Faith and Philosophy: Journal of the Society of Christian Philosophers

Volume 22 | Issue 1 Article 6

1-1-2005

Agent-Causation and Control

David Widerker

Follow this and additional works at: https://place.asburyseminary.edu/faithandphilosophy

Recommended Citation
Widerker, David (2005) "Agent-Causation and Control," *Faith and Philosophy: Journal of the Society of Christian Philosophers*: Vol. 22 : Iss. 1 , Article 6.
DOI: 10.5840/faithphil200522139
Available at: https://place.asburyseminary.edu/faithandphilosophy/vol22/iss1/6

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at ePLACE: preserving, learning, and creative exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faith and Philosophy: Journal of the Society of Christian Philosophers by an authorized editor of ePLACE: preserving, learning, and creative exchange.

AGENT-CAUSATION AND CONTROL

David Widerker

In this article, I consider a certain libertarian theory of free will which I call "Strong Agent-Causal Libertarianism". Central to it is the thesis that, if there is such a thing as agent-causation, then one can *show* that, as a matter conceptual necessity, agent-causal acts are within the agent's control. I first examine a recent attempt to establish this thesis by Timothy O'Connor and argue that it does not succeed. I then consider another defense of it which I also find wanting.

Introduction

Libertarians typically believe that some of the actions we perform are free. By 'free action' they do not just mean a nomically undetermined event that might *not* have occurred, like, for example, the random emission of a subatomic particle by a decaying atom. Rather, they conceive of a free action as an occurrence the agent had control over; one that was *up* to the agent *not* to perform. Hence, they construe the above thesis as follows:

(L) Some of the actions we perform are free, that is, within our control in the sense that it was within our power *not* to perform them.

(Unless specified otherwise, I shall henceforth use 'control' in just this sense.) An important issue among libertarians is how to treat this belief epistemically. Some libertarians (henceforth "Moderate Libertarians") realize that they cannot *prove* its truth. They cannot prove that the world is not deterministic. Nor can they rule out the possibility that what they consider to be a free action is in fact a random occurrence merely accompanied by the belief that this occurrence is up to the agent.[1] Still, they consider themselves justified in holding L as long as they have not been given a good reason to the contrary. Other libertarians (henceforth "Strong Agent-Causal Libertarians" or "SAC-libertarians" for short) are more ambitious. They, too, admit that they cannot prove L. However, they contend that they can do so *if* there is such a thing as agent-causation, or more specifically, *if* there are acts that consist in the agent's agent-causing a certain event. Call such acts 'agent-causal events'. Implied by this claim is a thesis that SAC-libertarians think they can establish, namely that

FAITH AND PHILOSOPHY
Vol. 22 No. 1 January 2005

All rights reserved

(SAC) Necessarily, an agent-causal event is within the control of its agent.[2]

A proof or a plausible argument for SAC would be quite significant. It would place the libertarian position on a stronger conceptual footing than is usually granted, dispelling the suspicion many share that libertarians are not able to distinguish an action that is free and up to the agent from an occurrence that is merely nomically undetermined and random.

In this article, I wish to provide a critical assessment of SAC-libertarianism. I first examine a recent attempt to establish SAC by Timothy O'Connor and argue that it does not succeed. I then consider another defense of SAC which I also find wanting. I conclude my article by tracing the implications of this result for the prospects of providing a plausible account of libertarian freedom.

1. O'Connor's Argument for SAC

According to the SAC-libertarian, when an agent S performs a free action, he stands in a direct causal relation to some event E that is a determinate intention to act in a certain way. The causal relation in question is *sui generis* in the sense that it cannot be reduced to an event-event causal relation or to nomic regularity. Building upon this assumption, O'Connor develops a two-step argument for SAC.[3] Its first part purports to show that

(OC1) It is impossible for an agent-causal event to be caused.

Consider a causally complex event of the form

(1) Event A causing event B,

for example, the ringing of the bell causing Jones's waking up. O'Connor points out that one can cause such an event only indirectly by causing its first relatum - the ringing of the bell. What now about a causally complex event such as

(2) S's agent-causing E?

Such an event, claims O'Connor, cannot be caused indirectly, as its first relatum S is not an event but an enduring substance, and it is impossible to cause an enduring substance. Hence, agent-causings cannot be caused or have causally sufficient conditions.[4] An agent who agent-causes an event is, therefore, the true causal originator of it.

Of course, this result does not yet establish SAC. The fact that an agent-causal event cannot be caused does not automatically imply that it is within the control of its agent in the sense that it was within the agent's power not to cause E. O'Connor is well aware of this, and the second part of his argument for SAC is intended to close this gap. Here

is what he says:

> But now consider an instance of *S's causing E*. This event is intrinsically a doing, owing to its internal structure (i.e., an agent's bearing a direct causal relation to another event.). Its very nature precludes the possibility of there being a sufficient causal condition for it (as I argued earlier), being an event that is the agent's causing the event internal to it (E). Now the event E is clearly under the control of the agent, since *he* caused it (directly). But would it not, then, be perfectly absurd to raise a doubt concerning whether the agent controlled *his causing E*? Indeed, it seems to me that the question whether the agent has control over this event is ill framed - *it* simply is an instance of an agent's *exercising* direct control over another event. (O'Connor 1995, 186-187.)

As we can see, O'Connor moves from

a. S agent-causes E,

to

b. E is under the control of the agent,

and then to

c. It is absurd to doubt that the agent had control over his agent-causing E, since his agent-causing E is an instance of S's exercising direct control over E, and it does not make sense to ask whether S has control over his controlling of E.

I find this argument puzzling. First, there is a problem in the move from (b) to (c). O'Connor claims that

(3) If S exercises control over E, then it does not make sense to ask whether S has control over his controlling of E.

However, (3) seems to be false. For example, we may imagine that S has control over his saying the word 'nice' in the next moment in the sense that it is within his power *not* to say it then. But from this it does not follow that it does not make sense to ask whether the fact of his having this power is within his control. Such a question makes perfect sense. Furthermore, the answer to it is usually negative. For like so many of us, S may just find himself with having this power without being able to rid himself of it.

Perhaps O'Connor's reason for thinking that it does not make sense to ask whether S has control over his controlling E is that such control involves

(4) S's agent-causing his agent-causing E,

which on his account is impossible. But even if (4) is impossible, it still does not follow from this that the question whether S has control over his controlling of E does not make sense. What does follow is that the answer to it is NO. Compare that question to the question of whether it is possible to name the largest integer? That the latter is an impossible task implies that the answer to this second question is negative, and not that it does not make sense or that it is ill framed. Thus, (3) turns out to be false again.

A more serious problem with O'Connor's argument is the move from (a) to (b). O'Connor justifies it by assuming that

> (5) S's agent-causing E is an instance of (or consists in) S's exercising direct control over E.

But how does he know (5)? Why does the fact that an agent stands in a direct causal relation to an event guarantee that he has control over that event? Here, O'Connor leaves us completely in the dark.[5]

We can bring out this weakness of O'Connor's argument also by the following consideration: Granted that we are careful not to assume (5), i.e. not to identify S's agent-causing E with his exercising control over E, what we can plausibly say is that

> (6) S exercises control over E by means of his agent-causing E only if S has control over his agent-causing E (only if it is within S's power *not* to agent-cause E),

And now we see that, since S's exercising control over E by means of his agent-causing E is contingent upon S's having control over his agent-causing E, and since O'Connor has not shown that the latter is the case, he is not justified in moving from (a) to (b).

2. *The Default Argument*

Although I believe that O'Connor's argument for SAC is unconvincing, I wish to explore another way in which an SAC-libertarian may want to defend SAC. He may argue as follows:

> Look, you charge me with not having shown that an agent-causal event is within the agent's control. Fair enough. However, what you do not seem to realize is that this must be so by default. We have seen earlier that such an event cannot be caused by anything else. Furthermore, it also can't be a chance occurrence. If *I* cause my intention to raise my arm, then obviously this occurrence is not something I find myself with, or that happens to me out of the blue. Thus, it does not occur at random. Hence, by default it must be in my control, as the only two reasons for this not being so do not obtain.

Let us call this argument "The Default Argument". This seems to me to

be the strongest argument that the SAC-libertarian can provide for his position. And the question arises whether it is sound? I shall now argue that it is not. First, I would like to show that its premises do not entail its conclusion.

The SAC-libertarian reasons that an agent-causal event must be in the agent's control, as the only two scenarios in which this might not be the case – one in which it is caused or one in which it occurs randomly – turn out to be incoherent. By causation he understands a *sui generis* relation between two events or between an agent and an event that cannot be reduced to nomic regularity.[6] There is, however, a further type of scenario in which an agent presumably lacks control over an agent-causal event which the SAC-theorist also needs to rule out as impossible in order for the Default Argument to succeed; a scenario in which there obtains for an agent-causal event a *nomically* sufficient condition. Suppose that there were a law of nature to the effect that the obtaining of antecedent conditions of a certain type F would be always followed by the occurrence of a certain type of agent-causal event. If that were the case, then if conditions of the said type were to obtain, then a certain agent-causal event would become inevitable. Its inevitability would not be due to its being caused, as, consistent with the SAC-theorist's view, causation does not reduce to nomic regularity. Rather it would be due to (i) the fact that its occurrence would be entailed by the conjunction consisting of the relevant law of nature and the relevant antecedent condition, and (ii) the fact that the agent would not have control over this conjunction (once the said antecedent condition occurred). [7]

Situations in which there obtains prior to the occurrence of an agent-causal event a *logically* or *metaphysically* sufficient condition for it pose a further difficulty for the Default Argument. A case in point is a scenario in which an essentially omniscient God forebelieves at time T0 that an agent-causal event Z will occur at time T10. (Hence, the fact that God forebelieves at T0 that Z occurs at T10 constitutes a logically or metaphysically sufficient condition for the occurrence of Z at T10.) Such a scenario seems perfectly compatible with the agent-causal event in question being both uncaused and non-random. But, as shown by a well-known argument against human freedom from divine foreknowledge, in the scenario in question the occurrence of that event is unavoidable.[8]

The conclusion that emerges from the above considerations is that, although one might agree with the SAC-libertarian that

(OC1) It is impossible for an agent-causal event to be caused,

one need not grant that

(OC1′) It is impossible for an agent-causal event to have a nomically (or metaphysically) sufficient condition that occurs prior to that event.

It is this latter thesis that the SAC-libertarian needs to prove in order for the Default Argument to go through - in order to convince us that, as a matter of conceptual necessity, agent-causal-events are within the

agent's control. And this he has not done. Note that it is not open to the SAC-libertarian to counter this objection by insisting that the possibility of an agent-causal event having a nomically (or metaphysically) sufficient condition is ruled out by the following assumption explicative of the notion of agent-causation:

(C) If S agent-caused E, then it was within S's power *not* to agent-cause E.

For by assuming C, which is equivalent to SAC, he would render his attempt to *prove* SAC question begging.[9]

3. *A Further Difficulty*

What about the SAC-libertarian's more specific claim OC1? So far I have not questioned it. However, it also seems to me unfounded. O'Connor's argument for it relies heavily on the assumption that

(OC2) One can cause a causally complex event only indirectly by causing its first relatum.

Unlike O'Connor, I reject this assumption and claim that we have no good reason to think that it holds for agent-causal events. If at all, it only holds for causally complex events such as event A causing event B.
To see this, consider again the agent-causal event

(2) S's agent-causing E.

When this event occurs, the individual S acquires the property of agent-causing E. Now an individual existing at time T may acquire a property it does not have at T at a later time. It may acquire it either spontaneously or by being caused to have it. The same, however, is not true of an event. An event, not being an enduring object, cannot acquire a (genuine) property it lacks at a time later than the time at which it occurred, i.e. later than the time at which it was wholly present.[10] The only way in which an event can come to have a (genuine) property is either by occurring (spontaneously or in a causal way) *with* that property, or by occurring in circumstances in which it acquires the said property in virtue of the properties it has and those of the circumstances. So, for instance, if the event of flipping the switch occurs in the right sort of circumstances, it acquires the property of causing the event of the light's going on.

Here, in my view, lies the reason why O'Connor's assumption OC2 does not hold for agent-causal events. Such events (unlike event-event causings) consist in an *individual* or a *substance* exemplifying a property. And it is simply not true that the only way in which an individual can come to have a property P is either by coming to exist *with* that property, or by coming to exist in circumstances in which it acquires the said property in virtue of the properties it has and those of the circumstances. Another, in fact, most common way in which an individual may acquire

a property is, when in a situation in which the individual already exists, something causes it to have the property - that something being a change in the individual itself or a change in some other substance. In this regard, I do not see any difference between the individual acquiring the property of agent-causing E or any other property.

Again, it is not open to the SAC-libertarian to try meet this objection by arguing that the possibility I am pointing to - the possibility of something causing S to have the property of agent-causing E does not exist, since the notion of S's agent-causing E entails that S has it within his power *not* to agent-cause E. For, as pointed out earlier, the SAC-libertarian's argument for SAC would then become question begging.[11]

I have argued above that we have no good reason to accept O'Connor's assumption OC2, and consequently, we have *no* good reason to accept his argument for his claim that

(OC1) It is impossible for an agent-causal event to be caused.

I shall now show that we also have good reasons to *reject* that argument. The argument rests on the following two assumptions:

m. One can cause a causally complex event such as S's agent-causing E only indirectly by causing its first relatum – S,

n. It is impossible to cause S, since S is an enduring substance.

Both these assumptions seem to me questionable. Consider (n). Why is it not possible to cause S? Since by 'causing' O'Connor means 'producing'[12], causing S certainly *is* possible. For example, it is certainly possible for God to produce, or to create S. In response, O'Connor might argue that strictly speaking what God causes when He creates S is not the *individual* S, but the *event* of S's coming into existence. But drawing this distinction between causing S and causing S's coming into existence, though it may save (n) from the above objection, merely shifts the objection onto (m). For now it seems possible for God to bring about S's agent-causing E *not* in the way specified in (m) - without causing the individual S. I.e., by either causing S to come into existence with the property of agent-causing E, or by causing S to come into existence in circumstances (and with properties) such that S would agent-cause E in those circumstances.

Assumption (m) may be objected to also on independent grounds. Contrary to what it states, causing

(2) S's agent-causing E at T

does *not* require one to cause it indirectly by causing S. Causing (2) does not require one to cause S *at all*, since S's existence at T may be guaranteed independently by some other factor. Assuming that S existed prior to T, S's existence at T may be guaranteed by God (not necessarily by His *creating* or recreating S at T, but by ensuring that a previously exist-

ing S will continue to exist at T.) Alternatively, a naturalist countenancing an ontology including substances may hold that S's existence at T is guaranteed by virtue of its being a substance and the way our universe is. That is, he may hold that our world is such that, if a substance exists prior to T, then, unless a necessary condition for its continued existence is missing, it will continue to exist on its own.[13]

We may expose the fallacy underlying O'Connor's (m) also in the following way: causing S to acquire at T the property of agent-causing E presupposes the existence of S at T. But it does not presuppose *causing* the existence of S at T. Note that, in this regard, there does not seem to be any difference between causing S to acquire the property of agent-causing E and causing S to have any other property. Thus, to cause S to feel pain at T, I certainly do not have to cause S to exist at T. In the same way, I do not have to cause S to exist at T in order to cause S to acquire at T the property of agent-causing E.

4. *Another Sense of Control*

The failure of the SAC-theorist to establish OC1 prevents him from raising the following important objection to my criticism of his position. He might claim that by 'control' in L and SAC he did not mean 'control' in the sense of the agent having it within his power to avoid acting as he did. Rather, he meant 'control' in the sense of an agent performing an act *on his own*. (An act that the agent performs on his own is one that is neither caused, nor nomically determined, nor random.) In other words, he might claim that the way he understood SAC is this:

> (SAC1) Necessarily, an agent-causal event is within the agent's control in the sense of being an act that the agent performs *on his own*.

Pursuing this line, the SAC-theorist might argue that in that case my earlier objections to SAC-libertarianism (those stated in sections 1 and 2) do not apply, being based on an incorrect understanding 'control'.[14;15] For instance, one objection that would not apply is the one I raised (in sec. 1) against O'Connor's claim that

> (3) If S exercises control over E, then it does not make sense to ask whether S has control over his controlling of E.

For if by 'S exercises control over E' we mean that S causes E on his own, then indeed it does not make sense to ask whether "S's causing E on his own" is something that S brings about on his own. Thus, on the "acting on his own" reading of 'control' (3) turns out to be true.[16] Furthermore, it would *seem* that my objection to the Default Argument also does not apply. The objection shows that the argument does not rule out the possibility of an agent-causal event being unavoidable - it does not rule out the possibility that an agent might lack control over an agent-causal event in the "avoidability" sense of 'control'. But it does not show that this is the

case when 'control' is understood in the "acting on his own" sense.

Now, however, this way out is not available to the SAC-theorist. For if he has not shown that an agent-causal event cannot be caused, then, obviously, he has not succeeded in establishing SAC1. Note that this conclusion also follows from fact that the SAC-libertarian has not ruled out the possibility of there being a nomically sufficient condition for an agent-causal event. For if the latter is a possibility, then someone who has it within his power to bring about such a condition would also be able to bring about the occurrence of an agent-causal event. Such a consequence would certainly be in contradiction with SAC1, as it entails that the occurrence of an agent-causal event may be explained by factors external to the agent.

Conclusion

The conclusion that emerges is that the SAC-libertarian is unable to establish the SAC-thesis to the effect that agent-causal events (acts) are within the agent's control. Hence, he also cannot *prove* the reality of free actions even on the assumption of agent-causation. This point raises the more general question of whether the notion of a free action can be more adequately captured by a libertarian theory other than SAC-libertarianism? For example, a theory that defines such an action as consisting in the agent's causing an event, provided that his causing the event is either nomically undetermined or uncaused. Or, a theory such as Simple Indeterminism, for which a free action either is, or originates in, a causally or nomically undetermined simple mental action such as a forming of an intention, an undertaking, a volition, etc. Or perhaps, as the Moderate Libertarian maintains, a free action is an action that the agent had it within his power *not* to perform, where this claim (i) entails that such an action is nomically undetermined, and (ii) the notion of power in question is *sui generis* in the sense that it is not reducible to causal possibility or other modal notions?[17] These are important questions, which I hope to pursue at another time.[18]

Bar-Ilan University

REFERENCES

Adams Frederick and Mele Alfred. 1989. "The Role of Intention in Intentional Action." *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 19: 511-531.

Chisholm Roderick. 1971. "Reflections on Human Agency." *Idealistic Studies* 1:33-46.

Fischer John Martin, ed. 1986. *Moral Responsibility*. Cornell University Press.

Fischer John Martin, ed. 1989. *God, Foreknowledge, and Freedom*. Stanford University Press.

Frankfurt H. 1969. "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility." *Journal of Philosophy* 66: 829-39. Reprinted in Fischer 1986.

Ginet Carl 1996. "In Defense of the Principle of Alternative Possibilities: Why I Don't Find Frankfurt's Argument Convincing." *Philosophical*

Perspectives 10: 403-17.
Ginet Carl 1997. "Freedom, Responsibility, and Agency." *The Journal of Ethics*. 1:85-98.
Hasker William. 1989. *God, Time, and Knowledge*. Cornell University Press.
Hasker William. 2001. *The Emergent Self*. Cornell University Press.
Hendrickson Noel. 2002. "Against an Agent-Causal Theory of Action." *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 40:41-58
Kane, Robert 1996. *The Significance of Free Will*. Oxford University Press.
Mele Alfred. 1992. *Springs of Action*. Oxford University Press.
O'Connor Timothy. 1995. "Agent Causation." in *Agents, Causes, and Events*. T. O'Connor (ed.) Oxford University Press. 173-200.
O'Connor Timothy. 1996. "Why Agent-Causation?" *Philosophical Topics* 24: 143-158.
O'Connor Timothy. 1998. "The Agent as Cause." *Metaphysics: The Big Questions*. Peter Van Inwagen and Dean W. Zimmerman (ed.) Oxford University Press. 374-380.
O'Connor Timothy. 2000. *Persons and Causes: The Metaphysics of Free Will*. Oxford University Press.
Pereboom, Derk. 2001. *Living Without Free Will*. Cambridge University Press.
Rowe William 1991. *Thomas Reid on Freedom and Morality*. Cornell University Press.
Taylor Richard 1966. *Action and Purpose*. Prentice Hall.
Widerker David 1995a. "Libertarianism and Frankfurt's Attack on the Principle of Alternative Possibilities." *Philosophical Review* 104: 247-61.
Widerker David and Michael McKenna, eds. 2003. *Moral Responsibility and Alternative Possibilities* in Ashgate Press.

NOTES

1. Although for a Moderate Libertarian a free action either is, or originates in, a simple mental action that is within the agent's control (a forming of an intention, a choice, an undertaking, etc), he cannot rule out the possibility that what he believes is an instance of a free action might turn out to be a mere chance occurrence consisting in the agent's passively *acquiring* a certain intention together with the (false) *belief* that he could have formed a different intention. On the notion of passively acquiring an intention, see Mele 1992, chapter 12, and Adams and Mele 1989, 521-522.

2. Strong Agent-Causal Libertarianism ought to be distinguished from other forms of Agent-Causal Libertarianism such as Moderate Agent-Causal Libertarianism and Reidian Agent-Causal Libertarianism. Proponents of these other positions also admit that they cannot *prove* L. However, for Reidian Agent-Causal Libertarians, SAC turns out to be true by definition, since part of their conception of agent-causation is that, if an agent causes a certain event, he also has the power *not* to cause that event (Rowe 1991, chapter 4). Moderate Agent-Causal Libertarians, on the other hand, deny that a thesis such as SAC is necessarily true. For them an agent-causal event might be caused or nomically determined, and thus might not be within the agent's control. They require, however, that an agent-causal event that constitutes a *free act* must be within the agent's control. A philosopher who espouses this type of libertarianism is Richard Taylor. See Taylor 1966, chap. 8 and 9, esp. pp. 114-115.

3. See O'Connor 1995, 184-187, esp. pp.186-187. O'Connor develops this argument in the context of trying to rebut Chisholm's claim that control over

an agent-causal event requires an infinite regress of agent-causings. See Chisholm 1991, 40. For a shorter version of O'Connor's argument, see O'Connor 1996, 146-147.

4. See O'Connor 1995, 186; and O'Connor 1996, 147.

5. For a similar worry, see Ginet 1995, 91.

6. See O'Connor 1995, 175, and O'Connor 2000, 68.

7. The rule of inference leading to the inevitability of the agent-causal event is this: whatever follows logically from something that is inevitable for the agent, is also inevitable for the agent. Note that I am assuming here a non-Humean, necessitarian account of laws of nature.

8. This may be shown as follows: The assumption of S's having it within his power (at T9) *not* to agent-cause E at T10 requires that there is possible world W' which shares its past up until T9 with the real world, and at which S does not agent-cause E at T10. But since that past includes the state of affairs of God's forebelieving at T0 that S agent-causes E at T10, and since that state of affairs entails S's agent-causing E at T10, it follows that a world such as W' does not exist. For other, more elaborated, versions of the argument against human freedom from divine foreknowledge and their discussion, see Hasker 1989, chap. 4; and the articles in Fischer 1989.

9. Though a SAC-libertarian like O'Connor takes C to be part of the very notion of agent-causation (O'Connor 1995, 176-177; 1996, 145), it is quite clear that he also thinks he can provide an *independent argument* for SAC; one that is meant to be based only on (i) the assumption that agent-causation is a *sui-generis* causal relation obtaining between an agent and an event, and (ii) on some general features of the causal relation. (See O'Connor 1995, 186-187; and O'Connor 1996, 147-148.)

10. I say "genuine property" because an event can, after it occurs, acquire a non-genuine or Cambridge property. For example, if, in December 2000, I mention the event of Abraham Lincoln's death (in 1865), then that event can be said to acquire the Cambridge property of P: being mentioned by me in December 2000, that is, much later after it occurred. Another way of dealing with Cambridge properties is to dispense with them altogether. The truth-conditions of a sentence like 'Lincoln's death was mentioned by David in December 2000' could be stated in terms of: David exemplifies in December 2000 the property of mentioning Lincoln's death. In other words, by accepting the truth of that sentence one need not be ontologically committed to properties like P. Thanks to Bob Kane for drawing my attention to the need to accommodate the case of Cambridge properties.

11. Carl Ginet and William Hasker are also skeptical about the cogency of O'Connor's contention that agent-causal events cannot be caused (OC2). See Hasker 2001, 106-7; and Ginet 1997, 92-93. Hasker argues against it by way of counterexample. Ginet argues that, given the *prima facie* difference between event-event causings and agent-causings, we have no reason to treat them alike, and hence have no reason to accept OC2. (See also Hendrickson 2002, 47-49, who takes the same position as Ginet.) The argument against OC2 in the text goes deeper tracing the asymmetry between the two types of causings to an ontological difference between individuals and events.

12. See O'Connor 1995, 175; and O'Connor 2000, 68.

13. Note that theists may also avail themselves of this assumption, except that they will add that God made the universe that way.

14. This reply is based on the controversial assumption that one can indeed pry apart the two senses of control. I.e., that the fact that an agent acted on his own does *not* entail it was within his power to avoid acting as

he did. For more on this issue, see Frankfurt 1969; Widerker 1995; Ginet 1996, Kane 1996, 142-3; Mele and Robb 1998; and Pereboom 2001, chap. 1. For a collection of articles devoted specifically to this issue, see Widerker and Mckenna forthcoming.

15. I do not mean to attribute this reply to O'Connor, but consider it only as a reply an SAC-libertarian may (in principle) avail himself of.

16. My thanks to Dovid Gottlieb for stressing this point.

17. That this power is *sui generis* has been admirably defended by Richard Taylor in (Taylor, 1966, chap.4).

18. I would like to thank Jerome Gellman, Dovid Gottlieb, Bob Kane, Charlotte Katzoff, Yakir Levin, Al Mele, Bill Rowe, and most especially Ira Schnall and the referees for *Faith and Philosophy*, for their excellent comments on an earlier draft of this paper.