

Philosophy 3334 Summer 2021

Reading questions #11

Due Thur, Jun 17th (though Friday is fine)

1) Read chapter 5 of Neil Levy's *What Makes us Moral?*. On page 174 after discussing genetic determinism and free will he says, "This set of questions is very, very hard. Fortunately, we can largely ignore them, on the grounds that genetics raises no *special* problems for free will and moral responsibility." Does this seem right to you? [answer after reading below – not right now]. Think about these two possibilities (related to the claims on the previous page):

1a) First, reflect on the fact that people with different genes exhibit various behaviors with different frequencies (lying, being a Christian, extroversion, homosexuality, donating lots of money to charity, spousal abuse). Does this fact alone provide a threat to free will and/or moral responsibility?

1b) Now what if it turns out (as seems very possible) that your genetics guarantee not only a causal influence on your behavior in a statistical sense, but also on your willpower making it much more or less easy for people to follow or to resist various 'impulses' that they have. Does this provide a threat to free will and/or moral responsibility?

2) After reading the chapter, come up with a question that you want answered or a topic that you would like to be discussed. This could be something that the chapters forced you think about or it could be something that you thought was particularly confusing in the chapters.