

Agent-Causation, Explanation, and Akrasia: A Reply to Levy's *Hard Luck*

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Abstract I offer a brief review of, and critical response to, Neil Levy's fascinating recent book *Hard Luck*, where he argues that no one is ever free or morally responsible not because of determinism or indeterminism, but because of luck. Two of Levy's central arguments in defending his free will nihilism concern the nature and role of explanation in a theory of moral responsibility and the nature of akrasia. With respect to explanation, Levy argues that an adequate theory of moral responsibility must be able provide contrastive explanations of why an agent performs one action *rather than* another, and that libertarians lack the resources to provide such explanations. With respect to akrasia, Levy argues that it is impossible to be directly morally responsible for akratic actions. In response I argue that any sense of contrastive explanation that can reasonably be thought to be a requirement on an adequate theory of moral responsibility is a sense that agent-causal libertarians can secure. I then argue that the agent-causal theory of free will offers an alternative and attractive understanding of motivation and self-control (than offered by Levy) that makes it plausible to think that we can be morally responsible for akratic actions.

Keywords Free will · Moral responsibility · Libertarianism · Luck · Explanation · Akrasia

Introduction

There has been an explosion of philosophical (and scientific) work on free will and moral responsibility over the last 60 years. This work has been penetrating and exciting, often uncovering new or long forgotten views on the nature of freedom and moral responsibility, and related concepts of self, blame, and punishment. One of the most intriguing

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