the absence of justice, the individual is enslaved to the passions. While Aristotle shares with Plato a concern for cultivating virtues, he gives greater theoretical attention to the role of choice in initiating individual actions which, over time, result in habits, for good or ill. Furthermore, mature humans make choices after deliberating about different available means to our ends, drawing on rational principles of action. Choose consistently well poorly, and a virtuous vicious character will form over time, and it is in our power to be either virtuous or vicious. A question that Aristotle seems to recognize, while not satisfactorily answering, is whether the choice an individual makes on any given occasion is wholly determined by his internal state—“perception of his circumstances and his relevant beliefs, desires, and general character dispositions wherever on the continuum between virtue and vice he may be—and external circumstances. One might worry that this seems to entail that the person could not have done otherwise—at the moment of choice, she has no control over what her present character is—and so she is not responsible for choosing as she does. Aristotle responds by contending that her present character is partly a result of previous choices she made. We note just a few contributions of the subsequent centuries of the Hellenistic era. This period was dominated by debates between Epicureans, Stoics, and the Academic Sceptics, and as it concerned freedom of the will, the debate centered on the place of determinism or of fate in governing human actions and lives. The Stoics and the Epicureans believed that all ordinary things, human souls included, are corporeal and governed by natural laws or principles. Epicurus and his followers had a more mechanistic conception of bodily action than the Stoics. They held that all things human soul included are constituted by atoms, whose law-governed behavior fixes the behavior of everything made of such atoms. Epicurus has often been understood as seeking to ground the freedom of human willings in such indeterministic swerves, but this is a matter of controversy. If this understanding of his aim is correct, how he thought that this scheme might work in detail is not known. A final notable figure of this period was Alexander of Aphrodisias, the most important Peripatetic commentator on Aristotle. In his *On Fate*, Alexander sharply criticizes the positions of the Stoics. He goes on to resolve the ambiguity in Aristotle on the question of the determining nature of character on individual choices by maintaining that, given all such shaping factors, it remains open to the person when she acts freely to do or not to do what she in fact does. Augustine —“ is the central bridge between the ancient and medieval eras of philosophy. His mature thinking about the will was influenced by his early encounter with late classical Neoplatonist thought, which is then transformed by the theological views he embraces in his adult Christian conversion, famously recounted in his *Confessions*. He clearly affirms that the will is by its nature a self-determining power—“no powers external to it determine its choice—and that this feature is the basis of its freedom. Scholars divide on whether Augustine was a libertarian or instead a kind of compatibilist with respect to metaphysical freedom. It is clear, however, that Augustine thought that we are powerfully shaped by wrongly-ordered desires that can make it impossible for us to wholeheartedly will ends contrary to those desires, for a sustained period of time. Will is rational desire: Freedom enters the picture when we consider various means to these ends and move ourselves to activity in pursuit of certain of them. Our will is free in that it is not fixed by nature on any particular means, and they generally do not appear to us either as unqualifiedly good or as uniquely satisfying the end we wish to fulfill. Furthermore, what appears to us to be good can vary widely—even, over time, intra-personally. For this reason, some commentators have taken Aquinas to be a kind of compatibilist concerning freedom and causal or theological determinism. The first consideration is clearly consistent with compatibilism. The second at best points to a kind of contingency that is not grounded in the activity of the will itself. And one wanting to read Aquinas as a libertarian might worry that his third consideration just

passes the buck: Those who read Aquinas as a libertarian point to the following further remark in this text: In opposition to Aquinas and other medieval Aristotelians, Scotus maintained that a precondition of our freedom is that there are two fundamentally distinct ways things can seem good to us: Contrary to some popular accounts, however, Scotus allowed that the scope of available alternatives for a person will be more or less constricted. He grants that we are not capable of willing something in which we see no good whatsoever, nor of positively repudiating something which appears to us as unqualifiedly good. However, in accordance with his uncompromising position that nothing can be the total cause of the will other than itself, he held that where something does appear to us as unqualifiedly good perfectly suited both to our advantage and justice – viz. The centrality of the problem of free will to the various projects of early modern philosophers can be traced to two widely, though not universally, shared assumptions. The first is that without belief in free will, there would be little reason for us to act morally. More carefully, it was widely assumed that belief in an afterlife in which a just God rewards and punishes us according to our right or wrong use of free will was key to motivating us to be moral Russell, chs. Life before death affords us many examples in which vice is better rewarded than virtue and so without knowledge of a final judgment in the afterlife, we would have little reason to pursue virtue and justice when they depart from self-interest. And without free will there can be no final judgement. The second widely shared assumption is that free will seems difficult to reconcile with what we know about the world. While this assumption is shared by the majority of early modern philosophers, what specifically it is about the world that seems to conflict with freedom differs from philosopher to philosopher. For some, the worry is primarily theological. How can we make sense of contingency and freedom in a world determined by a God who must choose the best possible world to create? For some, the worry was primarily metaphysical. How does contingency and freedom fit into such a world? For some, the worry was primarily scientific. Given that a proper understanding of the physical world is one in which all physical objects are governed by deterministic laws of nature, how does contingency and freedom fit into such a world? Of course, for some, all three worries were in play in their work this is true especially of Descartes and Leibniz. Despite many disagreements about how best to solve these worries, there were three claims that were widely, although not universally, agreed upon. The first was that free will has two aspects: Ideas about moral responsibility were often a yard stick by which analyses of free will were measured, with critics objecting to an analysis of free will by arguing that agents who satisfied the analysis would not, intuitively, be morally responsible for their actions. The third is that compatibilism – the thesis that free will is compatible with determinism – is true. Spinoza, Reid, and Kant are the clear exceptions to this, though some also see Descartes as an incompatibilist [Ragland]. The first step was to argue that the contrary of freedom is not determinism but external constraint on doing what one wants to do. Hume [ ] VIII. This idea led many compatibilists, especially the more empiricist-inclined, to develop desire- or preference-based analyses of both the freedom to do otherwise and self-determination. The freedom to do otherwise does not require that you are able to act contrary to your strongest motivation but simply that your action be dependent on your strongest motivation in the sense that had you desired something else more strongly, then you would have pursued that alternative end. We will discuss this analysis in more detail below in section 2. Given these analyses, determinism seems innocuous to freedom. The second step was to argue that any attempt to analyze free will in a way that putatively captures a deeper or more robust sense of freedom leads to intractable conundrums. The most important examples of this attempt to capture a deeper sense of freedom in the modern period are Immanuel Kant [ ], [ ], [ ] and Thomas Reid [ ] and in the early twentieth century C. These philosophers argued that the above compatibilist analyses of the freedom to do otherwise and self-determination are, at best, insufficient for free will, and, at worst, incompatible with it. With respect to the classical compatibilist analysis of the freedom to do otherwise, these critics argued that the freedom to do otherwise requires not just that an agent could have acted differently if he had willed differently, but also that he could have willed differently. Free will requires more than free action. I consider the determination of the will as an effect. This effect must have a cause which had the power to produce it; and the cause must be either the person himself, whose will it is, or some other being. If the person was the cause of that determination of his own will, he was free in that action, and it is justly imputed to him, whether it be good or bad. But, if another being was the cause of this

determination, either producing it immediately, or by means and instruments under his direction, then the determination is the act and deed of that being, and is solely imputed to him. While it is intelligible to ask whether a man willed to do what he did, it is incoherent to ask whether a man willed to will what he did: For to ask whether a man is at liberty to will either motion or rest, speaking or silence, which he pleases, is to ask whether a man can will what he wills, or be pleased with what he is pleased with? A question which, I think, needs no answer; and they who make a question of it must suppose one will to determine the acts of another, and another to determine that, and so on in infinitum. Locke [ ] II. It is important to recognize that an implication of the second step of the strategy is that free will is not only compatible with determinism but actually requires determinism cf. This was a widely shared assumption among compatibilists up through the mid-twentieth century. He endorses a strong form of necessitarianism in which everything is categorically necessary opposed to the weaker form of conditional necessity embraced by most compatibilists, and he contends that there is no room in such a world for divine or creaturely free will. Thus, Spinoza is a free will skeptic. Interestingly, Spinoza is also keen to deny that the nonexistence of free will has the dire implications often assumed. As noted above, many in the modern period saw belief in free will and an afterlife in which God rewards the just and punishes the wicked as necessary to motivate us to act morally. According to Spinoza, so far from this being necessary to motivate us to be moral, it actually distorts our pursuit of morality. True moral living, Spinoza thinks, sees virtue as its own reward Part V, Prop. Moreover, while free will is a chimera, humans are still capable of freedom or self-determination. Spinoza is an important forerunner to the many free will skeptics in the twentieth century, a position that continues to attract strong support see Strawson ; Double ; Smilansky ; Pereboom , ; Levy ; Waller ; Caruso ; Vilhauer For further discussion see the entry skepticism about moral responsibility. It is worth observing that in many of these disputes about the nature of free will there is an underlying dispute about the nature of moral responsibility. Underlying the belief that free will is incompatible with determinism is the thought that no one would be morally responsible for any actions in a deterministic world in the sense that no one would deserve blame or punishment. Hobbes responded to this charge in part by endorsing broadly consequentialist justifications of blame and punishment: Schlick ; Nowell-Smith ; Smart While many, perhaps even most, compatibilists have come to reject this consequentialist approach to moral responsibility in the wake of P. The Nature of Free Will 2. When an agent exercises free will over her choices and actions, her choices and actions are up to her. But up to her in what sense? As should be clear from our historical survey, two common and compatible answers are: However, there is widespread controversy both over whether each of these conditions is required for free will and if so, how to understand the kind or sense of freedom to do otherwise or sourcehood that is required. While some seek to resolve these controversies in part by careful articulation of our experiences of deliberation, choice, and action Nozick , ch. The idea is that the kind of control or sense of up-to-meness involved in free will is the kind of control or sense of up-to-meness relevant to moral responsibility Double , 12; Ekstrom , 7â€”8; Smilansky , 16; Widerker and McKenna , 2; Vargas , ; Nelkin , â€”52; Levy , 1; Pereboom , 1â€”2. Given this connection, we can determine whether the freedom to do otherwise and the power of self-determination are constitutive of free will and, if so, in what sense, by considering what it takes to be a morally responsible agent.

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