

Self-Forming Acts and Other Miracles*

INTRODUCTION

Ferenc Huoranszki argues for two main claims in the ninth chapter of *Freedom of the Will: A Conditional Analysis* (Huoranszki 2011). First, Huoranszki tries to show that libertarian restrictivism is false because self-determination in the libertarian sense is not necessary for our responsibility, even if motives, reasons or psychological characteristics can influence us relatively strongly to choose one or the other alternative. Second, Huoranszki rejects the so-called manipulation argument.¹ This is an argument for the conclusion that unless physical indeterminism is true, nobody can be morally responsible because our behavior is never independent enough of our environment.

Therefore, according to Huoranszki, neither libertarian self-determination nor physical indeterminism is required for moral responsibility. In my view, Huoranszki's counterarguments do not defeat libertarian restrictivism. However, they can force philosophers who defend this theory to modify or refine it. I analyze Huoranszki's arguments against libertarian self-determination in the first part of my paper. In the second part, I briefly argue for one supervenience argument inspired by a similar objection made earlier (Bács 2012). According to this modified argument, Huoranszki's theory about abilities and responsibility would entail that if physical determinism is true then we are responsible for our ordinary actions only because we are able to do miraculous acts as well. If this objection is correct, Huoranszki's compatibilism is unsuccessful.

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¹ Huoranszki discusses Pereboom's (2001: 112–117) version of the argument.

1. OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE THEORY OF SELF-FORMATION AND A POSSIBLE SOLUTION

1.1 Restrictivist libertarianism and reason-dependence

Before I reconstruct Huoranszki's argumentation, I summarize briefly why many libertarians think that we can only be responsible if it is possible to form our own character by choices and actions. Robert Kane called these self-, character- or motive-forming acts (Kane 1996). According to restrictivist libertarianism, *many times* agents are not able to choose and do otherwise, since their actual character and their motives/reasons determine the way they can choose and act in a particular situation. Nevertheless, they are *frequently* morally responsible even in these cases. This is so if their character and their motives/reasons are the consequences of former choices and intentional actions. If an agent has an irresistibly strong motive, and if the strength of one's motive is impossible to derive from former choices, the agent is not morally responsible.

The main idea behind this theory of responsibility is that the impossibility of acting otherwise, at least in many cases, has different source than the physical infeasibility of the alternative action. Rather, the alternative action is impossible because there are not psychologically sufficient grounds to act otherwise. It is plausible that a sadistic serial killer might be unable to show mercy for her next victim because she lacks emphatic motivation. Even if she can perceive moral reasons, their motivational power is too low compared to her selfish sadistic desires. Why would she act suddenly in a more humanistic way if nothing inclines her to do so? Still, she is responsible, because her former choices made her conscience too weak. According to this kind of libertarianism, the agent is *ultimately responsible*² despite the fact that she cannot choose otherwise just before the murder, if there was, somewhere in the past, at least one key situation (i) where sadistic motivations have significant motivational rivals and (ii) the decision made in that situation is the very origin of the weakness of humanistic motivations. One can be free in a direct way only if one has at least two significant motivational tendencies.

Since Robert Kane has elaborated the theory of self-forming acts in most detailed fashion, my suggestions about moral development will mostly be based on Kane's theory. Huoranszki has a special objection to Kane's restrictivism. He claims that Kane's theory presupposes the reason-dependence of free choices.

² According to Kane, an agent is ultimately responsible for an act if their act's ultimate source is the agent herself, and not the environment, the past, education and so on. (Kane 1996: 33–35.)

In Kane's view, we can use our free will directly if the agent perceives at least two sets of reasons suggesting different choices about the particular situation (Kane 1996: 114). Kane holds that character-forming acts are based on rational choices, because this kind of choice can ensure that the agent is in control.³ Desires and other possible irrational motives only increase the probability of alternatives. This is because they force the will to make a greater effort in so far as the agent tries to choose the other reason, which has less motivational support (Kane 2007: 36).

Huoranszki's problem with this understanding of reason-dependence is the following. We frequently have responsibility for acts which are not based on reasons. For instance, weak-willed or negligent actions, *actes gratuits*,⁴ and so on. It is beyond the scope of this paper to analyze this claim. However, I should mention that restrictivist libertarians have an answer to this problem of self-formation even if they would not reject Huoranszki's claims about irrational acts. A restrictivist libertarian can claim agents are responsible for acts not based upon reasons as long as the strong irrational compulsions are consequences of a clearly reason-dependent self-forming choice. This answer is not doomed to failure *if* self-forming actions can be the ground of moral responsibility.

Beyond this issue, Huoranszki has other counterarguments against libertarian self-determination.

A) The consequence of libertarian self-determination theory is either that the agents have a point in their life after which they just act quasi-mechanically or there is a stage in the agent's life when she does not have the relevant trait and hence cannot adequately perceive (moral) reasons. These consequences are very implausible (Huoranszki 2011: 170). Moreover, it is not clear how someone who cannot perceive reasons in relevant situations can be responsible.

B) Libertarian self-determination is not the grounds of moral responsibility since agents are not able to control how their acts form their characters and motives. This is because agents cannot acquire the desired moral motives and character traits by conscious habituation (or at least this cannot be typical). Why? (b1) Conscious habituation often has undesired moral effects. (b2) Conscious habituation is not effective enough. (b3) Effects of regular actions on character traits cannot be foreseen and controlled by the agent. (Huoranszki 2011: 170-175.)

³ Since, according to Kane, the responsible self's will is fundamentally rational. (Kane 1996: 21–28.)

⁴ These are acts agents perform intentionally but for no particular reason.

C) The relative strength of some motives, reasons and character traits cannot deprive the ability to choose and to do otherwise in non-pathological cases (Huoranszki 2011: 174-175). This is because the ability to choose otherwise requires first and foremost that the agent can represent herself as somebody who can do more than one thing in a particular situation.⁵

I answer objection A) in section 1.2, (b1) in 1.3, (b2) and (b3) in 1.4, and C) in 1.5.

1.2 Character-forming acts and automatism

According to Huoranszki, the problem described in A) is the least worrying one. However, he thinks that it does pose a challenge for libertarian self-determination. The source of this problem is that restrictivist libertarians say there are strong opposing reasons/motivations only in the case of self-determining acts. It would imply that agents who have carried out self-forming acts in one way or another and acquired a new character trait behave quasi-mechanistically according to these characteristics.

Huoranszki suggests that the only alternative to avoid this consequence is a dead end. If libertarians claim that positive character traits enable agents to perceive moral reasons, this then would explain why she always acts rightly. But this solution does not help. If the agent cannot perceive moral reasons adequately before acquiring the proper character traits, how could the self-forming actions when the agent is not able to perceive these reasons be the grounds for her moral responsibility?

In my view, the first option of quasi-mechanistic acting is actually not that problematic or implausible provided we respect the complexity of the human motivational system. I think the human motivational system requires psychological and natural scientific investigation. In other words, philosophers can only make sketchy remarks about it. Nevertheless, it seems that agents have many different dispositions which can ground opposite motivations and reasons in particular situations.

Let us suppose that somebody has three relatively strong motivational dispositions: irascibility, respect for authority, and altruism. Furthermore, imagine that she resists her irascibility when she speaks with her boss, as she would like to respect her. This might strengthen her self-control so that she will always resist her irascibility when it clashes with respect for authority. However, this does not mean that she can resist her bad temper in every case. For example,

⁵ This last claim is made before chapter nine (Huoranszki 2011: 41). Nonetheless, it is important because it is meant to explain why character traits and ordinary psychological states cannot, according to Huoranszki, deprive us of our ability to do otherwise.

in a situation where her irascibility clashes with her altruism, it is questionable which disposition will win. Or if her other dispositions militate against her respectfulness, she may not obey her superior. However, I believe it is probable that her former choices for respectful acts raise the probability of obeying.

The point is that, even if somebody acquires a new character trait, she may not act accordingly in a different type of situation where this trait has a different motivational “rival”. Moreover, it is also possible that she loses her character trait. If the employee acts irascibly in other situations where the temptation has different motivational rivals, her irascibility may become stronger. As a result, she may later not be able to show respect toward her superior. In my opinion, all this is not incompatible with Kane’s or Aristotle’s conception of self-formation.

There is another reason why the charge of quasi-automatism is not an essential problem for restrictivist libertarianism. Granted, actions determined by strong character traits are automatic in the sense that the agent always acts in the same way in similar situations. In addition, in these cases the agent’s habituation is so strong that it is possible to predict how she is going to act. But this need not prevent her from perceiving opposing reasons.

Kane distinguishes between the notion of external and internal reason (Kane 1996: 29-30). Usually, philosophers talk about internal reasons in the free will debate because only internal reasons have significant motivational power in the agent’s deliberation process, while external reasons are not supposed to have such influence. They are mere facts, which theoretically could have been a reason for someone, but actually they do not motivate the agent. In Kane’s example, someone who does not know that her friend will go to some party will not be motivated by this fact. Nevertheless, this fact is a reason for her to go to the party in the externalist sense.

In my opinion, the case of a perfectly virtuous agent would be similar to this in some respects. Granted, she could perceive that the morally wrong options have some benefits. So this example does differ in one way. Still, this knowledge did not really pose a danger that she would choose the morally right alternative every time. In short, she perceives morally wrong reasons, but these would be reason for her only in the externalist sense. Therefore, acquiring new character traits changes not the cognitive capacity and reason-perceiving ability (I do not exclude that this can sometimes happen during character-formation), but the motivational background, the motivational power of reasons, desires, and so on.

It is important to note that if we accept this view of self-formation suggested by Kane, ordinary habituation and self-formation will be similar in some respects. Nevertheless, there remain important differences. It may well be that the Aristotelian theory of self-formation criticized by Huoranszki does indeed put too much stress on the similarity. So I agree with Huoranszki that (b1) agents cannot acquire moral motives and character traits by conscious habituation (or at least this is not a paradigmatic case). Furthermore, I do not deny that (b2) the way

regular actions impact on character traits cannot constitute control in the ordinary sense of ‘control’. Still, I claim that agents are responsible for the morally relevant consequences of character-forming acts.

1.3 The invisible hand of character-formation

Why is Huoranszki so skeptical regarding agents’ ability to acquire motives and character traits by conscious habituation? Huoranszki does not deny that sometimes it is possible to gain these character traits in this way. Nonetheless, he has the problem that conscious habituation is not reliable, because trying consciously to develop a character trait can produce the opposite result (b1). His example is the following:

Let us suppose that someone does not have the disposition to behave kindly or respectfully with others. But she does judge in many situations that the best thing for her to do would be to behave kindly and respectfully. Thus, she makes an effort and, if she is continent enough, then she can regularly behave as if she was naturally kind and respectful.

The result of such kind of behavior may be disastrous. It is all too easy to imagine that instead of acquiring kindness and respectfulness, the person becomes a hypocrite. ... There is no guarantee that the recognition of what behavioral patterns would manifest such traits and the attempt to conform one’s behavior to such recognition will necessarily improve her ‘moral self’. (Huoranszki 2011: 171.)

There is something odd about this example though. A hypocrite who shows respectful behavior to somebody else does not really think that this other person has earned her respect. She behaves this way only because she believes that this hypocritical behavior will somehow pay off. Consequently, a hypocrite does not really want to be respectful with other people if she really is a hypocrite. So if the agent would like to be a kind and respectful person because she thought that this is morally good and other people deserve this kind of treatment, she was obviously not a hypocrite to begin with.

I cannot imagine a scenario in which somebody, who has such good intentions, loses her respect towards somebody else because she tries to behave respectfully. Maybe Huoranszki is thinking here of someone who is misanthropic but does not like herself just because of her misanthropy. But again, if somebody hates her own misanthropy because she believes that people deserve better, she will not be a hypocrite if she behaves not as her inclinations dictate but as her rational considerations do. This remains true even if her misanthropic feelings will never change. Suppose the misanthrope learns how to behave differently from what her irrational dispositions dictate. Suppose, moreover, that

she behaves kindly, even in cases in which she rationally thinks that it would be good if she had not behaved so nicely. The problem is not that she learned to be kind to people who deserve it. The real problem is that she does not have sufficient self-control to use her skills rightly. But this is a different problem.

The source of disagreement with Huoranszki here is that I attribute great importance to motivations to behave morally rightly. If somebody acts appropriately because she attempts to gain values which are distant from the territory of the morally right, the behavior and the choice which is behind the act might not have had a positive character-forming effect. Moreover, in my view, the character-forming choices which have a morally good effect have a different motivational center than the desire forming the agent's character.

This is the point where the Aristotelian model needs to be refined. Aristotle does not pay enough attention to the fact that motivations are indifferent in the case of ordinary skills but very important if we try to develop our moral virtues. If somebody paints frequently because she would like to learn painting, it is not relevant why she wants to be a good painter. But this is an important aspect if we investigate the problem of moral development.

It is at the very least suspicious if somebody acts morally rightly just for the reason that she would like to acquire a better character trait. But it is an entirely different case if the agent desires better character traits because, for example, she would like to help other people. Also, more commonly, in the case of positive character-forming actions the agent does not think about the action's character-forming power at all. The agent concentrates only on the action's potential good effects on other people and on its moral rightness. By contrast, if somebody wants to act morally rightly because she desires to gain new character traits, she uses people as a means. It may well be that the main motivation is only vanity or ambition.⁶

There is no reason to suppose that suitably motivated unselfish choices could have any morally problematic side-effects on one's personality. A long series of morally impeccable choices ensures the development of moral character unintentionally and invisibly, just as selfish choices ensure economic growth in Adam Smith's theory.

1.4 Pre-established harmony

Huoranszki criticized Aristotelian self-formation theory for claiming that the main source of moral responsibility is the conscious and direct practice of virtue. I granted that conscious and direct practice is not the paradigmatic form of gain-

⁶ Robert Kane (1996: 126–127) thinks also that the typical examples of self-forming choices are not outrightly directed at self-formation.

ing new morally important character traits. So I also rejected the Aristotelian picture, at least in part.

But my solution made it less clear how agents can control their character development. One problem is this. If character-forming choices have limited consequences, they cannot totally guarantee our virtuous acting in situations which are different from the original character-forming situation (b2). Their effects are too partial. This is Huoranszki's second problem about self-forming actions.

His third objection is the following. If conscious practice is not the best way to gain character traits, how we can ensure that we will be morally good people? If we cannot foresee what the consequences of our acts will be, why would we be responsible for our morally wrong acts (b3)? After all, their origin was a seemingly harmless choice, the effects of which were not predictable. First, I attempt to answer to (b3) objection. Subsequently, I will try to answer and offer a possible solution to problem of the limited efficacy of self-forming acts.

I claimed previously that actions and choices based on morally perfect motivations had no harmful influence on character development. In addition, it seems that these choices have frequently good effects. By the same token, self-forming choices based on inappropriate motivations almost always have a negative impact. I also suppose that morally neutral choices, based on neither positive nor negative motivations, have no morally relevant outcomes. My point is that if such 'pre-established harmony' actually exists between choices/acts and character-forming results, there is no need to foresee or control the character-forming effects of choices to be responsible for them. It is enough if the agent knows which acts and choices are morally good and morally bad. Or, at least, we can say that the agent should have known this.

For instance, *if somebody knew* from a reliable person that it would be *morally wrong* to pour water on a box with a bright red 'dangerous' label on it, she is morally responsible for the explosion if she does so. This will be so even if she did not know that it was a necessary consequence of the fact that this box contained sodium explosive. Another example is the following. Suppose that somebody knows that using strong drugs for hedonistic aims is morally bad. However, she has not heard that strong drugs turn people into addicts. If she does not care about her moral knowledge, she is not only morally responsible for using drugs. She is also responsible for becoming an addict.⁷ Similarly, if a person knew that it would be blameworthy if she acted in a particular way, and she chose this possibility anyway, she is responsible both for the choice and its bad influence on her character, even if she could not have known anything about the character-forming effect of her choice. On the one hand, if we had a strong notion of control, agents did not control the results—neither the destructive explosion nor

⁷ Nevertheless, this kind of ignorance about the character-forming effects can slightly moderate the agent's blameworthiness.

the changing of moral character. On the other hand, if we use a weaker notion of control, we can say that she had control over what will happen in the future. In my opinion, this latter degree of control is enough to be morally responsible for a character-forming effect, if the agent knew or should have known the *moral value*⁸ of the possible choices, *since there is harmony between character-forming choices and their results*.

But how is such harmony possible? I cannot present a full theory of character-formation here. My purpose is only to prove that Huoranszki's arguments are not conclusive against restrictivist libertarianism. But to make this defense more plausible, I briefly have to say something about the general issue as well.

So, first, I think that the presupposition of "harmony" fits best with an "intentionalist morality" in which wrong acts are based directly or indirectly on morally problematic intentions. An intention of a morally responsible agent is morally problematic if it is directed at some option of inferior value compared to other alternatives also accessible in the particular situation (provided the agent knew or should have known that this option is less valuable). If an intention is based on such inferior reasons, it will be less and less probable that the agent will form intentions based on morally superior values later. This is because she becomes accustomed to choosing in this way. Moreover, she is likely to identify increasingly with the value set compatible with her former choices.

Consequently, people who are motivated by selfishness where other people's interests would demand that they tell the truth will be more likely to lie in similar future situations. The probability of immoral action by such agents is increased in different situations as well. For instance, in a situation where the question for the agent is whether to embezzle some money or not.

If altruist intentions are indeed so central to morality and moral development, we can answer Huoranszki's second objection about self-forming action's partial effects. Altruism has many different manifestations in different virtues. Nonetheless, these moral virtues are not totally independent from each other. Each one is linked in one way or another to the willingness to undertake selfless actions. If this is true, every altruist choice can be considered a "preparation" for other moral challenges. So I claim that if one does everything to be an altruist person, that is, if it is a real possibility that one unselfishly chooses the morally good option, then one can form their character effectively. Therefore, one can be morally responsible for a morally wrong action even if one is not able to do otherwise, provided this inability is a consequence of a selfish and morally problematic choice in the first place.

⁸ If she knows about the moral value of an act, it does not mean that she knows about the self-forming effects of the action.

1.5 *Representations without motivations—calculable failure*

Huoranszki could complain that such a theory of character formation is not required. According to Huoranszki, character traits and the motivational background cannot undermine the agent's ability to do otherwise. Furthermore, the ability to do and choose otherwise presupposes only that the agent is able to recognize moral reasons and represent herself as somebody who can act in more than one way (Huoranszki 2011: 41). And it is beyond dispute that a brave man can represent himself as somebody who runs away from battle. Also, a coward is able to see himself as somebody who dies for his country.

I do not agree with Huoranszki on this point either. Sometimes ordinary people who have no pathological psychological problems can misrepresent their abilities in such a way that they have a false belief about what they are able to do psychologically. Let us suppose a football player in his thirties thinks about whether to retire. He is not particularly self-aware and does not know that he is a very ambitious person. But his mother is wiser, and knows that her son would be unable to keep his promise to spend more time with his family after his retirement, even if he did perceive that it would be the morally right choice. The reason for this is that the football player has no real desire to act in the morally right way. Nor would he really like to spend much more time with his family. He made his promise just because he wanted to put an end to a quarrel with his wife. In fact, he deceived himself about his real motivations.

I think that such self-deception is not pathological. The football player is responsible if he breaks his promise to his family. This is because the lack of appropriate motivation is explained by his former selfish choices.

Huoranszki would disagree. He would say that this football player could have chosen otherwise in this particular situation even if he had a selfish character.⁹ He perceives the right course of action and he thinks that he is able to choose it. He just does not choose this alternative, as it turns out. But why does he not choose this alternative? Huoranszki suggests that there is no full explanation. Nor is such an explanation possible in principle (Huoranszki 2011: 162). Contrary to restrictivist libertarianism, Huoranszki (2011: 118) denies that psychological states of non-pathological agents can determine how they choose and act.

Firstly, I believe that this is empirically improbable, because not only psychological experts but also ordinary people who are good judges of character can predict decisions. Take the football player's mother in the previous example. Secondly, sometimes we feel that we can give a *perfectly exhaustive* answer to the

⁹ Moreover, Huoranszki (2011: 175) claims that the only actions that reveal our character are ones we could have avoided. I beg to differ. I agree that actions that are physically impossible to avoid cannot reveal our character. However, I would argue that actions unavoidable due to psychological states are the most revealing as to our character traits.

question of why the agent decides in one way and not another, by referring to the agent's reasons, desires and other psychological states.

To summarize, in the first part of my paper I provided a possible defense of restrictivist libertarianism against Huoranszki's arguments. Moreover, I have argued that the hypothesis of self-formation is not all that implausible. Although the right theory of self-formation has to diverge to some extent from Aristotle's approach, restrictivist libertarianism is a better theoretical option to save moral responsibility.

2.0 Are we responsible for not doing miracles?

In the second part of chapter nine, Huoranszki returns to the question whether free will and moral responsibility are compatible with physical determinism (Huoranszki 2011: 175-182). Many libertarians claim that even if self-formation is not necessary for exercising free will, physical indeterminism is an indispensable condition so that agents can be independent enough of their social and physical environment.

Contrary to some compatibilists, Huoranszki accepts that some degree of independence is needed for moral responsibility. But he claims that social and physical laws do not endanger our independence.

First of all, he denies the possibility of strong social determinism. There is no social training which could deprive us of our ability to do otherwise. Social training mainly determines our character and motives. But, according to Huoranszki, our character and motives cannot determine how we choose or act. Therefore, social training cannot determine how we act in a particular situation. As already noted, I do not agree with this because I think motives and character can determine our action in some cases.

Huoranszki thinks the only possible way that social determinism can be a problem for a compatibilist is if libertarians can prove that social determinism necessarily follows from physical determinism. I agree with Huoranszki that this is a difficult, perhaps impossible, task. However, the libertarian does not have to show this in order to refute Huoranszki.

I believe Huoranszki accepts all of the following claims. First, that free actions need more independence than physical particles with regard to physical laws and past events. It is important for Huoranszki that social and psychological phenomena cannot reduce to physical ones. Second, that our actions are physical events (at least partly). Third, that there are free actions. But given these claims it is hard to see how they can simultaneously be true. The argument to show this runs as follows:

- (1) Two alternative actions related to the same agent and the same situation are connected to different movements of particles constituting the body. So the agent could have acted otherwise in every case only if her body's particles could have moved otherwise.
- (2) If the movement of a set of particles depends on something to some degree, the action connected to this movement depends on the same thing to the same degree as the movement of the set of particles itself.
- (3) Every movement of a set of particles is dependent on physical laws and past physical events to such a high degree that, according to physical laws, if determinism is true, any moving sets of particles could have moved otherwise only by some miracle (i.e. due to an event violating physical laws).
- [2+3] (4) Every action is dependent on physical laws and past physical events to such a high degree that, if determinism is true, any action carried out according to physical laws could have been done otherwise only at the cost of a miracle.
- (5) (At least) most actions are carried out according to physical laws and past physical events in the actual world.
- (6) Nobody can be responsible for an action which could only have been done otherwise at the cost of a miracle.
- (C) No agent can be responsible for (at least) most of her actions in the actual world.

This argument modifies Bács's (2012) supervenience argument,¹⁰ and the independence argument of incompatibilists such as Pereboom.¹¹ I attempted to preserve the main intuitions underlying these arguments while directing them specifically against Huoranszki's compatibilism.

The first two premises establish the consequences of the fact that the execution of every action supervenes on movements of our particles. We cannot act differently from action 'x' if our body's particles do not move differently from how they would move if we carried out action 'x'. Thus if the conjunction of physical laws and the remote past determines which movement of the particles would be a miracle at a particular time *t*, this also determines which act would be found in this "miraculous" category. Furthermore, if physical determinism is true, only one kind of movement for every set of particles is not a special movement at any particular time. But since every different action implies different

¹⁰ Bács's argument relies on the supposition that mental states supervene on brain processes. I utilize only the supervenience-relation between the movement of action and particles. I do so because the former relation is unclear. Huoranszki (2013) takes advantage of this in his answer to Bács.

¹¹ Pereboom (2001) argues that if determinism is true, we are not responsible because the environment determines how we choose and act. This is because there is no important difference between manipulation and ordinary causal chains. By contrast, my point here is that the world determines only whether an action would be a miracle or not. I think this is sufficient to reject Huoranszki's special version of compatibilism.

movements by the particles, at any time t an agent can execute only one action that is not a miracle.

Huoranszki holds that if we are morally responsible, we are able to act in more than one way. He also claims that an agent morally responsible because she is able to act in more than one way. Together with the claims above it would follow that if determinism is true, we are able to perform at least one miraculous action in every situation when we are morally responsible. Moreover, it would follow that we are morally responsible just *because* we could have performed a miracle (viz. other than how the laws of physics dictate it).

This would be an absurd conclusion. Even if agents were able to perform miracles in some sense of the word, this ability could not be grounds for moral responsibility. For instance, this would have the unacceptable consequence that if the agent failed to meet her obligation, fulfilling her obligation would have been a miracle.

SUMMARY

I have tried to show that restrictivist libertarianism is a defensible theory. I also pointed out that Huoranszki gives us too much freedom when he argues that an agent's character and her psychological background can never determine choices and actions of psychologically healthy persons. Furthermore, his compatibilism cannot handle the apparent implication of physical determinism that only one possible action of the agent is not a miracle at any given time t .

Huoranszki's objections against the theory of self-forming actions can force libertarians to develop a self-formation theory less directly based on the Aristotelian analogy between character-development and the acquisition of practical skills. I have sketched such a theory here, but of course there remain many open questions about character development.

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