

Review of: "Beyond the Luck Problem: Addressing Discrimination in Event-Causal Libertarianism"

Uwe Meixner¹

¹ Universität Augsburg

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

This is a sophisticated article, well-fitting a particular community of philosophical discourse, not fitting other such communities within the wide world of (rational) philosophy. The author makes much of discrimination and its unjustness. This makes it rather tempting to turn the tables on her. It seems that under determinism it would be unjust discrimination to make somebody morally responsible for something; just non-discrimination can only be had by absolving everybody from being morally responsible for anything. But, on the other hand, there seems to be moral responsibility in the world, and moral responsibility can only be in the world if, indeed, somebody is morally responsible for something. Thus there is a discrimination problem for those who happen to be determinists and yet believe that there is moral responsibility in the world.

Why is it that under determinism it would be unjust discrimination to make somebody morally responsible for something? Because under determinism nobody is morally responsible for anything. I suspect that the author would not agree with this. But suppose x is morally responsible for y and determinism is true; hence even prior to x 's existence it was determined that y would happen. How, then, can x be morally responsible for y ?

It is an obvious corollary of this argument that indeterminism is necessary for moral responsibility (and under the supposition that there is indeed moral responsibility in the world, it also follows that indeterminism is compatible with moral responsibility). But wasn't Luther morally responsible for his actions even if he couldn't do otherwise, even if he was determined to do as he did? If he really couldn't do otherwise, he would not have been morally responsible for his actions. But, in fact (I suspect), he could do otherwise; all he meant to say by saying "Ich kann nicht anders" (supposing he really did say this) is this: "If I follow my conscience, I cannot do otherwise (than this). And I follow my conscience."