

EVIDENCE FOR INCOMPATIBILISM. Clarence Darrow made an intuitive case for the absence of freedom. If your choices are fixed by your character, and if your character traits are fixed by your past history, what is left of the *free* choice? 95

This kind of argument was made already by d'Holbach (notice too the naturalist argument also advanced by d'Holbach). But we need to say something more concrete. 98

Rachels distinguishes between immediate and ultimate causes. Immediate causes are events in the brain. Physiological research shows that our choices, even those that appear *to us* as free choices, may be manipulated by stimulating the brain. A very telling detail is that we produce explanations of our choices *after* they have been made. 98 99

Psychology supplies evidence how more remote causes (I think they are not the 'ultimate' causes that Rachels has in mind) may alter our behaviour. Thus if you are placed in a particular social environment you will behave in accordance with the expectations of your peers, demands of your superiors, or even random, intuitively insignificant factors. But if no such environment was ever created, your behaviour and your choices would have been completely different. This is meant to show that the putative free choices are at least strongly influenced by external factor, even if it seems to the agents that they are completely free.

GENETIC INFLUENCES. What of the ultimate causes that stretch further back into our past history? Here Rachels uses the more recent research in behavioural genetics to show the influence of our genetic makeup. These studies are still in their infancy, but some phenomena have been extensively explored. For example, ASPD, intelligence, and shyness are highly heritable. 105ff

But can we use these facts to dismiss the reality of free will? As Rachels admits, genetic influences aren't determinism, but something 'close to it'. We have 'deep-seated desires' that we can resist with difficulty. Well, that's too close to the traditional Greek outlook that self-control (later to be associated with free will) can dominate desires, but often with difficulty. Even if our 'personalities' can affect behaviour, and even if these personalities are genetically influenced, mightn't free will be *another* factor in our choices? 108 106

There are two different problems with Rachels' invocation of genetic research. On one hand, he should be criticised for not going one step further. Behavioural genetics acknowledges non-genetic sources of our choices and actions, but attributes them to random environmental factors over which neither the subjects, nor the people around them like educators, have any control.

On the other hand, behavioural genetics has nothing to say specifically about individual agents. Its reasoning is statistical at the level of groups. It would be inconsistent with the methodology of this approach to take one individual and say, '*You* have no free control over your actions, because the factors determining your choices are *X, Y, Z.*' I think a more careful argument is needed to apply the statistics of twin studies, for example, to the question of individual choice.

As it stands, Rachels' discussion of behavioural genetics is effective in buttressing Darrow's claim of reduced responsibility. I can't be held at least fully responsible for what I did, if genetic or other factors had a strong influence on me. On the face of it, this doesn't touch on the reality of free will, however diminished its role may be in practical decisions.