

其他可能性原則與因果決定論

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摘要

有些相容論者相信其他可能性原則已為 Frankfurt 的反例所駁斥，而這讓支持因果決定與道德責任為相容的相容論者有機可乘。但捍衛其他可能性原則的不相容論者則堅持此原則，以及因果決定與道德責任的不相容性。在此篇論文中，我將論證 Frankfurt 的反例無法指出其他可能性的錯誤，但這不會導致不相容論的成立。事實上，我將證明，在一種對決定論與相容論的理解下，其他可能性原則與因果決定論及相容論者是相容的。

關鍵詞：

因果決定、相容論、責任、自由意志、Frankfurt、不相容論、
不決定論、動機

The Principle of Alternative Possibilities and Causal Determination

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Abstract

Some compatibilists believe that the principle of alternative possibilities has been shown to be false by Frankfurt-style arguments, and this gives way to the compatibility of causal determination with moral responsibility. Those incompatibilists who defend the principle of alternative possibilities, on the other hand, insist on the truth of the principle and on the incompatibility of causal determination with moral responsibility. In this article, I argue that Frankfurt-style counterexamples are unsuccessful in indicating the falsity of the principle of alternative possibilities, and yet this failure is inconclusive to prove the correctness of incompatibilism. In fact, the principle of alternative possibilities is, I show, compatible with causal determination and thus with compatibilism on a specific understanding of determinism and compatibilism.

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The Principle of Alternative Possibilities and Causal Determination

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The critics of the principle of alternative possibilities contend that the principle of alternative possibilities (PAP), which is traditionally regarded as a necessary condition of moral responsibility, is, as Frankfurt-style counterexamples (FSCs) have indicated, unnecessary for moral responsibility, and thereby causal determination is compatible with holding a person responsible for his or her actions. The compatibilists like Harry Frankfurt and John Fisher, for instance, tend to think that the failure of PAP prepares the ground for the compatibility of free will with determinism. Frankfurt's counterexample, to indicate the compatibility of moral responsibility with causal determinism by means of demonstrating the falsity of PAP, is as follows. Suppose that someone, say Black, wants Jones to do a certain action, but he does not show his hand unnecessarily though he is able to take effective measures to ensure that Jones decides to do what he wants him to do.¹ To make the

¹ Harry Frankfurt, 'Alternative Possibilities and Moral Responsibility'. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 66 (1969): 835.

example more concrete, suppose that Black wants Jones to kill another person, say Smith, but he does not show his hand unnecessarily despite his ability to take effective steps to prevent Jones from not killing Smith, and he waits for Jones to decide by his own choice to kill Smith. In this case, Jones is morally responsible for killing Smith because he decides by his own choice to kill Smith and does kill him. PAP entails that an agent is not morally responsible for his or her actions if he or she is compelled to do it. What Frankfurt purports to show is that an agent's responsibility is not undermined under conditions in which the agent has no alternative. However, this conclusion is seldom guaranteed by Frankfurt-style arguments. As David Hunt puts forward:

Fisher in particular argues that the only reason causal determinism seems incompatible with moral responsibility is its exclusion of alternate possibilities, and that once PAP is rejected and unavoidability is no longer regarded as a threat to responsibility there is no further reason to regard determinism as a threat either... It is not clear that this is so.... Compatibilism would require considerable further argument—perhaps no less argument after the defeat of PAP than before.²

On the other hand, incompatibilists, who advocate PAP, are inclined to insist that PAP by itself is the determinant condition of moral responsibility. They argue as if the truth of PAP is sufficient

² David Hunt, 'Moral Responsibility and Unavoidable Action'. *Philosophical Studies*, 97 (2000): 222-23.

for responsibility, and it is the key principle to establish the correctness of incompatibilism or libertarianism. Some philosophers such as David Widerker wholeheartedly defend PAP while others such as Eleonore Stump agree with compatibilists on the falsity of PAP but deny that the falsity of PAP undermines libertarianism.

Despite the overemphasis on PAP, however, its sufficiency for moral responsibility is rarely questioned. The central aim of this paper is to demonstrate that the discussion about whether or not PAP is necessary for moral responsibility is misguided, as PAP in the best case is only one necessary condition. There are other interesting necessary conditions, whose compatibility with determinism we ought to discuss. Some well-known candidates are motivation and foreseeability. Those insisting on the centrality of the debate about PAP may concede that PAP is only one necessary condition among many. But the emphasis put almost exclusively on PAP leads us to overlook the large picture in which we should discuss the notions of moral responsibility and freedom of will. In what follows, I shall first argue that FSCs are, in general, unsuccessful in demonstrating the falsity of PAP by focusing on Stump's example.³ I argue that even though a definite formulation of PAP is necessary, it is not sufficient for moral responsibility, and as such it is far from decisively establishing the truth of incompatibilism or indeterminism. Lastly, I maintain that PAP is, indeed, compatible with causal

³ I have chosen Stump's example because hers is one of the original attempts to eliminate a significant defect of Frankfurt's original example.

determination on a certain understanding of compatibilism.

A Defense of PAP against FSCs

Frankfurt's argument against the principle of alternative possibilities,

PAP: A person is morally responsible for what he has done only if he could have done otherwise,⁴

has received considerable attention in the philosophical literature. In spite of the general acceptance of the principle, some philosophers including Frankfurt, Fisher, and Stump have argued that PAP is false. These philosophers maintain that one can be morally responsible for an action even if one could not have done otherwise on the basis of Frankfurt-style counterexamples. Against FSCs, however, primarily two kinds of reaction have been developed. Firstly, alternative formulations of PAP—different from “could have done otherwise” condition—are suggested to withstand FSCs (Below, I shall argue that one such alternative construal of PAP is necessary for moral responsibility.). The second kind of reaction aims to show the failure of FSCs, which can be formulated as a dilemma: On the one hand, if

⁴ It is noteworthy that in the philosophical literature, PAP is interpreted in such a way that having an alternative possibility is a precondition of moral responsibility. But, in general, PAP's formulations express the opposite. Take the formulation “A person is morally responsible for what he has done only if he could have done otherwise,” for instance. Let M represent the sentence “A person is morally responsible for what he has done,” and N represent the sentence “he could have done otherwise.” The logical form of the whole conditional expressed by PAP is, however, “If M, then N.” That is, the main connector of PAP is “only if” and its logically equivalent sentence is “M \supset N.” But this means that if a person is morally responsible for what he has done, then he could have done otherwise, which implies that being morally responsible is a precondition of having alternative possibilities.

the counterfactual intervener waits until the victim makes one or another choice, the victim could have done otherwise because the choice was not determined. On the other hand, if the counterfactual intervener intervenes in advance to guarantee the occurrence of his choice, the intervener has actually determined the outcome in advance and the victim is not morally responsible for the outcome.⁵ That is, FSCs are unsuccessful in establishing the falsity of PAP.

Whether or not Frankfurt's criticism is successful depends on whether his counterexample actually leaves no alternative. There are, however, good reasons for doubting that Frankfurt's counterexample leaves no alternative possibility. Suppose that Jones is about to decide not to kill Smith, and Black, who wants him to kill Smith, is prepared to take effective steps to ensure that Jones decides to kill Smith. Suppose also that Jones suddenly decides and at the same time kills Smith's friend while he is prepared to shoot Smith. Since Jones's alternative decision and action occur simultaneously, he could have done otherwise despite Black's ability to change his decision. This suggests that there is a "flicker of freedom" or "elbow room" that secures moral responsibility even under conditions in which one supposedly could not have done otherwise. To cope with the problem, a critic of PAP might propose an alternative scenario or might argue that there is a time gap—though a very short one—between deciding and killing, i.e., one is mental and the other

⁵ See Robert Kane, 'The Dual Regress on Free Will and the Role of Alternative Possibilities', *Philosophical Perspectives*, 14 (2000): 76.

is a physical act, and since both cannot occur at the same time Black might intervene in this time period in order to secure that Jones kills Smith. Even if this is possible, still there is a flicker of freedom. It is Jones's initiating a decision-making process.⁶ Black's intervention presupposes a free act of Jones, namely Jones's attempt to decide to kill Smith. Jones is morally responsible for initiating a process which brings about an event even though he cannot avoid bringing it about. Widerker correctly notes that a counterfactual intervener can prevent an agent from executing his or her decision but he cannot prevent the agent of his or her freedom to initiate a decision-making process.⁷

It might be argued that Jones's showing an inclination to kill Smith could be a result of his being in a certain neurological state, which can be regarded as part of an event-causal process rather than an agent-causal process. Black might be alerted by an involuntary sign such as a twitch or a complex neurophysiological pattern for his inclination to kill Smith. In this case, triggering an event cannot be said to be free. So, Jones's initiating a decision-making process does not undermine Frankfurt's criticism. Stump, for instance, has suggested such a Frankfurt-style argument, recently. In Stump's story, Grey, the neurosurgeon, wants Jones to vote for Republicans. By virtue of his neuroscope, Grey finds that whenever Jones decides to vote for Republicans, the decision correlates with the completion of a

⁶ John Martin Fisher: *The Metaphysics of Free Will: An Essay on Control*, Aristotelian Series, v. 14 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), p. 136.

⁷ David Widerker, 'Libertarianism and Frankfurt's Attack on the Principle of Alternative Possibilities'. *The Philosophical Review*, 104 (1995): 251.

sequence of neural firings in Jones's brain that always includes, near its beginning, the firing of neurons a, b, and c. Jones's decision to vote for Democratic candidates is, on the other hand, correlated with the completion of a neural sequence that always includes, near the beginning, the firing of neurons x, y, and z. When the neuroscope detects the firing of x, y, and z, it immediately destroys the neural sequence so that the sequence is not brought to completion. If the neuroscope detects the firing of a, b, and c, it does not interrupt the sequence's completion and the decision to vote Republicans to occur.⁸ Stump presupposes that the decision is a causal outcome of the neural sequence. The neural sequence itself is not, however, the outcome of a causal chain that originates in a cause outside the agent; rather, it is the outcome of a causal chain constituted by the agent's intellect and will.

Nevertheless, if Jones's act of will is caused by the neural sequence a, b, and c, then he has no power to do otherwise, and this begs the question against the libertarian. Stump admits that her example needs modification and makes a further explanation. Accordingly, Jones's act of will to vote for a Republican is not correlated with the completion of the neural sequence a, b, and c, i.e., the firing of a, b, and c does not cause Jones's act of will to vote for a Republican; it is rather correlated with that very sequence itself. The difference of Stump's version of FSCs is that the counterfactual

⁸ Eleonore Stump, 'Alternative Possibilities and Moral Responsibility: The Flicker of Freedom'. *The Journal of Ethics*, 3 (1999): 303-304.

intervener is responsive not to a mental state preceding the desired act of will but to a neural state, which is correlated with the decision or the act of will.⁹ So, there is no possibility for the agent suddenly to change his or her decision and to vote for Democrats at the last moment because the neuroscope is effective to disrupt an alternative sequence before its completion.

Although Stump's example removes a defect of Frankfurt's argument, this does not amount to the end of troubles for FSCs. Suppose that at the last moment Jones attempts to vote for Democrats, and Grey immediately prevents him from voting for Democrats. It is still up to Jones not to vote for Republicans. Grey can cause Jones not to vote for Democrats but cannot cause him to vote for Republicans; nor can Grey prevent Jones from remaining indecisive. As Widerker points out:

... the only way in which Jones could have decided otherwise ... is by having the power to bring about the non-occurrence of a, b, c....
Now if Jones has the power to bring about the non-occurrence of a, b, c in the scenario featuring Grey, then, contrary to what is claimed by Stump, he also has it within his power in that scenario to refrain from his actual decision to vote for a Republican candidate.¹⁰

Jones's sudden attempt to vote for Democrats implies that he has condemned Republicans and already decided not to vote for them. So, all a counterfactual intervener can do is to make the agent

⁹ Stump, 'Alternative Possibilities and Moral Responsibility: The Flicker of Freedom', p. 309.

¹⁰ David Widerker, 'Frankfurt's Attack on the Principle of Alternative Possibilities: A Further Look'. *Philosophical Perspectives*, 14 (2000): 186.

actionless. Jones will not vote for Republicans because he has already decided not to vote for them; and he will not vote for Democrats because of the counterfactual intervener. If there were a certain neural sequence, say d, e, and f, for being indecisive, then Grey's device would intervene and disrupt the relevant neurons. But in Stump's example, there is no such neural sequence. Therefore, her attempt to indicate that there is no flicker of freedom in her Frankfurt-style example is unsuccessful.

Of course, Stump might add the neural sequence d, e, and f to her example. In that case, she might say, there would be no flicker of freedom. When Jones remains indecisive, the neural sequence d, e, and f will be disrupted by the neuroscope. Even if the neural sequence d, e, and f is disrupted by the neuroscope, however, there remains still a flicker of freedom. Instead of voting for Republicans, he can make unsuccessful attempts to vote for Democrats. As Grey's neuroscope immediately interrupts and prevents the realization of this attempt, and as Jones would have already eliminated the choice for voting Republicans by his attempt to vote for Democrats, the neuroscope's intervention amounts to Jones's indecisiveness again. The neuroscope may disrupt the neurons for indecisiveness but this means the beginning of the same process and the reiteration of the same attempts. So long as Jones has a power to avoid voting for Republicans, he has freedom to do otherwise. Stump's example fails to indicate that one can be morally responsible without an alternative possibility.

One could protest that the failure of Stump's example does not amount to the failure of all FSCs, and unless the invalidity of all these arguments is indicated, the necessity of alternative possibilities cannot be conclusively demonstrated. Frankfurt-style arguments developed by Michael Otsuka, Keith Wyma, and Michael McKenna, on the one hand, and Alfred Mele and David Robb and others on the other need to be addressed and refuted in order to show the truth of the principle of alternative possibilities.

I did not focus on these examples for the following reasons. First, they by and large suffer from the same defects the Stump's case suffers from. Consider the Frankfurt-style counterexample to alternative possibilities developed by Perebom. In Perebom's example, the counterfactual intervener—through a device implanted in Joe's brain—wants Joe to decide to evade taxes, and Joe has a powerful desire to evade taxes. Unless a moral reason with a causally sufficient force occurs to him, he decides to evade taxes. If a reason to accept a competing view occurs to Joe with a specified force, the counterfactual intervener—a neuroscientist—would electronically stimulate his brain to retain his initial position.¹¹ There is, however, a flicker of freedom in this example, as well. Joe is responsible for initiating a decision-making process among competing views. If a moral reason occurs to Joe without a causally sufficient force, he might consider and then dismiss it. But this proves that Joe initiates the decision-making process. If the counterfactual intervener

¹¹ Perebom, 'Alternative Possibilities and Causal Histories', p. 128.

prevents the occurrence of any reason to Joe irrespective of its causal force, then Joe is predetermined to think and act in a certain way, and as such the example begs the question against the libertarian. It is hard to see how Joe's action becomes genuinely his if there is no alternative possibility even to think about. Like other FSCs, Perebom's case has failed to eliminate the flicker of freedom. Moreover, Joe may refrain from choosing to evade taxes even in case a moral reason with a certain force does not occur to him so long as his action is not one hundred percent determined causally by his desire to evade taxes. My second reason for not dealing with other FSCs is that one can easily find successful criticisms of the FSCs in the philosophical literature.¹²

The aforementioned arguments show that a minimalist conception of PAP is indeed necessary for moral responsibility:

PAP_m: A person is morally responsible for what she has done under circumstances in which she could have refrained from doing it.

That PAP_m is necessary for moral responsibility can plainly be seen by the following example. Suppose that Jones does not know that the brakes of his car are faulty, and he has killed a child while driving due to the faulty brakes. In this case, his degree of responsibility for killing the child decreases to a great extent—depending, of course, on some conditions as to whether he is able to turn the direction of

¹² Ibid., pp. 119-137; and Widerker, 'Frankfurt's Attack on the Principle of Alternative Possibilities', pp. 181-201.

the car in the time period that he exhausts between the initial position of the car and the first appearance of the child on the road. In other words, Jones would hardly be held morally responsible for killing the child because he could not have refrained from killing the child. If the principle of alternative possibilities is unnecessary as defenders of FSCs claim, then they must explain why we have this strong intuition that Jones is not blameworthy because he could not avoid killing the child. The necessity of PAP_m is patent from our having the powerful intuition for his innocence, at least to an extent (I shall ignore the question of whether or not intention is sufficient by itself to explain away the blameworthiness for the moment.).

Suppose, says Daniel Dennett, Luther was literally correct about this: “Here I stand, I can do no other.” This does not change his position with regard to moral responsibility because “we simply do not exempt someone from blame or praise for an act because we think he could do no other.”¹³ The above example suggests, however, that even if we tend to blame Jones for killing the child, the degree of his responsibility will be lesser than Joe who kills a person willingly by driving upon her, and who could have done otherwise, owing to the intactness of the brakes of his car. What Dennett needs to explicate is why we are inclined to hold the former driver less responsible for killing a child while attributing full moral responsibility to the latter driver.

¹³ Daniel Dennett: *Elbow Room: The Varieties of Free Will Worth Wanting* (Cambridge: Bradford Books, 1984), p. 133.

The foregoing argument suggests that PAP_m is necessary for moral responsibility. It is a mistake, nevertheless, to think that once the truth of a sort of formulation of PAP is established, it will be proved that incompatibilism is correct. That is to say, it would be too hasty to infer the correctness of indeterminism or the *absolute* incompatibility of free will and action with causal determination from the truth of a formulation of PAP. One reason for this is that although PAP_m is necessary, it is not sufficient for moral responsibility. In what follows, I argue that not only the minimalist notion of PAP but also PAP itself—if it were true—is not sufficient for responsibility, and as such it is far from conclusive to establish the truth of incompatibilism.

On the Insufficiency of PAP for Moral Responsibility

The critics as well as the defenders of PAP generally presuppose that an agent's bringing about an event is sufficient for holding the agent responsible irrespective of the prior conditions of the event. One might, nonetheless, argue that if an agent's attempt to bring about an event is based on a deliberate choice and a motivation of which the agent is able to control, then the agent is responsible for the event. In many cases, what is crucial for moral responsibility is motivation and foreknowledge. Without a motivation, mere triggering an event or ability to do otherwise would hardly make an agent morally responsible for the event. If a conductor does not know

that children are playing on the railroad, for instance, he will not stop the train turning around a corner although he could have stopped it had he known the presence of the children. In the same way, if a man gives his daughter a drink hoping to cure her but kills her instead, his action might be regarded as voluntary in the sense that he is willing to give his daughter the drink, and that it lies in his power to perform the action of giving the drink, but it can hardly be claimed that he is fully responsible for killing her since he is ignorant. It is thus clear that mere ability to do otherwise is not sufficient for full-blown moral responsibility.

One is held accountable for bringing about an event only if one has, as noted above, a motivation to bring it about and knows the consequences of one's actions. Accordingly, motivation and foreseeability are the two main factors of moral responsibility; one can hardly be held responsible for the events occurring outside one's inclinations and knowledge. That is, even if one has a free will and freedom of action, one still may not be fully responsible for an event one brought about. Aristotle emphasizes the role of knowledge for responsibility to the extent that knowledge is the precondition of a voluntary act for him:

By the voluntary I mean ... any of the things in a man's own power which he does with knowledge, i.e. not in ignorance either of the person acted on or of the instrument used or of the end that will be attained (e.g. whom he is striking, with what, and to what end), each such act being done not incidentally nor under compulsion (e.g. if you take my hand and strike someone else with it, I do not act

voluntarily; for the act was not in my power). (NE.V.1135a23-28)

If voluntariness is necessary for a robust conception of responsibility, so does knowledge, the presence or absence of which is a sign of one's having a motivation to do or not to do something. One's responsibility varies in accordance with one's degree of knowledge of the consequences of one's actions for others as well as for oneself. One should not only make use of one's knowledge to predict the outcomes of one's actions but also take the necessary precautions to prevent plausible catastrophes that might ensue as a result of ignorance. We hold a person accountable if the person fails to exercise his or her knowledge in bringing about an event due to negligence, pleasure or pain. Conversely, we rarely hold a person fully responsible for the events brought about by his or her actions in the absence of any motivation to bring them about. As Hume accurately puts forward:

Actions are by their very nature temporary and perishing; and where they proceed not from some cause in the characters and disposition of the person, who perform'd them, they infix not themselves upon him, and can neither redound to his honour, if good, nor infamy, if evil. The action itself may be blameable; it may be contrary to all the rules of morality and religion: But the person is not responsible for it; and as it proceeded from nothing in him, that is durable or constant, and leaves nothing of that nature behind it, 'tis impossible he can, upon

its account, become the object of punishment or vengeance.¹⁴

Lack of a causal factor or motivation reduces the degree of one's responsibility for the results of one's actions, however *undetermined* and freely brought about these outcomes are. On the other hand, if one has strong motivation to do something and acts in accordance with that motivation, one's degree of responsibility increases correlatively.

It might, nonetheless, be urged that a man, who has a weak will, e.g., a drug addict, knows that he is pursuing an ill-formed action but this does not make him fully responsible because he cannot do otherwise. What this example indicates, however, is that knowledge by itself is not sufficient in some cases to hold someone entirely responsible for the events he or she brought about; it does not show that foreknowledge and motivation are unnecessary. It is true that one must be able to control one's actions in accordance with one's will and knowledge in order to be held responsible for the outcomes of the actions. If one does not have control over one's actions, one cannot be held wholly responsible for the events one brought about. Yet, this argument merely shows that the ability to do otherwise is necessary for responsibility; it does not demonstrate that motivation and knowledge are irrelevant to full-blown moral responsibility.

The condition of having motivation and foreknowledge is only one among many conditions of moral responsibility. My purpose

¹⁴ David Hume: *A Treatise of Human Nature*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 411.

here is not to give a complete list of conditions necessary and sufficient for responsibility. Rather, the purpose is to indicate that there are events, which are undetermined and brought about by an agent under the circumstances in which the agent could have done otherwise, and still we might not hold the agent responsible for these events. That is, the principle of alternative possibilities, though necessary, is not sufficient to be a robust ground for responsibility. It is a mistake to identify PAP with a sufficient condition of moral responsibility, and from this to conclude that free action as expressed by PAP, and thus moral responsibility, is incompatible with causal determination. A result of this mistake is to conflate an *accident* with a *crime*. Depending on the relevant factual conditions, in the former case, which is characterized primarily by the absence of any motivational factor, one's responsibility is minimal whereas in the latter case, one has maximum moral responsibility.

On the In/Compatibility of PAP with Causal Determination

The arguments around FSCs are too narrow to make a case for the in/compatibility of free will and determinism. The principle of alternative possibilities alone is a too thin basis to claim the truth of incompatibilism and the falsity of compatibilism not only because it is not a sufficient condition of moral responsibility but also because it might be consistent with compatibilism on a certain conception of the compatibility of moral responsibility with causal determinism. It

seems intuitively incorrect to say that if a decision is to be an agent's own, it must necessarily be causally undetermined. A decision might be the agent's own and yet causally determined, especially if causes are not strong enough¹⁵ to bring about an action, i.e., there is no one hundred percent causal determination of the action.¹⁶ In such a case, the agent might have alternative possibilities or an ability to bring about this or that outcome. Through the exercise of his or her control over the actions necessitated by the relevant causes, the agent might turn a weak cause into an efficient one. Suppose someone, say Joe, has motivation to evade taxes but if a moral reason occurs to him with a certain force, Joe could choose not to evade taxes. That is, the moral reason is not causally sufficient for his failing to choose to evade taxes—for the sake of argument, assume that a moral reason occurs to him but his motivation to evade taxes is slightly stronger than his motivation to pay taxes—but Joe may still choose to pay

¹⁵ By “not strong enough” I mean lack of satisfaction of necessary and sufficient conditions of bringing about an event. Among these conditions is the unavailability of a powerful counter-force operating effectively against the present motive for the relevant action. To make sense of the notion, imagine that there is a small fire in a forest, which could spread easily unless there was a sudden intense rain that extinguished it. Here rain constitutes a powerful counter-force preventing the spread of the fire whose force is not strong enough to overpower the rain. Analogously, if there were two competing motives in an agent, the agent plays the role of a counter-force which by preventing the occurrence of an action congruent with one of the motives allows automatically the occurrence of an action necessitated by the other—for the sake of simplicity, suppose that the agent has to make a choice between two alternative courses of action suggested by the two rivalry motives. In this case the motive for the action prevented by the agent is not strong enough to override the agent's counter-force.

¹⁶ John Bishop's compatibilism seems to be along these lines: “Once we regard it as a real possibility that natural science need not treat actions as 100 percent causally determined, resolving the problem of natural agency can no longer simply be reduced to deciding who wins in the old debate between compatibilists and incompatibilists.” In *Natural Agency* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 28.

taxes because the moral reason, though not sufficient, is a cause for him to pay taxes.¹⁷ In this example, Joe has alternative possibilities: he may pay or evade taxes. But this does not exclude a causal determination of his action. That is to say, prior to his decision, his action is not completely undetermined, and it is not the case that he randomly chooses one or the other. He has a cause or motivation to pay or evade taxes. His decision to do one or the other turns a weak causal determination of his action into a sufficient one. Through the exercise of his power to control his motives to evade taxes, he may allow his motives to pay taxes to be efficient causes of his action. In this sense, alternative possibilities seem to be compatible with causal determination.¹⁸

¹⁷ Derk Pereboom suggests a version of this example to demonstrate the success of Frankfurt's argument. In 'Alternative Possibilities and Causal Histories'. *Philosophical Perspectives*, 14 (2000): 128. I think that Pereboom's is another unsuccessful attempt to defend FSCs but instead of arguing the reasons for the failure of his example, for the moment I wish to use the example to show the compatibility of alternative possibilities with causal determination.

¹⁸ One could argue that this example presupposes agent-causation, which is incompatible with causal determinism or compatibilism. If an event brought about by an agent, it is agent-caused. An agent-caused event is, however, rejected by a natural scientific perspective, which explains natural-causal relations within the category of event-causation. Nonetheless, this argument misses a subtle difference between the notions of agent-control and agent-causation. In the example at issue, the agent plays a role of controlling mechanism rather than an effective cause directly bringing about an event solely by his or her non-causal powers. If there were no causal determination or motivation, and the agent brought about the event purely on the basis of a decision of his or her will and intellect, then the talk of agent-causation would be appropriate. But in the example there is a causal factor; Joe, though weakly determined, has a motivation to pay taxes. The role of the agent here is controlling or guiding certain mental states by preventing or letting the relevant motivational factors to be efficient causes of his or her actions. The question of how the agent controls his or her mental states and actions is partly an empirical question, and I shall not address it here. For the metaphysical part of the question of how an agent as a non-causal power can influence causal forces or motivations without presupposing agent-causation, I tentatively provide the following answer. By withdrawing a reason, the agent indirectly influences causal forces that determine his or her actions. If a reason for an action is eliminated by the agent on the ground of some competing reasons, the motives

The compatibilist notion of freedom of action fits into this picture quite well. John Bishop, for instance, maintains that “to be morally responsible for an outcome ... an agent must contribute to it through his or her own exercise of agent-control—through his or her own action.”¹⁹ What is necessary for moral responsibility is that an outcome should have been produced through an agent’s action or through the controlled exercise of the agent’s own power; it is not necessary that the outcome should not have been subject to the influence of any causal powers: “One may exercise control without having total control over what happens.”²⁰

It is unclear what Bishop exactly means by the notion of control; it might mean the control and determination of major part of a process to bring about an event or merely triggering or preventing the occurrence of an event. Causal determinism, one might argue, is compatible with moral responsibility on the basis of a very weak sense of freedom of action, which is nothing but an exercise of power to trigger an event. But merely an exercise of power to trigger an event comes to be inadequate for full-fledged moral responsibility.

associating the eliminated reason would vanish—as an example consider Joe who learns that his friend’s not keeping her promise to meet at a particular time is a result of a car accident in which she is injured but not of her ignorance, his feeling of anger against her spontaneously abolishes. In that case, there would not be any counter-causal forces against the motives accompanied by some reason according to which the agent wants to act. This is, as noted, merely a tentative answer based on the contentious assumption that when the agent dismisses a reason, his or her motives accompanying the reason would be spontaneously extinguished or lose their power to influence the agent’s action. However, I shall not pursue the issue further due to lack of space. I am indebted to Michael Robins for the discussion of this point and to his comments on an earlier draft of the paper.

¹⁹ Bishop, *Natural Agency*, p. 25.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

An insane person, like an animal, has freedom of action; both the insane and the animal can, in a sense, control and change their behaviors but we hold neither responsible for the events they bring about. Simply the control of one's behavior does not make one completely responsible for the event one brings about. That is to say, merely triggering an outcome is not a sufficiently robust ground to hold someone responsible. Robust grounds for moral responsibility lie in calculative reason and deliberate choice or decision of an agent rather than on brute causal physical forces that control the occurrence of some events.

The existence of a causal factor or motivation does not, however, eliminate the possibility for one to deliberate on alternative courses of action and make a choice. One's degree of moral responsibility increases in correlation not only with one's degree of motivation to bring about an event but also with one's ability to choose a specific course of action deliberately. I will not address to the question as to how much a process bringing about an event must be independent of direct causal factors to ensure responsibility. But it is worth noticing that the notion of agent-control involves more than merely preventing an event and thus triggering another; it involves a decision making process and a calculative reason, as well. The agent allows or prevents the occurrence of an event as a result of deliberating and making a choice. This does not, nonetheless, falsify the claim that if one has no motivation to do something, one's deliberation and calculative reason alone can scarcely lead him or her

to do that thing.

Some Concluding Remarks

In the foregoing pages, I argued that the ongoing debate around FSCs is too narrow to make a case for compatibilism or incompatibilism and to understand the complicated issues surrounding the notion of moral responsibility. Instead of taking part in these arguments, to question the very basis of them and their significance for the issues surrounding moral responsibility, compatibilism and incompatibilism would make a better contribution to the understanding of these issues. I tried to show that PAP_m is necessary for moral responsibility, and Frankfurt-style arguments are not successful in indicating the falsity of PAP_m . But the failure of FSCs does not establish the correctness of incompatibilism; nor does it prove the falsity of compatibilism. This is because although PAP_m is necessary, it is by no means sufficient for moral responsibility.

It may be objected that if FSCs are unsuccessful, and PAP_m is true, this is conclusive to prove the correctness of incompatibilism or libertarianism. Since libertarianism is based on some formulation of PAP, it might be maintained, if PAP_m is true, so is libertarianism, which entails indeterminism and excludes any causal determination of an action. But this objection relies on the presupposition that an action is either one hundred percent causally determined or totally undetermined; and that there can be no intermediate level of causal determination of an action. That is to say, if an action is to count as

free, it must be one hundred percent undetermined. One need not accept this overall either/or attitude to the determination of an action, however. An action might be free, and yet it might, to an extent, be causally determined. Neither indeterminacy of an action nor ability to do otherwise is sufficient for moral responsibility and for proving the correctness of libertarianism. In addition, I have argued that even if PAP is true, it need not necessarily be incompatible with causal determination as FSCs presuppose. There might be some cases in which one has alternative possibilities, and yet one's actions might be causally determined in a weak sense.²¹ If so, then compatibilists need not to show the falsity of PAP, as Frankfurt assumes, to vindicate the compatibility of moral responsibility with causal determination.²²

²¹ It might be insisted that unless an event is one hundred percent causally determined, one cannot claim that the event is causally determined. Nevertheless, there are events, which are weakly causally determined in the sense that in the absence of counter-causal forces, these events occur due to causes determining their occurrence.

²² I'd like to thank the anonymous referees of *The Philosophical Review* and *Philosophia* for their helpful comments and criticisms on the previous versions of this paper.

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