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The Curse of Fortune; Responding to Luck Objections in an Uncooperative World

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The Curse of Fortune; Responding to Luck Objections in an Uncooperative World.

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Abstract

The consensus scientific view holds that our world is indeterministic at the micro level, but practically deterministic at all other levels. In an indeterministic world, live alternative possibilities at the moment of decision render it impossible for agents to guarantee what they will choose; regardless of their personality and deliberative processes. Critics of indeterminist free will argue that this lack of a necessary connection between mental state and choice makes the ultimate decision fundamentally a matter of luck. As such, indeterminism opens free will up to potential problems of present luck. Additionally, large-scale determinism opens up free will to a separate “luck pincer”. Our initial set of beliefs, desires and deliberative patterns (endowment) are settled by luck. Since our initial endowment forms our initial character, only (lucky) factors outside ourselves can modify it. Our decisions and characters are practically determined by either luck in our initial endowment or in the outside circumstances that modify it. In order to defuse these objections, free will defenders must develop an answer to both the problem of present luck and the determinist “luck pincer” presented by Neil Levy. I will argue that the problem of present luck is resolvable by applying a modified version of Frankfurt cases to the actual sequence of decisions. In the majority of these cases, I argue indeterminism plays no significant freedom-endangering role. Additionally, I will argue that the luck pincer is not lethal to free will since our endowments constitute our characters, desires and beliefs. I will argue that decisions that decisions originating from our endowments constitute a direct outpouring of our identities, and such decisions are free. The aim of my paper is to present responses to contemporary luck objections relevant to all views, particularly those aiming to defend free will in the world agents most likely inhabit.

The Curse of Fortune; Responding to Luck Objections in an Uncooperative World.

0. Introduction

Many defenders of the existence of free will worry that living in a deterministic world- one where all future actions follow necessarily from facts about the present-would render robust free will impossible. Fischer asks readers to, "Suppose, for example, that a consortium of well-respected scientists announce...that all events that all events can in principle be fully explained by previous events and the laws of nature"¹ and develops an account of free will to preempt this possibility. But is a deterministic world really a step in the wrong direction? The current scientific consensus holds that due to the individually unpredictable but statistically irrelevant quantum fluctuations, the world is technically indeterministic², but practically deterministic. Suppose a consortium of scientists were to announce tomorrow that the consensus view today were confirmed beyond doubt; would the implications of this discovery comfort proponents of free will? There is strong reason to believe the answer is no. By pointing out that the actual world is both indeterministic in one relevant sense and deterministic in another, the scientific consensus view opens up free will to luck objections to both indeterminist and determinist accounts of free will.

A formulation of the problem of present luck asserts that the role genuine randomness plays in human decision-making makes it "a matter of luck that the agent chooses, or is the

¹ Fischer p.6

² For a more detailed example of similar sentiments in the literature, see Kane, "A Contemporary Introduction to Free Will" p 7-10

The Curse of Fortune; Responding to Luck Objections in an Uncooperative World. source of, the action she actually performs”.³ Practical determinism, too can be used against free will; Neil Levy characterizes the luck problem for deterministic worlds as a “luck pincer”. He argues that the necessary connection between agents and their decisions that makes deterministic worlds immune to present luck correspondingly makes decisions a mere function of the agent’s initial endowment and environment, both of which are lucky for the agent. The combination of theoretical indeterminism and practical determinism in our world opens free will up to two challenging luck objections. If we are to believe in free will now, we must generate an answer to both of these troubling objections. We may eventually be rescued from one luck objection by empirical findings, but until then we are on our own.

I am to show that convincing responses to both the problem of present luck and the “luck pincer” can be developed. I also offer an example of an account of free will consistent with both responses and the scientific consensus view of the world. For consistency, I will focus on the luck objections provided by Neil Levy in “Hard Luck” and Alfred Mele’s work regarding present luck in “Free Will and Luck”. I argue that Frankfurt examples modified to remove technical indeterminism from the actual sequence render present luck unproblematic in our practically deterministic world. To supplement this argument I shall show that one may adopt this strategy regardless of one’s view on the success of classical Frankfurt examples in proving determinism. I shall also engage Mele’s worry that in situations where the final outcome or “contrastive explanation”⁴ of a choice comes down to luck, that choice cannot be free.

With regards to Neil Levy’s “luck pincer” I will argue that the deterministic hor Certainly it's the case that at every point before the agent's decision is actually finalized it's up to quantum mechanics to swoop in and change the decision.n of the pincer is not lethal to free will. I will argue that an (ahistorical) account of free will in which the origin of the agent’s endowment is

³ I will be referring frequently to Neil Levy’s luck objections in “Hard Luck”

⁴ From Alfred Mele’s “Free Will and Luck” Ch.3

The Curse of Fortune; Responding to Luck Objections in an Uncooperative World. irrelevant to freedom is resilient to this objection. By grounding free action in decisions that spring directly from an endowment, free will can be attained even if the formation and alteration of that endowment is always lucky for the agent. I will argue that a decision is free, so long it is a direct application of the agent's character to the perceived situation and endowment-driven decisions qualify as such direct applications. I shall then reconcile an ahistorical version of free will to cases of manipulation and explain why these cases are not overly damaging to the view. Finally, I will argue that real world cases of "direct outpouring" frequently overlap real world cases that are analogous to anti-luck Frankfurt examples.

1. Frankfurt examples and Present Luck

The following adaptation of the problem of present luck makes use of Levy's definition of luck to generate the worry that indeterminism renders free choice impossible:

1. When indeterminism plays a final role in an agent's decision making process, nothing about that agent is sufficient to necessitate her decision.
2. If nothing about an agent necessitates her decision, then the deciding factor of that decision is external to the agent and outside of the agent's control.
3. When indeterminism plays a final role in an agent's decision making process, the deciding factor in a decision is external to the agent and outside of the agent's control.
(1,2 MP)
4. If a fact is external to an agent and outside of her control, and significant for that agent, that fact is lucky for that agent.
5. When indeterminism plays a final role in an agent's decision making process, the deciding factors in significant decisions are lucky for the choosing agents. (3,4)MP

The Curse of Fortune; Responding to Luck Objections in an Uncooperative World.

6. If the deciding factor in a decision is lucky, the chooser does not exercise free will in that decision.
7. When indeterminism plays a direct role in the choosing process, choosers do not exercise free will in significant decisions. (5,6)MP
8. indeterminism plays a final role in the choosing process.
9. Choosers do not exercise free will in significant decisions (7,8)MP

Essentially, Levy claims that in indeterministic worlds, agents cannot necessitate any particular outcome of a decision. Quantum indeterminacy plays a final role in the fulfillment or frustration of the agent's normal choosing process. Since a final step in the choosing process--the behavior of quantum particles--is outside of the agent's control, and is genuinely indeterministic, it counts as lucky⁵ for her, provided the decision is significant. Quantum fluctuations are "final" in the sense that they possess a sort of "veto power" over the agent's mental state and deliberation. In an indeterministic world such as ours, there is always the potential for a random last-minute indeterministic override to alter what the agent chooses. As such, a decision-determining factor in indeterministic decisions is lucky and the agent does not exercise free will in that decision. Since this logic applies to all significant decisions, the argument's conclusion eliminates free will for all significant decisions. Significant here should be understood in the broadest sense, as "making any difference at all", and the agent need not be aware of her choice's significance. The conclusion is clearly unacceptable for most defenders of free will, so they must find some way to question its soundness.

Since my response to the problem of present luck revolves around the adaptation of classic Frankfurt examples (I will refer to Frankfurt examples concerned with proving alternate possibilities are not required for free will as classic), a brief summary of these influential cases is

⁵ A more rigorous explication of the concept of luck can be found in "Hard Luck" Ch.2

The Curse of Fortune; Responding to Luck Objections in an Uncooperative World.
 in order. Classic Frankfurt examples are putative counterexamples to the statement, “*if an agent does could not have done otherwise than act how he did, then he is not morally responsible for that decision*”.

In classic Frankfurt examples, the manipulative Black is dead set on our chooser Jones acting according to his plan. The original case continues as follows:

“Black does nothing unless it is clear to him...that Jones is going to decide to do something *other* than what he wants him to do. If it does become clear that Jones is going to decide to do something else, Black takes effective steps to ensure that Jones decides to do...what [Black] wants him to do... Now suppose that Black never has to show his hand because Jones, for reasons of his own, decides to perform and does perform the very action Black wants him to perform. In that case, it seems clear, Jones will bear precisely the same moral responsibility for what he does as he would have born if Black had not been ready to take steps to ensure that he do it.”⁶

The critical feature of the Frankfurt case is the isolation of the feature of the world that eliminates Jones’ possibilities from the real-world. Black’s manipulation plays no role in the actual sequence of Jones’ decision, and thus Jones chooses exactly as he would if he had truly had said alternatives. Thus, the recipe for a frankfurt example is to construct a situation where the supposedly necessary condition is absent, but its absence has no effect on the actual decision. As such, we are left with a situation in which the lack of a supposedly essential factor cannot affect the situation’s end result.

Tweaking the formula presented by classic Frankfurt examples can provide just this response by providing a counterexample to premise (6) *If the deciding factor in a decision is*

⁶ From Frankfurt “Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility” p 835-836.

The Curse of Fortune; Responding to Luck Objections in an Uncooperative World.

lucky, the chooser does not exercise free will in that decision. Applying the method of Frankfurt examples, we set out to create a case where the deciding factor in a decision is lucky, but the chooser still manages to act freely. We do this by relegating the “luckiness” of the choice to counterfactual space, and letting the situation play out as it would in a luckless scenario. I will describe such cases directed at highlighting the irrelevance of luck as “anti-luck” Frankfurt examples.

Consider the following case. Black and Jones inhabit a technically indeterministic but practically deterministic world much like ours! Suppose further that in this world, normal decision-making processes are deterministic. Given his extensive information on Jones’ mental states, Black knows that Jones will act in a very boring and practical manner. Being a tad eccentric, Black wishes to interject a little chaos into the situation. He installs an indeterministic device in Jones’ brain, which uses genuinely random quantum processes to simulate 100 coin flips. If all of the flips come up “heads”, the device will deterministically override Jones’ decision to the most fun and spontaneous alternative (as programmed by Black). The box remains inactive for the entire deliberative process, simulating its flips and either interfering at the moment of Jones’ decision or remaining dormant the entire time. Unsurprisingly, in the actual world at least one flip is tails, and Jones proceeds to decide exactly as he would have in the nearest deterministic universe. The box very explicitly makes Jones’ ultimate decision a matter of luck, yet in no way interferes with Jones’ decision. Black later responds to the accusation that he has rendered Jones’ decision unfree by pointing out that his box had no more influence on Jones’ decision than the music box his daughter had been using at the time. He argues that if Jones did not decide freely, Black’s box is certainly not the cause of this limitation.

One important point demands clarification: even if successful this anti-luck Frankfurt case does not constitute a strict counterexample. After all, if for some reason Jones did not

The Curse of Fortune; Responding to Luck Objections in an Uncooperative World. have free will to begin with, Black's tampering will certainly not restore it.⁷ What the example does show; however, is that-in practically deterministic choices-lucky factors are no danger to the agent's free will provided they don't interfere significantly with the causal chain. Thus, anti-luck Frankfurt examples move the question of free will back a step, to whether free will is possible in a practically deterministic world. To answer that question in the affirmative is beyond the scope of this paper. But the ultimate success of anti-luck Frankfurt examples is related to the success of my response to the luck pincer in the sense that the success of the latter offers a good reason to believe that this response to present luck is likewise fruitful, since one significant objection to practically determinism free will has been answered. I will postpone concerns about practically deterministic free will and move to consider possible objections to the anti-luck Frankfurt examples in themselves.

1.1 Anticipated objections to anti-luck Frankfurt examples.

One immediate objection that may spring to mind for many libertarians is that the classical Frankfurt examples upon which the anti-luck examples are based fail⁸. As such it is possible that anti-luck cases fail in an analogous way. I will briefly sketch out the common objections to classic Frankfurt cases and explain why similar problems do not apply to the anti-luck examples. I will discuss both the "flicker of freedom" and "indeterministic world" objections.

Dismissing the "flicker of freedom" objection is the most simple of the two. Objectors argue that for Black to be able to rule out alternate possibilities he must be able to identify some factor in Jones' behavior that reliably indicates his future decision to misbehave. As such, if Jones were to act against Black's wishes he would make some facial twitch or play with his hair

⁷ Unless what Jones was missing was exactly and only the sort of alternative possibilities technical indeterminism provides. But most proponents of alternative possibilities require the agent have control over which possibility is selected, which Jones does not.

⁸ I personally disagree with this statement; however, I will neglect to defend the classical Frankfurt cases here, instead showing why the best objections to them fail to apply to anti-luck cases.

The Curse of Fortune; Responding to Luck Objections in an Uncooperative World.
 a certain way or some other such indicator. Objectors claim that the legitimate alternative possibility Jones had when making this sign is the act through which he can be morally responsible for his eventual decision. Fortunately, similar objections do not apply to anti-luck examples. While it is true that Jones' previous choices were not subject to present luck at any time before the moment of his decision, it is not the case that the presence or absence of any previous indeterministic luck has any impact on whether *the deciding factor in this decision is lucky*. The indeterminism box is completely insensitive to Jones' history. Put simply, an agent cannot be free from luck in any particular decision solely in virtue of some fact about a previous decision.

The "indeterministic world" objection to classic Frankfurt cases can be sketched as follows in argument form:

1. Jones inhabits either a deterministic or indeterministic world.
2. If Jones' world is indeterministic Black cannot know with certainty that Jones will not decide contrary to his expectation.
3. If Jones' world is deterministic Black's meddling is inconsequential to his lack of alternative possibilities.
4. if Jones inhabits an indeterministic world then Black fails to remove all alternative possibilities
5. if Jones inhabits a deterministic world then Black's meddling is irrelevant to the question of moral responsibility.
6. Either Black fails to remove alternative possibilities or his meddling is irrelevant to Jones' moral responsibility.
7. So classic Frankfurt examples fail to demonstrate that alternate possibility is unnecessary for moral responsibility

The Curse of Fortune; Responding to Luck Objections in an Uncooperative World.

Regardless of the success of such objections against classic examples, there is no vagueness about the sort of world Jones inhabits in the anti-luck example. It is explicitly stated that anti-luck Jones inhabits a technically indeterministic but practically deterministic world. It is no coincidence that this is exactly the world described by the current scientific consensus, since this paper is directed at developing answers to the luck problems that arise in what scientists believe is the actual world. The technical indeterminism is consistent with the sort of genuinely random event required in the example, so there is no hidden ambiguity about the state of the world in anti-luck examples to be scrutinized.

Alfred Mele has characterized a parallel worry regarding present luck in indeterministic worlds by referring to contrastive explanation⁹. It is worth asking if anti-luck Frankfurt examples fail to secure free will from worries regarding contrastive explanation that spring from present luck. Mele voices the worry that in indeterministic worlds for any agent X who chooses action A, there is an identical agent X* in a nearby possible world who chooses something other than A. Since the agents are exactly identical up to the moment of decision, the difference between the two worlds that explains the X's diverging choice must be completely external to X, a matter of luck.

Let us put our anti-luck Jones in Mele's framework and see how his free will holds up. As per Mele's objection, there exists a nearby Jones* who makes the fun and exciting decision Black recommends at the final moment. Moreover, in the anti-luck example, it is abundantly clear that the factor explaining the difference in choices is Black's indeterminism box, (more precisely the sequence of quantum "coin flips" it simulates), a clear source of luck for Jones. So the only difference between Jones and Jones* is a matter of luck, as Mele claims. Is this fact cause for worrying about Jones' free will?

⁹ "Free Will and Luck" p70-73, Ch.1

The Curse of Fortune; Responding to Luck Objections in an Uncooperative World.

I claim that there is one salient difference between Jones and Jones*, explaining why Jones is exercising free will in the situation. For Jones*, the indeterminist box overrides his determining natural proclivity towards boring action. Jones* is a victim-or perhaps beneficiary-of luck. Jones, in contrast, is completely unaffected by the indeterminist box, and chooses normally according to his personality, rational capacities and assessment of the situation. The luck introduced into the situation by Black's box fails to causally interact with him in any way. The difference between Jones and Jones* is merely a matter of luck, but that luck matters only for Jones*.

One way Mele motivates the problem from contrastive explanation is to question the legitimacy of aiming differing moral judgements at identical agents who differ only in regard to their good or bad luck in making a particular choice. Can we blame Jones for his boring decision, or praise Jones* for his exciting decision, given that the difference between their choices is a matter of luck? It seems that we can hold Jones responsible; his decision to act boringly was not influenced by luck at all. In contrast, Jones* acted in an exciting matter only because of Black's box. His decision to act excitingly is merely the result of a series of unlikely quantum swerves in the box, and are not a consequence of his beliefs, values or deliberation. Because of this we can justifiably criticize Jones for his boring action, although we cannot praise Jones* for his exciting choice. Although the **contrastive** explanation of the differing choices indeed makes exclusive reference to luck, luck plays no part in the **actual** explanation of Jones choice; he acts exactly as he would in a luckless world. It is the presence of luck in the **actual** explanation of Jones*'s decision that makes his action unfree.

It may be legitimately charged that anti-luck Frankfurt examples only answer the problem of present luck in certain specific situations. Because of this, it may be thought their utility in defense of free will is highly limited. For instance, in the anti-luck case, the indeterministic

The Curse of Fortune; Responding to Luck Objections in an Uncooperative World.

factors of the universe are completely external to his decision process. In the real world;

however, quantum events occurring in our brains are necessary components of our decision-making in the direct physical sense. Does this disanalogy cripple anti-luck cases? The answer seems to be no, on the level of the neurons, quantum fluctuations rarely, if ever, have any impact. They are technically a component of decision making processes, but as with Black's box, quantum fluctuations are capable of having a significant impact on decision making only on massively lucky occasions. Like the box they can, in principle, significantly impact decisions, but in situations where they do not, quantum fluctuations likewise pose no threat to free will.

But the objector's initial point still stands; anti-luck cases only successfully resist free will when lucky elements fail to override the decision the agent would make in a nearby deterministic world. If Jones were incapable of deterministically choosing between the boring and exciting choice, Black's box would clearly make his eventual decision a matter of luck, regardless of whether or not it was activated. When there is no sufficient cause within the agent for making a particular choice, any chancy deciding factor is capable of rendering the decision a matter of luck. It is only in cases where the agent is significantly or even drastically in favor of one choice over the other that present luck is irrelevant. The exact number of this significance threshold is vague, but it is certainly satisfied if the chance of failure is less than the chance of 100 coins flipping heads. And the scientific consensus is that the possibility of a series of quantum fluctuations occurring being sufficient to override an entrenched decision with a significant deliberative process is certainly below that threshold. As such, in situations where the agent is vastly predisposed in favor of a certain decision and no lucky factor interferes with that decision, the fact that the decision's determining factor is lucky fails to undermine that agent's free will.

The Curse of Fortune; Responding to Luck Objections in an Uncooperative World.

2. Practical determinism and the Luck Pincer

While I have been leaning heavily on Neil Levy's definition of luck to characterize the problem of present luck, Levy himself agrees that "Libertarianism can dispense with chanciness by borrowing...heavily from compatibilism"¹⁰. Levy allows that "real world" accounts of free will that are technically indeterministic but practically deterministic can withstand the problem of present luck by itself. But Levy claims deterministic accounts of free will are vulnerable to a "luck pincer", which combines Issues of indeterministic and deterministic luck.

Here is a summary of Neil Levy's "Luck Pincer"¹¹

1. A deterministic agent's endowment¹² is purely a matter of luck for that agent.
2. External deliberation-influencing factors are lucky for a deterministic agent.
3. If an agent's endowment at a given time is a matter of luck, so are the decisions settled by that endowment.
4. Decisions completely settled by an agent's endowment are a matter of luck for that agent. (1,3) MP
5. To the extent that an agent's endowment fails to completely settle a decision, her decision is decided by external factors which are lucky for that agent. (2)
6. A deterministic agent's decisions are always settled by a combination of her endowment and external factors.
7. A deterministic agent's decisions are always a matter of luck for her. (4,5,6)

¹⁰ Levy "Hard Luck" 77.

¹¹ Ibid. argument adapted from Ch.4.

¹² Levy defines an endowment as the collection of an agent's desires, beliefs, values and deliberative tendencies.

The Curse of Fortune; Responding to Luck Objections in an Uncooperative World.

8. Decisions that are a matter of luck cannot be free.

9. Deterministic agents cannot act freely. (7,8)MP

The force behind Levy's argument comes from two complementary sources: initial endowments and external environmental factors. Our initial endowments are indeed lucky for us. We exercise no control over them, they are highly significant for us, and are drastically different for many others. Conjointly, this lack of control, high significance and variation across individuals is sufficient for the selection of our initial endowment to count as lucky. Additionally, in a deterministic world, decisions our endowments leave "up in the air" must be settled by external factors (usually during the deliberative process). Subconscious influences brought on by physical circumstances frequently influence our moods. Environmental inputs can also determine which deliberative considerations are brought to mind in deliberation or left unnoticed. A radio melody can remind us to consider our mother, youth, or how much we hate our neighbor. The "gaps" our endowments bring to difficult decisions are settled in one way or another by these external lucky factors. On the surface, it appears as if deterministic agents are besieged by luck on all sides.

I will offer an argument for the conclusion that decisions resulting from our endowments are free. I will claim that my argument is superior to Levy's because the individual premises are more reasonable than Levy's (3) *If an agent's endowment at a given time is a matter of luck, so are the decisions settled by that endowment.* Specifically, I will argue that my second premise is significantly more firmly established than (3). As such, readers should prefer my argument to Levy's. I shall refer to my argument as "the Outpouring argument" to differentiate it from Levy's "Luck Pincer". I shall refer to my preferences in shorthand by (O1) for premise 1 to avoid confusion.

The Curse of Fortune; Responding to Luck Objections in an Uncooperative World.

1. If a choice is the direct outpouring¹³ of who we are at the moment we make it that choice is free.
2. In situations where our endowment (desires, values, deliberative tendencies) is sufficient to (practically) determine our decisions, our choice is the direct outpouring of who we are at the moment we make it.
3. In situations where our endowment is sufficient to practically determine our decisions, our choice is free. (1,2) MP

My sub-argument for (2) runs as follows:

- a. Suppose not (2). Then there exists some component of our identity relevant to decision making not expressed in the normal application of our endowment.
- b. But there is no such component of our identity.
- c. So (2). (a,b CONT)

2.1 Anticipated objections to Outpouring Argument

Since the Outpouring Argument is valid, objectors will likely take issue with either premise (O1) or (O2). I will discuss (O1) only briefly, as it strikes me as generally uncontroversial. (O1) states *If a choice is the direct outpouring of who we are at the moment we make it that choice is free*. I am not sure what could be expected of free will other than that it allows us to be the direct causes of our decisions in the absence of external interference. Luck objections, alternate possibility worries, and concerns about divine foreknowledge all seem at their core to object to outpouring. The primary worry of these objections is some factor **outside** of the agent's normal decision-making method is actually responsible for some significant portion of decisions. It is informative that there is no "agential" problem of free will; the

¹³ I am simply using outpouring as a term for the natural application of our endowment to the perceived situation. Significant outside interference in the decision constitutes a violation of the outpouring condition.

The Curse of Fortune; Responding to Luck Objections in an Uncooperative World.
possibility that the agent makes her own decision according to her rationality and perceived judgment is a desired outcome for nearly all free will defenders. That said, an argument demonstrating that agents must rely on some would be highly interesting and informative, and I would welcome such a unique response.

The second claim is the more contentious of the two: (O2) *In situations where our endowment (reasons, values, deliberative tendencies) is sufficient to (practically) determine our decisions, our choice is the direct outpouring of who we are at the moment we make it.* I will not discuss issues relating to present luck in this segment since my defense is recorded above. As indicated in my sub-argument, if the natural application of our endowment to our perceived circumstances fails to constitute the natural outpouring of who we are, there must be some part of our identity relevant to decision making that fails to be expressed in our endowment. The obvious question arises naturally; what could this additional part of us possibly be? It cannot be our deliberative tendencies, desires, values or the like since those are explicitly contained in our endowment. It is part of us, so external factors are also ruled out. The extra factor supposedly necessary for a decision to count as a direct outpouring is thus nothing in what is generally accepted to be our normal decision making process, and nothing external to our character. We are looking for some hidden corner of our agency that is both necessary our decision to be a natural extension of who we are and not contained in the complete picture of our desires, values, memories, deliberative nature, or character.

This quandary brings to mind the mysterious extra factors frequently offered in response to the problem of present luck. Ironically, such ideas here do more to hamper the cause of free will than to promote it. In this case; however, it is not enough for objectors to suggest that these factors exist and help enhance agential freedom. It must be argued that these factors are also essential to our agency so that an action cannot be a direct outpouring of who we are without

The Curse of Fortune; Responding to Luck Objections in an Uncooperative World.
their application. Such a significant metaphysical claim would require its own paper to address, but suppose for a moment there does exist some additional component of our agency whose intervention was necessary for direct outpouring and presumably free action. Agent-causationists, for example, might champion the existence of some such component of our identity. Since this extra factor might not be expressible through normal means, it is now possible that decisions from our endowment may not be *direct outpourings of who we are at the moment*, since those decisions will fail to reflect this non-physical yet essential aspect of our identity.

Despite this possibility, the outpouring argument is only in danger if this factor for some reason cannot be expressed in normal deterministic decision-making processes. To claim both that some external factor exists that is both necessary for us to choose as a direct outpouring of our agency **and** cannot be exercised in conjunction with our endowment is a high standard indeed. The outpouring argument need not fear this eventuality until significant work is done showing its plausibility.

There is room in the logical space for another objection. There may be some factor necessary for a decision to qualify as a direct outpouring that simply does not exist in agents in our world. To make this claim; however, is largely ad hoc, as there is no legitimate preliminary reason to believe such a factor exists. On the face of it, if you were divinely guaranteed that your actions would stem directly from your values, desires, character and assessment of the situation without interference, would your initial response be one of skepticism about your ability to make decisions as direct outpourings of your character? Your divine blessing guarantees that outside factors will not intervene or determine your deliberations; your decisions are always determined by the normal application your nature as a rational agent to the situation at hand. If this is not sufficient for a choice to be a direct outpouring of who you are, what is?

The Curse of Fortune; Responding to Luck Objections in an Uncooperative World.

In summary, I argue that the premises of my response to Levy, especially the weakest premise, (O2) *In situations where our endowment (desires, values, deliberative tendencies) is sufficient to (practically) determine our decisions, our choice is the direct outpouring of who we are at the moment we make it.* I claim that if (O2) is false, there must exist some integral choice-making aspect of our agency outside of and incapable of being implemented through our endowment. Since such a factor is unlikely to exist, we have drastic reason to prefer the acceptance of (O2) than to Levy's (3) *If an agent's endowment at a given time is a matter of luck, so are the decisions settled by that endowment.* Suppose you buy an orange at the store, and your current endowment is strongly inclined towards oranges by luck. This does not make your decision for an orange lucky for you **now**. After all, in a very important, perhaps even comprehensive sense, you **are** your endowment. Given this, you may be lucky to be the way you are, but your choice to buy the orange stemmed directly from your character at the moment you made the decision. To claim that this constitutes not only luck, but luck of the significant and unacceptable variety is rightly viewed with suspicion. I hope I have convinced my readers likewise.

3. Conclusion

Scientific consensus opens up free will defenders to objections based in both nondeterministic and deterministic aspects of the world. Technical indeterminism makes free will vulnerable to the problem of present luck. Anti-luck Frankfurt examples can diffuse this worry in situations where luck fails to intervene with the chooser's actual sequence. Neil Levy's luck pincer creates a parallel worry that combines the question of present luck with a new, deterministic element. Since our endowments are generated and impacted heavily by lucky factors outside our control, decisions that spring from them must also be a matter of luck. I argue that in such situations, endowment-driven decisions can still be the direct outpouring of

The Curse of Fortune; Responding to Luck Objections in an Uncooperative World.
who we are at the moment, since our endowments are so integral to our identities. Taken together, both of my responses to luck problems secure free will from both halves of the luck pincer in cases where an agent's endowment practically determines their decision. In this way, I hope that without recourse to other responses, a view where practically determined decisions can be free regardless of luck's influence. It is my hope that the arguments advanced in this paper will prove useful to defenders of free will who share my interest in defending free will from the unique problems posed by world we (probably) inhabit.

The Curse of Fortune; Responding to Luck Objections in an Uncooperative World.

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