The Parallel Manipulation Argument*
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Abstract: Matt King has recently argued that the manipulation argument against compatibilism does not succeed by employing a dilemma: either the argument infelicitously relies on incompatibilist sourcehood conditions, or the proponent of the argument leaves a premise of the argument undefended. This article develops a reply to King's dilemma by showing that incompatibilists can accept its second horn. Key to King's argument for the second horn's being problematic is "the parallel manipulation argument." I argue that King's use of this argument is problematic, but I suggest that a (modified) parallel manipulation argument is effective for a different, though more restricted, purpose.

I. The Manipulation Argument

Many of us find something problematic about and are made uneasy by cases of manipulation. When the main character of the film *The Truman Show*, Truman (played by Jim Carrey), discovers that he has been manipulated (not only because his environment was manipulated, but also because his psychological characteristics were manipulated) into living out someone else's plan for his life, he is appalled by this and immediately seeks freedom from the influence of his manipulators. In extreme cases of manipulation, such as when a prisoner of war is "broken" by intense torture or total isolation and as a result comes to have a different set of values, the agent's moral responsibility for what she does after being manipulated is called into question. Several incompatibilists (about determinism and moral responsibility) find something similarly problematic about determinism, or more generally about the possibility that we are

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causally determined to act as we do by factors beyond our control, and have argued that there is no relevant difference between manipulated agents and agents who are causally determined.[1]

Consider the following case of manipulation, which Matt King has recently adapted from an example by Alfred Mele:

Ann is an exceptionally industrious philosopher who works diligently and continuously on being a good teacher, researcher, and colleague. Beth, an equally talented colleague, does not share Ann's devotion to the profession. Beth finds other pursuits more enjoyable and fulfilling, and thus teaches, researches, and does committee work only as much as she must. Their dean wants Beth to be more productive, and so directs a team of psychologists and neuroscientists to figure out what makes Ann tick, and then "brainwash" Beth so as to make her like Ann. The psychologists determine that it is Ann's "peculiar hierarchy of values" that makes her so industrious, and the neuroscientists implant the same hierarchy in Beth, while eradicating all competing values. The result is that Beth becomes, in the relevant respects, Ann's psychological twin, now possessing the same industriousness and devotion to her profession. Moreover, the ways in which Ann endorses these values and commitments is now also true of Beth; on critical reflection, they both fully support their ways of life.[2]

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[1] Two recent versions of the manipulation argument are the "Four-Case Argument" and the "Zygote Argument," which are given by Derk Pereboom and Alfred Mele, respectively. See Derk Pereboom, *Living without Free Will* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), and Alfred R. Mele, *Free Will and Luck* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). Mele, it should be noted, is not an incompatibilist but rather an agnostic about the compatibility of determinism and moral responsibility.

[2] Matt King, "The Problem with Manipulation," *Ethics* 124 (2013): 65–83, 66. Adapted from Alfred R. Mele, *Autonomous Agents: From Self-Control to Autonomy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 145–46.

Once the team of psychologists and neuroscientists have done their work, Beth apparently lacks moral responsibility for acting on her new values. This is a problem for compatibilists, because Beth is manipulated into satisfying certain compatibilist conditions on morally responsible conduct.[3]

This problem for compatibilists can be regimented into an argument against compatibilism itself. The first step is to invite the audience to judge that a certain manipulated agent is not morally responsible, and the second step is to argue that there is no moral responsibility-relevant difference between the manipulated agent and ordinary agents who are causally determined. The conclusion is that compatibilism is false. This form of manipulation argument has come to be known as *the* manipulation argument.[4] Here is King's version of the manipulation argument:

(M1) The manipulated agent is not morally responsible for acting on his implanted psychological states, despite satisfying compatibilist conditions on moral responsibility.

(M2) There is no difference between the manipulated agent's action and the actions of ordinary agents in a deterministic universe.

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[3] Many of the earlier discussions of manipulation in the recent literature on freedom and responsibility were concerned with showing problems with specific compatibilist conditions on free and responsible action, especially Harry Frankfurt's conditions developed in his article "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person," *Journal of Philosophy* 68 (1971): 5–20; whereas the more recent trend is to use manipulation to argue against compatibilism itself. For examples of the earlier trend, see Michael Slote, "Understanding Free Will," *Journal of Philosophy* 77 (1980): 136-51; Gary Watson, "Free Action and Free Will," *Mind* 96 (1987): 145-72; John Martin Fischer, *The Metaphysics of Free Will: An Essay on Control* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994); and Mele, *Autonomous Agents*.

[4] See, for example, Michael McKenna, "Moral Responsibility, Manipulation Arguments, and History: Assessing the Resilience of Nonhistorical Compatibilism," *Journal of Ethics* 16 (2012): 145–74.

(MC) Thus, compatibilist conditions on moral responsibility are insufficient. In short,

compatibilism is false.[5]

Since many compatibilists accept the second step, (M2), they are apparently forced to take a so-called "hard-line" reply to the argument, denying that the manipulated agent (e.g., Beth) lacks moral responsibility, to which incompatibilists are likely to reply with an incredulous stare.[6] Recently, however, King has argued that things are not so bad for compatibilism.

II. King's Dilemma

According to King, the manipulation argument is not a problem for compatibilism because the proponent of the manipulation argument is subject to a dilemma: either the first premise, (M1), is defended, or it isn't defended. If (M1) is defended, King argues, then that defense will either appeal to some unique feature of manipulation or it won't.[7] If it does, then we will have a reason to reject the second premise of the argument, (M2), which says that there is no (moral responsibility-relevant) difference between the manipulated agent's action and the actions of ordinary agents in a deterministic universe. If the defense of (M1) does not appeal to some unique feature of manipulation, however, then King thinks the best option for the proponent of

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[5] King, "The Problem with Manipulation," 67.

[6] For a defense of this strategy, see Michael McKenna, "A Hard-line Reply to Pereboom's Four-Case Manipulation Argument," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 77 (2008): 142-59. Most compatibilists, including McKenna, would presumably reject (M2) as it is stated, though, since one clear difference between the manipulated agent (Beth) and ordinary agents in a deterministic world is that ordinary agents in a deterministic world are not manipulated in the way that Beth is (or else such agents would not be ordinary). We should read (M2), then, as making the claim that there is no moral responsibility-relevant difference between the manipulated agent and ordinary agents in a deterministic world. Even with this modification, some compatibilists will demur. See, for example, Robyn Repko Waller, "The Threat of Effective Intentions to Moral Responsibility in the Zygote Argument," *Philosophia* 42 (2014): 209-22.

[7] A very similar response to an instance of the manipulation argument is made by Stephen Kearns, "Aborting the Zygote Argument," *Philosophical Studies* 160 (2012): 379-89.

the manipulation argument is to appeal to (contentious) sourcehood conditions on responsibility that are not satisfied by manipulated agents nor ordinary causally determined agents. But this appeal would be dialectically infelicitous, according to King, since this would be an appeal to specifically *in*compatibilist conditions in an argument *for* incompatibilism.

If (M1) is left undefended (this is the second horn of King's dilemma), however, then the proponent of the manipulation argument is merely expecting the audience to find (M1) intuitive. This, King argues, is problematic because a parallel manipulation argument can be constructed such that manipulation is a problem for incompatibilism. After presenting a case in which an agent is indeterministically manipulated into acting, King offers the following argument (which is structurally parallel to the manipulation argument):

> (P1) The manipulated agent is not morally responsible for acting on her implanted psychological states, despite satisfying incompatibilist conditions on moral responsibility.
>
> (P2) There is no difference between the manipulated agent's action and the actions of ordinary agents in an indeterministic universe.
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> (PC) Thus, incompatibilist conditions on moral responsibility are insufficient. In short, incompatibilism is false.[8]

If (M1) is left undefended, according to King, then the proponent of the manipulation argument will have no choice but to find (P1) of the parallel manipulation argument equally plausible. And

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[8] King, "The Problem with Manipulation," 70. Note that (P2), like (M2) of the original manipulation argument, is problematic as stated. A clear difference between a manipulated agent (Beth) and an ordinary agent in an indeterministic world is that ordinary agents in an indeterministic world are not manipulated in the way that Beth is (or else such agents would not be ordinary). We should read (P2), then, as making the claim that there is no moral responsibility-relevant difference between the manipulated agent and ordinary agents in an indeterministic world.

since (P1) is part of an argument against incompatibilism, whereas (M1) is part of the manipulation argument against compatibilism, King thinks that failing to defend (M1) will result in a dialectical stalemate, not a victory for the incompatibilist.

Neal Tognazzini has replied to King's dilemma by arguing that the proponent of the manipulation argument should accept the first horn, using the manipulation scenario as a way of motivating incompatibilist sourcehood conditions.[9] This, according to Tognazzini, is not dialectically infelicitous, so the manipulation argument remains a challenge to the compatibilist. But, as I will argue for the remainder of the article, the proponent of the manipulation argument need not accept the first horn of the dilemma; King's use of the parallel manipulation argument (in attempt to make the second horn of the dilemma seem worrisome) is problematic, and there is nothing worrisome about leaving (M1) undefended. Thus, it is open to the proponent of the manipulation argument to accept the second horn of King's dilemma.

In what follows, I argue that King's use of the parallel manipulation argument is problematic for several reasons. The first set of problems arises from considerations about who is advancing the original manipulation argument, and these are discussed in the next section of the article. The second set of problems arises from considerations about the parallel manipulation argument itself, and these are discussed in the final section of the article. I end by suggesting that a (modified) parallel manipulation argument can be used for a different, but more restricted, purpose; while it cannot be used to undermine incompatibilism, and thus cannot be used to make the second horn of King's dilemma seem worrisome, it is effective for extending worries about manipulation to libertarian accounts of free will, which is a noteworthy result since it shows that compatibilists are not uniquely plagued by worries about manipulation.

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[9] Neal A. Tognazzini, "The Structure of a Manipulation Argument," *Ethics* 124 (2014): 358-69.

III. The Dialectic: Who Is Advancing the Manipulation Argument?

It is generally taken for granted that the manipulation argument is being advanced by incompatibilists (and King certainly takes this for granted).[10] But even granting that it must be an incompatibilist who is advancing the manipulation argument, King has not shown that the parallel manipulation argument is problematic for the incompatibilist. In order to show this, King would need to establish that the parallel manipulation argument is a problem for the incompatibilist qua incompatibilist, but the parallel manipulation argument is only problematic for the incompatibilist who thinks that we (ordinary human beings) are morally responsible for some of what we do. Not all incompatibilists are libertarians (incompatibilists who think that we are morally responsible for some of what we do); some are hard incompatibilists, denying that anyone is ever morally responsible for anything. Such an incompatibilist will not find the inference made in the conclusion of the parallel manipulation argument to be convincing. The conclusion, (PC), says:

> (PC) Thus, incompatibilist conditions on moral responsibility are insufficient. In short,
> incompatibilism is false.[11]

Even if the hard incompatibilist is convinced by the argument to accept that some libertarian conditions on moral responsibility are insufficient, she would nevertheless deny that

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[10] There are other types of manipulation arguments (e.g., arguments which target a particular compatibilist account of the conditions on morally responsible action and arguments which aim to motivate historical conditions on moral responsibility), not all of which necessarily feature in an incompatibilist agenda. These kinds of manipulation arguments have a different form than *the* manipulation argument, since only the latter (i.e., *the* manipulation argument) aims to establish that compatibilism itself is false. King is only concerned with the manipulation argument against compatibilism, though, so we can leave aside the other types of manipulation arguments and assume that the proponent of the manipulation argument is an incompatibilist.

[11] King, "The Problem with Manipulation," 70.

incompatibilism is false, since she thinks that moral responsibility is incompatible with determinism and she thinks that libertarianism is false.

Since certain incompatibilists (hard ones) can advance the manipulation argument without accepting the conclusion of the parallel manipulation argument, such incompatibilists need not accept that leaving (M1) undefended inevitably leads to a dialectical stalemate. For example, Derk Pereboom is an incompatibilist who denies the truth of libertarianism, and his version of the manipulation argument (the Four-Case Argument) aims to elicit the intuitive judgment that the manipulated agent lacks moral responsibility.[12] According to King, Pereboom would need to defend the premise that codifies this judgment, or else Pereboom is subject to the parallel manipulation argument and we arrive at a dialectical stalemate. But, since Pereboom does not think that we are morally responsible, he need not accept the inference from (1) incompatibilist conditions on moral responsibility are insufficient for moral responsibility to (2) incompatibilism is false. Hard incompatibilists accept (1) but deny (2), and so hard incompatibilists advancing the manipulation argument need not concede that the parallel manipulation argument leads to a dialectical stalemate.

IV. Against King's Parallel Manipulation Argument

Even more problematic for King's use of the parallel manipulation argument is that both premises of the argument are false (though, as I will argue, the problem with the first premise can be fixed by modifying the indeterministic manipulation scenario to which it refers). Recall the premises of the argument:

(P1) The manipulated agent is not morally responsible for acting on her implanted psychological states, despite satisfying incompatibilist conditions on moral responsibility.

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[12] Pereboom, *Living without Free Will*, 110-17.

(P2) There is no difference between the manipulated agent's action and the actions of

ordinary agents in an indeterministic universe.

As I will argue, the manipulated agent in King's indeterministic manipulation scenario does not

satisfy libertarian conditions on moral responsibility, so (P1) is false. The scenario can be

modified, though, such that (P1) comes out true. But, as I go on to argue, no tinkering with the

indeterministic manipulation scenario will save (P2), for there will always be important (and,

arguably, moral responsibility-relevant) differences between such cases of manipulation and

ordinary agents in indeterministic worlds.

Let us begin with (P1). King bases the indeterministic manipulation scenario to which

(P1) refers on Robert Kane's influential and widely discussed event-causal libertarian account.[13]

Essential to Kane's account of moral responsibility is that there be points in agents' lives at

which they perform "self-forming actions" (SFAs) which are not causally determined and which

result from competing "efforts of will." One type of SFA occurs when an agent's choice between

doing what morality requires and what she takes to be in her own best interest is causally

undetermined. Kane's famous example involves a businesswoman who is on her way to an

important meeting, witnesses a mugging, and must choose whether to hurry on or to stop and to

call for help.[14] No matter which effort of will succeeds, according to Kane, the woman can be

responsible for the SFA she indeterministically performs.

With the basics of Kane's account on the table, let us now consider King's

indeterministic manipulation scenario, which is an adaptation of Mele's example discussed

above:

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[13] Robert Kane, *The Significance of Free Will* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).
[14] Ibid., 126.

Suppose that we have two businesswomen, Ann and Beth. Ann is driven by her career

ambitions but still takes seriously the needs of others. When she witnesses the mugging,

she must choose between her conflicting motives of self-interest and self-sacrifice. Beth

the businesswoman, in contrast, has never been particularly driven by professional

ambition, though she always puts in a good day's work, nor does she go out of her way to

help others, though she refrains (as much as possible) from directly harming people. Now

suppose that instead of making Beth more industrious, the "brainwashing" implants

Ann's competing values in Beth. Now when Beth witnesses the mugging, she

experiences the same conflict of values that Ann does, although Beth's conflicting values

are a direct result of the manipulation.[15]

According to King, this is a case in which post-manipulation Beth satisfies Kane's conditions on

moral responsibility. So, if the incompatibilist advancing the manipulation argument judged Beth

not to be responsible in the original case (which made use of deterministic manipulation), the

incompatibilist should also judge Beth not to be responsible in the new case (even though it uses

indeterministic manipulation).

An initial problem with King's indeterministic manipulation scenario is that it is not clear

that the scenario actually involves manipulation.[16] In paradigmatic cases of manipulation, the

manipulator makes it likely (if not guaranteed) that the manipulated agent will act a certain way

(or the manipulator at least precludes the manipulated agent from deviating from the

manipulator's plan), but Beth is just as likely to opt for either option. The reason for this is that,

given the values that have been implanted in Beth, there are only two salient actions that she

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[15] King, "The Problem with Manipulation," 71.

[16] This worry is consistent with there being no univocal sense of manipulation in the literature, since King's "manipulation scenario" differs in important respects with virtually all other cases of manipulation discussed in the literature.

might perform, and neither is substantially more likely than the other (since Beth is torn between the two competing efforts of will). We might say that the "manipulator" in this case has manipulated Beth's options, since Beth will end up performing one of the two actions made salient by the values implanted in Beth, but Beth has not been manipulated into performing a particular action.

Even if we set aside this initial worry, however, a bigger problem for King's indeterministic manipulation scenario is that Beth the businesswoman fails to satisfy Kane's libertarian conditions on moral responsibility. On Kane's view, in order to be ultimately responsible (in a non-derivative way) for an SFA, one must have a certain degree of control over the competing efforts of will. The standard of control is different here (for the dual efforts) than it is for the SFA itself. Kane calls the former kind of control "only a *compatibilist kind of control*...akin to what [John Martin] Fischer and [Mark] Ravizza also call 'guidance control.'"[17] If we take Kane seriously when he says that the agent must exercise guidance control over each of her dual efforts in order to be ultimately responsible (in a non-derivative way) for an SFA, then she will need to satisfy (for each effort of will) Fischer and Ravizza's ownership condition on guidance control (according to which an agent must, in order to be morally responsible for an action, act on her *own*, reasons-responsive mechanism).[18]

In order for an agent's mechanism to be her own, according to Fischer and Ravizza, the agent must have taken responsibility for the mechanism, which Fischer and Ravizza claim involves three major ingredients: first, the agent must see herself as an agent whose actions are

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[17] Robert Kane, "Rethinking Free Will: New Perspectives on an Ancient Problem," in R. Kane (Ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Free Will*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 404. Kane's reference is to John Martin Fischer and Mark Ravizza, *Responsibility and Control: A Theory of Moral Responsibility* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[18] See Fischer and Ravizza, *Responsibility and Control*, 170-239, for more on the ownership condition.

efficacious in the world; second, the agent must accept that she is a fair target of the reactive

attitudes as a result of how she exercises her agency in certain contexts; and third, the agent's

view of herself specified in the previous ingredients must be based, in an appropriate way, on the

evidence.[19] Fischer and Ravizza consider a case (not entirely unlike King's indeterministic

manipulation scenario) in which a scientist has manipulated an agent, Judith, into punching her

best friend, Jane, by inducing in Judith a "desire that is not literally irresistible but is nevertheless

extremely strong."[20] In this case, the mechanism induced by the scientist is reasons-responsive,

but, according to Fischer and Ravizza, the agent clearly lacks moral responsibility. The reason

that the agent clearly lacks moral responsibility, on their view, is that the ownership component

to guidance control is not satisfied by Judith since she is unaware of what her manipulator has

done and thus "has *not* taken responsibility for the kind of mechanism that actually issues in the

action (the 'manipulation mechanism')."[21]

Similarly, in King's indeterministic manipulation scenario involving Beth, taking

responsibility for the mechanisms (which issue in the dual efforts of will) that have been

bestowed on Beth would require that Beth see herself as a fair target for the reactive attitudes

when those mechanisms issue in action and also that she see herself as such in a way that is

appropriately based on the evidence. But even if Beth would see herself as a fair target of the

reactive attitudes for actions that issue from her competing efforts of will, she would not see

herself as such in a way that is appropriately based on the evidence; instead, she would see

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[19] Ibid., 210-13.

[20] Ibid., 232.

[21] Ibid., 233.

herself as such because of her manipulation.[22] Because Beth is unaware of what her manipulators have done, she could not yet have taken responsibility for the "manipulation mechanisms" that have the potential to issue in her action. Thus, in King's indeterministic manipulation scenario, Beth lacks guidance control over each effort of will, since these efforts issue from mechanisms which are the direct result of manipulation and are not yet Beth's own. Since Beth fails to satisfy Kane's conditions on moral responsibility, it is false that Beth is not morally responsible *despite satisfying incompatibilist conditions on moral responsibility*, which is to say that (P1) is false.

On my own view, it is possible to construct an indeterministic manipulation scenario such that (P1) comes out true. Consider the following case:

> Beth, unlike Ann, is a philosophy professor who teaches, researches, and does committee work only as much as she must, as she finds other pursuits more enjoyable and fulfilling. Their dean wants Beth to be more productive, and so directs a team of psychologists and neuroscientists to make Beth more like Ann by implanting various mechanisms in Beth that mirror Ann's mechanisms and by manipulating Beth into taking responsibility for those mechanisms. The team is able to do this first by finding out how Ann made herself

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[22] One might reasonably reply to this point by arguing that the manipulation has not affected the agent's mechanism (which actually issues in her action) but rather merely the circumstances to which the agent's mechanism responds, since the agent has only been given new values to which her mechanism (say, of practical reasoning) responds. While I admit that issues pertaining to mechanism-individuation can be thorny, I would argue that this must be a case in which the agent's mechanism has been affected by the manipulation. Indeed, this is what Fischer and Ravizza (whose ownership condition must be satisfied in the manipulation scenario in order for the agent to satisfy Kane's conditions on moral responsibility) say about relevantly similar cases of manipulation. Even if Beth sees herself as a fair target of the reactive attitudes for actions that result from her new values, she does so because of the manipulation, and so the manipulation has affected the mechanism, or, as Fischer and Ravizza describe it, "the process that leads to the action" (Fischer and Ravizza, *Responsibility and Control*, 38). And since Beth is unaware of the manipulation that has affected her mechanism such that it satisfies the first two ingredients of the ownership condition, Beth's view of herself as such has not been formed in the appropriate way (cf. Fischer and Ravizza, *Responsibility and Control*, 236). Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for raising this point.

the way she is and second by making sure Beth acts similarly when in relevantly similar

circumstances. If Beth ever acts differently than Ann would have, the team of

manipulators will incapacitate Beth. As it turns out, Beth goes on to act in just the right

way to make herself like Ann. Moreover, as she makes herself like Ann, Beth comes to

see herself both as an agent whose actions are efficacious in the world and as an agent

who is sometimes a fair target of the reactive attitudes, and she sees herself as such on the

basis of appropriate evidence (e.g., even though she doesn't know about the

manipulators, she sees herself as described despite being convinced that most agents have

no say over what mechanisms they inherit and that being given a mechanism by an agent

is not relevantly different from being given a mechanism by blind natural forces). Now,

when Beth witnesses a mugging, she quickly thinks about something else as she hurries

along to do some committee work. The team of manipulators inform the dean, who

celebrates this victory.[23]

Beth is clearly manipulated into becoming like Ann and into choosing the committee work over

stopping to call for help, yet, in this case, she satisfies Kane's libertarian conditions on moral

responsibility, for her manipulators have brought about a change to Beth's values without

undermining her guidance control over who she is or what she does on this occasion.

Importantly, when Beth witnesses the mugging, her competing efforts (one to stop and help and

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[23] This case is a hybrid of two of Mele's cases, the first discussed above and the second from
Alfred R. Mele, "A Critique of Pereboom's 'Four-Case Argument' for Incompatibilism,"
Analysis 65 (2005): 75-80, 75-6. The latter case is adapted for a different purpose in Kearns,
"Aborting the Zygote Argument," 385. My version of the case also resembles the so called
"Fischer-type" variation of the classic "Frankfurt-style case." Beth is not ensured to act like Ann,
but the manipulators do ensure that if Beth acts at all, she will act like Ann. See Harry Frankfurt,
"Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility," *Journal of Philosophy* 66 (1969): 829-39;
John Martin Fischer, *My Way: Essays on Moral Responsibility* (New York: Oxford University
Press, 2006), 150-151.

the other to hurry along to the committee work) satisfy Fischer and Ravizza's conditions on

guidance control, including the ownership condition. This is so because, while the manipulators

have implanted "manipulation mechanisms" into Beth, Beth nevertheless takes responsibility for

those mechanisms (which issue in her efforts of will): in addition to seeing herself as an agent

whose actions are efficacious in the world and accepting that she is a fair target of the reactive

attitudes (the first two ingredients in the ownership condition), Beth's view of herself is based, in

an appropriate way, on the evidence (the third and final ingredient); even though she does not

know about the manipulators, Beth recognizes that she had no control over coming to have the

mechanisms which eventually issue in her dual efforts (and, we can stipulate, this recognition is

not the result of her manipulation), so Beth is not manipulated into viewing herself in the way

specified.[24] So, with the right modification, an indeterministic manipulation scenario can be

constructed such that (P1) of King's parallel manipulation argument comes out true.[25]

Even if we modify the indeterministic manipulation scenario to which (P1) refers,

however, the second premise of King's parallel manipulation argument remains problematic.

Recall the second premise:

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[24] At this point, the libertarian might "bite the bullet" and admit the manipulated agent's moral
responsibility in the manipulation scenario, but granting this is tantamount to giving up on the
manipulation argument against compatibilism, for an exactly parallel response is open to the
compatibilist in response to the original manipulation argument (indeed, this is the popular
"hard-line" reply to the argument).

[25] It is a further question whether an indeterministic manipulation scenario can be constructed
such that the manipulated agent in the scenario satisfies all (or even most) libertarian conditions
on moral responsibility. This is a challenge, given the number and disparity of libertarian
accounts of the conditions on free and responsible action, but I argue that this can be done in
"Manipulation Arguments and Libertarian Accounts of Free Will" (unpublished manuscript).

(P2) There is no difference between the manipulated agent's action and the actions of ordinary agents in an indeterministic universe.[26]

When considering whether, upon discovering that she had been manipulated, Beth might complain that her undetermined action was not her own but rather the result of Ann's competing values, King says:

> One with incompatibilist sympathies might at this point think that Beth's complaint is unfounded. He might remind her that all agents have values that are not yet theirs. Whether through inculcation, unreflective habit formation, or similar mechanisms, agents have suites of motives and values that they have not come to "own" yet. But this is just the point upon which the parallel manipulation argument plays. If there is no difference between these engineered values and ordinarily acquired ones, then, should manipulation undermine responsibility brutely, it would generalize to all cases of ordinary action (even in an indeterministic universe).[27]

Unfortunately, King does not say more in defense of (P2). This is unfortunate because there simply is no reason to think that ordinary agents in indeterministic worlds—agents who (at times) take ownership of the values that they had not previously come to "own"—are not relevantly different from manipulated agents who are manipulated into taking ownership of values. In the modified indeterministic manipulation scenario constructed above, the manipulators limit Beth's options in some sense, despite leaving intact the alternative

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[26] Recall that (as I mentioned in n. 8) we should read (P2) as making the claim that there is no moral responsibility-relevant difference between the manipulated agent and ordinary agents in an indeterministic world.

[27] King, "The Problem with Manipulation," 72.

possibilities required for Kane's libertarian account.[28] Moreover, the manipulators are in an

important sense the (perhaps partial) source of Beth's new values (even if Beth is a source of

them as well).[29] But we have no reason to think that such limiting of options or other agential

sources would be present in ordinary indeterministic universes.

A prima facie plausible response by King and others convinced by his defense of (P2)

would be to suggest that the very thing that is had in common between ordinary agents in

indeterministic worlds and manipulated agents is that the choices of both can be traced back to

values and motives which they did not initially "own."[30] But the "tracing" involved in these two

sets of cases are relevantly different: the earlier stages to which the values and motives of

ordinary indeterministic agents "trace" do not guarantee or even make it likely that some specific

action occurs years down the line, yet the manipulated agent *is* in the position of having her

actions made likely to occur as the result of values and motives which are not her own. It is true

that, at the beginnings of their moral responsibility-careers, ordinary agents in indeterministic

worlds must rely on evaluative "seemings" which are not their own, which is akin to the situation

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[28] Recall that, in the description of this case, it was stipulated that Beth sees herself as efficacious and as a fair target of the reactive attitudes despite being convinced that most agents have no say over what mechanisms they inherit and that being given a mechanism by an agent is not relevantly different from being given a mechanism by blind natural forces. These convictions of Beth's are in the case by design but, as I will argue in the next paragraph, are not convictions that I think that anyone should hold.

[29] One might read my claims about sourcehood here as an indication that I am denying King's "dilemma" to be a genuine dilemma, for the worry on the first horn of the dilemma is that the incompatibilist is problematically assuming an incompatibilist conception of sourcehood, and the issue of sourcehood arises here, too, in a response to the second horn of the dilemma. But this is not what I mean to suggest; rather, I am only pointing out a potentially moral responsibility-relevant difference between agents who are indeterministically manipulated and agents in deterministic worlds who are not manipulated (i.e., "ordinary" agents in indeterministic worlds), namely that former involves manipulation of a certain kind while the latter does not. This difference can be granted without taking on an incompatibilist conception of sourcehood. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for pressing me to be clearer about this aspect of the dialectic.

[30] Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for raising this point.

of an agent who has been manipulated. Still, ordinary agents in indeterministic worlds are not

obviously in this situation with respect to all subsequent actions for which they are morally

responsible, since ordinarily they can (perhaps decades down the line) come to reflect on the

evaluative "seemings" with which they started and can bring about changes to their evaluative

schemes (and, given that their worlds are indeterministic, these reflections are not guaranteed or

even made likely by the unowned starting points). And at these later points, ordinary agents in

indeterministic worlds are relevantly different from manipulated agents.[31]

The problem I have raised for (P2) reveals an important difference between the original

manipulation argument, which seeks to undermine compatibilism, and the parallel manipulation

argument, which seeks to undermine libertarian accounts of the conditions on moral

responsibility. Recall the second premise of the original manipulation argument:

(M2) There is no difference between the manipulated agent's action and the actions of

ordinary agents in a deterministic universe.

(M2) is not prima facie problematic in the way that (P2) is—in fact, many compatibilists accept

that (M2) is true and thus deny the first premise of the manipulation argument instead.[32] Both

manipulated agents and ordinary causally determined agents have in common that they are

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[31] Of course, one could argue that, given the lack of ownership of their starting points, agents in indeterministic worlds could not possibly become morally responsible for anything, since all subsequent reflection would be guided (either directly or indirectly) by the unowned starting point. While I grant that it is a challenge to explain how later reflections (and subsequent modifications to one's evaluative set) could be "one's own" given the unowned starting point, I believe that the challenge can be met (see Mele, *Free Will and Luck*, 129-33, for a libertarian proposal for meeting this challenge). Moreover, it is plausible that manipulated agents might also (eventually) be able to take ownership of certain "starting points" over which they had no control. This is consistent with there being a relevant difference between ordinary (adult) agents in indeterministic worlds and manipulated agents who have not had enough time to take ownership of their new "starting points."

[32] Some compatibilists have denied (M2), though, as I mentioned in n. 6, where I also noted that (M2) requires some modification in order to be plausible.

causally determined to act as they do by factors beyond their control. But there is nothing like

"being determined by factors beyond their control" that both indeterministically manipulated

agents and ordinary agents in indeterministic worlds have in common (that is, there is no

candidate commonality between these sets of agents that is intuitively relevant to ascriptions of

moral responsibility, in the way that "being determined by factors beyond their control" is

intuitively relevant), so the parallel manipulation argument will not be able to succeed if it relies

on the kind of generalization found in (P2).

      With the right modification, however, the parallel manipulation argument can play an

important role in framing debates about manipulation arguments. Even though the parallel

manipulation argument cannot successfully undermine libertarianism in general (since the

second premise's generalization is problematic), a modified parallel manipulation argument can

attack particular libertarian accounts of the conditions on moral responsibility. As we have seen,

with the right indeterministic manipulation scenario, Kane's libertarian conditions can be

satisfied by a manipulated agent; if the agent in such a scenario is not morally responsible, then

Kane's conditions on moral responsibility are insufficient. But notice that this puts Kane's

account in the same position as compatibilist accounts—both must deal with manipulation. If an

indeterministic manipulation scenario can be constructed such that an agent is manipulated into

satisfying other libertarian conditions on moral responsibility as well, then this modified parallel

manipulation argument will show the insufficiency of other libertarian conditions. The more

libertarian accounts targeted by the modified parallel manipulation argument, the more

libertarian accounts are shown to be in the same position as compatibilist ones.[33]

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[33] On my own view, the modified parallel manipulation argument raises the same problem for all
libertarian accounts of the conditions on moral responsibility, so libertarians are in the same
position as compatibilists. Thus, on my view, manipulation arguments should be seen as dividing

Despite the problems with the parallel manipulation argument as King presents it, then, there are insights to be gleaned from the argument. King attempted to show (on one horn of his dilemma) that if the first premise of the manipulation argument against compatibilism is left undefended, then the one advancing the manipulation argument would run into a dialectical stalemate, since the parallel manipulation argument would raise the same problem for incompatibilism. We have seen that this use of the parallel manipulation argument is problematic for several reasons, including that it leaves hard incompatibilists unscathed—and so they can leave the first premise of the original manipulation argument undefended without inevitably running into a dialectical stalemate—and also that we have no reason to think that the second premise of the argument is true. With the right modification, however, the parallel manipulation argument can be used by compatibilists to show that their accounts are not uniquely subject to worries about manipulation; some (and perhaps all) libertarian accounts are subject to worries about manipulation as well. This is not exactly a defense of compatibilism, as King had originally hoped for the parallel manipulation argument to be, since it does not make the second horn of King's dilemma seem worrisome for incompatibilists in general. Nevertheless, a modified parallel manipulation argument does show that compatibilists are not uniquely plagued by worries about manipulation, and that is some consolation.

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the pro-free will camp from the no-free will camp, rather than as dividing the compatibilist from the incompatibilist. I defend this view in "Manipulation Arguments and Libertarian Accounts of Free Will."