

Hard Incompatibilism, Reverse Frankfurt Cases, and Reasons-Unresponsiveness

Hard incompatibilism maintains that although agent-causation is both coherent and metaphysically possible, human agents lack this power in our actual world. And because we are not agent-causes, we lack the type of freedom which would ground moral responsibility. Thus, hard incompatibilism endorses the conditional claim that if we had agent-causal powers, we would be morally responsible. Derk Pereboom, the creator of hard incompatibilism, understands this agent-causal power to secure *sourcehood* rather than *leeway* freedom; what would ground our moral responsibility is the power to settle our decisions and actions rather than the power to do or decide otherwise. This paper develops skepticism about hard incompatibilism's connection between agent-causation and moral responsibility. Using a pair of reverse Frankfurt-style cases, I contend, first, that Pereboom's conception of agent-causation as the power to be the uncaused cause of one's decisions is not robustly distinct from the power to decide otherwise. My second reverse Frankfurt case argues that Pereboom's success conditions for responsibility generate a reasons-unresponsiveness requirement. This result undermines the possibility of acting freely *because* of reasons, including moral reasons, and renders praise and blame inappropriate precisely where responsiveness to reasons seems most central. I conclude that Pereboom faces an unpalatable trilemma: (1) embrace this reasons-unresponsiveness condition on being morally responsible, (2) abandon hard incompatibilism for an impossibilist position, arguing that there are no metaphysically possible grounds for responsibility, or (3) allow reasons to play a causal role in deliberation, endorsing compatibilism.

Introduction

According to hard incompatibilism, our status as free and responsible agents is just out of reach. We could have had this status if only our world was slightly different than it in fact seems to be. If we were only uncaused agent-causers, we could deserve to be praised and blamed for what we did. But because our world seems to be one in which human agents lack this power, we are not in fact morally responsible creatures. The missing ingredient, according to Derk Pereboom, is the power of agent-causation: the power to settle our decisions and actions without being causally influenced by states and events beyond our control. If we could only add this ability to the human constitution, we would be fully free and responsible agents.

In this paper, I express and develop skepticism about Pereboom's ability to endorse this conditional claim: that if we only had agent-causal powers, we would then be morally responsible for what we did. I develop this criticism of the hard incompatibilist project in two steps. The first step is a conceptual critique; I argue that Pereboom's insistence on agent-causation as essentially the power to be the ultimate source of one's decisions is not robustly distinct from the power to decide otherwise. After making this conceptual claim, I proceed to the normative connection between agent-causation and moral responsibility: Pereboom's claim that agent-causation, if only humans had this power, would

render praise, blame, and basic desert appropriate. In both steps of my critique, I leverage what I'll call a pair of reverse Frankfurt-style cases.

1. Constructing Hard Incompatibilism

Our first task is to understand how Pereboom constructs the hard incompatibilist position. My aim here is to pick out five core claims that constitute hard incompatibilism and to understand the interconnected role they play.

Pereboom begins by laying out two horns: either determinism is true, or it is false. Following a tradition of *hard determinism*, Pereboom argues that if determinism is true, we do not have the freedom required to be morally responsible (2007, 85). However, the falsity of determinism alone is insufficient to secure free will and moral responsibility; “if the causes of our actions were exclusively states or events, indeterministic causal histories of actions would be as threatening to moral responsibility as deterministic histories are” (2007, 85). Here we can see the root of the problem for Pereboom: if an action’s causal history is exhausted by states and events, then the agent herself plays no causal role in acting, regardless of whether those states and events are themselves determined or not.¹

Thus, the freedom which would make us morally responsible requires (i) that determinism is false and (ii) that actions’ causal histories are not exhausted by states and events. The way to positively satisfy this requirement is for a person to be an uncaused agent-substance who possesses and exercises a causal power to settle her actions in a manner that is not determined by states and events (Pereboom 2014, 51). In other words, Pereboom maintains that the right way for an action’s causal history not to be exhausted by states and events is for the *agent herself* to exercise a causal power to settle her action.² That power is called *agent-causation*.

The exercise of this agent-causal power could provide two different kinds of freedom: *leeway* freedom or *sourcehood* freedom. Leeway views require that for an agent to be free and responsible, she must have alternate possibilities available to her. To be responsible for a decision or action requires that one could have intentionally decided *not* to do an action or could have made some alternative

¹ It is for this reason that Pereboom rejects the notion that event-causal libertarianism, if true, would provide the freedom required for responsibility: “If only events are causes and the context is indeterministic, the agent disappears when it needs to be settled whether the decision will occur, while the power of the agent to substance-cause decisions can have this settling role” (2014, 55; see also 2014, Ch 2).

See also: “What would be need to be added to the event-causal libertarian account is involvement of the agent in the making of her decision that would enhance her control so that she can settle whether the decision occurs, and thereby have the control in making a deciding required for moral responsibility” (2014, 50-51).

And finally: “What needs to be added to the event-causal libertarian story is involvement of the agent in the production of decisions that would enhance her control so as to make it sufficient for moral responsibility... What the agent-causal libertarian posits is an agent who possesses a causal power, fundamentally as a substance, to cause a decision without being causally determined to do so. The proposal is that the control absent on the event-causal libertarian view – the sort of control sufficient for moral responsibility – is supplied by the agent by virtue of having this causal power” (2007, 110).

² Clarke (2010) suggests that a central difference between belief formation and intention formation is found in the ‘final step.’ While there are many similarities between the two processes, Clarke suggests that the final stage of belief formation is passive, while intention formation is an active exercise of agency. Clarke defends this position against O’Shaughnessy’s (2009) suggestion that both final states are passive and Watson’s (2004) view that both final stages are active and agentic.

decision. On leeway views, agent-causal powers provide this ability to do otherwise, and it's this ability that makes us morally responsible.

Pereboom, however, rejects the necessity of leeway freedom for responsibility, opting instead for a sourcehood view (2007, 86). For an action to be free and responsible, the agent herself as an uncaused causer must be the source of her action: “[agent-causation] is a power of an agent (i) fundamentally as a substance (ii) to cause a decision without being causally determined to do so” (Pereboom 2014, 55). Sourcehood views focus on an action’s causal history as opposed to whether an agent had alternate possibilities available to her—whether she had the ability to do otherwise (Pereboom 2014, 4 & 2007, 85-86). Recall that Pereboom sees determinism as a threat to moral responsibility, not because it eliminates an agent’s ability to do otherwise, but because it locates the causal source of her (mental) actions in states and events beyond her control (2014, 13). This worry also holds if determinism is false but states and events probabilistically determine actions. In either possibility, if actions are wholly caused by states and events, the agent disappears.

Thus, the way in which agent-causation would provide the freedom required for responsibility is by ensuring that an action’s causal history is not wholly exhausted by states and events which are not identical to the agent herself as a causal substance.³ Pereboom aligns with a common libertarian solution to this problem of the disappearing agent: if an agent exercises her agent-causal power to settle her decision, then she (an agent-substance) shows up in the causal history of that decision (2014, 30-32).⁴ It’s her way of ensuring that the causal ‘buck’ stops with *her*.

However, Pereboom simply denies this freedom exists: “although agent causation has not been ruled out as a coherent possibility, the claim that we are agent-causes is not credible given our best physical theories” (2007, 85). Notice that Pereboom simply rejects the empirical truth of agent-causation. He does not argue that the position is metaphysically impossible or conceptually incoherent. If we had this freedom, we would be responsible agents. But we simply don’t, and are therefore not morally responsible. Because we are not uncaused causers, “we need to take seriously the prospect that we are not free in the sense required for moral responsibility. I call the resulting view hard incompatibilism” (Pereboom 2007, 85).⁵

We can summarize the core principles of hard incompatibilism below:

1. Agent-causation, if we had this power, would enable and ground our being morally responsible.⁶

³ So to state things explicitly, Pereboom maintains that the type of freedom which would ground responsibility is what I’ll specify as *agent-causal sourcehood freedom*: agent-causal, because the fundamental cause which settles free action is the agent as an uncaused substance, and sourcehood, because the free and responsible action must have its causal source in the agent, not merely in states and events. Thus, we arrive at Pereboom’s success condition for the freedom which would provide responsibility.

⁴ See Chisolm (1964), O’Connor (2000 & 2009), Clarke (2003), and Griffith (2010).

⁵ The denial of the empirical existence of free will and thus of moral responsibility are also core features of hard incompatibilism (Pereboom & Caruso 2018, 199).

⁶ To enable something is to make it possible; an enabling condition is a necessary condition, but not necessarily a grounding condition.

2. The existence and exercise of agent-causal power survives the loss of any possibilities of the agent doing otherwise.⁷
3. This agent-causal power is essentially the power of an agent to be the uncaused cause of her decision; that is, of being the source of her decision.
4. This agent-causal power is conceptually coherent and metaphysically possible, but empirically implausible given our understanding of the actual world.
5. Thus, it is metaphysically possible but empirically implausible that we are morally responsible.

Claim 1 establishes a conditional connection between agent-causation and moral responsibility; if we had this power, we would be responsible. Claim 2 conceptually differentiates the power of agent-causation from the power to do otherwise; since the former can survive the loss of alternate possibilities, the power of agent-causation is not simply this power to take an alternative action. Claim 3 defines in positive terms what the power of agent-causation is: a power to be the uncaused source of one's decision or action. Claim 4 affirms the possibility of this power but denies its existence in our actual world. Claim 5 follows suit for moral responsibility.

I'm skeptical about the plausibility of these five interconnected claims. In what follows, I plan to first apply conceptual pressure to claims 2 and 3, which will then allow us to more closely examine the plausibility of Pereboom's first claim.

2. Source Without Leeway?

The aim of this section is to make a conceptual point: Pereboom insists that the power of agent-causation is essentially a power to be the ultimate (uncaused) source of one's decisions and actions, *not* a power to do or decide otherwise. This is a conceptual claim about what agent-causation *is* according to Pereboom's commitments (specifically, claim 2 and 3 from the previous section). I argue that on an incompatibilist conception, the power to be an uncaused cause just is the power to do otherwise. In other words, I'll argue that sourcehood freedom simply is leeway freedom. To support this claim, I'll introduce and examine what I'll call a reverse Frankfurt case.

2.1 Frankfurt Cases and the Power to do Otherwise

First, we need to review how Pereboom understands Frankfurt's original rejection of what he calls "the principle of alternate possibilities" (1969). This principle says that alternate possibilities are required for moral responsibility—that to be responsible for a decision or action, one must have been able to decide or do other than what they did. Pereboom nicely captures the essentials of Frankfurt's original case, put forth to argue against the necessity of alternate possibilities:

An agent considers performing some action, but an intervener is concerned that she will not actually come through. Thus if the agent were to show some sign that she will not or might not perform the action, the intervener would cause her to perform the action anyway. So an

⁷ In what follows I will tend to focus on an agent's power or ability to do otherwise, rather than whether she has alternate possibilities, following van Inwagen's focus on ability (or power) rather than possibility. I'll use 'power' and ability interchangeably,

intervener, Black, might ensure that an agent, Jones, will perform an action, say, killing Smith, by implanting a device in her brain, which, upon detecting that she will or might not do so, would cause her to kill Smith nevertheless. In fact, however, Jones kills Smith on her own, without the intervention taking place. The intuition that Frankfurt aims to generate is that Jones could be morally responsible for killing Smith despite the fact that she could not have done otherwise (2007, 87).

Pereboom agrees that Frankfurt-style cases effectively challenge the principle of alternate possibilities (2007, 87). These cases aim to show that an agent can be morally responsible without having the ability to decide other than as she actually does. These cases aim to demonstrate this conclusion by showing that an agent can be the source of her action without having the power to do or decide otherwise.⁸ Thus, Frankfurt cases rely on a conceptual distinction between (i) being the source of a decision and (ii) having the power to decide otherwise. And to effectively use this distinction to support the conclusion that (i) is necessary but not (ii), we have to construct a case where the agent in question satisfies (i) but not (ii).

But notice that there are two ways to read Frankfurt-style cases, as Pereboom himself points out (2014, 9). Both compatibilists and incompatibilists alike can read Frankfurt cases and find something to like in them. Both camps can be happy with the conclusion that ‘an agent can be the source of her action, and thus be morally responsible, without having the power to do otherwise.’

A critical difference, however, lies in how each camp understands what it means for an agent to be the source of her action. Compatibilists can understand the notion of an agent being the source of her action without bringing along certain incompatibilist entailments. That is, compatibilists can understand an agent being the source of her decision or action without this requiring either determinism to be false or that the agent be an uncaused causer. For instance, on a second-order desire compatibilist view, one might think an agent can be the source of her decision in the sense that what she did aligned with her first order desire, and that desire aligned with her second-order volition (Frankfurt 1971). None of this requires that the agent was an uncaused causer. In this article, I am not focused on how compatibilists can interpret the meaning of ‘source.’ I want to focus on how Pereboom understands—and indeed, *must* understand—what it means for an agent to be the source of her decision in a Frankfurt-style case. Because of the way Pereboom builds his hard incompatibilist position, he’s argumentatively tied to understanding what it means for an agent to be the source of her decision in a very strict manner.

First, note that Frankfurt himself leaves the required conditions of being morally responsible undefined; he simply suggests that Jones’ “responsibility for [killing Smith] is not affected by the fact that Black was lurking in the background with sinister intent, since this intent never comes into play” (1969, 836). Frankfurt’s intuition is simply that Jones is responsible because Black played no causal role, even if he made it the case that Jones could not do otherwise.

Pereboom, however, has spelled out specific requirements for an agent to be morally responsible. For Pereboom, an agent is the morally responsible source of her decision if and only if (i) she is a causal substance who (ii) causes what she does without being causally determined to do so

⁸ If Pereboom wanted to put his view of Frankfurt cases in slogan form, it might be something like the following: “*Tell me if the agent was the ultimate source of her action and I’ll tell you if she’s responsible.*” No alternate possibilities are required.

(2014, 55). Thus, any time we posit that an agent is morally responsible, she must satisfy conditions (i) and (ii); she must have exercised her agent-causal powers to ensure that her action's causal history included *her*, the agent.⁹ Frankfurt doesn't have these conceptually weighty commitments about what is required to be responsible. But Pereboom does. So when *he* says that Jones may well be responsible for killing Smith, even while lacking the power to do otherwise, 'being morally responsible' must be interpreted from within Pereboom's framework of commitments.

When Pereboom says Jones may well be responsible, what he's really saying is that Jones may well be responsible [because she, an uncaused agent-substance, caused her decision to kill Smith without being causally determined to do so] while lacking the power to decide other than what she does in fact decide.¹⁰ So in agreeing with the conclusion of Frankfurt-style cases, Pereboom must maintain that a person could be the uncaused causal source of her action without having the power to do otherwise. Here we can see how bold this distinction really is: for Pereboom to endorse Frankfurt cases, he must be able to demonstrate that a person could (i) be a causal substance who (ii) causes her decision without being causally determined to do so *without* (iii) having the power to decide otherwise.

I'm skeptical about the plausibility of this distinction *given Pereboom's theoretical commitments*. It seems like what it means for an agent to be an uncaused causer just is to have this two-way power of decision and action. If an agent is an uncaused causer, how could she have the power to settle her decision above and beyond any external causal influence without that power *just being* the power to do otherwise?

Pereboom largely defines the notion of an agent as a causal source of her actions by negation; we're told quite a bit about what this power is *not*, but relatively little about what it *is* (see Pereboom [2014, Chapter 1], which defends source incompatibilism). In a sense, I sympathize with this struggle. But I adopt a different conclusion; I deny that the distinction can be made from within an incompatibilist framework. I'll defend this conclusion by considering a reverse Frankfurt case—one in which agent-causal powers are *returned* to Jones.¹¹

2.2 Black II, a Funding-Starved Neuroscientist

Black the second (Black II) is the son of a famous neuroscientist who works at a poorly funded public university. While his father had a device that could override agent-causal powers and directly cause someone to perform an action, Black II possesses a weaker device. His device can only turn agent-causal powers ON or OFF. In this world, determinism is false and people are agent-causal substances with the power to cause their decisions and actions without being causally determined to do so.¹²

⁹ The reverse is also true: iff.

¹⁰ I'm just substituting Pereboom's stated requirements to be morally responsible into the conclusion of the Frankfurt case.

¹¹ In the following case, keep in mind that the current question being explored: what exactly does it mean for an agent to be an uncaused causer of her decisions and actions?

¹² Readers will notice these are precisely the two conditions Pereboom stated are necessary and sufficient for the freedom which would ground moral responsibility.

If Black II flips the switch OFF, Jones will lose this power and this power alone. His phenomenology won't change, but the underlying causal history of what Jones does will be settled by states and events outside his control.¹³ He would still have the feeling of deliberating, deciding, and acting.¹⁴ But, if his agent-causal powers have been turned off, what he will in fact decide is probabilistically settled by states and events.¹⁵ Like his father, Black II is a nefarious neuroscientist and has crafted some scheme involving Jones (the details don't matter). As Jones was sleeping, Black II surreptitiously implanted this device in his brain. He then toggles OFF Jones' agent-causal powers.

It's the next morning. Jones is deliberating about whether to do some action, A, and Black II desperately doesn't want Jones to decide to do A. Jones has overwhelming reasons in favor of A, and A aligns with his character, desires, and motivations. Black II is monitoring Jones' brain closely, scanning for signs that he might decide to do A. He in fact sees those signs starting to manifest in Jones' mind. His predictive calculations show that Jones is 99% likely to decide to do A, and panicking, does the only thing he has the power to do: he flips the switch, giving Jones agent-causal powers once again (*before* he has decided to do A).

Our Central Question: Given that Jones was highly likely to decide A, and given that Black II does not want Jones to decide A, did his choice to flip the switch make sense? That is, put yourself in Black II's shoes: if you want Jones to decide something—*anything*—other than A, and it looks extremely likely that Jones is about to decide A, are you going to flip the switch? My sense is that the answer is clearly yes.

The Key Intuition: Why Flip the Switch? Because it is highly intuitive that turning Jones' agent-causal powers back ON, making him an uncaused causer of his decision, must change the likelihood that Jones decides something other than A. And since everything is trending towards Jones deciding A (99% likely according to everything known about Jones and the world at that time), giving him his agent-causal powers back, allowing Jones to be the uncaused causer of his decision, should give Jones a better than 1% chance of deciding otherwise.

Backing up this Intuition: We know that agent-causation is the power to “cause a decision without being causally determined to do so” (Pereboom 2007, 110). The above is reverse Frankfurt case where that power back is *returned* to someone who recently lost it. This allows us to ask: What exactly can Jones now do with the return of his agent-causal powers that he previously could not? And the only plausible answer is that giving Jones his agent-causal powers back returns to him the power to change his mind; to decide something *other* than A (either not-A or some alternative B, C, D, etc.). In other words, by making Jones the uncaused causal source of his decision, Black II has returned to Jones his leeway freedom.

The idea is to apply Pereboom's own notion of agent-causation to Jones at the moment where Black II flips his powers back ON. In that moment, Jones still has all his reasons to decide A, and A

¹³ One reply that doesn't seem open to Pereboom is that Jones' phenomenology would have to change. This reply isn't available because we don't fully know if agent-causation is empirically plausible in this world. So if this power could be true or not given out current phenomenology, it makes sense to assume that Jones could gain or lose this power without his phenomenology changing either.

¹⁴ Inspiration for this Black II case was found in Korsgaard (1992, 317-319 & 1996, 162).

¹⁵ What he decides won't be settled by Black II, as the device isn't as sophisticated as his father's, but what Jones decides will be caused by states and events beyond his control.

aligns with his character, motivations, etc. But if Jones is now truly an uncaused cause, then what he decides cannot be settled by any of these antecedent states. And if the power which is returned to Jones is *only* the power to affirm what he is about to decide based on these states and events, then what he decides is in fact settled by those antecedent states. Thus, if his reasons and character cannot settle his decision, the power returned to Jones in the moment before settling his decision must be the power to decide otherwise: either to intentionally not-A or to do some alternative to A.

If flipping the switch makes Jones an uncaused agent-causer, and being an uncaused causer must mean more than the power to affirm what one was already going to decide, then an agent-causal notion of sourcehood freedom *just is* one way of spelling out how an agent has leeway freedom: the freedom to do otherwise. Thus, this case challenges Pereboom's assertion that a person could (i) be a causal substance who (ii) causes what she does without being causally determined to do so *without* (iii) having the power to decide otherwise. Securing (i) and (ii) just means that (iii) obtains. To return Jones' power to be an uncaused causer *just is* to return to Jones his ability to do otherwise. This means that when we speak of agent-causation, what we are conceptually mean is a power to do (or decide) otherwise. This conclusion will have further implications for the tenability of hard incompatibilism.

3. Pereboom's Possible Replies

First, though, we need to consider how Pereboom might respond to the conceptual point made by my Black II case. I suspect that Pereboom would want to reject some aspect of this argument, and I can see three possible replies. The first two attempt to deny the conceptual point (that the power to be an uncaused causer just is the power to do otherwise). The third is to concede this conceptual claim in the service of saving Pereboom's central normative claim.

3.1 Reply One:

Pereboom might attempt to resist the central intuition that, if you're in Black II's shoes, it makes sense to return Jones' agent-causal powers in an attempt to change the likelihood he decides A. However, because of Pereboom's other commitments espoused in his defense of hard incompatibilism, this response is not available.

First, I should clarify that on the stipulation that the world is indeterministic, it's still possible, even if Black does nothing, that Jones does not end up deciding A (even if all his reasons, character, and motivations align with A). Because these forces are only probabilistic, Jones could end up deciding other than A.¹⁶ But the odds of Jones deciding otherwise are very low. (Also note that even in the possible outcome where Jones decides against A, if Jones' agent-causal powers are still turned OFF, his decision would not be agentic, since it would be determined by factors beyond Jones' control.)

So then, when Black II desperately gives Jones his agent-causal powers back by flipping the switch, does he make it more likely that Jones will decide something other than A?

¹⁶ ...in the same way that it's possible that given quantum indeterminacy, the fridge in the office lounge could suddenly move a foot to the left (Steward 2011).

I maintain that Pereboom must be committed to saying *yes*. When discussing the proper conception of agent-causal libertarianism, Pereboom states “that the influence of reasons on a morally responsible agent-cause given the libertarian view cannot be either deterministically or probabilistically causal” (2014, 62). It’s clear why Pereboom asserts that reasons could not be *deterministically* causal; in that case, reasons alone cause a decision, and the agent disappears from the picture.¹⁷

But the same issue holds even if reasons *probabilistically* influence agents. Pereboom lays out this reasoning quite clearly when responding to O’Connor’s suggestion that an agent’s causal power “might be shaped by states (such as the agent’s reasons for acting)...so that agent-causal actions would be expected to reflect the physical probabilities in the long run” (2003, 309). Here, O’Connor is essentially adopting the first route to resist my reverse Frankfurt-style case. He’s suggesting that even agent-caused decisions and actions conform to the likelihood of their occurring based on states and events beyond the agent’s control (in this case, Jones’ reasons for deciding A). Pereboom rejects this as a legitimate move for the agent-causal libertarian:

The exercise of the agent-causal power must be distinct from the exercise of the causal powers of these events [reasons to decide or act]. As a consequence, we would expect the decisions of the agent-cause to diverge, in the long run, from the frequency of choices that would be extremely likely on the basis of the events alone. If we nevertheless found conformity, we would have good reason to believe that the agent-causal power was not of a different sort from the causal powers of the events after all (2014, 69).¹⁸

Here’s another way to put Pereboom’s point: Say that the extant reasons for an action make it 66% likely that a specific person, sensitive to those reasons, will decide to do that action. If reasons probabilistically settle what one decides, then this individual is certainly not *determined* to do that action. However, if reasons are probabilistically causal, then if we were to create a hundred copies of that world at the moment the agent decides, we would expect 66 of those worlds to be ones in which she deciding to do the act. And we would expect 34 to be worlds in which she decided otherwise. But for any of these worlds, because what she did was probabilistically settled by the causal influence of her reasons, then in none of those worlds is the decision an instance of free and responsible agency. The agent herself plays no causal role if what she actually does strictly conforms with the expected probability distribution given the relevant states and events.

I think Pereboom is right to reject this move by O’Connor; if any states or events (including reasons) probabilistically determine a decision, then the picture begins to resemble a purely event-causal image. And in this image, if the causal history is fully settled by states and events, then the agent disappears from the causal picture (Pereboom 2014, 31-33, 50-55, 69).

¹⁷ Pereboom: “My sense is the agent-causal libertarianism cannot accommodate the claim that the propensities of the agent-causal power are governed by probabilities specified in this way period to answer the disappearing agent objection, the causal power exercised by the agent must be of a different sort from that of the causally relevant events, and on the occasion of a free decision, the exercise of the agent causal power must be distinct from the exercise of the causal powers of these events. For the disappearing agent objection shows that causal powers of the events are not the sort that can provide the decision-settling control needed for moral responsibility” (2014, 61).

¹⁸ Chisolm (1964) advocates for the necessitation of agent-caused actions not being aligned (i.e., probabilistically settled) by the mere probabilistic influences of states and events. Pereboom simply rejects the plausibility of our having such a power; he does not reject the claim that if we did have this power, we could exercise it in a way which would make us morally responsible.

However, we can also apply this reasoning to our current case; if giving Jones his agent-causal powers back does not change the likelihood that he decides A, then the same problem holds. If returning Jones' agent-causal powers does not change the likelihood of him deciding A, then the likelihood he decides A is settled by states and events beyond Jones' control.¹⁹ But Pereboom cannot have this be the case if giving Jones his agent-causal powers before deciding is to make him free and responsible for his decision. So if the probabilities change upon the return of Jones' powers, then it's the returning of these powers that changes the probabilities (since nothing else changes in the situation). If the probabilities change, then in some different number of possible worlds, Jones does in fact do otherwise. But this must mean that the power which is returned to Jones—his being the uncaused causal source of his decision—*just is* the power (or ability) to self-determine his decision in a way which must be more than just affirming A. Thus, Jones has been given the power to do otherwise. By being made the uncaused causer of his decision, Jones has been given *leeway freedom*.²⁰

3.2 Reply Two:

The second path to resistance focuses not on whether the probabilities change, but whether the game was rigged. Pereboom may argue that my Black II case was not a conceptually fair set up, since Jones' decision was previously settled by factors outside his control up until the moment he was given agent-causal powers. Thus, the reply goes, it isn't at all clear that sourcehood freedom just is leeway freedom, since I haven't set up a case where true sourcehood freedom is returned to Jones.

This objection argues that returning Jones' agent-causal powers *now* does not make his decision free and responsible because in the recent past he was causally influenced (either deterministically or probabilistically) towards deciding A. On this objection, it seems like for Jones to be free and responsible *now* requires there to have been a moment in the immediate past where Jones was not even probabilistically influenced by states and events. But for *that* moment in the recent past to withstand this same objection, Jones could not have been influenced by states and events in the moment before that prior one. This generates a regress which can only be solved by the following requirement: for an agent to be responsible now, she cannot have ever been causally influenced (deterministically or probabilistically) by states and events beyond her control. An alternative way to state this requirement is to reject the supposition that agent-causation is the sort of power which can in fact be turned ON or OFF.

This requirement is unpalatable. If agent-causal powers cannot be turned OFF, then they are god-like in nature: unable to be limited, blocked, muted, or lost. But the hope of agent-causal theories was to provide an account of how human beings could be free and responsible without needing god-like powers. Both Pereboom and agent-causal theorists alike wish to set realistic success conditions for the freedom needed to be morally responsible. These powers should be such that, if we had them in a nearby possible world, then we could be free and responsible. An immutable causal power that

¹⁹ In a sense, giving Jones his agent causal powers back means that there are no probabilities that can be accurately assigned to what Jones will decide, since if he is an uncaused causer, then states and events cannot probabilistically settle or even influence his decisions. Agent-causation is a power which does not conform with probability calculations. If this seems mysterious to the reader, I share this worry.

²⁰ This doesn't mean Jones must decide other than A, but it does mean he now has the *ability* to freely and responsibly decide other than A.

cannot ever be turned off brings us too far afield from the actual world. So we should assume that agent-causal powers can in fact be turned ON and OFF.²¹

3.3 Reply Three:

Finally, Pereboom may reply by conceding both that returning Jones' agent-causal power does make a difference to the probability of what he decides and that my Black II case collapses the distinction between the power to be an uncaused causer and the power to do otherwise. But in conceding these two conceptual claims, Pereboom may attempt to save his foundational normative claim: that even if to have agent-causal power just is to have the power to do otherwise, it is not this power which *grounds* our being morally responsible. That is, Pereboom may admit that having sourcehood freedom entails having leeway freedom, but he could still deny that leeway freedom is relevant for being morally responsible. Perhaps being an agent-causal substance is like a buy-one get-one coupon: having sourcehood freedom gets you the ability to do otherwise for free. But this does not mean that leeway freedom is doing the relevant normative work. The ability to do otherwise may be an enabling condition of being responsible, but it still does not ground our being morally responsible.

First, recall that the central point being made in my Black II is a conceptual one, not a normative one. So far, I've only argued against the claim that one can be a causal substance who causes what she does without being causally determined to do so without having the power to decide otherwise. What this means for the connection between agent-causation and moral responsibility is yet to be seen. But this doesn't directly rebut Pereboom's third possible reply. And I'm not sure there is a way to decisively defeat it. However, I will note that this response concedes something crucial: that to have agent-causal powers just is to have *both* the power to be the ultimate source of one's decision and to have to the power to decide otherwise. So then, the nature of what it means to be an agent-cause has shifted from Pereboom's original framework. Now we know that having agent-causal powers means that one has the power to do otherwise. So when we reexamine Pereboom's claim that agent-causation, if we had it, would enable and ground our being morally responsible, we have to keep in mind what it now means to have this power. We now have to ask whether *this* conception of agent-causation does in fact ground our being morally responsible for what we decide. This is a normative question: Is having the power of agent-causation (under our new understanding) the right sort of power to make us deserve to be held morally responsible for what we do? It is precisely this normative question which occupies the focus of our next section.

4. Grounding Responsibility

The lesson from our Black II case is already an issue for the hard incompatibilist. Pereboom, rightly in my opinion, wanted to avoid hinging the success condition for free will and moral responsibility on agent-causation understood as a power to do otherwise. The way Pereboom attempted to avoid this was by putting forth agent-causation as a power to cause a decision without

²¹ This conclusion will play a role in the next section.

being causally determined to do so—a power that was separate from the power to do otherwise. However, using my Black II case, I argued that there is no substantial distinction between an agent having the power to be an uncaused causer and having the power to do otherwise. This was a conceptual argument about what the power of agent-causation is the power *of*. In this section, I aim to push next on Pereboom’s foundational claim about the connection between agent-causation and moral responsibility.

We can now turn to investigating this final conditional claim: that agent-causation, if we did have this power, would enable and ground our being morally responsible. This conditional claim was a core feature of the hard incompatibilist view, differentiating it from other skeptical positions. I’m skeptical of this claim. In what follows, I am not going to argue that agent-causation is incoherent or impossible, nor that it requires god-like powers. I’ll instead argue that Pereboom’s conception of agent-causation is the not the sort of power which would enable and ground our being morally responsible.

In our Black II case, we examined a device which could directly turn an agent’s causal powers ON or OFF. But perhaps this power can be turned OFF by other means as well. Perhaps sufficiently strong reasons could act like Black II’s device, turning OFF agent-causal powers because they render alternate possibilities volitionally impossible.²² Consider a case where a third-generation neuroscientist, Black III, attempts to change Jones’ decision by making him aware of powerful reasons against what he is about to decide.²³

Black III

Black III has a device which is weaker than his father’s. This device cannot directly turn a person’s agent-causal powers ON or OFF, but it can make him aware of powerful reasons for or against a given action. Say that, like before, Jones has this device surreptitiously implanted in his brain by Black III. This again is an indeterministic world where humans have agent-causal freedom.

Say that Jones is deliberating about whether to undertake action A or action B. Unlike the prior case, Jones is genuinely torn about which action he should perform. The choice between A and B really is a ‘close call.’²⁴ Jones is aware of legitimate, self-interested reasons to do A and legitimate, self-interested reasons of roughly equal weight to do B. Both A and B are well within the bounds of what Jones has historically done, and neither option would be character-redefining. Jones is not aware of any other factors at play with respect to either A or B. However, there is an extremely powerful

²² Frankfurt on such cases of volitional necessity: “A person who is subject to volitional necessity finds that he must act as he does. For this reason it may seem appropriate to regard situations which involve volitional necessity as providing instances of passivity. But the person in a situation of this kind generally does not construe the fact that he is subject to volitional necessity as entailing that he is passive at all” (1982, 264).

²³ We should think that sufficiently strong reasons could act like Black II’s device. Pereboom has already stated that reasons cannot probabilistically or determinatively settle what someone does if she has agent-causal powers and acts freely. This means that if reasons did determine what someone does, they aren’t free and responsible. In addition to powerful reasons, perhaps agent-causal abilities could be ‘shut off’ by certain forms of mental illness. Steup discusses two interesting cases where an agent lacks volitional control over a decision: an agoraphobic and mysophobic (2012, 147).

²⁴ See Nahmias (2006).

prudential (self-interested) reason to perform B over A, and if Black III flips the switch on his device, Jones will become aware of that powerful prudential reason against A.

Once again, Black III does not want Jones to decide to do A, and thus flips the switch, making Jones aware of the powerful reason against A.²⁵

In the previous case, I argued that Pereboom must be committed to affirming the intuitive outcome of Black II's flipping of the switch. Here, I argue Pereboom must be committed to denying the intuitive outcome of Black III's switch flipping. Because external states and events cannot play a causal role in free and responsible (mental) action, Pereboom is committed to the flipping of the switch to have no causal effect on what Jones decides, regardless of how powerful the reasons are against A (or for B) and how many of those reasons Jones is made aware of. If Jones truly is an uncaused agent-cause, then the toggling of the switch, making Jones aware of powerful reasons against one choice, cannot even probabilistically influence what he does.

This result in the current context is certainly a strange, but not obviously detrimental outcome of Pereboom's view. Jones cannot be causally moved by being made aware of reasons for B over A—even probabilistically so. (That is, it seems like Pereboom must say that being made aware of powerful reasons cannot even generate a volitional pull for Jones, since this pull would plausibly affect the probability distribution of Jones choosing B over A. And we previously examined Pereboom's insistence that reasons, being an external state of affairs, cannot exert a causal influence on Jones if he is to be responsible for his choice.) If he is to be responsible for his decision (no matter what he decides), he must exercise his own agent-causal power, ensuring that the causal history of his decision cannot be written without *him*, the agent. What this means is that the external event (being made aware of powerful reasons against A) cannot causally influence what Jones decides. And if his being made aware of compelling reasons against A does in fact causally move him, then he is not responsible for his choice.

Again, this is certainly a strange result of Pereboom's commitments, but it isn't obviously a damning one. However, when we apply these same requirements in different contexts, the outcome becomes less and less acceptable. Think of the case above as the first in a series of four, constructing a four-case style argument.²⁶ As we'll see, there is no principled way for Pereboom to reach a different conclusion in any of the four cases. But as we progress, the entailments of hard incompatibilism generate less and less acceptable outcomes.

Case 2: Jones is deliberating about whether to undertake action A or action B. Jones is genuinely torn about which action he should perform; the choice is a close call. He is aware of self-interested reasons for A and moral reasons of roughly equal weight in favor of B. Both A and B are well within the bounds of Jones' character, and he is not aware of any other factors at play with respect to either A or B. However, there are in fact decisive moral reasons to perform B over A, and if Black III flips the switch on his device, Jones will become aware of those decisive moral reasons against A.

²⁵ Jones' becoming aware of this reason is thus an *event* rather than an *action*.

²⁶ As Pereboom constructs against compatibilism (2014, Ch 4).

Again, if Black III flips the switch, Pereboom is committed to Jones' becoming aware of the moral reasons for B (and against A) having no causal effect on what Jones decides. (As before, his becoming aware cannot even generate a volitional force that has any probabilistic causal effect—because then it would presumably shift the proportion of worlds in which Jones did decide to do the morally right thing.) Not only is Pereboom committed to this conclusion, but also to the conclusion that if becoming aware of decisive moral reasons did in fact causally move Jones, then his subsequent decision would be one for which he is *not* morally responsible. Thus, the point is less about what Jones in fact does and more about the status of Jones' moral responsibility if he does the right thing *because* of his being made aware of the moral reasons in its favor.

Case 3: Jones is deliberating about whether to undertake action A or action B. He has limited understanding of his current situation and the details of either option. As it currently stands, Jones is strongly inclined to do A. He is aware of self-interested reasons for A and moral reasons of roughly equal weight in favor of B, but Jones is a self-interested man at heart. And since the moral consequences of performing A over B are not great, Jones is strongly inclined to perform A. But while he is a selfish man, Jones is not morally bankrupt. He is strongly inclined towards A because the reasons he is aware of seem to generate something of a toss-up. There are self-interested reasons for A and moral reasons for B, but they are of roughly equal weight. And in close calls, Jones is the type of man who tends to act in his self-interest.

However, there are in fact powerful, decisive moral reasons to perform B over A. Not only are there decisive *moral* reasons against A that Jones is not yet aware of, but there are in fact decisive *self-interested* reasons as well. Say that action A is a sort of self-defeating action, one that only appears to benefit its performer, while in reality being prudentially detrimental. If Black III flips the switch, Jones will become aware of both the decisive moral and self-interested reasons against A. If Black III flips the switch, Jones will realize that his initial inclination lacks both moral and prudential support—that on an all-things-considered basis, he should change his mind.

As before, if Black III flips the switch, Pereboom is committed to Jones' becoming aware of powerful, decisive reasons for B (and against A) to have no causal effect on what Jones decides. Again, becoming aware of powerful reasons against A cannot even probabilistically influence what Jones decides. Not only is Pereboom committed to this conclusion, but also to the conclusion that if becoming aware of decisive reasons did in fact causally move Jones, then his subsequent decision would be one for which he is *not* morally responsible. That is, if Jones was in fact swayed by the reasons against A, and chose to perform B because he was made aware of the powerful reasons in its favor, then he would not be responsible for this decision.

Case 4: Remove Black III and his device from the scenario. Jones is faced with a choice between action A and action B. Again, according to everything Jones knows, the choice is a toss-up. There are reasons for both options of roughly equal weight. But in fact, there are decisive reasons to perform B over A.²⁷ Jones is again made aware of those reasons, not by a clandestine scientist with a brain-implanted device, but simply by being told about those

²⁷ It doesn't matter what kind of reasons they are (moral, prudential, etc.), nor does it matter what sort of choice Jones is faced with. The causal role of reasons simpliciter has been neutered by Pereboom's entailments.

reasons by a trusted source. The event of being made aware of those reasons is not something Jones intentionally does, so his awareness is not an active exercise of his agent-causal will.

Again, Pereboom must remain committed to the conclusion that if reasons exert any causal influence on what Jones does, he is not morally responsible for his decision. That is, if Jones was in fact swayed by the reasons against A, and chose to perform B because he was made aware of the powerful reasons in its favor, then he would not be responsible for this decision.

I suggest this conclusion is untenable. Black III does not exist, nor does his device. But the way in which this device presents reasons to Jones is directly analogous to how we often experience becoming aware of reasons for or against decisions and actions. When we deliberate, we sometimes voluntarily call reasons to mind. We can make ourselves aware of relevant reasons. But often, we are *made aware* of reasons; we speak of *discovering* reasons on our own, or of being *presented* with reasons via others in precisely the hope that they will have a causal effect on what we decide to do. These ways of becoming aware of reasons are *events* rather than *actions*. But if reasons cannot play a causal role in Jones' deliberation, then reasons cannot ever play a causal role in ours.

Pereboom's commitments generate a morally and psychologically implausible *reasons-unresponsiveness* requirement on being genuinely morally responsible, at least in a causal sense. That is, on the thesis of hard incompatibilism, reasons cannot have a causally effective influence on what an agent decides to do if she is to be responsible for that decision. Consider what this bewildering requirement entails; it means that for an agent to act freely and responsibly, she cannot be causally influenced in any way by her reasons, but also by her character, motivations, or desires, for these are all states which are not identical to her present, uncaused will. The agent must always supply an exercise of her uncaused causal power which determines what she does in a way that is not even influenced, let alone determined, by her reasons, character, motivations, and desires. Thus, no one can ever do the right thing, and do that thing *because* it's the right thing to do, while being free and responsible for what they did.

If one ever acts because of the moral reasons for or against that act, one is not responsible for this choice. But this raises the question: on what basis *should* one decide if reasons cannot play a causal role? The answer, it seems, is that in some sense, there can be no basis upon which one decides.²⁸ Reasons cannot ever constrain the will if the resulting action is to be a free and responsible one.²⁹ Thus, when someone truthfully informs us that the moral considerations at play moved them to act

²⁸ Wolf paints a convincingly dreadful image of what this requirement would look like: "Let us imagine, however, what an agent who satisfied this condition would have to be like. Consider first what it would mean for the agent's actions not to be determined by his interests—for the agent, in other words, to have the ability to act despite his interests [reasons in our case]. This would mean, I think, that the agent has the ability to act against everything he believes in and everything he cares about. It would mean, for example, that if the agent's son were inside a burning building, the agent could just stand there and watch the house go up in flames. Or that the agent, though he thinks his neighbor a fine and agreeable fellow, could just get up one day, ring the doorbell, and punch him in the nose" (1980, 152-153).

²⁹ I argue that this generates an unacceptable conclusion: only *spasms of the will*, analogous to muscular spasms, result in free and responsible acts, while an action that is causally influenced by one's reasons, character, and motivations is unfree and one for which we are not responsible.

in alignment with the good, Pereboom suggests that we need something further for the person to deserve praise. But it is totally opaque as to just what rationale could plausibly fill this lacuna.³⁰

If this is what agent-causation requires, we need to reexamine Pereboom's claim that agent-causation, if only we had this power, would make us morally responsible for what we did.³¹ The problem for Pereboom is that his account cannot successfully allow reasons to be causally integrated into an agent's deliberation while allowing that agent to remain morally responsible for what they do on the basis of those reasons. And if reasons cannot even probabilistically push us in one direction or another, it's hard to spell out exactly what role they are allowed to play in Pereboom's framework.³² The real force of these cases is not found in Pereboom's positive requirement: that to be free and responsible, reasons cannot play a causal role in our decision-making process. It's his negative requirement: that if reasons do exert any causal influence in our deliberation, then we cannot be morally responsible for what we decide or do on the basis on those reasons.³³

5. An Identity Crisis for Hard Incompatibilism

Interestingly, Pereboom himself nods towards acknowledging this type of worry:

The influence of reasons on a morally responsible agent-cause given the libertarian view cannot be either deterministically or probabilistically causal. This leaves an influence that is causal but neither deterministically nor probabilistically so, or else a non-causal influence. It's not obvious that an influence that meets either of these specifications is conceivable in a strong sense, and this casts further doubt on the ideal positive conceivability of the agent-causal libertarian's proposal (2014, 62).

Somewhat frustratingly, the section containing this quote ends there. But I'm not sure that such an indecisive conclusion can be sustained upon further scrutiny. This issue is not a peripheral one—it's at the heart of the matter, and I don't think it's something that can be tossed off as orthogonal to the tenability of hard incompatibilism. Recall that a crucial plank of the position maintained that agent-causation, if we had this power, would enable and ground our being morally responsible. So it better be the case that agent-causation, according to what Pereboom has said this power must be, would

³⁰ This result of hard incompatibilism goes against the possibility of reasoning in general, moral persuasion, moral development, and it rules out cases of volitional necessity as free and responsible actions.

³¹ This is still not an argument that agent-causation is incoherent or impossible, nor is it an argument that it would have to be a god-like power. It's a very narrow and specific argument that Pereboom's conception of agent-causation is not the right success condition for the freedom which would make us morally responsible.

³² Pereboom might suggest that reasons can play an explanatory but not causal role in deliberation and decision. We might explain what we decide by citing our reasons even while those reasons failed to exert any causal influence on the outcome of our deliberation. This suggestion is hard to fully make sense of; it's difficult to spell out how exactly reasons are supposed to be involved while having no causal influence on what an agent decides. Say an agent is deciding between three courses of action, and there are powerful moral reasons in support of the first. There are no such reasons for choosing the second or third option. If reasons cannot play even a probabilistic causal role, then what the agent decides must be unrelated to the strength and quantity of reasons in support of the first option. And it's hard to understand what it would mean for the agent to explain her decision for A without citing the reasons for A in a causal sense.

³³ I am more than willing to believe that agent-causalists like Clarke and O'Connor may have or could devise strategies to avoid this repugnant conclusion. What I am arguing is that Pereboom specifically is committed to this conclusion and cannot adopt any potential sway to save himself from it, unless he is willing to give up some prior commitment.

enable and ground our being morally responsible. But the impossibility of squaring this reasons-unresponsiveness requirement makes it very difficult to see how this conditional claim holds true. I take myself to be pushing Pereboom to grapple with the full depth of this framework's implications.

In response to my worries, there seems to be three moves open to Pereboom, none without pain for the hard incompatibilist position.

The first option is to simply embrace the implications of hard incompatibilism as it currently stands. Pereboom could hold to the view that if reasons play a causal role in what an agent does, then she is not responsible (praiseworthy or blameworthy) for her action. I've made clear why I do not believe this is a tenable position, and I think Pereboom is quite sensitive to this concern as well. He has, over the years, spoken in a manner which increasingly appears to waiver on whether agent-causation would provide the freedom required to be morally responsible.

This leads us to Pereboom's second option: reject agent-causation as the grounding condition for moral responsibility because of its inability to integrate the causal role of reasons in free and responsible action. Consider the following quotes offered by Pereboom on this subject:

At the same time, I think that if we were undetermined agent-causes – if we as substances had the power to cause decisions without being causally determined to cause them – we *might well then* have the sort of free will required for moral responsibility (2007, 85).

My stance in the earlier book [2001: *Living without Free Will*] was that there are no good reasons to think that this position [agent-causal libertarianism] is incoherent, although it still may be, while our best our best reason for rejecting it is that it resists reconciliation with our leading physical theories. I defend this last claim against a number of objections, but I've changed my stance about the coherence of agent-causal libertarianism somewhat. I now argue that the difficulty of integrating reasons-explanation, together with issues several critics have raised for our conception of agent-causal control, count against the coherence of the position, even though these concerns don't go so far as to definitively establish its incoherence (2014, 5-6).

This is an interesting and troubling development. Notice the chronological progression of these doubts: in 2001, Pereboom strongly affirmed that agent-causation would, if it existed, ground responsibility. In 2007, he began to speak in a less conclusive tone: that agent-causal freedom "*may well then*" ground our being responsible. By 2014, the publication of his updated defense of hard incompatibilism, Pereboom was openly doubting whether agent-causation would in fact coherently provide the type of freedom sufficient to render us responsible.

Pereboom seems to have become increasingly sensitive to these very sorts of worries about the role of reasons in free and responsible action on an agent-causal picture. The problem, however, is that Pereboom speaks as though whether agent-causation would ground moral responsibility is a peripheral issue—as a sort of “buffet-style” proposition. One can accept or reject agent-causation as the grounding condition for responsibility without this affecting the larger hard incompatibilist framework. But I think this move is not open to Pereboom. The way hard incompatibilism differentiated itself from impossibilism—the position that the conditions for being free and responsible are theoretically impossible (Vihvelin 2008)—was by providing a positive account of the grounding conditions for responsibility. Hard incompatibilism states that there is a way for us to be

morally responsible, while impossibilism denies that the world could be setup in a way to warrant basic desert. If agent-causation becomes conceptually implausible as the success condition for free will and moral responsibility, then hard incompatibilism faces an identity crisis: it would become just another form of impossibilism, stating that there is no success condition for freedom and responsibility.

The way to resolve this issue, and the third possible reply, would be to allow reasons to play a causal role in free and responsible deliberation and action. But this route requires radical revisions to the hard incompatibilist scheme. It's not at all clear that the position could survive such revisions without becoming a form of compatibilism.

References

- Chisholm, Roderick (1964). Human Freedom and the Self. In Gary Watson, *Free will*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Clarke, Randolph (2003). *Libertarian Accounts of Free Will*. New York, US: OUP Usa.
- Randolph Clarke (2010). "Making Up One's Mind", In, *Action, Ethics, and Responsibility*, Joseph Keim Campbell, Michael O'Rourke, Harry S. Silverstein. The MIT Press.
- Frankfurt, H. G. (1969). Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 66(23), 829–839. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2023833>
- Frankfurt, Harry G. (1971). Freedom of the will and the concept of a person. *Journal of Philosophy* 68 (1):5-20.
- Frankfurt, H. (1982). The Importance of What We Care About. *Synthese*, 53(2), 257–272. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20115802>
- Griffith, Meghan (2010). Why agent-caused actions are not lucky. *American Philosophical Quarterly* 47 (1):43-56.
- Korsgaard, C. M. (1992). Creating the Kingdom of Ends: Reciprocity and Responsibility in Personal Relations. *Philosophical Perspectives*, 6, 305–332. Retrieved from <http://jstor.org/stable/2214250>
- Korsgaard, C. M. (1996). *Creating the Kingdom of Ends*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nahmias, E. (2006). Close Calls and the Confident Agent: Free Will, Deliberation, and Alternative Possibilities. *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition*, 131(3), 627–667. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25471827>

- O'Connor, Timothy (2000). *Persons and Causes: The Metaphysics of Free Will*. New York, US: Oxford University Press USA.
- O'Connor, Timothy (2003). Review of Derk Pereboom, Living Without Free Will. *Philosophical Quarterly* 53 (210):308-310.
- O'Shaughnessy, Brian (2009). Trying and acting. In Lucy O'Brien & Matthew Soteriou, *Mental actions*. New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 163.
- Agent-causal power. In Toby Handfield, *Dispositions and causes*. New York : Oxford University Press,: Clarendon Press ;
- Pereboom, Derk (2001). *Living Without Free Will*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Pereboom, Derk (2007). "Hard Incompatibilism." In Fischer, John Martin; Kane, Robert; Pereboom, Derk & Vargas, Manuel (2007). *Four Views on Free Will*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Pereboom, Derk (2014). *Free will, agency, and meaning in life*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Pereboom, Derk & Caruso, Gregg D. (2018). Hard-Incompatibilist Existentialism: Neuroscience, Punishment, and Meaning in Life. In Gregg Caruso & Owen Flanagan, *Neuroexistentialism: Meaning, Morals, and Purpose in the Age of Neuroscience*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Steup, M. (2012). Belief control and intentionality. *Synthese*, 188(2), 145–163.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41681635>
- Steward, Helen (2011). Moral responsibility and the concept of agency. In Richard Swinburne, *Free Will and Modern Science*. New York: OUP/British Academy.
- Vihvelin, Kadri (2008). Compatibilism, incompatibilism, and impossibilism. In Theodore Sider, John Hawthorne & Dean W. Zimmerman, *Contemporary debates in metaphysics*. Malden, MA: Blackwell. pp. 303--318.
- Watson, Gary (2007). The Work of the Will. In Sarah Stroud & Christine Tappolet, *Weakness of Will and Practical Irrationality*. Oxford, GB: Oxford University Press.
- Wolf, S. (1980). Asymmetrical Freedom. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 77(3), 151–166.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/2025667>