

#6 GRE 学生习作+美国老师点评+Fiona点评笔记

People's Behavior Is Largely Determined By Forces Not Of Their Own Making

Write a response in which you discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement and explain your reasoning for the position you take. In developing and supporting your position, you should consider ways in which the statement might or might not hold true and explain how these considerations shape your position.

I partially agree with the statement that people's behavior is largely determined by forces not of their own making.

It is true that external forces will influence people's behavior. External forces may include social environment, other people's opinions or even present weather. It goes without saying that people's personality and predisposition vary due to the distinction of their familial environment and social influence. For instance, a child who was brought up by parents with abusive treatment is more likely to take a pessimistic attitude toward life or bully weaker kids, while a child growing up with well-educated and decorous parents probably tends to be courteous and kind to others. Apart from that, if it begins raining, you will find that a large number of people without an umbrella start running to a shelter. Although external forces do, in fact, determine people's behavior, the inner forces made by people themselves largely dominate their behaviors compared to exterior ones.

As mentioned above, when the rain begins, lots of people will hastily find a shelter. But the external forces there mask the inner forces that truly drive people to run. Take me for example. On one hand, maybe I will run to a shelter simply because I think that if I get wet in the rain, I will feel bad and easily get caught. On the other hand, maybe I will even walk in the rain from a shelter only because this time I feel that walking in the rain will bring me a different feeling, a unique experience I never go through. Therefore, whether people will run or just walk in the rain largely depends on their free will they make by themselves.

When it comes to chess, that people's behavior is largely determined by forces of their own making is more salient. When people begin learning how to play chess, they may read some books with respect to strategy, gain rich knowledge from other experienced people or just watch players how to compete with each other. These outer forces have an impact on players how to play next step, but the more powerful motivation, free will, is bound to dominate over the outer forces. For example, despite the fact that the player knows from the books or hears other onlooker that the better way is to move the bishop, he or she can follow his or her own free will to move queen or knight in order to try a new way to win the game. Or, it may be exaggeration

to say, he or she can intentionally move a chessman absurdly when he or she wants to lose the game on a sudden impulse. Thus, it can be seen that the behavior of people is not influenced as much by an external force as compared to their own free will.

In conclusion, admittedly exterior forces and interior forces will both determine people's behaviors, but interior forces play a more crucial role in influencing people's behavior. This is because only the interior forces people make by their own directly manipulate their bodies.

ESSAY REVIEW

Examples are useful for the purposes of explaining and supporting an argument when it is clear that there is a close connection between the example itself and the general thing being exemplified. Now your examples are a little odd in this respect. You are being asked about people's behavior in general, but choose very odd examples for the purpose of elucidating such behavior: how we act when it rains; how we decide what moves to make in chess. These are not worthless examples, of course; they are odd in the sense that it is difficult to generalize whatever lesson they teach us. And you don't help your reader in this respect. (举例子不是你举出来就可以的~! 托福是这样的, GRE必须论证有力! 你举得例子能说明什么? 不要举一些奇怪的例子不能够被generalize的, 所以你选例子的时候, 要思考"What general thing is this specific thing an example of?". 下雨打不打伞, 下棋怎么走, 都是比较不能被generalize的例子。你要论证的有力, 就要具体, 到底是什么样的外部因素, 是我们可以发挥主观能动性的? 那雨, 在这里就可以说是自然力量, 作者其实要表达的观点是This example shows that we respond to natural forces in ways that might appear to be instinctual, but our free will still has a say in how we respond.例子不是单独在那里, 要清楚的让读者知道, 这个例子到底可以说明什么generalized的东西, 不然会很奇怪。)

So how can you do that? You need to answer for your reader the question, "What general thing is this specific thing an example of?" In the case of our response to rain, you might say that it is an example of our response to natural forces. So is it your ultimate argument that our response to natural forces is always freely chosen? In that case, you might want to say something like this: "This example shows that we respond to natural forces in ways that might appear to be instinctual, but our free will still has a say in how we respond." (这一段的点评很体现美式思维的哈, 关于举例子, 其实中国美国, 对于举例子的理解, 其实是非常不一样的)

Once you've done that, I think it would be a good idea to ask whether a different example might result in a different conclusion, or to ask in general how someone who disagreed with you might respond. When we flee from fire, for instance, is that action as freely chosen? Or how about when we withdraw from a source of sudden pain? Although it is not explicitly required by this particular prompt (unlike others), I think it is always a good idea to ask yourself what the best arguments on either side of an issue are, and then to try to respond to possible objections to your position. (GRE最好还是两边考虑, 因为GRE不是托福, 要的是你思考全面, 才显得逻辑严谨) I think that because doing so tends to produce essays that are more complex, and you

ought to be trying to demonstrate here as much as possible the complexity of your thinking.
(GRE思考一定要复杂全面严谨)

I'm not convinced by your argument from chess. I don't think it addresses the heart of the issue. I'm sure, in other words, that no one would disagree that chess players can choose to follow moves suggested by chess theory or not, and yet the question about whether our behaviour is determined by forces not of our own making would remain. Someone who believed we lived in a deterministic universe, for instance, might object that the appearance of free will is an illusion created by complex interaction of elementary particles. But, again, if you want to use this example, it is important to demonstrate how universally it might apply. **So what exactly is the chess example an example of?** (请具体的说明, 你的例子到底想证明什么? 不要直接把例子扔出来) You need to answer that question before arriving at the conclusion that "the behavior of people is not influenced as much by an external force as compared to their own free will." You need an intermediate step which **clarifies the general nature of the example**. In this case, it might be something like this: **"Although we often seem to be blindly following rules that have been established for us, the fact that we do sometimes break the rules shows that we can always choose to break the rules, and so we are in some sense always responsible for our actions."**
(标准的美式思维。告诉我们, 例子, 是要证明一个可以从这个例子generalize出来的东西)

The part of the essay that does get to the heart of the matter for me is the first part, the first half of the first paragraph, which **I think you abandon too quickly and so leave a lot of questions unanswered**. We all feel in many cases, I suppose, that we do just what we choose to do and so are responsible for what we do, but is that true? If I'm a drug addict, is that because I choose to be or because I'm genetically predisposed or because my father was a drug addict and started giving me drugs when I was 12? What if I'm a thief or a serial killer or a rapist or, to look in the other direction, a philanthropist, a Mother Theresa or a Gandhi? Am I such things because I choose to bad or good, or instead because my parents, or society, or my school, or the mass media, or violent video games, or the universe, has shaped my mind and predetermined by choices? (什么叫逻辑不严谨? 就是可以被别人提出这么多反例来质问!)

P.S, Your opening statement does not accurately reflect what you go on to argue. You do not, to judge by your essay, **"partially agree with the statement that people's behavior is largely determined by forces not of their own making."** Instead, you acknowledge that people's behavior is influenced by forces not of their own making, but argue that the dominant force in determining their actions is their own free will.

(很多同学都喜欢写 partially agree with, 但是并不是真的理解这个是什么意思。这里那你根本没有 agree 呀! 从内容来看, 学生在这里只是承认了外部力量可以影响一个人, 但是是自己的主观能动性决定了他们的行为。)