

Print ISSN: 2347-2146 | Online ISSN: 2347-6869



SOCRATES

*An international, refereed (peer-reviewed) and indexed scholarly journal in
Public Administration and Philosophy*



THE SOCRATIC INQUIRY

The Official Newsletter of the Socrates Journal

VOL. 3 ISSUE 6 2021 (MAY 3 - JUN 6)

IN THIS ISSUE

- Letter from the Editor
- Featured Article
- Upcoming Conference
- IPARN Research Committee on Migration
- About Dr Abha Foundation
- Join Our Team
- Subscriptions Information 2021

EDITOR

Dr. Michelle L. Blakely

Editor, Journal Section - Public Administration

Assistant Professor of Social and Administrative Pharmacy

University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming, USA

E-Mail: michelle.blakely@socratesjournal.com

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Dr. Curtis R. Blakely

Criminal Justice Lecturer

University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming, USA

E-Mail: cblakely@socratesjournal.com

Date of Publication: Sunday 6 June 2021 Wyoming, USA



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

HELLO JUNE 2021!

Thank you for joining us!

In this issue of our Newsletter, we present a featured article. This article is written by Aditi Singh of India. The article is titled, "*Am I Free to Choose?*", and it discusses choice, freedom, individuality and responsibility.



There is also information about an upcoming conference (17 June 2021) titled, "Beyond Academic Philosophy" on page 8. The IPARN Foundation is creating a Research Committee on Migration. If you are interested in learning more about the committee's work, please see page 9 of this Newsletter.

Thank you so much for your continued support of our Newsletter! We hope you are well, happy and productive! Take care and please join us again next month.

Warm regards,

Michelle

FEATURED ARTICLE

AM I FREE TO CHOOSE?

Author: Aditi Singh

Country: India

Abstract: This paper focuses on themes of freedom, social responsibility, and individuality. With special emphasis on Jean Paul Sartre and Immanuel Kant, I try to put forth my opinions on these topics. This paper is very carefully segmented to answer different questions that can arise while answering the question 'Am I Free to Choose?' In this paper I also try to articulate philosophy of choice, what constitutes and how we ultimately make a choice. Sartre's conception of 'freedom' and Kant's theory of categorical imperative also helps shape this essay to come to a conclusion about freedom and how it is entwined with social responsibility.

Keywords: Freedom, Individuality, Choice, Responsibility

"It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities."
— J.K. Rowling, Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets

Being just 12 years old and watching Harry Potter for the first time, I never really understood the meaning of this beautiful sentence. Growing up, studying philosophy, allowed me to finally understand some of this sentence. If I put it in the words of Jean Paul Sartre, "We are our choices" and the choices we make represent our personality. But one question that rises whenever the concept of choice is raised is that are we even free to make any choices by ourselves. From a determinist point of view, what we do is already planned and our actions don't really make a difference, however the whole concept of determinism presents a fatalist attitude towards life. Moreover, if determinism is true and valid, then none of us should do anything and should adopt a fatalist attitude. But this is not the case, as we make choices, some really tough ones in our day to day lives, we see that these choices not only effect us but is also important to others in and beyond our lives. The argument given by Sartre against determinism helps

us to understand the approach of freewill in a better way. He says that even though we are thrown into the pit of nothingness, our self-creation depends on us, it solely lies in the choices we make, thereby providing us a pragmatic approach to the concept of human freedom.

Refuting determinism in one sense or the other, the question that still remains is 'what really is a choice?' A choice may be defined as the act of preferring one alternative over the other. There must be at least two alternatives to even make a choice and this act of choosing requires the agent to be capable of deliberation and action. Now a choice may be of different kinds depending on the source (the source of motivation for that choice). It may be a moral choice, a responsible one, or one whose motivation lies in utility or a causally determined choice. Most of the choices we make come from a utilitarian point of view, we put our utility above all other aspects and then choose to do something. However, many moral philosophers have contested against this notion and have propounded for a moral responsible choice. Major difference between a utilitarian choice and a moral choice is where utilitarian choice is depended on many external factors where the sole motive is to profit ourselves, a moral responsible choice is based on freedom and autonomy of will.

Given the different types of choice, a choice is really a choice when it come from the source of freedom, otherwise it may as well be counted as a coerced decision. In the words of Kant in 'Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime (1764), "But what is harder and more unnatural than this yoke of necessity is the subjection of one being under the will of another. No misfortune can be more terrifying to one who is accustomed to freedom, who has enjoyed the good of freedom, than to see himself delivered to a creature of his own kind who can compel him to do what he will (to give himself over to his will). It requires a very long habitation to make the terrifying thought of servitude tolerable, for everyone must always feel that even when there are many adversities that one might not be pleased to shed at the risk of one's life, still in the choice between slavery and the risk of death one will have no reservation about preferring the latter." Here Kant is trying to point out that the worst thing that can happen to someone who was once morally free to make his/her own decisions is to be subjected to someone else's tyranny. He compares this position to the very notion of slavery.

Thinkers like Kant, who focuses on moral freedom, explains "how freedom in the proper sense

(moral, not metaphysical) is the supreme principle of all virtue and all happiness." By Kant's interpretation, we see that virtue does not depend on happiness. He opposes it to utilitarianism by saying that, "in moral matters, the noble must not be considered from the viewpoint of utility," and further, "hence the moral goodness of action does not consist in utility to the self." He therefore states that freedom is the central concept of human beings and forms the framework to make choices.

However, there are other thinkers, like Hobbes, who have claimed that man cannot be the original source of his actions. All desires and inclinations proceed from some cause. For Hobbes, universal causation is a brute fact, therefore we do not have the power of creating new causal chains by free choice; we do not have the power of origination, which means that 'freedom of will' is beyond us. However he also says that despite the absence of ultimate freedom, man is still free, by that he means he has a power of acting or not acting according to the determinations of the will. We are free (what we may call the freedom of action) insofar as we follow our own desires and inclinations, and implement our own decisions. A free action is where there is an absence of external impediments, and in the plainest sense it must be voluntary or willing. This may be described as a compatibility definition of freedom.

Therefore, it is not always the case that freedom is absolutely required to make a choice, we do sometimes unknowingly under the influence of someone else, or after being manipulated by someone else, make a choice which is not really our own. But this act of choosing under manipulation or under influence still requires a certain amount of power to act which has its basis in freedom.

Even though determinism is often refuted by advocates of freewill, there still remains certain external or internal conditions which poses great threat to the freedom to make a choice. The concept of causal thesis is one such problem. We might not sometimes even be aware of some pre-conditioning which influences us to make a choice. This antecedent might be the cause of our consequent i.e., our choice. Therefore, the

question again arises, whether we were free to make that choice. Apart from this there are other external causes like social conditioning, which might try to limit our freedom, and then there are other internal causes like our own desires, inclination which can also limit our freedom. No doubt these external and internal conditions exist in everyone's life but our freedom of will, freedom to choose should remain aloof to that. Freedom to choose can only exist if we somehow detach ourselves momentarily from these desires, pre-conditioning, etc. In order to resist pressure of these forces, one has to de-objectify oneself from these forces and then maybe that person can make a decision free of external or internal forces.

My whole essay has pointed out one thing, that a person cannot be free to think if s/he is subjugated by another. Here I borrow Kant's conception of being free in the way of using our own rational agency to achieve ends. Being influenced by someone, being subjugated, making decisions from the aspect of pre-conditioning, only result in disabling our functions to choose as agents. Some might ask, why subjugation is a disabling condition, when it doesn't ask to do anything, only to follow the guidance of others, well this very reason is the cause of our 'un-freedom', the fact that in this domain we are not even allowed to think or reflect on our own is the sole cause for disabling freedom to choose. We need to rationalize a situation on our own before even taking a decision, disabling this is therefore one of the most hazardous things that can happen to the notion of freedom. On the other hand, conditions where we can reflect, think about others as well as of ourselves as ends and not as any means can lead to conditions of freely choosing an action. Under these conditions we not only think about ourselves but also due to our reflective powers take such decisions which will in turn serve as a universal choice for others too. This represents not only objectivity of our rationale to make a decision but also the inter-subjectivity of that decision which will also serve others. Therefore, by referring to the objectivity and inter-subjectivity of the situation, we can think in such a way which will pave the path for freely choosing an action.

The question that remains after this evaluation is that whether freedom is absolute, such that everyone can follow and understand its concept? Conceptually speaking, the notion of freedom is absolute, it has both the aspects of objectivity and intersubjectivity as mentioned above. It is our consciousness and it makes us what we are. If we are not even free ontologically, our society would have never moved ahead of slavery and colonialism. All these acts of freedom are also due to the concept of "Rights". Although right and freedom are closely related, it might sometimes be the case that there are certain aspects of 'negative' freedom which you cannot do because of the concept of 'right'. Our rights therefore contain the limits to our freedom. However, rights are not something which were made overnight, they have been very carefully articulated and then made universal. The universal aspect is what makes 'right' compatible with freedom, it helps us recognize other human beings, animals, environment as ends and not as means. We all are equally given rights which does entail freedom. It is because of this universal, absolute concept of freedom, that it pains us when we see that someone is not free even in today's world. Countries where there is still no democracy, no rights for women and animals, make us suffer just by thinking about them, because the very basic concept of freedom is not there. Therefore, even though there are certain limitations to people acting freely, the concept of freedom remains to be an absolute.

I would like to conclude my essay by emphasizing on the fact that freedom is the key to a good human life, when we see others as agents of their own rationale, as ends and not as means, we end up creating a world which is meaningful to all. Freedom forms a necessary condition for our existence as it allows us to think freely without coercion, articulate a matter without pressure and then to make a choice which in turn can become a law, a law that if followed by anyone else will also benefit that person (Kant's Autonomy of Will). Even though we sometimes think that we are not free to do something, taking the recent example of restrictions put down on us during COVID-19, the rationale behind these restrictions show that it is in turn treating everybody as an agent of freewill and therefore expecting them to comprehend the situation and react accordingly. The concept of right again takes its place here and shows that something which is universal, is there to preserve our freedom and not destroy it.

Moreover, freedom is not an individual concept, it is embedded in the plurality of 'interactive beings', and the reciprocity it follows. This concept of reciprocity is not limited to humans only

but extends itself to nature too. It is only when we treat nature as an end in itself, as an intelligible agent, whose rights shouldn't be exploited, then we see the rewards of nature. The concept of freedom has to become 'mutually meaningful' through its exercise and thus help in the creation of an inter-subjective world which not only seems 'meaningful' and 'fulfilling' to each, but also gives one the 'feeling' that one can do something worthwhile on one's own since others are supportive of it or not negatively disposed to it, unless one is violating the right of the other. This can only happen when we fully understand the concept of freedom is there around us. Therefore, the quote by J.K Rowling "It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities", holds the concept of freedom as true and that it is really our own choices which can improve both ourselves and the world.

References

Butler, M. (2015). There is No Good Answer. *Sartre Studies International*, 97-107.

Daya Krishna, J. L. (2011). *Contrary Thinking: Selected Essays of Daya Krishna*. Oxford Scholarship Online: Oxford University Press.
<https://oxford.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:osobl/9780199795550.001.0001/acprof-9780199795550-chapter-26>

Demenchonok, E. (2019). Learning from Kant. *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia*, 191-230.

Author Contact Information: aaaddii011@gmail.com

UPCOMING CONFERENCE



FACULTY OF THEOLOGY AND ISLAMIC STUDIES
VICE PROVOST FOR RESEARCH

BEYOND ACADEMIC PHILOSOPHY



Nadia Maftouni



Slavoj Žižek

17 June 2021
11 am Tehran



Research Committee on Migration

As part of the execution of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that was signed between IPARN FOUNDATION, India and the Siirtolaisuusinstituutti - Migration Institute of Finland, Finland, IPARN Foundation is constituting a Research Committee on Migration to study the migration issues in developing countries of Asia and transnational migration between Finland and Asia.

Scholars and Researchers who are Interested in joining this research committee are requested to send their CV, Cover letter and at-least three published research publications to the Chairman, IPARN Foundation, India through email at: md@iparn.org

Pre-requisite:

Interested Academic/Researcher:

1. must have a Ph.D. or a D.M. degree.
2. must be employed in any academic institution or research organization.
3. must have relevant publication in reputed journals on Migration.
4. must have demonstrated evidence of superior academic and professional achievement.

Most suitable profiles will be contacted by the IPARN Foundation, India for a face-to-face interview through the Internet.

IPARN Foundation (Integrated Policy and Administrative Research Networking Foundation) is a Non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of scientific research and exchange of knowledge in the field of Public Policy and Public Administration, and its ecosystem, and to contribute to its national and international development.

To learn more, please visit: <https://www.iparn.org/>



DR ABHA FOUNDATION

A PUBLIC CHARITABLE TRUST IN INDIA WORKING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND BETTERMENT OF VULNERABLE SECTIONS OF SOCIETY

Dr Abha Foundation, India is a public charitable trust registered in India, working for the development and betterment of vulnerable sections of the society. More specifically, it is a non-profit organization promoting human development issues and advancement of scientific research in education. The Foundation sponsors and publishes scholarly Journal SOCRATES, The Socratic Inquiry (monthly newsletter of the Socrates Journal), SOCRATES SCHOLARS INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH NETWORK (SSIRN) and undertakes and encourages other similar projects.

We work for the development of the vulnerable sections of society:

1. Women
2. Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST)
3. Children
4. Aged
5. Disabled
6. Poor migrants
7. People living with HIV/AIDS and Cancer; and
8. Sexual Minorities

Our Objectives:

1. Social and Economic upliftment of the vulnerable sections of society.
2. Establishment and promotion of public health services.
3. Promotion of scientific research and quality education.
4. Relief activities during Natural calamities.
5. Skill development by establishing technical, Non-technical art and culture academics institutions.
6. Environmental protection.
7. Social Mobilisation and awareness.
8. Rural development.
9. Urban planning.
10. Human Rights.
11. Sustainable development.
12. Women and Youth empowerment.

**To know more visit our website drabhafoundation.org
or write an email to info@drabhafoundation.org**

JOIN OUR TEAM



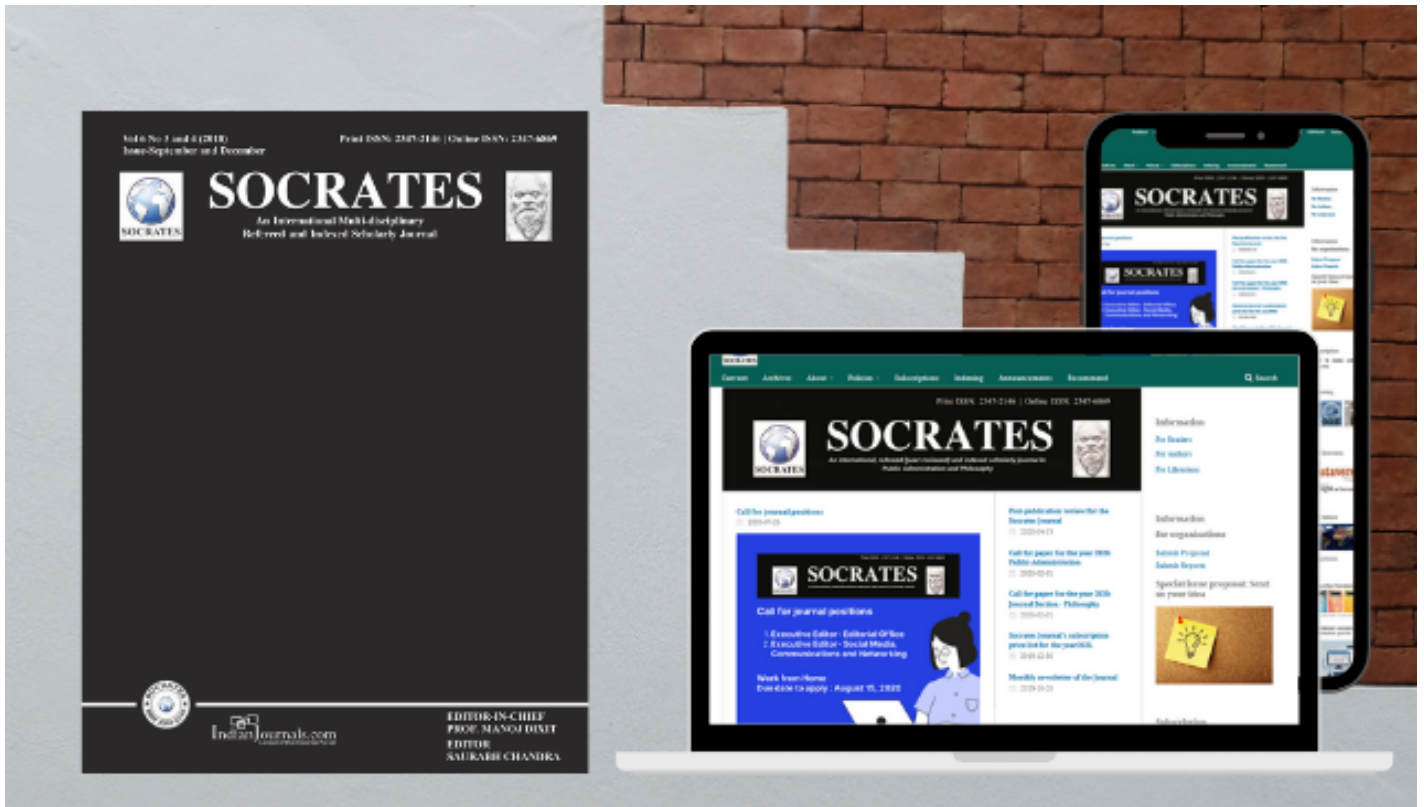
Socrates has a team of scholars from 11 + countries who represent the Journal in their respective countries. We are looking forward to increasing this international collaboration even further. We invite leading scholars to contribute to this Journal by submitting their papers, citing articles, and taking part in the editorial process by joining our editorial team.

Current Openings:

1. Editor
2. International Advisory Board Member (Consultancy position)
3. Reviewer
4. Post-Publication Reviewer
5. Editorial Assistant

To learn more visit: <https://www.socratesjournal.com/index.php/SOCRATES/joinourteam>

SUBSCRIPTIONS 2021: INDIVIDUAL AND INSTITUTIONAL



Socrates is the official publication of the "Dr Abha Foundation", a public charitable trust in India, working for the development and betterment of Vulnerable Sections of society. This Journal publishes innovative, responsive and high-quality research papers. *Socrates* is an international, peer-reviewed, scholarly publication that is indexed, and we only accept quality manuscripts for publication. Our mission behind introducing and initiating this journal is to motivate scholars who have the willingness to produce and publish quality research and discuss their original research, thoughts and ideas. We encourage libraries to list this journal among their electronic journal holdings. The copyright of all content published in *Socrates* is retained by the authors. However, all *Socrates* content is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution license. We also encourage individual readers to subscribe to the Journal. *Socrates* believes in providing quality material on a timely basis. Since the journal will be of great relevance to individual reader, organizations and their members, it should be subscribed to for the benefit of all concerned.

Individual Subscriptions:

Socrates offers three types of subscription options for individual readers:

1. Online only: In this option, subscribers can log in into this e-journal's website and enjoy full online access for one year to all the articles in our database.
2. Online and Print: In this option subscribers enjoy full online access for one year to all the articles in our database. Along with that, they receive the printed copies of the issues published in a year to their doorsteps or physical mailing address.
3. Print Only: In this option subscribers receive the printed copies of the issues published in the year to their doorsteps or physical mailing address for one year.

Visit this webpage to know more:

<https://www.socratesjournal.com/index.php/SOCRATES/information/readers>

Institutional Subscriptions:

Socrates offers three types of subscription options for Institutions.

1. Online only: In this option, subscriber institutions are granted with full online access for one year to all the articles in our e-Journal.
2. Online and Print: In this option subscriber institutions enjoy full online access for one year to all the articles in published in our e-journal. Along with that they also receive the printed copies of issues published in a year to their doorsteps or physical mailing address.
3. Print Only: In this option, subscriber institutions receive the printed copies of issues published to their doorsteps or physical mailing address for one year.

Visit this webpage to know more:

<https://www.socratesjournal.com/index.php/SOCRATES/information/librarians>

We do not offer any offline mode of subscription.

Please subscribe to our journal through our e-journal's website only.

Subscriptions Contact: **subscription@socratesjournal.com**

NCS PORTAL



The screenshot shows a web form titled "SOCRATES" with a logo and a small portrait. Below the title, it says "Socrates newsletter content submission portal". A note reads: "Please submit your content for review and inclusion in our weekly newsletter through this form. Once submitted you will receive a confirmation e-mail." The form fields include: "Full Name" (split into First Name, Middle Name, and Last Name), "Email" (with a placeholder "Please enter your email@socratesjournal.com"), "Phone Number" (with Area Code and Phone Number fields), "Country" (with a dropdown menu), and "Please select your domain" (with a dropdown menu). A "Next" button is at the bottom right.

NEWSLETTER CONTENT SUBMISSION PORTAL

Registered members of the *Socrates* Journal who are interested in submitting their content for review and consideration of publication in this Newsletter can now submit their content through the Newsletter content submission portal. **It is available at the following link:**
<https://www.socratesjournal.com/index.php/SOCRATES/ncs-portal>

Through this portal, you are able to submit the following:

1. Your featured article for inclusion in the Newsletter,
2. Information about the latest researches and research papers from your domain,
3. Information about upcoming conferences,
4. Information about new jobs and research opportunities,
5. Information about new projects and funding opportunities,
6. Information about new books and book reviews,
7. Information about your work on any article/research paper for submission to the Newsletter,
The information may be included in the Newsletter as an 'Upcoming Featured Article'.
8. Information about new International organizations,
9. Any new information related to your area of research interest, and
10. Information about your recently awarded PhD.

and much more...

For queries, please contact the Editor of the Newsletter, **Dr. Michelle Blakely**, Assistant Editor, Journal Section - Political Science, Assistant Professor of Social and Administrative Pharmacy, University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY, USA. E-mail: michelle.blakely@socratesjournal.com

THE SOCRATIC INQUIRY

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

- To submit your content such as new research updates, articles and research to this Newsletter, please contact Newsletter Editor: Dr Michelle Blakely, Editor, Journal Section - Public Administration, Assistant Professor of Social and Administrative Pharmacy University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming, USA. E-Mail: michelle.blakely@socratesjournal.com.
- To join the advisory committee of this Newsletter, please write an email to editor@socratesjournal.com.
- To subscribe to the Newsletter, please visit:
<https://www.socratesjournal.com/News/?p=subscribe&id=1>
- For any other issue and queries, please contact the Editor of the Newsletter, Dr Michelle Blakely, Assistant Editor, Journal Section - Political Science, Assistant Professor of Social and Administrative Pharmacy, University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY, the USA at michelle.blakely@socratesjournal.com.
- **PLEASE NOTE: All submissions should be received by the Editor of the Newsletter no later than 5:00 pm Mountain Standard Time (MST) U.S. the last Thursday of the month to be considered for inclusion in the next month's Newsletter. Submissions received after 5:00 pm MST on the last Thursday of each month will be considered for a future Newsletter.**

DISCLAIMER

- Views expressed in articles are the personal opinion of the author/contributor and are in no sense official, neither the journal *SOCRATES* nor any member of the journal and this Newsletter is responsible. In case any research paper/Article is found previously published elsewhere, the author/contributor will be entirely responsible. There would be no responsibility of any member of the journal and/or the Newsletter.
- All the new updates included in this Newsletter have been carefully checked by the advisory committee members but in case any error is found, the Newsletter team and the journal *Socrates* would not be responsible. Please do not forget to verify the details yourself before following.
- CANVA.COM Website has been used to create this Newsletter and all the images used are from CANVA.

This Newsletter is published by:



**DR ABHA
FOUNDATION**

Public Charitable Trust

WWW.DRABHAFoundation.ORG



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.
To view the license please visit: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>