

Lesson 7

Questions

Directions: You need to answer 3 questions from 1-5. Please number your answers on your submission with the same number as below

1. Most of what you do and say reflects the influences, training, education, examples, and rules that have affected you all your life. Some of these come from your parents; when you were very young, you learned certain prejudices and preferences and so have never been able to consider the alternatives. Some have been imposed on you by force (through threat of punishment and nonacceptance), and others have been subtly imposed on you through television, magazines, and other forms of mass communication. Does all this make your actions and decisions any less “free”? To what extent would you be more free if you would get outside of all these influences and make decisions without them?
2. If a person commits a serious crime but is wholly determined or caused to do so by his or her upbringing, by criminal influences, or by drugs, should he or she be held responsible for the crime? Should society be responsible? Friends? The drug dealer? Should anyone be held responsible? Or is that just “the way things had to happen”?
3. Define *freedom* in your own terms, specifically outlining those aspects of yourself that you consider the basis of your own conception of “acting freely.” To what extent does your conception include playing roles and interacting with other people? To what extent do other people limit your freedom?
4. Is freedom necessary for living the good life in a good society? Can you imagine circumstances in which freedom would be undesirable, or at least irrelevant? Is giving people freedom always giving them something positive?
5. Consider one of the two compatibilist positions discussed in this chapter and defend it, or attack it, from the point of view of a hard determinist.