

FREE CHOICE

A Self-Referential Argument

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*This book is dedicated
to our teachers and our students,
and to other colleagues
with whom we have philosophized.*

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Foreword with Acknowledgments

In this work, we clarify and examine the philosophic controversy over free choice and we attempt to present a sound, self-referential argument for the thesis that human persons can make free choices. The work is addressed primarily to professional philosophers and to serious students. Someone who is already quite familiar with the controversy can understand our own argument without reading chapters two, three, and four. At the same time, a student who wishes to gain some insight into the perennial controversy over free choice might find the first four chapters useful even if chapters five and six are not at present helpful to him. Someone who is interested in the method of self-referential argumentation will find chapter five interesting; the statement of the logic of the method in sections A through D of chapter five can be understood by itself.

Abbreviations and some rather barbarous, technical expressions are used throughout this work. The abbreviations are explained in the introduction. We apologize to our readers for the style we have adopted; we have regularly sacrificed felicity of expression to clarity and precision when we found our skill in exposition inadequate to achieve both values. We considered providing a glossary of our own technical expressions, but have not done so, since several of them are defined in quite complex contexts. However, we have taken care to include our technical expressions in the index, to assist the reader in finding passages in which they are introduced.

Stimulated by his participation in the present collaborative project, Germain Grisez wrote and published an independent work, *Beyond the New Theism: A Philosophy of Religion*. Grisez's work, although published in the spring of 1975, thus presupposes the present work, rather than vice versa. In several notes, Grisez refers to the present work. A reader who tries to follow out these

references will meet some difficulty in doing so, since the chapters of this book were rearranged in the final revision, after Grisez's work was published. In one or two cases, material to which Grisez refers no longer appears in the present work, but in most cases the material can be found by checking the table of contents of this book for its new location in the text.

The present project arose out of a conversation in December, 1970. We knew of several previous attempts to apply a self-referential method of argumentation to the controversy over free choice. These attempts seemed limited and unsatisfactory in some respects. (They are discussed in chapter two, section E, of the present work.) We tried to work out a sound, self-referential argument which would be effective against any position which attempts to exclude the human capacity to make free choices.

The first published fruit of this effort was an article, "Determinism, Freedom, and Self-Referential Arguments," which appeared in *The Review of Metaphysics*, 26 (September, 1972). We received a great many reactions to this article and suggestions for important improvements in our effort. Robert Young replied to our article in the same journal, 27 (September, 1973): "A Sound Self-Referential Argument?" These critical reactions made clear to us many defects, both in substance and in presentation, in our initial attempt to articulate the argument.

The present work was planned and drafted, and several times redrafted. Many philosophers have read and commented upon at least some part of one or more of these drafts. We thank the members of the Department of Philosophy, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, and also Thomas Flynn, Richard M. Fox, James Gallagher, Ronald Lawler, O.F.M.Cap., John Minahan, Russell Shaw, Henry Veatch, and John Ziegler for their special help. Notre Dame University Press submitted two drafts of the book to a reader whose name we do not know; his critical comments and suggestions were most helpful and significantly guided us in bringing the book to its present structure. Of course, neither he nor others who helped us should be blamed for defects which remain in the work.

Our project received support from many quarters. Aquinas College aided us with two research grants under a program generously funded by the Medora Feehan Charitable and Educational Trust. Campion College, University of Regina, provided a research grant, and the National Endowment for the Humanities a summer stipend. Mount Saint Mary's College, Emmitsburg, Maryland, provided space for work and extensive copying facilities; Capuchin College, Washington, D.C., provided space for work and received us as guests; and Campion College, University of Regina, provided working space and facilities. The library of the University of Regina, in particular the Interlibrary Loan Department, was especially helpful.

Barbara Boyle and Jeannette Grisez typed the early drafts of the work. Jeannette Grisez prepared the final manuscript and assisted with indexing and proof-reading.

We are grateful for all of this support and dedicated assistance, which alone made this collaborative project possible. We also thank our editor, John Ehmann, for his unfailing helpfulness.

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