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Free Will: The Basics



Synopsis

The question of whether humans are free to make their own decisions has long been debated and it continues to be a controversial topic today. In *Free Will: The Basics* readers are provided with a clear and accessible introduction to this central but challenging philosophical problem. The questions which are discussed include: Does free will exist? Or is it illusory? Can we be free even if everything is determined by a chain of causes? If our actions are not determined, does this mean they are just random or a matter of luck? In order to have the kind of freedom required for moral responsibility, must we have alternatives? What can recent developments in science tell us about the existence of free will? Because these questions are discussed without prejudicing one view over others and all technical terminology is clearly explained, this book is an ideal introduction to free will for the uninitiated.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Philosophical discussions of free will have been going on since the beginning of philosophy itself, and recently science -- particularly neuroscience, but also fundamental physics -- got into the fray as well. Too many popular writers, and not a small number of scientists, write about it without a clear grasp of what the debate is concerned with, or what are the differences among the myriad positions proposed by philosophers over a long time. This book is an excellent introduction to the topic, with short, to the point discussions of a bewildering variety of philosophical notions about free will. Moreover, the author does not defend a specific position, but rather introduces the reader to a given

idea, raises objections, counters the objections as defenders of that idea would do, and then moves on to the next take. A must read if you really want to know what you are talking about whenever uttering the words "free will." Look for a broader essay on this book coming out soon at the Scientia Salon webzine.

This is a intro book into the discussion of Free Will and some of the contemporary arguments against it. I feel the Author does a good job explaining What different schools of Philosophy (compatibilism, soft determinism ect) have to say about the issue without picking a side in the argument. The Author also does a good job in defining slight differences in some of the arguments. For someone who is interested in this discussion this would be a great place to start without getting bogged down in heavy philosophical reading.

I thought this was a great primer. Some distracting typos.

An excellent introductory book that let me organize my thoughts on the subject and reach new insights.

I can only agree with the other reviewers that this is an excellent introduction to the philosophical debate about free will. Meghan Griffith is a professor of philosophy who specializes in free will (and action theory), and her experience of teaching this difficult subject comes over in the book. Her text is readable, clear, up-to-date, interesting and not at all biased towards any particular position. She concentrates on the modern debate and provides an even-handed account of all the major positions with great clarity. The free will debate has become very complicated in recent years, but the author manages to get across to the reader what the essential issues are. The book includes an index, a glossary of terms, and suggestions for further reading. I strongly recommend it.

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