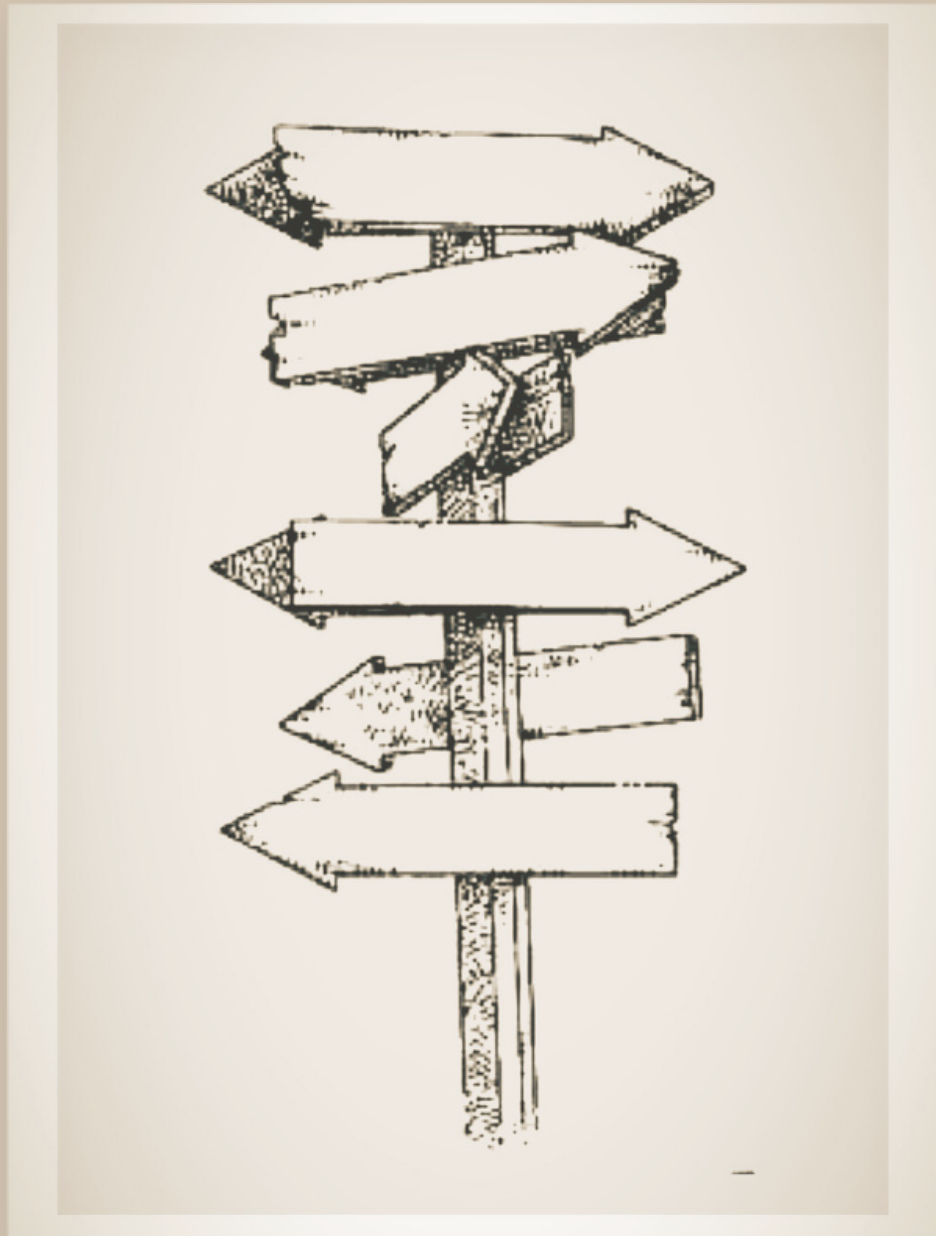


29th Edition | 2023-2024



GNOSIS

— ANNUAL MAGAZINE



FREE WILL AND DETERMINISM

**Department Of Philosophy
Gargi College
University Of Delhi**

Cover Design By:
Riya Kumar
B.A. (Hons) Philosophy, 2nd Year

The cover page shows a sign board which points to multiple paths. It emphasises on the concept of 'choice' and how the path that is ultimately chosen by the individual reflects either their own free will or destiny (predestined).

EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the 29th Edition of our Annual Departmental Magazine, Gnosis! We are thrilled to present a diverse array of contributions such as essays, reviews and captivating features that reflect the breadth and depth of the robust academic endeavour in our field that we hope will inspire, inform, and entertain you.

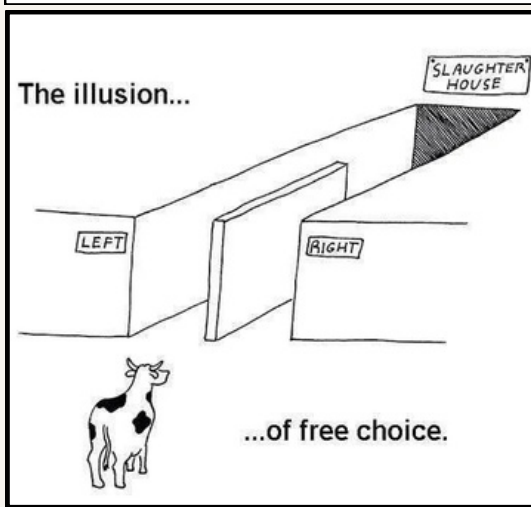
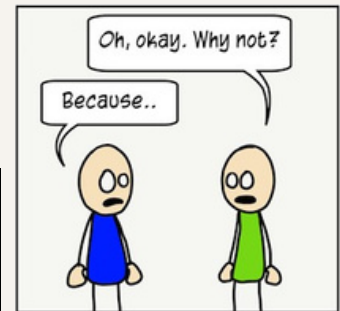
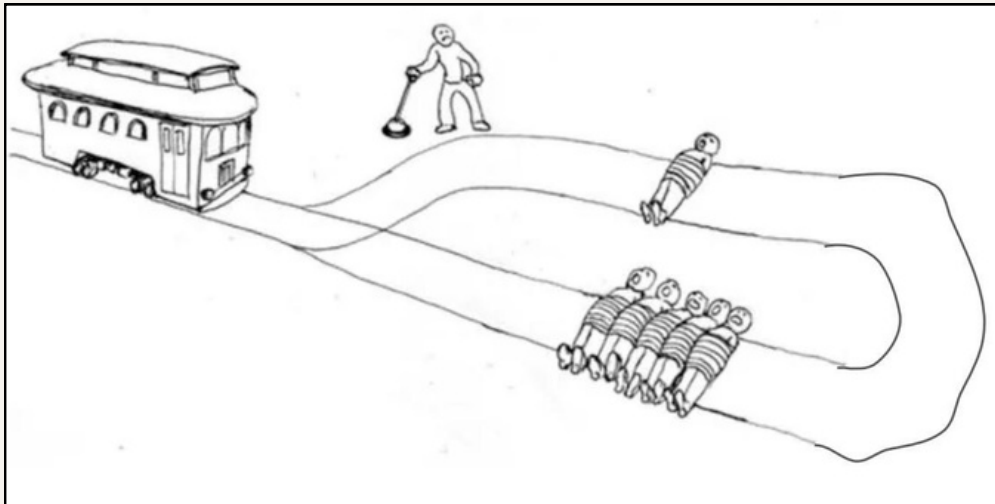
In this edition, we explore the theme of 'Free Will and Determinism', with different perspectives on what role our choices have to play in the grand scheme of the universe. Can free will coexist with fate and determinism, or are they inherently incompatible?

From gripping opinion pieces to in-depth philosophical perspectives, each contribution in this issue enhances the ongoing conversation of how much power we truly hold with regard to what happens to or around us.

We invite you to immerse yourself in the articles and engage with the ideas presented. We hope you find this issue both thought-provoking and enlightening!

Warm Regards,
Maya Joseph and Riya Kumar
(Editor and Co-Editor)





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Philosophy Union '23-24



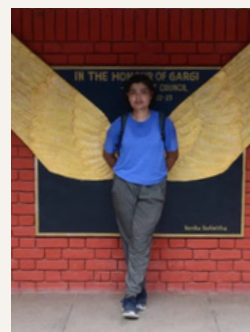
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Association Co-Convenor
Mimāmsā Co-Convenor



Dr. Dharmendra Kumar
Assistant Professor



Dr. Chandra Mohan Pandey
Assistant Professor

FACULTY

GLIMPSES OF FACULTY

REMINISCING DR. DEEPIKA CHATTERJEE, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AT PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT, GARGI COLLEGE-

Panelist at the virtual book discussion held by the India International Center on 27 June 2023.



Speaker at the book discussion held at the India International Center and Poetry Society.

Dr. Deepika Chatterjee retired in 2023 after completing 26 glorious years of service. We would like to thank her for all the hard work, dedication, guidance and contributions she has made over the years to this college. We wish her a very happy and blissful retirement!



TALKS BY DR. REKHA NAVNEET, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AT PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT, GARGI COLLEGE-



Presented a talk on 'Art, Aesthetics and Morality: Some Deliberations' as a part of Gnosis '23 at Philosophy Department, Miranda House.

CONTRIBUTIONS

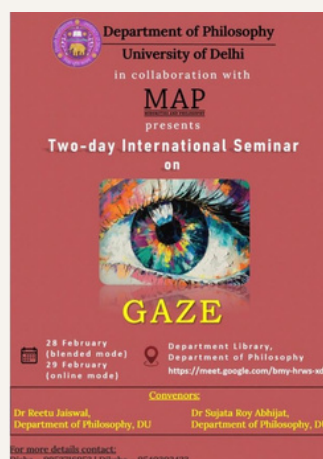
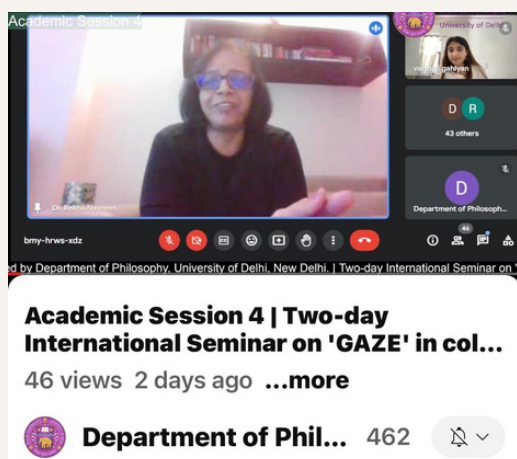
ACHIEVEMENTS (2023-24)!

One of the panelists at the Lit Fest '23 of The English Literary Society of Gargi College themed 'Nature and Alienation' and discussed the topic 'Dualism vs Harmony: A Philosophical - Aesthetic Dimension'.



Presented a talk on 'Aesthetics of Peace' at the international workshop for 'Ontology of Peace: Reflections of Pluriversity' on 24 June 2023.

Presented a lecture on Bio-Medical Ethics held by DAVV, University of Indore on 3 August 2023.



Spoke in a Two-day International Seminar on 'Gaze' in collaboration with MAP on 2 March 2024.

MIMĀMSĀ

THE PHILOSOPHY SOCIETY



The Philosophy Society of Gargi College, Mimāmsā, serves to provide students with a platform where they can engage with various topics and learn from each other. The very foundation of this venture lies in breaking through various dogmas and biases. This can happen only when different minds and perspectives come together in conversation on a number of issues, including the contentious and the unspoken. Mimāmsā ventures to offer a space for students to engage in dialectical philosophy of sorts and realise

their own tacit beliefs. Moreover, it also nurtures their ability to listen, grasp, comprehend and articulate their own standpoints.

In every Mimāmsā session, students explore a plethora of complex topics, inextricably bound to apt articles which in many ways highlights the academic rigour and adeptness. The discussions allow for nuanced takes on these issues, which can relate to a number of subjects and themes pertinent to the overall motif of the discussions so that students get a chance to learn how to reflect philosophically and critically investigate their preconceived notions.



A PLATFORM FOR PHILOSOPHICAL
DEBATE AND DISCUSSION

SESSION 1: FEMINISM

Date: 12th of September, 2023

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie in her Tedtalk "We Should All Be Feminists" in 2012, presents insights about the various ways in which gender inequality persists to be deep rooted in our society. Furthermore, it highlights how the word 'feminist' has been frowned upon and it is a call to question the gender injustice and inequality.



SESSION 2: APPROACHES TO DISABILITY

Date: 10th of October 2023

After the successful completion of our departmental social initiative "Cinema For A Cause", the award-winning short film "The Silent Child" (2017) was screened. The film follows the story of a young girl with a hearing disability which presents some philosophical reflections on the ethics and ontology of emotional sensitivity vis-a-vis language and communication. The discussion was centred around the themes of inclusivity and empathy as done through the aforementioned approaches.



SESSION 3: EMPOWERMENT THROUGH PHILOSOPHY

Date: 17th of October 2023

The session on "Philosophy as a Means of Empowerment and Self-Advocacy", based on chapter 3 of the book "Philosophy By Women" (2020) by Lisa Bortolotti and Sophie Stammers explores the idea of how philosophy can be instrumental in attaining empowerment and self-advocacy. It further discusses how engaging in philosophical thinking can lead to holistic personal growth.





SESSION 4: ETHICS, PHILOSOPHY AND ENVIRONMENT

Date: 6th of February 2024

Arran Gare's paper "Ethics, Philosophy and the Environment" (2018) engages with the idea of how ethics highly influences our attitude towards the environment and argues how important they are in overcoming the environmental crisis.

SESSION 5: PROFESSIONAL ETHICS WITHOUT MORAL THEORY

Date: 20th of February 2024

The article "Professional Ethics Without Moral Theory: A Practical Guide for Confused Non-Philosophers" (2014) by Michael Davis, explores the notion of professional ethics without necessarily resorting to complex moral theories. Davis argues that even non-philosophers can approach professional ethics in a practical way; without getting overly tangled in various moral theories that seem to be fraught with abstract conjectures.



SESSION 6: THE SOUL OF PHILOSOPHY IN A SOULLESS AGE

Date: 5th of March 2024

In the article, "The Soul of Philosophy in a Soulless Age" (2021), David Skrbina explores the pertinence of human relations vis-a-vis the essence of philosophy. It further presents an attempt to recover this indispensable nature and soul of philosophy in an era beleaguered by materialism and technological allurements.

A RECAP OF DEPARTMENTAL EVENTS



Field Trip to NGMA

March 22, 2023

The students of the department of Philosophy, accompanied by Ms. Saachi Chowdhry (faculty member), visited the National Gallery Of Modern Art (NGMA) in New Delhi, which is home to many renowned paintings and artworks. It was an opportunity for the students to discover contemporary artists, and learn more about various art styles and movements across varied time periods and regions in India. Students further explored various other exhibits within the main gallery as well as other displays in the Jaipur House. It included sections dedicated to the works of notable artists such as Amrita Sher-Gil, Raja Ravi Varma, Rabindranath Tagore, Jamini Roy, members of the Bombay Progressive Artists' Group such as M.F. Hussain and S.H. Raza, and other displays. The experience enhanced the students' appreciation for art and media and concomitantly relate it with their understanding of aesthetics.



Left: Students from the department alongside Ms. Saachi Chowdhry on NGMA grounds, outside the entrance to Jaipur House.



Above: A play of light in the hallway of the Rabindranath Tagore Display at the National Gallery of Modern Art

Top Right: "Spanish Girl" painted by Amrita Sher-Gil

Middle Right: "Portrait of A College Girl" sculpted by Ramkinkar Baij

Bottom Right: "Mohini On A Swing" painted by Raja Ravi Varma

(Pictures courtesy of Maya Joseph.)



Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

August 29, 2023



The Department of Philosophy organised an event commemorating India's Linguistic Diversity as a part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav (AKAM) celebrations. Students and teachers both participated in multiple fun activities, putting their knowledge of many languages and dialects from across the country to test.

It was an engaging display of events, which was concluded with a round of performances that showcased the beauty of linguistic and cultural diversity in India.



Left: The winners of the AKAM events, with the faculty of the department.



Paying homage to the idea of "unity in diversity", the students and faculty of the department dressed in the colours of the Indian flag.

(Pictures courtesy of Riya Kumar.)



Donation Drive

September 25, 2023 - October 3, 2023

As a part of the student-led social initiative, the Philosophy Department conducted a week-long donation drive in our college. This was a collaborative effort with Bhumika Trust, an NGO based in Delhi that works towards the upliftment of various social groups. It particularly focuses on underprivileged women and people with disabilities, aiming to create a more egalitarian and inclusive world. This drive primarily focused on collecting stationery items and clothing which was then distributed to those in need via the NGO's outreach programme.

The donation drive was met with remarkable enthusiasm which concluded successfully on the 3rd of October with a screening of the award winning film, "The Silent Child" (2017) as part of the initiative to spread awareness about the topics of disability, prejudice, empathy, emotional sensitivity and inclusivity in society.



Above: Department Union members at the collection point (outside the college auditorium) for the donation drive. (Picture courtesy of Riya Kumar.)



Above: The poster for the short film "The Silent Child" (2017)



Left: The Philosophy Union 2023-24 and department faculty with Jayant Singh Raghav and Namrata Mishra (founding members of the Bhumika Trust).

Cinema For A Cause:

October 3, 2023

The “Silent Child” looks into the life of a young girl named Libby with a hearing disability. The film is based on real life events and examines the way prejudices operate. This is further accentuated by the lack of sensitivity and awareness affecting those with disabilities. It makes one reflect upon the ways to restore the values of inclusivity and empathy in order to respond to the aforementioned challenges. The screening was open for all students and faculty members, and was followed by a discussion that centred around the pertinent contours of the film. The event also included input from two of the founding members of Bhumika Trust and concluded with a summative and insightful lesson and demonstration of sign language.

Right: The audience follows the lead of the Union President, Shubhangi to a sign language demonstration.



(Picture courtesy of Riya Kumar.)

To celebrate World Philosophy Day, the Department conducted a Vārtā session with Ms. Ratna Appnender.

VĀRTĀ: Criminal Justice



December 4, 2023



(Pictures courtesy of Riya Kumar.)

Ms. Ratna Appnender is a lawyer with over 10 years of experience, practicing in trial and appellate courts in Delhi. She is trained as a criminal lawyer and has extensive experience in the field of human rights and gender justice. Her talk focused on criminal justice and theories of punishment.

This session gave students the opportunity to learn more about criminal justice, punishment, and law, with insights on the perspectives of criminals and victims alike. It expanded their grasp of how laws are formulated, applied, and further amended to cater to the dynamic needs of the society. The event facilitated intriguing dialogues and engaging deliberations where students approached these legal issues through an overarching philosophical lens; particularly via a plethora of ethical perspectives.



Right: The Department Union and faculty with Ms. Ratna Appnender.

A Field Trip to Sunder Nursery

March 3, 2024



Left: The Department Of Philosophy inside Sunder Nursery.

The department organised an educational field trip to Sunder Nursery, which focused on certain themes presented through the philosophy of nature, environmental ethics and animal ethics. The trip included a nature walk through the gardens, as well as other activities. These engagements were geared to further enhance the students' appreciation for nature and to bridge the gap between the self and the natural world.



Left: Students were accompanied by the following faculty members -
Mr. Amulya Gurung,
Ms. Saachi Chowdhry,
Dr. Rashmi Bhardwaj and
Ms. Anasuya Agarwala
(left to right).

(Pictures courtesy of Riya Kumar.)



(Pictures courtesy of Riya Kumar.)



(Pictures courtesy of Riya Kumar.)

MIND MATTERS: INSIGHTS AND REVELATIONS

ARTICLES, ILLUSTRATIONS, GAMES,
HOROSCOPE AND MORE!!



Does the Devil Actually Make Decisions?

By Anvi Gupta

B.A. (Hons) Philosophy, 1st Year

When one talks of free will, they exercise the notion of whether one is in the proper sense of mind to make a choice (or not to make it) and whether their senses are the origin of deeds and choices. To have free will denotes that an action is not predetermined or predestined, but rather that individuals pave their own paths. Determinism, on the other hand, propagates that every event, encompassing moral choices, is predetermined by previously existing causes and forces of nature. It is the belief that humans do not have the agency to exercise free will.

The juxtaposition between free will and determinism can be very well observed in the film *The Devil Wears Prada* (2006). The film follows Andrea "Andy" Sachs, an aspiring journalist, securing a job at *Runaway Fashion Magazine* and becoming an assistant to Miranda Priestly, the editor-in-chief. Her job is a great platform to escalate her journalism career as Miranda is highly revered in the spheres of both journalism and fashion. However, her constantly demanding nature and unpredictability is the price one must pay.

In the course of the entire film, Andy faces dilemmas, forcing her to choose between her family, friends, relationships, values and ethics, or her job. There is an unwavering tumultuous conflict between her free will, which is her agency and values, and determinism, which is the pressure to achieve professional success and materialise her long-term goals which are influenced highly by her extremely demanding work sphere of fashion and her boss, Miranda. A recurring line said to Andy and recited by her to reaffirm her commitment to her job in the film is "a million girls would kill for this job", which further augments the pressure on her.

"...the fashion industry is essentially determinist, camouflaged in the shimmery cloth of free will."

Andy makes a plethora of questionable decisions in the duration of the film, like missing the important events of her beloved ones and losing them in lieu of her job.

Although these decisions seem to have arisen out of her free will, it is not exactly the case. If she were to trivialise the demanding nature of her job, especially outside of work hours, she would face the consequences by derailing her career before it took off. Choosing her work over her relations caused her to lose sight of her core identity. In either case, her fate is determined: she would have to pay a huge price to succeed in either area of life. Andy also finds herself in a situation where she has to deviate from her morals regarding her co-worker, Emily. She ought to either go to Paris with Miranda, betraying Emily in the process, or risk being fired and potentially being blacklisted in the field of journalism. Andy selects the former option. Many characters confront her, claiming that she is acting upon free will, including Miranda. Andy realises that she is slowly turning into Miranda due to the nature and force of her actions.

"What if I don't want to live the way you live?" / "Don't be ridiculous Andrea, everybody wants this."

The impact of this conversation between her and Miranda impels Andy to take drastic measures. She throws her phone into the fountain, which is a symbol of her free will in the edifice of determinism. She works upon reclaiming her agency, her free will, her morals and her relationships.

Apart from Andy's personal dilemmas, the film showcases how the fashion industry is essentially determinist, camouflaged in the shimmery cloth of free will.

The famous 'Cerulean Blue' scene where Miranda condemns Andy, claiming she is ignorant and is not exempted from the world of fashion, even if she believes so, is an example of this. *"That blue represents millions of dollars and countless jobs and it's sort of comical how you think you've made a choice that exempts you from the fashion industry, when in fact you are wearing a sweater that was selected by the people in this room, from a pile of stuff."*

"...one might fathom that they possess free will, but it may be a mere illusion."

This is a quintessential model which explains that one might fathom that they possess free will, but it may be a mere illusion.

Some decisions, like the clothes we adorn, are the product of the decisions of others, what is popularised and is predetermined by select individuals. The fashion industry also paves the way that one lives - when one reads about fashion, they aspire to be like the models whom they see on billboards and in magazines.

Fashion media promotes an abundance of unhealthy practices such as excessive dieting and exercise, and the idea of the person fitting into the clothes rather than the clothes fitting the person. When one starts an extremely strict diet or exercise for the purpose of being fashionable, it may appear to be an act of free will. However, these drastic measures are often the ramifications brought by the toxic mindset of the fashion industry, especially in the time period of the film.



For instance, many characters in the movie are appalled by carbs, and criticise and mock models if they are not thin or fitting the mould of the fashion industry's beauty standards.

Andy, in order to fit in, gives up certain foods, exercises excessively and turns into a more fashionable person. This again, was not a choice made due to free will but the deterministic nature of how well it would impact her job, status and reputation in fashion journalism and the approval of Miranda and others. Emily too resorts to eating nothing but a cube of cheese when she feels like she may pass out in order to lose weight and fit into new designer clothes from Paris Fashion Week.

Overall, *The Devil Wears Prada* (2006) is an interesting example of media which navigates the complexity of the relation between free will and determinism, through the lens of Andrea's life. It also sheds light upon the functioning of the socio-economic world and how often people in higher power determine our choices when we may think of them as free will. It reflects upon how choices are not always black and white and may be effectuated from the lack of free will, even if it may not appear so. Often, there is an illusion of free will but the fate of that very action is predetermined. It is for us to introspect which actions are the result of our agency and accordingly be wise in making the right choices.

dis•aster

mid 16th century

from the Italian "dis" expressing negation and "aster" meaning star, the word disaster literally translates to an ill starred event, a result of a poor alignment of the stars.

Elucidating Freedom And Destiny

By Vriddhi Shoor
B.Sc. (Hons) Microbiology, 2nd Year

In India, we believe in the science of astrology, the study of movement and relative position of celestial bodies interpreted as having an influence on human affairs and the natural world. Based on this knowledge, every human who has ever been born on this planet Earth has a unique astrology chart, since the day they were born. This chart can be utilised to calculate or predict the whole life of a baby who has just taken its first breath. (An astrology chart - also called a birth chart or natal chart - is technically a snapshot of the position of the planets on the exact day, time, and location you were born. It contains powerful information about the types of energies you were exposed to at the precise moment of birth).

**"...It is amazing, quite frightening even,
how everything about us seems to be
predestined."**

It can be said based on this knowledge, that every human being comes into this world with a unique yet defined destiny. It is amazing, quite frightening even, how everything about us seems to be predestined. Using our birth chart, we can easily find what we came into this world for, the most suitable job or career for us. It can even help us to efficiently filter spouses, making life much easier this way.

But, are we only meant to blindly follow a set trajectory in life based on a set mandate declared at our birth? Or do we have the freedom to navigate beyond it?

We humans are God's greatest creation, we have the gift of imagination and creativity beyond any other being. Therefore, it does not matter what the stars say, we are humans and we are the masters of our own lives.

✦✦ **"Where astrology tries to tell you
how the cycles of the planets and
stars bind you, the spiritual process
tells you how to go beyond that."** ✦✦
- Sadhguru

We are not bound by any limitations; human beings are free creatures, and we have all the abilities, skills, and intellect necessary to make our own decisions in life, to decide what we want to be, who we are going to become, and what sort of people we want to have in our life. What type of person we are going to become, good or bad, can be up to us alone. We have to own up to our decisions, because this is our life and we decide how we are going to live it. Ultimately, we shape our own destiny and carve a wonderful thing called 'life' out of it.

And if all this freedom somehow leads us back to how our life was supposed to originally go according to the stars... do not fret, because we still believe in the hidden yet miraculous threads of fate.

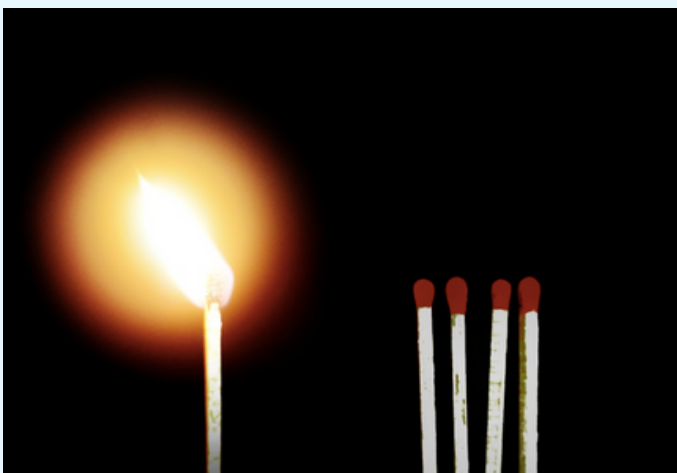
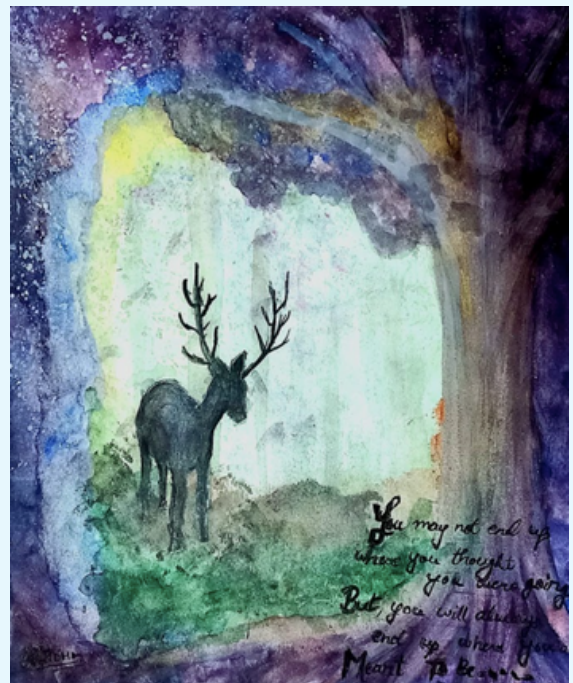


It is determined for a caterpillar to become a butterfly but it is the free will of the butterfly to choose how it spends its newly gained life.

By Shivani Yadav, 2nd Year
B.A. (Hons) Philosophy

You may not end up where you thought you were going, but you will always end up where you are meant to be.

By Vridhi Shoor , 2nd Year
B.Sc. (Hons) Microbiology



The match that is lit up chose to be lit up, now it is up to fate whether the other match sticks will catch the flame as well or not.

By Shivani Yadav, 2nd Year
B.A. (Hons) Philosophy



free will

TELLING YOU WHAT DO

Your default setting is to be bold and impulsive, Aries. You act freely, before anyone else can tell you what to do (and that includes the stars).



ARIES

(March 22nd to April 20th)



TAURUS

(April 21st to May 21st)

As the sign of the bull, you stand your ground without being swayed by others. Some may call it being stubborn, but you're doing what you think is best.

Ever-curious Gemini, you're always exploring - why would you settle for one path in life when there's so much more to discover and experience?



GEMINI

(May 22nd to June 21st)



CANCER

(June 22nd to July 22nd)

You're extremely intuitive, so trust that you know what to do. Remain empathetic, but don't let yourself be overwhelmed by the needs and feelings of others.

Leo, you thrive in the spotlight and celebrate each moment. Who cares what the celestial transits have to say when you yourself are a star?



LEO

(July 23rd to August 23rd)



VIRGO

(August 24th to September 23rd)

Don't let your perfectionist side get the best of you. Remember that there is no right or wrong way to live your life, and each mistake is a part of your journey.

horoscope

WITHOUT TELLING YOU WHAT TO DO



Being able to see both sides of any situation is a blessing and a curse. Be wary of indecision, and no matter what choice you make, try to see it through.



LIBRA

(September 24th
to October 23rd)



SCORPIO

(October 24th to
November 22nd)

Secretive Scorpio, your ways are so mysterious that even the stars cannot predict what you'll do next! Fear not, nothing can hold back your passionate self.

The world is your oyster, Sagittarius! You're ruled by the expansive planet Jupiter, so remember that there is no limit to your opportunities in life.



SAGITTARIUS

(November 23rd
to December 22nd)



CAPRICORN

(December 23rd
to January 22nd)

You're characteristically hardworking, Capricorn, and this is your key to success in all your pursuits. Have faith in the power of your efforts.

Eccentric and often non-conforming, you will be capable of great things if you remember to balance your individuality with your connection to other people.



AQUARIUS

(January 23rd to
February 20th)



PISCES

(February 21st
to March 21st)

Lean into your naturally creative and imaginative side, Pisces. You are the maker of your own destiny - life's what you make it, so don't be afraid to dream big.

Know Your Ideology

(Western Philosophers Zodiac Edition)



ARIES

René Descartes
(Cogito ergo sum
and cartesian dualism)



TAURUS

Immanuel Kant
(Deontology and
role of experience)



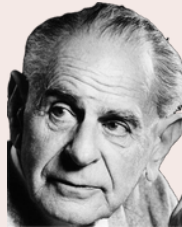
GEMINI

Ralph Waldo Emerson
(Transcendentalism and
self-reliance)



CANCER

Jean-Paul Sartre
(Existentialism)



LEO

Karl Popper
(Critical rationalism and
falsification principle)



VIRGO

Georg Wilhelm
Friedrich Hegel
(Dialectical method
and absolute spirit)



LIBRA

Paul-Michel Foucault
(Genealogy of power
and knowledge nexus)



SCORPIO

Albert Camus
(Absurdism)



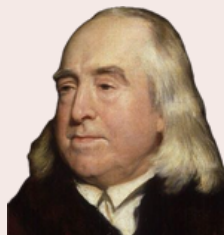
SAGGITARIUS

Baruch Spinoza
(Pantheism and
determinism)



CAPRICORN

Simone de Beauvoir
(Socialist Feminism and
individual autonomy)



AQUARIUS

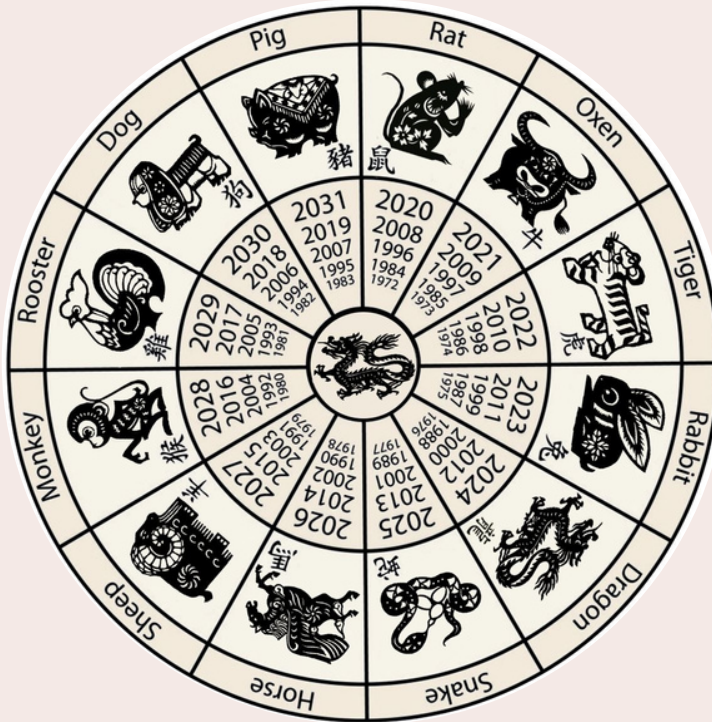
Jeremy Bentham
(Utilitarianism)



PISCES

George Berkeley
(Esse est percipi and
subjective idealism)

Chinese Zodiac and Determinism



Chinese zodiac, or shengxiao, is represented by 12 zodiac animals. In order, they are the Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, and Pig.

Chinese zodiac years begin/end at Chinese New Year (in January/February). Each year in the repeating zodiac cycle of 12 years is represented by a zodiac animal, each with its own reputed attributes.

Chinese zodiac animals have astrological and cultural meanings. The Chinese associate each animal sign with certain characteristics. It's believed that people born in a given year have the personality of that year's animal.

Rat: quick-witted, resourceful, versatile, kind...

Ox: diligent, dependable, strong, determined...

Tiger: brave, confident, competitive, unpredictable...

Rabbit: quiet, elegant, kind, responsible...

Dragon: confident, intelligent, enthusiastic...

Snake: enigmatic, intelligent, wise...

Horse: animated, active, energetic...

Goat: calm, gentle, sympathetic...

Monkey: sharp, smart, curious...

Rooster: observant, hardworking, courageous...

Dog: lovely, honest, prudent...

Pig: compassionate, generous, diligent...

*By Riya Kumar
B.A. (Hons) Philosophy, 2nd Year*

Agency and Responsibility: Exploring the Implications of Free Will and Determinism

By Ananya Sharma

B.A. (Hons) Philosophy, 2nd Year

Game of chicken *noun phrase*

A situation where two parties engage in a showdown where neither has anything to gain from winning. Only pride stops them from backing down.

Anisha, a Philosophy major with a passion for existentialism, adamantly believed in the power of free will. Mohan, an engineering student immersed in the world of algorithms and precision, leaned towards a deterministic perspective, viewing life as a series of equations waiting to unfold. "Choice is an illusion, end of story."
"No it's not, we are the ones living our lives and deciding on our actions."
"Oh really-"

Their debate would take an unexpected turn when they stumbled upon an intriguing psychology experiment. Professor Harmon, a quirky researcher, had developed a device claiming to predict students' academic and personal choices based on their past behaviour and psychological profiles.

As Anish and Mohan volunteered for the experiment, they found themselves at the mercy of Professor Harmon's device, which seemingly anticipated their every move. Anisha, initially sceptical, felt her belief in free will shaken as the predictions unfolded remarkably accurately. Meanwhile, Mohan, intrigued by the precision of the predictions, saw them as a confirmation of deterministic principles.

However, as the experiment progressed, Anisha and Mohan encountered situations that defied the predictions. Anisha chose to join a last-minute study group, deviating from her usual solitary study routine. Mohan, usually a stickler for schedules, impulsively decided to go on a blind date instead of working on a project.

The unexpected choices baffled Professor Harmon, challenging the deterministic nature of the predictions. Anisha and Mohan, realising the limitations of the device, began to question the intricate dance between free will and determinism.

Free will and determinism are two opposing philosophical perspectives on human behaviour and decision-making.

Free will refers to the belief that individuals have the capacity to make choices independent of external influences or constraints. It implies that humans possess the ability to act voluntarily, making decisions based on personal motivations, desires, and values.

Determinism posits that all events, including human actions, are determined by previously existing causes. In a deterministic worldview, every state of affairs, including choices and behaviours, is a consequence of preceding conditions, leading to a predictable and inevitable outcome.

Some philosophers argue for compatibilism, suggesting that free will and determinism can coexist to some extent. Compatibilists assert that even if events are determined by external factors, individuals can still have a meaningful sense of free will if their actions align with their desires and motivations.

"...the true definition of free will is what you do is what's been done been to you", as Jean-Paul Sartre once said.

I believe free will is a possibility but within a narrow range of possibilities for each human being. Our surroundings and upbringing undoubtedly shape us, yet we retain the agency to decide how we navigate these influences. When it comes to things we wish to change in our past, many of our decisions are informed in the past. Or rather, the past informs the things that we would like to alter. We possess the freedom to alter our circumstances and challenge our own biases, despite their initial imposition.

In a sense, the true definition of free will is what you do is what's been done been to you", as Jean-Paul Sartre once said.

"...It is the view that even in a universe that is completely determined, it is still possible to have free will."

When aspiring to alter the course of the future consciously by trying to brush aside the past - setting aside relationships, experiences, and acquired knowledge - a paradox unfolds. While the decision to pursue objectivity is a personal choice, it remains inevitably shaped by one's past. The valleys navigated and lessons learned were essential in reaching a developmental point where the recognition of "enough is enough" crystallised. The decision to make such a radical choice is intrinsically influenced by the journey through specific challenges and experiences.

Compatibilism is not a half-way view between believing that many things are determined and that only some things are determined: it is the view that even in a universe that is completely determined, it is still possible to have free will."

Similarly, determinism, generally understood, is not the view that many things have causes. In the way that it is most often understood, determinism is the theory that entails that if you take everything in the universe at any one moment in time, and you take all of the laws that govern nature in that universe, and you put those together, then the course of events in said universe after that point in time will necessarily be a single course of events.

Free will can be argued from an existentialist point of view. Existence precedes essence - we are born with a clean slate. Or are we?

Yet, the complexity arises as our genetic makeup, appearance, and circumstances are predetermined. From the onset, certain tendencies shape our journey, and experiences gradually mould our perceptions. We become conditioned by

certain things - don't touch fire, don't run in the house, don't raise your voice due to the fear of punishment, be good and get the cookie.

What happens when we face unforeseen circumstances- like being a prisoner of war, a rape victim or getting robbed? This is when I think there are rare moments of limited free will. These events challenge our worldview and redefine our experiences. This is how devout Jews become atheists, or a successful CEO goes to Nepal to meditate for 10 years. Through a deterministic lens, these events catalyse actions within us. Yet, from the perspective of individual choice, facing such challenging circumstances presents new decisions: how to cope, how to move forward, and what direction to take in life. While we perceive these choices as conscious decisions, the abstract nature of human response to extreme stress raises the question of whether they are merely severe reactions moulded by circumstances beyond our control.

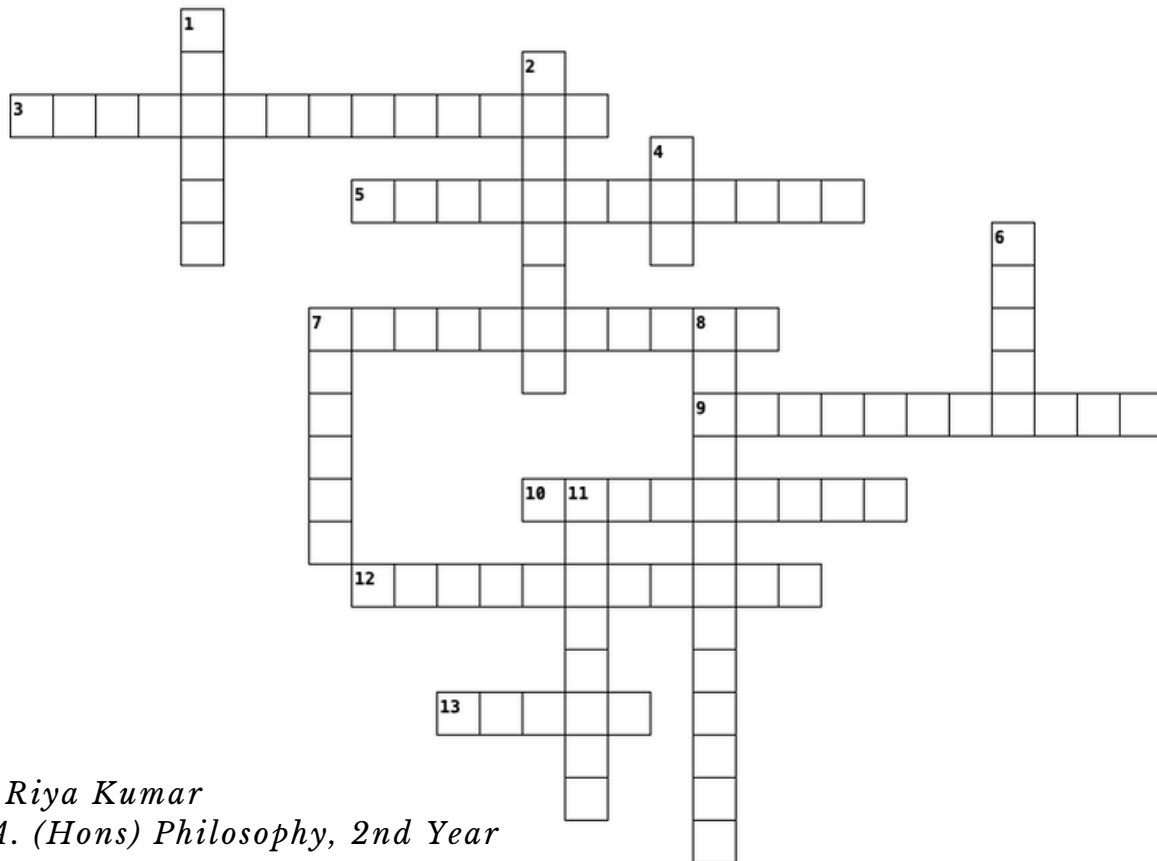
"Our memory, a constant companion, continually shapes our decision-making."

Ultimately, life seems to impart the lesson of mindfulness - an awareness of our past, present, and future trajectories. To be a well-rounded, sapient being, we must realise that we're not these neutral decision making computers - we don't just alter a piece of code in our psyche and forget that piece of code was ever there. Our memory, a constant companion, continually shapes our decision-making.

We also have to be mindful of if we are ultimately reducing our experience down to causality in which we have no stake, or down to the realm of human choice, in which we choose who we love, who we spend time with, and where we want to take our lives through all the valleys we've crossed.

The notion of free will, then, might be intricately tied to our choice of belief. Alternatively, it could be the belief itself that either empowers or diminishes our autonomy.

Crossword Puzzle



By Riya Kumar

B.A. (Hons) Philosophy, 2nd Year

Across :

- 3. theological doctrine that God, being omniscient, or all-knowing, and omnipotent, or all-powerful, has already determined the fate of the universe, including the fate of immortal souls
- 5. branch of philosophy concerned with knowledge
- 7. status of propositions that are neither true under every possible valuation nor false under every possible valuation
- 9. branch of philosophy that studies the fundamental nature of reality
- 10. influence by which one event, process, state, or object contributes to the production of another event, process, state, or object
- 12. the view or belief that the existence of God, of the divine or the supernatural is unknown or unknowable
- 13. a statement that is so evident or well-established, that it is accepted without controversy or question

Down :

- 1. the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choices, based on their will
- 2. a codification of beliefs or a body of teachings or instructions, taught principles or positions, as the essence of teachings in a given branch of knowledge or in a belief system
- 4. the highest being who is wholly immaterial
- 6. a universal divine reason, immanent in nature, yet transcending all oppositions and imperfections in the cosmos and humanity
- 7. the supposed ability to freely decide between alternatives
- 8. the belief that free will and determinism are mutual and coexistent
- 11. the state or condition of self-governance

Word Search

J Q Z M H I D O J P D T C H I C F Z I S
F O O G E U J A Z X W A I E I O R X D Z
K L A F A T A L I S M I T C C M E M E J
C I U L T B A I Z C W H C U A P E W A E
P H I L O S O P H Y I Z E P N A W B L P
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G S V U R R D M Q D Y R E K M Y S T O Y
Q Y R L T C E F M X E C T A K G O N N W
P R A G M A T I S T S H N N S O X O O G
H L T L W Q F Z E Y R R X E N L H E T M
C K Y U B R C D J T Y J C A G O O D U N
M S I N A I R A T R E B I L Q A E E A E

Aesthetics	Determinism	Fatalism	Ontology
Agency	Dialectic	Free Will	Philosophy
Autonomy	Dualism	Idealism	Pragmatists
Causality	Empiricism	Libertarianism	Rationalism
Compatibilism	Epistemology	Metaphysics	Skepticism
Deontology	Ethics	Nihilism	

*By Riya Kumar
B.A. (Hons) Philosophy, 2nd Year*

Can Free Will Ensure Morality Or Is It Just Determinism that Behoves It?

By Aditi Thakur

B.A. (Hons) Philosophy, 3rd Year

The age-old debate between the existence of free will and the existence of determinism or causal determinism has continued to fascinate the philosophical discourse for far too long. Free will, in a simplified sense, encompasses the agency that humans possess to make a choice for themselves or to act according to their own reasons and senses. Here, the basic idea is that an individual makes their own decisions unaffected by external influences, wishes or past events. This in turn is challenged by the notion of determinism or causal determinism which suggests that every physical event that happens is a result of past events or has been caused by circumstances which are predetermined by nature itself. This causes a sort of “incompatibilism” between the two binaries and threatens us to believe that it is only when there is a sense of determinism around, can humans actually be morally responsible?

This notion can be demystified by understanding how the idea of cultural, social and even economic determinism aims straight towards affecting our day to day choices and preferences. The belief that our social, cultural and economic atmospheres heavily determine our decision-making and leave us as mere consumers with little to no say in taking morally responsible decisions is itself something that free will challenges. For instance, even if each of the aforementioned factors may or may not lead us to work towards the betterment of the environment or contribute towards the prevention of climate crisis, we still have the free will or the agency to choose our democracies that could work around policies

that aim at our environmental well being.

However, the falsification of determinism, which is indeterminism, is a metaphysical doctrine, rather than an epistemic one; that is, causal indeterminism posits indeterminacies in nature, not just incompleteness in our understanding of nature.

But other physicists (and philosophers) cling to the view that causal determinism is true, and that what appears currently to be genuine metaphysical indeterminacies reflect mere inadequacies in our knowledge of the world. For instance, Albert Einstein once said that “*God doesn’t play dice with the universe.*” What he meant when he said this was that the fundamental laws of nature can’t be probabilistic. The fundamental laws, Einstein thought, have to tell us what will happen next, not what will probably happen, or what might happen. So Einstein thought that there had to be a hidden layer of reality. But a lot of other physicists — most notably, Werner Heisenberg and Niels Bohr disagreed with Einstein. In fact, philosophers like Leibniz call this phenomenon “lazy sophism”, where you already know what is going to happen and you do nothing to alter or curb it.

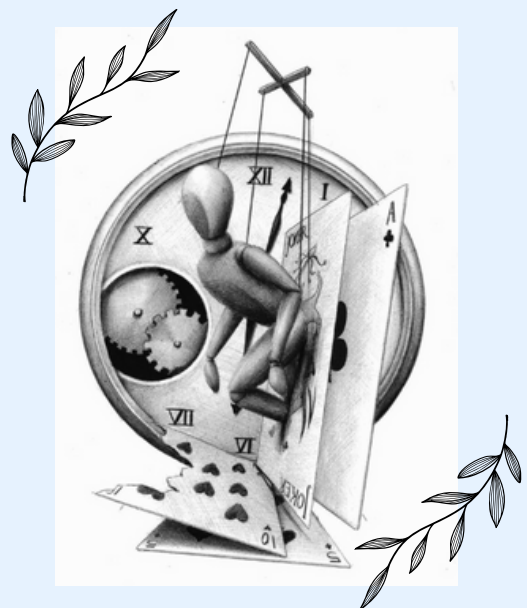
“We seek to figure out ‘what is best’, and to act in accordance with that sort of judgment, all-things-considered.”

One of the more central aspects of human “persons” is that we can engage in significant deliberation and practical reasoning. In deliberating, we consider and weigh reasons for (and against) various courses of action. We seek to figure out ‘what is best’, and to act in accordance with that sort of judgment, all-things-considered. We of course are fallible in our judgments, and we sometimes certainly fail to act in accordance with our judgment about what is best, all-things-considered. But in any case the process of deliberation (or practical reasoning) involves identifying and weighing reasons with an eye to figure out what we have sufficient reason to do.

This is what Kantian Deontology also acknowledges as the obligation or the moral duty that each of us have. Some philosophers have argued that it is a conceptual truth that we cannot engage in deliberation of choosing the moral best, if we do not believe that we have free will, in the sense that involves alternative possibilities. We cannot deliberate about what we should do, unless we believe that it is completely “up to us”.

Thus, the relevant notion of “up to us” is incompatible with causal determinism. According to this notion, an act being “up to us” implies that it is up to us whether or not we do it or how we proceed with it and this itself gives us the scope to have and exercise our “free will”.

However, it cannot be denied that there exists a practical gap or inconsistency when it comes to the co-existence of free will and determinism (compatibilism). For instance, an individual is trying to make up their mind on who to vote for in the next election. At the same time, they take the existing psychological causes, operating presently, to be causally sufficient to determine whom they are going to vote for. So, free will does or does not necessarily come into play here even though causal determinism still exists. Thus, the morality or the moral responsibility of choosing the right government rests at the threshold of “free will” and “determinism”.



Solipsism: Does It Favour Free Will Or Determinism?

By Riya Kumar

B.A. (Hons) Philosophy, 2nd Year

Solipsism is a philosophical concept that posits the idea that the only thing that can be known to exist is one's own mind or consciousness. According to solipsism, there is no way to verify the existence of anything external to one's own mind, including the physical world. In essence, it suggests that the self is the only reality that can be known with certainty.

Free will is the idea that individuals have the ability to make choices and decisions independently of external forces or deterministic factors. In a solipsistic worldview, where only one's own mind is considered certain, the existence of free will could be interpreted as an inherent aspect of the individual's consciousness. Since the external world and other minds are uncertain or potentially illusory, the choices and actions of the individual may be seen as self-determined, arising from the autonomy of their own mind. From this perspective, solipsism can be compatible with a belief in free will, as it emphasises the centrality of the individual's consciousness in shaping their experiences.

On the other hand, determinism is the philosophical idea that all events, including human actions, are ultimately determined by causes external to the will. Every event is the inevitable result of preceding conditions or causes. Here, in a solipsistic world, the existence of external causes may be doubted, uncertain or deceptive. Hence, determinism can be seen as being incompatible with solipsism while maintaining emphasis on the primacy of individual perceptions and consciousness.

Moreover, solipsism favours the existence of free will. The individual's mind or consciousness holds a central role in shaping

one's understanding of reality. This further influences the decisions taken by the individual. Therefore, the self as a thinking and experiencing entity is the only indubitable reality that can be experienced directly and known with certainty as compared to the existence of external objects or other minds.

sol·ipsism

mid 19th century

from the Latin word "solus" meaning solely, and "ipse" meaning self, the belief that nothing is sure but one's own mind.



Don't just exist, live.

PHILOCORE

The Philosophy Student Aesthetic

The only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing.

— Socrates

true embodiment of critical thinkers, being skeptics and questioning the reality, nature of existence, knowledge, morality, drawn to abstract concepts, best friends with caffeine, books (and socrates?); while holding a deep appreciation for the complexities of the human experience

Knowledge becomes evil if the aim be not virtuous.

—Plato

No artist tolerates reality.

— Nietzsche

By Riya Kumar

B.A. (Hons) Philosophy, 2nd Year

Ever Asked Life?

By Tanya

B.A. (Hons) Applied Psychology, 2nd Year

Ever asked Life, "Why do you exist?"
Or still confined in with bounded mastery
tied around your wrist ?

All of the finite, fed to us by grown-ups,
Blinded by possessiveness, stopped us from
learning by dint of our own cuts.

Not a very long after I was born,
Mom taught me to Worship the God.

The conception of Divinity was apparent to
them,
Nevertheless, the aging that planted doubts
blossomed like a flower from stem.

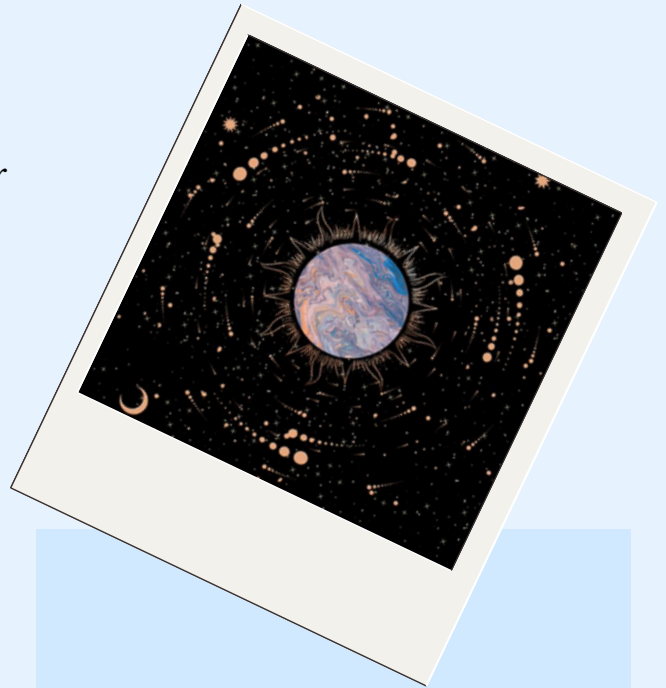
A warm hug from father, whenever I used to
get scared,
From the white canopy, that covers the blue
sky above the dead gave me nightmares.

Now that I discern - Death being the
absolute,
It lures me deep into its route.

The tales of mythology, that Naanu taught,
Would become so weighty to me,
I never thought.

The stories continue yet, celebrated as
festivals,
But from where do I find my story teller,
who has now become an Ancestor.

Ever asked life, "Why do you exist?"
Or is it just an evolutionary gift?
Destined upon us to relive memories,
Or maybe just to laugh, to love and learn
from our own experiences.



This poem reflects my understanding of how humans have the capability to question the existence of life while being in the presence of external influences of the society. The poem dives into the deep question of free will, thinking about how much of what we believe is really our own, versus what is shaped by the society and our upbringing. It makes us wonder if we are truly in control of our beliefs or just following a script written by others, indicating the struggle to be ourselves in a world with set expectations.

Is Delusion Really The Solution?

**Can determination cut through the
notion of hard determinism?
(Spoiler alert: it seems like it!)**

By Madhushree Singh
B.A. (Hons) Philosophy, 1st Year

Let's start by examining whether you believe in free will or determinism. If so, up to what degree and how does it impact your life? If we take an incompatibilist route, it would lean more towards determinism, since our universe does seem to have certain laws that it is governed by and a series of cause and effect relations that have everything predetermined. Therefore, free will pretty much appears to be an illusion since even according to many neuroscientists, a person acts based on subconscious decisions that already have been made and what we observe in our metacognition reflects the decision process based on a number of already limited ideas exposed to an individual rather than something we actively choose boundlessly. But this notion also poses ethical concerns more than anything because if free will does not even exist, how do we hold anyone accountable for any actions they have taken when even criminal law requires a *mens rea* along with *actus reus* to hold one guilty? That is the doubt that we have observed in many cases where some injury or deformity in people's brains have caused a drastic change in their behavior. How do we account for such exceptional cases?

Consciousness is a part of the world, but it is also our only access to the world, including oneself and based on Plato's *representational theory of consciousness*, we have quite an incomplete access to reality because of our limited human faculty of senses that only create a representation of what is real and we get a warped, personalized version of it. This poses a bit of a dilemma when we make an attempt to derive objective truths about

the subjectivity of our experiences of the world.

Interestingly, a phenomenon known as the *observer's effect* in quantum physics suggests that nothing that is observed is unaffected by the observer. Thereby it seems that this tragedy can be altered into something to study upon and work with because the way we interpret the things we perceive, also changes the way we interact with our reality.

**"...one's current reality and its
limitations need not determine or
set limits for their future reality."**

While not believing in the concept of gravity might not make you start floating mid-air, there seems to be a way in which the human faculty of imagination alongside balance with rationality and action-taking has given rise to this uproaring idea of new age spirituality being propagated in pop culture known as *manifestation*. This at its core attempts to inculcate practices of positive thinking, wellness and faith in oneself and the Universe (or any higher power one wishes to believe in) in order to better the quality of one's life and feel more in control of it. That is, a new age interpretation which takes into account a mix of old wisdom that holds up the postulate of free will to better the experience of one's life. It essentially aims to instill the belief that one's current reality and its limitations need not determine or set limits for their future reality.

While on the surface, it might seem like an almost baseless and irrational notion simply based on *confirmation bias* when we see trends like "delusion is the solution", "lucky girl syndrome", "law of attraction" and all its other variants. At its core, its practicality almost seems heavily inspired by philosophies like Buddhism (which attempts to look into the practical problems of the world like suffering, its causes and the way to its cessation), just adapted to today's time and taking into account the diversity of the practitioners and interpreters of the ideology.

A core belief it holds is also similar to philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche's idea of *amor fati* which essentially aims to take the given situation for what it is while also believing that everything in life happens FOR us and not TO us.

At any given moment there are a myriad of things which seem absolutely out of our control but the idea of *will to power* suggests overcoming obstacles on one's path by making continuous efforts. It takes one out of a victim mentality and makes them take control as autonomous beings up to whatever degree, shaping their reality by the cause and effect relations set by one's *karma*, which can make many people push forward through many odds, because we clearly can observe many cases where people in the same situations but with varying interpretations of it, deal with it differently and eventually end up with different outcomes. There are many instances where people with good resources and environment for everything to work out in their favor still don't end up making the most of it while there are many who make something out of nothing. It is to live for the hope of it all as long as one lives while acknowledging a practically optimistic outcome resulting from the possibility of "*black swan events*" or "*miracles*". Our smallest actions whether under our control or often not holding the possibility of setting forth in motion some crazy butterfly or domino-like effect, changing the course of our lives forever.

black swan events

an event which is
unpredictable or highly
unlikely, often having
extreme consequences



The primary metaphysical belief observed in most believers of this ideology seems to be that - every individual is the Universe experiencing itself. Hence, an individual is simply an extension of it, rather than a pawn in its game which can be drawn parallel to concepts in Indian philosophies like- *Prakriti* (primal matter) on union with *Purusa* (conscious intelligence). It manifests itself with the aim of Purusa being able to experience itself in a physical form according to Samkhya Philosophy. Another parallel can be found in the idea of *Atman* (self) and Brahman (cosmic reality) when it talks about the idea of a higher self one should strive towards, which primarily works by an individual consciously and repeatedly brainwashing themselves with this mindset of the Universe always conspiring in their favor, making it easier and easier for it to become a central part of one's attitude. Hence, this way of interpreting becomes a second nature eventually for their day to day challenges and scenarios making one feel more empowered no matter what comes their way. Here the mind becomes the driver of the chariot, that is the body while the senses become the horses and the aim is to balance the material and spiritual world using our discernment. It is similar to the concept of *preyas* and *shreyas* to attain *nishreyas*. That is, aiming at self-actualisation which requires delayed gratification, which goes along with, but also beyond simply achieving survival and other basic human needs.

Therefore, here we can take into account the concept of *intersubjectivity*, given by Edmund Husserl, which suggests that this form of reality rather than being a separate and isolated phenomenon is created by the collective experience of all its participants. The Universe doesn't exist as an object of our subjective perceptions, instead it arises out of our very interaction with it. Maybe all that exists is our collective inter-subjective experience, and there is simply no way of knowing it.

“...We always want to feel like we are in control and that we know things or are at least constantly attempting to understand it in a better way.”

Plunging into the depths of uncertainty can never really be pleasant. That is why humans came up with theology and mythology and further, reason and sciences to tackle them. We always want to feel like we are in control, and that we know things or are at least constantly attempting to understand it in a better way.

Philosophy as a discipline that has been simply described by Russell as a “*No man’s land*” between theology and sciences, thereby, attempts to keep asking such questions that shake up our very perception of reality. The more open we remain to retaining our child-like sense of wonder for the world the more it will make us constantly work on getting out of the shadow-cast cave rather than falling into a state of robotic existence or “everydayness”. It makes us take our very existence in the world for granted, as we focus on the nail we are hitting on with the *ready-to-hand* hammer until it falls apart becoming *present-at-hand*.

The way to work out of this sense of “thrownness” into the world at birth according to Heidegger’s idea of *dasein* then, would be to understand our position in the finite spectrum of life between birth and death. The way we perhaps do it is by living life and making the most of a given moment despite knowing the transient state of the world and how fleeting life can be.

Embracing uncertainty and transforming our perception is probably the way to go when we aim to balance living our lives in this reality with our limited human facets while also constantly questioning it with our hopefully never-ending thirst for knowledge and wisdom.



law of attraction

the spiritual belief that one’s thoughts and energy determine their circumstances, and that optimistic thinking brings in or “manifests” positive results.

Free Will: Recourse To Actions

By Alina Khan
B.A. (Hons) Philosophy, 2nd Year

Philosophy is a science of making underlying phenomena concretely evident. It implores deep to find the crux that constitutes the existence of things and possibilities. Philosophical debates over centuries associate free will as a line between myth and reality. Free will is the capacity of individuals to take decisions and shape their destinies through progressive ways. Polishing oneself through means of education and training, setting goals for the future and working on achieving the targets are concerned domains of free will.

Can we really make decisions relating to our interests?

Are the choices we make really free?

Is there a binding source of authority on our actions?

These comprise of a few philosophical positions regarding the possibility of free will.

Proponents of free will give humanistic psychological bent to the capacity of individuals to make choices. It gives primacy to Kantian Maxim of “Persons as End-In Themselves” which confers dignity and autonomy to people to take decisions. It further enhances respect by not subjecting external sources of control on individuals. Political philosophers such as John Rawls highlight the idea of free citizens taking part in a cooperative society modelled on justice. This freedom springs from the urge to will autonomously by taking decisions, making choices and pursuing the ultimate *telos* (good).

The moral ethical philosophers dealt upon the choices as lying in the moral or immoral domains as secondary.

Their major focus was on the agency of human beings to base decisions through an inner voice or simply conscience as we know today.

“...Conscience can be visualised as a manifestation of free will.”

Socrates himself inherited a voice of God within himself as referred to Daimon, which guarded him to take a rightful path and guided against devils obstructing the path. This inner voice was the conscience which never pushed the individual to adopt unethical immoral means. Conscience can be visualised as a manifestation of free will. It is the free will which disposes us to act and perform duties or societal roles.

Philosophy of Religion draws upon the existence of an omnipotent and all perfect being, God who is the controller of our actions and thoughts. For them, there is no such phenomena of free will. It seems that all our thoughts and actions are controlled by the words of destiny placed in a situational manner by God. We humans, in a critical sense, have no control over our actions. In fact, we are mere instruments working on the tunes of an omnipotent being. The world is undergoing a constant flux, shaped by an external force.

Philosophers supporting free will take arduous steps to show the human potential in achieving the ultimate *telos*. Free will should not just be correlated with taking charge of one's lives but also the force that drives mankind in achieving their dreams and objectives.

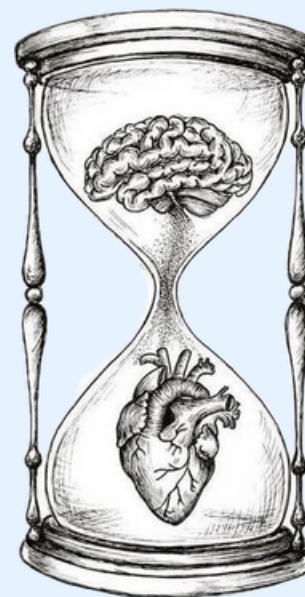
As famously put, “God helps those who help themselves”, the right amount of effort still requires oneself to shape their destinies to a better beginning or satisfactory end.

“...We are controllers of our action and mind (manas) and not results (karma).”

In our lives we juggle between the two ends of Free Will and Determinism. It is by realising the inner voice (conscious) shaped through Humanistic agendas which implore an individual to work consistently without thinking about the result and gain true purpose.

The Nishkama Karma Philosophy strongly highlights the need to work consistently. We are controllers of our action and mind (*manas*) and not results (*karma*). There is a harmonious relation between consciousness and karma with karmic matter evolving in each stage with consistent efforts of the agent.

Free will thus emerges from the perspective of moral agents in shaping their ends. It does not only help them depend on destinies or words of astrological predictions, superstitions and tarot, but makes them autonomous and rational agents of decision making.



The Illusion Of Free Will: Is Ignorant Bliss Better Than Informed Despair?

*By Navya Singh
B.A. (Hons) Philosophy, 1st Year*

**"A man can surely do what
he wills to do, but cannot
determine what he wills."
-Arthur Schopenhauer**

The decision to choose anything is what is called free will. It's the idea that we are sole authors of our destiny. That, in the face of multiple choices, whatever decision we make is completely down to us. We have the power of free choice. But what if someone says that free will is a myth? That we are all just a group of atoms who will react to a particular stimulus in a way that can be predetermined?

In the 1980s, Benjamin Libet, a physiologist, used an EEG, an electroencephalogram, to show that you can read and tell that somebody is about to move 300 milliseconds before they decide in their conscious mind to actually move. This means that before we decide that we want to move our bodies, it's already been decided for us subconsciously, and we only think that we made the decision ourselves after it has already been made. In a similar study, participants were asked to press one of two buttons while looking at a clock with a random sequence of letters on a screen.

With the use of MRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging), they discovered that two of the participants' brain regions showed what button they would press 7 to 10 seconds before they consciously made that decision. The results of this research only prove one thing - it is the decision that has been made deep in your subconscious that your brain becomes aware of. We become convinced that we are in the process of making that decision.

Since the brain is like the heart, we don't tell it what to do, it just does what it does. So, in reality, consciously making a decision, the experience we call "free will," is actually an illusion. It is simply a visualisation of events that the brain has already set in motion. It tells you what the brain has decided.

For as long as society has existed, we have understood the role of surrounding influences on our decision making. With idioms like "it takes a village to raise a child" and "you are the product of your environment" we understand that, to a great extent, our upbringing, our parents, the society we grew up in; all of these influence our decision making process. If someone is born religious, it is not crazy to think that they will be religious throughout their lives. *How can we all truly have the freedom to decide our fate when we are not dealt equal cards from the start?*

And it is not just the cards we are dealt, it is also the ability to play those cards. When you look at the concept of free will critically, the whole idea seems to crumble pretty quickly. In fact, researchers have come to the conclusion that believing in free will is like believing in religion; neither of them agree with the laws of physics. Think about it, if free will truly exists and if choice is not just a chemical process, then why can things like alcohol and antipsychotics completely change a person's behaviour?

**"...The biggest obstacle that the idea of
free will faces is morality."**

Some scientists who still want to cling on to the idea of free will argue that, while it's true that the subconscious makes decisions for the conscious, we still have the free will to shape the unconscious world. The biggest obstacle that the idea of free will faces is morality.

If morality is based on free will and free will doesn't exist, then what happens to morality? What happens to every other man-made

institution that has been designed around the idea of free will? When faced with questions like these, many people immediately fall into a trap of fatalism.

Fatalism is the idea that we are completely powerless in the universe's game. People who think like this believe that since we aren't completely in charge of our destiny, we are completely at its mercy; it is random and not up to us. Then, they become a lot less happy and start slacking in their relationships. They stop trying to be good people or to uphold any moral standards, and overall, they start to have a lower sense of fulfilment in life. But we don't have to fall into that trap. The scientists who champion the idea of the absence of free will would rather explain it philosophically as "determinism" rather than fatalism.

Determinism is the idea that all events are predetermined by existing causes. That everything that will happen can be explained through the clockwork laws of cause and effect. It doesn't mean that we are completely powerless and simply at the mercy of what's to come. It simply gives us a different way to look at everything that happens around us.

With deterministic thinking, we would also show more humility when talking about our achievements, because we understand that we are simply a product of our past experiences. It helps us to have empathy for people who are not in a similar position as we are, and it helps us to reduce our sense of entitlement. If the people in society do not attribute all of their success to their personal efforts alone, they are more likely to help and give back to others, hoping they might be able to recreate the factors that helped them succeed. It is a difficult thing to wrap our heads around because it goes against everything society is built around.

Free will is the basis of our society. It is what determines who is right and who is wrong, who gets the praise and who deserves to be punished. It tells us that a man who killed another man deserves to spend the rest of his life in prison, and that someone who works hard deserves to live a good life. And that is the fear of spreading the message of the absence of free will. Many scientists believe that if enough people are aware of this idea it could literally end society as we know it. Why would someone risk their life to save another person, only to hear people say "Well, he did not essentially decide to do it himself, so he does not deserve any praise?" The reality is that praise and punishment are two huge factors that help influence our decisions.

So, if we remove them from society, we pay the same way for our good deeds as our much worse ones. It is a strange dilemma to be in. Although the truth is that we do not have free will, believing that we do is actually a lot better for us. This is the concept of *illusionism*. That, although free will is an illusion, it is one that we must keep up with. Because faced with the choice between the Truth and the Good, it benefits the most of us to always choose the Good.

So, the next time you see a homeless person down the street, do not just roll your eyes and judge the person. Understand that there are a multitude of factors, many of which they might not have been able to control, that have caused them to be where they are. Be grateful about what you have and what you have achieved. If you had just a little less intelligence in your DNA, you might not have made that one decision that changed your life. Know that you do not have free will, at least how you imagine it. You are just lucky that your composition of atoms makes the right decision. Act like every decision is yours completely, because only then you will be able to make the decisions that can truly change your life.

गाँव का प्रतिबिम्ब

महक सिंह द्वारा
ब.ए (होन्स) दर्शनशास्त्र, २ साल

खुली सी हवा है, जहाँ मैं घंटो बैठती हूँ, और कुछ इस तरह मैं अपने गाँव को महसूस करती हूँ।

गाँव में सादा जीवन व्यतीत करने वाले लोगों के बीच तथा वहाँ के सुंदर और आश्चर्य वातावरण में गोते लगाते हुए समय कुछ इस प्रकार भागा चला जाता है जैसे कि मन की गति। गाँव जाकर अलग सा खुलापन महसूस होता है जो कि बंधनमुक्त होता है। हालांकि वहाँ जो चीजें वास्तविक रूप में निहित हैं सबको अलग-अलग महसूस हो सकती हैं।

पक्षी, उपवन, बाग, बगीचा, और यहाँ सब है मौजूद,
खेतों में खलिहानों में किसानों का है वजूद।

मिट्टी खुशबूदार यहाँ की तन-मन को महकाती है,
मिट्टी से ही फसलें उगती, मिट्टी ही बोझ उठाती है।

लोग यहाँ के बहुत निराले प्रेम-भाव को बढ़ाते हैं,
छल-कपट का भाव नहीं है सादा जीवन अपनाते हैं।

शुद्ध जल और शुद्ध हवाएँ मानव को बहलाती है,
मोर यहाँ नाचा करते हैं, बादल गाना गाते हैं।

लोग यहाँ के बहुत अनुभवी सबको पथ दिखलाते हैं,
हर व्यक्ति जुड़ा हो गाँव से, लोग यही सिखलाते हैं।





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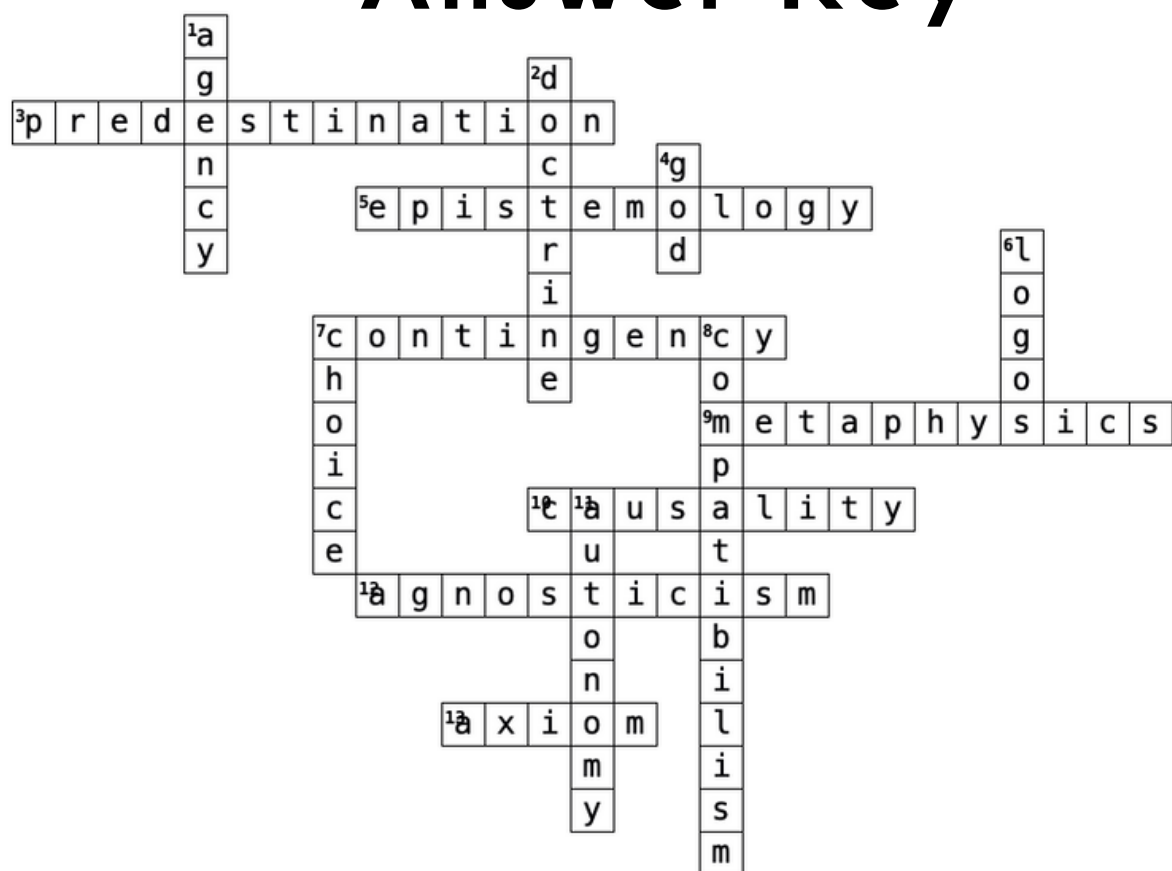


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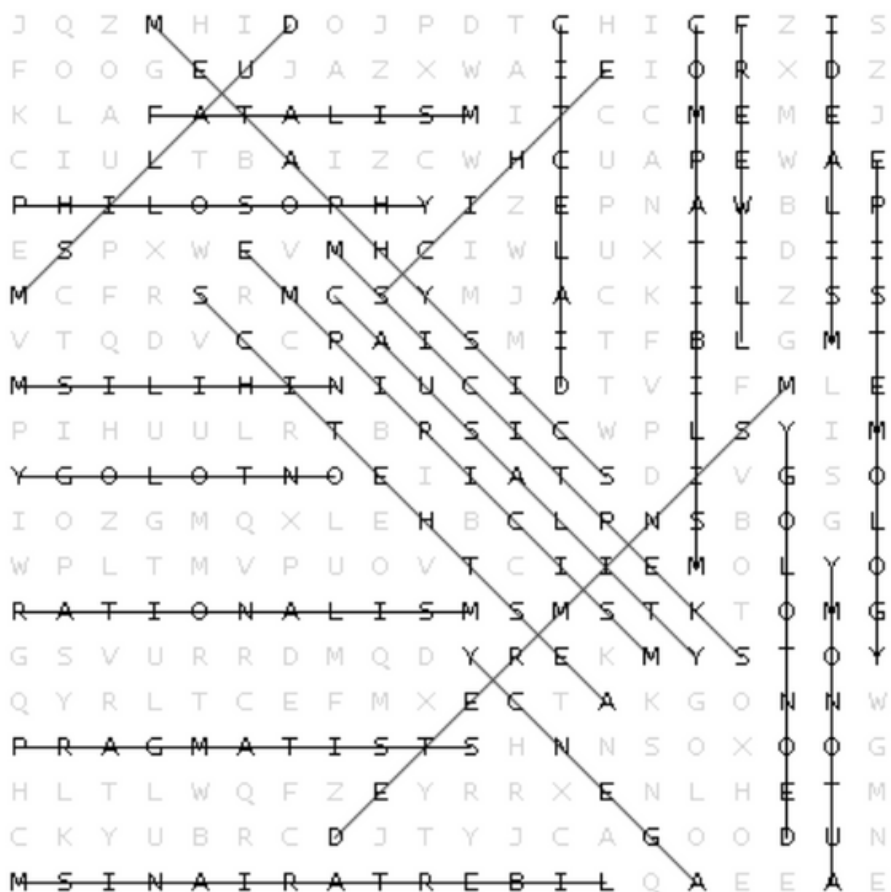
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Answer Key



Crossword Puzzle

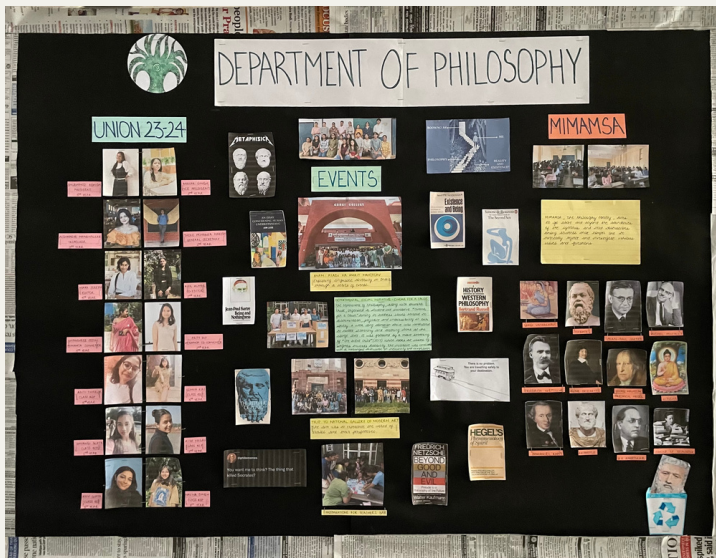
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As we draw the curtains on yet another edition of our departmental magazine, we find ourselves reflecting on the diverse array of pieces that have added a unique layer to the tapestry of knowledge that we strive to cultivate.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who contributed to the success of this magazine, the authors, reviewers, and readers.

Sincerely,
Philosophy Department Union





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THE MAGAZINE!**



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"ETERNITY,"

WHERE WILL YOU SEE...

« HERE IS NOTHING NEWER OR OLDER THAN THE UNIVERSE... »
STEPHEN HAWKING

midnight

Neptune

Pluto

Uranus

Saturn

Jupiter

Mars

Mars

Earth

Venus

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