

## ABSTRACT

How to be a Libertarian

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Can we give an account of free will in terms of the same kind of causal relations that govern all other interactions? I claim we cannot. In what follows, I outline the strongest account of free will of this kind. I then argue that this account does not successfully provide the sort of control our theory needs to account for free human actions.

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HOW TO BE A LIBERTARIAN

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By

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To my parents. Without your unconditional love and support, this would not have been possible.

## INTRODUCTION

Can we give an account of free will in terms of the same kind of causal relations that govern all other interactions? I claim we cannot. In what follows, I outline the strongest account of free will of this kind. I then argue that this account does not successfully provide the sort of control our theory needs to account for free human actions.

This thesis primarily regards not whether we have free will, but how it works. The question of whether we have free will is clearly an important one. Free will seems necessary to holding people accountable for their actions, which we do as individuals when we end a friendship or as a society when we punish a criminal. We would not do these things if we found definitively that people were not free. Both our moral and non-moral pursuits and reactions often depend on the assumption that people have free will. There is a lively philosophical literature discussing the question of whether we have free will. However, in what follows, I examine answers to the question of how free will works.

The answer to this question bears on one's answer to many other metaphysical questions, and vice versa. Philosophers value having coherent theories, theories which do not contradict themselves. Thus, as answers to this problem seem much more or less likely, we must examine other aspects of the way the world is. The question of free will is closely tied to that of the nature of causation, as well as the nature of agents. One's answer to how free will works often affects one's answer to even more wide-ranging questions about what exists and the nature of things, not to mention the nature of persons.

My argument is primarily a negative one. I am arguing that the best theory of a certain kind is not enough to explain what we need to in order to have a good account of free will. I use this argument to motivate further concerns about the ability of any theory of this kind to explain all we need it to. In doing so, I add to already-existing reasons not to hold this theory. I motivate abandoning this way of answering the question of how free will works.

There could be an amended theory, one that does not face the problems I find in this one. But this theory is the best yet. No one has delivered on a better theory, so I examine what I have before me. If we can't explain free will in terms of the same kind of causal relations that govern all other interactions, perhaps we can't explain free will at all. Perhaps we don't have it. Or perhaps we should posit that there is more than one kind of causation.

I will begin by outlining the contemporary free will debate. In this, I aim to give an idea of the aims of an account of free will, laying out what one needs to explain. I will discuss issues which divide the field and the various positions philosophers take on these issues. I will present some motivations for holding each position, along with advantages and disadvantages. In this chapter, I aim to present the context in which these accounts are presented, and point to reasons why I take Christopher Franklin's account to be the best of its kind thus far. In the second and third chapters, I present his theory, focusing on how it avoids common objections to accounts of this kind. Then, I engage his argument. I argue that certain steps he attempts to make in order to avoid objections are not successful. Moreover, I argue that such an account cannot give an agent sufficient control over her desires.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Context

In this chapter, I will explain terminology and context important to understanding Chris Franklin's place in the free will debate as well as my argument against him. I will examine major issues that divide the field. I will discuss different types of libertarianism, with special attention to event-causal and agent-causal theories. Lastly, I will discuss why I take Franklin's account to be the strongest event-causal theory of free will. It is not my aim in this chapter to argue for any one of these positions. Rather, I explain the advantages, disadvantages, and what must be proven when defending a certain position on free will.

### *Free Will*

Much philosophical discussion about free will concerns the nature of free will. What is it fundamentally? What is essential to it? Under what circumstances is it impossible? Theorists have varying answers to these questions, and at times give the same answer on the basis of very different reasons. There is not one agreed-upon definition of free will in the literature. I will be motivating a certain understanding of free will in what follows. For now, we can understand free will as an ability unique to humans which allows them to exercise control over their actions in the way required for moral responsibility (Mckenna and Coates 2016: 1.1). Much of the what divides the field regards the nature of this control – how the agent causes actions she controls, what

circumstances are required for this to happen. This definition follows the common practice of discussing free will in terms of moral responsibility. When we hold someone accountable for behavior by calling them worthy of praise or blame or of reward or punishment, we act as though they are morally responsible. Holding someone accountable in this way only seems reasonable if we believe they have control over their morally relevant actions. As with free will, it is contentious what conditions are necessary and sufficient for moral responsibility. Differences in one's requirements for moral responsibility will impact his or her account of the agency necessary to fulfill these (Mckenna and Coates 2016: 1.2).

### *Determinism*

Determinism is a metaphysical thesis that “the facts of the past, in conjunction with the laws of nature, entail every truth about the future” (McKenna and Coates 2016, 1.3). If determinism is true, every event that occurs is entirely determined by antecedent events (Clarke 2011: 331). In other words, there is only one possible future in a deterministic world. On this view, every event that occurs must necessarily have occurred because of events before it. Thus, if one knew the arrangement of all the particles in the universe in 27 B.C.E., one could know when it will rain next in Los Angeles, and the results of the next election. If the universe is deterministic, this implies that the decisions one makes are caused by the placement of particles and the workings of natural laws. Thus, there were sufficient causal conditions for any person's behavior long before that person was born (McKenna and Coates 2016: 1.3). If determinism is true, it seems that agents could not have acted otherwise than they in fact do. It is

contentious whether the truth of this sort of determinism would preclude free will. One's answer to the question of whether determinism is compatible with free will does not commit one to any particular position about whether humans actually have free will.

### *Hard Incompatibilism*

Hard incompatibilists claim that if determinism is true, then agents cannot be free, and that if determinism is false, then agents cannot be free. Free will is threatened by the truth of determinism as much as its falsity (Mckenna and Coates 2016: 1.4). To hold this position, one need not make a claim about whether determinism or indeterminism is true. Rather, hard incompatibilists argue that in either case, humans cannot have free will. An advantage of this view is that one's position is not dependent on the status of another metaphysical thesis. One's argument does not depend on a claim regarding whether determinism is true. However, this position denies that we have free will. This claim seems contrary to experience. One who holds it can be called on to explain why we think we have free will when we in fact do not. Moreover, it seems that we assume others have control over their actions in holding them morally responsible. This is relevant not only to how we react toward others in calling them morally praiseworthy or blameworthy, but moreover, to how we govern ourselves as a society in punishing criminals and rewarding especially admirable actions. Moreover, free will seems important to non-moral actions. It seems to be important that we are in control of certain non-moral decisions, such as a choice of career or of a spouse. The hard indeterminist must explain moral responsibility and the meaning and value of life without appealing to free will, or else argue that

humans are misguided in believing in such things, and explain why we have the impulse to deceive ourselves.

### *Compatibilism*

Compatibilists claim that the truth of determinism would not preclude free will. In other words, they claim that if it were true that the occurrence every event was entailed by past events and the laws of nature, humans could still have that unique ability to control their actions in such a way that they are morally responsible for them. Some compatibilists argue that alternative possibilities are compatible with determinism. Others concede that determinism precludes alternative possibilities, but claim that agents could nonetheless be free (Mckenna and Coates 2016: 5). The term regulative control refers to an agent's ability to regulate between various alternatives. Guidance control refers to an agent's ability to bring about her actions, regardless of whether there were alternative possibilities available to her (Fischer 1994). For example, if Tim is faced with the choice to open one of two doors. He chooses door B rather than door A. If he later found out that door A had been locked the whole time, it would seem he did not really have alternative possibilities, and thus he did not have regulative control. But regardless of whether door A was locked, it seems Tim did have guidance control over his choice to open B, because he brought about this action. Agents could have both, but one could deny one sort of control and define free will in terms of the other. Many contemporary compatibilists focus on regulative control, claiming only this sort of control is necessary for free will. These theories do not appeal to alternative possibilities, but rather argue that agents can play a special role in bringing about free actions even if determinism is

true (Mckenna and Coates 2016: 5).<sup>1</sup> Several compatibilists have developed thorough accounts of guidance control.

An advantage of compatibilism is that one's account of free will does not depend on the truth or falsity of determinism. Determinism is a contentious thesis, and it is an advantage if one's account of free will could still stand if it were proven true. Moreover, some claim that the falsity of determinism could also be troubling for free will. Compatibilists accounts argue that the sort of control necessary to free will and moral responsibility is possible even if our actions are caused by sources outside of our control.<sup>2</sup> Unlike incompatibilists, compatibilists do not need to make a claim about the truth of determinism, much less prove one. Their position is simply that *if* determinism is true, agents could have free will. Holding that this conditional is true does not require one to claim that humans have free will, however, most compatibilists claim we are free. Much of the work of compatibilism is outlining the conditions of free will and moral responsibility in a way that is not threatened by compatibilism, and moreover, giving an account of what is required for the control necessary to the given definition of free will and moral responsibility.

### *Incompatibilism*

Incompatibilists claim that determinism and free will are incompatible.

Incompatibilists often claim that free will requires alternative possibilities, i.e. the power

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<sup>1</sup> The fixation on guidance control among compatibilists is in large part due to Frankfurt cases, which aim to illustrate examples of agents who are morally responsible though they lack alternative possibilities (Mckenna and Coates 2012, 4.2, Frankfurt 1969).

<sup>2</sup> Compatibilist accounts refine the sort of control and the sort of outside forces that it can stand up to. A good account will not, for example, call 'free' the actions of someone who is suffering from hallucinations.

to do otherwise than one actually does, and ultimate sourcehood, i.e. that an agent's actions are "up to her" and thus that she is the source of her action (Clarke 2017: Introduction). To be an ultimate source of her action, "some condition necessary for her action originates within the agent herself." (Mckenna and Coates 2016: 2.2).

The role of alternative possibilities is sometimes described as a garden of forking paths. If a student is walking in a garden and comes to a fork, there are multiple paths she can take. When she decides whether to pursue a career as a philosopher or as a lawyer, these are both options that she can take. Whichever one she chooses, she had an alternative possibility available to her. These are two possible paths branches off from one single past. If we have alternative possibilities, the future could be more than one way. If alternative possibilities are required for free will, determinism would be a threat to free will. This is because for us to have alternative possibilities, more than one future must be possible. But if determinism is true, then only one future is possible (Clark 2017: 2.1). There would be only one path in our garden that it was truly possible for her to take. She would only have one possible career choice. In this way, some incompatibilists claim that determinism is incompatible with alternative possibilities which are required for free will. These considerations are represented more formally below.<sup>3</sup>

- A. Any agent,  $x$ , performs an act  $a$  of  $x$ 's own free will iff  $x$  has control over  $a$ .
- B.  $x$  has control over  $a$  only if  $x$  has the ability to select among alternative courses of action to act  $a$ .
- C. If  $x$  has the ability to select among alternative courses of action to act  $a$ , then there are alternative courses of action to act  $a$  open to  $x$  (i.e.,  $x$  could have done otherwise than  $a$ ).
- D. If determinism is true, then only one future is possible given the actual past, and holding fixed the laws of nature.

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<sup>3</sup> This representation is from Mckenna and Coates 2016, 2.2.

- E. If only one future is possible holding fixed the actual past and the laws of nature, then there are no alternative courses of action to any act open to any agent (i.e., no agent could have done otherwise than she actually does).
- F. Therefore, if determinism is true, it is not the case that any agent, *x*, performs any act, *a*, of her own free will.

A source incompatibilist claims that determinism is incompatible with the sort of control necessary to free will, namely, ultimate sourcehood. One could also be unconcerned with the way that indeterminism threatens alternative possibilities, but remain an incompatibilist because of concerns that indeterminism threatens this sourcehood. The source incompatibilist is primarily concerned with whether the agent was the source of her decision to take the path that she does in fact take, rather than the presence of alternate possible paths. The source incompatibilist is nonetheless a compatibilist because he claims that determinism would preclude the agent's being the source of her action. The truth of determinism would mean that the past and the laws of nature made it necessary that she act in the way she did. Though it appeared to the agent that she contributed to her action, she did could not have done so in the significant way required for her to be its ultimate source. The past and the laws of nature alone are sufficient conditions for her actions. Because the agent is still the immediate cause of her action, she is still the source of her action, in a way. However, "that source, the one provided by her, itself has a further source that *originates* outside of her" (Mckenna and Coates 2016: 2.2). What ultimately explains her action is the placement of particles in the past and the laws of nature, and these make no reference to her (Mckenna and Coates 2016: 2.2). Thus, it is not the case that something necessary to the agent's acting as she does originates from within herself, as the definition of ultimate sourcehood requires. In

this way, the source incompatibilist argues that determinism threatens free will. This is represented formally below.<sup>4</sup>

- A. Any agent,  $x$ , performs an any act,  $a$ , of her own free will iff  $x$  has control over  $a$ .
- B.  $x$  has control over  $a$  only if  $x$  is the ultimate source of  $a$ .
- C. If  $x$  is the ultimate source of  $a$ , then some condition,  $b$ , necessary for  $a$ , originates with  $x$ .
- D. If any condition,  $b$ , originates with  $x$ , then there are no conditions sufficient for  $b$  independent of  $x$ .
- E. If determinism is true, then the facts of the past, in conjunction with the laws of nature, entail every truth about the future.
- F. If the facts of the past, in conjunction with the laws of nature, entail every truth about the future, then for any condition,  $b$ , necessary for any action,  $a$ , performed by any agent,  $x$ , there are conditions independent of  $x$  (in  $x$ 's remote past, before  $x$ 's birth) that are sufficient for  $b$ .
- G. If, for any condition,  $b$ , necessary for any action,  $a$ , performed by any agent,  $x$ , there are conditions independent of  $x$  that are sufficient for  $b$ , then no agent,  $x$ , is the ultimate source of any action,  $a$ . (This follows from C and D.)
- H. If determinism is true, then no agent,  $x$ , is the ultimate source of any action,  $a$ . (This follows from E, F, and G.)
- I. Therefore, if determinism is true, then no agent,  $x$ , performs any action,  $a$ , of her own free will. (This follows from A, B, and H.)

Incompatibilists claim that determinism is incompatible with free will because it threatens something necessary to free will – alternative possibilities, ultimate sourcehood, or both. Different theories will lay out their own criteria of the sort of control that is necessary for free will, and refine the relationship between free will and moral responsibility. Accounts that prioritize sourcehood on the basis of the same reasoning may vary greatly in their conception of how it is that agents must bring about their actions to fulfill this criterion. Like in the case of compatibilism, the claim is that if determinism is true, then agents cannot have free will. One could be an incompatibilist but make no claim about whether agents are free. Some incompatibilists claim that

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<sup>4</sup> This argument is taken from Mckenna and Coates 2016, 2.2.

determinism is true, and thus that agents are not free. These are hard determinists. This is not a popular position among contemporary incompatibilists (Mckenna and Coates 2016: 1.4). Another group claims that agents are free, and that determinism is false. These are libertarians. Because the incompatibilist claims that the possibility of free will is affected by the truth value of determinism, one who makes a claim about whether humans have free will is thereby committed to a claim about the truth value of determinism. This is a disadvantage of the position, as one's interlocutor could have convictions that conflict with one's claim about determinism. The incompatibilist who makes positive claims about free will must also defend a position regarding determinism to fully defend his position on free will.

### *Libertarianism*

Libertarians claim that free will is incompatible with determinism and that at least some humans have free will. Libertarian accounts of free will explain what must be the case for persons to have free will (Clarke 2011: 329).<sup>5</sup> Theories can be categorized by the type of indeterminism they require, and further by where they place indeterminism in the process that leads to a free action (Clarke 2017: Introduction). I divide them in this way and examine the different positions further in what follows.

The libertarian faces the same difficulties above that plague any incompatibilist account. The libertarian must not only outline conditions of free will required for moral responsibility and argue that they are incompatible with determinism, but she must also

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<sup>5</sup> An exception to this is Peter van Inwagen, who declines to offer an account. His view is libertarian, as he claims that free will requires indeterminism, yet that we cannot see how free will is possible in an indeterministic world. Thus, he claims free will is a mystery (Clarke 2011, 329).

argue that some agents fulfill these conditions. The libertarian must argue that persons are free in the sense that she defines. There must be evidence that her theory describes and explains our world, that is, the free will we take ourselves to exercise. Libertarians examine evidence regarding the truth of determinism or indeterminism, and speculate about indeterminism at certain junctures in brain processes (Clarke 2017: 4). Randolph Clarke claims that we have no good evidence for the truth of any incompatibilist account. He writes that there is no good evidence that determinism is true, but there is also little consensus regarding the interpretation of quantum theory, and there are both deterministic and indeterministic interpretations of it. Moreover, if there is any dependence between mental events and physical events, the libertarian needs indeterminism to relate to freely caused actions in a certain way. Currently, speculations about where one would need indeterminism in brain processes is just that. We do not have the understanding of the brain necessary to give evidence for or against such conjectures (Clarke 2017: 4).

### *Noncausal Libertarianism*

Noncausal libertarian views do not place positive causal requirements on free action. Some such views claim free actions must be uncaused, while others will allow indeterministic causation. These accounts typically claim that free action begins with a basic mental action (Clarke 2017: 1). A basic action is one that is not constituted or brought about by further action, but rather is at the beginning of the otherwise-infinite chain. Overt bodily action, for example, is nonbasic because moving one's hand is caused by further mental action. Different accounts have nuanced characterizations of

these basic actions. Noncausal accounts are criticized for not providing a positive account of the sort of control required for free will as the objector claims an account of free will should. Moreover, some object that noncausal theories cannot adequately account for the way in which actions seem to be performed for and explained by reasons (Clarke 2017: 1).

### *Agent-Causal Libertarianism*

Agent-causal libertarians often focus on the agent's control over her choices. The agent-causal libertarian is concerned with the way in which the agent herself causes the particular action that she performs. They are concerned that the agent has a causal capacity to choose among the alternatives open to her. They argue that a causal capacity fills this role. Giving agents causal powers is a way to provide them with the control necessary to responsibility. Moreover, agent-causal libertarians point to inadequacies of event-causal and noncausal accounts explanations of control and claim that we should take agent causation as an ontological primitive (O'Connor 2011: 311).

This causation does not consist in causation by events. Agent-causalists claim that the agent is a substance, and thus that causation by an agent is causation by a substance. Substances are irreducible, meaning that they are "in a robust sense more than the sum of the constituents of their bodies" (O'Connor 2011: 312). A substance is not the sort of thing that can be an effect, and thus agents originate their decisions as an uncaused cause. They also claim that free decisions must be caused by agents and require that both the event the agent causes and the agent's causing that event are not determined (Clarke 2017: 3). There are different proposals regarding what, exactly, the agent causes.

O'Connor proposes that the agent causes a state of intention to act. The agent makes a choice or a decision when she causes an intentional state. Clarke speaks of agents as causing their entire actions, while Chisolm claims agent causation triggers a neurophysiological event (O'Connor 2011: 314-315).

The advantage of this view is that by positing agent directly cause their choices, it gives agents a great amount of control over their choices. It allows for agents to be ultimate sources of their choices. However, this explanatory power comes at the cost of simplicity. The agent-causalist claims that there is a special kind of causation. To posit more than one kind of causation is to add complexity to one's view. If some account that did not have the complexity of multiple kinds of causation could explain control just as compellingly, then the simplicity would be a great advantage. Further, holding this view requires certain contentious commitments about the metaphysics of agents (O'Connor 2011: 311-312).

There are other objections to agent causal libertarianism. Some challenge whether an intelligible account of agent-causation can be given. Some take the luck objection (explained below) to apply to agent-causal views. Moreover, some challenge whether agent causalists can successfully explain the causation of a choice in terms of reasons, as agents' causing choices is basic, and thus cannot be caused by some earlier recognition of reasons.

It is unclear if there could be empirical evidence either affirming or denying agent-causal views (Clarke 2017: 4). Some claim that our experience of making choices is evidence for agent-causation (O'Connor 1995: 196-7).

### *Event-Causal Libertarianism*

Event-causal libertarian views add a requirement of determinism to event-causal theories of action. An event-causal account of action explains that actions are caused when agent-involving mental states cause events in the appropriate way.<sup>6</sup> An event-causal libertarian adds that the agent-involving mental states must cause nondeterministically. When an action is caused in this way, the agent is able to act for reasons, and until she does it, there is a chance that she will not perform the action (Clarke 2017: 2). Because of indeterminism, the agent has alternative possibilities. Because choices are caused by agent-involving mental states, she is the source of her action. Event-causal theories are reductive theories thus analyze free will in terms of and even reduce it to states and events involving the agent (Franklin 2013: 414).

The event-causal theory of action only posits one sort of causation. In the case of free action, mental events are causing other events. The event-causal theory is thus more simple. One who holds it avoids having to explain how a whole other kind of causation works. On this view, the kind of causation that causes all other effects is the same kind of causation by which free actions are caused. In this way, one can integrate free choices into a single view of causation, rather than having to posit two kinds of causation. This simplicity is good motivation to hold the view, especially in light of the further metaphysical commitments required for the agent-causal libertarian.

Event-causal libertarians often face objections regarding the role of indeterminism in their theories more so than agent-causal libertarian views. Some claim that indeterminism would diminish the agent's control enough to diminish her responsibility

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<sup>6</sup> I will cover this in more depth in Chapter 2 in order to illustrate Christopher Franklin's adjustments to the model.

(Clarke 2017: 2). Often these objectors claim that whether an event occurs is a matter of chance if it is not completely determined by the event before it. No one has control over an event whose occurrence is a matter of chance. Even an agent cannot have control over her choice if that event (her choosing) is not determined by something that precedes it. If the action is not determined by earlier occurrences, the agent cannot have control over whether it is performed. Because of this, indeterminism is not a requirement of free will. Rather, if an agent caused her decisions indeterministically, this would preclude her ability to control her choices (Clarke 2011: 333). This is the problem of luck.

A similar argument eschews appeal to luck and instead claims that indeterminism is directly undermines the sort of control necessary to free will. I will refer to this as the *Mind* argument. I present both of these in detail in what follows. As in the case of the problem of luck, if the *Mind* argument is successful, it proves that what incompatibilists take to be a necessary condition for the possibility of free will would actually guarantee its impossibility (Franklin 2010: 200). I will refer to these together as coherency objections to indeterminism.

A similar objection is in regard to the relevance of indeterminism. Some claim that requiring indeterminism does not add anything integral to free will that could not exist in a deterministic world. Thus, the requirement of determinism seems superfluous (Clarke 2017: 2). I refer to this as the problem of enhanced control. I refer to this as a relevance objection to indeterminism.

Another objection is what I will refer to as the disappearing agent argument. On event-causal libertarianism, agent-involving mental states cause choices. Derk Pereboom argues that the agent's role in making a choice is exhausted by mental states. These

states leave open which choice will obtain, but the agent plays no role in settling whether the decision is made in one way or another. The agent plays no further role than bearing certain mental states; she is only involved because they occur in her brain. Nothing about the agent herself settles the decision (Fischer et al. 2007: 202-203). I refer to this as the problem of the disappearing agent.

These are serious objections to any event-causal theory. If they are not solved, it seems that the event-causal theory cannot give an account of how the agent can be the source of her choices, though she could have the opportunity to do otherwise. The theory may be simpler than an agent-causal libertarianism, but this is unhelpful if it cannot properly explain the control necessary to free will.

### *Franklin's Theory*

I take Christopher Franklin's theory to be the best account of event-causal libertarianism. This is in part because he avoids the luck and *Mind* arguments. Unique features of his description of how agents cause free choices allow him to offer a picture of nondeterministic causation that has yet to be problematized. Thus, his account avoids objections that plague most event-causal accounts casting doubt on whether indeterminism is compatible with the control necessary to free will and moral responsibility. Further, he offers an argument which shows that indeterminism is relevant to enhancing control.

Moreover, Franklin addresses the disappearing agent argument. He examines the important role the agent plays in self-determination, i.e., the process of considering rival motivations and selecting among them. He gives an account of how this role is fulfilled

by mental states. Further, he addresses the relationship of the agent to her states. He attempts to explain how the agent plays a role in settling which decision is made by giving an account of how these states stand in a close enough relation to the agent that they ‘count as’ her when they fulfill her role.

Franklin’s account thus addresses objections which commonly face event-causal accounts of freedom. In his work, he lays out a schema which an event-causal libertarian could fill out in various ways. If one’s account fulfills Franklin’s criteria, it also avoids these objections. Below, I offer a formalized version of the schema. Franklin never formally argues something so comprehensive. In representing him so, I simply aim to show how certain facts of his theory relate to one another.<sup>7</sup> It omits certain important aspects of his theory that I do not address in my argument against his theories. I will motivate each of the premises as I explain his account in what follows. He fills out this schema to an extent, partially in order to demonstrate the dynamics of doing so. Below, I represent the schema he lays out together with his account of one way to fill it out as a formally valid argument that an agent such as he describes is

I take premises (1) through (7) to make up his schema. These lay out what requirements an agent must fulfill in order to be free on his theory. There are many states that could potentially fulfill the role of the self-determining agent, and this role could be multiply realizable by several states. Because of this, a theorist could easily motivate using another state or set of states as the antecedent of premise (8). As long as one can

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<sup>7</sup> To be comprehensive, one would at least have to block making the biconditionals true by denying each side. To do so would make one’s theory no longer libertarian. As I have tried to make clear in my presentation of Franklin’s theory, he gives this schema as advice to the event-causal libertarian. It is embedded within this context, and thus it is meant to be used by libertarians who would not want to deny (for example) that the agent has the ability to self-determine. Thank you to Alex Pruss for pointing out that the purpose of this formalization needed clarification.

show that one of these states (or sets of states) is possessed by an agent, that it fulfills the functional role of self-determining agent, and that the agent can be identified with or to this state or set of states, then the agent has the ability to self-determine.<sup>8</sup>

1.  $Fr \leftrightarrow P_{sd}$

(An agent S is free if and only if S has the power of self-determination.)

2.  $P_{sd} \leftrightarrow (A \wedge O)$

(S has the power of self-determination if and only if S has the ability and the opportunity to exercise the ability.)

3.  $I \rightarrow O$

(If indeterminism of just the right sort characterizes the process that brings about an action, then the agent has the opportunity to exercise the ability.)

4.  $I$

(Indeterminism of just the right sort characterizes the process that brings about an action.)

Therefore,  $O$

(Therefore, the agent has the opportunity to exercise the ability.)

5.  $A \leftrightarrow (F \wedge C)$

(The agent has the ability to self-determine if and only if there is a mental state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent and that counts as the agent)

6.  $(Id_w \vee Id_{to}) \rightarrow C$

(If the agent is identified with or to the state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent, then the state counts as the agent.)

7.  $Id_w \vee Id_{to}$

(The agent is identified with or to a state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent.)

Therefore,  $C$

(The state counts as the agent.)

8.  $D \rightarrow F$

(If the agent has the desire to act for reasons, then there is a state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent.)

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<sup>8</sup> I will clarify this terminology in the following chapters. I am grateful to Todd Buras for helping formalize this schema.

Fr= The agent is free.

$P_{sd}$  = The agent has the power of self-determination.

A = The agent has the ability to self-determine.

O = The agent has the opportunity to exercise the ability to self-determine.

I = Indeterminism of just the right sort characterizes the process that brings about an action.

F = There is a state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent.

C = The mental state counts as agent.

D = The agent has the desire to act for reasons.

$Id_{to}$  = Agent is identified to the state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent.

$Id_w$  = Agent is identified with the state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent

9. D

(The agent has the desire to act for reasons.)

Therefore, F

(There is a state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent.)

Therefore,  $C \wedge F$

(The mental state counts as agent and there is a mental state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent.)

Therefore, A

(The agent has the ability for self-determination.)

Therefore,  $O \wedge A$

(The agent has the ability for self-determination and the opportunity to exercise this ability.)

Therefore,  $P_{sd}$

(The agent has the power of self-determination.)

Therefore, Fr

(The agent is free.)

In what follows, I will present the considerations which motivate premises (1) through (3) and (5) through (9). I will not address (4), that indeterminism is true, and I grant it in the argumentative chapter.

## CHAPTER TWO

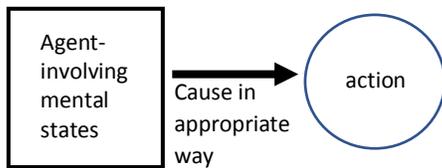
### The Coherency and Relevance of Indeterminism

The purpose of this chapter is two-fold. First, I aim to explain the way in which Franklin responds to challenges to the coherency and relevance of the indeterminism inherent to a libertarian theory. I attend to his response to these issues because they are taken to challenge event-causal libertarian theories. Part of why I take Franklin's theory to be the best version of event-causal libertarianism is because it allows one to respond to these challenges. Second, I explain integral aspects of Franklin's theory of free will. As I explain Franklin's responses to arguments that challenge coherency and relevancy, I will also explain how his theory incorporates these responses in order to provide a unique account of event-causal libertarianism that avoids these problems.

#### *Causal Theory of Action*

Event causalists adhere to the causal theory of action. On this theory, actions are defined as events caused in the appropriate manner by agent-involving mental states (Clarke 2017: 2). Franklin uses as his example van Inwagen's case of the thief who freely chooses to refrain from robbing the parish poor box (van Inwagen 1983). The thief's refraining from stealing is an action because it is caused in the appropriate manner by his desire to fulfill a promise to his mother and by his belief that refraining from stealing will fulfill this promise. The stipulation 'in the appropriate way' is meant to exclude cases of deviant causal chains. A well-known example of this is a climber wants

to rid himself of the danger and difficulty of holding another man on a rope. He knows that if he lets go of the rope, he could rid himself of these. The belief is so unnerving that he drops the rope. In this example, the climber did not choose to let go of the rope, nor did he do so intentionally. The reason did not cause his action in the right way. Thus, event-causal theorists must offer an account of what is deviant in this case and what conditions must be fulfilled for causation to be ‘in the appropriate way’ (Davidson 1980, 112-28).<sup>1</sup> There is disagreement about exactly which mental states must be involved in causing the event for it to properly be an action, but generally, beliefs, desires, and intentions are put forth as good candidates. I represent this as follows:



### *Indeterminism*

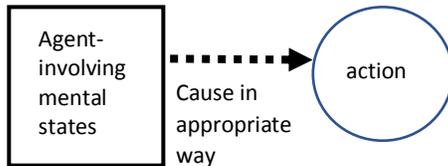
On the causal theory of action, an agent whose actions are determined by prior causes outside of her control could satisfy these requirements and perform an action. As incompatibilists, libertarians claim a choice that is determined by causes outside the agent’s control is not free. On a deterministic picture of the laws of nature, the placement of every particle at any particular time is determined by the laws of nature and the past. Therefore, event-causal libertarians add indeterminism to this theory as a requirement of

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<sup>1</sup> Some philosophers hold that this cannot be done, and thus give up on the causal theory of action.

free action.<sup>2</sup> One of the stipulations on the ‘appropriate way’ that a free action is caused is that it must be caused non-deterministically.

I represent this like so:

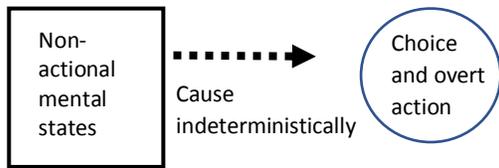


Indeterminism is only relevant to enhancing control when it is in the moment of choice. If one’s account of libertarianism moves indeterminism away from this crucial point, it becomes irrelevant. If the indeterminism is not in the moment of choice, it can no longer provide the opportunity to make different choices in a way that is relevant to enhancing control, and this is the libertarian’s aim in adding indeterminism (Franklin 2010: 202-3). More specifically, Franklin requires that the “causal relation that obtains between the agent’s non-actional states and events (e.g. desires and beliefs) and free choice be nondeterministic” (Franklin 2013: 416). For Franklin, the agent-involving mental states that are causally efficacious in the choice are non-actional. This stands in contrast to Robert Kane’s theory, in which the efforts of will that effect a free choice are actions. Kane locates indeterminism, as Franklin sees it, between one action and another. In contrast, Franklin claims that “all the non-actional elements – such as character, education, up-bringing, reasons, desires, etc. – leaves open what [the agent] does” (Franklin 2010: 206).

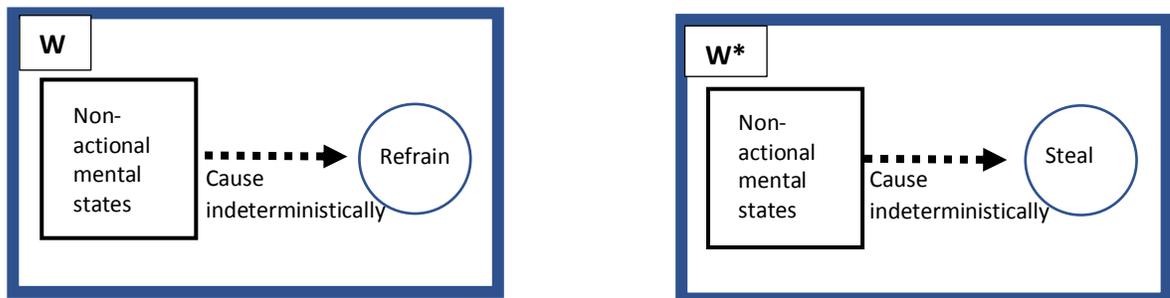
I represent this as follows.

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<sup>2</sup> Libertarians make a distinction between indirectly free actions, which are deterministically caused by free actions, and directly free actions. Directly free actions are at issue here, and thus I lay aside indirectly free ones.



Franklin’s account represents free choices as caused nondeterministically by non-actional mental states.<sup>3</sup> In the case of the thief, if his choice fills the requirement of indeterminism, there is another world with the same laws of nature and past, but in which the thief chooses instead to steal, rather than to refrain from stealing. This is because his action is not determined by the past and laws of physics. Thus, in an indeterministic world, it is possible that the thief does otherwise than he actually does. This could be represented like so:



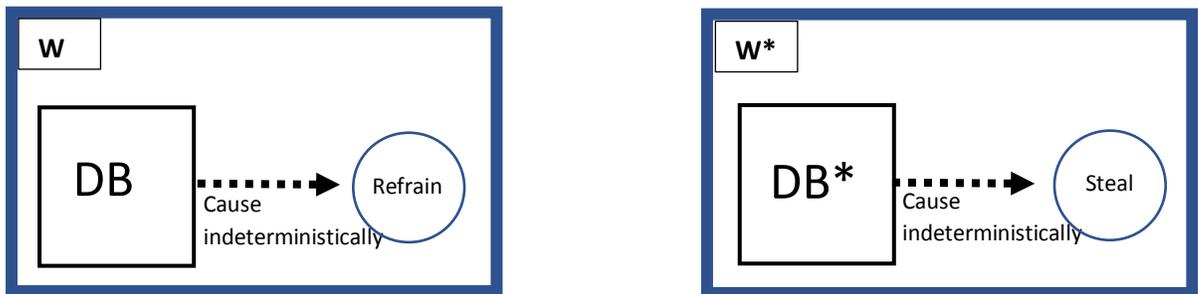
However, Franklin imagines that two different actions will be caused by distinct sets of reasons and desires. It is not the case that, given the presence of indeterminism, one set of reasons has two possible outcomes, but rather “different desires and beliefs might be causally efficacious” (Franklin 2013: 416). As an agent considers two different

<sup>3</sup> He does not specifically forbid the presence of mental actions, such as Franklin’s efforts of will. However, he does concede that mental actions seem to fall prey to the *Mind* argument. Franklin could perhaps defend a combination of ‘actional’ and non-actional mental states by using similar considerations to those he claims liberate non-actional states from the challenges of the luck and *Mind* arguments. Franklin only addresses non-actional states, so I assume it is not central to his account of free will that actional states contribute to the nondeterministic causation of free choices.

courses of actions, each of these would be motivated by a distinct set of non-actional mental states or events such as beliefs and desires, *DB*.

As represented below, if the thief chooses to refrain, this will be motivated by the beliefs and desires of the set of mental states *DB*. If he decides instead to steal, the causally efficacious set of non-actional mental states or events will be *DB\**. If we suppose that thief's world is indeterministic and that *W* and *W\** have the same past and laws, both of these are possibilities for our thief.

This could be represented like so:



In *W*, *DB* was causally efficacious in the thief's choice to refrain from stealing. In *W\**, a different set of non-actional mental states or events, *DB\**, is causally efficacious in the thief's choice to steal. Different sets of beliefs, desires, and reasons cause these different actions. It is not the case that "the thief's reasons for stealing might motivate his choice to steal or his choice to refrain" (Franklin 2013: 417). If the thief chooses to steal, it is on the basis of reasons that favor his stealing. If he refrains, other reasons that favor his refraining will be causally efficacious in this decision.<sup>4</sup>

After the addition of indeterminism, there is much more work to be done by the event-causal libertarian. It is contentious whether indeterminism is relevant to enhancing

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<sup>4</sup> This aspect of Franklin's theory of action becomes important as he justifies weakly free actions, see the section on weakly free actions below.

control, and some argue that indeterminism actually undermines control (Clarke 2017: 2). Franklin must answer these challenges regarding the coherency and relevance of indeterminism as it relates to enhancing control. Even if one grants that the openness provided by indeterminism enhances control, this openness is not enough for a compelling account of libertarian free will (Franklin 2010: 426-7). Franklin must give an account of what role the agent plays in causing a certain choice to obtain, and of how the agent plays that role, given that it is reduced to mental states or events or sets of these.

### *Issues with Indeterminism*

Event causal theories have been accused both of failing to secure enhanced control for the agent, and further, of reducing control (Griffith 2010, Pereboom 2014). The luck and *Mind* arguments attempt to show that indeterminism is incompatible with the sort of control necessary to free will and moral responsibility. If either one is sound, then the absence of indeterminism is required for free will and moral responsibility. In other words, determinism would be required for the sort of control necessary to free will and moral responsibility.

The luck objection makes into a more rigorous argument intuitions that indeterminism entails luck and randomness. It does seem that luck and control are mutually exclusive. An action that is wholly under our control is not lucky, and an action is often called lucky because the action did not seem to be under someone's control. For example, a basketball player is said to have made a lucky shot when his making the basket under the circumstances that he did seemed beyond the level of skill of which he is capable. The shot was lucky because it was not under his control, and it was not under

his control because the reason he made it was chance rather than ability (Franklin 2010: 201). Indeterminism seems to entail luck and randomness because it leaves open whether the intended effects of our actions will obtain incompatible with the control we need for free will and moral responsibility. Different objectors will have varying claims about whether an undetermined action is wholly or only partly a matter of luck, and about whether actions that are a matter of luck exclude any sort of control or only the sort needed for free will and moral responsibility.

The *Mind* argument argues for the same conclusion without appealing to the notion of luck. Rather, this is a direct argument that free will and moral responsibility are incompatible with indeterminism. Instead of regimenting intuitions about luck, the *Mind* argument attempts to show that indeterminism excludes the possibility of the degree of control necessary to free will and moral responsibility. Thus, it concludes that indeterminism is directly incompatible with free will and moral responsibility (Franklin 2010: 225).

Franklin answers many different formulations of the luck and *Mind* argument. My focus here will not be his handling of each of these formulations, but rather certain requirements regarding indeterminism in his account and how it allows him to escape these arguments.<sup>5</sup> I take his analysis of these formulations to rightly have found them wanting, and thus I take Franklin's theory to have escaped the luck and *Mind* arguments.

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<sup>5</sup> I will not address the ways in which he finds a formulation itself wanting, I will only address how Franklin's account uniquely avoids some of these that would apply to other libertarian accounts.

### *Requirements regarding Indeterminism*

Indeterminism is only relevant to control if it is near the moment of action.

Whether indeterminism itself increases control or it provides for some further feature that enhances control, it must be near the moment of action in order to provide this.

However, if indeterminism is in a place in the causal sequence that is relevant to control, this leaves it open to objectors to claim that the presence of indeterminism diminishes control. If one is convinced that indeterminism problematizes control, then the libertarian requirement of indeterminism appears to secure even less control than their compatibilist competitors.<sup>6</sup>

The unique placement and role of indeterminism on Franklin's account allow him to avoid the most troubling of these arguments. Franklin "locates" indeterminism between non-actional mental states and choice. Thus, indeterminism is between states that lead to action – such as reasons, desires, beliefs – and choice and overt action. In this, Franklin requires that the causal relation between the agent's non-actional states and events and the free choice is a nondeterministic relation. Franklin speaks of his theory as "locating" or "placing" determinism somewhere unique. This language seems dubious. If the world is indeterministic, we cannot simply put indeterminism wherever we want (Franklin 2010: 202). Rather than imagining that Franklin moves indeterminism, it seems more accurate to think of him as claiming that free actions can only be caused by non-actional mental states. Indeterminism is where it must be – between a cause and effect. The uniqueness of Franklin's theory is that only non-actional mental states cause

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<sup>6</sup> This paragraph is following Franklin's thoughts on p. 202 in "Farewell to Luck and *Mind*."

free choices.<sup>7</sup> He does not directly define non-actional mental states. Rather, he contrasts his own theory to Robert Kane's, on which efforts of will cause free choice. These efforts are actions. On Kane's theory, it is true that the thief could do all that he can to resist the temptation to steal and still fail because of the way indeterminism resolves itself (Franklin 2010: 214-5). Franklin claims that the causes of free actions are 'non-actional' because they stand in contrast to actions such as efforts of will. That the state are non-actional precludes the possibility that we could *do* all we can and still fail to make a certain choice obtain because we do not perform any action in determining a choice.

Franklin's account is compatible with a choice's deterministically bringing about later choices or actions (Franklin 2010: 205). What the agent does not do, that is, non-actional elements such as upbringing and character, leave open what the agent does. On this picture, the indeterminism allows the independence from the past and laws that the libertarian aims for by leaving open what the agent will do until the moment of choice. It is not the case that an agent could do all that was in her power to make a choice and still fail. But once a choice is made, it will obtain (Franklin 2010: 204-5). The worry that the openness libertarians take to be so crucial for freedom actually entails luck largely disappears when the indeterminism is 'moved' before the choice and action. This move is what negates the possibility of a thief doing all he can to refrain and his effort of will failing.

This claim that choice is indeterministically caused by non-actional mental states allows Franklin's account of event causal libertarianism to avoid the most troubling

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<sup>7</sup> There are some choices that may be derivatively free – they are caused deterministically by another choice that is free. I will not address these choices, only those that are initially free.

formulation of the luck argument and the *Mind* argument. I will begin by presenting his analysis of the rollback formulation of the luck argument and point to how his theory escapes this. I will next examine how it shows the avoids the *Mind* argument.

### *Rollback formulation*

Peter van Inwagen presents the rollback formulation of the luck argument (1983: 128-9). He uses the example of Alice, who must choose whether to lie or to tell the truth in the face of a difficult situation. She seriously considers both options, and ultimately tells the truth, though she was also able to tell the lie, as she had contemplated doing. As van Inwagen assumes the ability to do otherwise is incompatible with determinism, Alice could have chosen to lie up until the moment of choice. He then has his reader imagine that God makes the universe rollback to the exact state it was in the moment before she made the choice to be honest, and that we are in a position to watch how the scene progresses in this replay. Because her choice is undetermined, Alice may choose to tell the truth or to lie. Next, van Inwagen has us suppose that God rolls the universe back in this way a thousand times, letting Alice choose over again so many times. He supposes that after seeing 726 replays, Alice chooses to tell the truth in half and to lie in the other half. After having seen this, van Inwagen claims that “we shall be faced with the inescapable impression that what happens in the seven-hundred-and-twenty-seventh replay will be due simply to chance” (van Inwagen 2000: 15). We must conclude that each of the options has an objective probability of 0.5, and thus that what happens in each replay is strictly a matter of chance. There is nothing further to be said, according to van Inwagen, about these options than this ground-floor probability. This is problematic

because if it is a mere matter of chance which Alice chooses to do, then it seems we cannot properly say that she was able to tell the truth or to lie, and having such an ability is necessary for this choice to be free. If the action is a mere matter of luck, then no one can bring it out or prevent it, and it seems it cannot be properly controlled by an agent in the way necessary for freedom. That indeterminism challenges what agents have the ability to do, and thus challenges what agents are free to do, is unique to van Inwagen's version of the luck argument (van Inwagen 2000: 16-7).

This example motivates two claims: (1) an undetermined choice is a matter of luck, and (2) if it is a matter of luck that an event occurred, then no one was able to prevent or bring about that event at that time. van Inwagen defines an event as a matter of chance or luck iff its objective probability of occurring is less than 1. Franklin concedes that if this is what van Inwagen means by chance, then (1) is true.<sup>8</sup> He challenges premise (2), which van Inwagen supports with another example (Franklin 2010: 216).

To support the second claim, van Inwagen imagines a friend of a candidate who knows something about the candidate that could cost him the election were it revealed (van Inwagen 2000: 17). The candidate asks his friend to promise not to reveal this information. But the friend knows that there is an objective, ground-floor probability of 0.43 of him revealing the fact, and a probability of 0.57 that he will remain silent. If the friend believes himself to be capable of remaining silent, it seems he should think of himself as capable of making this promise. However, this does not seem like a promise he can make, because only 57% of a million duplicates of himself would remain silent.

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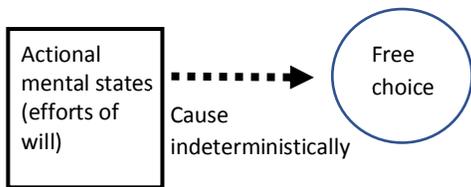
<sup>8</sup> He goes on to challenge van Inwagen's notion of luck, but I will not focus on this here.

To make a promise, van Inwagen claims that the friend need only believe that he can remain silent. But the friend clearly cannot promise to remain silent because he knows there is a good chance that he will not. van Inwagen claims the friend's inability to make this promise is explained by the friend's lacking the ability to remain silent. Because the friend lacks this ability, the friend is not free. van Inwagen takes this argument to either apply to both agent causal and event causal libertarian theories or neither. He takes it to pose a major challenge to libertarians.

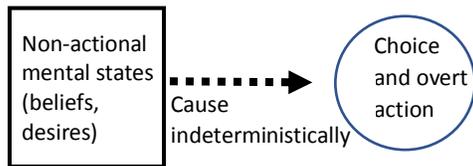
Franklin explains that the argument fails because van Inwagen mistakenly locates indeterminism after choice. The example van Inwagen gives is importantly different than the sort of case in which libertarians imagine an agent to have free will, and this sort of situation is not forced on the libertarians by their requirement of indeterminism. The situation is importantly different because there are objective probabilities that the friend will perform a certain later action, and there is nothing he can presently do to affect these probabilities (Franklin 2010: 217). The friend lacks the ability to do anything that would raise his later probability of keeping silent to 1. Because van Inwagen mistakenly locates indeterminism after choice, the friend cannot affect these probabilities, and thus indeterminism appears to be a threat to freedom. This case makes assumptions about the role and location of indeterminism, which undermine his defense of (2).<sup>9</sup> Thus, premise (2) is not defended with regard to theories that follow Franklin in placing the indeterminism between non-actional mental states and choice (Franklin 2010: 218). I represent this below:

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<sup>9</sup> Franklin argues further that not only is this premise undefended, but there is good reason to think it false. This is because there is no account of abilities that would vindicate van Inwagen's claim about the relationship between chance and ability.



Luck arguments are typically aimed at Kane’s event-causal libertarianism, in which efforts of will cause free choices. The actional mental states which are efficacious here are efforts of will. Meanwhile Franklin alters the picture:



His special case of causation by non-actional mental states has not yet been shown to introduce luck, and thus he escapes this challenge.

### *The Mind argument*

The mind argument, as previously mentioned, cuts out the middleman and argues that indeterminism is directly incompatible with the control necessary to free will and moral responsibility. It depends on two assumptions which have been successfully contested. Though the validity of this rule has been successfully contested, Franklin takes up another line of criticism of the *Mind* argument because it retains an intuitive force (Franklin 2010: 225).

On the foundation of these assumptions, van Inwagen argues that no one has a choice about undetermined events (van Inwagen 1983: 142). He describes a device with a single button connected to both a red light and a green light. It is certain that when the button is pushed, a light will flash. The probability that the red light flashes is less than

1, as is the probability that the green light will flash. van Inwagen claims it is obvious that when you press the button, you have no choice about which light will flash. Because the connection between pressing the button and which light flashes is an indeterministic one, you had no choice about which light flashed when you pressed the button. With this example, van Inwagen supports that no one has a choice about that which is undetermined (van Inwagen 1983: 142).

In the case of the thief who refrains from robbing the parish poor box, a mental state *DB* which favored his refraining, *R*, brought about this action nondeterministically. Because this is a nondeterministic connection, given the past and laws of nature, it is possible that *DB* did not cause *R*. It is possible that some other mental state *DB\** nondeterministically brought about that the thief chose not to refrain, but rather to steal, which I will refer to as *S*. Franklin assumes that the thief has no choice about *DB* and *DB\**, and that no one had a choice about whether *R* follows *DB*, as this is a nondeterministic connection and no one has a choice about undetermined things. One can infer that this means that no one had a choice about *R*.<sup>10</sup> Because these considerations generalize to all agents and undetermined actions, van Inwagen has supported his claim that no one has a choice about an undetermined action.

This can be formally represented like so:

1. *NDB*
2. *N(DB→R)*
- 
3. *NR*.

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<sup>10</sup> The inference rule of the second premise, BETA, has been successfully contested.

*Franklin's Response to the Mind argument*

Franklin thinks this example shows far less than van Inwagen imagines.<sup>11</sup> This example shows that when one performs an action whose consequence comes about nondeterministically, then one does not have a choice about the consequence. One's pushing the button is an action nondeterministically connected to the outcome about which we seem to have no choice. In this illustration, Franklin described the indeterminism as placed after the action. In other words, the effect is indeterministically caused after action (Franklin 2010: 227). Franklin concedes that van Inwagen successfully makes his point regarding those cases in which it is an *action* that brings about an outcome nondeterministically. If the indeterminism is placed after an action, then one does not have a choice about the outcome. In Kane's account, "the indeterminism occurs after action, rather than just prior to or at the moment of action" (Franklin 2010: 227). However, as discussed above, Franklin claims this placement is not necessary for an event-causal libertarian theory.

On Franklin's account, *DB* is a non-actional state. van Inwagen's example only applies to mental actions. Thus, the second premise of his argument,  $N(DB \rightarrow R)$ , has not been fully defended because of the possibility of accounts like Franklin's who imagine the antecedent is a non-actional mental state, rather than an action. In other words, on Franklin's account, the indeterminism is placed between non-actional mental states and actions. Eschewing locative language, the choice is indeterministically caused by non-actional mental states rather than by actions, such as Kane's efforts of will. van

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<sup>11</sup> He also points out that van Inwagen never explains what it means for someone to have a choice about an action.

Inwagen's *Mind* argument fails to show that we would have no choice about a action if it were brought about indeterministically by a non-actional mental state.

Further, Franklin argues that van Inwagen's claim that the thief has no choice about *R* following *DB* is ill-formed (Franklin 2010: 227). On an event-causal theory of action, an agent exercises control over some event *E* when *E* is caused by an agent-involving mental state *E\** in the appropriate way. Exercising control is a relationship between agent-involving mental events and another event. Thus, the thief's exercising control over *R* just is his mental state *DB* bringing it about in the appropriate way. van Inwagen points to the thief's lack of control over whether *DB* follows *R* as a way of questioning whether the thief truly has control. But an agent's having control is constituted by the relationship between a mental event that appropriately involves her and another event, such as the action she performs. Franklin argues that the thief's choice to refrain and his exercising control over his choice to refrain occur simultaneously, as "the thief's having a choice about whether he exercises control over his choice to refrain just is his having a choice about whether he chooses to refrain" (Franklin 2010: 227). Thus our judgement about whether the thief had a choice about *R* following *DB* will be symmetrical to our judgment about whether the thief had a choice about *R*. Because van Inwagen does not show that  $N(DB \rightarrow R)$  with regard to Franklin's account, then we have no reason to deny that the thief had a choice about *R*.

Franklin remarks that van Inwagen's mistakenly assuming that indeterminism is located after the action allows him to argue that indeterminism is incompatible with control. However, when placed, as Franklin proposed, between non-actional mental states and choice and overt action, indeterminism does not diminish control. With these

considerations, Franklin proves that  $\varphi$ 's being indeterministic does not take away the agent's ability to  $\varphi$ . Thus, indeterminism does not undermine the possibility of the thief having the ability to choose to refrain from robbing the poor box, and so he had a choice in this instance. In this way, Franklin shows that the *Mind* argument is unsound in light of this mistaken assumption about the placement of indeterminism in the causal sequence.<sup>12</sup>

### *Enhanced Control*

If one accepts Franklin's relocation of indeterminism, he can defend against the luck and *Mind* arguments' claims that indeterminism is incompatible with the sort of control necessary to free will and moral responsibility (Franklin 2011: 687). But indeterminism alone does not seem to add to the agent's control over her choices. The problem of enhanced control challenges the event-causal libertarian to show how his account provides for more control than the compatibilist account. One who argues this point could concede that indeterminism is neither incompatible with control because of luck nor is it so directly. The challenge to the libertarian is to show why his account provides for more control than that of the compatibilist. Is indeterminism relevant to control? Except for the requirement of indeterminism, an event causal account is acceptable to a compatibilist. Indeterminism is not detrimental to control, but the libertarian has yet to prove that it secures further control. In this way, the problem of

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<sup>12</sup> Franklin has not exactly proven that the premise is false. Rather, the illustrations meant to motivate it do not apply to his theory because they do not address non-actional mental states. This is an escape, but the premise has not yet been shown to be true. It avoids the argument, but perhaps not for long.

enhanced control questions whether the added libertarian requirement of indeterminism adds anything relevant to enhancing control.

To answer this problem, a libertarian can claim either that indeterminism enhances control itself or that it adds some other feature which enhances control. The libertarian must explain how indeterminism does one of these. If one claims that indeterminism introduces some feature that enhances control, this feature must be something which the compatibilists cannot adopt (Franklin 2011: 690).

### *Franklin's Response*

Franklin argues that though indeterminism itself does not enhance control, it provides agents the opportunity to exercise their abilities in more ways than possible in a deterministic world, and this opportunity does enhance control. In this argument, it is important that the indeterminism is required of the relationship between non-actional mental states and choice in order for that choice to be free. With this response to the problem of enhanced control, Franklin motivates premise (3) in my representation his event-causal libertarian schema: if indeterminism of just the right sort characterizes the process that brings about free action, then the agent has the opportunity to exercise the ability. He also introduces considerations which help motivate premise (2), as well, which states that S has the power of self-determination only if S has the ability and the opportunity to exercise the ability.

An agent's control is often identified with agential abilities because analyses of free will often operate solely in terms of an agent's capacities, powers, and abilities. Many understand the agent's capacities and abilities to be the only constituents of the

agent's control. Libertarians often simply layer their requirement of indeterminism over an event causal theory of action. Thus, it seems that this external requirement is not relevant to control, as control is analyzed in terms of capacities, powers, and abilities internal to the agent without regard to her environment.

But Franklin argues that the assumption that an agent's capacities and abilities exhaust her control is mistaken (Franklin 2011: 691). Control is constituted not only by the powers and abilities of the agent, but also by what she has the opportunity to do. Thus, event causal accounts do not simply add indeterminism, but rather they increase the agent's opportunity to do otherwise. In this way, event-causal libertarians enhance the agent's control with their requirement of indeterminism beyond what is available to the compatibilist.

#### *For Control in terms of Opportunity*

Franklin points out that though the will is (or is constituted by) abilities, freedom primarily concerns features of the agent's circumstances, which are external to the agent. Thus, it is necessary that an agent have not only a will, but also the openness to use it in more than one way in order to have free will. On these grounds, Franklin claims that "to have freedom of the will over some action  $\varphi$ , one must not only have the ability to do other than  $\varphi$ , but also the opportunity to do otherwise" (Franklin 2011: 692). On this definition of free will, control is constituted by what an agent has the opportunity to do in addition to what she has the ability to do.

To illustrate this, Franklin offers two examples. In the first, Jones is a strong swimmer and a professional lifeguard (Franklin 2011: 693). One day he spots a boy in

the ocean who appears to be drowning, and so he runs toward the water intending to save him. However, as he is on his way, Smith the malevolent bystander tackles him and pins him down. Because Smith is stronger than Jones, the lifeguard cannot save the boy, despite doing all he could to escape, and the boy drowns.

In his second example, Franklin presents Ann, the world-renowned pianist (Franklin 2011: 694). She is flying on an airplane 35,000 feet in the air. Clearly, her grand piano is not the sort of instrument she can bring with her when she travels. Though she does desire to practice for the upcoming concert, she cannot, because she has no piano.

Franklin claims that Jones has the ability to swim to the boy, and that Ann has the ability to play the piano. This affirmative answer is contentious, but he maintains that the contention arises from a failure to distinguish between the ability and the opportunity to  $\phi$ . His examples are instances of lacking the opportunity to  $\phi$ , rather than the ability. He claims that it does not follow from the fact that one has the ability to  $\phi$  that one has the opportunity to exercise this ability, and that the examples illustrate this point. Abilities are an intrinsic matter, they are relatively stable properties of agents that do not change with changes in the environment, and the agent retains abilities even when she is not exercising them (Franklin 2011: 694). Thus, Ann and Jones still possess their abilities. It is their circumstances that are affecting what they can do.

The role of Smith and the airplane, Franklin argues, can best be accounted for in terms of opportunities. The fact that Ann is on an airplane and that Smith is holding Jones down are obstacles to the agents' exercising his or her ability, and thus these take the opportunity to exercise the ability away from the agents. Opportunity goes beyond

intrinsic features of the agent relevant to ability to include features of the environment (Franklin 2011: 695). Thus, two intrinsically identical agents in worlds with the same laws will have the same abilities. When placed in different environments, two such agents will have different opportunities to exercise their abilities (Franklin 2011: 697).

On the basis of these considerations,<sup>13</sup> Franklin introduces the following semi-stipulative definition of ‘can for free will,’ that covers both opportunities and abilities:

(CFW\*) An agent *S* can  $\varphi$  at *t* in possible world *W* iff (i) *S* has the ability to  $\varphi$  at *t* in *W* and (ii) there is a possible world *W\** in which *S*  $\varphi$ s at *t* and, at the very least, everything except *S*’s  $\varphi$ -ing and the causal consequences of her  $\varphi$ -ing is the same as in *W*.

On this analysis, one has free will over an action when one could have done otherwise, and this requires not only the ability, but also the opportunity to do otherwise. Thus, free will is not simply a matter of properties intrinsic to the agent.

Franklin is clear that it is not indeterminism itself that enhances control, but the opportunity to do otherwise which it provides to agents. Indeterminism is not the only difference between the accounts. Event causal accounts provide agents with the opportunity to do otherwise, and this enhances control. Determinism does not allow for this opportunity to do otherwise than what one actually does, and thus compatibilists cannot provide this opportunity (Franklin 2011: 687). In this way, libertarianism secures enhanced control above what is possible on the determinist picture.

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<sup>13</sup> There are further considerations beyond the scope of this paper which cause him to refine his original (CFW). For these purposes, I start with (CFW\*).

### *The No Opportunity Argument*

Franklin presents the following argument on the basis of (CFW\*) to show that a deterministic agent lacks the opportunity to do otherwise. This argument allows Franklin to claim that indeterminism does allow event-causal libertarian accounts further control than is available to the compatibilist (Franklin 2011: 699).

- (1) An agent *S* in a deterministic possible world *W* can do otherwise at *t* iff (i) *S* has the ability in *W* to do otherwise at *t* and (ii) there is a possible world *W\** in which *S* does otherwise at *t* and, at the very least, everything except *S*'s doing otherwise at *t* and the causal consequences of her doing otherwise is the same as in *W*.
- (2) Given that *W* is deterministic, any world *W\** in which *S* does otherwise at *t* than she does in *W* will differ with respect to the laws or the past.
- (3) if the past differs in *W\** this difference will not consist in or be a causal consequence of *S*'s doing otherwise.
- (4) If the laws differ in *W\** this difference will not consist in or be a causal consequence of *S*'s doing otherwise.  
Therefore,
- (5) There is no world *W\** in which *S* does otherwise at *t* and, at the very least, everything except *S*'s doing otherwise and the causal consequences of *S*'s doing otherwise is the same.  
Therefore,
- (6) *S* cannot do otherwise at *t* in *W*.

The argument is clearly valid. The first premise is motivated by the considerations above. Premise (2) follows from Lewis' definition of determinism.<sup>14</sup> Premises (3) and (4) are weaker than the principle of the fixity of the past and that of the fixity of laws which are often invoked in context of the consequence argument.

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<sup>14</sup> This states that a world *W* is deterministic if and only if for every world *W\** that has the same laws, either *W\** is exactly like *W* at every time or not exactly like *W* at any time. It is from David Lewis, "Counterfactual Dependence and Time's Arrow," *Nous*, 13/4: 466-76, qtd. in *ibid.*, 699. Because of this, if *W* is deterministic, a world *W\** in which *S* can do otherwise "is either exactly like *W* at some time and hence its laws are different" and this allows for *S* to do otherwise, or its laws are the same, and thus it is not exactly like *W* at any time, and the difference in past allows for *S* to do otherwise.

Incompatibilists invoke these as constraints on plausible analyses of ‘can’ without providing an analysis of the term. Rather than enter this abstract realm of debate, Franklin sidesteps this contention. In offering his concrete analysis of what is necessary for the truth of ‘can’ claims, Franklin shows that compatibilism is threatened by even weaker principles than those of the fixity of the past or of laws (Franklin 2011: 700). Premise (5) follows from (2)-(4) and (6) follows from premises (1) and (5).<sup>15</sup>

### *Impact of the No Opportunity Argument*

To analyze control in terms of opportunity, Franklin distinguishes intrinsic and extrinsic features relevant to the agent’s exercising her free will. He admits that the compatibilist does have a level of control, as compatibilist agents can exercise their abilities in the way that they actually do. He argues that indeterminism increases control by increasing the agent’s opportunity to exercise her abilities. He concludes that indeterminism “is relevant to enhancing control because its existence is necessary for agents to possess the freedom to do otherwise” (Franklin 2011: 705).

Thus, Franklin proves that indeterminism enhances control because it furnishes the agent with further opportunities to exercise her abilities. In this way, he answers the challenge of the problem of enhanced control by showing that the libertarian requirement of indeterminism is relevant to enhancing control.

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<sup>15</sup> In responding to this argument, the compatibilist must reject the first premise and argue instead that the sort of accessibility relationship in the refined analysis of opportunity (O\*) is such that it allows for difference in the past or in laws, and that these differences are neither identical to nor a result of actions of the agent. Franklin strengthens his argument with a discussion of Lehrer’s analysis of can, but I will move onward.

### *Reviewing before Advancing*

Thus far, Franklin has added the requirement of indeterminism to the event causal theory of action. Thus, an action is an event caused in the appropriate manner by mental states and events, such as beliefs, desires, and intentions, which involve the agent. Franklin places indeterminism in the moment of action between non-actional mental states and choice. More precisely, he requires the causal relation that obtains between the agent's non-actional mental states and free choice to be nondeterministic (Franklin 2013: 416). This allows his account to avoid the worrisome rollback formulation of the luck argument, and because of it the *Mind* argument has not been properly defended with regard to this placement of indeterminism. Franklin has shown that indeterminism does not undermine the agent's control, and moreover that it is relevant to enhancing control. However, there remains another challenge to the event-causal libertarian view that Franklin must answer. If one stops his account of event-causal libertarianism at this juncture, it would still not provide the sort of control necessary to free will and moral responsibility, as will become clear in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER THREE

### The Agent's Reappearance

In the previous chapter, I began to outline the details of Franklin's account of event-causal libertarianism. My focus was the way his theory responds to challenges regarding the coherency and relevance of indeterminism to event-causal libertarianism. These responses are part of why I consider his theory to be the strongest theory of event-causal libertarianism. In this chapter I turn to his response to the disappearing agent argument.

#### *The Disappearing Agent Argument*

The requirement of indeterminism increases the agent's opportunity to exercise her abilities. However, the requirement of indeterminism leaves open which choice will obtain. This openness is just as problematic (or unproblematic) in regard to control as determinism if nothing about the agent contributes to making the choice on event causal libertarian's theory. This would seem to undermine the agent's ability to be the source of her actions. The event-causal libertarian analyzes the determination of the action in terms of states and events that involve the agent, as opposed to agent-causal views which posit substances that fundamentally or irreducibly cause choice. The disappearing agent argument is based in this reduction of the agent's involvement in making choices to mental states and events. Because the agent's involvement in the production of a decision is limited to mental states and events in which she is involved, it seems that

nothing about the agent contributes to which choice is made. Meghan Griffith explains that the problem “is that the agent is not able to control which decision is made” (2010: 51).

Because the agent does not contribute to making the choice that obtains, it is said that the agent disappears in the moment of choice. In the case of the thief who chooses to refrain from robbing the parish poor box, indeterminism allows that there are two possible options until the moment that he chooses. However, “the thief’s contribution to either decision is exhausted by his possessing the relevant set of desires and beliefs for action” (Pereboom 2007: 102). In this case, the thief only contributes to the production of the decision because he is the locus of antecedent mental states and events that constrain which possibilities are left open by indeterminism.

Franklin represents this argument as follows:

1. On event-causal libertarianism, there is nothing about the agent that settles which decision he makes.
2. If nothing about the agent settles which decision he makes, then the decision he makes is a matter of luck.
3. If the decision the agent makes is a matter of luck, then he is not free with respect to or morally responsible for the decision.  
Therefore,
4. An agent who merely satisfies event-causal libertarianism is neither free with respect to nor morally responsible for any of his decisions. (2013: 414)

The argument is clearly valid. Franklin focuses on denying (1) by showing that there is something about the agent that settles which decision is made. He does so by filling out his account of event-causal libertarianism. In examining the meaning of this premise more closely, it becomes clear that in his presentation of the challenge, Derk Pereboom takes issue with a) the fact that indeterminism leaves open what choice will obtain given the mental states and events of the agent and b) that the agent plays no further causal role

in determining what decision obtains, or as Franklin interprets it, “that the agent’s causal role is *exhausted* by the agent’s antecedent states and events” (Franklin 2013: 426, emphasis original).

Franklin admits that this argument holds in regard to traditional event-causal libertarian theories, as these often simply add indeterminism to a causal theory of action. On this theory of action, the agent disappears because the action is entirely a function of agent-involving mental states and events such as beliefs and desires. The agent does not play any further role in the production of the decision beyond bearing these states and events.

By locating a state that both plays the functional role of the self-determining agent and in doing so counts as the agent’s playing her role, Franklin falsifies Pereboom’s charge in regard to his theory. He enriches the reductive base to which the agent is reduced with a reductive analysis of the functional role of the self-determining agent and therein explains the way in which the agent plays a causal role over and above that of her mental states and events such as her beliefs and desires (Franklin 2013: 426).<sup>1</sup> Below is my representation of this.<sup>2</sup>

1.  $Fr \leftrightarrow P_{sd}$

(An agent S is free if and only if S has the power of self-determination.)

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<sup>1</sup> I will argue that he does not successfully give the agent a further role.

<sup>2</sup> Fr= The agent is free.

$P_{sd}$  = The agent has the power of self-determination.

A = The agent has the ability to self-determine.

O = The agent has the opportunity to exercise the ability to self-determine.

I = Indeterminism of just the right sort characterizes the process that brings about an action.

F = There is a state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent.

C = The mental state counts as agent.

D = The agent has the desire to act for reasons.

$Id_{to}$  = Agent is identified to the state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent.

$Id_w$  = Agent is identified with the state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent

2.  $P_{sd} \leftrightarrow (A \wedge O)$

(S has the power of self-determination if and only if S has the ability and the opportunity to exercise the ability.)

3.  $I \rightarrow O$

(If indeterminism of just the right sort characterizes the process that brings about an action, then the agent has the opportunity to exercise the ability.)

4. I

(Indeterminism of just the right sort characterizes the process that brings about an action.)

Therefore, O

(Therefore, the agent has the opportunity to exercise the ability.)

5.  $A \leftrightarrow (F \wedge C)$

(The agent has the ability to self-determine if and only if there is a mental state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent and that counts as the agent)

6.  $(Id_w \vee Id_{to}) \rightarrow C$

(If the agent is identified with or to the state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent, then the state counts as the agent.)

7.  $Id_w \vee Id_{to}$

(The agent is identified with or to a state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent.)

Therefore, C

(The state counts as the agent.)

8.  $D \rightarrow F$

(If the agent has the desire to act for reasons, then there is a state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent.)

9. D

(The agent has the desire to act for reasons.)

Therefore, F

(There is a state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent.)

Therefore,  $C \wedge F$

(The mental state counts as agent and there is a mental state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent.)

Therefore, A

(The agent has the ability for self-determination.)

Therefore,  $O \wedge A$

(The agent has the ability for self-determination and the opportunity to exercise this ability.)

Therefore,  $P_{sd}$

(The agent has the power of self-determination.)

Therefore, Fr

(The agent is free.)

*How the Event-Causal Account Must be Expanded: The Functional Reduction of the Role of the Self-Determining Agent*

In order to fill out the account and deny premise (1) of the disappearing agent argument, Franklin provides a schema for a reductive analysis of self-determining agent to a mental state, and the identification of the agent with this state. Franklin claims that “a free agent is an agent with the power of self-determination,” and defines the concept of a self-determining agent and its central functions:

Our concept of a self-determining agent is (at minimum) the concept of the agent intervening between his motivations for action and his decision concerning which course of action to pursue. The self-determining agent adjudicates among his rival motivations for action, considering and weighing them, and on the basis of this adjudication selects or chooses a particular course of action. (2013: 417-8)

Self-determination seems integral to our understanding of the sort of control necessary for freedom. With these considerations, Franklin motivates premise (1) of his schema: An agent S is free if and only if S has the power of self-determination. Taking into account Franklin’s earlier considerations, this power should be analyzed in terms of both ability and opportunity, and thus we have premise (2).

Franklin emphasizes that there is more to the self-determining agent than simply that she causes events by her beliefs and desires. Because event-causal libertarians seek to give a reductive analysis of free will, they must also include a reductive analysis of the power of self-determination. The self-determining agent is a functional concept, and thus Franklin takes a functional reduction to be a promising approach. A functional reduction is a certain model that “describe[s] reduction as consisting of a relation between a functional property *P* and a structural or substrate property *P\** that plays the role determined by the functional property *P*.” As the self-determining agent is a functional

concept, its “nature, essence or significance is fully captured by a description of the role it plays within a system” (van Riel and van Gulik 2016).

He attempts to reduce the activity of the self-determining agent, that is, the role the agent plays in self-determination, to a state or event<sup>3</sup> that plays this functional role. Franklin therefore calls for event-causal libertarians to “enrich their account of the causal etiology of free action” so that it includes this state or event to which the functional role of the self-determining agent is reduced (Franklin 2013: 418). The event causal libertarian etiology of free action would then include a state or event that plays the role of the self-determining agent. With this, Franklin motivates part of premise (5), namely, if an agent has the ability to self-determine, then there is a mental state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent. The next section makes clear why this function alone is not sufficient for an agent’s having the ability to self-determine.

#### *The Functional Reduction of the Role of the Self-Determining Agent: Issues and Possible Approaches*

Franklin recognizes that simply reducing the functional role of the self-determining agent to a state or event could be problematic. The state or event must be one that “not only plays [the agent’s] functional role, but that in so doing *counts as his* playing his functional role” (Franklin 2013: 418). There is a similar competition in the case of Jaegwon Kim’s causal exclusion argument. Under certain basic assumptions about the physical world, for every effect that is supposed to have a mental cause, that effect has a physical cause. It seems that the mental and the physical are thus in

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<sup>3</sup> He recognizes that a set of states or events will also suffice, as this could be multiply realizable. For the sake of grammatical simplicity, I will write as though there is just one such state.

competition. Given that the mental supervenes on the physical, this dependence means that physical causes exclude would-be mental causes. Franklin claims that the physical competes with the mental when (i) the physical plays the functional role of the mental, (ii) the mental and physical are not identical in type or token, and (iii) the mental and physical do not stand in the right sort of intimate relation (Franklin 2013: 420).

Applied to the situation at hand, something that plays the functional role of the self-determining agent does not on this basis count as the agent playing this role. The event-causal reduction risks mental states usurping the role of the agent by causally excluding it in the same way that physical causes exclude would-be mental causes. Thus, a state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent is not sufficient for the agent's having the ability to self-determine.

Franklin outlines responses to causal exclusion and describes analogues which can be applied to the competition at hand. Regarding the causal exclusion argument, some philosophers attempt to remedy the apparent competition by means of identity solutions.<sup>4</sup> This approach claims that the mental and the physical do not compete because they are the same – “the mental just is the physical” (Franklin 2013: 419). Because they are not two distinct causes, they are not in competition. Others propose inheritance solutions, claiming that mental properties inherit the causal powers of their physical realizers because they are so intimately related. Central to this is that the mental property M, though not identical to physical property P, stands in such an intimate relation to it that “M inherits the causal powers of P, and so P's causing something *counts* as M's

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<sup>4</sup> Franklin here follows Heil in citing possible responses to the problem. Autonomy solutions are unhelpful to the event-causal libertarian who hopes to reduce the role of the agent to mental states, as this would give each a separate role in an attempt to remove competition.

causing that thing” (Franklin 2013: 419). Similarly, Franklin remarks that we seek “a state that does not compete with the self-determining agent, but rather, in some way, amounts to his playing his role” (Franklin 2013: 419). If an agent has the ability to self-determine, it must have a state that not only fulfills its functional role of self-determination, but also counts as the agent’s fulfilling this role. This motivates one part of the bi-conditional in premise (5), namely: if an agent has the ability to self-determine, then there is a mental state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent and that counts as the agent.

Franklin claims that if one finds a state that both fulfills this functional role and counts as the agent’s doing so, then one can dismantle the disappearing agent argument (Franklin 2013: 413). Though this argument did apply to previous event-causal libertarian theories, Franklin’s account avoids it. The disappearing agent argument challenges whether the agent has the ability to self-determine. Franklin claims this is dismantled by a theory which accounts for a state which both fulfills the agent’s functional role of self-determination and counts as the agent’s doing so. Thus, Franklin motivates premise (5) of my representation of his schema: if there is a mental state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent and that counts as the agent, then the agent has the ability to self-determine.

#### *Analogous Solutions: Identity Reduction and Identification Reduction*

Event-causal libertarians can take similar approaches to the competition between the mental state which plays the agent’s self-determining role and the agent’s playing this functional role. Both of these responses aim at establishing some intimate connection

between the agent and the state which fulfills the functional role of self-determination such that the state may 'count as' the agent's fulfilling this role, rather than usurping the agent's self-determining.

Franklin terms those who prefer an approach analogous to the identity solution 'identity reductionists.' Such event-causal libertarians will claim that the agent simply is her mental states and events, or some set of these. Thus, the states which play her functional role count as her playing her role because she is identical to these states.

One could also pursue an approach analogous to the inheritance solutions. Franklin calls those who take such an approach 'identification reductionists.' This view would claim that though "agents are not identical to any (collection of) mental states or events, they are identified with some of these states or events" (Franklin 2013: 419). The state or event with which the agent is identified "has the authority to speak for the agent" because the agent is identified with it. Furthermore, "because the state has authority for the agent, its playing the self-determining agent's functional role counts as his playing his functional role" (Franklin 2013: 419). On this view, because agents bear such an intimate relation to mental states or events, the agents play a causal role because these states or events play a causal role. The agent is identified with mental states or events in order to solve the problem of competition, whereas the identity reductionist identifies the agent to mental states or events for the same end. The identification reductionist has the advantageous ability to sidestep debates about the nature of the self. Whatever an agent really is, its role of self-determination in the production of the decision is played by those states and events with which the agent is identified. An event-causal libertarian could follow either an identity reductionist account or an identity reductionist account in order

to find this state that counts as the self-determining agent in fulfilling the agent's function (Franklin 2013: 420-1). Thus, Franklin motivates premise (6) in my representation of his schema for event causal libertarians: If the agent is identified with the state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent or the agent is identified to the state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent, then this state counts as the agent.

Identification reductionists identify the agent with a state that plays the functional role of the self-determining agent. There are many different theories as to what this state is and in what way the agent is identified with it. Franklin points out that these identification reduction accounts of self-determination share the assumption "that exercises of the power of self-determination are essentially tied to a certain kind or range of motivation" (Franklin 2013: 420). Thus, these accounts will identify the agent with some state that is this certain kind or range of motivation. Because this motivation is essentially tied to exercises of the power of self-determining agent, it can fulfill the function of the self-determining agent. The agent is then identified with this state in such a way that it has the authority to speak for the agent. Theorists greatly diverge in their methods of filling out what constitutes this motivation. The event-causal theorists' views of the nature of motivation will affect which identification theory he prefers (Franklin 2013: 420).

The event-causal libertarian view is not dependent on the specifics of any one of these accounts. It does not require a particular view of what constitutes the motivation to which exercises of the power of self-determination are essentially tied.<sup>5</sup> Rather, the event-

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<sup>5</sup> Because of this, theorist can motivate many different disjuncts in premise (8) of my representation of Franklin's event-causal libertarian schema.

causal libertarian only needs to locate a state to which he can reduce the functional role of the self-determining agent, and give either an identity reductionist or an identification reductionist account of how this state counts as the agent's playing her role, rather than undermining this.

*The Functional Reduction of the Role of the Self-Determining Agent: Franklin's Account*

Franklin adopts the identification reductionist view as a working hypothesis in order to flesh out this position's treatment of identification and to show the dynamics of integrating this into one's event-causal libertarianism. He uses Velleman's account of the role of the self-determining agent to do so (Franklin 2013: 420). Velleman identifies the agent with her desire to act for what she perceives to be the strongest reasons. The functional role of the self-determining agent is to adjudicate between varying motivations and to select a course of action on that basis. The agent's desire to act for the strongest reasons is what drives the agent to consider the relative strength of her varying reasons. Once the agent selects a certain reason as the strongest, the agent's desire to act on the strongest reasons acts as an added motivation to act on this reason, which reinforces the influence of her desire to act on the strongest reasons. Thus, the agent's action is motivated not only by whatever her original reasons were for choosing this action, but also by her "desire to act on the original motive because of its superior rational force" (Franklin 2013: 421). The desire to act for the strongest reasons thus contributes to the behavior of the agent in such a way that it perform the function of the self-determining agent, and "it is therefore, functionally speaking, the agent's contribution to the causal order" (Franklin 2013: 421).

Thus, Franklin motivates premise (8): If the agent has the desire to act for the best reasons, then there is a state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent. He also claims that agents have such a state, and so he also motivates premise (9): the agent has the desire to act for reasons. He recognizes that event-causal libertarians need not accept that this desire is essential to the agent's power of self-determination. Rather, one could take this role of the agent to be multiply realizable, and thus recognize this desire as a sufficient condition for an agent's performing a self-determined action, but not necessary to it.

This desire to act for reasons not only performs the self-determining agent's functional role, but it also counts as the agent's playing this role. It can count as such because the agent is essentially identified with this desire to act for the strongest reasons. Because a self-determining agent's role is to select a course on the basis of its adjudicating between rival motivations, "to dissociate oneself from this state requires that one cease to guide one's life by reason." Though it is not inherent to the concept of the self-determining agent that he guide himself by reason, Franklin makes the further claim that "to cease to guide one's life by reason is to cease to be a self-determining agent" (Franklin 2013: 422). Because this desire is constitutive of self-determining agency, the self-determining agent can be essentially identified with it.

This desire fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent, and Franklin identifies the agent with it. In this way, Franklin identifies the agent with the mental state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent. With this, Franklin fulfills one of the disjuncts of premise (6). The agent is now identified with a state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent, and thus we have a state that counts as

the agent's fulfilling this role. At this point, Franklin has motivated all of the premises in my representation of his schema and his filling it out. He has an argument that this agent is free.

*Applied to the Thief*

Franklin applies his fleshed-out theory to the case of the thief (2013: 426). The following events would make his choice to refrain from robbing the parish poor box a self-determined one. Through his deliberations, the thief concludes that his desire to refrain provides the strongest reason for action. Whatever motivations and desires the thief had coming into this process that favored refraining will be supplemented by his desire to act for the reasons, because he takes the reasons for refraining to be the strongest. In this way, the desire to act for the strongest reasons "introduces a new causal influence" (Franklin 2013: 423). In this supplementation, the thief plays an additional causal role over and above that of his desires and beliefs. This supplementation of his preexisting motivations for favoring refraining because of his desire to act for the strongest belief "amounts to the thief 'throwing his weight' behind the desires and beliefs" that favored his choice to refrain. The "additional participation of the agent... transforms mere action into self-determined action" (Franklin 2013: 423).

To summarize, the thief's desire to act for what he takes to be the strongest reasons reinforces his desires and reasons for favoring refraining because he takes refraining to be the rationally superior course of action. This reinforcing or supplementing amounts to the thief's throwing his weight behind these reasons and desires, and in this, the thief plays an additional causal role beyond that of his desires and

beliefs for action. This is what makes the thief's refraining a self-determined action, rather than a mere action. The thief thus has the power of self-determination, and is free.

*How this dismantles the Disappearing Agent Argument*

Franklin now takes himself to have enough of a schema of event-causal libertarianism that he can dismantle the disappearing agent argument. Recall the premise Franklin aims to prove false:

- (1) On event-causal libertarianism, there is nothing about the agent that settles which decision he makes.

On Franklin's account, it is false that the agent's causal contribution to the decision she makes is exhausted her specific desires and beliefs. The agent plays a causal role over and above that of her antecedent mental states and events because she is identified with a state which fills her functional role of self-determining and counts as her performing this role, rather than competing with or excluding her doing so. The agent is either identified with or to this state, depending on how one fills out his schema. Franklin fills out the identification reductionist approach, identifying the agent with a mental state, namely, with Velleman's proposed desire to act for the strongest reasons. On this account, the agent adds a further causal influence in virtue of this desire to act for the strongest reasons, and this desire supplements the motivational force of antecedent beliefs and desires which favored the action. In this way, the agent plays a causal role over and above that of her antecedent mental states and events (Franklin 2013: 423).

With his theory, Franklin denies premise (1) by allowing for the agent to be robustly present during the moment of self-determined action and to make a contribution

by way of her desire to act in accordance with the strongest reasons, which reinforces those desires and beliefs that favor the decision she makes. Franklin takes himself to preserve the role of the agent in the moment of decision by his reduction of the functional role of the self-determining agent in action to a state which plays this functional role and with which the agent is identified. If one accepts that his theory accomplishes what it sets out to do, then premise (1) is false when the charge is brought against his theory.

### *Weakly Free Action*

Franklin claims that “although freedom requires the *power* of self-determination, it does not necessarily require its *exercise*” (Franklin 2013: 423). An action does not have to be self-determined to be free. This is because Franklin analyzes power in terms of both ability and opportunity. Recall his analysis of ‘can’ for free will presented in the previous chapter:

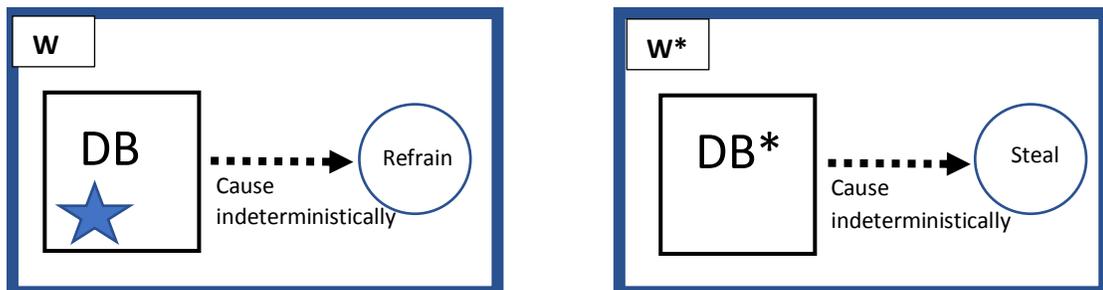
(CFW\*) An agent S can  $\varphi$  at t in possible world W iff (i) S has the ability to  $\varphi$  at t in W and (ii) there is a possible world W\* in which S  $\varphi$ s at t and, at the very least, everything except S’s  $\varphi$ -ing and the causal consequences of her  $\varphi$ -ing is the same as in W. (2011: 698)

Weakly free actions are free because the agent has the ability to choose self-determinedly and the opportunity to exercise that power, but does not exercise it.

Franklin introduces weakly free action by way of an example. The thief, as above, realizes that refraining from stealing is the rationally superior option. Thus, the motivation with which Franklin identifies the agent is present in the set of non-actional mental states which favors his refraining, *DB*. Above, our thief acts on this realization and refrains from stealing. When he refrains, the set of mental states which favors his

refraining is causally efficacious, and that other set of states  $DB^*$  which favors his stealing is not causally efficacious.

But suppose it is possible that the thief acts against his better judgement. If he proceeds to steal after recognizing that refraining is the rationally superior option, “He would not act self-determinedly because there would be no attitude among the causes of his deciding to steal both that he is identified with and [that] plays his functional role” (Franklin 2013: 423). As represented below, the state with which the agent is identified is symbolized by a star. It is a non-actional mental state among others in the set which favors refraining. Above, the thief refrains, and thus  $W$  is the actual world. When acting weakly, the thief steals despite his better judgement, and thus in the case of weakly free action,  $W^*$  is actual.



Franklin claims that this action is free, though only weakly so. This is because freedom only requires the power of self-determination, not its exercise. The thief has the power to self-determinedly choose because,

...he *could* have acted self-determinedly: he could have decided to refrain, and had he made this alternative decision there would have been a state among the causal antecedents of his decision that played his functional role with which he was identified. (2013: 423)

The power of self-determination requires that the agent has the ability and opportunity to self-determine. The thief has both the ability and opportunity to self-determine because

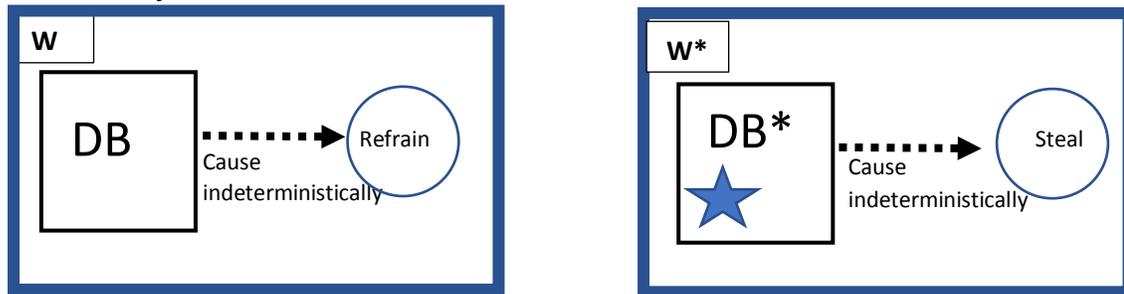
the thief could have made the self-determined choice to refrain. In *W*, thief is identified with a mental state that plays the functional role of the self-determining agent. Because in this world the state fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent and counts as the agent's doing so, the thief can be said to have the ability to self-determinedly choose. The presence of indeterminism means that this possible world is accessible to the agent. Thus it was open to the thief to self-determinedly choose to refrain in this moment instead of weakly choosing to steal. Thus, the thief has the opportunity and ability to self-determine, and so he has the power of self-determination. In choosing to steal despite his better judgement, he can freely choose without choosing self-determinedly, that is, without exercising his power of self-determination in his choice.

It is important to note that it was possible for the thief to exercise his power of self-determination in choosing to steal. He could have decided that the set of non-actional mental states which favored his stealing, *DB\**, was rationally superior. If this were the case, the state with which he is identified, namely the desire to act for reasons, would have been causally efficacious in his decision to steal.<sup>6</sup> In this scenario, the thief has made a different judgement which results in his being identified with a state in *DB\** instead of one in *DB*. Thus, when he acts on the considerations in *DB\**, there is a state among these with which he can be identified. He has exercised his power of self-

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<sup>6</sup> Franklin never actually says this, but a careful reading of the third paragraph on page 423 reveals that the case Franklin presents includes certain constraints, which I present in the following paragraph. Moreover, if this is not the case, it would amount to a major weakness in the theory. If the thief could not self-determinedly choose to steal, Franklin could still claim that the thief is free because he had the ability and opportunity to self-determinedly choose to refrain from stealing. However, this would mean that the thief can only exercise his power to self-determine when he chooses to refrain. He would have no ability to steal self-determinedly. There would only be one course of action in which self-determination is possible. The agent could not judge stealing to be the rationally superior course of action. This would amount to a major weakness in the account, and so I take the constraints under which Franklin presents the thief's action to have the temporal implications described below.

determination by self-determinedly choosing to steal. When he chooses to steal, this is not a weakly free choice.



Franklin greatly constrains which cases count as weakly free action – only *after* one has already recognized *DB* as the rationally superior option does acting on *DB\** become a weakly free action. In cases of weakly free action, the thief does not change his mind and decide stealing is a better idea. Rather, he decides to act against his better judgement. Thus, though the thief “throws his weight” behind *DB*, he acts on *DB\**. This constrains the cases of weakly free action to those in which the thief has already judged one set of reasons, beliefs, desires, etc, as rationally superior, and then performs an action that is caused by a different set of mental states.<sup>7</sup> Franklin recognizes that the possibility of such action amounts to an asymmetry in his account, but he does not take it to cause problems for the event-causal libertarian (2013: 424).

### *Refinements in light of weakly free action*

This draws out a point of Franklin’s theory: the agent is identified with a state that is present in only one of the sets of mental states *DB*. As quoted above, had the thief (counterfactually) gone with his better judgement and refrained, “there would have been

<sup>7</sup> I doubt whether one could really perform a weakly free action because it seems to me that persons always act for what they take to be the best reasons. I nonetheless explain this case because it brings to light aspects of how Franklin imagines self-determination working that are not addressed elsewhere.

a state among the causal antecedents of his decision that played his functional role with which he was identified” (Franklin 2013: 423). But as it is, the thief chooses to steal. His “motivational force in the form of his desire to act for what he takes to be the best reasons” still “introduces a new causal influence” which supplements the desires and beliefs that favor his refraining (Franklin 2013: 423). However, the set of beliefs and desires that the thief reaffirms in this way is not causally efficacious. Thus, the thief does not “play a causal role over and above the causal role played by his desires and beliefs for action,” but he could have because he could have refrained from stealing (Franklin 2013: 420). Once the thief has made a judgement about which *DB* is rationally superior, he can be identified with a state within that set of desires, beliefs, and reasons.

Franklin does not speak to the temporal aspect of this sequence of events. It seems that if the thief is to have the opportunity and ability both to self-determinedly steal and to self-determinedly refrain, there must be some time before he has made a judgement about which option is rationally superior. At this time, his desire to act for the best reasons is present in all potentially efficacious mental states. However, he has not yet made a judgement about which of these sets has the best reasons. Without this judgment, it remains possible that the thief will self-determinedly choose to steal or to refrain. At this point, it seems that we cannot identify him with a state in either set of mental states. Though his desire to choose for the best reasons is presumably present in both, he has not yet made a judgement about what are the best reasons. Franklin does not address *when* we may identify the agent with his desire to act for the best reasons, nor does he make mention of whether a belief about which reasons are reasons is required for us to identify the agent with a state in one of these sets. Perhaps I overstep my

interpretational liberty in this timeline, but it seems to accord with how Franklin describes the thief making a self-determined choice:

“Let us suppose that on the basis of his deliberation [the thief] comes to view his desire to refrain as providing the strongest reason for action. In this case, the motivational force of the thief’s desires and beliefs that favor refraining *will be* supplemented with the thief’s own motivational force in the form of his desire to act for what he takes to be the best reasons and, in this way, the desire *introduces a new causal influence.*” (Franklin 2013: 423)

The thief could hardly be taken to view something on the basis of deliberation before he has deliberated. The desire to act for the best reasons supplements his set of desires and beliefs that favor refraining, and this introduces a new causal influence.<sup>8</sup> The former set of beliefs and desires is supplemented, the thief throws his weight behind the set of desires and beliefs he has recognized as rationally superior. If the event-causal libertarian prefers to identify the agent with another state, only after the agent has recognized that *DB* as in accordance with the relevant motivation or range of motivations can the agent be identified with that state in *DB*.

Thus the process of making a free choice goes like so: The agent first deliberates, then finds *DB* to be in accordance with her motivation that plays the functional role of the self-determining agent. The agent can then be identified with this motivation in *DB*. The agent can then perform an action that is not in accord with this motivation, and such an action would be weakly free. Alternatively, the agent can perform an action on the basis of that set of beliefs and desires that contains the state with which she is identified. This

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<sup>8</sup> One could take this causal influence is ‘new’ in the sense that it has not been considered by previous theories, and then this interpretation would hinge on only two words – ‘will be.’ Though the phrasing could be taken in this way, it is a problematic interpretation. If we can identify the thief with a course of action before he has deliberated about which course of action is best, this would undermine his adjudicating and selecting among rival motivations. If there is one state within one *DB* with which we can identify the agent before he has deliberated, there would only be one course of action that is not weakly free. I harp on this point because I later take issue with Franklin’s self-determining agent.

state would fulfill her functional role as a self-determining agent and count as her doing so. The relationship between the non-actional mental states in any *DB* and the choice and overt action they effect is nondeterministic.

### *Conclusion*

I take Franklin's event-causal libertarianism to be the best account of its kind, both because it avoids issues with indeterminism and because it addresses the role of the self-determining agent. Franklin's account is unique in that it restricts the causal antecedents of free choice to non-actional mental states. This allows his theory to avoid the luck and *Mind* arguments, which challenge the coherency of control on an account which requires indeterministic causation of free choices. Franklin's analysis of control in terms of abilities and opportunities answers the problem of enhanced control, giving agents further control in terms of opportunity that is unavailable on a deterministic picture. More importantly, Franklin addresses the sense in which the agent has the ability to make free choices via his examination of the function of self-determination. He points to ways in which the agent may fulfill this important role through her states or by being her states in his explication of identification reduction and identity reduction. These aspects of his theory allow him to respond to questions of the coherency of indeterminism that come in the form luck and *Mind* arguments, the question of the relevance of indeterminism posed in the problem of enhanced control, and account for the role of the agent in response to the disappearing agent argument. In what follows, I argue that his account does not fully respond to these issues, and thus I argue that the best of event-causal accounts of libertarianism does not fully account for free agents.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Argument

In the last chapter, I presented Franklin's account of event-causal libertarianism. I have recounted how he defends his position against major challenges often brought against it. I have explained and motivated Franklin's argument that his event-causal account provides for free will. In this chapter, I will dispute the truth of premises (5) and (6). Against (5), argue that playing the role of the self-determining agent requires action, and thus that the role cannot be fulfilled by a non-actional mental state. Against (6), I argue that the lack of clarity in the identification reductionist disjunct makes it unclear whether this position successfully allows the state to play the role of the agent. Further, I argue that the identity reductionist position is still plagued by the problem of the disappearing agent, and thus further argumentation would be required to escape the problem. Lastly, I make a case that an agent could fulfill Franklin's criteria for freedom while subject to manipulation.

Recall that the argument is as follows:<sup>1</sup>

1.  $Fr \leftrightarrow P_{sd}$

(An agent S is free if and only if S has the power of self-determination.)

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<sup>1</sup> Fr = The agent is free.

$P_{sd}$  = The agent has the power of self-determination.

A = The agent has the ability to self-determine.

O = The agent has the opportunity to exercise the ability to self-determine.

I = Indeterminism is true.

F = There is a state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent.

C = The mental state (that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent) counts as agent.

D = The agent has the desire to act for reasons.

$Id_{to}$  = Agent is identified to the state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent.

$Id_w$  = Agent is identified with the state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent.

2.  $P_{sd} \leftrightarrow (A \wedge O)$

(S has the power of self-determination if and only if S has the ability and the opportunity to exercise the ability.)

3.  $I \rightarrow O$

(If indeterminism of just the right sort characterizes the process that brings about an action, then the agent has the opportunity to exercise the ability.)

4. I

(Indeterminism of just the right sort characterizes the process that brings about an action.)

Therefore, O

(Therefore, the agent has the opportunity to exercise the ability.)

5.  $A \leftrightarrow (F \wedge C)$

(The agent has the ability to self-determine if and only if there is a mental state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent and that counts as the agent)

6.  $(Id_w \vee Id_{to}) \rightarrow C$

(If the agent is identified with or to the state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent, then the state counts as the agent.)

7.  $Id_w \vee Id_{to}$

(The agent is identified with or to a state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent.)

Therefore, C

(The state counts as the agent.)

8.  $D \rightarrow F$

(If the agent has the desire to act for reasons, then there is a state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent.)

9. D

(The agent has the desire to act for reasons.)

Therefore, F

(There is a state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent.)

Therefore,  $C \wedge F$

(The mental state counts as agent and there is a mental state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent.)

Therefore, A

(The agent has the ability for self-determination.)

Therefore,  $O \wedge A$

(The agent has the ability for self-determination and the opportunity to exercise this ability.)

Therefore,  $P_{sd}$

(The agent has the power of self-determination.)

Therefore, Fr

(The agent is free.)

*Functional Role of the Self-Determining Agent: Issues in Fulfilling the Role with a State*

Franklin reduces the functional the self-determining agent to a state which fulfills this role and counts as the agent's doing so. In this section, I will deal only with the state's fulfilling this role. In arguing that a non-actional mental state cannot fulfill the agent's functional role in self-determination, I deny the consequent of premise (8):

8.  $D \rightarrow F$

(If the agent has the desire to act for reasons, then there is a state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent.)

One could take the antecedent to be some other state, such as one's greatest loves, or even take it to be multiply realizable. If it is true that no non-actional mental state can fulfill the function of the self-determining agent, this problematizes whatever state one chooses for one's antecedent. If one attempts to avoid my argument by claiming an actional mental state fulfills this role, one must deal with the luck and *Mind* arguments which Franklin avoided via his requirement that the causal antecedents of free choice be non-actional.<sup>2</sup>

In the next section, I will take issue with the sense in which this state counts as the agent. Presently, I challenge whether a non-actional mental state can fulfill the functional role of the self-determining agent. I argue that playing this role requires action, and thus it seems an actional mental state cannot fulfill this function.

Franklin's theory only allows non-actional mental states to cause choice. By excluding mental actions as causes of choice, the theory avoids the more troubling formulations of the luck and *Mind* arguments. In comparing his own to Kane's theory, on which actions (namely, efforts of will) indeterministically cause choices, Franklin

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<sup>2</sup> I have Dr. Pruss to thank for helping work out the proper logic here.

remarks that on his theory, “unlike Kane’s theory, it is not true that we do everything we can and are then forced to wait and see how indeterminism resolves itself.” Rather, on Franklin’s theory, “everything we do *not* do leaves open what we will do” (2010: 214-5). Franklin claims the causes of free action are non-actional mental states – what we do not do – as opposed to mental actions such as efforts. Non-actional mental states are invoked to exclude actions as indeterministically causing free choice. Franklin never positively defines non-actional mental states, rather, he presents them as mental states which exclude action. This mental state must be a non-actional one if it is to avoid the luck and *Mind* arguments in the manner outlined in Chapter 2. Thus Franklin only allows non-actional mental states to cause free action, and they may only do so nondeterministically. To reintroduce mental actions as causes of free action would be to reintroduce the luck and *Mind* arguments and the challenges these pose to event-causal libertarian theories.

Franklin is committed to the claim that the state which plays the agent’s role in self-determination is a non-actional one. This is because free choices are at times caused by self-determination, and only non-actional states cause free choice. So, the state which plays the agent’s role of self-determination must be a non-actional one.

Recall Franklin’s characterization of the functional role of the self-determining agent:

Our concept of a self-determining agent is (at minimum) the concept of the agent intervening between his motivations for action and his decision concerning which course of action to pursue. The self-determining agent adjudicates among his rival motivations for action, considering and weighing them, and on the basis of this adjudication selects or chooses a particular course of action. These are the central functions of the self-determining agent.

He later adds that “this process consists of determining which motivations present the strongest reasons for acting and then deciding to act for those reasons” (Franklin 2010: 422).

The agent must perform certain actions in order to play her role – here, the central functions involve intervening, adjudicating, considering, weighing, selecting, determining, deciding. This role is described in terms of these actions. The process consists in certain actions. Yet, in functionally reducing this role to a state, Franklin claims the role of the self-determining agent is fulfilled by a non-actional mental state (or by a set of such states). As outlined above, Franklin requires that the cause of free action is a non-actional mental state rather than an action. Yet, he describe this non-actional state as fulfilling its role by performing certain actions:

The motivational force of the thief’s desires and beliefs that favor refraining will be supplemented with the thief’s own motivational force in the form of his desire to act for what he takes to be the best reasons and, in this way, the desire introduces a new causal influence. The thief plays a causal role *over and above* the causal role played by his desires and beliefs for action, and this supplementation amounts to his “throwing his weight” behind the desires and beliefs that led to action. It is this additional participation that transforms mere action into self-determined action. (2013: 423)

It is unclear in what sense a *non-actional* mental state can ‘throw its weight’ behind one of these possible courses of action, or otherwise introduce a causal influence.

There may be no appropriate analogy, but I imagine a scale that automatically adds weight to the side that is heavier. Once the merits of each *DB* are weighed, the weight of that which is heavier is increased by some percent. Such a scale seems to mimic the agent’s automatic supplementation of that set of considerations that she takes to be rationally superior. However, weighing is an action. The agent must perform this

action in order to fill the role. A non-actional mental state would need to determine the value of each *DB* without actively weighing them.

Perhaps instead of a scale weighing, the adjudication of self-determination is like a formula. It seems a formula does not perform an action in order to reach an answer. We could understand Franklin as identifying the agent with the formula. This interpretation is sensible, because the formula fulfills the function of self-determination, and Franklin identifies the agent with or to the state that fulfills this role. The formula could be a better analogy of how a non-actional state could fulfill the role of adjudicating without action. A formula-like state could adjudicate between rival options and supplement that which is rationally superior.<sup>3</sup> But there remains the question of how a formula assigns values to beliefs and desires. We could propose that another state fulfills this role, and that we identify the agent with or to a set that includes both of these states. But the state that determines the value of each *DB* must still be a non-actional state. It must deliberate about its reasons and beliefs and assign values while remaining a non-actional state as opposed to an action.<sup>4</sup> Again, in examining what it takes to fulfill the function of the self-determining agent, we find that this role requires action.

The agent must also select which course of action will obtain. The course of action is not selected *by* this process of deliberation, but *on the basis* of it, and thus this ‘selecting’ cannot be an automatic result of the formula. This is made clear by cases of

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<sup>3</sup> One could also challenge whether we can have such “formula-like” mental states. Some theories may not allow mental states to do what the formula does here. Making any claim either way seems to require a deeper theory about mental states than I can address here.

<sup>4</sup> I have found a similar point against functional reductionism about mental properties more generally in Gulick, Robert Van, “Functionalism,” in *Oxford Handbook to Philosophy of Mind*, edited by Brian P. McLaughlin, Ansgar Beckermann, and Sven Walter. Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 133.

weakly free action, in which the agent realizes that one *DB* is rationally superior yet he decides to act on another.

In order to play the role of self-determination, the state must fulfill the role of the agent in perceiving the superiority of different *DBs*, calculating which set of mental states she takes to be the best reasons, and selecting a course of action on the basis of or in spite of this judgment. I do not see a way to get around the fact fulfilling these functions requires action. Thus I claim action is required to fulfill the role of the self-determining agent. The role of self-determination involves deliberating about which option is best and selecting one on the basis of this deliberation, but both this deliberation and selection require action. Franklin allows only non-actional mental states as causes of choice as opposed to actions. Thus, a non-actional mental state cannot fulfill the role of the self-determining agent.

In response, I doubt Franklin would advocate a return to actions as causes, given that some versions of the luck argument and the *Mind* argument remain in such cases. When the choice is caused by an action, Franklin admits that the presence of indeterminism seems to undermine control. Thus, one could again accuse his theory of mistaking a sufficient condition on the absence of free will for a necessary condition to its presence. Instead of reopening these issues, it seems a better option to attempt to give an explanation of how a non-actional mental state can fulfill a role that requires performing action. However, this does not seem to be an easy task, and it is only complicated by the further requirement that this state ‘speak for’ the agent while it plays this role.

*Functional Role of the Self-Determining Agent: Issues with ‘Counting’ States*

In this section, I take issue with premise (6) of my representation of Franklin’s schema. Recall that this premise states that if the agent is identified with the state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent or the agent is identified to the state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent, then the state counts as the agent. I begin by addressing the identification reductionist disjunct, and then move to the identity reductionist. The identification reductionist position leaves much terminology undefined. Until it is clearer how this reduction would work, it does not seem to be a viable position. Moreover, it is presented as an analogue to inheritance solutions to causal exclusion. The analogy does not help us clarify terminology. Because inheritance solutions do not obviously solve causal exclusion, it is unclear how we are to follow the same strategy in identification reduction.

Recall that Franklin uses Kim’s causal exclusion argument to introduce the possibility that states which fulfill the role of self-determining agent could exclude the agent’s playing this functional role. That the state plays the role of the self-determining agent does not mean that it “counts as the *agent’s* playing his functional role” (Franklin 2013: 419). He describes what we are seeking as a state that “does not compete with the self-determining agent’s playing his role, but rather, *in some way, amounts to* his playing his role” (Franklin 2013: 419).

Franklin’s account lacks clarity regarding what it means for a state to count as an agent. He calls the step in which the state is shown to count as the agent a “second conceptual enrichment” of the event-causal theory of free will (Franklin 2013: 418). The event-causal libertarian needs this further enrichment in order to answer the disappearing

agent argument (Franklin 2013: 413). That is, one must solve the competition between the agent's and her states' fulfilling the function of self-determination in order to avoid the disappearing agent argument.

I represent the necessity of this conceptual enrichment in premise (5), which states: The agent has the ability to self-determine if and only if there is a mental state that fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent and that state counts as the agent. Franklin takes a state that both fulfills this role and counts as the agent's doing so to be both sufficient and necessary for the agent's having the ability to self-determine. If this premise is true on one's theory of event-causal libertarianism, his theory avoids the disappearing agent argument. Further, I represent in premise (6) Franklin's claim that either identifying the agent to a state that fulfills the function or identifying the agent with such a state is sufficient for this second conceptual enrichment. In other words, the state (or set of states) does not causally exclude the agent's playing her role if it counts as the agent's doing so, and it counts as the agent doing so if the agent is identified with or to it.

Franklin does not adequately define integral terms. He does not explain what it means for a state to have authority to speak for an agent, nor how a state comes to have this authority. It is not clear if there are any other methods of making a state count as the agent beyond identity reduction and identification reduction. Identification reduction gives the state authority to speak for the agent because it establishes an intimate relationship between the state and the agent. Franklin does not explain what it means for someone to identify an agent with a state, nor does he explain how identification enables an intimate relationship between the state and the agent, nor how this relationship endows the state with authority to speak for the agent. In the case of identity reduction, the nature

of the relationship between an agent and her states is clearer, as is the way in which this would allow a state to count as the agent. I elaborate on this further in the following sections.

In introducing inheritance solutions to the problem of causal exclusion, Franklin claims that causation by the physical ‘counts as’ causation by the mental because of the “intimate relation” between mental and physical properties, which allows mental properties to inherit the causal powers of physical properties. He gives constitution as an example of this intimate relation, which claims that “mental properties are causally efficacious because they are constituted by physical properties that are causally efficacious” (Franklin 2013: 419). So, it seems that the agent plays some causal role in making a choice because it is constituted by mental states that are causally efficacious. An agent is identified with mental states or a set of mental states, and “When an agent is identified with a state or event, that state or event has the authority to speak for the agent.” On the basis of this authority, the state’s fulfilling the role of self-determination counts as the agent playing her role.

Thus, at least in the case of identification reduction, an intimate relation between the agent and the state endows the state with the authority to speak for the agent, and thus it counts as the agent’s playing her role when this role is fulfilled by the state. However, Franklin does not define his terms. He does not tell us anything about what the relationship between a state and an agent must be like in order to be ‘intimate.’ He does not explain what it means for a state to have ‘authority,’ nor does he explain how the intimate relationship endows the state with this authority to speak for the agent. Probably, not just any close relationship between a state and an action gives the state

authority to speak for it. Similarly, probably not just any state intimately related to an agent can have this sort of authority to speak for the agent. It is unclear whether state's having this authority to speak for the agent *allows for* the state to count as the agent's fulfilling her role, or whether the state's speaking with authority *amounts to* the agent's fulfilling her role. Rather, Franklin simply gives examples of states which one could argue bear this intimate relation. Further, Franklin does not outline what a theory must do to identify an agent with a state.

In addition, Franklin takes it to be an advantage of the identification reductionist position that it avoids making a claim about the nature of the agent. He remarks that this solution identifies the agent with a state "regardless of what the agent actually is" (Franklin 2013: 420). Rather, identification reductionists simply claim that the agent's functional role of self-determination is fulfilled by states. Yet to hold this position, one must claim that the authority of the agent can be given to a state. The event-causal libertarian who pursues this position is committed to the claim that agents can be spoken for. This position does not completely avoid questions about the nature of the agent because the agent must be the sort of thing whose authority can be given to a state. To use Franklin's analogy, the identification reductionist escapes accusations of causal exclusion by claiming that an agent's causal powers can be inherited by a state. The agent-causal libertarian view posits that agents have the power to cause actions *qua* agent. If these causal powers belong primitively to an agent, a state likely cannot inherit them. Similarly, a substance dualist would likely take issue with the possibility of identifying an agent with a state, though it is hard to say because it is unclear to what extent identification necessary to a state 'counting as' the agent.

When Franklin fills out his schema, he gives one example of a theory that successfully follows his recommendations. This example does illustrate some dynamics of an a theory which fulfills his schema, but it does not clarify what it means for an agent to be identified with a state, much less with the sort of state that can perform the functions of self-determination without action. Nor does his filling out of the schema describe the way in which a state can have authority to speak for an agent, or how possessing this authority relates to his judgment that such a state ‘counts as’ the agent’s fulfilling her functional role. Though Franklin clearly takes his theory to have achieved the second conceptual enrichment, and thus he gives us an example, he leaves the relevant terms largely undefined. Without clarity as to how this position is achieves the necessary enrichment of his theory, we cannot be sure that it achieves its goal. Though this may be a possible approach, as it stands, it does not clearly succeed as a reductive account of the agent. Franklin must give further explanation as to how these solutions work and further argument about how they solve the apparent competition between the state and the agent before this account is compelling.

Moreover, this obscurity is exacerbated by the fact that the analogous inheritance solutions may not solve their own problem causal exclusion. Franklin admittedly puts forth identity reduction and identification reduction as solutions to the causal competition between the agent and her states because they are analogues of solutions to the problem of causal exclusion. This is problematic because it is contentious whether the originals that he imitates solve the problem of causal exclusion. It is unclear how Franklin intends the analogue to work – that is, how identity reduction and identification reduction to enable states to count as agents. I argue that the problem of his lack of clarity is

exacerbated by the fact that these solutions are analogues of solutions that may not solve their own problem of causal exclusion between mental and physical properties.

### *Identity Reductionist*

I have handled identification reduction above, as this position is both more complex and more filled out by Franklin. I now move on to the second disjunct of premise (5), which allows a state to count as the agent if one identifies the agent to this state. Concerns of unclear definitions and dubious analogies are not as troubling for the identity reductionist.<sup>5</sup> The identity reductionist claims that the agent ‘just is’ these states which fulfill its functional role. There is no competition between the agent and those states that fulfill her functional role because she just is those states. It is clearer in these cases why those states which fulfill the functional role of the self-determining agent have the authority to speak for the agent: the agent just is these states. However, this clarity comes at the cost of committing the identity reductionist to a stronger reductionism about the agent than is required of the identification reductionist. Moreover, I argue this position does not fully address the disappearing agent argument.

### *Clearer terms, stronger claims*

The stronger claims about an agent’s relationship to its states inherent to the identity reductionist’s position make it clearer how states are to count as the agent. This position is simpler than the identification reductionist’s because it does not require that

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<sup>5</sup> As in the case of inheritance solutions, identity solutions to causal exclusion are not uncontentious. Objectors to identity solutions take several different approaches. However, these objections need not be as troubling to us as those which challenge identification reduction. This position is clearer, and we need not look to the analogue in order to understand what is left undefined.

one who adheres to it to also argue that agents can be ‘spoken for’ by states.

Additionally, the identity reductionist need not define the relationship between a state and an agent sufficient for the ‘intimate’ relationship that endows the state with this authority.

Thus, there are fewer aspects that require definition on the identity reductionist position.

There is no added step of describing the closeness of the relationship and proving the way in which this closeness give authority to states. Rather, the relationship between the state and the agent is well-defined, as is the closeness between the two. The agent just is these states that perform the function of self-determination, and they have the authority to speak for the agent because they are the agent.

There are good reasons not to hold this position. One could believe the agent is more than just her states. The stronger claims about the nature of the agent make it clearer how this position answers the problems of causal exclusion. However, this position is not open to as many varying views about the nature of the agent as the identification reductionist counterpart. Those who take this position do not have to explain and motivate as many moving parts as the identification reductionists, but this comes at the cost of having to affirm a certain view of the nature of the agent.

### *Identity Reduction and the Disappearing Agent Argument*

I argue in this section that identification reduction does not answer the challenge of the disappearing agent argument. Recall that this argument claims that the agent does not sufficiently contribute to the decision that is made, and thus claims event-causal agents fall prey to luck. Franklin represents the argument as follows:

1. On event-causal libertarianism, there is nothing about the agent that settles which decision he makes.

2. If nothing about the agent settles which decision he makes, then the decision he makes is a matter of luck.
3. If the decision the agent makes is a matter of luck, then he is not free with respect to or morally responsible for the decision.  
Therefore,
4. An agent who merely satisfies event-causal libertarianism is neither free with respect to nor morally responsible for any of his decisions.

Franklin attempts to deny (1) by giving ways in which the agent does contribute to settling which decision is made. On identity reductionism, the agent just is her states that settle decisions by fulfilling the function of the self-determining agent. This position deflects accusations of competition between the agent and her states, and thus it is true that something about the agent settles which decision she makes.

But in presenting this problem, Pereboom's concern is more refined than what Franklin represents. Pereboom is not only concerned whether *something* about the agent contributes to the decision. Rather, his concern is that on an event-causal view the agent's "role in producing a decision is exhausted by antecedent states or events in which she is involved." He continues: "If nothing about [the agent] can settle whether the decision occurs, then she lacks the control required for moral responsibility for it. This may be called *the problem of the disappearing agent*" (Pereboom 2007: 102). The challenge is how the agent is involved in a further way than simply bearing states. I argue that the identity reductionist does not fully answer the concerns of the disappearing agent argument because this argument challenges the event-causalist to show how the agent is more than a locus of states and events.

Franklin shows that something about the agent does contribute to the choice because the agent just is those states which cause the choice. However, Pereboom makes the claim that nothing about the agent contributes to choice *because her role is exhausted*

*by antecedent states and events.* Identifying the agent to her states does allow something about the agent to settle the decision. However, it does so by saying that the agent just is her states. Even with this addition, her causal role is nonetheless exhausted by agent-involving mental states.

The problem is not fully solved, because her causal role still is exhausted by agent-involving mental states. On the identity reductionist position, the desires and beliefs which cause choice are certainly something about the agent, and these indeed cause the decision the agent makes. However, it remains the case on this view that “there is nothing *else* about [the agent] that can settle” which decision is made because it is still the case that the role of the agent is exhausted by antecedent states and events. That the agent’s role is exhausted by states is problematic because given indeterminism, states leave open which choice will obtain. Once we have worked out the strength of antecedent desires and beliefs, it can be highly probable that the thief will steal and that the thief will refrain.(Fischer 2007: 102). For Franklin, even after the thief is identified to that *DB* which he takes to accord with his motivation for action, the thief could decide against his better judgment and act on some other *DB* to which he cannot be identified. As Meghan Griffith writes, “the agent is not able to control which decision is made” (Griffith 2010: 51). To have control, the agent must control *which* decision is made, not just states that result in *some* decision’s being made. This seems to require that the agent has some role beyond simply being the locus of states which leave open which decision obtains.

There is no further way that the agent controls which decision is made beyond by bearing (or being) certain states. The problem posed is that nothing about the agent

contributes to the choice because the agent is only involved through states. The problem calls for some further involvement beyond just states, which the identity reductionist cannot provide. If what settles which choice actually obtains is not something about the agent, this would threaten agential control.

Below, I represent Pereboom's concerns in his presentation of the disappearing agent argument.<sup>6</sup>

1. On event-causal libertarianism, the agent's role in producing a decision is exhausted by antecedent states or events in which she is involved.
2. If the agent's role in producing a decision is exhausted by antecedent states or events in which she is involved, then nothing about the agent can settle whether the decision occurs in one way or another.
3. If nothing about the agent can settle whether the decision occurs in one way or another, then she lacks the control required for moral responsibility for it.  
Therefore,
4. An agent who merely satisfies event-causal libertarianism lacks the control required for moral responsibility for any of her decisions.

The identity reductionist claims that the agent just is those states which fulfill the role of self-determination. Because the agent is nothing more than these states, the identity reductionist cannot claim that the agent is involved in a further way than her states are. The identity reductionist cannot deny premise (1). Rather, one who holds this position should deny premise (2).<sup>7</sup>

One who denies premise (2) must argue that it is not problematic that her role in producing the decisions is exhausted by these states. He must argue that the agent does

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<sup>6</sup> This follows his introduction of the problem in 102-103 of *Four Views on Free Will*.

<sup>7</sup> The identification reductionist could still deny premise (1). Franklin refers to the agent as introducing some further causal influence over and above her states. The earlier concerns of clarity make the way in which this happens uncertain. Moreover, concerns about the possibility of non-actional mental states' fulfilling the role of self-determination make it unclear if this can be done in a way that escapes the luck and *Mind* arguments.

have control over which decision obtains, despite that the agent's involvement is exhausted by her being identified to those states that fulfill this function.

The agent is the states that fulfill the role of self-determination. This function involves weighing different motivations for action and selecting one. If states can fulfill this function, then it would seem our above concern can be resolved. If the agent is identical to states that weigh, adjudicate, and select a course of action, that would allow the agent to have a role in causing action that is realized through states. However, cases of weakly free action problematize this. The thief can choose to steal even though the desire he is identified to is present only in that *DB* which favors refraining. The thief can choose to steal, and if he did, "he would not act self-determinedly because there would be no attitude among the causes of his deciding to steal both that he is identified [to] and [that] plays his functional role" (Franklin: 2013 423). The thief chooses to act on a set of beliefs and desires to which he is not identified. The states that fulfill the function of self-determination are not present in this *DB* that favors stealing. Though we identify the agent to that motivation which causes her to affirm one *DB* as in accord with her motivation for action, she can still choose to act on the other *DB* which does not contain a state to which she is identified. It is not an automatic result of the process of self-determination that the agent acts on that choice she determines to be in accord with her motivation for action. So, we cannot always identify the agent to a state within the set which is causally efficacious. So, we cannot say that identifying the agent to the states which play the role of self-determination makes it that the agent settles which decision is made. The thief can decide to act against his better judgement, and in doing so he can act on the *DB* which lacks the desire to which he is identified and which fulfilled the role of

self-determination. There is some other factor, to which the agent is explicitly not identified, that causes this choice.

Perhaps this unknown factor that settles the decision to act in a certain way is a state. Franklin could then identify the agent to a set of states which must include this one alongside those that play the role of self-determination. This would be a major change to the theory. There would be an added state which would activate one set of desires and beliefs, somehow making it causally efficacious where it otherwise would not have been. This seems to be a viable way to escape my representation of the disappearing agent argument.<sup>8</sup> However, to examine its impact on Franklin's theory is outside my purposes here. Further, even if some account of this unknown factor as a non-actional mental state could both be given and be integrated into a theory that fulfills Franklin's schema, the improved account would fall prey to the arguments presented in the next section.

I have argued thus far that the identity reductionist position does not fully solve the problem of the disappearing agent. Something about the agent does contribute to the making of a choice. Yet, it is nonetheless concerning that the agent's contribution to making a choice is exhausted by agent-involving mental states, even given that the agent just is these states. The disappearing agent argument challenges the event-causal libertarian to show how the agent controls *which* choice obtains. Something about the agent must settle which decision obtains, and this seems to be left open.

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<sup>8</sup> I do worry that one cannot escape the disappearing agent argument as long as that which settles the decision is states which (because they cause indeterministically) leave open what will obtain. But Franklin takes indeterministic causation to be unproblematic for control, so long as the causes are not actions. So, I speak here as if I have no such reservations.

### *Artificial Intelligence*

As an event-causal theory, Franklin's theory integrates human action into an account of change that governs all other kinds of change. In contrast, the agent-causal libertarian claims that free choices are effected by a kind of cause which is unique to agents. Agents have powers of causation which are unique to agents. This sort of change is not the same as that which effects all other changes, such as when one billiard ball causes another to move. The agent-causal libertarian posits two kinds of causal relations where the event-causal libertarian posits only one. Thus, the event-causal libertarian theory has the advantage of simplicity. Moreover, because there is only one kind of causal relation, human action is an effect of the same kind of causal powers that cause any other effect.

On Franklin's theory, non-actional mental states which fulfill a certain function and count as the agent cause free action. His theory is a function of mental states. The states are complex, as they are identified with or to agents and they cause indeterministically. Nonetheless, this theory requires no special kind of causation other than that which causes all other change. So, at least theoretically, his theory could be instantiated in artificial intelligence. More specifically, some agent S that merely fulfills the requirements of an event-causal libertarianism that follows Franklin's schema could be instantiated in strong, human-level artificial intelligence. Because S fulfills Franklin's schema, S is free.

However, S is programmed. S has states which fulfill the role of adjudicating and selecting among rival motivations and with/to which we identify S, these states operate in this way because of the program. We could add some randomizing factor to ensure that

the *DB* which the agent decides to act on causes choice and overt action indeterministically. Thus, the program is not deterministic. The agent fulfills Franklin's schema. Recall our earlier metaphor of a formula. We can identify the agent with this mental state which, like a formula, weighs rival motivations for actions and affirms one as having a higher value.<sup>9</sup> We can identify the agent to the formula which fulfills the functional role of the self-determining agent by affirming that *DB* which is in accord with her motivation for action. Some other state settles whether the agent will act in accordance with that *DB* that has the higher value.<sup>10</sup> We identify the agent with or to those states that fulfill these functions, and thus their playing these roles counts as the agent's doing so. All of these states and the way in which they are to operate would be programmed, along with some randomizing measure to ensure that certain states cause indeterministically. *S* would thus be programmed to fulfill Franklin's schema, and would be free according to his theory.

However, if *S* is programmed, the operations of all these states are the product of forces outside of her control – primarily her program, and the indeterminism within it. Thus it seems she is not the source of her actions. But an agent must be the source of her actions in order to have the level of control necessary for freedom. I take the above considerations to motivate premise (2) of the refined disappearing agent argument. However, this challenge goes further than simply motivating premise (2).

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<sup>9</sup> Here, having a higher value equates to providing greater motivation for action, or better according with the motivation for action which is essentially present in all self-determined action and with which the agent is identified. This is namely Velleman's desire to act for reasons, as Franklin fleshes out the theory. However, this could also be the agent's deepest loves, or some other motivation or range of motivations.

<sup>10</sup> As I have conceded could be possible in the last section.

### *Manipulation Cases*

The challenge I have just posed is a manipulation case. Manipulation cases have been brought against Frankfurt's compatibilist theory of free will. Frankfurt's theory, as a compatibilist theory, attempts to downplay the causal history of an action and instead places importance on the agent as its source. He theorizes that freely-willed actions are purely a function of a certain relationship between the agent's will and her second-order volitions.<sup>11</sup> A particular causal history is not required for an action to be free. Rather, an agent acts freely if and only if this action comes from the will she wants. Free action is thus a function of a certain relationship between her will and her second-order volitions, regardless of how she came to have these volitions.

Manipulation cases construct some agent S who fulfills the criteria set out for freely willed action, but in these cases, it seems that it matters how an agent came to fulfill this criteria. Because Frankfurt's theory does not require a certain causal history, the agent in a manipulation case acts of her own free will and is morally responsible for her actions. As long as the criteria set out for freely willed action is fulfilled by the agent, she acts freely and is responsible, regardless of the causal history that led to her fulfilling this criteria (Mckenna and Coates 5.2.3). These cases make it seem that Frankfurt's account is not sufficient for providing the agent with the sort of control necessary to

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<sup>11</sup> Second-order desires are the agent's desires about her desires, such as wanting to stop craving cigarettes. The desire to enjoy a cigarette would be a first-order desire; these have actions as their objects, where second-order desires have desires as their objects. These are second-order *volitions* because the agent wishes them to be effective. In contrast, a psychologist could have a second-order desire to crave narcotics to better understand a patient. She desires to crave a drug without desiring to actually take it. Second-order volitions are those in which the agent desires that the first order desire is effective, as when the dieter wants to stop wanting sugar. He does want this lack of desire for sugar to take effect, unlike the psychologist's desire to crave narcotics. If and only if the action comes from the will she wants, the agent acts of her own free will (Mckenna and Coates 2016: 5.2.1-5.2.2).

freedom and moral responsibility. Either Frankfurt must explain what is amiss in these deviant cases, or he must admit that the causal history of free action is relevant.

Franklin's theory, as a libertarian one, already admits that the causal history of the action is relevant. Moreover, it has certain requirements regarding the causal history of free action. As I level this manipulation case against Franklin, I aim to show that his account is not sufficient for providing the agent with the sort of control necessary to freedom. The agent S fulfills his criteria for freedom. Her free actions have the causal history Franklin specifies. However, she is not the ultimate source of her actions because her actions are a function of her programming. Franklin must show how his theory allows the agent to be the source of the content of her beliefs and desires, though these beliefs and desires will interact with one another and any new evidence she receives according to the dictations of her programming with some added randomness. She needs to settle which choice she makes. But her settling will be programmed. A function.

### *Conclusion*

Franklin adds a helpful complexity to his picture. Mental states do need to fulfill the functional role of self-determination if they are to have any chance at providing for free will. This does seem to risk excluding agents' playing this role. However, he fails to provide the agent with control over what she wants. Rather, he has made her desires function in a complex way and claimed that those which fulfill integral functions stand in an intimate relation to the agent herself. This does not provide the agent with control over which desire obtains. Making these states more complex and explaining the causation of action in terms of states alone does not seem to be a viable method by which

to furnish agents with this control. So long as mental states are causing action, the theory will either struggle to allow the agent any role above a manner of speaking, or it will face some sort of manipulation argument. It seems that providing agents with control requires allowing agents themselves to cause things.

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