A Critical Review of Christopher Franklin's Solution in Ensurance and Rollback Formulation of the "Problem of Luck"

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Abstract

The main issue of this research is to examine Christopher Franklin's solution to Ensurance and Rollback formulation of Luck, and its purpose is to criticize this solution and show the ineffectiveness of his answer in a descriptive-analytical way. According to the problem of luck, the negation of determinism in the creation of an action leads to luck, and its requirement is the negation of free will. Franklin, who is one of the supporters of event-based causation, offers four formulations of this problem. Negation of determinism in Ensurance formulation leads to unguaranteed action and in the Rollback formulation, leads to the failure to predict the occurrence of an action at the moment of its occurrence. Franklin's answer is based on recognizing the proper location of indeterminism in the process leading to free action. According to him, by placing indeterminism at the moment of the basic action, the two formulations of luck can be solved. According to this interpretation, the agent's reasons, including his desires, goals and emotions, are the cause of free action. In this research, it is revealed that the indeterministic causality of the agent's reasons for free action, which is considered the central core of Franklin's view, is exactly where it leads to the randomness of free action, and as a result, the problem of luck remains valid.

Keywords: Libertarianism, Indeterminism, Luck Problem, Christopher Franklin.

Introduction

Libertarianism is a theory that posits the incompatibility between free will and determinism, staunchly advocating for the prioritization of free will in this philosophical conflict (Franklin, 2018: 17). The focal issue that looms prominently within libertarian discourse is termed the "problem of luck. If we contemplate two worlds sharing an identical causal history up to the moment termed t1, libertarianism posits that the agent S could make disparate decisions in each world. Essentially, despite all antecedent conditions being identical, encompassing S's personal attributes and reasons, she might choose an alternative course of action. Consequently, the emergence of these decisions is attributed to chance (Haji, 2009: 137).

The advocate of the Ensurance formulation posits that if an action cannot be ensured before its occurrence, it is deemed a product of chance (Haji, 1999: 42-58; Haji 2001: 178-200). Within the rollback formulation, in the context of indeterminism, envisaging the world reset a thousand times to the moment preceding a decision renders predicting the agent's choice

impossible. This formulation stipulates that if the probability of an event occurring ranges between zero and one, it is considered a stroke of luck. The crux of the rollback formulation centers on the assertion that when the probability of an action falls between zero and one, neither its causation nor its prevention is feasible (Van Inwagen, 2000: 1-19).

The principal focus of this research revolves around the analysis and evaluation of Christopher Franklin's responses concerning the Ensurance and Rollback formulation of the "Problem of Luck". The hypothesis guiding this research suggests that Franklin's proposed solutions lack the capacity to effectively address the problem of luck inherent within the two aforementioned formulations.

Research Findings

According to Franklin, an agent's reasons, encompassing beliefs, desires, and emotions, directly and indirectly shape the agent's decision-making process. Franklin considers the causality of these reasons to be indeterminate concerning the decision. Under minimal libertarianism, the agent's reasons fall into two categories: category A supports moral decisions, while category B favors self-interested choices. When a moral decision occurs in scenario W1, category A reasons play a causal role, and category B reasons remain inactive. Franklin asserts that both categories of reasons do not causally influence the decision randomly in W1.

Franklin places indeterminism at the stage where categories of reasons start to influence causally or remain inactive, rather than at the outcome stage of these reasons. He terms his interpretation "Basic Action-Centered Account", because the agent's decision is not an effect of another action but results from the agent's reasons (Franklin, 2018: 107-108).

Regarding formulations based on insurance and rollback, Franklin argues that they do not conflict with his minimal libertarianism. If uncertainty pertains to the actor's decision post-effort of will, the agent lacks moral responsibility. However, if uncertainty relates to which categories of reasons become active or remain inactive, the agent retains free will and moral responsibility. Furthermore, in the rollback-based formulation, if despite the agent's efforts, the decision's probability doesn't reach certainty, the action is considered random, with the agent lacking necessary control. Yet, if the probability falls between zero and one, concerning the activation or silence of reasons, it ceases to be a matter of luck.

Franklin's interpretation appears to grapple with the issue of luck as well. What dictates the activation of certain reasons while others remain inactive? It seemingly boils down to chance. The fundamental concern in the problem of luck resides in relinquishing control from the actor's hands at one of the stages leading to action, thereby absolving responsibility at that stage.

Conclusion

According to Franklin, the agent's reasons, including his desires, goals and emotions, are the cause of free action. By placing indeterminism at the moment of the basic action, the Ensurance and Rollback formulation of luck can be solved. In this research, it is revealed that the indeterministic causality of the agent's reasons for free action, which is considered

the central core of Franklin's view, is exactly where it leads to the randomness of free action, and as a result, the problem of luck remains valid.

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