Perspectives on Free Will

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The term “free will” basically refers to the ability of being in control of one’s actions. Over time, philosophers have made contributions to the notion of free will in relation to moral philosophy. Thomas Hobbes was a philosopher during the 16th and 17th centuries who contributed immensely to modern philosophy. He viewed the free will as the lack of external forces that prevent an individual from engaging in voluntary actions. According to Hobbes, free will involves the ability of an individual to decide on a particular course of action and implementing it without external interference (Kraynak, 2019).

George Berkeley was a philosopher during the 17th and 18th centuries. His perception of free will was rooted in religious beliefs. He indicated that man was created to obey God’s law. He believed that man possesses free will, but that he is required, but not compelled, to obey them. Therefore, although man had a duty to obey God’s will, he had the free will to choose whether or not to obey (McKenna & Pereboom, 2016).

While both philosophers held the view that man had the capability to act freely, Berkeley indicated that man was required to act in accordance with religion, while Hobbes indicates that free will involves acting without being influenced by external influences such as religion. Modern psychology underscores the uniqueness of human beings and their freedom to choose their own destiny (Baumeister, 2018). Therefore, Hobbes’ philosophy better reflects what modern psychologists think about free will as it emphasizes the importance of individual capacity to act freely without being influenced by external forces.

References

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McKenna, M., & Pereboom, D. (2016). *Free will: A contemporary introduction*. Routledge.