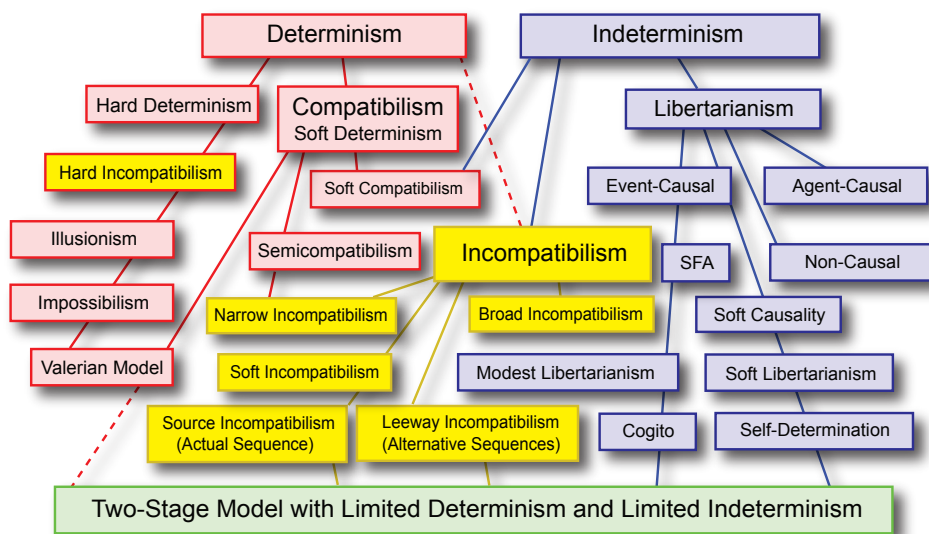


## About the Cover

Academic philosophers today have developed an absurd number of niches from which to defend their often exotic positions on the free will problem.

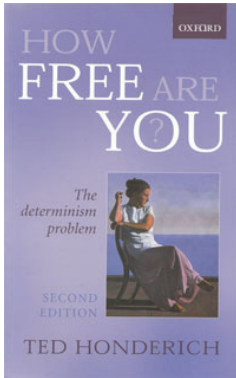
*Determinism* is the position that every event has a cause, in a chain of causal events with just one possible future. “Soft” and “hard” determinism are terms invented by William James. “Hard” determinists simply deny the existence of free will. “Soft” determinists claim a freedom that is compatible with determinism. This is now called *Compatibilism*. *Semicompatibilists* are narrow incompatibilists who are agnostic about free will and determinism but claim that moral responsibility is compatible with determinism. *Hard incompatibilists* think both free will and moral responsibility are not compatible with determinism. *Illusionists* are hard incompatibilists who say free will is an illusion and usually deny moral responsibility. *Impossibilists* are hard incompatibilists who say that both free will and moral responsibility are impossible.



*Indeterminism* is the position that there are random (chance) events in a world with many possible futures. *Libertarians* believe that indeterminism makes free will possible. *Agent-causalists* are libertarians who think that agents have originating causes for their actions that are not events. *Non-causalists* simply deny any causes whatsoever for libertarian free will. Event-causalists accept chance decisions. Soft causalists admit some unpredictable events that are *causa sui* which start new causal chains. *Self-Determination* describes decision determined by the agent's character. *Two-Stage Models* are today's most plausible models for free will, putting limits on both determinism and indeterminism. See Chapter 12 for more details.

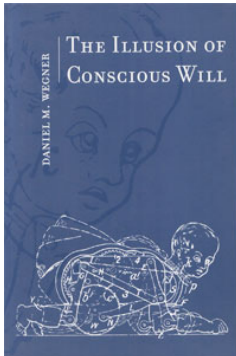
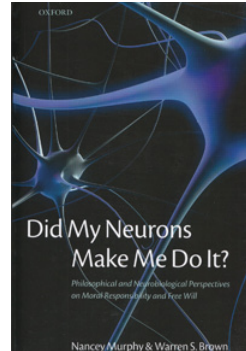


# What Philosophers Are Saying about Free Will



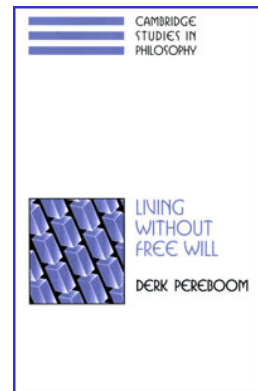
*"How Free Are You?"*, asks the well-known determinist philosopher TED HONDERICH, in his best-selling book. Though he is its foremost champion, Honderich frankly characterizes determinism as a "black thing" and an "incubus" which gives him dismay.

*"Did My Neurons Make Me Do It?"*, asks NANCEY MURPHY, summarizing the concern of philosophers who think neuroscience will reveal us to be just biological machines that are running programs determined by our heredity and environment, by our genes and our upbringing,



*"Is Conscious Will an Illusion?"* Harvard psychologist DANIEL WEGNER thinks so. We think we do things freely for good reasons, but Wegner finds we often confabulate reasons after the fact, when we are challenged to provide the motivations for our actions.

*"Living Without Free Will"* is required, according to hard incompatibilist philosopher DERK PEREBOOM. And philosopher GALEN STRAWSON provides a logical and "basic" argument to prove that we cannot possibly be responsible for our actions, because they are the consequences of a causal chain that goes back to times long before we were born.



# Why The Free Will Scandal Should Matter to You

Academic philosophers, psychologists, and neuroscientists teach their students to believe that their actions may be determined and beyond their control, that free will is an illusion.

Like the workers in Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times*, humans are seen as cogs in a vast biological machine. If scientists could show that this is so, and give us reasonable evidence for it, we would have little choice but to accept the science. Or, we could do as IMMANUEL KANT did in his great *Critique of Pure Reason*.



We might doubt Reason to make room for Belief in Free Will.

But physical and biological science can produce no such evidence. Iron-clad proof that determinism is true is beyond the reach of empirical science, since evidence is always prone to observational errors, and physics today is indeterministic.

Nevertheless, some philosophers accept the faulty reasoning that freedom exists only on some metaphysical plane. If you accept freedom as a mystery beyond explanation, a gift of God beyond understanding by our finite minds, perhaps you need not worry and may not need this book.

But this ivory-tower thinking should still matter to you. Why? Because we have good evidence that telling young people they are determined beings, and that they are not responsible for their actions, actually makes them behave less morally, more willing to cheat their colleagues in innocent games, for example.

Whether you are one of those young students, or one of the older generation sending your children to school, or perhaps one of the faculty teaching our young, you should be concerned about what we are doing to the life hopes and moral fibre of our youth.

If you see something scandalous in this situation, this book provides you with the resources you need to do something to change what we are teaching in our schools.



La Trahison des Philosophes...  
In a world full of problems, they sat doing puzzles.

Qui docet doctores?

Tantum philosophia potuit suadere malorum.

Werte ohne Freiheit sind nutzlos,  
Freiheit ohne Werte ist absurd.

Ich mußte also den Determinismus und den Indeterminismus  
aufheben, um für die Freiheit Platz zu bekommen.

Our thoughts are free. Our actions are willed.



# FREE WILL

## The Scandal in Philosophy

Online updates are available here:

[informationphilosopher.com/books/scandal](http://informationphilosopher.com/books/scandal)

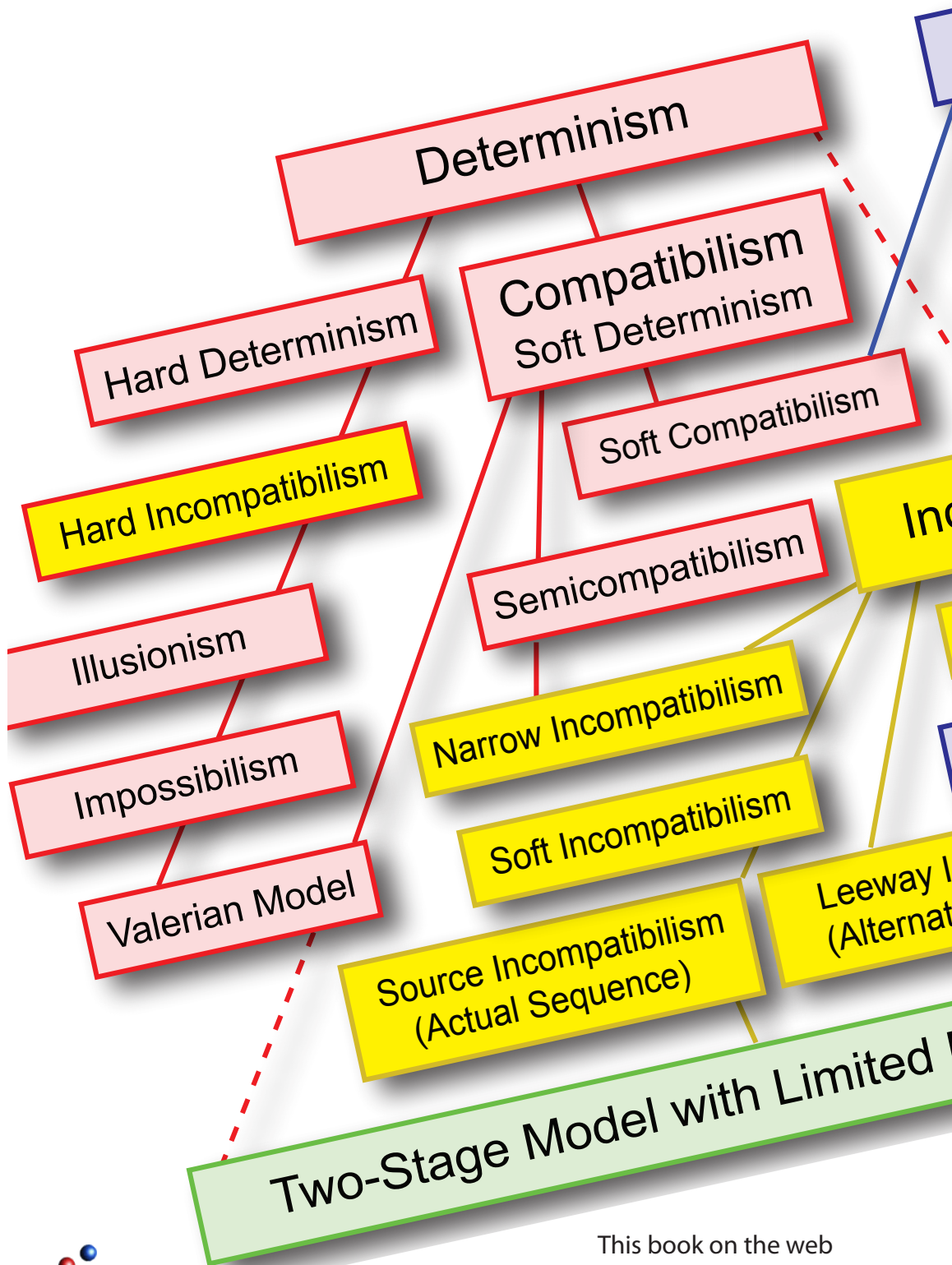
Send comments to [bobdoyle@informationphilosopher.com](mailto:bobdoyle@informationphilosopher.com)

**Bob Doyle**

**The Information Philosopher**

*“beyond logic and language”*





Indeterminism

Libertarianism

# FREE WILL

Event-Causal

Non-Causal

Compatibilism

SFA

Stochastic Causality

## The Scandal in Philosophy

Broad Incompatibilism

Soft Libertarianism

Modest Libertarianism

Self-Determination

Cogito

Incompatibilism  
(infinite Sequences)

Determinism and Limited Indeterminism

**Bob Doyle**

**The Information Philosopher**

*"beyond logic and language"*



First edition, 2011

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# Dedication

To seven philosophers who made a difference to freedom – two ancient Greeks, the greatest Scot, the greatest German, the two greatest Americans, and the greatest Austrian –

*To Aristotle*, for recognizing chance as a fifth cause, and that our choices are not necessitated, but are “up to us.”

*To Epicurus*, for introducing his swerve of the atoms in order to break the causal chain of determinism implied by his fellow atomist and materialist, *Democritus*.

*To David Hume*, for reconciling a compatibilist freedom with the classical mechanical laws of Newtonian physics.

*To Immanuel Kant*, for insisting on libertarian free will despite his scientific commitment to Newtonian determinism in the phenomenal world.

*To Charles Sanders Peirce*, for defending absolute objective chance in his *Tychism*, for recognizing the unavoidability of experimental and observational errors, for his open community of inquirers, and for evolutionary love.

*To William James*, for his **two-stage model** of randomly generated **alternative possibilities** that present themselves to the mind as open and ambiguous futures, followed by the will making an **adequately determined** choice which grants consent to one possibility, transforming an equivocal and open future into an unalterable and closed past.

*To Karl Popper*, who, in England, reminded his fellow Austrian *Ludwig Wittgenstein*, that some puzzles are really problems. They are “*beyond logic and language games.*”



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