

Lech Majchrowski

Jagiellonian University in Kraków

The Future Is History

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Abstract

The following text addresses the issue of determinism and the associated problem of free will. This problem, as it seems, still raises a lot of emotions and remains current despite the passage of years. The question of human freedom is in fact one of those to which the answer (positive or negative) depends profoundly on our understanding of our own existence, the overall picture of the world (e.g. the belief that life is governed by destiny), the relation to the various metaphysical (or religious) concepts, as well as the understanding of concepts such as morality, justice, guilt (sin), responsibility and autonomy. Determinism also connects with the existential anxiety about whether we are able to control our own decisions and whether our life, therefore, is not merely a plaything in the hands of fate.

The purpose of this article which was inspired by an analysis of the writings of Nietzsche² is an attempt to justify the position of rejecting the concept of free will as a kind of

illusion, reigning in the general human consciousness. In this regard, the text mainly focuses on arguments denying the ideas of free will, and so, to a lesser extent, on those that might argue for its maintenance: it does not include, e.g., issues related to quantum physics or the Heisenberg principle. My intention was to engage in the debate about free will and opt clearly for the deterministic position in such a way as to provoke the Reader to his or her own thoughts, and even inspire him or her to write their own article in which s/he will, for example, argue in favour of maintaining the concept of free will by an indication of the errors in my reasoning. In the text I try, among other things, to formulate a definition of free will, and present its origins and the consequences flowing from the adoption of a deterministic vision of the world.

¹ To nie koncepcja nadczłowieka, śmierci Boga czy woli mocy, a właśnie determinizm (radykałna negacja wolnej woli) jest, moim zdaniem, absolutnie kluczowy dla rozumienia całej filozofii Nietzschego.

² This is not the concept of the superman, the death of God and the will of power, but just determinism (the radical negation of free will), which is, in my opinion, absolutely crucial for understanding the whole philosophy of Nietzsche.