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## 1 Incompatibilism

Here's an argument from the Rachels reading:

1. Everything we do is caused by forces over which we have no control.
2. If our actions are caused by forces over which we have no control, we do not act freely.
3. Therefore, we never act freely

The hard determinist accepts this conclusion. The libertarian accepts premise 2, but rejects the conclusion.

### 1.1 Libertarianism

According to libertarianism (not to be confused with political libertarianism), premise 1 is false. Why might we reject premise 1? Here's more from the Rachels:

- The argument from experience: each of us is immediately aware of being free.
- The argument that the universe is not a deterministic system.
- The argument that we cannot predict our own decisions:
  1. If human behavior is causally determined, it is in principle predictable.
  2. But a prediction about what someone will do can be thwarted if the person whose behavior is being predicted knows about the prediction and chooses to act otherwise.
  3. Therefore, not all human actions are in principle predictable. (2)
  4. And so not all human actions are causally determined. (1,3)

Response: we should distinguish between two senses of "predictable."

- Predictable by a hypothetical ideal observer who stands outside the system and observes events but does not interfere with them.
- Predictable by human beings in the real world.
- The argument from accountability (this is a different version from the one in the reading):
  1. Sometimes we justifiably blame and praise other people, and sometimes we justifiably feel proud or guilty about our own actions.
  2. It is only justified to blame or praise people, or to feel proud or guilty, if we have free will.
  3. Therefore, we have free will.

If we reject this argument, what *should* we think it takes for blame/praise/pride/guilt to be justified?

## 2 Compatibilism

Like the libertarian, the compatibilist also holds that the argument from the beginning of the handout is unsound. But the compatibilist rejects the second premise, rather than the first.

- An action is free if it is *uncoerced*, not *uncaused*.
- Freedom is not only compatible with determinism, it *requires* determinism—for an agent to act freely, her choice must be caused by her desires/intentions/preferences.

What about cases where people's actions are caused by their desires, but they're not responsible for their desires? From wikipedia:

Wilson and Seaman (1990) conducted a study on incarcerated serial killers and what they felt was the most influential factor that contributed to their homicidal activity. Almost all of the serial killers in the study had experienced some sort of environmental problems during their childhood, such as a broken home, or a lack of discipline in the home. It was common for the serial killers to come from a family that had experienced divorce, separation, or the lack of a parent. Furthermore, nearly half of the serial killers had experienced some type of physical and sexual abuse and even more had experienced emotional neglect.

If people act freely when their actions are caused by their desires, and people are morally responsible (blameworthy/praiseworthy) when they act freely, then explanatory stories like the ones above are completely irrelevant to moral responsibility. But they often seem relevant—even if they don't erase blameworthiness, many people think they mitigate it.

## 3 The Lazy Argument

Suppose I have an exam tomorrow. What's wrong with this argument that determinism implies that I have no reason to study?

1. Either it is already determined that I will pass the exam, or it is already determined that I will not. (Assumption)
2. If it is already determined that I will pass, then I have no reason to study—I'd rather spend the night having fun. (Assumption)
3. If it is already determined that I will fail, then I have no reason to study—it won't lead to my passing, so better to spend the night having fun. (Assumption)
4. I have no reason to study (1, 2, 3).

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24.00 Problems in Philosophy  
Fall 2010

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