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Free will, causation, and Sartorio's *Causation and Free Will*

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ABSTRACT: No matter what side one takes in the debate about free will, one will also have to accept certain metaphysical assumptions about causation and causal laws and, consequently, posit a certain ontological framework. In *Causation and Free Will,* Sartorio develops a compatibilist, actual causal sequence account of free will which is grounded on certain controversial features that causation presumably has. In this paper, we argue that those features cannot be jointly incorporated adequately into any plausible philosophical account of causation regardless of the validity of the thesis of causal determinism, and that they work against one another in Sartorio's account of free will. We argue that no philosophical account of free will can establish the freedom of the will without offering a plausible answer of how an agent can have a grip on causation.

KEY WORDS: Free will, causation, omissions, causal history, causal powers.

Introduction

Free will and causation are two traditional and complex issues within metaphysics. There are many positions which one can hold concerning the problem of free will, and the same is true for causation. First, one can be an incompatibilist and hold that under no conditions are determinism and freedom compatible, so they cannot both be true. On the other hand, compatibilists hold that freedom and determinism are compatible, while some of them even insist that freedom of the will obtains only if determinism is true. Incompatibilists can be either hard determinists, who hold that determinism is true and there is no free will and freedom of action, or libertarians, who hold that determinism is false and there

is free will and freedom of action. We could also add a third position on this issue: Those who assert that whether determinism holds or not, there is simply no freedom of the will.

Determinism is sometimes interpreted as causal determinism, and the notion of causation is frequently used in discussing various questions about free will and the freedom of action, regardless of the position one holds. The problem of defining what exactly is causation and what kind of things can enter into causal relations has produced a rich and interesting philosophical discussion. Causation is one of the key notions in various theories and accounts in the philosophy of science, philosophy of mind, and epistemology. It can be said that no one has influenced the philosophical debate on causation more than Hume. His work on the problem of causation was a starting point for different accounts of causation, most commonly associated with regularity and counterfactual theories of causation. In opposition to those metaphysical accounts and their ontological consequences, which Lewis (1986) famously labelled "Humean supervenience", a new set of theories and accounts have emerged since the 1970s, collectively described as a neo-Aristotelian approach to causation. There are, however, further elaborated approaches to the problem of causation, such as Salmon's process theory (1984), Woodward's interventionist account (2003), and different causal pluralist accounts, but we should be careful to differentiate metaphysical accounts from merely epistemological accounts of causal relations when introducing causation into the free will debate.

Still, because of the complexity of these two metaphysical problems, many important notions about causation are sometimes only sketched, or a certain view of causation is just assumed, because the development of the arguments and theories about the freedom of the will do not allow going further into the problems of causation, which is, of course, reasonable and understandable. For example, compatibilist accounts of free will or causalist account of action operate with events as causal *relata*, while the notion of a causal power in the Aristotelian sense is crucial for agent-causation theorists. We do not thereby say that there are no elaborated conceptions of causality present, but it seems that the time has come to go even further. So it seems that taking certain details and elaborated features about causation should benefit the free will theorists. This is shown by Sartorio (2016). We consider her work as a welcome contribution to the debate but, as is usual among philosophers, we do not agree with some of her claims. In this article, which primarily focuses on her book *Causation and Free Will* (2016), we try to show how

important it is to take more rigorously the metaphysics of causation in the debate on free will. We shall follow the path laid by Sartorio, but turn to a different side, almost at the first fork.

Causal history of a free act

Sartorio's *Causation and Free Will* (2016) is a close study of the intersection between the metaphysics of causation and free will, and the consequences of that intersection for her compatibilist project. Starting with the premise that the agent in a Frankfurt-style scenario (where the counterfactual intervener does not intervene) is free, and that all that matters for the freedom of the act are the relevant parts of the actual sequence of causes that precede the act, Sartorio develops a compatibilist account of freedom which rests on the validity of certain features that causation presumably has. Although there are similarities between her account and the inner/outer mechanism account of Fischer and Ravizza (1998), Sartorio argues that their account is burdened by its complexity and apparent counterexamples while she offers a simple and more promising route that, according to her, escapes the counterexamples.

According to Sartorio, what grounds our freedom of action is not that we have alternative possibilities at our disposal, but only that the actual sequence of causes (the causal history and external factors of that causal relation) is of the *right kind*. In other words, the freedom of a certain act supervenes on the causal history of that act: differences in the sequences of causes generate differences in freedom. The central tenet of Sartorio's account is therefore the *supervenience claim*: "No difference in freedom without a difference in the relevant elements of the causal sequence" (Sartorio 2016: 29). Such a claim, Sartorio argues, could only be supported if we assume that the following four features of causation hold: (i) absences or omissions can be causal *relata* (Sartorio 2016: 48), (ii) causation is an extrinsic relation (Sartorio 2016: 68), (iii) causes are difference-makers (Sartorio 2016: 93), and (iv) causation is an intransitive relation (Sartorio 2016: 104).

Each of these features of causation is a matter of dispute in the metaphysics of causation and how these issues should be settled is far from clear. Furthermore, accepting these four features of causation pushes Sartorio away from holding on to any specific or general theory or account of causation. In fact, Sartorio claims that even if it turns out that causation does not possess all of these features, "some significant metaphysical relation (or relations) in which actions and omissions can

be involved" or "quasi-causation" (Sartorio 2016: 49) will suffice to ground our freedom and responsibility. We will discuss later in the paper whether this is a desirable consequence or not.

In a nutshell, Sartorio's actual causal sequence (hereafter: ACS) account is based on three claims. The first two are about the grounding of freedom: there is a positive one, "P", which states that freedom "is grounded, at least partially, in actual sequences" (Sartorio 2016: 18), and a negative one, "N", which states that freedom "is not grounded in anything other than actual sequences" (Sartorio 2016: 18). The third claim is the claim of supervenience. At first, the positive claim seems redundant; however, P is needed, according to Sartorio, because N is insufficient on its own as a grounding claim for freedom, for "it is consistent with the claim that freedom isn't grounded in anything at all" (Sartorio 2016: 19). It may be true that there is no complex grounding of the freedom of the will. If someone accepts van Inwagen's claim that freedom of the will is a mystery, one perhaps could say that freedom, in the sense of possessing the ability to do otherwise under the same antecedent circumstances, is a basic fact of the constitution of human beings: that it is a basic brute fact of the universe. In that sense perhaps we could really say that freedom is not grounded at all. But this does not, at present, change the course of the discussion that follows.

In Sartorio's account, the causes that make up the causal history of an act, and which in turn ground the freedom of an act, are only the causes of that action, not the causes of the causes of that action. Throughout chapters 2 and 3 of her book, she considers several pairs of arguments, based on examples, famously discussed by van Inwagen, and which seemingly undermine the claim that the freedom of an act is grounded in the causal history of that act. Sartorio argues that the four features of causation (which are in fact highly controversial!) resolve these potential problems for her ACS view. Consider the first pair of examples: "Phones" and "No Phones".

> Phones: I witness a man being robbed and beaten. I consider calling the police. I could easily pick up the phone and call them. But I decide against it, out of a combination of fear and laziness. (Sartorio 2016: 56)

> No Phones: Everything is the same as in Phones except that, unbeknownst to me, I couldn't have called the police (the phone lines were down at the time). (Sartorio 2016: 56)

It is commonly understood that the agent in "Phones" is free to call the police, and by failing to do so, he can be held responsible for not calling

the police. In "No Phones", it seems that the causal history of the agent's act is exactly the same as in "Phones", yet the agent is not free to call the police since the phone lines were down at the time. Therefore, the agent cannot be held responsible for not calling the police. What grounds the freedom of an agent to call the police, according to alternative-possibilities accounts of freedom, is that the agent in the first scenario had the opportunity to do otherwise. In response, Sartorio argues that the act in "Phones" and the act in "No Phones" do, in fact, have different causal histories. However, this works only if we accept that omissions or absences can be the *relata* of a causal relation. In "Phones", my fear and laziness caused my failing to call the police by my not trying to call the police. In "No Phones", my fear and laziness could not cause my not calling the police since the phone lines were down. The state of the phone lines precludes that such a causal relation could obtain, or the state of the world is simply such that there could not be a causal relation between my not trying to call the police and my failing to call the police. There are further examples that Sartorio discusses and they all share a similar structure. *Prima facie*, it seems that the supervenience claim withstands these alleged problems.

Since the state of the phone lines is not a part of the causal history of my action (or inaction), and yet it seems highly relevant, Sartorio argues that this is so because of the extrinsicness of causal relation. She defines extrinsicness as follows: "A causal relation between C and E may obtain in part, owing to factors that are extrinsic to the causal process linking C and E" (Sartorio 2016: 71).

Consider an example of the extrinsicness of causation that Sartorio discusses:

> Imagine, for example, the act of redirecting a train from track A onto another track B, in a case where the two tracks reconverge shortly before the train reaches the station. [...] Although it helps determine the particular way in which the outcome is brought about, or the particular causal route to the outcome, it arguably doesn't cause the outcome itself: the arrival at the station. [...] For imagine, now, that the train is redirected to track B in a scenario where track A is disconnected (somewhere before the tracks reconverge). In that case redirecting the train to track B does cause the outcome of the train reaching the station, since the train wouldn't have reached the station if it had continued on track A. (Sartorio 2016: 72-73).

How does this help Sartorio? According to Sartorio, extrinsic factors, such as the state of the phone lines, ensure that there will or will not obtain some relevant causal relation. Therefore, in "No Phones", the state

of the phone lines simply ensures that my fear and laziness cannot cause my failing to call the police. That causal relation cannot obtain because of the extrinsic causal factor: the state of the phone lines. We can only claim that, in "No Phones", my fear and laziness caused my failing to try to call the police but not my failing to call the police. On the other hand, in "Phones", according to Sartorio, "[m]y not trying to call the police in fact causally resulted in my not calling the police" (2016: 78). Therefore, it is not true that the agent's acts in "Phones" and "No Phones" had the same causal history but differ in freedom to call the police.

The underlying metaphysics of Sartorio's ACS account

Causation by absence or causal relation that includes omissions as its *relata* is a highly controversial feature of causation. Many philosophers would deny the coherence of the idea that nothingness can be a cause of something and that it can be an effect of some event (cf. Beebee 2004), or at least would express doubts about the supposed causal efficacy of such entities (cf. Dowe 2001). However, leaving aside the controversies of causation by absence, the problem for Sartorio arises in supposing that if omissions can be causes or effects, they can also be the cause and the effect in the very same token causal relation. And this is what Sartorio's difference between "Phones" and "No Phones" amounts to. Consider then, the causal claim which Sartorio asserts: "My failing to try to call the police in fact causally resulted in my failing to call the police." Both are omissions and are causally connected. Even if we are ready to accept that an omission can be causally efficacious or that it can be the effect of some event, there is no justification nor any obvious step from it to accepting omissions as both cause and effect in the very same causal relation.

What, then, is the connection between failing to try to call the police and failing to call the police in "Phones" that makes it a causal relation? Certainly, they are somehow connected but we are not presented with an explanation that justifies the relation between these two non-occurrences as a causal one. Sartorio rightly observes that causation by absence is "notoriously explosive" (2016: 33). By accepting absences as causes, we can say that one of the causes of my arriving at work today was the absence of an alien attack. If we allow that an absence can indeed cause another absence, is it the only absence it causes in that case? Does my failure to try to pick up the phone and call the police cause my failure to call the police, and, in addition, cause my failure to call an ambulance or order

a pizza instead? Furthermore, Sartorio states that there is no physical process linking my failure to try to call the police with my failure to call the police. "C brings about E directly" (Sartorio 2016: 71). There is no intermediary event between these two non-occurrences. However, as Sartorio fails to point out, these two non-occurrences are not temporally contiguous either. My failure to try to call the police and my failure to call the police do not occupy different times or make up different events, they occur (or non-occur, if you like) simultaneously. They are the facts of the same event (or of the same state of affairs) – my not reaching for the phone. But this seems highly dubious from the standpoint of the metaphysics of causation because there is no theory of causation that comes to mind which would allow instantaneous causing of the effect by its cause even if we consider facts as causal *relata*. Nevertheless, recall that Sartorio claims that ACS does not need to be grounded in causation or tied to some specific theory of causation. So, she claims that quasi-causation would suffice to ground freedom in this case. But, now, what exactly is quasi-causation? What is its relation to causation and how does it ground freedom? It seems that it grounds freedom only by possessing the aforementioned alleged four features of causation. We shall leave it to the reader to conclude whether this is a satisfying, non-circular answer.

To analyze what and how an agent does (or does not do) something, in terms of the causation connected with the question of free will, we think that we can, and must, ask for an even more fine-grained approach. It seems that things can become complicated very soon, so we have to tread carefully. First, an agent mentally considers and evaluates his beliefs, desires, possible outcomes of possible decisions, and other relevant information on the matters about which the agent is striving to make a decision. The important question may be also how and when the agent acquired the beliefs, desires, and other relevant data about the matters of concern and how the outcomes of past decisions and acts (his and other people's) affect his present thinking and striving to decide about certain matters. The causal influence of such factors perhaps can influence very significantly the outcome and its content. It is also important whether there is an unbroken chain of uniquely determining causes which cause these beliefs, desires, and intentions, that goes outside of the subject, and in such a way that the subject does not have any control over acquiring his own mental (both occurrent and non-occurrent, dispositional) states and processes. It seems that we have to make a fine-grained specification of events, first in order to see what causal powers or factors are indeed "up to the agent", and what strongly, loosely, *ceteris paribus*, or luckily,

does or does not (causally) depend on the agent. It is evident that what is in fact relatively simple in intentional terms or for a description at the general level, is in causal terms more complex. If we would like to get a clear picture, we must define our cases even more specifically, with finer distinctions.

Now, we will make some more general observations about the "Phones" and "No Phones" scenarios. We can ask what causal powers the agent really has and what is causally within the power (control) of the agent. Consider the abovementioned example of calling the police. How far, in any case, do the (causal) powers of an agent go? Is calling the police really fully within the power of the agent? If we specify the case in a more fine-grained way, we see that what is within the reach of the agent is less than "calling the police" even if the lines do function properly. What is within the scope of an agent is to deliberate, to come to a decision, to act according to the decision – and, at least here, things become complex and murkier. Generally, only mental operations and basic physical actions are exclusively, or directly, within the causal powers of an agent.[1] So in a direct "mode", it seems that the direct causal powers of an agent (or direct or basic abilities to cause, or as causes) are to mentally operate thoughts and to move his body (including uttering noises, sounds, words, sentences, and texts). Then, by carrying out basic actions and (in succession or simultaneously) by carrying out basic actions connected with or issuing from formed decisions and intentions, the agent does other things. These other things are non-basic actions which may or may not include objects as tools with and by which human beings do many things. But here, the causal powers that seemingly belong to an agent may not be enough to ensure that what is intended as a final result is carried to its completion. For example, the functioning of the telephone lines does not depend on the agent (unless the agent is a telephone electrical engineer or a director of a telephone company – and we assume not). There, at the interface with the telephone, the direct causal powers of the agent stop, and trying to call is the maximum that can be done with the agent's intrinsic causal powers. Therefore, the agent causes calling the police only *in part*. Calling the police depends on factors which are not within the agent's power as well as on those which are. On the other hand, the act of trying to call the police is *fully* caused by the agent, because it depends exclusively on the agent's causal powers.

[1] For now, we do not presume there is a continuous causal chain operating like in a deterministic world, or, for example, that the agent himself is the source of the "first cause", as in agent-causation.

Therefore, we can state the following. When the lines function properly, my not trying to call the police "ends" in not calling the police. When the lines do not function properly, my not trying to call the police also "ends in not calling the police." The difference is only in the following: in the first case, the police could have been called if I had tried, and in the second case, if I had tried, then the result, not calling the police, would have been caused by the malfunctioning of the lines. Regardless of the state of the phone lines, an agent can only *try* to call the police. To say it in more picturesque words, what is within the power of an agent is to grab the receiver and dial the number. This is what an agent can do in both scenarios discussed by Sartorio.[2] Of course, if the agent *knows* that the lines do not function, then it would be meaningless to try to call the police. But then, there is a completely different causal factor for causing the not trying to call the police (and a justifiable one if we are assessing moral responsibility: the agent knows, in this particular case, something which is strongly relevant for the behavior in the situation; in this case, about the state of the lines). Many things on which we rely are not at all within our power, but they only make *ceteris paribus* conditions: conditions that more or less state that things function properly or as usual. Corollary: Agents are responsible for what they can do, so in the second case, an agent is responsible in the same way as in the first case, even though the lines do not function.[3]

What, then, explains the fact that I failed to call the police? What explains the fact that the police were not called by me? Here is a suggestion. It is a fact that corresponds to a state of affairs in which I am not reaching for the phone. Let us call it then a corresponding fact (a fact that corresponds to a certain state of affairs but is not caused by it).[4] Moreover, similar corresponding facts for my not reaching for the phone to try to call the police are that a man is being robbed and beaten, that I did not call the ambulance, or that I did not order a pizza. However, these facts or state of affairs are not caused by my not reaching for the

[2] Of course, in some other situations, even trying to call the police would not be in my power. For example, assume that the lines function properly even in the following circumstances: there happens to be an earthquake at the moment I would like to reach the phone, so instantaneously there is a spatial gap made between me and the phone, made by that earthquake, which I cannot traverse; or, the telephone is surrounded by armed and strong guards so I cannot go through or past them to reach the phone.

[3] See Zimmerman (2002) for a similar and, concerning responsibility, more elaborated case.

[4] Sartorio uses the term "non-causal consequence" (2016: 81) in an example of a grieving widow. Although the murderer caused the death of the widow's husband, the murderer did not cause the widow's grief.

phone and not trying to call the police. In Sartorio's words:

> [...] whereas the complete causal history of an action will include the relevant thing's being done, the complete history of an omission will not include the relevant thing not being done, but only the agent's not doing it. (Sartorio 2016: 92).

Even if we consider my failing to call the police, the complete history of my failing to call the police will only include the fact that I am not doing it, and the state of the phone lines seems irrelevant. Again, both scenarios, "Phones" and "No Phones", have the same causal histories.

Causation by absence plays a significant role in Chapter 4 of Sartorio's *Causation and Free Will*, which is concerned with the reasons-sensitivity of the agent and implementing it in ACS. Sartorio argues that the agent's reasons-sensitivity is to be understood as encompassing both acting on the basis of the presence of reasons to act, and the absence of reasons not to act. Consider the Frankfurt-style case (without the planning intervention of a neuroscientist) that Sartorio offers in favor of her account: Frank desires to shoot Furt on the basis of reasons that Frank has. Nevertheless, Frank would refrain from shooting Furt if he knew that Furt has five children; call this reason R. Insensitive Frank, on the other hand, also desires to shoot Furt for the very same reasons, but he would be completely insensitive to reason R (assume that Insensitive Frank is physiologically different from Frank in this relevant way) if it was known to him. Both Frank and Insensitive Frank eventually decide to shoot Furt for the same reasons, and it seems that their acts share the same causal history. However, Sartorio once again introduces causation by absence and argues that the two Franks have different causal histories. Frank's causal history involves not only the positive reasons for shooting Furt, but also the absence of reason R. The causal history of Insensitive Frank's act, on the other hand, does not involve the absence of reason R. The role of the absence of potential causes here is purely counterfactual and therefore the actual causal sequence of that act would involve as causes, on a par with positive reasons, countless other counterfactual possibilities in which the act of shooting Furt does not occur. Does this still imply that the only thing that matters for the freedom of an act are the actual causes of that act? Sartorio's answer would be that by reflecting on counterfactual scenarios we can find out more about our actual world.

In a deterministic world, however, only one history is possible, so the only causal chain which is possible is the actual one, and it would be pointless to speak about any other causal chain regarding an assessment of the world in which determinism reigns. In a compatibilist world, which

embraces determinism, only the actual chain of events is possible: there are no other ones possible. The worlds which are fully determined by other causal chains, even if we identify the agents as being the same ones as in this actual world, are different worlds entirely and they do not reveal anything about each other. Each is fully determined in its own special way and this means that only one history is possible for each world, so only the actual histories which obtain, of these worlds, are possible for each of these worlds. Since these histories are, by hypothesis, different, these worlds do not say anything about each other; they, then, cannot be compared so as to gain any insight into our actual world regarding the problem of freedom of the will. Furthermore, if the causal history of Frank's shooting Furt involves the absence of reason R, then it surely involves the absence of, possibly, innumerable causes. Also, reason R, whose absence is a difference-maker between these two causal histories, is, presumably, an arbitrary difference. There could be numerous reasons for which Insensitive Frank would refrain from shooting while Frank would not. An example would be if Insensitive Frank would refrain from shooting Furt provided it were known to him that Furt is a fan of a certain sports team.

Conceiving causes as difference-makers does indeed release the potential threat to the freedom of an agent in a Frankfurt-style scenario. Sartorio (2016: 96) is right in asserting that "an action and the corresponding omission by an agent cannot have the same causal powers." To put it simply, two causal histories of Frank's choice, one involving the presence, and the other involving the absence of reasons, are different. However, introducing the extrinsicness of a causal relation to this type of cases relieves the casual efficacy of Frank's reasons or their absence. Recall the example of a train's reaching its destination in either of two possible ways. Since Frank will make a certain choice no matter the presence or absence of reasons for that choice, the extrinsicness of the causal relation puts Frank in the same position as a switch on a railroad whose two tracks reconverge. Frank determines the route for the reaching of the outcome, but not the outcome itself. Therefore, if causes are really difference-makers and their effects do not counterfactually depend on them, then it seems right for Sartorio to claim that Frank's choice in the scenario without the involvement of the neuroscientist was free. On the other hand, introducing the extrinsicness of causation to this case generates a strong opposition to this conclusion without offering a satisfying answer, and it seems that Sartorio's two features of causation (or quasi-causation) work against one another.

There is one further thing about which we disagree with Sartorio. If determinism is the case, then, contrary to what Sartorio claims, causation *is* transitive. Namely, if we interpret determinism as causal determinism, then there is a unique causal chain that uniquely determines an unbroken chain of events – only one history (as well as future) of a determined universe is possible. Each and every event is fully and uniquely (causally) determined: from the first cause there inevitably follows the effect, which is then the cause of the subsequent effect, which becomes a cause itself, and so it goes for each and every cause and effect in a determined world (except the first cause, which is not the effect of a causal chain of this determined world, but is an effect of a different sort of cause or chance, philosophically speaking). It is like dominoes: you knock down the first and all the rest go down inevitably. From the first cause there is an unbroken unique chain of causes and effects (until the last member or to infinity), where the causation is in fact transitive. The falling of the first domino causes the second one to fall. The second one's falling itself becomes the cause of the effect of the third domino's falling. The third domino's falling now becomes the cause of the fourth one's falling and so, possibly, to infinity or to the last one's falling. The chain of causes and effects transitions from one to another. For example, the last domino's falling is already determined by the first one's falling through the unique and inevitable transition of causation. The first cause causes the last by mediate causes. A determined world is in fact only a little bit more complicated version of this. Using the cosmological argument of St. Thomas Aquinas, we add a little amendment to describe determinism:

> For an earlier member causes an intermediate, and the intermediate causes the last (whether the intermediate be one or many). If you eliminate a cause, however, you also eliminate its effect. So there cannot be a last cause, nor an intermediate one unless there is a first. (Aquinas 2006: 25)

We see that, given determinism, when the first cause obtains, all other effects and causes follow, uniquely and inevitably, depending on the first cause already: causation moves transitively from the first, through intermediaries, to the last (or to infinity). So, the first cause is, through intermediates, also the cause of the last (both cause and effect), though not perhaps the immediate or proximal cause, but certainly efficient. In a deterministic world or in a deterministic causal chain, if A does not occur, neither would C (and not B, of course). So, if A is the cause of B, and B is the cause of C, then A is also a cause of C. Therefore, *it is* the case that in a deterministic world, there is a transitive relation of causation: namely, A causes B and B causes C.

Conclusion

Sartorio (2006) offers a refreshing and new approach in developing a compatibilist argument in the debate of free will. Although we strongly disagree with Sartorio's answers to potential problems with her account, and with her use of highly controversial metaphysical aspects of causation to defend it, we consider *Causation and Free Will* a welcome contribution to the debate on free will precisely because of the introduction of these controversial aspects of causation, which provide a subject for a rewarding and interesting discussion in the metaphysics of causation but have so far been largely neglected in the discussion of freedom of the will and responsibility. Does Sartorio offer a simple and more promising route for actual-sequence accounts? Certainly, her account possesses a simpler structure than the other actual-sequence accounts, such as that of Fischer and Ravizza (1998). However, contrary to the title of her book, Sartorio's account relies on certain features of some metaphysical relation that, at best, only resemble causation. Even if it turns out that those features do not work against one another in different cases, as we have argued here, it is still not clear how does some metaphysical relation that is only relatively close to causation ground the freedom of the will.

To assess whether an agent has genuine freedom of the will and freedom of action, we think that, concerning causation, the answer to the following question is important: Does the agent have a grip on causation or does causation have a grip on the agent? If determinism is true, then we would say that causation has a grip on the "agent"[5] and it only seems that the agent is making decisions: in fact, the agent's mental chain of decision making is governed by causal laws which the agent does not control. Causation controls the "agent". It controls and produces all the mental states and events of the "agent"/subject, as well as his actions. The "agent"/subject would be, in fact, only a passive observer of what happens to the "agent"/subject, though from the first-person perspective it would seem *as* if the "agent"/subject is actively producing his mental events and states, as well as his actions that follow; but this is not so: all these are products of the operation of deterministic laws in the form of completely deterministic causation (cf. Pećnjak 2018). Therefore, for genuine freedom of the will and genuine freedom of action, the answer should be that an agent (to be a real agent) should have a "hold" on causation. We

[5] We put "agent" in quotation marks because we think that in the case of causal determinism, there are no real agents, but rather only (let us say) subjects.

are aware that this leads us towards a version of agent-causal theory (cf. O'Connor 2000, Clarke 2003) or a non-causal theory of freedom of the will (cf. Pink 1996, Goetz 2008, Ginet 1990). However, the explication of our version of these theories is something for the future.

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