

REJOINDER TO SCHILLER'S "CHOICE"

BERTRAND RUSSELL

The article by F. C. S. Schiller to which Russell wrote the following untitled draft rejoinder was "Choice", published in *The Hibbert Journal* 7 (July 1909): 802–12. Schiller's article was in reply to Russell's "Determinism and Morals", *ibid.* 7 (Oct. 1908): 113–21 (B&R Co8.10). This article was, or just possibly was yet to become, section IV of "The Elements of Ethics", reprinted in *Philosophical Essays* (1910) and again in Paper 19 of *Papers* 6. Section IV now reappears as 34 in *Papers* 5. Schiller appended his piece to the third edition of his *Riddles of the Sphinx* (Swan Sonnenschein, 1910), pp. 451–62. This book, unmarked, is in Russell's library at McMaster. Russell drafted a rejoinder headed "*Schiller* Hibbert J. Apr. '09", with a premature issue date. The rejoinder did not appear in the *Hibbert*, although a reply by G. T. Sadler did ("Choice", 8 [Oct. 1909]: 193–4). We do not know that Russell did *not* submit a rejoinder. He seems not to have altered the text of section IV in response to Schiller's article. The text below follows the manuscript (RA1 220.011230). In 1967 I found this at Plas Penrhyn in Schiller's *Studies in Humanism* (1907), which Russell had reviewed anonymously (B&R Co7.02). Also in the book, which has many verbal marginalia and indeed a chapter (xviii) on determinism, were four leaves of notes on the book. He and Schiller had several controversies in the *Papers* 5 period. Neither Schiller's reply nor the draft rejoinder (and the notes and most marginalia) are used in *Papers* 5 to complete the story. Most of the quoted passages below, sometimes truncated or transformed, are in Schiller's piece. E.g., Schiller complained that "logical implications" of the doctrine of determinism had not been fully explored (p. 455). Russell changed that to "moral implications". He repeated his moral point in the "Determinism" chapter of *Religion and Science* (1935).—K.B.

Ancient and unsolved difficulty. [Does it exist?]
[Determinism affords no reason for doing anything,
and is therefore ethically irrelevant. Therefore it does not

render ethics irrelevant, since, if it did, it would be ethically relevant.] Note that all that is maintained is that the future can be inferred from the past; it does not follow that deliberation is useless.

What do we mean when we say that something “makes a difference”? We mean that subsequent things are not what they would otherwise be. In this sense, deliberation makes a difference.

“Moral implications of determinism not fully explored”. On the contrary, morals not fully explored by libertarians. All that is necessary is to observe that moral considerations may be among the causes of actions.

What is an “alternative”? It occurs wherever there are two acts of which either will be performed if we choose. Determinism declares that we can’t do what we don’t want to do; but this seems no great hardship. Choice and deliberation are real, because they are parts of the causes of actions.

I agree that the question turns on the objectivity of truth. For if it is now true that I shall do such and such an act, though no one knows what I shall do, then the results of choices are already determined; it is not necessary to bring in causation, which only adds a possibility of prediction.

“Agency, power, choice ... lose all meaning.” No. Volition still distinguished from all other causation by prevision of effects and preference between them. “*If* must be expunged”. No, *if* only requires ignorance. “*If* it rains” does not imply that it is free to rain or not, but only that we don’t know. Similarly in the free will controversy there is confusion between (1) the future being in fact determined and (2) the agent knowing *how* it is determined; latter destroys deliberation, not former.

“Indeterminate choice is not motiveless choice.” But if motives exist in equal intensity on both sides, it is not they that determine the choice.

Schiller’s argument about tiger and cat would not appeal to mice.

Block universe versus one which really evolves. False antithesis. The unchangingness of truth does not involve that of reality, because there are truths about times. But if propositions about the future are now true or now false, that decides for determinism.

Paradoxes whatever we decide. Schiller says a man is not moral unless he had bad impulses, nor immoral unless he had good ones!
