

FREE WILL: NOT LAWLESS OR UNCAUSED

Free will is not identical with either the lawless or the uncaused, for if it were, it would be non-existent. Rather, free will is identical with that which is not stimulus-bound, i.e. with what is innerly determined. My freely choosing to do X is the result of previous causes and it is a lawful event--only, it is not one predominantly caused by concurrent external causes, unless by reaction against the latter. (E.g., an individual chooses, even while under torture, not to squeal on his friends.)

The notion of free will was mainly introduced, e.g. by St. Augustine, to justify sin in a world supposedly ruled by an omnipotent and benevolent God. However, it is equally necessary to account for virtue in a wicked world. →

If we were fully conditioned by experience, the way a pigeon or a rat can be taught to respond, we would be neither good nor bad, neither virtuous nor sinful.

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