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## FATALISM: CONTRIBUTION OF WILLIAM OF OCKHAM

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### Abstract

Fatalism is the ideology in which man is unable to do anything other than his own control and prevent any opinion, action or dislike. It also includes the fact that man is incapable of creating or preventing any event related to the future. There were several forms in fatalism. According to logical fatalism, such things are accepted as truth only if the future events of the present have already been decided. According to theological fatalism, free will does not mean that God has a foreknowledge of future events. Fatalism is one of the famous philosophical problems. Aristotle's interpretation of this has created a fatal mixture of theological teachings. This incompatible teaching was invented by Ockham. According to Aristotle, the omniscience and foreknowledge of God and the basic theological teachings have subtly challenged but some medieval philosophers have used those teachings without realizing it. As the first philosopher who criticized Aristotle in the Medieval Period, Ockham correctly interpreted the theological teachings. In contemporary philosophy, Ockham's teachings are highly regarded. The purpose of this paper is to identify the confusions of Aristotle's teachings and to analyze Ockham's interpretations. For this purpose, I have used the works of Aristotle and Ockham on fatalism as well as other sources which discuss and analyze the nature of logical fatalism as well as theology and how it affects theological teachings.

**Keywords:** Aristotle, Fatalism, Logical basis, Ockham, Sea battle

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## **Introduction**

Aristotelian philosophy was a thought that revolutionized the history of philosophy. It is undisputed. His philosophy was accepted as absolute natural till the Renaissance in the Middle Ages. St. Thomas Aquinas, in particular, brought the situation to a very high level in his philosophical inquiries. But St. Aquinas failed to recognize the deadly mixture that manifested itself in Aristotelian philosophy. William Aristotle's teachings in the 14th century identified one of the most powerful theologically hidden forms of theology in the teachings of fate. This paper seeks to find out how the logical fate of Aristotelian philosophy and the contradictions presented by Ockham fit into the present time.

Fatalism can be defined as events in which there is no understanding of what is happening and cannot be influenced by man. What can human safety be like in such a situation? And isn't his life completely at risk? Also, is it not possible to take precautionary measures in this regard? However, does such a situation really exist? Can man design anything? If not, is he inactive? This is a dilemma. It is also a philosophical problem. Although various philosophical theories have been put forward in this regard, Aristotle's rational fatalism theory has a formal basis and is an important analysis of this problem. That interpretation has long been accepted in philosophy, but a new perspective has been created on the philosophical problem after Ockham presented the flaws and weaknesses of that interpretation. This article aims to address this issue.

## **Nature of fatalism**

Fatalism is based on the conclusion that no human action is free. According to fatalism, man cannot control events or prevent unpleasant things from happening. It is especially clear that this feeling prevents man from making decisions or making an effort (Ray, 2016)<sup>1</sup>. Fatalism is the attitude of the mind that accepts that whatever happens is bound or determined. Such recognition can be considered to rely on a binding or ordering agent (Mifflin, 2010)<sup>2</sup>. Such matters are investigated primarily on logical and theological grounds. Fatalism points out that man can have no influence on the past, present and future actions, and that he must get adapted to them. In other words, it is concluded that the facts pertaining to any fact or event are unavoidable. Theological fatalism concludes that such actions cannot be prevented from divine beliefs about future actions. There are two features of any argument for fatalism; that is, general logical or metaphysical assumptions that no human action is free, and that those actions are not explicitly related to determinism. In fact, fatalism offers a clear argument for concluding that determinism is incompatible with free will (Taylor, 1992)<sup>3</sup>. Fatalism is an explanation beyond determinism. But there are major differences. According to determinism, all events are predetermined by cause-and-effect chains. However, fatalism holds a more stable position.

## **Theological fatalism**

This foundation begins in philosophy with an interpretation based on Christian teachings by Evodius, the Bishop of Antioch, a contemporary of St. Augustine of Hippo. Initiating this discussion, Evodius declares that he wanted to know whether the Creator of man should have given up on that free choice, which he concluded had the power to sin (Peterson, 2014)<sup>4</sup>. God acted

irresponsibly to give us the will to bring evil (Peterson, 2014)<sup>4</sup>. If God's omniscience includes the secrecy of man's decision before it happens, how can man maintain that he makes a genuine choice because he inevitably chooses what God knows? (Peterson, 2014)<sup>4</sup>. It is clear that he did not care how free the will of philosophically analyzed people was.

This interpretation by Evodius is known as theological fatalism and St. Augustine has responded to it (King, 2010)<sup>5</sup>. If man is to do well and act only as he pleases, he must have a free will. Without it, he would not be able to function properly. Yet, it should not be believed because a person also sins through it. If free will is used to sin, divinity will affect him. This would be unjust if not only the free will to live but also the free will to sin. How can God justify His will? What does not come willingly is not sinning or doing the right thing. As a result, punishment and retribution would be unjust if people did not have a free will. Since justice is one of God's gifts, justice must be done through punishment and reward. Therefore, God must give people a free will. However, theological fatalism is not widely used in fatalism because there is no flow in it. Ockham submitted formal inquiries in this regard (Ockham, 1983)<sup>6</sup>. Yet, rational fatalism was highly regarded by the Medieval Aristotelians. Therefore, this paper does not pay much attention to theological fatalism.

### **Aristotelian analysis of logical fatalism**

Rational fatalism is clearly presented in the Aristotelian interpretation. According to the law of duality, the conclusion of any thesis must be either true or false. The classical argument concerning rational fatalism is found in the ninth chapter of Aristotle's Interpretation (Ackrill, 1975)<sup>7</sup>. He has thereby attempted to examine all issues positively or negatively (Anscombe, 1981)<sup>8</sup>. What he says can be presented as an argument through the following argument.

When a proposition P is considered affirmative,  
It can be true P or false P.  
And in its negative sense,  
It can be not-true P or not-false P.  
Then, it is true P or not-true P.

Two theories can be true or false at the same time: both affirmatively and negatively. Such theories, whether affirmative or negative, must be either true or false (Anscombe, 1981)<sup>8</sup>. Again, in the case of a contradictory pair, when the subject is universal, and the proposition takes on a universal form or when it is alone, as the saying goes, 'One of these must be true and the other false. When the subject is universal, the premise is true. In a universal character, there is no such need' (Ackrill, 1975)<sup>7</sup>.

His example (Ackrill, 1975)<sup>7</sup> illustrates that a sea battle should not take place tomorrow, but it does not have to be tomorrow. However, it is needed. It should or should not be held tomorrow. When matched with facts from the propositions, it is clear that there will be future events. Are a real option and a potential in opposite directions? Corresponding certification and denial have the same character.

Thus, it is clear that a clear understanding of voluntarism or determinism cannot be obtained. Although various philosophers have occasionally made inquiries into these two concepts, such inquiries have only further complicated these concepts. The significance of Ockham's solution to this problem should be considered as it is innovative.

### **Ockhamian analysis of fatalism**

In his dissertation (*Tractatus de Predestinatione et de Praescientia Die et de Futuris Contingentibus*), he writes in response to Ockham's findings that theology can be fatal to Aristotelian fatalism (Ockham, 1983)<sup>6</sup>. As he points out, must past requirements necessarily be true? In response to fatalism, many people think that past events are irreversible. However, Ockham points out that if one can remove something from the past, it means that what has been done in the past, not done, at least if it is true, is not true as something that was not done after it happened (Ockham, 1983)<sup>6</sup>. Some propositions today are based on words and their meanings. Some theories are based on their universal nature. Every true proposition can be understood as a necessity of something that existed in the past on its present form. The rest of the proposition now exists only in its words. They could be a compromise about the future. Accordingly, their authenticity depends on the predictions of the future (Ockham, 1983)<sup>6</sup>.

Ockham examines the nature of the propositions using Aristotle's description of the sea battle as the basis (Ackrill, 1975)<sup>7</sup>. On this basis, Ockham argues that the reality of some past propositions (or part of them) may also be statements about the future but those events are not inevitable. Accordingly, these terms suggest that Aristotle's sea battle may be real tomorrow but 2100/01/01 is only a possibility (Fischer, 2016)<sup>9</sup>. Accordingly, the proposition states something in one direction only in relation to one time. That is a fact but difficult does not mean impossible. Ockham calls it its soft points (Sober, 2015)<sup>10</sup>. Soft facts about the past: Nominally a fact of the past but whether they are true depends on what happens next. Clearly, the notion that soft facts should represent the whole is not always correct. Yet, it seems that the soft facts about the past which are reflected in many theories must be part of the future if they are to be a necessity.

Not every proposition is genuine. Problems can arise when associating one past genuine proposition with some false purpose proposition. If so, the nature of natural law must be adapted to confirm them. If multiple models of natural law make the same testable predictions, they are the same and Ockham's razor principle is not required to select the desired one (Sober, 2015)<sup>10</sup>. However, when two false theories of this need are connected, they appear to be a necessity. It appears that a thesis of diversity presupposes that soft facts exist in relation to past events, but it is understood that they are not in demand.

Thus, it is possible to examine the Aristotelian propositions made in relation to fatalism. If tomorrow's event is true, then the proposition that there should be a sea battle on 2100/01/01 depends on a false equation that if it were to exist tomorrow, there should be a sea battle on 2100/01/01. Further, if this proposition does not necessarily arise, then there is no need for the 2100/01/01 Sea Battle to exist. This proves that Aristotelian fatalism teachings are erroneous. If it is to continue in the relevant premise, the 2100/01/01 Sea Battle must necessarily exist. On this basis, it appears that either the Aristotelian solution is correct, or this argument is not functional; or this argument does not work on the theory that there is no independent cause for the proposition

of 2100/01/01 Sea Battle. This proposition, that is, 2020 is true, that there is no reason to focus on whether the 2100/01/01 sea battle should have taken place.

### **Ockham's analysis is in line with the present**

It is true that at present there is no debate between these teachings. However, the new attitudes that have emerged on such a basis need to be examined to see how important they are in the present scrutiny.

Fate is the inevitability of all events. The opposite view is that if all events can never be fully predicted, then man should have the freedom to choose his actions (Mackie, 1980)<sup>11</sup> but what is clear today is the opposite of fate. The reason for this is that not all events are decided before they happen. He is led to believe that many events are man-made and can change, even if the consequences of events are not complete. Yet, the acceptance of events beyond human control is realistic and the acceptance of reality can be irreversible to the extent that it does not coincide with the feeling that man can do nothing to change events. Fate depends on the actions of man. He decides his future only on that basis. Fate rests on voluntariness.

Accordingly, not only the belief that events are determined by fate but also the recognition that they are inevitable is an acknowledgment that man has no free will. An event may be fate according to human thought, but it does not reflect the belief that every event is predetermined. Thus, fate can be believed but fate can be denied. Fate can only be based on the belief that life is meaningless because events are determined by forces beyond human control and we have no power to change our destiny. Destiny can also be a means of preparing man for all the evil that happens in human life. It creates a basis for justifying all his immorality. Fate, in fact, is the guilt of immorality and the means by which one can try to avoid or avoid guilt. The argument that events are determined by fate can be used to justify the acceptance of injustice and evil.

This implies that the teachings of Aristotle cannot be accepted as the absolute truth. If such a situation were created, man would become a complete slave to determinism. The creation of an era of free ideology will be hidden in it. Although Ockham challenged Aristotle's teachings on the need to stabilize the theological foundation, its correct use began in the Reformation. Thus, Ockham has the honor of creating a new free ideological society. The basis for establishing the free ideology of modern and contemporary philosophy is based on his explanation that man has a free will through which he can create free thought, and that the future is not entirely based on the past, although it is entirely true, because he explains the dangers of rational destiny.

### **Conclusion**

Aristotelian philosophy is a thought that revolutionized the history of philosophy; it is undisputed. Until the Renaissance of the Middle Ages, his philosophy was accepted as absolute. St. Thomas Aquinas brought the situation to a very high level in his philosophical inquiries. Yet, the teachings of fatalism are based on the conclusion that no human action is free. This is because according to destiny, man cannot control events or prevent unpleasant things from happening. On this basis, he

has presented a logical fatalism. Evodius laid the foundation of theological fatalism by challenging theological facts.

It was Ockham who correctly understood that Aristotelian fatalism could be a fatal mixture of theology. This dangerous situation is understood based on the logical errors identified in Aristotle's logic. Ockham questions whether past needs must necessarily be true. Many teachings based on fatalism think that past events are irreversible. The reason for this is to assume the future based on the past and make decisions based on it. However, Ockham points out that one can remove something from the past. This means that they should move away from the causality they build with the future, and not about what they did or did not do in the past. Past events, as well as future events are independent. If the complex causation that builds up by comparing these with each other is true, Ockham says, it is not true as something that did not happen after it happened.

Many inquiries today are based on their wordings and meanings. Some theories are based on their universal nature. There is indeed no debate between these teachings today but how important such attitudes are in the present investigation should be explored. Fate is the inevitability of all events. The opposite view is that not all events can be fully predicted. Man must have the freedom to choose his course of action. Thus, it is clear that the opposite of fate and the reason for this and not all events, are decided before they happen. Contemporary philosophy recognizes that Ockham's contribution is crucial to stabilizing this foundation.

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