

LIBERTARIANISM, LUCK, AND GIFT

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Abstract: According to libertarianism, free will requires indeterminism. Many opponents of libertarianism have suggested that indeterminism would inject luck or chance into human action in a problematic way. Alfred Mele's recent "contrast argument" is an especially clear effort to make this kind of objection to libertarianism precise. This paper is response to the contrast argument on behalf of libertarianism. I argue that worries about luck and chance, enshrined in the contrast argument, arise largely from confusion and lack of imagination. I address the confusion by disambiguating various conclusions the contrast argument is supposed to support. In each case, I claim the libertarian turns out to be on solid ground. I address the lack of imagination by developing (rather tentatively) a hint from William James regarding the relationship between chance and gift.

[W]e now know that the idea of chance is, at bottom, exactly the same thing as the idea of gift—the one simply being a disparaging, and the other a eulogistic, name for anything on which we have no effective claim.

William James

According to the libertarian, the falsity of the thesis of causal determinism is a necessary condition for free and responsible agency. This means that such agency requires, and therefore will have to be compatible with, *indeterminism*. Opponents of libertarianism have taken advantage of this fact by appealing to the way that luck, or mere chance, would seem to threaten freedom and responsibility. If indeterminism is true, then certain crucial agent-involving events will be the result of luck or chance. That which is a matter of luck or chance, the arguments go, is uncontrolled, spasmodic, or in some other way antithetical to freedom and responsibility. Thus, libertarianism cannot provide for the kind of agency we need for free will.

Concerns of this sort comprise a powerful family of "luck" arguments against libertarianism. A great deal of the power of these arguments is attributable to two philosophically misleading elements of their presentation. First, the recent literature has encouraged our facile acceptance of false and frightening images of, and assumptions about, luck and chance.¹ Second, these luck arguments get

¹ Robert Kane (1999) collects an intriguing sampling of these "bogeymen".

much of their traction by trading on confusions about their sources and targets. The principal focus of my attention will be on this second element of the contemporary discussion but I will make some effort near the end to address the first.

As my earlier characterization insinuated, worries about “luck” appear to be worries about the degree to which a libertarian account of free will can ensure that agents genuinely control their actions in an indeterministic world. To give these worries their due, I will begin by presenting what I take to be the most forceful effort to convert them into an argument against libertarianism; namely, Alfred Mele’s recent *contrast argument*.² My goal, then, is to assess how poignant a criticism of libertarianism this argument turns out to be.

The assessment I offer starts by distinguishing three different conclusions the contrast argument might be thought to support. First, the contrast argument can be viewed as an attempt to demonstrate that the invocation of indeterminism will make it impossible for the libertarian to characterize, in her own terms, a notion of control that is sufficient for freedom and responsibility. If it succeeds, then libertarianism will thereby be shown to be a *conceptual failure*. Second, the contrast argument can be viewed as an attempt to demonstrate that compatibilism is to be preferred to libertarianism. If it succeeds, then libertarianism will thereby be shown to be a *comparative failure*. Finally, the contrast argument can be viewed as an attempt to demonstrate that skepticism about free will is to be preferred to optimism about free will. If it succeeds, then libertarianism (and indeed contemporary compatibilism along with it) will thereby be shown to be a *skeptical failure*. With respect to the first two employments of the contrast argument, my conclusions are unambiguous vindications of libertarianism. The requirement of indeterminism, in and of itself, makes libertarianism neither a conceptual nor a comparative failure. With respect to the third employment of the contrast argument my reply on behalf of free will optimism has two prongs. First, I argue that a crucial step in the argument from indeterminism to free will skepticism is simply missing—and not likely to be found. For this reason alone the contrast argument fails to establish the skeptical conclusion. Still, the worries about luck and chance that are enshrined in the contrast argument are likely to continue to exert an undue pressure on libertarianism insofar as they trade on just those frightening images toward which I gestured above. The second prong of my reply to the skeptical employment of the contrast argument, then, is an effort to supplant these images by providing an alternative picture of the implications of indeterminism. Taking a hint from William James (and as an antidote to the images of indeterministic action as spasmodic, twitchy, and stroke-like) I explore the relationship between luck, chance and *gift*.

² Mele (2008) gives the argument its fullest elaboration. We have Randolph Clarke (2005) to thank for the argument’s name—the appropriateness of which will be clear as soon as the argument is presented.

1 THE CONTRAST ARGUMENT

Here, then, is an expression of the contrast argument. Suppose libertarianism is true and that Leo is deliberating about whether to tell the truth or to lie on a given occasion. He has reasons to lie. He also has reasons, of roughly the same strength, to tell the truth. Furthermore, he intends to make his decision now. Suppose, finally, that he decides to tell the truth.³ Given that libertarianism is true, it must also be true that the causal path to Leo's decision was indeterministic. This insures that though Leo decided to tell the truth he nevertheless, at the very same moment (call it *t*), could have lied. The proponent of the contrast argument now draws attention to an implication. If Leo could have lied at *t*, then this means that there is a possible world with the same past as the actual world up to *t* in which Leo lies at *t*. That is, the possible world in which Leo lies at *t* is identical to the actual world at every point prior to *t*. Nothing distinguishes the two worlds prior to *t*.

But now the problem emerges. Randolph Clarke puts it this way:

An argument from luck—what seems to me the strongest form of such an argument—might then proceed as follows. The actual world, where Leo decides to tell the truth, and world *W*, where he decides to lie, do not diverge until the time at which Leo makes a decision. There is, then, no difference in them to account for the difference in the decisions that Leo makes in the two worlds; nothing accounts for this difference. Hence, the difference between the actual world, where Leo decides to tell the truth, and *W*, where he decides to lie, is just a matter of luck. But if the difference between the actual world, in which a certain agent makes a certain decision, and any possible world with the same laws and the same pre-decision history in which the agent makes an alternative decision is just a matter of luck, then the agent does not freely make that decision in the actual world. Hence, Leo does not freely decide to tell the truth. And by a similar line of reasoning, had he instead decided to lie, he would not have freely made that decision. (2005, 412–13)⁴

Furthermore, the worry here looks to be perfectly general. If the contrast argument is sound and Leo doesn't make his decision to tell the truth freely because of trans-world luck, then all the actions of agents in an indeterministic world will be implicated. No free decisions will be possible under indeterminism.

But what, exactly, is this argument supposed to show? More precisely, we should ask how the contrast argument is supposed to undermine the libertarian project. I will consider the three possible answers sketched above, reject the first two, and attempt to weaken considerably the appeal of the third.

³ We will also need to assume that Leo's decision is a basic action.

⁴ I have followed Clarke's reconstruction of Mele's argument rather than Mele's own because some unnecessary details of Mele's presentation (having to do with a certain goddess named 'Diana') are conveniently elided. For the details of Mele's version, see pp. 7–9 of his (2008).

2 CONCEPTUAL FAILURE

One possible answer to the question of how the contrast argument is supposed to work will involve an appeal to conceptual incoherence. It has not at all been uncommon for luck critics of libertarianism to put their complaints in these strongest possible terms. Proponents of what has come to be known as the *Mind Argument* present an especially pointed case of this kind of critical intensity.⁵ Hobart asserted of the libertarian, for example, that “[a]t the very root of his doctrine he contradicts himself” (1934, 5). The various other contributors to this line of reasoning appear to have concurred in this assessment of libertarianism as fundamentally incoherent. J. L. Mackie’s famous presentation of the logical problem of evil seems to be rather explicitly influenced by this popular angle. Mackie rejects as fallacious the standard theistic free will response to the problem because it requires the truth of libertarianism. Thus the free will solution “is unsatisfactory primarily because of the incoherence of the notion of freedom of the will” (1955, 84). Why think anything so strong about the conceptual trouble with libertarianism?

The answer seems to be this. Nearly everyone agrees that for a bit of behavior to be subject to the distinctive forms of moral evaluation characterized by praising and blaming it has to be controlled by the agent. Lack of agential control necessarily undermines moral responsibility. According to this luck objector, the insertion of indeterminism into the action system amounts to an injection of luck. But no one controls that which is a matter of luck. This means that the requirement of indeterminism renders agents incapable of the very form of control that the libertarian herself will admit we need for moral responsibility.

What claims of this sort signal is the possibility that libertarianism is a *conceptual failure* in virtue of its invocation of indeterminism.⁶ In other words, on this reading of the luck objector’s goals, he can be understood to be arguing that the libertarian herself should abandon her view. After all, considerations of the lucky consequences of indeterminism demonstrate that libertarianism entails a contradiction or is in some other way self-refuting. Even Peter van Inwagen, who endorses libertarianism, is driven to his “mysterianism” by virtue of a concern in this neighborhood whereby libertarian commitments at least appear to involve conceptual failure.⁷

But, does the contrast argument deliver the conclusion that libertarianism is

⁵ van Inwagen (1983, 142–50) dubs it “the *Mind Argument*” because of what he takes to be its frequent appearance in the pages of the journal *Mind*.

⁶ Others who take note of the appeal to incoherence in versions of the luck objection include Franklin (2011b), Vargas (forthcoming), and Timpe (2012, see especially the concluding chapter). As Franklin in particular rightly recognizes, both Double (1991) and Smilansky (2000) have put the objection explicitly in terms of incoherence.

⁷ van Inwagen (2000) treats this argument not as a decisive reason to abandon libertarianism but instead as an invitation to be mystified by our free agency. It is also worth noting that van Inwagen employs the roll-back thought experiment that features prominently in this paper in order to buttress what, again, he has called the *Mind* argument. The *Mind* argument and the contrast argument are very closely related. Perhaps, however, they are not identical. For an argument to this effect, see Coffman (unpublished manuscript). It does not seem to me that the differences make a difference with respect to the success of the responses I offer.

incoherent?

No. To see why not, return to Leo's truth-telling. In order for libertarianism to be a conceptual failure the following will have to be true: anyone who insists that Leo tells the truth responsibly even though he lies in another possible world with the same past and laws of nature up to the point of decision must in some way contradict herself. I think we can see rather clearly that no such self-contradiction is in the offing.

As I see it, this form of the luck objection gets off the ground not by arguing for, but rather by asserting, that indeterminism entails a lack of control. What drives the intuitions of those who are compelled by this use of the contrast argument (and its kin) is, I suggest, something like the following reasoning:

1. Indeterminism just is (or entails) luck.
2. Luck just is (or entails) lack of control.
3. Control is necessary for freedom and responsibility.
4. Therefore, indeterminism is incompatible with freedom and responsibility.

Of course, 1 and 2 taken together entail:

5. Indeterminism just is (or entails) lack of control.

With this central claim made explicit, it should be obvious that the libertarian is completely within her rational rights to deny it. She can and should simply refuse to grant that indeterminism bears this intimate relationship to lack of control. And this will not merely be a bald assertion. If the libertarian is an agent-causalist, she can and should insist that the free agent exercises the most fundamental kind of control over his undetermined action; he agent-causes it. If the libertarian is an event-causalist, she can and should insist that the full story of how indeterminism is assimilated into free action just is the story of control. This means that there is nothing incoherent or conceptually problematic in the libertarian assertion that either 1 or 2 of the argument above is false.

Suppose that the libertarian accepts 2 (either as a conceptual truth or by stipulation). In this case, the libertarian has principled grounds for rejecting 1. If we suppose, on the other hand, that the libertarian accepts 1 (either as a conceptual truth or by stipulation), then she will have principled grounds for rejecting 2.⁸ Of course the critic of libertarianism can take issue with the account of control offered by each libertarian. But it will be question begging in the extreme to employ as a premise in this criticism the unsupported claim that indeterminism entails lack of control. That would, after all, just be the denial of the libertarian hypothesis. Put another way, in order for the charge of conceptual incoherence to stick, the luck objector will have to appeal to considerations that the libertarian herself has reason to accept. But whatever support this luck objector can gar-

⁸ I have a preference for accepting 2 and rejecting 1. In addition to further substantive reasons for this preference that will emerge in later sections, this use of the terminology also fits best with the way similar terminology is used in what has come to be called the problem of "moral luck"—wherein "luck" is understood as lack of agent control.

ner for the claim that indeterminism entails lack of control will have to come from a set of anti-libertarian intuitions.

What appears to be emerging here is something akin to what John Martin Fischer has called a “dialectical stalemate.”⁹ In such a situation, competing philosophical positions have apparent argumentative clash. When the arguments are unpacked, however, it turns out that neither party has advanced conceptually neutral reasons in favor of their position. Instead, each party has appealed to the fundamental intuitions of their own view in casting their opponents’ position in a questionable light. The idea that this amounts to a kind of stalemate comes from the thought that the only way to adjudicate between the competing views under such circumstances will be to beg the question against one of them. This would only be “adjudication” in an attenuated and unsatisfying sense. In a stalemate of this sort, then, it will seem that the best we can do by way of the dialectic is provide ourselves with the tepid comfort of internal coherence (admittedly better than being incoherent but not as good as having conceptually independent support).

Tepid as this comfort may appear, it is comfort enough for the libertarian under these conditions. We have been imagining that the luck objector is trying to show that libertarianism is a conceptual failure because of its invocation of indeterminism. Libertarianism would fail in this way only if it could be shown to involve a demonstrable inconsistency. That the libertarian can force a stalemate when her opponent raises a concern about luck indicates that there is no such demonstrable inconsistency—since the libertarian need not contradict herself in insisting that Leo is responsible for telling the truth in the contrast situation. Hence, I conclude that the contrast argument does not show libertarianism to be a conceptual failure.

3 COMPARATIVE FAILURE

A more cautious and subtle appeal to the contrast argument may, nevertheless, show that libertarianism is a *comparative* failure. That is, it may be that the compatibilist is in position to claim a distinctive advantage over the libertarian in this context. Thus, while the compatibilist might admit that indeterministic luck need not thoroughly undermine Leo’s control over his truth-telling, the compatibilist might argue that this form of luck diminishes rather than enhances it. Something (if not everything) is lost with respect to Leo’s control by requiring indeterminism. The control-diminishing effect of indeterministic luck, therefore, gives us a reason to prefer compatibilism to libertarianism.

Put this way, however, the argument remains insufficiently cautious. This is because almost no extant compatibilist can make it. Though the history of philosophy has produced compatibilists (Hobbes, Hume, Schlick, Ayer, etc.) who make the truth of determinism a *necessary* condition for free agency, the vast majority of contemporary compatibilists do not. Indeed, one attraction of compatibilism, to which its present-day proponents sometimes appeal, is its putative

⁹ Fischer (1994, 83–85).

ability to insulate freedom and responsibility from threats from *either* causal pole. We can draw a distinction here between *classical compatibilists* (or soft determinists, who insist that determinism is required for freedom and responsibility) and *supercompatibilists* (who claim, instead, that the truth or falsity of causal determinism is irrelevant to freedom and responsibility).¹⁰ Most extant compatibilists, then, are committed to the view that free agency is threatened by neither determinism nor indeterminism. That is, most compatibilists are supercompatibilists rather than soft determinists. This would make it very awkward for them to launch the argument above. If the contemporary compatibilist is committed to the view that responsibility-ensuring control is not undermined by indeterminism, then it will seem that he has no grounds for insisting that the libertarian is worse off for requiring it. At the very least, it cannot be that the libertarian is worse off *with respect to control* for requiring it. For, on his own compatibilist view, an agent like Leo can possess control sufficient for moral responsibility even if it turns out that determinism is false.

But a nearby argument does appear to be available even to the contemporary compatibilist who hopes to show libertarianism to be a comparative failure. Though the critic may not be able to argue that indeterministic luck diminishes Leo's control, he can plausibly argue that indeterminism does not enhance it. To see why this argument is plausible, begin by imagining that there is some single best contemporary compatibilist account of free agency. Presumably, this account is going to be constructed out of the sturdy and natural materials explored by empirical psychology. In a free action, crucial agent-involving mental events (beliefs, desires, intentions, etc.) will be linked together in such way as to amount to the agent's bringing it about that he performs an act rationally and intentionally. What will make it a compatibilist account is that whether or not the crucial elements are linked together by deterministic rather than indeterministic causal processes will be irrelevant. What will matter is only that they are causally linked in the right way. Now, suppose we take this best compatibilist story and convert it into a libertarian one simply by insisting that there be indeterministic relations between the agent-involving elements at some point in the etiology of a free action. Our only addition to the compatibilist account is indeterminism. Then, it certainly is hard to see how further control on Leo's part can be thought to emerge. Perhaps Leo has not *lost* any control, but it is surely plausible to conclude that he could not have *gained* any either.

What can this conclusion do for the compatibilist in her dispute with the libertarian? Well, if one agrees with the intuitions canvassed at the end of the last paragraph, then the compatibilist seems to be able to argue that libertarianism is *no better* than compatibilism with respect to agential control. Since indeterminism does not provide Leo with enhanced control over his action, we have no reason, with respect to control, to prefer libertarianism. In this sense, we might be able to argue that the contrast argument reveals that libertarianism is a comparative failure in this attenuated sense. The libertarian cannot claim to offer us more

¹⁰ I am indebted to Manuel Vargas (forthcoming) for the terminology of "supercompatibilism."

by way of agential control than the compatibilist.¹¹

This is certainly a much weaker claim than we might have expected from the proponents of the contrast argument and related luck objections. Indeed, it is not completely clear that the libertarian ought to be even mildly disturbed by it. Still, even this more restrained employment of the contrast argument is too bold, and for two reasons. First, even if it is true that the libertarian invocation of indeterminism does not ensure greater control for an agent over an action than he would have had on a purely compatibilist account, it does not follow that compatibilism is thereby preferable to libertarianism.¹² After all, control may not be the only desideratum of a theory of free agency. And it may be that libertarianism trumps compatibilism with respect to these other (non-control-based) values in virtue of its insistence on the falsity of determinism. For example, adding indeterminism to an otherwise compatibilist account of free agency might make it the case that agents like Leo can be genuinely supposed to make a real difference in the world by their actions. Similarly, such undetermined agents may be able to engage in practical deliberation without also having to engage in any form of self-deception. Here I am not arguing for these claims.¹³ I am merely noting the sort of arguments that might be made. This is enough to show that equivalence with respect to control between libertarianism and compatibilism does not entail equivalence all things considered. Since indeterminism may have roles to play in theory preference that outstrip our concerns with control, even the restrained luck objection cannot be thought to demonstrate the general comparative failure of libertarianism.

The second reason to be unimpressed by this restrained use of the contrast argument is that it can be effective only against an event-causal version of libertarianism. Event-causal libertarians insist that actions are the result of the (indeed complex) causal interactions of the mental events constitutive of, and internal to, agency. To say that an agent performed a certain action is to say that the agent's beliefs, desires, intentions, volitions, etc. (all understood as mental events) causally bring about the relevant bit of behavior in a non-deviant way. Obviously, it is in connection with precisely this model of agency that the

¹¹ Christopher Franklin (2011a) makes an intriguing case that the libertarian—indeed, even the event-causal libertarian—can offer an account of enhanced control. Crucial to the argument is the suggestion that control is a function of both ability and *opportunity*. Franklin argues that the appeal to indeterminism is, for the libertarian, an appeal to opportunity. Agents who have both the ability and the opportunity to perform either of two incompatible actions have more control than agents who have the ability but not the opportunity to perform either action. Thus, underdetermined agents can have more control than their determined counterparts, quite apart from any appeal to agent causation. If Franklin's argument is sound, then the claim that libertarianism is a comparative failure is dead in the water. In fact, libertarianism will have a very strong claim to comparative success. Though I am very sympathetic to Franklin's argument, it does employ some mildly controversial assumptions that I would prefer to avoid defending here. I will, therefore, proceed without invoking his nevertheless provocative strategy. Thanks to Kevin Timpe for bringing to my attention the relevance of Franklin's argument.

¹² Robert Kane (1998) is one theorist who believes that indeterminism would diminish control. Even though it would be an obstacle or hindrance to overcome, he nevertheless emphasizes the overall importance of indeterminism.

¹³ Though Randolph Clarke (2003, 108–116) does.

restrained luck objection can be seen to have its force. For the event-causal libertarian appears to accept the very same constraints on the construction of human agency as does the compatibilist. The only addition to the mental stew is indeterminism.

But the libertarian need not be an event-causalist. Obviously, many libertarians are agent-causalists. That is, they insist that the causal relationship between an agent and her action cannot be reduced to a relationship between events internal to her and her action. The agent is a non-reducible primitive substance. Furthermore, in free action it is supposed that the agent (as a substance) directly brings about (say) a decision through the exertion of non-reducible causal power. Thus, Leo can be said to control his action in the most direct and fundamental way. He brings it about directly, and not through the causal interaction of any of his internal mental events. The requirement of indeterminism does not create any space for the version of the contrast argument presently under consideration because it is not a mere addition to an otherwise compatibilist picture.

Of course, agent-causation is an exotic thesis. There may be many reasons to be suspicious about it. But it would seem, if coherent, to provide for a kind of control for an agent over her action that would go beyond that which is available to her ordinary compatibilistic counterpart.¹⁴ This would mean that though van Inwagen may be right in arguing that the agent causal libertarian is no better (and, presumably, no worse¹⁵) off than the event-causal libertarian with respect to the first (conceptual) luck objection, this is not clearly true with respect to the second (comparative) luck objection. By my lights, you will recall, appeal to agent causation is not necessary to vindicate the conceptual coherence of libertarianism. However, such an appeal can, as I have just shown, contribute to a defense of the further claim that libertarianism is not at all a *comparative failure*.

4 SKEPTICAL FAILURE

To this point, I have been developing the idea that the indeterminism to which libertarianism must appeal does not create an intractable problem of control such that we have reason either to abandon the view outright or to gravitate toward compatibilism. The presence of indeterminism does not render libertarianism incoherent on its own terms; nor does it give the contemporary compatibilist a comparative advantage. If you are keeping score, you will have noticed that despite my efforts thus far to defend libertarianism *in general* from conceptual and comparative failure, the agent-causal account of libertarianism has done slightly better than the event-causal account. This is because the agent-causal account posits a fundamental form of additional control available to

¹⁴ Ned Markosian (2002) has invited compatibilists to adopt their own version of agent causation. If Markosian's view is coherent and the compatibilist accepts his invitation, then it seems to me that we will be back to something like a tie with respect to control as regards the comparative assessment of libertarianism and compatibilism.

¹⁵ Recall that if my earlier arguments about conceptual failure are sound, then neither agent- nor event-causal libertarianism is seriously threatened by van Inwagen's "roll-back" argument. Thus, the libertarian does not *need* to invoke agent-causation to meet the conceptual challenge.

agents when they exercise agent-causal power. While the event-causal version of Leo in an indeterministic world is *no worse off* with respect to control than is his compatibilist counterpart, the agent-causal version of Leo appears, in fact, to be *positively better off* (again, I emphasize *with respect to control*). I will be abandoning even further the effort to remain non-partisan in my responses to the third use of the contrast argument since I think it becomes increasingly clear that the agent-causal version of libertarianism has unique resources to deploy in countering it. This is not to say that event- and non-causal versions of libertarianism cannot respond to this third targeting of the contrast argument. Perhaps each can. I will not, however, be making any special effort to construct such responses on behalf of those libertarians who reject agent causation.

What, then, is this third use of the contrast argument? Both libertarianism and compatibilism are, clearly enough, optimistic views about free will and moral responsibility. That is, both are driven by the conviction that free will exists and that some people are in fact morally responsible for some of their actions in virtue (at least in part) of their possessing this freedom. Perhaps worries about the implications of indeterminism amount to an argument against this general optimism. Perhaps the contrast argument should be understood as giving us a reason to prefer skepticism to optimism. If so, and if it succeeds, then the contrast argument will demonstrate that libertarianism is what I will call a *skeptical* failure.

One point to note here is that the contemporary compatibilist—the supercompatibilist, that is—is in no position to revel in this conclusion if it does indeed follow. If libertarianism is not a comparative failure in virtue of its invocation of indeterminism, as I have tried to show, then its being a skeptical failure in virtue of its invocation of indeterminism will not help the contemporary compatibilist cause. What the skeptical failure of libertarianism would show, I'm afraid, is that we ought to endorse either classical compatibilism (soft determinism) or full-blown skepticism about free will. That is, if the contrast argument moves us, the movement ought to be toward the general view that free will is incompatible with indeterminism. Since contemporary compatibilism is committed to the compossibility of freedom and indeterminism, this position is just as vulnerable to the skeptical employment of the contrast argument as is libertarianism. The final position of those who are persuaded by the contrast argument will depend, then, on their assessment of the arguments for the conclusion that free will is also incompatible with determinism. Those who accept the contrast argument and who also go on to accept (say) some consequence-style argument will be on the way to free will skepticism. Those who accept the contrast argument and who go on to resist traditional incompatibilist arguments will be on the way to classical compatibilism.¹⁶ In any case, the point is, again, that the contemporary compatibilist will not be getting any help from this third species of the luck

¹⁶ In what follows I will be essentially ignoring the classical compatibilist (soft-determinist). This is largely because very few contemporary philosophers self-identify as such. I suspect, again, that the explanation for this is that the contemporary compatibilist is moved first and foremost by optimism about our having free will. This optimism is, for these theorists, deeper than any commitment to how the fundamental physics will turn out. As John Martin Fischer expresses the mood, "if I were to

objection. If libertarianism can be shown to be a skeptical failure by the contrast argument, then the same will be true for contemporary compatibilism. What this demonstrates is that libertarians and contemporary compatibilists are bedfellows (strange or otherwise) in the project of showing that the invocation of indeterminism ought not move us toward skepticism. After all, if the contrast argument does give us reason to prefer skepticism to libertarianism, then it equally gives us reason to prefer skepticism to contemporary compatibilism. What I will be offering, then, is a response to the skeptical use of the contrast argument on behalf of the libertarian that I invite the contemporary compatibilist also to consider.

My response turns on a crucial distinction over which, following the recent literature, I have been more or less running roughshod. This is the distinction between luck and chance.

We should notice that luck *befalls* a person.¹⁷ It is something that *happens* to one. When a genuinely indeterministic roll of the dice comes up “snake eyes,” the outcome is merely a matter of chance if I have no bet on the roll. In that case, nothing happens to me or befalls me as a result of the roll. My interests are completely unaffected. The outcome of the roll becomes a matter of luck only when it has some effect on me, good or bad; only if I have money, or pride, or my life on the line, for example. Presumably, even as I type these words, someone in the world has just rolled a pair of ones (in Vegas, or Atlantic City, or Monte Carlo, or behind the corner deli). Who cares? Certainly not me. I remain unaffected. The roll is, we will assume, a chance event. But it is not a matter of luck to me. I do not control it, but neither does it happen to me since it has no impact on my interests.

This point allows us to see that the contrast argument (rhetorical tradition notwithstanding) does not by itself generate a problem of *luck*, a least not for the agent causalist. Remember that, on Clarke’s reconstruction of Mele’s contrast argument, it is “the difference between the actual world, where Leo decides to tell the truth, and *W*, where he decides to lie, [that] is just a matter of luck” (2005, 412–13). But a difference between worlds does not happen to Leo. A difference between worlds cannot *happen* to anyone. It’s just not that sort of thing. If the contrast argument is taken to present a worry about the lucky nature of contrastive action (Leo’s telling the truth *rather than* lying), then a similar point will apply. Telling the truth does not *happen* to Leo because he performs an *action* in doing so. He is not passive with respect to telling the

wake up tomorrow and read in the *Los Angeles Times* that scientists have decisively proved that causal determinism is true, I would not have any inclination to stop thinking of myself, my family and friends, and human beings in general as morally responsible. The precise form of the equations that describe the universe, and whether or not they are or correspond to universal generalizations, are not the sorts of thing that should be relevant to our most basic views of ourselves (as morally responsible agents and thus apt targets of the reactive attitudes)” (Fischer, 1999, 129). Furthermore, however controversial the view is among physicists, the “popular” view appears to be that indeterminism is more likely than determinism to be true. For discussion of the concept of determinism and assessment of its truth, see Earman (1986) and Hoefer (2008).

¹⁷ I owe this point to Meghan Griffith (2010).

truth.¹⁸ Lying does not *happen* to Leo because, of course, he does not lie. Therefore, no sense can be made of the idea that his *telling the truth rather than lying* simply happens to him. It cannot, then, be a matter of luck.¹⁹

I assert again then that the contrast argument by itself does not raise a problem of *luck* for the agent causal libertarian. The contrast situation does not reveal anything such that, given agent causation, Leo lacks control over it and it befalls him.²⁰ But this is not to say that the contrast argument raises *no* problem for libertarianism, agent causal or otherwise. For even if the difference between the world in which Leo tells the truth and the world in which he lies is not, strictly speaking, a matter of luck, it may be a matter of *chance*. And perhaps chance or randomness is enough to threaten libertarianism (and free will optimism more generally). This sort of concern has certainly had a prominent history.

In Section 2, you will recall, I argued that it would be question-begging for the critic of libertarianism simply to assert that indeterminism entails a lack of agential control. What keeps libertarianism from being a conceptual failure, according to my earlier argument, is the fact that the view can maintain its internal coherence by denying the logical or metaphysical linkage between indeterminism and luck. The libertarian claims to have an account of control that emerges out of indeterminism. So to insist that the denial of determinism will straightaway involve the libertarian in a contradiction amounts to philosophical unfairness. I also admitted, however, that the critic of libertarianism might very well take up the project of criticizing the account of control on offer.

Now that we have distinguished luck from chance, we can see how such a criticism—rooted in the results of the contrast argument—might go. What the contrast argument reveals, let's suppose, is the ineliminable presence of *chance* at the point of basic free action for the libertarian. While libertarians do not necessarily contradict themselves in invoking indeterminism, it is not completely unreasonable for skeptical critics of the position to suspect that the objective chanciness revealed by the contrast argument threatens or undermines control. Put another way, even if libertarians can take a purely defensive posture against the conceptual complaint, the skeptical critic may have grounds for thinking that chance at the point of Leo's decision will entail luck or lack of control with respect to that decision. The skeptic will, then, not simply be asserting that indeterminism just is or entails lack of control. Rather, the skeptic will be arguing that indeterminism entails chanciness and that chanciness undermines control. To the degree that there are good grounds for the thought that chanciness entails luckiness, libertarianism (along with contemporary compatibilism, its brother in optimism) is a skeptical failure. The requirement (or mere permission) of indeterminism in these optimistic accounts of freedom will thereby give us reason to

¹⁸ If you think he is, then at the very least you have begged the question against the agent-causal libertarian

¹⁹ Griffith (2010) develops this point with considerable force.

²⁰ I am inclined to think, however, that there is a residual problem of luck for event-causal versions of libertarianism. In insisting, as such views do, on the necessity of indeterministic occurrences of crucial agent-involving events in the composition of free action, the contrast argument may be able to isolate an event over which Leo lacks control and that befalls him.

prefer pessimism.

I have been generous to the skeptic here. After all, it is not as if there are a host of powerful *arguments* that demonstrate that chance entails a lucky lack of control. Largely, this is because the distinction between luck and chance has not been clearly drawn. As a result, in most instances of luck argumentation the inference from chance to luck is elided, assumed, or left to the imagination—rather than defended by argument. In point of fact, I know of no argument that purports to show that objective chanciness by itself entails lack of control.²¹ If my purpose were merely to put my own libertarian mind at ease, I could quit here. When I look directly at the inference that the skeptic expects me to make from chance to luck I simply do not feel its pull. And without an argument that I *ought* to feel its pull, I might just as well move on to other matters. But my goals here go beyond the defense of the internal consistency of libertarianism in the face of the contrast argument. I am also hoping to persuade the free will *seeker* not to draw the skeptical conclusion on the basis of it.²² My generosity is, then, not really directed to the skeptic but rather to the seeker who is beginning to fall under the spell of the skeptic's appeal to the contrast argument.

It is a tricky business to counteract a spell. It is in the neighborhood of refuting an incredulous stare. Nevertheless, I will make some effort to do so. The contrast argument demonstrates, I admit, that Leo's decision in an indeterministic world may indeed be chancy. But the move from chanciness to lack of agential control is, as it stands, unsupported by any further argument. It turns, instead, on images or intuitions about randomness and irrationality that I will try to dispel. I would be more comfortable assessing an argument at this point. But, alas, one hasn't presented itself. Three points, then, about the "defense" that follows.

First, I can hope that at least some of the free will seekers that I am trying to pull back from the skeptical brink will have the spell broken just by seeing that there is no formidable argument forcing us to infer luck from chanciness.

Second, if my assessment of the dialectic to this point is roughly correct, then we should take particular note of its implications. The decision we are imagining ourselves faced with will now be between skepticism, on the one hand, and one or another form of optimism, on the other. Given the very high philosophical stakes, the skeptical argument will need to be especially strong. That is, the free will seeker should, at this point, place a very high argumentative demand on the skeptic and his employment of the contrast argument.

To bring out the point I am attempting to make here, think about the range of philosophical responses to the most sweeping forms of epistemological skepticism—where we can think of "brain-in-a-vat" skepticism or Chisholm's *prob-*

²¹ How about Peter van Inwagen's (2000) rollback argument? Isn't this an argument for the entailment? I think not. It is, instead, an especially clear case of the bald assumption that chance entails lack of control. For detailed assessment to this effect, see Clarke (2005) and Griffith (2005).

²² I hope the concept of a "seeker" is sufficiently intuitive. What I have in mind is a person who has not yet decided what to believe about human free will but who is sincerely interested in reaching a conclusion on the basis of the best available evidence.

lem of the criterion as prominent cases in point.²³ Epistemic optimism enjoys such a deep-seated position in our philosophical economy that we are prepared to go to considerable lengths to preserve it. In fact, many philosophers maintain their optimism quite explicitly *despite* having no response that they themselves consider ultimately satisfying to skeptical arguments. Perhaps we will have to argue in an ugly circle, beg the question, or deny a powerfully plausible principle of closure in order to block arguments for epistemological skepticism. My point is that many philosophers have consigned themselves to such measures under these conditions, and even more of them simply go forward in their epistemic optimism without anything like a reply to the skeptic.

One very hard-nosed (and perhaps uncharitable) way to interpret all of this would be in terms of a collective weakness of philosophical will. Of course, this is precisely how the epistemological skeptic (if one exists) will put the point. We are all refusing to draw the appropriate conclusion solely because we don't like it. What seems a better interpretation, I think, is that the skeptical thesis is rationally required to clear a very high evidential bar—a bar so high, in fact, that even a putatively cogent argument without transparent defeaters doesn't clear it. I admit that free will skepticism is not as philosophically costly as epistemological skepticism. Still, it seems to me that there is a crucial dialectical parallel. What I am trying to emphasize here is that it is reasonable for the free will seeker to demand that the skeptical employment of the contrast argument overcome a similarly forceful presumption in favor of free will optimism.

Third, let me stress again that what follows is not a response to some crisp and clear argument demonstrating that we ought to infer luck from chanciness. There is no such extant argument, I claim. So the imagistic and analogistic appeals I am about to make need to be seen in this light. The skeptical use of the contrast argument, so I say, rides on the back of images and analogies rather than resting on the firm footing of reasonable inference. One important way of destabilizing its mount will involve offering competing images and analogies. If you find the counter-images I muster unsatisfying for one reason or another, let me urge you to recall that there is still no forceful argument for the claim that objective chanciness entails the lack of agential control.

5 CHANCE AND GIFT

The counter-image I will recommend can be found, perhaps unsurprisingly, in William James's colorful essay "The Dilemma of Determinism." Consider, then, this set of claims that seem to lie at the center of James's reasoning about free will optimism and the threat posed to it by something in the neighborhood of the contrast argument:

The sting of the word "chance" seems to lie in the assumption that it means something positive, and that if anything happens by chance, it must needs be something of an intrinsically irrational and preposter-

²³ Roderick Chisholm (1982).

ous sort. Now, chance means nothing of the kind. It is a purely negative and relative term, giving us no information about that of which it is predicated, except that it happens to be disconnected with something else—not controlled, secured, or necessitated by other things in advance of its own actual presence. As this point is the most subtle one of the whole lecture, and at the same time the point on which all the rest hinges, I beg you to pay particular attention to it. What I say is that it tells us nothing about what a thing may be in itself to call it “chance.” It may be a bad thing, it may be a good thing. It may be lucidity, transparency, fitness incarnate, matching the whole system of other things, when it has once befallen, in an unimaginably perfect way. All you mean by calling it “chance” is that this is not guaranteed, that it may also fall out otherwise. For the system of other things has no positive hold on the chance-thing. Its origin is in a certain fashion negative: it escapes, and says, Hands off! coming, when it comes, as free gift, or not at all. (2010, 26–7)

Notice that James characterizes the problem he is facing in terms of a set of assumptions: first, that chance is something positive; second, that chance entails lack of control; and third, that chance entails irrationality. James is prepared to deny all of these assumptions in his effort to defend his commitment to a species of incompatibilism about free will.

With respect to the first assumption, what James seems to be addressing is the possibility that those who fear chance have reified it into a substance with causal powers that might interfere with our agency. He insists, instead, that chance is a purely negative term. Of course, this doesn’t mean that it is essentially bad or undesirable. It isn’t negative in *that* sense. Apparently he means to be emphasizing rather that the term has no positive *content*. To say that an outcome involves chance is to say something about what the outcome is *not*, not about what the outcome *is*. In particular, a chance event is not tied by necessary connections to those events that precede it. With respect to the contrast argument, then, we may be forced to say that the difference between the world in which Leo lies and the world in which he tells the truth involves chance. And, in fact, this may mean that Leo’s decision to tell the truth in the actual world also involves chance. But since chance is a purely negative term, this will mean merely that Leo’s decision (and with it, the difference between the possible worlds) wasn’t guaranteed by any prior state of the actual world. No surprise here. This is simply to say that determinism is false, a fact we have already been assuming. James goes on to assert that the negative character of a chance occurrence does not “preclude its having any amount of positiveness and luminosity from within, and at its own place and moment” (27). This seems absolutely right. The chanciness of Leo’s decision is compatible with its complete internal transience. That is, in spite of the chanciness of the circumstances, telling the truth can appear to Leo (before, during, and after his decision) as the only thing it makes sense for him to do. Chance need not be imagined as some positive

force or power pushing Leo around or getting between him and his reasons at the moment of decision.

Notice, secondly, that James does not appear to be moved by the claim that chance entails lack of control *simpliciter*. What chance entails is that the chance event is “not controlled, secured, or necessitated by *other things in advance of its own actual presence*” (my emphasis). The control is not attributable to “other things” independent of the agent himself. Similarly, the control emerges at the very moment of the chance occurrence. Perhaps chance entails the absence, with respect to at least some basic free actions, of an antecedent guarantee of the result. But antecedent ensuring control is only one form of control—one especially appropriate to mechanisms. A further argument would have to be made that the control we care about in the free will debate is of this variety. The image of control that James seems to have is such that it is exerted fundamentally *by the agent and at the moment of decision*. Far from undermining this sort of control, it is hard to see how objective chanciness is anything more than a consequence of it.

The third assumption that James is prepared to deny is, again, that chance entails irrationality. Presumably this point is related to the purely negative nature of chance as James is conceiving of it. Of course, a chance event could turn out to be irrational. But its irrationality won’t reside simply in its chanciness. Its irrationality would be found in its lack of fit with “the whole system of other things,” or in its positive clash with reason. However, we should ask, once again, what grounds there might be for thinking that objective chanciness would involve either a clash with reason or a failure of systemic fit. I, for one, cannot see what such grounds might be.

With respect to these three assumption that James seeks to reject, I want to develop a suggestive point that he appears to make more or less in passing; namely, that there is a relationship between chance and *gift*. James introduces this idea in the passage quoted above. He later gives further expression to it by insisting, after some discussion, that “we now know that the idea of chance is, at bottom, exactly the same thing as the idea of gift—the one simply being a disparaging, and the other a eulogistic, name for anything on which we have no effective claim” (30). The image is deeply provocative, I think, but also in need of some development and explication.

James appears, in both quotes, to be treating chance as a property of “things” in general. More carefully, however, we can perhaps clarify his view by thinking of *events* as occurring by chance. A chance thing is one whose *coming* is a matter of chance. It is the event of the thing’s appearing that we should regard as the fundamental subject of indeterministic chanciness. But now, what to make of his claim that the idea of chance “is, at bottom, exactly the same thing as the idea of gift”?

Frankly, it is difficult not to impute at least some hyperbole here. Identity or exact similarity between gift and chance just seems implausible. As a case in point, if we assume indeterminism, then there might be countless objectively chancy events occurring all over the universe at the present moment that confer

no benefit on anyone. It would be a remarkable stretch of the language to refer to every chancy event—no matter how isolated from, or irrelevant to, anyone's experience—as a gift. We have all received gifts that did not, in point of fact, benefit us. (Keep those Christmas sweaters coming, grandma!) But each at least *purported* to do so. Surely the indeterministic events occurring in distant galaxies cannot even be *thought* or *expected* to benefit anyone. Furthermore, gifts appear to be distinctively agential. Gifts involve intentional action, or at the very least something analogous to intentionality. This is to say that gifts must be *given*, whereas chancy events can simply *happen*. I conclude, then, that James's stylistic extravagance has outrun his conceptual precision at this point. Still, there may be something for the free will optimist to salvage here.

We can't be sure precisely what James had in mind in linking chance and gift. But suppose the story of human freedom that James might tell goes like this. Leo has agent-causal power, the exertion of which will ensure that he brings about his decision in the light of the reasons for which he exerts it. If he exerts it toward telling the truth for the reasons he has for doing so, then the exertion will issue in a decision to tell the truth. If he exerts it toward telling a lie for the reasons that he has for doing so, then the exertion will issue in a decision to lie. Suppose, further, that the exertion of agent-causal power requires a causally open future. Leo can exert his power toward telling the truth only if it is also causally possible for him to exert his power toward telling a lie. This dual causal possibility will entail that there is some objective chance that he will decide to tell the truth and also some objective chance that he will decide to lie.

Under these conditions, what attitude ought those of us who stand to be benefited by Leo's truth-telling take toward his action when he does indeed tell the truth? Receiving it as a *gift* would seem to be perfectly reasonable. And this would be recognizably different from receiving it in some other way—say, either as payment or as a lottery winning.

By way of exploration, consider Phil, an eccentric philanthropist who has decided to give away a large portion of his money \$100 at a time. His method of distribution is this. He allows the phone book to fall open randomly. Then he closes his eyes and places his finger on a name. The person on whose name his finger falls receives \$100. Now, consider the various ways *you* might receive \$100 from Phil. You may receive it as payment for services rendered. A contract, together with your work product, guarantees that you will receive the money. In a sense, your receipt of the money is determined by the prior state of the world. A second way you could receive the money is, again, *via* a completely random event. Phil selects your name by his eccentric phone book procedure. There is sense to be made of the claim that, when you have earned the money, the \$100 transfer enjoys a particular form of rationality and predictability. There are reasons for the transfer both from your point of view and from the Phil's. Similarly, there is sense to be made of the idea that, in the phone book case, the \$100 transfer is in some way less than rational and, in a sense, uncontrolled, even by Phil. Nothing, either from your point of view or from Phil's, antecedently *ensures* that you will receive the money. Nothing makes it distinc-

tively *reasonable* that you receive it. The chance objection to libertarianism gets a great deal of its purchase, I suggest, from something like the assumption that you can get the \$100 in only one of these two ways. If you have not received the money as compensation, then it must have come to you by way of a lottery. This parallel's the thought that if a person's action was not causally determined, then it must have been the result of randomization—action theory's version of the lottery.

But, of course, you can get the \$100 from Phil by receiving it as a gift—if Phil bears the right relationship to you. Receiving it in this way is very different from receiving it in either of the other two ways. If it is a genuine gift (and not the kind of pseudo-contractual piece of bartering that often haunts our birthdays and other holidays), then you have not earned it. It is not payment for anything. You do not deserve it in any strict sense. From your point of view it is, in a way, inexplicable. But from the giver's point of view, the gift makes perfectly good sense. Phil has his reasons for his generosity. No doubt, his reasons do not *ensure* or *guarantee* that you will receive the money. They aren't those kinds of reasons. This is why we sometimes say after receiving a gift that the person "shouldn't have" or "didn't have to." We know that our friends care for and appreciate us. Still, we did not expect the gift. The gift was not entailed by their state of mind in a way that we could have or should have anticipated.

The gift both is and is not like the payment. What it shares with the payment is that the giver in both cases has reasons for his giving that make essential appeal to distinctive properties of the receiver (not extrinsic properties like "being the person on whose name Phil's finger fell"). The gift is unlike the payment, however, in that it cannot be fully explained or accounted for from the receiver's point of view in terms of the receiver's properties. The receiver cannot legitimately expect the money in the case of gift, but can have such an expectation in the case of the payment.

The gift both is and is not like the lottery. What it shares with the lottery is the impropriety of the receiver's expectation. Like the receiver of the gift, the lottery winner is in no position rationally to anticipate the money (and, therefore, to complain counterfactually about its absence). The gift is unlike the lottery, however, in that the gift-giver has reasons for her behavior that make essential appeal to distinctive (and, in a certain sense, intrinsic) properties of the receiver. The giver is grateful for her friend's kindness or is aware of her friend's need or wants to bring her friend joy. Such considerations rationalize the transfer of money in a way that the random selection of a name cannot.

Gift, then, falls somewhere between payment and lottery. And it is crucial to see that there is a species of rational space in this location. For the assumption that there is no such space does much to animate the idea that indeterminism should make libertarianism a skeptical failure. If an event lacks the rationality of the payment because the universe could not have expected it, then it must share in the irrationality of the lottery, with its inherent randomness. Having reflected now on the nature of gift, we can see that this is a false dichotomy. Gifts are rational in a particular way—a way that straddles the middle ground between

payment and lottery, between expectable and randomized processes. Whatever the truth of the matter about reasons in general, our reasons for giving gifts appear to provide our gift-giving behavior with a distinctive kind of rationality that can be distinguished from the contractual rationality of payments and the randomized irrationality of lottery winnings.

Perhaps, then, we can take James's suggestion to be that the chanciness of an indeterministic universe need not entail that what occurs in it is random, capricious, or arbitrary. True gifts often come to us just as Leo's action does—without antecedent guarantee or the distinctive marks of mechanistic rationality.

Furthermore, we can reflect on the gift that chance itself might constitute. Given the value of agent causal freedom and its dependence on a causally open future, Leo might very well consider it a bit of very good fortune that the universe permits objective chance. That is, he could reasonably be grateful for the chanciness of his decision as it is afforded him by indeterminism. The chance would itself be a kind of gift.

Here, then, we have found two illuminating senses in which gift and chance might be related. First, the image of gift presents us with an alternative picture of how we might respond to the free choices of others in an indeterministic world; not as the uncontrolled twitches and random seizures foisted upon us by the skeptical outlook, but as gifts given for reasons that incline and explain without antecedent promise or guarantee. Second, the image of gift presents us with an alternative picture of how we might respond to the opportunities afforded to each of us by indeterminism. The libertarian requirement of indeterminism can then be viewed as a demand for space, for room to move and make a difference in the causal structure of the world. If this indeterminism turns out in fact to exist, it has the potential to be a great gift in its own right. On the libertarian view, it will be the gift of opportunity because it will have made possible the distinctive kind of free agency this view believes to be necessary for deep personhood. That is, it will be the gift of the opportunity to return the favor by giving gifts of our own—to the universe and to each other—in the events we bring about freely.

I find attractive the image of our free actions as gifts to one another and to the universe (to the "system of other things" as James might put it) predicated on the prior gift of opportunity. It captures a number of deep features of free will as libertarians, in particular, are inclined to see it. For instance, it taps into the idea that free actions will be objectively *chancy* from the point of view of the universe, a matter of *luck* from almost any second-person perspective, and yet nevertheless under the *rational control* of the agent from the first-person perspective (that perspective which is, after all, partly constitutive of agency). I commend these gift images to the free will seeker as she weighs the skeptical employment of the contrast argument.

As I have said, I do not think that the free will skeptic has presented us with a compelling argument for the luckiness of Leo's decision based on a premise about its chanciness. Which is to say that there is no deep reason for the free will seeker to be driven by the contrast argument into the arms of the skeptic. In fact,

I have claimed that the skeptical threat to free will that appears to be posed by the contrast argument is rooted in a combination of confusion and flawed imagery. The confusion involves (1) failing to distinguish luck from chance and (2) leaving the crucial inference of luck from chance either unsupported or dependent upon contentious imagery. I have done my best here to highlight the confusion. And perhaps the alternative image of gift can weaken even further the skeptical force of the contrast argument.

6 CONCLUSION

The indeterminism built into the structure of libertarianism certainly creates a set of puzzles about the rational control free agents can exercise over their actions. And it is natural to express our puzzlement by raising questions about the implications of luck and chance. But the force of indeterministic objections to libertarianism has to be measured in proper context. More specifically, the contrast argument and its kin have to be seen against the backdrop of their proper targets. As an effort to demonstrate the incoherence or internal instability of libertarianism *per se*, worries about luck fall flat. As an effort to demonstrate that compatibilism is to be preferred to libertarianism, these worries again fall flat. Presented as a reason to accept free will skepticism, worries about indeterministic chanciness turn not on strong arguments but on imprecision and lack of imagination. Quite clearly, the responses to the contrast argument that I have presented do not amount to anything even close to a thoroughgoing defense of libertarianism *per se*. There remain plenty of points at which to attack the view—with respect to its internal coherence, with respect to its disadvantages by comparison with compatibilism, and with respect to its weaknesses in competition with free will skepticism. What I hope is now less clear is that the contrast argument and related concerns about indeterministic luck reveal a point of particular vulnerability in libertarianism. If my arguments go through, then (1) no one should abandon libertarianism in virtue of the contrast argument, (2) no one should become a compatibilist in virtue of the contrast argument, and (3) no one should become a free will skeptic in virtue of the contrast argument. I think it would be a bit rash to draw the conclusion that this makes the contrast argument good for nothing. But if you are inclined to draw this conclusion from what has been argued here, I won't make much effort to stop you.²⁴

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