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Free Will and Divine Omniscience

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COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

FREE WILL AND DIVINE OMNISCIENCE

By

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ABSTRACT

A traditionally difficult problem in the Philosophy of Religion is the one that divine omniscience, particularly divine foreknowledge, poses for free will. If God knows in advance how we will act, it looks as if we cannot act freely because we cannot act other than in accordance with God's foreknowledge. Thus, it looks like God's full omniscience and free will are incompatible. But this is problematic precisely because both God's full omniscience and human and divine free will are very important in Christian theology. In this dissertation, I discuss this dilemma and attempt to find the best solution available to the Christian theist.

In Chapter 1, I introduce and discuss the problem, which I refer to as "the foreknowledge dilemma." I then consider and ultimately reject three of the most commonly offered solutions. These solutions are the Boethian solution, which attempts to solve the foreknowledge dilemma by arguing that God does not exist within the temporal order and so cannot have knowledge prior to our actions, the Ockhamist solution, which argues that God's past beliefs are soft facts about the past and so rely upon the future in a way that many past facts do not, and the Molinist solution, which posits middle knowledge to explain the way God can know facts about human free actions. I conclude the first chapter by arguing that God's omniscience and free will, as traditionally defined, are incompatible and so the best solution will be to redefine (though not give up entirely) one of these two concepts.

In the next three chapters, I discuss the suggestion made by source incompatibilists that we redefine free will in such a way that it does not require alternative possibilities (though still remains incompatible with causal determinism). In Chapter 2, I discuss the reasons (independent of the foreknowledge dilemma) that have driven some in the secular free will debate to adopt this understanding of free will. In Chapter 3, I point out that in order to be a successful solution to the foreknowledge dilemma, the source incompatibilist's version of free will cannot rely at all on the presence of alternative possibilities, for God's foreknowledge rules out any and all alternatives. I then reject such a characterization of human free will. And in Chapter 4, I ask if source incompatibilism is required to save God's freedom in light of His essentially perfect nature. I conclude that it is not.

Finally, in Chapter 5 I gesture in the direction I take to be the most promising for the Christian theist. The best solution, I argue, is not to redefine free will but to redefine God's omniscience such that it does not include exhaustive foreknowledge. This Open Theist solution

argues that it is logically impossible for God to know in advance how a free agent will act and so this lack of knowledge is not a diminishment of God's perfection.

CHAPTER ONE

THE FOREKNOWLEDGE DILEMMA

The foreknowledge dilemma has been the source of much recent philosophical discourse, though the problem itself is centuries old. The problem arises from the seeming incompatibility of divine omniscience and human libertarian free will. If an agent has libertarian free will concerning a particular action A at time t, it is open to her to either (choose to) perform A or not perform A at t, i.e. she is not determined concerning A. Many Judeo-Christian theists insist that humans have this sort of freedom. But libertarian free will seems inconsistent with the following set of three claims: a) there are truths about what S will do in the future, b) God (infallibly) believes all truths and only truths at all times, and c) what is past is beyond S's power to affect. If S will perform A at t, then God infallibly believes before t that S will do so (given a) and b)). And given that God's beliefs cannot be false, the fact that God believes before t that S will A entails that S will A at t (this follows from b) and c)). That is, God has an infallible belief before t that S will A at t and it is not in S's power to change God's past belief (for it is past); and this implies that necessarily S will A at t. But then, S is not really free at t concerning A.¹ It therefore seems that God's foreknowledge of S's future free actions is inconsistent with her performing those actions freely.² It seems that every church father, from Augustine to Aquinas, Boethius to Calvin has struggled to solve this problem. And philosophers today continue to try to rectify the situation by either attempting to make God's complete knowledge of the future compatible with human free will or explaining why either God's foreknowledge or human free will as traditionally understood is unnecessary in the Christian worldview. In this chapter, I will outline the problem of divine foreknowledge for human free will (henceforth referred to as "the foreknowledge dilemma"). I will motivate the problem and explain why theists have been, and should continue to be, worried about this issue. I will then outline the three standard attempts to render God's foreknowledge and human free will compatible, and explain why I take each to be an unacceptable solution. I will conclude by suggesting that the only viable solutions to the

¹ Nothing here rides on a distinction between God's beliefs and God's knowledge. If God's beliefs are infallible (as is stipulated), then His past beliefs carry the necessity needed to generate the worry. Thus, foreknowledge need only be explained in terms of prior infallible beliefs.

² Brian Leftow, Time and Eternity (Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991) 246-47.

foreknowledge dilemma are those that focus on redefining either God's omniscience or human free will.

The Problem

The foreknowledge dilemma, often referred to as the case for theological fatalism, insists that God's divine foreknowledge (or infallible beliefs about the future), entailed by God's essential omniscience, is inconsistent with human freedom. This is highly problematic because both notions are central to standard Western religious doctrine. The foreknowledge dilemma goes as follows:

- 1) At t1, God infallibly believed that S would A at t2 (Assumption).
- 2) If an event E occurred at t1, it is necessary at t2 that E occurred (Principle of the Necessity of the Past).
- 3) It is necessary at t2 that God infallibly believed at t1 that S would A at t2 (1,2).
- 4) Necessarily, if God has an infallible belief about X, X will occur (Definition of Infallibility).
- 5) If p is necessary at t2, and necessarily $p \rightarrow q$, q is necessary at t2 (Transfer of Necessity Principle).
- 6) It is necessary at t2 that S will A at t2 (3,4,5).
- 7) If it is necessary at t2 that S will A at t2, S cannot do otherwise but A at t2 (Definition of Necessity).
- 8) If S cannot do otherwise but A at t2, S does not act freely (Principle of Alternate Possibilities).
- 9) Therefore, when S does A at t2, she does not do so freely (7,8).³

As Nelson Pike points out, the core of the problem is God's *infallibility*, or as Pike calls it, God's "essential omniscience."⁴ God does not merely believe, or even know, at t1 that S will A at t2; rather, He *infallibly* believes that S will A at t2, meaning He cannot be wrong concerning His

³ This characterization of the Foreknowledge Dilemma is adapted from Linda Zagzebski's entry in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy entitled "Foreknowledge and Free Will."

⁴ Nelson Pike. "Divine Omniscience and Voluntary Action." *Philosophical Review* Jan 1965: 28-31.

belief. Thus, the problem only arises in the case of an infallible believer, and not in normal cases of human (fallible) foreknowledge. If God believes it, it is true. But if a human knower happens to have foreknowledge of a future event, say of S's Aing at t2, this foreknowledge does not render S's action inevitable. For though a human knower can have a justified true belief at t1 about S Aing at t2, the truth of the human knower's belief is only factually connected to the truth; it could have turned out to be wrong in a way that the infallible knower's belief cannot.⁵

Pike is also careful to point out that the necessity of S Aing at t2 is not a causal necessity. It is not that God's foreknowledge is causing S to A at t2 or is playing any causal role in S's future action. Nor is the necessity nearly as strong as logical necessity. Most human free actions are logically contingent, meaning it is conceivable that the agent not have acted in the way in which she did. That is, in some logically possible worlds, S fails to A at t2 and the foreknowledge dilemma as outlined above does not deny this claim. Rather, God's foreknowledge renders S's actions at t2 necessary insofar as it renders them non-voluntary. Namely, S has no choice but to A at t2, even though she is not caused to do so and in other possible worlds she fails to A.⁶ God's beliefs are past and thus carry with them the necessity that is attributed to things that have already happened. This type of necessity is often referred to as "accidental" necessity. That is, past events (including God's past beliefs) were contingent at the time of their occurrence, meaning they could have been different. But once they occur, it is no longer possible that they not occur; they become necessary, for nothing we are able to do can change the past. But if x is accidentally necessary and logically implies y, then y is also necessary, even if y is not yet past. Thus, because God's past beliefs are accidentally necessary, the events that God foreknows are also necessary (because His past beliefs are infallible) without God's knowledge actually causing them.⁷

Many philosophers do not find the standard argument for fatalism very troublesome, and thus one might worry that this theological version of fatalism should have been laid to rest long ago. It is true that the foreknowledge dilemma is often referred to as the problem of *theological* fatalism and some theists, such as Alvin Plantinga, have argued that it is merely a different

⁵Pike 40-45.

⁶ Pike 35-36.

⁷ Though God's knowledge is non-causal and S's action is logically contingent, one way of thinking about the connection is that in possible worlds in which God infallibly believes at t1 that S will A at t2, S's action is rendered logically necessary. That is, both God's beliefs and S's actions are logically contingent, but it is not logically possible that God's belief and S's action come apart, given God's essential omniscience.

version of the standard problem. But most theists find the foreknowledge dilemma very troubling while at the same time dismissing the case for fatalism. As Linda Zagzebski points out, the seriousness of the former (and the corresponding lack of seriousness of the latter) rests on a couple small, but significant, differences between the two cases.

According to the logical problem of fatalism, it is true at t_1 that S will A at t_2 and thus it is not open to S at t_2 that she should not A. S's actions are inevitable because of past true propositions. Thus, past true propositions render S's future actions inevitable in the same way that God's past beliefs are claimed to do so in the foreknowledge dilemma. In fact, it could be argued that it is actually the truth of the proposition that is generating the worry in both cases (for God knows that S will A at t_2 precisely because God knows all and only true propositions). But, Zagzebski notes, most people who find fatalism unpersuasive deny that propositions are true *at a time*.⁸ Rather, many non-fatalists think of propositions as timelessly true. But the proposition must be true *at t_1* to render S's action at t_2 inevitable. If it is simply the case that it is timelessly true that S will A at t_2 , the worry disappears, for S's action is not rendered necessary through the accidental necessity of the past. This easy solution, however, is not open in the case of theological fatalism for in the foreknowledge dilemma it is an actual state of affairs, i.e. God's past belief, that renders S's actions at t_2 inevitable. The necessity of the past, if it exists, certainly applies to states of affairs (even if it does not apply to propositions) and this is all that is required to successfully generate the argument for theological fatalism.

William Hasker, on the other hand, grants the fatalist that propositions can be true at particular times, but notes that an important distinction between hard and soft facts can alleviate the worry in the case for standard fatalism. Hard facts about the past are solely about the time at which they are uttered. For instance, it is a hard fact that I am currently writing page four of my dissertation. It is a hard fact because it is a fact that does not rely, in any way, upon events that are still to come. A soft fact, however, would be that I am currently writing the fifth of 114 pages, for the truth of this fact depends, in large part, on my writing the next 109 pages in the future. Now the traditional argument from logical fatalism argues that because it is true at t_1 that S will A at t_2 , S has no choice regarding A at t_2 because the truth of the proposition was determined long ago, namely at t_1 . However, S's ability to do $\sim A$ at t_2 is only blocked if the past

⁸ Linda Zagzebski, *The Dilemma of Freedom and Foreknowledge* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991) 27-28.

proposition is a hard fact, in no way dependent upon the future (S's actions at t2) for its truth value. However, propositions about what will be true in the future seem like the most likely of all propositions to count as soft facts, and once this distinction is made the problem of logical fatalism seems to melt away. Though the distinction between hard and soft facts is also employed in the problem of theological fatalism, it is very difficult to see how God's past beliefs can count as soft facts, unlike past propositions, as I will argue later in this chapter.⁹

The foreknowledge dilemma also differs from the "secular" argument for incompatibilism. As noted above, the necessity that is generated by God's foreknowledge is not causal. But recently many contemporary philosophers have directed their attention at the related incompatibility between causal determinism (the past and the laws of nature causally generate one unique future) and human free will. Though the worries behind both problems are similar, the two problems are distinct because the necessity at issue in both is very different. In fact, one could think causal necessity is incompatible with free actions while accidental necessity is not (or, conceivably, vice versa). That is, one might think only certain forms of necessity are incompatible with human freedom and thus one could be a compatibilist in one arena and an incompatibilist in another. In order to make this distinction clearer throughout this dissertation, I will henceforth refer to compatibilists and incompatibilists concerning causal determinism and free will as CD compatibilists and CD incompatibilists, respectively, and I will refer to compatibilists and incompatibilists about divine omniscience and free will as DO compatibilists and DO incompatibilists, respectively. And, in fact, most theists who are concerned to show that divine foreknowledge is compatible with free will are CD incompatibilists. This is because they think that humans have (and need) a strong, libertarian kind of freedom which cannot be completely caused by anyone but the acting agent. It is the libertarian (standard incompatibilist) version of free will that is at issue in the foreknowledge dilemma. While those working on the foreknowledge dilemma merely assume this type of freedom, some philosophers in the standard free will debate are working towards understanding just what this sort of freedom looks like and why it is incompatible with causal determinism. For this reason, among others, work on the foreknowledge dilemma can draw upon and use the work done in the secular free will debate to better understand the nature of the relevant incompatibility. Thus, the standard free will dilemma,

⁹ William Hasker, God, Time, and Knowledge (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1989) 75-77.

though still separate from the foreknowledge problem, has much more to offer (in my opinion) than standard forms of logical fatalism.

One might wonder, at this point, why free will is of such vast importance, both in the secular and religious spheres. Why should we care whether free will is compatible with divine foreknowledge and causal determinism; why do we care if we have it at all? Though not universally accepted, it is generally thought that some sort of freedom is necessary for moral responsibility, and I will accept this supposition in what follows. And moral responsibility, it is argued, is an important element of personhood.¹⁰ Given that we care about our status as persons and our special status within this group, we care about our freedom. It may be easier to see why we care about freedom if we note that it is necessary for our status as morally responsible agents. As Michael McKenna and David Widerker explain, the morally responsible agent is “capable of complying with the demands of morality; she is a being for whom it is appropriate that others expect of her that she so comply, and for whom praise and blame, as well as punishment or reward, might be fitting.”¹¹ We care about our interpersonal relationships; we hold others accountable and want them to reciprocate. The action of holding responsible is a sign of respect, of a certain sort of higher status that we care very deeply about. But most of all, we care about being the types of beings who have control over our actions and are responsible for them in every possible sense. Though freedom is not the only necessary condition for moral responsible agency, it is indispensable. Without freedom of some sort, the agent is not in control of her actions and thus cannot be appropriately held responsible for them.

The freedom condition for moral responsibility is at the heart of the secular free will debate. Some argue that the freedom necessary for moral responsibility is incompatible with the agent having been causally determined to act as she did. That is, causal determinism undermines the agent’s control. Those who argue this way are called (CD) incompatibilists and though they do not all agree, most CD incompatibilists argue that at the heart of the lack of control is a lack

¹⁰ Michael McKenna and David Widerker note that moral responsibility can help us understand the class of persons, though not all persons are actually morally responsible. They write, “This is because morally responsible agents are best understood as a special subclass of persons. While not all persons are morally responsible agents (such as small children, the severely mentally retarded, or those who suffer from extreme psychological disorder), all morally responsible agents are persons, persons who have achieved a certain sophisticated level of development” (“Introduction” Moral Responsibility and Alternative Possibilities: Essays on the Importance of Alternative Possibilities (England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006) 1-2).

¹¹ Widerker and McKenna 1-2.

of an ability to do otherwise.¹² This adherence to PAP (Principle of Alternative Possibilities) plays a key role in the foreknowledge dilemma (as seen in premise eight of the argument laid out above). Thus, those who find the foreknowledge dilemma compelling are those who think PAP has intuitive appeal. Some, called (CD) compatibilists, argue that an agent can be in control of her actions, even if she is causally determined so to act. Thus, the agent need not be able to act otherwise in order to have control, and hence freedom and moral responsibility.¹³

Now most people care about their status as persons and, more specifically, their participation in the moral community. But theists may have an even higher stake in the issue. That is, God is said to hold his creatures morally responsible for their sins and good deeds. And perhaps more importantly, the Biblical characterization of justice is often considered to be retributivist, and thus eternal punishment or reward hangs in the balance. In Christian theology, God is generally thought to send those who have not freely repented and accepted Him to hell for eternity, and conversely, he takes those who have freely accepted Him as Savior to heaven. Thus, a lot depends on this free choice. It is of utmost importance to Christian doctrines of grace, judgment and sin that humans are fully responsible. Therefore, freedom is extremely important to Christians. Furthermore, most Christians believe that God is a person, perfectly free and morally perfect. And according to Christian theology, humans are elevated to a high status because they are created in God's image. If God is a morally responsible person, then it is important to many Christians that humans have, at least partially, this nature within us.

The importance to the theist of finding a solution to the foreknowledge dilemma, then, is clear. The theist wants (even needs) both God's omniscience and human free will in her worldview. While it is open to someone to deny that propositions are true at a time (in rejecting the problem of logical fatalism), or that causal determinism actually obtains (in arguing for CD incompatibilism), it is not open to the theist to deny that God is completely omniscient. That God is completely perfect is essential to the Christian perspective. And where some could deny the existence of human free will or argue for a weaker version of free will that is compatible with

¹² CD Incompatibilists are further broken down into two groups: libertarians, who argue that we are free and thus causal determinism does not obtain, and hard determinists, who argue that causal determinism obtains and thus we are not free.

¹³ I here assume that if one is a CD compatibilist, one probably would not find the foreknowledge dilemma worrisome. This is because I assume causal determinism to be more of a threat than accidental necessity. At any rate, if one rejects PAP, one rejects a key premise in the foreknowledge dilemma. Thus, if one is a CD compatibilist but finds God's foreknowledge problematic for free will, one would have to outline the problem in such a way that PAP does not play a critical role.

causal determinism, a similar move is not open to the theist, for various (important) doctrines of the Fall and God's eternal judgment hinge on the idea that humans freely choose to sin and also freely choose to repent. Thus, here we have two essential doctrines which seem to be incompatible with one another. If the theist cannot find a way to make the two compatible, she must reject either divine omniscience or libertarian human free will, neither of which is initially desirable.

Given that most theists do not wish to reject either complete divine omniscience or libertarian free will, various attempts have been made to render it the case that S freely As at t₂, even though God knows at t₁ that S will do so. A position first introduced by Augustine of Hippo, expanded upon by Boethius and later endorsed by St. Thomas Aquinas is that of divine timelessness.¹⁴ Proponents of this position, often referred to as Boethians, argue that given that God is timeless (outside time), the problem of divine *foreknowledge* disappears. God's knowledge is timeless and thus does not stand in temporal relation to the free actions of His creatures. That is, His knowledge, being timeless, does not have the accidental necessity attributed to past things and thus does not render S's actions at t₂ necessary in the way a past belief would. Thus, the Boethian rejects the first premise of the argument outlined above. Following William of Ockham, proponents of the second DO compatibilist position, Ockhamism, argue that the second premise of our argument is false.¹⁵ This, they claim, is because the Necessity of the Past only applies to hard facts. Given that God's beliefs about the future are soft facts, so they argue, it is not the case that God's having had a belief about S's Aing at t₂ renders this action necessary, for God's belief depends upon S's actions at A. The third dominant position does not reject any particular premise in our argument but rather posits "counterfactuals of human freedom" to help explain the way in which God knows the future free actions of His creatures. Molinists, named for Luis de Molina, argue that these counterfactuals of human freedom, if they exist, help explain how it is both true that S is free to either A or ~A at t₂ and that God knows what S will do. These counterfactuals of human freedom are what each person would freely (in the libertarian sense) do in any given situation. They are not determined or caused by God, but He can choose which creatures and situations He will create, thus knowing what each creature will do once created. He thus creates S knowing that she will A at t₂, of her

¹⁴ Hasker "God" 2-8.

¹⁵ Hasker "God" 12-13.

own accord.¹⁶ God's knowledge, then, encompasses both His counterfactual knowledge and His foreknowledge (once He has chosen a particular world to create). Most DO compatibilists take one of these three approaches, because each position accepts both a full sense of God's omniscience and libertarian free will. In the following sections, I will discuss each of these views in more detail and argue they are all unsuccessful for various reasons. I will then conclude the chapter by arguing that we need a different sort of solution that agrees that divine omniscience is incompatible with human free will, as defined, and looks to redefine one or both so as to remove the incompatibility.

The Boethian Solution

The Boethian solution to the foreknowledge dilemma is one that appeals to the doctrine of divine timelessness and has been the historically favored solution. The Boethian believes that God exists entirely outside of time, which means, minimally, that temporal terms and concepts do not apply to God. He does not act, will, know or exist within the flow of time at all and this provides an "easy" solution to the foreknowledge dilemma: the foreknowledge problem is not a problem at all because God does not have beliefs about free actions at any particular time, and certainly not at all times. That is, the Boethian denies that God infallibly believes *before* t_2 (i.e. at t_1) that S will A at t_2 ;¹⁷ the Boethian rejects the first premise of our argument for theological fatalism. The only way God's infallible beliefs threaten S's free will is if God's beliefs about S's actions occur *prior to* S's choosing or acting.¹⁸ But if God is timeless, He and His beliefs do not occur at any time; God is entirely separated from the temporal order.¹⁹ As Boethius suggests, the entirety of God's timeless knowledge can be thought of as occurring in one extended present, not in any way before or after the actual occurrence of the action.²⁰ And if God's beliefs do not occur before S's actions, they fail to be accidentally necessary and so also, then, is S's Aing at t_2 freed from necessity.^{21 22}

¹⁶ Hasker "God" 15-16.

¹⁷ Leftow 250.

¹⁸ Leftow 251.

¹⁹ Hasker "God" 149.

²⁰ Paul Helm, Eternal God: A Study of God Without Time (New York: Clarendon Press, 1988) 96.

²¹ The Boethian view must not be confused with Open Theism. The Open Theist assumes that God is temporal and then denies that He has an infallible true belief concerning free actions that are future to Him. On the model being

Paul Helm argues that removing God's knowledge from the temporal order fails to solve the problem. Helm argues that even if God's actual knowledge is outside time, talk of His divine foreknowledge (legitimately) remains.²³ That is, we can still speak of God foreknowing that S will A at t2 because "foreknowledge" describes not God's actual knowledge but the experience within time of that knowledge.²⁴ It does not follow from the fact that God, from His perspective, cannot foreknow anything that He cannot foreknow anything from the perspective of a temporal knower. That is, just as one person cannot truthfully utter "I am not talking now" but a second person can truthfully utter, of the first person, "He is not talking now," so a timeless being cannot think "I foreknow that x" but a temporal being can truthfully say of that timeless God that He *does* foreknow that x.²⁵ At any time prior to t2, Helm argues, it will be true that God timelessly knows that S will A at t2. Thus, God's timeless knowledge is past for S and the problem of God's "foreknowledge" remains. S cannot change the fact that at t1 it was true that God timelessly knows she will do A. Helm writes,

I suggest therefore that it makes sense to speak of a timeless knower's foreknowledge of events where the notion of foreknowledge expresses a temporal knower's belief or recognition that certain events were known timelessly before this time. But to say this is not to claim that the timeless knower's knowledge is

discussed, nothing is future to God. Therefore, God knows all (there is no limitation on His knowledge, as there is on the Open Theist model) but He does so outside the temporal order, thus removing the problem entirely. The Open Theist denies that there is any knowledge occurring prior to the action whereas the proponent of divine timelessness denies that there is any divine knowledge *at any time*.

²² Paul Helm argues that timeless knowledge carries as much necessity as past knowledge. A timeless being, by definition, cannot undergo change and so all beliefs that a timeless being holds he holds unchangingly. And since God holds all true beliefs and only true beliefs, what He believes will necessarily occur (Helm 105-06). Thus, even if God's knowledge of our actions is timeless, it carries the same necessity as if God's knowledge were past; God's timeless knowledge, therefore, has the same negative implications for human libertarian free will as God's foreknowledge (Helm 101). However, Brian Leftow argues that this does not have negative implications for human freedom unless the necessary knowledge occurs prior to the free action. I could know at (or after) t2 that S does A at t2. But my knowledge that S does A at t2 does not threaten the freedom of that action precisely because it does not occur prior to her action (my knowledge is a result of S's action). In the same way, God's knowledge is unchanging, but this does not render S's action necessary because the knowledge does not occur before t2. S *can* do otherwise at t2, but she will not, and it is this that God knows (Leftow 255). I am assuming that Leftow is right here, and agree that only past knowledge renders S's action at t2 necessary in a problematic way.

²³ Helm discusses the issue in terms of foreknowledge, and not infallible beliefs. Nothing hinges on this distinction, as belief is a necessary component of knowledge.

²⁴ Helm 98.

²⁵ Helm 99.

analogical or anthropomorphic. It is literally knowledge, and it is literally foreknowledge, but it is not foreknowledge for the timeless knower.²⁶

Helm's line of argument fails, I think, for the same reason that the problem of logical fatalism fails. Helm seems to claim that the same knowledge can both be temporal foreknowledge and timeless knowledge, but he does not offer a way in which to understand such a claim. For a timeless being cannot participate in the temporal order without, Himself, becoming temporal. Furthermore, it is hard to see how knowledge can count as both timeless and temporal, especially when the knower is only one of these things. How is it possible that temporal knowledge exists independent of a temporal knower? Is it free from a knower entirely? If not, how can a timeless God possess temporal knowledge? What he has to say, I think, is not that there is temporal knowledge known by a timeless God, but rather that the proposition "God believes that S will A at t2" is true at t1. But as we have seen, it is highly improbable to think that propositions can be true at a time. And even if they can be true at a time, the claim that God *timelessly* knows something *at a particular time* itself seems problematic, for as Brian Leftow notes, "[t]hat a proposition has a truth-value in eternity does not entail that it has a truth-value at any particular point in time (other than the time at which we make it true), because in time, eternity is in no way simultaneous with any time."²⁷ Even if we think that propositions about God's timeless knowledge could be true at a time, they may, nonetheless, count as some variety of soft fact and thereby provide a solution to the foreknowledge dilemma. They could be soft facts because they depend upon a) our future free actions and b) a timeless state of affairs which is not identical with the time at which the proposition is true. Therefore, either Helm must claim that there is a past state of affairs that involves temporal knowledge either known by a timeless being or floating free of a knower entirely, or there is no past state of affairs but rather a past true proposition. The former seems unintelligible and the latter, as we have seen, fails to generate a problem for human freedom. Therefore, I must conclude with Leftow that the Boethian *does* offer a solution to the foreknowledge problem by pulling God (and His knowledge) out of time. The problem, however, is that the model of divine timelessness has further problems that both

²⁶ Helm 101.

²⁷ Leftow 254.

render this solution unhelpful and the entire model undesirable and it is for these reasons that I think we should reject the Boethian approach.

The first set of problems with the Boethian model, according to William Hasker, rest on the idea that while God may have timeless knowledge of temporal free actions, this knowledge is not useful and thus it is unclear why such omniscience is to be considered a divine perfection. The problem is that divine timelessness, if we are to take libertarian free will seriously, must be a result of (or logically subsequent to) our actual human actions. That is, God cannot know what we will do logically prior to our so doing, or we will have the foreknowledge dilemma repeated with timeless knowledge instead of temporal foreknowledge. Hasker appeals to Arthur Prior to demonstrate the issue. On the timelessness model, God “sees” temporal events as they are, and the question is how the future can be open and undetermined for the agent if God sees it as occurring in one particular way. The “openness of alternatives,” Prior argues, is characteristic of events themselves and is not relative to the persons that know the events. The openness exists or it does not; it cannot be that it exists for one being (a temporal agent) and not for another (a timeless God).²⁸ Though the openness of alternatives cannot be relative to the observer, it *can* be relative to a time. That is, we often view the future as open and contingent until it occurs and then we view it as past and unalterable. Hasker concludes, “What we apparently need to say, then, is that God timelessly sees the *very same event* as contingent-and-future-before-it-occurs and also as past-and-inalterable-after-it-occurs.”²⁹ For if God only sees human free actions as past and unalterable, it looks as if they are necessary and the original foreknowledge dilemma rears its ugly head. But how can a timeless God see the *very same event* in these two different ways? The answer, Hasker and Prior point out, can be found in Anselm. Anselm argues that God’s timelessness is more like our knowledge of the past than knowledge of our present. That is, when we look back over our past, we can recognize which things could have gone otherwise than they did and which things could not have, though we can no longer change how things did go. Thus, we can see which things were contingent, though all is unalterable now. In the same way, a timeless God may be able to distinguish what happens necessarily and what could happen otherwise, though when He views them, things could no longer turn out differently than how He

²⁸ Arthur N. Prior, “The Formalities of Omniscience,” Papers on Time and Tense (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968) 43-44. Quoted in Hasker “God” 175.

²⁹ Hasker “God” 175.

knows them.³⁰ Though eternity is not actually future to us, we can think of God's eternal knowledge as occurring in the same way as our own future knowledge of the past will occur to us. And our future knowledge of our current actions is, most importantly, up to us to decide. That is, we can now act in a variety of ways and these current actions determine our future knowledge of the past. Our future knowledge of our past actions is under our direct control, and it is only because of this fact that we can later see our past actions as contingent though unalterable at the time of the future knowing. Thus, the only way in which a timeless God can see the very same event in these two ways, as contingent-and-future-before-it-occurs and past-and-inalterable-after-it-occurs, is if His timeless knowledge is open to our influence; God's knowledge depends causally (though non-temporally) on our actions.³¹ If God's timeless (necessary) knowledge is to be compatible with human freedom, it must rely upon the actual free actions themselves, not the other way around. That is, God's knowledge cannot be temporally prior to human free actions, but it must not be causally or conceptually prior to these actions either.

The problem, if Hasker is right, is two-fold. First, a proponent of divine timelessness must be able to account for the causal relationship that obtains between temporal events and a timeless (and therefore changeless) God. It has been notoriously difficult for defenders of God's timelessness to explain His actions in the world; it may prove to be even more difficult to explain how a timeless God can be affected by temporal beings. And second, as Hasker points out, if God's timeless knowledge relies upon our temporal actions this significantly diminishes His providential guidance of the world. As we will see in our discussion of the Molinist solution, it has been repeatedly pointed out in discussions concerning middle knowledge that God cannot use His knowledge of future free actions to determine His own prior actions.³² Thus, if our free actions do determine God's timeless knowledge, as seems required for this particular solution to the foreknowledge problem, then God cannot use that knowledge to act temporally, logically or causally prior to the free action. The model can provide an answer to the foreknowledge dilemma, but it may not be the answer we are looking for; the benefits it provides in the foreknowledge debate may not be worth the costs it extracts from the Biblical account of divine providence.

³⁰ Hasker "God" 175.

³¹ Hasker "God" 176.

³² Hasker "God" 176.

Though the model seems to indicate a deficient view of God's providential control over the temporal order, one may still think that the benefits (i.e., providing a solution to the foreknowledge dilemma) outweigh the costs. But there is a further problem that plagues the timelessness model. The problem is that the Biblical view of God is one of a divine person who has meaningful, personal and responsive relationship with His creatures. The difficulty, Hasker points out, stems from the fact that "in responding to another it is of the essence that one first *acts*, then *waits* for the other to react, then acts *responsively*, and so on. There seems to be no way this sequence could be collapsed, as it were, into a single timeless moment."³³ The Boethian could argue that God could build His re-actions into the very creation of the world. That is, God could create the world with certain conditional responses already established. For instance, God could create the world with a specific conditional response in case Abraham climbs Mount Horeb (e.g. God's voice sounds at Mount Horeb) and one in case he climbs Mount Carmel (God's voice sounds at Mount Carmel).³⁴ Or she could argue that since God knows which mountain Abraham will climb, He builds in his actual response.^{35 36} The problem with these models, I think, is their inconsistency with the Judeo-Christian conception of a loving, personal God who listens and responds. A God who simply pre-programs His responses (e.g. answers to prayers, acts of forgiveness, and the feeling of His presence in the world), is not *really* engaging personally with His creatures. The fact that His "response" occurs after a human action within the temporal order does not imply that God, in so acting, truly responds to the request itself. Rather, it merely *appears* to the temporal agent that He does so. It seems that a God who really listens and responds to the actual request is superior (and theologically more accurate) to a God who simply pre-records his "responses." The God of Scriptures does *not* seem to hold the same position from eternity, merely appearing to change His mind, but rather takes a request seriously and responds *because* of it. A personal God, in other words, changes His actual attitude toward a creature that makes a request; the request itself *matters* and causally moves God to act differently than before the request was made. But such a God cannot be accounted for on the Boethian model.

³³ Hasker "God" 156.

³⁴ Leftow 305.

³⁵ Hasker "God" 158.

³⁶ It should be noted that if what Hasker argues about God's knowledge being impotent is correct, then this response mechanism is not a possibility, and the Boethian must go with the conditional response mechanism.

Thus, though the Boethian *can* provide a solution to the foreknowledge problem, I think the model that it introduces in order to do so should be rejected for it is plagued with other issues. In salvaging God's perfect omniscience, the timelessness model requires that we give up His providential guidance and personal relationships with His creatures. These costs, I would argue, are not worth the benefit.

The Ockhamist Solution

The solution of choice for many contemporary philosophers is often referred to as the "Ockhamist" solution, named after its founder William of Ockham. The strategy employed by the Ockhamist is to use the distinction between hard and soft facts often used to dismantle the case for logical fatalism, and apply it to the foreknowledge dilemma. Ockham suggests a starting point for understanding the distinction used against the logical fatalist:

Some propositions are about the present as regards both their wording and their subject matter (*secundum vocem et secundum rem*). Where such propositions are concerned, it is universally true that every true proposition about the present has (corresponding to it) a necessary one about the past: e.g., "Socrates is seated," "Socrates is walking," "Socrates is just," and the like.

Other propositions are about the present as regards their wording only and are equivalently about the future, since their truth depends on the truth of propositions about the future. Where such (propositions) are concerned, the rule that every true proposition about the present has corresponding to it a necessary proposition about the past is not true.³⁷

The former type of proposition is a hard fact. Since it is solely about one particular time, once that time has passed, the proposition becomes (accidentally) necessary. For example, the fact that I am currently typing this sentence is a hard fact about the present (it concerns only the present) and as such carries with it accidental necessity any time after the present. The second type of

³⁷ William of Ockham, Predestination, God's Foreknowledge and Future Contingents (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1983) 46-47; Quoted in: John Martin Fischer, "Introduction" God, Foreknowledge and Freedom (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1989) 32.

proposition introduced by Ockham is a soft fact for it concerns the future, at least in part. If it is true now that I will turn this section in tomorrow, then this fact is not entirely about the present because it depends on the future for its truth value. Soft facts, Ockham claims, do not carry with them the necessity of the past, so this soft fact about me cannot render my action (namely turning in this section tomorrow) necessary. Since it is only these sorts of facts (true propositions about what humans will freely do in the future) that generate the problem of logical fatalism, the problem dissolves with this distinction. Given the similar structure of logical and theological fatalism, the Ockhamist argues that a very similar solution can be given to the problem of God's foreknowledge for human free will. That is, the Ockhamist argues that God's past beliefs about our future free actions are soft facts and thus do not render the future actions to which they refer necessary. The Ockhamist, then, denies the Principle of the Necessity of the Past (as outlined in premise two of our argument for theological fatalism) in regards to God's past beliefs because this Principle can only be applied to hard facts and God's past beliefs are soft.³⁸

The problem, on the face of it, seems to be that there is a crucial difference between past beliefs and past true propositions. Beliefs are states of affairs that happen at a particular time in the past. The actual state of affairs of some agent having a particular belief does not seem like it could depend upon future events, though some quality of the belief, namely its truth or falsity, could rely upon future events. The problem for the Ockhamist is offering a definition of soft facts such that it captures God's actual past belief as dependent upon the future in the same way as all other soft facts rely upon the future, without looking ad hoc. That is, a hard fact/soft fact distinction must be given such that some actual beliefs (i.e. God's past beliefs), and not just their truth value, depend upon future events.

Marilyn McCord Adams, taking the challenge posed to the Ockhamist, defines a fact F about a time t1 as a soft fact if and only if "F's obtaining entails that something (contingent) occurs at some later time t2."³⁹ A hard fact about t1, on the other hand, is one that is expressed by a statement that is "not at least in part about any time future relative to t1." In other words, hard facts do not have "the happening or not happening, actuality or non-actuality of something" at t2 as a necessary condition for their truth, unlike soft facts.⁴⁰ On this way of distinguishing

³⁸ Fischer "Introduction" 33.

³⁹ Fischer "Introduction" 35.

⁴⁰ Marilyn McCord Adams, "Is the Existence of God a 'Hard' Fact?," God, Foreknowledge and Freedom, ed. John Martin Fischer (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989) 75-76.

hard and soft facts, God's belief at t1 that S will A at t2 is a soft fact, because it entails that S As at t2.⁴¹ John Martin Fischer points out that defining a soft fact by what it entails seems initially plausible. But, he argues, this initial definition fails because it entails that *all* facts are soft facts; the distinction between hard and soft facts collapses. He asks us to suppose that "Smith existed at t1" is true. He reasons, "It is a necessary condition of the truth of this statement that it is not the case that Smith existed for the first time at t2."⁴² That is, "Smith existed at t1" entails that Smith not come to exist for the first time at t2, and thus this proposition is actually a soft fact on Adams's definition, despite the fact that it looks to be a hard fact. But *every* statement entails things about the future in this way and thus, on Adams's account, there are no hard facts. Adams *does* manage to capture God's beliefs in the class of soft facts, but she also captures all intuitively hard facts, such as human past beliefs, in the same class and has the counterintuitive result that the class of hard facts collapses into the class of soft facts.

In response to Adams's failed attempt to distinguish between hard and soft facts, many other Ockhamists have offered increasingly more intricate versions of the distinction. Eddy Zemach and David Widerker appeal to the idea that some facts are compatible with the non-existence of any future times. Hard facts about a time t, on this view, are those facts that are compatible with the lack of times after t.⁴³ Alfred J. Freddoso uses a similar idea about past and future indifference to define hard facts. According to Freddoso, the set of hard facts consists of all those facts that are "present-tense, atomic, and temporally indifferent," where temporally indifferent roughly means that a fact A (and its negation) obtain at t in some possible world in

⁴¹ Marilyn McCord Adams not only argues, as do most Ockhamists, that God's *beliefs* are soft facts about the past, but that further, God's *existence* is a soft fact. She argues that God's essential everlastingness renders his existence a soft fact. Adams proposes the following principle about God's everlastingness: "'x is God and (Et) (x exists at t)' entails '(t) (x exists at t)'" But on this account, any statement to the effect that "x is God" is partly about the future (i.e. that x exists at every future time) and thus this statement is not a hard fact (Adams 78). The alarming part about this argument is that Adams takes this to indicate that (contra Pike), humans can have the power to render x *not* God by rendering one of His beliefs false and contradicting God's essential omniscience. Because God's existence is a soft fact, it is open to future influence. Most Ockhamists do not share this view, probably because, as Fischer points out, a view on which God's very existence is, in some way, dependent upon human actions is "theologically implausible." As Fischer points out, "God's existence should be construed as 'counterfactually independent of possible human action'" (Introduction 34). Fischer also points out, as many Ockhamists have noted, that though a fact is soft, it is not necessarily in our power to change it. It may be a soft fact today that the sun will rise tomorrow. However, it is not within my power to bring it about that the sun does not rise tomorrow. Likewise, even if God's existence is a soft fact (which is, itself, contestable), it is not necessarily the case that humans have the ability to bring about God's non-existence (through rendering one of His beliefs false) (Fischer 96).

⁴² John Martin Fischer, "Freedom and Foreknowledge," God, Foreknowledge and Freedom, ed. John Martin Fischer (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989) 92.

⁴³ Fischer "Introduction" 40.

which t is the first moment of time, in some possible world in which t is the last moment of time, and some possible world in which t is an intermediate moment of time.⁴⁴ Freddoso writes,

Roughly speaking, the truth or falsity of an immediate proposition is temporally (as opposed to, say, logically or causally) independent of what has been or will be true, while the truth conditions of a non-immediate proposition involve an essential reference to what has been true at past moments or will be true at future moments.⁴⁵

Likewise, William Hasker (not himself an Ockhamist) defines hard facts in terms of future-indifference. The set of hard facts, for Hasker, is the set of all atomic, future-indifferent facts. Future-indifferent facts, Hasker notes, are compatible with both the existence of times after t and the non-existence of such times.⁴⁶ He writes, “a future-indifferent proposition must permit, but not require, that the entire universe should disappear and there be nothing at all after [t].”⁴⁷ Finally, Joshua Hoffman and Gary Rosenkrantz define the set of hard facts as the set of “present-tense facts that are unrestrictedly repeatable and do not entail unrestrictedly repeatable facts about future times.”⁴⁸ Unrestrictedly repeatable facts are ones that “may obtain, then fail to obtain, then obtain again indefinitely many times throughout all of time.”⁴⁹ For example, “Sarah walks” is an unrestrictedly repeatable fact, but “Sarah walks on January 9, 2010” and “Sarah walks for the first time” are not. As Fischer points out, all of these various accounts of the hard fact/soft fact distinction rely upon an Entailment Principle of Soft Facthood (as we saw in discussing McCord’s distinction). That is, a soft fact at t_1 is one that entails a particular sort of fact about the future, e.g. that there are times after t_1 .⁵⁰

I will not critique each of these different versions of Ockhamism here, but rather I will point to two objections that apply to all solutions of this particular sort, two objections that, I

⁴⁴ Fischer “Introduction” 40.

⁴⁵ Alfred J. Freddoso, “Accidental Necessity and Logical Determinism,” God, Foreknowledge and Freedom, ed. John Martin Fischer (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989) 146.

⁴⁶ Fischer “Introduction” 41.

⁴⁷ William Hasker, “Foreknowledge and Necessity,” God, Foreknowledge and Freedom, ed. John Martin Fischer (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989) 231.

⁴⁸ Fischer “Introduction” 41.

⁴⁹ Joshua Hoffmann and Gary Rosenkrantz, “Hard and Soft Facts,” God, Foreknowledge and Freedom, ed. John Martin Fischer (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989) 127.

⁵⁰ Fischer “Introduction” 41.

think, indicate what is seriously wrong with any view that attempts to paint God's past beliefs as soft facts. In order to bring out the first objection, Fischer asks us to consider a particular scenario:

Consider the fact that Caesar died 2009 years prior to Saunders's writing his paper. What lies behind our view that this fact is not a hard fact about 44 B.C.? We might say that it is a soft fact about 44 B.C. because one and the same physical process would have counted as Caesar's dying 2009 years prior to Saunders's writing his paper, if Saunders wrote his paper in 1965, and would *not* have counted as Caesar's dying 2009 years prior to Saunders's writing his paper, if Saunders had not written his paper in 1965. This captures the "future dependence" of soft facts; a soft fact is a fact *in virtue* of events which occur in the future.⁵¹

On this conception of soft facts, human foreknowledge clearly counts, Fischer notes. If Smith knows at t1 that S will A at t2, his knowledge counts as a soft fact about t1 because the *exact same state of mind* would count as Smith believing falsely at t1 that S will A at t2, if S, in reality, fails to A at t2. That is, a soft fact about t1 is such that, in a possible world in which the relevant future is different, the event at t1 looks the same, though the truth value of the proposition changes. This future dependence is common to all soft facts. The problem, Fischer points out, is that once we understand this common theme among soft facts, the idea that God's past beliefs could count as soft facts looks highly suspect. For the only way God's belief at t1 that S will A at t2 would count as a soft fact is if "one and the same state of the mind of the person who was God at t1, would count as one belief if [S] did [A] at t2, but a different belief (or not a belief at all) if [S] did not [A] at t2."⁵² The problem seems to be that while fallible foreknowledge is a candidate for counting as soft fact because its future dependence does not affect the actual state of affairs at t1, beliefs themselves cannot be construed as soft facts unless we are willing to accept that the *belief itself* remains the same while picking out contrary concrete events as its object in the world. But beliefs (at least of the human variety) are not the sorts of things that can remain

⁵¹ Fischer "Freedom" 93.

⁵² Fischer "Freedom" 93-94.

unchanged if their propositional content changes. For to have a belief is inseparable from what is believed; if one changes what one believes, one changes beliefs (unlike when one's knowledge is no longer knowledge, one's belief does not itself change). Thus, if the Ockhamist wants to claim that God's past beliefs are soft facts, he must either introduce an unacceptable asymmetry between God's beliefs and the class of all other soft facts, or he must introduce an equally unacceptable asymmetry between God's beliefs and the class of all other beliefs. If she does not want her view to be obviously ad hoc, she must take the latter route. This, however, seems highly unwarranted for the Ockhamist is attempting to offer an account on which God has complete omniscience. But this is unhelpful if we are no longer speaking about knowledge, omniscience and belief in a way in which we can understand. Furthermore, it seems inconsistent with God's omniscience (traditionally understood) that the content of His beliefs are determined not by His act of believing, but rather by our (human) actions. Fischer writes: "God's omniscience would be seriously attenuated if the same state of God's mind at t1 would constitute different beliefs about Jones, depending on Jones's behavior at t2."⁵³ ⁵⁴ This seems to introduce an unacceptable level of passivity in God: He believes but leaves it up to us to determine what the content of His belief consists in. And, in fact, it seems to render God's omniscience unnecessary (or at least less impressive) if He does not actually believe anything but rather is in one determined state of mind whose content is left up to everyone (and everything) else besides Himself.

William Hasker, like Fischer, is struck by the asymmetry between God's past beliefs and human beliefs in the past on the Ockhamist picture. According to the Ockhamist, the former are soft facts whereas the latter are hard facts about the past. He notes that according to all the accounts of the hard/soft fact distinction

⁵³ Fischer "Freedom" 94.

⁵⁴ Fischer notes that the Ockhamist could insist that God's state of mind would not have been the same had S not Aed at t2, but rather that God would have had a different state of mind, dependent on S's action at t2. The problem with this approach, Fischer notes, is that this brings in an unacceptable asymmetry between God's past beliefs and all other soft facts. The Ockhamist solution is only as strong as its ability to give an adequate explanation of soft fact that both captures God's beliefs as soft facts and is not ad hoc. Responding to Fischer's challenge in this way fails to do both and thus leaves the Ockhamist position in an unacceptable position (Fischer "Freedom" 94-95). One could also bite the bullet here and accept that God's actual past state of mind would not have changed while His belief would have been different given a different future free action (see Eddy Zemach and David Widerker in Fischer's anthology). But this response does not get around the worries about Ockhamism unacceptably redefining God's belief so as to fit the model. There seems no reason to believe that God's belief differ so radically from human beliefs, or that His beliefs should be so vacuous as to depend entirely upon our actions in the world for their content. This is not to mention, the worry that the Ockhamist is here smuggling in some kind of backward causation, where S's future action causes God's past belief to be what it is.

(A) Mary believed at t1 that S will A at t2

is a hard fact about t1 whereas

(B) God believed at t1 that S will A at t2

is a soft fact about t1. The only difference between the two, however, is that the believer in (B) is God (traditionally understood), i.e. He is essentially infallible.⁵⁵ But Hasker asks us to take (A) and replace “Mary” with “Yahweh,” where Yahweh is a proper name for God used largely in the Old Testament but does not have built into it any assumptions about God’s essential properties. Thus, we have the hard fact

(C) Yahweh believed at t1 that S will A at t2.

Coupled with the essential property of Yahweh:

(D) If Yahweh exists, Yahweh is God

We arrive at the *hard* fact

(B) God believed at t1 that S will A at t2.

That is, (B) is “jointly entailed by an accidentally necessary proposition and a necessary truth.”⁵⁶ But this is problematic, Hasker points out, because the Ockhamist wants to hold that (B) is a soft fact and thus we’ve come to an impasse. There does not seem to be a principled reason to single out God’s beliefs as soft while holding that all other beliefs are hard facts.

The Ockhamist may object that Hasker is not entitled to call (C) a hard fact. This is because in referring to the individual, Yahweh, Hasker rigidly designates the individual, and with the rigid designator comes all of the essential properties of that particular individual. Because

⁵⁵ William Hasker, “Hard Facts and Theological Fatalism,” God, Foreknowledge and Freedom, ed. John Martin Fischer (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989) 170.

⁵⁶ Hasker “Hard Facts” 171-72.

there is no possible world in which Yahweh exists and is not essentially omniscient (i.e. does not fail to be God, who is essentially omniscient), then (C) is a soft fact for it does not differ from (B) as originally introduced. Hasker argues, however, that if we follow this reasoning to its logical conclusion, no facts will count as hard facts. He argues that we should only consider the properties of an individual expressed in the relevant proposition when determining whether or not that proposition counts as a hard or soft fact. If we let in all essential properties, he argues, then we will eradicate all hard facts. Every individual, Hasker argues, has multiple essential properties that entail truths about other times. For instance, Mary has a particular history that is essential to her (or at least certain aspects of her history, for example, being created by God). If these essential properties are relevant in determining whether or not (A) is hard or soft, it becomes apparent that even (A) entails things about other times and thus is a soft fact.⁵⁷ In fact, the existence of every individual may entail the future existence of God (given God's essential properties), and thus no fact about these individuals is future-indifferent. But as noted before, the success of Ockhamism depends upon its ability to capture the intuitive difference between hard and soft facts. If all facts turn out to be soft, the Ockhamist has failed.

The problem, then, with the Ockhamist solution to theological fatalism, is its seeming inability to properly distinguish God's past beliefs as soft when all other beliefs are clearly hard facts about the time at which they occur. Without a *principled* way of defining soft facts in such a way as to capture God's beliefs while leaving out other clearly hard facts, the Ockhamist does not offer an acceptable (or believable) solution to the problem of theological fatalism. And Fischer and Hasker are correct, I think, in questioning whether such a principled distinction is even possible.

The Molinist Solution

Like the Ockhamist, the Molinist (named for Jesuit theologian Luis de Molina) takes issue with premise two of the argument for theological fatalism, though she does not deny the Principle of the Necessity of the Past (as does the Ockhamist). The Molinist allows that God knows at t1 that S will A at t2, but argues that God's past knowledge is not necessary. This is

⁵⁷ Hasker "Hard Facts" 174-75.

because, were S to \sim A at t₂, God would have had a different belief in the past.⁵⁸ This is not, however, for the same reasons that the Ockhamist cites to explain why God's past beliefs are not necessary. Rather, the Molinist takes a different approach. She explains *how* it is that God has foreknowledge of S's future action and in doing so, attempts to show that the seeming incompatibility between God's foreknowledge and human freedom is illusory. This is because the Molinist explains God's foreknowledge by appealing to S's freedom, arguing that, in a sense, S's free actions are logically prior to God's foreknowledge (thus it is S's free actions that lead to the necessity of God's foreknowledge and not the other way around).

According to the Molinist, God has three different types of knowledge. First, God has natural knowledge of all necessary truths, including which possible worlds are open to Him to actualize. God's natural knowledge is necessary and independent of God's will.⁵⁹ Second, God possesses free knowledge of the actual world. God's free knowledge is contingent and dependent upon God's will, for it is knowledge about the world that God chooses to create and would have been different had God actualized a different possible world.⁶⁰ God's foreknowledge is to be located within God's free knowledge. But finally, according to the Molinist, God has middle knowledge, or counterfactual knowledge. This knowledge includes, most importantly, counterfactuals of human freedom, or knowledge of what each possible individual would do in every possible situation. Middle knowledge, then, is contingent (for if it were necessary, the counterfactuals would not be of human *freedom*) but independent of God's will. Thus middle knowledge is found in the conceptual space between natural and free knowledge.⁶¹ Before God's creative act, on the Molinist picture, God finds Himself (through no choice of His own) in a "Creation Situation."⁶² A Creation Situation is one that determines a particular set of feasible worlds that God can actualize, based upon the counterfactuals of human freedom that are true in the Creation Situation. God, then, finds Himself in a situation in which certain counterfactuals of human freedom are true and certain ones are false. For example, it is true in Creation Situation ZZ that S will A in certain circumstances X. If God finds Himself in ZZ, then if He places S in X, she will A. It may be true in another Creation Situation that S will \sim A in X, but given that

⁵⁸ William Lane Craig, "The Middle Knowledge View," *Divine Foreknowledge: Four Views*, ed. James K. Beilby and Paul R. Eddy (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2001) 131-32.

⁵⁹ Thomas P. Flint, *Divine Providence: The Molinist Account* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1998) 42.

⁶⁰ Craig 121; Flint 42.

⁶¹ Craig 122.

⁶² Term adopted from Alfred Freddoso.

God is in ZZ, it is only open to Him to create a world in which S As if placed in X. Such a world is, then, feasible for God, whereas one in which S ~As in X is possible, though not feasible.⁶³ It is the counterfactuals of freedom, then, that delineate those possible worlds that are feasible for God from those that are not.

The logical ordering of God's knowledge and creative act are of utmost importance on the Molinist picture. Molinists often refer to the succession of God's knowledge and actions as "moments," though it is important to remember that these moments are only logically, and not temporally, ordered.⁶⁴ The ordering is thus: 1) God's natural knowledge, 2) God's middle knowledge, 3) God's act of actualizing one particular possible world, 4) God's free knowledge of that world.⁶⁵ What is most notable, on this picture, is that God's middle knowledge is logically prior to His creative act, and thus His free knowledge. And hence, counterfactuals of human freedom are logically prior to God's foreknowledge of human free actions. This, the Molinist argues, is the key to the compatibility between divine foreknowledge and human freedom. God's knowledge does not cause or render necessary human free action but is rather a logical consequent of it. Thomas Flint writes,

Free knowledge, then, is neither causally nor explanatorily prior to the true future contingent [i.e. counterfactual of human freedom] foreknown. Indeed, in the sense that the truth of a proposition must be thought of as prior to the fact that someone knows that truth, it seems evident that the true future contingent should be seen as explanatorily prior to God's knowledge of it. Hence, from a Molinist standpoint, we can indeed say with Molina that "it is not because [God] knows that something is going to be that that thing is going to be. Just the opposite, it is because the thing will come to be from its causes that He knows that it is going to be."⁶⁶

The Molinist account, then, suggests a solution to the foreknowledge dilemma by offering a way for God to know what humans will freely do without causing them to do so or even rendering their actions necessary. But the Molinist picture does more than merely offer a

⁶³ Eef Dekker, Middle Knowledge (Belgium: Peeters Leuven, 2000) 10-11.

⁶⁴ Craig 121-122.

⁶⁵ Flint 43.

⁶⁶ Flint 45; quote from Molina's Disputation 52, Section 19.

solution; it offers a picture on which not only are humans completely free, God has complete providential control over the future. The only other picture on which God has so much control is the Calvinist picture, in which God is the ultimate cause of everything, determining all in His creation.⁶⁷ The Molinist claims to have improved on this picture by explaining how God can have complete control over the future without determining the free choices of His creatures. William Lane Craig stresses the importance of this aspect of Molinism. He writes,

Not only does the Molinist view make room for human freedom, but it affords God a means of choosing which world of free creatures to create. For by knowing how persons would freely choose in whatever circumstances they might be in, God can—by decreeing to place just those persons in just those circumstances—bring about his ultimate purposes *through* free creaturely decisions. Thus, by employing his counterfactual knowledge, God can plan a world down to the last detail and yet do so without annihilating creaturely freedom, since what people would freely do under various circumstances is already factored into the equation by God.⁶⁸

Unfortunately, as is often the case, when something looks this good, it rarely is.

The most commonly cited objection to Molinism is commonly referred to as “the grounding objection” for it argues that there is nothing in virtue of which counterfactuals of human freedom (henceforth “CHF’s”) are true. That is, CHF’s are groundless. The problem, Flint notes, is determining the cause of these counterfactuals. He asks, “Who or what actually *causes* the ones that are true to be true, and the ones that are false to be false? In whose activity are we to find adequate metaphysical grounds for such truths?”⁶⁹ It clearly cannot be God who grounds or causes their truth, for the truth of the CHF’s are logically prior to and independent of God’s

⁶⁷ This strong view of God’s providential control opens the Molinist up to a similar objection to one leveled against the Calvinist: If God knows what every possible being would do in any given situation why is their evil in the world? Given that God is in control of our free actions in some way (not by causing them, like the Calvinist claims, but rather by actualizing free beings in specifically chosen situations), it seems that God is implicated in evil that can be blamed on human free action on other theories (Hunt 152). The Molinist is forced, here, to argue that there is no feasible option in which all humans freely refrain from evil, but this seems highly implausible. Thus, it seems that the stronger one’s view of God’s providential guidance, the stronger the Problem of Evil worries that plague it.

⁶⁸ Craig 122.

⁶⁹ Flint 123.

will. The Molinist view is one that embraces libertarian freedom and thus God cannot cause or ground human free actions in any way. But, on the other hand, it cannot be free human agents that ground or cause the truth of the counterfactuals for several reasons. First, CHF's are true or false both logically and temporally prior to an agent's actions in the world (prior, in fact, to the very existence of the agent, or the world itself).⁷⁰ Second, our actions themselves are not independent of God's will, because He creates us in certain situations for the very reason that we will act as He wants us to act and thus "it is not true that we are around to cause things *regardless* of what God does."⁷¹ Furthermore, many CHF's concern themselves with possible agents that God did not actually create. They are never around to act, and so clearly their actions could not ground the truth of the CHF's that apply to them. And finally, our characters cannot fully determine the CHF's because our characters are a product of actions in the world (and so could not determine something logically prior to our actions) and also are not deterministic (so long as we are taking libertarian freedom seriously).⁷² Thus, we are faced with true propositions that appear to lack grounds or causes and this is baffling. As Hasker notes, "In order for a (contingent) conditional state of affairs to obtain, its obtaining must be grounded in some categorical state of affairs. More colloquially, truth about 'what *would be the case ... if*' must be grounded in truths about what *is in fact* the case."⁷³

The Molinist could reply that the idea of grounding is itself mysterious and that until her opponent gives a clear definition of grounding, she need not offer a response. But given the intuitive appeal of this objection, the more common move is to point to truths about future free actions and note that the grounding for such truths is mysterious in the same way as the grounding for CHF's. That is, there is nothing going on in the "here and now" that grounds future free actions just as there is nothing currently occurring that grounds CHF's. If the objector to Molinism accepts that truths about the future free actions are grounded, she should have no problem with the grounding of CHF's, for neither is grounded in the actual present nor what is necessitated by the present. That is, just as future free actions are grounded in what the agent *will* do, so CHF's are grounded in what the agent *would* do. This directly reflects how we ground past

⁷⁰ It should be noted that it is the logical priority here that is most worrisome. As we saw in our discussion of logical fatalism, the truth of the counterfactuals themselves could be considered soft facts if we were only concerned about temporal priority.

⁷¹ Flint 125.

⁷² Flint 125.

⁷³ Hasker "God" 30.

contingents: “Just as a past contingent requires grounding activity, not in the present, but only in the past, so a future contingent . . . requires grounding activity in the future, not in the present.”⁷⁴

This response is, I think, highly suspect. First, it is clearly open to the objector to deny that there are truths about future free actions (because the future is not real in an important sense). Thus, the objector could allow that CHF's are like future contingents while pointing out that both are groundless. I am sympathetic with this move, but it is not the only one available. There seem to be important differences between CHF's and future contingents. There are causal connections that exist between past, present and future that do *not* exist between the possible and the actual. And it seems that we are most concerned, as Flint points out, with causal connections when we worry about the grounding of a certain fact. And though the future has not yet happened, it is causally connected to the present and will eventually happen, revealing at that time the grounds of the (then past) truth. Furthermore, the fact that the grounds of a future free actions lie within the actual world seems of utmost importance. As David Hunt points out, though the grounds for a fact about the future are not yet actual, they importantly *will be*.⁷⁵ The problem, however, for the opponent of CHF's is, as Hunt points out, not that the grounds for CHF's are not in the actual present, but rather that their very grounding seems impossible and contradictory. For though we understand what “S will A at t2” means, it is much harder to understand what “S would do A in X” means if we are assuming S's libertarian freedom.⁷⁶ But the grounds for facts about the future do not seem impossible in the same way. For Hunt, the problem is not how counterfactuals themselves can be grounded, but rather how counterfactuals of *freedom* can be grounded. And this distinction makes all the difference when we compare CHF's with facts about future free actions. Hunt explains:

The difference in futurefactuals that renders them compatible with free agency is that their truth is grounded in the actualization of *one* particular pathway through the branching patterns of future possibilities compatible with the actual past and present. Since they entail only that A do y in *one* of the relevant worlds (namely, that one whose future turns out to be actual), they leave open plenty of other

⁷⁴ Flint 132, explaining Freddoso's position.

⁷⁵ David Hunt “Middle knowledge: The ‘foreknowledge defense’,” International Journal for Philosophy of Religion August 1990: 14.

⁷⁶ Hunt Middle Knowledge 17.

relevantly similar worlds in which A may refrain from y, as the conditions for free agency require.

Counterfactuals of freedom, on the other hand, cannot be grounded in the actualization of one pathway out of a plurality of possibilities....How, then, are they grounded? In the semantics for counterfactuals developed by Lewis, this ground involves a kind of monopoly exercised by counterfactuals over all the relevant possible worlds: the claim that A *would* do y if antecedent condition x were to obtain entails that A do y in *all* the relevantly similar x-worlds, leaving none available for A's pursuit of other options. Assuming that this reading of counterfactuals is correct, there appears to be an insuperable obstacle to any consequent of a true counterfactual conditional giving expression to a free action.⁷⁷

Thus, it is not so much that the Molinist's opponent finds it mysterious how a truth could be grounded in anything but the actual present, but how a CHF, understood as a truth about what S would certainly do in X, can be grounded at all without rendering S unfree. And this worry is not present in the case of what S will do in the future, for it is S who grounds the truth of such a proposition.

Furthermore, the grounds of CHFs are supposedly to be found in other possible worlds, more specifically those possible worlds that are most similar (i.e. closeset) to the actual world. But it is unclear how to define this similarity relation without completely begging the question. The Molinist wants to claim that there is a true CHF that states that S will A in circumstances X. But the Molinist also allows that there are clearly possible worlds in which S fails to A in X. But why should we think the former world, in which S As in X, is closer to the actual than the latter world in which she fails to do so? The only possible response open to the Molinist seems to be the one offered by Plantinga: the similarity relation holds in virtue of the various possible worlds sharing the same CHFs.⁷⁸ But then we are left wondering why the sharing of CHFs is what determines which worlds are most similar. For S does not have to actually be placed in X for a CHF to be true. But why are not all the worlds in which S is placed in X more similar than those

⁷⁷ Hunt Middle Knowledge 19-20.

⁷⁸ Flint 135.

worlds in which she is not? Why is it not the actual obtaining of X that determines the similarity and not merely what S *would* do if X obtained? The answer seems to be that if we took this more intuitive approach to the similarity relation, there would be no CHF's. For the Molinist clearly allows that there are possible worlds in which S is placed in X but does not A (this is needed for libertarian free will). But if similarity is determined by the actual obtaining of X, then S will A in some (relevantly similar) possible worlds and \sim A in other (relevantly similar) possible worlds, and there is no truth about what S *would* do in X, for the truth of such a proposition is determined by those worlds most similar to the actual. Thus, the Molinist begs the question in attempting to ground the CHF's in worlds similar to the actual for she must assume the existence of the CHF's and build the CHF's into her definition of similarity in order to ground the CHF's and explain how such things could even exist.

The worry about how to explain the similarity relation that supposedly grounds the CHF's leads to a second, related, concern: the Molinist picture is viciously circular. Robert Adams argues that in order to find which worlds are most similar to the actual world (and thus determine the truth of the CHF's), one needs to know what is true of the actual world. That is, in order to find out what S *would* do in X, we need to look at the possible worlds that are most similar to the actual and see what she does. But the only relevant test for finding this out, Adams notes, is to see what S does in X in the actual world and then find the class of worlds in which S does the same thing in X. Thus, he explains, the truth of the CHF will depend crucially on what S does in X, in the actual world.⁷⁹ But this leads to a critical problem. On Plantinga's model, God uses knowledge of the truth of CHF's to decide which world to make actual (and thus the truth of the CHF's is prior to the actualization of a possible world). But the truth of the CHF is itself determined by the similarity of the actual world with other worlds in which S also As in X. Thus, on the Molinist picture, there needs to be an actual world to determine the truth value of a CHF, a CHF then used to decide which world will become actual. This, Adams points out, is viciously circular. Due to the fact that we must wait and see whether or not S does A in X (thus establishing an actual world) to determine the truth of the CHF, middle knowledge becomes impossible and the CHF has no truth value.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Robert Merrihew Adams, "Middle Knowledge and the Problem of Evil," *The Problem of Evil* ed. Marilyn McCord Adams and Robert Merrihew Adams (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990) 116-17.

⁸⁰ Adams "Middle Knowledge" 117-19.

Another way to put the circularity objection is to look at the logical ordering of “events” on the Molinist picture. God’s middle knowledge is logically prior to His creative act and thus prior to all actual free human actions. And the truth of the CHF’s is logically prior to God’s knowledge of them (they are independent of His will). But if we are to take libertarian freedom seriously, the actual actions of free agents should be logically prior to the truth of CHF’s. So it looks like we quickly find ourselves in a tight explanatory circle.⁸¹ The circle goes as follows: actual action of free agent → truth of the CHF → God’s middle knowledge of the CHF → creation of the actual world → actual action of free agent.⁸² Thus the very same actual free human action is both logically prior to the truth of the CHF and the creation of the actual world, and logically posterior to them.

The problem is that the only way out of the circle, for the Molinist, is to deny that S’s actions in the actual world are logically prior to the truth of the CHF. Such a removal of the critical link, Adams notes, is tantamount to removing the agent’s freedom. Because of the order of explanation, our actions presuppose the truth of the CHF’s (because our actions depend upon our existence, which in turn depends upon God’s creative action, which is further dependent upon His middle knowledge the CHF’s). That is, if S will A in X, this CHF is explanatorily prior to S’s very existence. But if S is to freely A in X, then no truth that is strictly inconsistent with her ~Aing in X can be explanatorily prior to her action. Given that the CHF in question is strictly inconsistent with S’s ~Aing in X (because it stipulates that she will, in fact, A in X), S does not act freely when she As in X.⁸³ The upshot of this discussion, then, is that the Molinist finds herself on the horns of a dilemma. Either she must allow that S’s actual actions are logically prior to the truth of the relevant CHF which places her in a vicious explanatory circle. Or she must deny that S’s action is logically prior to the CHF, in which case S is no longer free in the libertarian sense. Neither option will save Molinism therefore I take the combination of the grounding objection and the vicious circle argument to be fatal to the Molinist position. The Molinist can either offer us a solution that fails to be helpful because it is viciously circular and/or appeals to impossible counterfactuals, or worse yet, she can provide an account which strips agents of freedom, the very thing she set out to save.

⁸¹ Flint 159-160.

⁸² → = logically prior to.

⁸³ Robert Merrihew Adams, “An Anti-Molinist Argument,” *Philosophical Perspectives* 1991: 349-350.

Where We Go From Here

So where does this leave us? We have considered the three most plausible attempts to explain how God's full omniscience can be compatible with human freedom and I have argued that all three positions suffer from fatal flaws. The Boethian may do the best in terms of explaining how God can have foreknowledge that is compatible with human freedom (a goal left unaccomplished on the other two views) but has unacceptable problems explaining other core Christian beliefs such as God's personal relationship with His creatures and His providential control over the future. The Ockhamist position, though detailed and closely mirrored on a common solution to logical fatalism, cannot give an acceptable definition of soft facts that captures God's past beliefs while leaving out all other facts that should clearly count as hard. This is because beliefs seem to be the sorts of things that are about a particular time and thus cannot count as soft facts. And the Molinist, as we have just seen, cannot explain how to ground counterfactuals of human freedom. In an effort to ground these counterfactuals, she either offers an unhelpful theory or removes libertarian freedom from the equation entirely. Each of the three positions fails to deliver a solution that allows us to keep both God's full omniscience and human libertarian freedom, classically defined.

So does that mean there is no possible route out of the dilemma? Must we abandon either God's omniscience or our freedom? I think that it is clear that the foreknowledge dilemma is successful in showing that God's full omniscience and human freedom are incompatible. This should not be a surprise given the initial intuitive plausibility of our original argument. All attempts to explain how the two could be compatible have failed so I believe the best course of action is to accept their incompatibility and move on. Fortunately, I do not think this need be the end of the matter, for it is only as they are *classically defined* that God's omniscience and human freedom are incompatible. We are left with the option to redefine either or both. And I believe this is the route we should take. Of course, we do not want to give up Biblical accuracy or doctrines that are at the core of the Christian faith. But I believe that one, if not both, can be redefined while continuing to capture all that is important in the essence of God's omniscience and our freedom. And it seems far better to take a slightly redefined notion of God's omniscience or of human freedom than to give one or both up entirely.

So in conclusion, I would like to point in the direction of two related solutions to the foreknowledge dilemma. The first position is often referred to as Open Theism or Process Theology, and according to this view, God's omniscience should be defined in the same way that God's omnipotence has been defined. God's omnipotence is generally thought to include the power to do everything but the logically impossible, i.e. God is bound by logical possibility. In similar fashion, we should think of God's omniscience as operating under the same restraints: God cannot know (infallibly believe) what it is logically impossible to know (infallibly believe).⁸⁴ And given the nature of libertarian free will, it is logically impossible that God should know what a free agent will do before she does it. This conception of God's omniscience denies the initial assumption of the argument (that God infallibly believes at t1 that S will A at t2) and in doing so escapes the unwanted conclusion that God's omniscience is incompatible with human free will. But it does this, I believe, without jeopardizing what is most important about God's omniscience: that He has the fullest scope of knowledge that is logically possible.

A second possible solution is to similarly redefine human freedom. I do not mean, here, that we should adopt a CD compatibilist (non-libertarian) view of free will. I attempted to motivate a desire for libertarian freedom earlier in the chapter and it seems that in denying the existence of such freedom (as the Calvinist does) leads to some unacceptable conclusions about human moral responsibility, divine judgment and life after death, not to mention inter-personal interactions. However, it may be open to the libertarian to redefine freedom without appealing to PAP, thus rejecting premise eight of our argument. Some libertarians working in the secular free will debate have taken a similar line, arguing that alternative possibilities are not at the heart of free will. Rather, sourcehood is what is most important about free will; an agent is free if she is the appropriate source of her actions. In redefining free will in this way, we may capture the theist's intuition that freedom is incompatible with causal determinism while allowing that God could know that S will A before she does so by recognizing that God's knowledge is not causal. Thus, God could have complete omniscience (as classically defined) and humans could have complete libertarian free will (when undetermined), even though they cannot do otherwise.

I am not sure whether both of these solutions will be successful, but given the failure of the best attempts to render God's full omniscience compatible with our full freedom, I believe

⁸⁴ Richard Swinburne, The Coherence of Theism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 179-182.

that developing one or both of these types of views offers the best possibility for fruitful scholarship on the matter.

CHAPTER TWO

REDEFINING FREE WILL

One strategy for solving the foreknowledge dilemma recently defended by David Hunt is to redefine free will. Recall that the foreknowledge dilemma is a problem because it seems that if an agent lacks alternative possibilities, then she is not free.⁸⁵ This is because freedom requires the ability to do otherwise, an ability that does not exist if one's actions are rendered inevitable by God's foreknowledge. In recent years, however, this characterization of free will has come under dispute and some CD incompatibilists (e.g. Hunt) have joined CD compatibilists in arguing that alternative possibilities are not at the heart of free will. Hunt and other such incompatibilists argue that free will, when redefined without appeal to alternative possibilities, turns out to be incompatible with causal determinism but, importantly, compatible with God's foreknowledge. In this chapter, I will outline the discussion that has led to Hunt's "Frankfurtian" solution to the foreknowledge dilemma. This discussion will include an explanation of the "Frankfurt-style" objection to the standard characterization of free will and the CD source incompatibilist's new theory of free will that can help us understand how full libertarian freedom can be compatible with God's full foreknowledge.

Frankfurt-Style Cases

As we have seen, it has been historically accepted that freedom requires alternative possibilities. That is, the following moral principle has been (and still is) commonly accepted:

PAP: An agent is morally responsible for performing a given act A only if she could have avoided performing it.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Though others distinguish between them, in this paper I will use "free action," "free will" and "freedom" interchangeably. For our present purposes, I see no reason to separate these concepts.

⁸⁶ David Widerker, "Blameworthiness and Frankfurt's Argument Against the Principle of Alternative Possibilities," *Moral Responsibility and Alternative Possibilities*, Ed. David Widerker and Michael McKenna (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006) 53.

While PAP is simply assumed in the construction of the foreknowledge dilemma, it has recently come under dispute in the secular free will debate. In his game-changing paper, “Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility,” Harry Frankfurt argues that we ought to reject this principle for it is possible that there are circumstances in which an agent cannot do otherwise but is still responsible for her actions. In such a situation, the agent is morally responsible because she does not act as she does wholly *because* of her lack of alternatives.⁸⁷ That is, her lack of alternative possibilities does not play a full causal role in her action, and thus she can rightfully be said to have acted freely (and thus is morally responsible for so acting⁸⁸). To demonstrate the falsity of PAP, Frankfurt offers a counterexample. Let’s suppose that Black is a neurosurgeon who wants Jones to vote for Obama in 2012. Black installs a device in Jones’s brain (unbeknownst to Jones) that monitors, and is capable of controlling, his brain activities. If Jones shows some sign of voting for Romney, then Black intervenes and causes Jones to vote for Obama. But if Jones decides on his own to vote for Obama, then Black does not intervene and allows Jones to decide and act on his own. As it turns out, Jones never shows any inclination for voting for Romney and so Black never intervenes. It seems that in voting for Obama, Jones is morally responsible for so voting even though he could not have done otherwise (i.e. he could not vote for Romney).⁸⁹ Frankfurt writes,

It would be quite unreasonable to excuse [Jones] for his action, or to withhold the praise to which it was normally entitle him, on the basis of the fact that he could not have done otherwise. This fact played no role at all in leading him to act as he did. He would have acted the same even if it had not been a fact. Indeed,

⁸⁷ Harry Frankfurt, “Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility,” Moral Responsibility and Alternative Possibilities, Ed. David Widerker and Michael McKenna (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006), 22-23.

⁸⁸ Recall that I take freedom to be a necessary condition for moral responsibility. We normally care about freedom insofar as it is a necessary condition for moral responsibility and so when Frankfurt points out that someone could remain morally responsible though she could not do otherwise, I take it that it is the moral responsibility that we are most concerned with, and only derivatively the freedom. At any rate, because freedom is required for moral responsibility, if the agent is morally responsible despite her inability to do otherwise, then she is also free despite of the lack of alternatives. I will continue this discussion with references to moral responsibility, though my ultimate goal is to discuss whether alternative possibilities are required for freedom, as it is freedom that is at issue in the foreknowledge dilemma.

⁸⁹ This particular version of the counterexample adapted from John Martin Fischer (“Responsibility and Alternative Possibilities,” Moral Responsibility and Alternative Possibilities, Ed. David Widerker and Michael McKenna (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006), 27.

everything happened just as it would have happened without Black's presence in the situation and without his readiness to intrude into it.⁹⁰

Because this is so, Frankfurt argues, PAP is false and moral responsibility does not require alternative possibilities. Many CD compatibilists take this as vindication that free will is compatible with causal determinism while CD incompatibilists resist this conclusion either by arguing that no Frankfurt-style counterexample establishes what it attempts to demonstrate (henceforth referred to as 'leeway incompatibilists') or arguing that though Frankfurt-style cases are successful in showing that PAP is false, they do not show that causal determinism is relevantly similar to Black's counterfactual intervention and thus do not give victory to the CD compatibilist (henceforth referred to as 'source incompatibilists').

The leeway incompatibilist's first objection to Frankfurt-style counterexamples is the "flicker of freedom" objection. The CD incompatibilist here argues that though Black eliminates the most obvious alternative possibilities, he is unable to eliminate all possibilities. And if this is the case, then PAP stands, because Jones's moral responsibility in Frankfurt cases is due to the alternative possibilities that remain. Furthermore, causal determinism, if this is correct, is *not* compatible with free will because causal determinism does not leave open even the smallest alternative possibilities (and so causal determinism differs in relevant respects from Black).⁹¹ As John Martin Fischer points out, there are several places that we could identify these alternative possibilities within the Frankfurt scenario. Presumably, Jones must show some indication (or fail to do so) that he is going to vote for Romney before he does so. That is, he may begin to form the intention and it is this that triggers Black to intervene. But then, presumably, Jones has various possibilities: he can either begin to intend to vote for Romney or fail to do so (by either not beginning to intend to vote for Obama or by not beginning an intention at all). The problem is that it seems as if Frankfurt cases must involve a prior sign, and if this is so, such cases will always have a flicker of freedom.⁹² Other leeway incompatibilists have argued that essential to an event is its entire causal history. Thus, if Jones votes for Obama without Black intervening, this is an entirely different event than one in which Jones votes for Obama because Black intervenes. This is because they have different causal histories. But if this is the case, then it

⁹⁰ Frankfurt 22.

⁹¹ Fischer "Responsibility" 30.

⁹² Fischer "Responsibility" 31.

looks as if there are two possible outcomes, each of which is an entirely different event, and Jones acts freely in actualizing one particular event.^{93 94} Another response to the Frankfurt-style counterexamples is to point towards the notion of agent causation embraced by many CD incompatibilists. According to this view, when an agent acts freely, she agent-causes her action, which is incompatible with her being externally caused to (form the intention to) so act. On this view, Jones in fact agent-causes his volition to vote for Obama, but had Black intervened, Jones would not have agent-caused his action. Thus, though Jones cannot act otherwise, he does have two different *ways* in which he could act: he could agent-cause his volition or fail to do so. This, the leeway incompatibilist argues, is a significant difference.⁹⁵ A final way to put the objection is to point out that we need to be more specific about what we are holding Jones responsible for. It is not, the leeway incompatibilist argues, that he is morally responsible for voting for Obama, simpliciter, but rather that he voted for Obama *on his own*. Much like the appeal to agent-causation, this view notes that there are different ways in which Jones can act, and this is what grounds his responsibility. Thus, Jones has two options. He can either vote for Obama on his own or vote for Obama because Black caused him to do so. Though the final event/action is the same, the way in which it is accomplished is significant for moral responsibility attributions.⁹⁶

Fischer argues that this general type of response to the Frankfurt-style counterexample is unsuccessful. While he allows that there may be alternative possibilities of the various types discussed, he worries that they may not be robust enough to ground our attributions of moral responsibility. The problem is that in order for an action to be free, the agent must have some sort of control over it. But the control necessary cannot be grounded upon something as weak as the alternatives introduced by the leeway incompatibilist.⁹⁷ That is, it seems mysterious how such small, seemingly insignificant, alternatives can give Jones moral responsibility. Surely moral responsibility is significant, and if it is to be grounded in alternative possibilities, the alternatives themselves must be significant. Fischer writes,

⁹³ Fischer "Responsibility" 32.

⁹⁴ Fischer points out that the CD incompatibilist here distinguishes particular events and their event types. That is, Jones cannot do otherwise than vote for Obama (a general event type) but he has a choice between two different ways of bringing about this general event, and these two options are different particular events. However, this difference is all that is needed to ground moral responsibility (32).

⁹⁵ Fischer "Responsibility" 33.

⁹⁶ Fischer "Responsibility" 34.

⁹⁷ Fischer "Responsibility" 36.

Now it seems that the flicker theorist must claim that the addition of the sort of alternative possibility he has identified would transform a case of lack of responsibility into one of responsibility. But this seems mysterious in the extreme: how can adding an alternative scenario (or perhaps even a set of them) in which Jones does not *freely* vote for [Obama] make it true that he actually possesses the sort of control required for him to be morally responsible for his voting for [Obama]? This might appear to involve a kind of *alchemy*, and it is just as incredible.⁹⁸

Fischer's objection, then, to the various forms of alternative possibilities that the leeway incompatibilist locates in the Frankfurt-style case is to note that they are all cases in which the agent does not freely act, and Fischer argues that an alternative that lacks freedom is not robust enough to ground responsibility. Simply pointing out that Jones votes for Obama *on his own* and could have failed to do so, for instance, does not show that there are two robust alternatives in this case, for only one of these is a free alternative. Thus, Fischer argues, the presence of unfree alternatives cannot be what grounds Jones's responsibility, and therefore freedom, in the actual sequence.⁹⁹

The leeway incompatibilist, however, could push back. According to the first version of the objection, the alternatives are to be found in the initiating of the intention. Though Jones could not finish forming an intention to vote for Romney, he could *begin* to form the intention and this alternative seems fairly robust. And, she could argue, all Frankfurt cases must have a similar "prior sign," for without it Black could not know if and when to intervene. Fischer, however, does not find this response persuasive for it is possible that in constructing the Frankfurt-style counterexample, we push the prior sign back further in the causal chain. In this case, the prior sign may be something that is not an intentional action (or any type of action), e.g. a blush preceding the forming of an intention to vote for Romney. This prior event is all Black needs, but it is clearly not robust enough to ground moral responsibility for it is not an intentional

⁹⁸ Fischer "Responsibility" 35.

⁹⁹ Fischer "Responsibility" 36-37.

action.¹⁰⁰ Thus, Fischer argues, the Frankfurt-style counterexample stands and PAP fails; alternative possibilities are not required for free will.

Fischer argues that the prior sign used by Black to decide whether or not to intervene may not be within the agent's control (may be prior to any intentional action of the agent) and thus is not robust enough to ground responsibility. But this, the leeway incompatibilist insists, is problematic. If a Frankfurt-style counterexample is to convince a CD incompatibilist, it must not simply assume the truth of determinism. That is, CD incompatibilists maintain that free will is incompatible with determinism and thus to assume determinism in a Frankfurt-style case would be to beg the question against the CD incompatibilist. The entire point of a Frankfurt-style case is to give a scenario in which an agent does not have other options but does not act *because* of this lack of options, i.e. they are not determined to act as they do though they cannot do otherwise. If the agent is *actually* (as opposed to counterfactually) determined, the case will fail to sway someone committed to the incompatibility of causal determinism and free will. But this raises an issue for the Frankfurt-defender. For one must ask whether or not the prior sign, if it is to be found prior to any intentional action of the agent, is deterministic. It appears that it must be if it is to do the work Black needs it to do. But if this is the case, then the CD incompatibilist will simply deny that Jones acts freely in voting for Obama. But if the prior sign is indeterministic, then it remains open until the agent begins to intentionally act that he could do otherwise. In other words, if it is true that Jones will blush before he decides to vote for Obama and he, in fact, blushes, then Black will leave him to act on his own. But if the blush is indeterministic, it remains open to Jones to vote for Romney, even after blushing. Only if the blush ensures (i.e., determines) that Jones will vote for Obama, is Black able to refrain from actually acting. As Robert Kane explains,

... when free choices that are *undetermined* (as incompatibilists or libertarians about free will require them to be), a Frankfurt controller faces a dilemma. He must either wait to see what the agent will choose, not being able to determine this in advance; and then it will be too late to intervene. Or the controller must intervene in advance to get what he wants, thus becoming an actual and not merely a counterfactual controller. In the first case, the agent will be responsible,

¹⁰⁰ Fischer "Responsibility" 37.

but will also have APs [alternative possibilities]. In the second case, the agent will not have APs, but neither will the agent be responsible for the outcome; the controller will be, since the controller will have determined which choice would be made.¹⁰¹

In response to this objection, Frankfurt defenders have attempted to develop more sophisticated versions of the Frankfurt-style counterexample that do not rely upon prior signs. Most notably, Alfred Mele and David Robb have developed a modified blockage-style case in which the agent's action is determined to occur by Black, but in which his free, indeterministic action, preempts this deterministic process, thus rendering the deterministic chain to be causally inefficacious. They explain:

Our scenario features an agent, Bob, who inhabits a world at which determinism is false ... At t1, Black initiates a certain deterministic process P in Bob's brain with the intention of thereby causing Bob to decide at t2 (an hour later, say) to steal Ann's car. The process, which is screened off from Bob's consciousness, will deterministically culminate in Bob's deciding at t2 to steal Ann's car unless he decides on his own at t2 to steal it or is incapable at t2 of making a decision (because, for example, he is dead at t2) ... The process is in no way sensitive to any 'sign' of what Bob will decide. As it happens, at t2 Bob decides on his own to steal the car, on the basis of his own indeterministic deliberation about whether to steal it, and his decision has no deterministic cause. But if he had not just then decided on his own to steal it, P would have deterministically issued, at t2, in his deciding to steal it. Rest assured that P in no way influences the indeterministic decision-making process that actually issues in Bob's decision.¹⁰²

Because it is unclear how Bob's own decision to steal the car can preempt P without it occurring prior to it, and thus opening up a window for alternative possibilities to sneak into the equation,

¹⁰¹ Robert Kane, "Responsibility, Indeterminism and Frankfurt-style Cases: A Reply to Mele and Robb," Moral Responsibility and Alternative Possibilities, Ed. David Widerker and Michael McKenna (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006), 92.

¹⁰² Alfred Mele and David Robb, "Rescuing Frankfurt-style Cases," Philosophical Review, 1998: 101-02.

Mele and Robb introduce some additional considerations. They ask their reader to imagine that in Bob's brain are nodes (N1 and N2) that can be "lit up." When N1 is lit up, this constitutes a decision to steal the car and the lighting up of N2 constitutes a decision to not steal the car. If no decision is made, no node is lit up. In this Frankfurt-case, if both P and Bob's indeterministic decision process x hit N1, then x lights up N1 and P is inefficacious. But if x does not hit any node, or hits N2, and P hits N1, P will be efficacious.¹⁰³ Of course, in the scenario, both P and x strike N1 at the same time, and so it is x that is causally efficacious. That is, x blocks P and Bob thereby acts freely when he decides to steal the car. The Mele/Robb counterexample, as Kane points out, is a modified blockage case because it leaves open some alternative, but non-robust, possibilities (e.g. that x not hit any node because Bob becomes distracted at t2).

Many leeway incompatibilists remain unconvinced by these blockage cases and other more refined Frankfurt-style counterexamples. David Widerker argues that it is simply impossible that one completely simultaneous process could preempt another at the exact moment of striking N1 (the exact moment of deciding). What, he asks, happens to P that it is no longer causally efficacious? If both P and x actually strike N1 (which constitutes Bob's actual decision to steal the car), it "would be simply too late for x to [prevent P from deterministically causing Bob's decision]." ¹⁰⁴ The only way that x could preempt P, Widerker argues, is if the preemption occurs directly before Bob's decision to steal the car. But if it occurs prior to Bob's decision, then there is a window, be it ever-so-slight, in which Bob can change his mind, and P, having already been preempted, could no longer strike N1.¹⁰⁵ Thus, the leeway incompatibilist could argue that if this counterexample is to get rid of all determinism, it must allow at least one robust alternative possibility. Robert Kane further worries that Black, in the Mele/Robb scenario, blocks all robust alternatives (such as lighting up N2 and consciously deciding to continue deliberations) and thus is an *actual* intervener as opposed to merely counterfactual intervener. Thus, one might worry with Kane that the Mele/Robb version of Black interferes too much and thereby renders Bob unfree.¹⁰⁶ Finally, the leeway incompatibilist could ask, with Widerker, what Bob should have done instead of stealing Ann's car. He writes,

¹⁰³ Mele and Robb 104.

¹⁰⁴ Widerker 56.

¹⁰⁵ Widerker 55.

¹⁰⁶ Kane 100-101.

When we consider someone morally blameworthy for a certain act, we do so because we believe that morally speaking he should *not* have done what he did. This belief is essential to our moral disapproval of his behavior. Sometimes, however, such a belief may be unreasonable, for example, in a situation in which it is clear to us that the agent could not have avoided acting as he did. To expect in that situation that the agent should not have done what he did is to expect him to have done the impossible. By implication, considering him blameworthy because he has not fulfilled this unreasonable expectation would be unreasonable.¹⁰⁷

Most CD compatibilists and source incompatibilists, however, think that these worries are not insurmountable. Such individuals choose to look past the debate over the details and rather argue that the spirit of Frankfurt-style counterexamples can shed some light on our understanding of free will. Though we have not come up with an airtight example of a Frankfurt case, they argue, the ones we have teach us that the mere presence of alternative possibilities is not at the heart of free will. This is largely because the alternative possibilities to which leeway incompatibilists point seem to lack robustness and themselves indicate that there is something else at that heart of free will, namely sourcehood. Thus, these CD compatibilists and CD incompatibilists alike have abandoned all versions of PAP and have turned their efforts towards understanding their new condition for free will.

The Sourcehood Condition and Incompatibilism

Through the Frankfurt-style counterexamples to PAP, the discussion regarding the nature of free will has deepened. Some (both CD compatibilists and CD incompatibilists alike) have rejected the need for alternative possibilities entirely and have argued that sourcehood is both necessary and sufficient for free will, though CD compatibilists and CD incompatibilists understand sourcehood in different ways. Most CD incompatibilists, however, accept that both sourcehood and alternative possibilities are required for free will and differ in which one they

¹⁰⁷ Widerker 63.

take to be primary.^{108 109} Kevin Timpe argues that regardless of whether or not you think Frankfurt-style counterexamples are definitive regarding the need for alternative possibilities, in light of the discussion that ensued following Frankfurt's paper, we need to "shift the focus off the mere presence of alternative possibilities toward a more metaphysically robust kind of agency."¹¹⁰ Source incompatibilists have located this more robust kind of agency in a sourcehood condition that they find to be at the heart of free will while leeway incompatibilists take sourcehood to be peripheral and only important insofar as it helps make alternative possibilities more robust.¹¹¹ The source condition for free will is quite simple: a person is free concerning a particular action or choice only if she is the source of her action or choice.¹¹² How this condition is to be met is answered differently by CD compatibilists and CD incompatibilists. Exploring how source compatibilists understand this condition can help us differentiate their views from those of the source incompatibilist. In looking at CD compatibilist views of sourcehood, we can better see how source incompatibilists find conceptual space between leeway incompatibilists and source compatibilists.¹¹³

The most notable compatibilist views on sourcehood are offered by Harry Frankfurt and by John Martin Fischer and Mark Ravizza. In his article, "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person," Frankfurt argues that a person acts with free will if her will is structured in an appropriate way. He explains that not only do humans have first-order desires of various kinds but we also have second-order desires that have as their objects our first-order desires. In other

¹⁰⁸ Kevin Timpe, *Free Will: Sourcehood and its Alternatives*, (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2008), 72-74.

¹⁰⁹ In this section, I will refer simply to "sourcehood incompatibilists" without differentiating between those who accept alternative possibilities as necessary for free will and those who do not. In chapter 3, I will draw out this distinction for I take it to be very important. For our current purposes, however, source incompatibilists insist that sourcehood is what is most important about free will.

¹¹⁰ Timpe "Free Will" 74.

¹¹¹ Kevin Timpe points out that even leeway incompatibilists accept a sourcehood condition for free will. The very presence of alternative possibilities is not enough to ground free will, for at least some of the possibilities must be within the agent's control for the alternatives to be relevant to the agent's freedom. Timpe writes, "The *mere possibility* of something else happening outside of the agent's control would undermine, rather than bolster, the kind of control necessary for moral responsibility" (73). Therefore, even leeway incompatibilists, in order to deal with the Luck objection, need the agent to have control over various alternatives for these alternatives to ground her free will. Where they disagree with the source incompatibilist is that they take the alternatives to be fundamental and the control, or sourcehood, is peripheral and only important insofar as it explains the importance of the alternatives available to the agent, while the source incompatibilist accepts sourcehood as primary and takes alternative possibilities (if they are necessary) to be necessary only insofar as they are necessary for the agent to be in control.

¹¹² Timpe "Free Will" 75.

¹¹³ I take this approach and the following discussion largely from Kevin Timpe's book.

words, not only do humans want things, but they want certain desires to be efficacious.¹¹⁴ On Frankfurt's account, a person has free will if her first- and second-order desires are all aligned. That is, an agent has freedom of will when she acts from a first-order desire that coincides with a second-order volition.¹¹⁵ As Kevin Timpe explains, Frankfurt understands the sourcehood condition for free will to rely upon second-order desires: an agent has free will if she wills (acts on a first-order desire) in a way that is consistent with a second-order volition (a second-order volition is a second-order desire that a certain (first-order) desire be efficacious¹¹⁶).¹¹⁷ That is, one is the source of one's actions if the action flows from a first-order desire that is backed by a second-order volition. If the agent has both the first-order desire and the corresponding second-order volition (in other words, the agent endorses her first-order desire), then the sourcehood condition has been met and she acts from free will. The CD incompatibilist's response to this sourcehood condition is to point out that it seems consistent with a clear case of manipulation. What if, the source incompatibilist argues, someone implants in an agent both a first-order desire and a corresponding second-order desire and furthermore causes her to identify with both? Surely, such an agent is not the source of her action and is thus not free.¹¹⁸ In such a case, it is the will of the agent that is manipulated or controlled, and so the agent may not be aware of the manipulation. Such a case is consistent with her feeling as if she is the source of her will and therefore her actions, but the problem seems to be that she is wrong about this fact. Interestingly, Frankfurt has simply accepted that agents manipulated in this way have free will and the sourcehood condition is still met. He states,

My general response to criticisms of this kind is that the only thing that really counts is what condition I am in. How I got into that condition is another matter. If I'm in the condition where I'm doing what I want to do and I really want to do it, i.e., I decisively identify with my action, then I think I'm responsible for it. It makes no difference how it came about that that is the case.... [T]he historical considerations are not relevant to the evaluation of moral responsibility and the

¹¹⁴ Harry Frankfurt, "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person," *Free Will*, 2nd ed. Ed. Gary Watson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 323.

¹¹⁵ Frankfurt "Freedom" 330-31.

¹¹⁶ Frankfurt "Freedom" 327.

¹¹⁷ Timpe "Free Will" 76-7.

¹¹⁸ Timpe "Free Will" 77-8.

only thing that's relevant is the actual state of affairs at the time of whatever action or condition it is that's at issue.¹¹⁹

Given, however, that we are trying to find a condition on which the agent is said to be the proper *source* of her actions, source incompatibilists have been unwilling to bite the bullet along with Frankfurt and rather take cases of manipulation to undermine free will.

Fischer and Ravizza try to address the manipulation worry but, according to source incompatibilists, do not go far enough and are still susceptible to the objection. They distinguish between two kinds of control, each of which is linked with a different kind of freedom: regulative control and guidance control. Regulative control is the control over one's actions where one has at least two available options and the control consists in choosing (and correspondingly doing) one over the other(s). Guidance control, on the other hand, does not require alternatives.¹²⁰ Rather, guidance control has two features: it must issue from the agent herself and it must be at least somewhat responsive to reasons. That is, the mechanism of control must be receptive to reasons, though it need not act on them, and the agent must identify with the mechanism, i.e. she must see it as hers and take responsibility for it.¹²¹ In taking responsibility for her mechanism, the agent must meet three conditions. First, she must believe that she has real causal effects in the world. Second, she must believe that these consequences make her a fair target for reactive attitudes. And third, these two beliefs must be based upon the evidence in the appropriate way.¹²² ¹²³ Thus, Fischer and Ravizza's sourcehood condition for the free will that

¹¹⁹ Harry Frankfurt, "Discussion with Harry Frankfurt," Ethical Perspectives (1998), 32-33. Quoted in Timpe 79.

¹²⁰ Fischer 28.

¹²¹ Timpe "Free Will" 79.

¹²² Timpe "Free Will" 80; John Martin Fischer and Mark Ravizza, Responsibility and Control :A Theory of Moral Responsibility (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 210-213.

¹²³ One might worry that someone could fail to take responsibility for something that they are clearly responsible for, most notably by simply failing to see themselves as appropriate targets for the reactive attitudes. Fischer and Ravizza note in response that taking responsibility is largely involuntary and most people simply *do* see themselves as appropriate targets of the reactive attitudes. To fail to do so would be to cut oneself out of the moral community entirely, denying on the opportunity for relationships that we crave (I discussed a similar desire to be a part of the moral community in my first chapter) (Fischer and Ravizza 217-219). But if someone insists that it is possible for someone to simply fail to see themselves as a moral agent even though they should, then Fischer and Ravizza bite the bullet and argue that such an agent actually fails to be a moral agent. They write, "In *not seeing himself* in a certain way, he *fails to be* a morally responsible agent. Lacking the required view of himself, he *is* essentially passive, buffeted by forces that assail him (221).

grounds moral responsibility is that an agent act from a reasons-responsive mechanism that she appropriately takes to be hers.¹²⁴

It is the agent's identification with her will, based upon appropriate evidence, that is supposed to help Fischer and Ravizza avoid the manipulation objection. But opponents remain unconvinced for they find it conceivable that an agent could act from an implanted reasons-responsive mechanism for which she takes complete responsibility. In such a case, Fischer and Ravizza argue that she would not have guidance control for she would inappropriately take responsibility for her actions. This is because she cannot be said to have based her belief that she is responsible for her reasons-responsive mechanism on evidence *in an appropriate way*. They write:

This condition is intended (in part) to imply that an individual who has been electronically induced to have the relevant view of himself (and thus satisfy the first two conditions on taking responsibility) has *not* formed his view of himself in the appropriate way. But the relevant notion of appropriateness must remain unanalyzed.¹²⁵

It is the final sentence, the fact that they leave inappropriateness unanalyzed, that leaves critics unconvinced for it seems to indicate that Fischer and Ravizza are merely stipulating that an agent cannot be manipulated,¹²⁶ an odd suggestion given their acceptance of the compatibility between causal determinism and moral responsibility. The problem is that the agent could come to take responsibility for her reasons-responsive mechanism and do so on the basis of a large amount of evidence. But Fischer and Ravizza give no indication when the connection between the evidence and the belief is *appropriate* short of simply stipulating that in troublesome cases, it is not.¹²⁷

¹²⁴ Timpe "Free Will" 80.

¹²⁵ Fischer Ravizza 236; quoted in Timpe 83.

¹²⁶ Timpe "Free Will" 83.

¹²⁷ Elsewhere, however, Fischer argues that agents who are manipulated in the relevant ways can be held morally responsible for their actions though they may not be morally blameworthy or morally praiseworthy (Timpe "Free Will" 84; John Martin Fischer, *My Way: Essays about Moral Responsibility* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 233). This distinction seems mysterious at best, and given that Fischer must make such an odd, and to most unacceptable, suggestion may indicate that even he is aware that the evidence condition for guidance control cannot do all the work they need it to do.

According to the source incompatibilist, if it appears that manipulation undermines free will (the sourcehood condition), then so should causal determinism, for the two are relevantly similar. Because agents who are manipulated cannot be the source of their actions, neither can agents if causal determinism obtains.¹²⁸ It is not a coincidence that CD compatibilists must finally bite the bullet and accept that some manipulation is also compatible with free will because manipulation of some forms and causal determinism are highly similar. Source incompatibilist Derk Pereboom uses four cases to argue from the incompatibility of free will and manipulation to the incompatibility of free will and determinism. In each case, Professor Plum kills Ms. White because he has a resistible desire to kill her. Moreover, he has a second-order desire that his desire to kill Ms. White is efficacious and he wholly identifies with this second-order desire. And his desires issue from a mechanism that is responsive to reasons and for which he takes himself to be responsible.¹²⁹ Pereboom argues from the first case in which Professor Plum is locally manipulated by neuroscientists so as to have the appropriate first- and second-order desires that issue from a reasons-responsive mechanism with which he fully identifies to the fourth case in which the manipulation is general and governed by nonintentional causal factors, i.e. determinism. It is clear, Pereboom argues, that Professor Plum does not have the requisite control over his actions in the first case and this case is relevantly similar to the case in which causal determinism obtains.¹³⁰ Thus, incompatibilism holds and no sourcehood condition offered by the compatibilist can ground free will. Kevin Timpe explains that in each of Pereboom's cases there is a causal chain that is both sufficient for bringing about the result and originates outside of the agent.¹³¹ It is the presence of this external causal chain that demonstrates that Professor Plum is not the source of his actions and is thus not free. Timpe offers the following necessary (and jointly sufficient) conditions for a causal chain x as externally sufficient for an agent A's decision to perform action d:

1. There is a proper part of x, y, involving A's agential structure which is causally sufficient for A's decision to d.
2. There is a proper part of x, z, which does not involve A's agential

¹²⁸ Timpe "Free Will" 86.

¹²⁹ Derk Pereboom, "Defending Hard Incompatibilism," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* XXIX (2005), 235.

¹³⁰ Pereboom 236.

¹³¹ Timpe "Free Will" 90.

structure.

3. z is temporally prior to y.
4. z is causally sufficient for y....
5. There is no proper part of x which is temporally prior to z, involves A's agential structure, and is causally sufficient for z.¹³²

Timpe argues that it is quite likely that on Pereboom's account, Professor Plum is not free because conditions 1-5 obtain. Rather, the agent is appropriately said to be the source of her own action, and to have free will, only if there fails to be a causal chain that is externally sufficient for the agent's actions. That is, for the source incompatibilist, the sourcehood condition for free will is a negative condition: it is the absence of a sufficient external cause of the agent's actions. If such a cause does not exist or is not effective (as in the Frankfurt cases), the agent is the proper source of her actions and can be held morally responsible for them.¹³³ Source incompatibilists, then, agree with leeway incompatibilists that free will cannot coexist with causal determinism, but agree with most CD compatibilists by identifying the heart of free will not in alternative possibilities but in a sourcehood condition.

Sourcehood as a Response to the Foreknowledge Dilemma

At this point, we can finally turn to the source incompatibilist response to the foreknowledge dilemma. Recall that I argued previously that there are two promising routes to pursue in response to an air-tight foreknowledge dilemma: we can either redefine God's omniscience so as to rule out divine knowledge of future free actions or we can redefine libertarian free will so it no longer relies upon the presence of alternative possibilities. As we have seen, such a redefinition of libertarian free will exists, and the source incompatibilist response to the foreknowledge dilemma relies upon this redefinition.

For the source incompatibilist, what is important about free will is that the agent is the proper source of her action (perhaps in a way similar to the one suggested by Timpe). Some source incompatibilists, such as David Hunt, argue that this reconceptualization of

¹³² Timpe "Free Will" 90-1.

¹³³ Timpe 91-3.

incompatibilist free will gives us an obvious response to the foreknowledge dilemma: so long as the action is *free*, that is connected in the appropriate way to the agent, the fact that it is foreknown, and therefore necessary, is unproblematic. David Hunt argues that this is what Augustine had in mind when he rejected the dilemma. Augustine argued that since God's foreknowledge is not causal, and is thus crucially different from causal determinism, it does not undermine the agent's freedom.¹³⁴ Hunt agrees and argues that so long as the agent acts without interference, manipulation or coercion (and she does by stipulation in the foreknowledge dilemma), she acts freely because she remains the proper source of her actions. Because the necessity derived from God's foreknowledge is not causal, it therefore does not threaten the actual cause of the agent's actions, i.e. the agent herself. Thus, if we allow an account of libertarian free will in which sourcehood is the key element, Hunt argues that we can render divine foreknowledge and human free will compatible.

Though some source incompatibilists argue that alternative possibilities are necessary for free will, but are not central, those who support this response agree with CD compatibilists and reject the need for alternative possibilities altogether. On Hunt's view, a case in which God infallibly foreknows that Jones will vote for Obama *just is* a successful Frankfurt case.¹³⁵ In fact, Hunt argues that such a case is more adequate than other proposed Frankfurt-style cases to show that PAP is false. This is largely due to the fact that the "alternative-eliminator," i.e. God's knowledge, is logically posterior to the free action, rather than logically (and temporally) prior to it, as in other Frankfurt-style cases, and is not causally related to the agent's actions, thereby avoiding all the worries about counterfactual triggers and covert causal determinism that plague other Frankfurt-style cases.¹³⁶ "As a counterexample to PAP," he writes, "[A Frankfurt-style case involving God, Jones and Obama] is therefore unrivaled in its capacity for eliminating all of Jones's alternatives while leaving the actual sequence unaffected."¹³⁷

It could be argued, Hunt notes, that simply positing such a case as a counterexample to PAP simply begs the question against the defender of the foreknowledge dilemma. That is, Hunt simply assumes what he sets out to prove, namely that Jones is free in such a case in spite of

¹³⁴ David Hunt, "The Simple-Foreknowledge View," *Divine Foreknowledge: Four Views*, Ed. James K. Beilby and Paul R Eddy (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2001) 88.

¹³⁵ David Hunt, "Freedom, Foreknowledge and Frankfurt," *Moral Responsibility and Alternative Possibilities*, Ed. David Widerker and Michael McKenna (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006), 174.

¹³⁶ Hunt "Freedom" 174-75.

¹³⁷ Hunt "Freedom" 175.

God's foreknowledge. Hunt does not disagree but argues that such a case of begging the question is unproblematic because the other side does it as well. What we have, he argues, is an impasse between proponents of the source incompatibilist response and proponents of PAP. Faced with the foreknowledge dilemma, Hunt's opponent takes it as more evident that PAP is true than that Jones, in such a case, is free. Hunt, faced with the same dilemma, is more convinced that Jones is free than that PAP is true and thus takes it as a counterexample to PAP.¹³⁸ In this way, Hunt claims, both sides beg the question against each other and we are left to decide for ourselves which is more obvious. For his part, Hunt has an entire theory of libertarian free will that helps bolster his own assumption that Jones acts freely.

Thus, proponents of the source incompatibilist response use the Frankfurt-style examples to argue that alternative possibilities are not necessary for free will. In this way they argue that God can have complete foreknowledge without threatening the libertarian free will of His creatures. In fact, God's foreknowledge is not only analogous to Black's device¹³⁹ but is better suited to show the falsity of PAP. The obvious place to press, then, is on Hunt's conclusion that alternative possibilities are not necessary for free will (the point of the impasse). It seems that to get rid of *all* alternative possibilities would undermine libertarian free will, as Timpe, Pereboom and other fellow source incompatibilists argue. Thus, while one could possibly grant (though I doubt they should) the falsity of PAP, one could still argue that some alternative possibilities are necessary for free will and, assuming God has complete foreknowledge of the future, no such alternatives are possible. Thus, it is open to the defender of the foreknowledge dilemma to insist that alternative possibilities are necessary for free will (even if they are not central to it) and given that God's foreknowledge rules out the possibility of any such alternatives, His omniscience remains incompatible with libertarian free will. It is to this objection that I turn in the next chapter.

¹³⁸ Hunt "Freedom" 176.

¹³⁹ Black, recall, is the counterfactual intervener in the original case involving Jones voting for Obama discussed at the beginning of this chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

SOURCE INCOMPATIBILISM AND THE FOREKNOWLEDGE DILEMMA

As we have seen, some incompatibilists find Frankfurt cases, at least of one variety or another, convincing and prefer to shift the discussion concerning free will from alternative possibilities to sourcehood. They are still CD incompatibilists, however, because they maintain that in spite of retooling the debate, free will is still impossible in a world in which determinism obtains. This is because sourcehood (or ultimacy) is impossible in such a world, because no one can be the ultimate source of their actions if they are determined so to act. In this chapter I will explore this source incompatibilist position further and then investigate its role in David Hunt's solution to the foreknowledge dilemma. I will discuss the difference between "wide" and "narrow" source incompatibilist views (Kevin Timpe's distinction) and endorse the "wide" version over the "narrow." I will then argue that if one is convinced by sourcehood incompatibilism, this distinction makes all the difference for Hunt's solution. If alternative possibilities are required in any capacity (either because they are at the heart of free will or because they are a precondition for it), his solution will not work, because it depends upon characterizing free will as independent of alternative possibilities. After this discussion, I will then give some reasons for rejecting source incompatibilism in favor of leeway incompatibilism.¹⁴⁰ This would guarantee that Hunt's solution is unsuccessful.

Source Incompatibilism: Two Views

CD compatibilist Michael McKenna offers an explanation of the source incompatibilist view, a view he takes to be in direct competition with source compatibilism in the post-Frankfurt debate. He understands the debate to be about control over one's actions. For both the source compatibilist and incompatibilist alike, an agent must have the right sort of control over the causal history leading up to her action in order for her to have free will concerning that action.

¹⁴⁰ Recall that the leeway incompatibilist argues that alternative possibilities are both necessary for and central to free will and moral responsibility. That is, the leeway incompatibilist endorses some version of PAP. The source incompatibilist, on the other hand, does not take alternative possibilities to be at the heart of free will.

Most notably, she must control the origination of the causal history.¹⁴¹ ¹⁴² He writes, “Control is understood as one’s being the source whence her actions emanate. On this model, a *Source* model of control, one’s actions issue from one’s self (in a suitable manner).”¹⁴³ The problem, according to the source incompatibilist, is that determinism undermines this sort of control. This is because the ultimate (originating) source of the causal history would start not from within the agent but from outside her. She would be the source of her action in one way, but the ultimate source of her actions would be guaranteed by the laws of nature and the past, both of which lie outside her control. The problem for the source incompatibilist, then, is that determinism rules out the possibility of the agent being the “ultimate source” of her actions. And ultimacy, or sourcehood, it is argued, is necessary for free will.¹⁴⁴ Free will, on this model, requires that the agent contribute at least some necessary condition for her action above and beyond what the laws of nature and the past jointly determine. She must make an original contribution, one that does not originate outside of herself.¹⁴⁵ That is, an agent is not free if the laws of nature and the past are jointly sufficient to produce her actions. McKenna defines the source incompatibilist’s ultimacy principle as follows: “An agent, A, is the ultimate source of her action D only if she contributes some necessary condition, C, to D such that there are no sufficient conditions for C that obtain independently of A.”¹⁴⁶ It should be noted that this ultimacy principle, as laid out by McKenna, is actually two-fold. First, it requires that the agent add some necessary condition to the causal chain that leads to the action, such that were she not make that contribution, the action would not happen. This condition is compatible with determinism. What is needed to

¹⁴¹ The source incompatibilist and the source compatibilist will have different ideas about what could count as the “origination of the causal history.” For the compatibilist, one need only go as far back as a reasonably full explanation requires. According to McKenna, this type of explanation will be context-dependent. If we want to know what caused a particular action and a completely acceptable answer seems to be that “Joe caused this action,” this is all we need to determine that Joe is the ultimate source of this action. It may be that Joe is causally determined so to act, but pointing to Joe answers the question in a way that claiming “Joe’s hand caused this action” does not. For the source incompatibilist, however, an “ultimate source” is something that adds a necessary condition for the action. This necessary condition could be added at the moment of action, or it could occur somewhere earlier in the causal history of the agent. But it must be something added that the causal laws and the past do not already jointly determine (that is, it is necessarily separate from a causally determinate chain of events) (Michael McKenna, “Ultimacy and Sweet Jane,” *PhilPapers* (2009): 15 Dec 2010 <<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/~uctytho/dfwMcKennaCompat.html>>).

¹⁴² Michael McKenna, “Compatibilism” *Stanford Encyclopedia* 2009 (2.2): 15 Dec 2010 <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/compatibilism/>.

¹⁴³ McKenna, “Compatibilism.”

¹⁴⁴ McKenna, “Compatibilism.”

¹⁴⁵ McKenna, “Compatibilism.”

¹⁴⁶ McKenna, “Sweet Jane.”

differentiate the source incompatibilist from the source compatibilist, then, is a second necessary condition, namely that factors entirely outside her control are not sufficient for her action.¹⁴⁷ Furthermore, it is important to keep in mind that this ultimacy principle offers a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for meeting ultimacy. There may be more that is required, but it at least requires these two conditions.¹⁴⁸ Since ultimacy is ruled out by determinism, the source incompatibilist argues that free will (and hence the moral responsibility for which free will is necessary) is incompatible with determinism. As McKenna notes, this argument for incompatibilism is independent of PAP and so source incompatibilists can accept the conclusions drawn by Frankfurt-cases while maintaining for independent reasons that free will and determinism are incompatible.

McKenna, however, argues that any argument for incompatibilism that begins with an appeal to ultimacy will be hopelessly question begging. He offers the following characterization of such an argument:

1. A person acts freely in the sense required for true moral responsibility only if she is the ultimate source of her action.
2. If determinism is true, no one is the ultimate source of her actions.
3. Therefore, if determinism is true, no one acts freely in the sense required for true moral responsibility.¹⁴⁹

McKenna argues that the first premise begs the question against the CD compatibilist for it assumes the truth of a condition that is simply impossible on the CD compatibilist picture. When the debate centered on alternative possibilities, nearly everyone (CD compatibilist and CD incompatibilist alike) agreed that some version of PAP should be accepted. The difference between the two camps was simply how they interpreted PAP and whether or not these interpretations were compatible with determinism. The argument centered on ultimacy, however, offers a condition that a CD compatibilist cannot accept from the out-set because built into the concept of ultimacy is that the agent must contribute something above and beyond what she is determined to do. This assumes CD incompatibilism in the very premise. As McKenna notes,

¹⁴⁷ Thanks to Randy Clarke for pointing out to me that this is really a two-fold condition.

¹⁴⁸ McKenna, "Sweet Jane."

¹⁴⁹ McKenna "Sweet Jane."

[Ultimacy as defined by the incompatibilist] demands causally indeterministic breaks in the internal etiology of the agent. Compatibilism holds that no such breaks are necessary. But now, if the compatibilist will simply allow the incompatibilist this definition of ultimacy as a matter of stipulation, then it is unclear why the premise should be regarded as true.¹⁵⁰

There are a few points I would like to make in response to McKenna's charge. First, it seems, as McKenna notes, that the source incompatibilist is motivated by issues concerning justice.¹⁵¹ As Derk Pereboom notes, there is a strong form of desert that is not clearly compatible with determinism and it is this form of desert that CD incompatibilists find important to hold onto.¹⁵² ¹⁵³ Pereboom writes,

The notion at issue is this: for an agent to be morally responsible for an action is for it to belong to her in such a way that she would deserve blame if she understood that it was morally wrong, and she would deserve credit or perhaps praise if she understood that it was morally exemplary. The desert invoked here is basic in the sense that the agent, to be morally responsible, would deserve the blame or credit just because she has performed the action, given sensitivity to its moral status.... Moral responsibility in this sense is presupposed by our retributive reactive attitudes, such as indignation and moral resentment....¹⁵⁴

As McKenna notes, the CD compatibilist is free to reject such a strong notion of desert.¹⁵⁵ She could argue that this strong form of desert does not exist or is not something that we need worry about. She may argue that we can retain all of our practices of holding one another responsible without this strong sense of desert-entailing responsibility (one that requires that the agent be able to do otherwise so as to alter her behavior or act as the ultimate source of

¹⁵⁰ McKenna "Sweet Jane."

¹⁵¹ McKenna "Sweet Jane."

¹⁵² Derk Pereboom, "Free Will Skepticism and Meaning in Life," *forthcoming in The Oxford Handbook of Free Will* 2nd ed., ed. Robert Kane (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010) 2.

¹⁵³ I would like to thank Daniel Haas for stressing this point to me in conversation.

¹⁵⁴ Pereboom "Meaning" 2.

¹⁵⁵ McKenna "Sweet Jane."

her actions). The CD compatibilist can also argue that we can attain this strong notion of desert on a CD compatibilist picture by giving a compatibilist analysis of the conditions under which someone could have this strong desert-entailing responsibility. But I think we need to take seriously the idea that “true moral responsibility” may simply be different for the CD compatibilist and the CD incompatibilist, in which case the CD compatibilist can simply agree with premise one without giving up any of her theory, for she may simply not concern herself with this strong type of moral responsibility.

Similarly, the CD compatibilist is free to accept the first premise but can offer a compatibilist analysis of ultimacy. McKenna seems to admit as much when he turns his attention to premise two, offering two compatibilist readings of ultimacy that allow it to remain compatible with determinism. Far from offering a question-begging first premise, I would argue, the source incompatibilist here offers an argument similar to the “old” arguments based on PAP; the CD compatibilist can agree that ultimacy is required for moral responsibility (like she used to agree that the ability to do otherwise is required for free will), but then offer a compatibilist understanding of ultimacy in much the same way that the leeway compatibilist has a different analysis of the ability to do otherwise.

Finally, it seems a little unfair to charge the CD incompatibilist with begging the question. Just because she does not start from premises everyone can accept, this does not automatically mean she begs the question. One is free to deny her premise, but if it has intuitive plausibility (and it seems to have as much intuitive plausibility as PAP had before Frankfurt), the CD compatibilist needs to argue against it rather than dismissing it outright. While the CD incompatibilist may want to start from more universally acceptable premises in order to convince the CD compatibilist of her position (a task which seems impossible at this point in the discourse), she does not wrong the CD compatibilist by offering a premise she finds plausible in defense of her position.¹⁵⁶

At any rate, McKenna may be right to point out that source incompatibilists may wish to offer separate arguments for their understanding of ultimacy and Pereboom does just this. For Pereboom, the incompatibilist understanding of ultimacy follows from his 4-case argument for incompatibilism and so Pereboom avoids McKenna’s charge of question-begging.¹⁵⁷ In

¹⁵⁶ Thank you to David McNaughton for bringing this point to my attention.

¹⁵⁷ McKenna “Sweet Jane.”

Pereboom's 4-case argument (briefly discussed in Chapter 2), he starts with a case in which scientists locally manipulate an agent, Professor Plum, so that he kills Ms. White. The manipulation is such that it allows all of the source compatibilist's possible control conditions¹⁵⁸ to be met but still Professor Plum can do nothing but kill Ms. Plum. Pereboom takes it as evident that even though the compatibilist control conditions are met, Professor Plum is not free concerning his murder of Ms. White and is therefore not morally responsible for it. Pereboom then sets out three further cases, each broader than the last, ending with a case in which determinism obtains and Professor Plum is causally determined to kill Ms. White (case two moves the manipulation to the beginning of Plum's life and the third case removes the scientists and replaces them with a strict family upbringing). The progression of cases is supposed to demonstrate that there are no relevant differences between the manipulation in the first case and the determinism in the fourth case. Thus, if Professor Plum is not morally responsible in the case of local manipulation, he is not morally responsible in cases where determinism obtains (cases of global impersonal manipulation).¹⁵⁹ Furthermore, Pereboom argues, what *explains* our intuition that Professor Plum is not free in the first case is "that his action is produced by a deterministic causal process that traces back to factors beyond his control."¹⁶⁰ In other words, we think that Professor Plum is not free because he does not have ultimate control over his action to kill Ms. White. Since this same lack of ultimate control also obtains in case four, it is this that explains why no one is free in a deterministic world. So here we have an argument for source incompatibilism that does not appeal to ultimacy in its premises but rather explains our intuitive response to a particular case by appeal to ultimacy, rather than alternative possibilities. The only ways for the CD compatibilist to respond is to bite the bullet and claim that Professor Plum truly *is* responsible in the first case or to find some relevant differences between the first and fourth case (made difficult by Pereboom's intermediate cases).

A full discussion of the debate between source compatibilists and source incompatibilists over ultimacy falls outside the scope of this dissertation, and since I assumed at the beginning of Chapter 1 that CD incompatibilism (more specifically, libertarianism) is the theory of free will

¹⁵⁸ These conditions include Hume's stipulation that Professor Plum must act in accordance with his character, Frankfurt's condition that Professor Plum must have a second-order desire that coincides with his first-order desire to kill Ms. White, Fischer and Ravizza's condition that Professor-Plum be minimally reasons-responsive (Pereboom "Meaning" 5).

¹⁵⁹ Pereboom "Meaning" 6-11.

¹⁶⁰ Pereboom "Meaning" 10.

that we should endorse, I will assume that Pereboom's argument or one similar to it is successful.¹⁶¹ Assuming, then, that either leeway incompatibilism or source incompatibilism is right, I turn again to the source incompatibilist position. Whether through argumentation or by appeal to intuition, source incompatibilists take it that a necessary condition for free will is that the agent herself must contribute something positive to the causal history leading up the action, something that is not entirely determined by factors outside of her control. Furthermore, as Randolph Clarke puts it, "what is required for responsibility ... is that one's actions not be determined by causal factors over which one has never had any control."¹⁶² Taken together, the agent must be the ultimate source of her action. For source incompatibilists, their "untraditional" position (as Clarke terms it) is motivated by the message of ever-improving Frankfurt-style cases. As we saw in Chapter 2, the debate over Frankfurt-style cases often ends in a debate over "flickers of freedom." This objection to Frankfurt-style cases was introduced by John Fischer, himself a CD compatibilist, who argues that no Frankfurt-style case can eliminate *all* alternative possibilities without begging the question against the CD incompatibilist (that is, without assuming the truth of determinism).¹⁶³ And if there *must* be alternative possibilities, however small, then Frankfurt-style cases do not refute PAP.

The problem, according to the source incompatibilist, is that the flickers of freedom left in more complicated versions of Frankfurt-cases are not robust enough to ground moral responsibility. Derk Pereboom explains the problem: "[F]or an alternative possibility to be of the robust sort that can ground moral responsibility, it must first of all satisfy this condition: the agent could have willed something other than what she actually willed such that by willing it she would thereby have been precluded from the moral responsibility she actually has for the action."¹⁶⁴ That is, while she could not avoid the particular action that she performs (for the case is set up such that in all alternatives, she performs the same action), she could have done *something*, namely forced the counterfactual intervener to step in and force her to perform the action. Thus, she is only responsible if there is something else she can will, such that if she had willed that thing (rather than the thing that she actually willed), she would still have performed the action but would have avoided responsibility for the action. Furthermore, Pereboom argues,

¹⁶¹ I have a growing hunch that at the very end of the day, no arguments will be completely successful for the difference between the compatibilist and the incompatibilist truly boils down a fundamental difference in intuitions.

¹⁶² Randolph Clarke, *Libertarian Accounts of Free Agents* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) 11.

¹⁶³ John Martin Fischer, *Metaphysics of Free Will* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1994) 134.

¹⁶⁴ Pereboom "Meaning" 11.

she must *know* (or have some cognitive sensitivity to the fact) that in so willing otherwise, she would avoid moral responsibility for her action.¹⁶⁵ ¹⁶⁶ The problem, according to Pereboom, is that you can construct a Frankfurt-style case in which this condition is not met so the alternative possibilities are not robust enough to ground moral responsibility. Pereboom asks us to consider Joe, who is wondering if he should claim an illegal tax deduction. Joe is such that he is strongly motivated to act on self-interest but his desire is not overwhelming and he is aware of the moral reasons against so acting. It turns out that a necessary (though not sufficient) condition for his choosing not to claim the tax deduction is that he voluntarily imagine the possible consequences of his actions (that is, he must imagine the consequences in order to choose not to take the tax deduction, but his imagining the consequences is compatible with his still choosing to take the tax deduction). In order to guarantee that Joe takes the tax deduction, our friend the neuroscientist implants a device in Joe's brain rigged to intervene should Joe voluntarily imagine the consequences of his action. But Joe never imagines, so the device never intervenes.¹⁶⁷ As Pereboom points out, Joe has an alternative, namely he could have begun to imagine the consequences. But this isn't a robust alternative because Joe does not know that he could have precluded moral responsibility had he done otherwise (not to mention, his alternative option could still have resulted in the same action), so the fact that he had this alternative possibility cannot be at the heart of why we hold him responsible. I think it is up for debate in Pereboom's particular example whether or not Joe has a robust alternative, but I will set this aside for the moment and assume that Pereboom is right and Joe does not have the alternatives necessary to ground our attribution of responsibility.¹⁶⁸ Given the fact that we still find Joe morally responsible and he does not have any robust alternatives to ground this fact, what then should the source incompatibilist say about the alternative possibilities that remain? Should she argue that alternative possibilities are not at all necessary for free will and moral responsibility (they need not be present at all) or should she claim that they must be there, though they are not at the heart

¹⁶⁵ Derk Pereboom, "Further Thoughts on a Frankfurt-style Argument," Philosophical Explorations, 12.2 (2009): 112. Print.

¹⁶⁶ This requirement seems a little strong. While it seems there is an epistemic condition for moral responsibility (the agent must know that she has more than one option, or at least believe that she does), Pereboom's condition seems too strong. I will take this issue up later in this chapter. For now, I will grant Pereboom this point.

¹⁶⁷ Pereboom "Further Thoughts" 113.

¹⁶⁸ Perhaps the best possibility is one, like a case offered by Fischer, in which the only other alternative is for the agent to die (John Martin Fischer, "Frankfurt-type Examples and Semi-Compatibilism," The Oxford Handbook of Free Will, ed. Robert Kane (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) 288.)

of Joe's responsibility? Kevin Timpe and other source incompatibilists (including Pereboom) take the latter approach and claim that alternative possibilities cannot be eliminated entirely from an understanding of libertarian free will.

Kevin Timpe notes that source incompatibilists separate into two camps on this issue, what he calls "wide" and "narrow" source incompatibilist views. He notes that some source incompatibilists like Robert Kane and Derk Pereboom require alternative possibilities while others like Eleonore Stump, Linda Zagzebski and David Hunt do not. The former are "wide" incompatibilists because they take a "broader and more inclusive approach to moral responsibility."¹⁶⁹ The latter are "narrow" source incompatibilists for they think that even an agent who has *no* alternative possibilities can still be morally responsible if she is the ultimate source of her actions. Timpe endorses a wide source incompatibilist view. The reason that Timpe and others reject leeway incompatibilism is not that Frankfurt-cases show that alternative possibilities can be altogether eliminated, but rather that all *robust* alternative possibilities can be eliminated while leaving the agent morally responsible. But, such source incompatibilists argue, it is impossible for a non-question-begging Frankfurt-case to eliminate all non-robust alternative possibilities. In order to do this, determinism would need to obtain and incompatibilists will immediately insist that in cases where determinism obtains, the agent cannot be free. So on this view, alternative possibilities are necessary for free will insofar as they result from indeterminism; alternative possibilities are a necessary precondition for ultimacy and so cannot be eliminated from a libertarian picture of freedom. Timpe writes,

If the falsity of determinism is relevant to moral responsibility, as the incompatibilist under consideration claims, then any alternative possibilities are relevant to moral responsibility in that they are a necessary precondition for moral responsibility. Even if it turns out that the remaining alternative possibilities are not relevant to moral responsibility in any further way, or tell us nothing further about the nature of moral responsibility, their absence is sufficient for the incompatibilist to claim that an agent is not morally responsible.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ Kevin Timpe, "Source Incompatibilism and its Alternatives," Unpublished, 12. Web 16 Dec 2010 <http://people.nnu.edu/ktimpe/research/source.pdf>.

¹⁷⁰ Kevin Timpe, "The Dialectic Role of the Flickers of Freedom," *Philosophical Studies* 131 (2006): 342. Print.

Thus, flickers of freedom cannot ground moral responsibility but must be present for the agent to be free, for they alone guarantee that determinism does not obtain. They, in Tim O'Connor's words, make possible an agent's "self-determination."¹⁷¹ That is, if an agent is to be capable of adding something to the causal history of her free actions that is not, itself, determined by factors outside of the agent, she *must* have alternative possibilities, no matter how non-robust.¹⁷² If she does not have these alternatives, then things outside her control are sufficient for her action and the ultimacy requirement for free will cannot be met.¹⁷³ Thus, it is the ultimacy that grounds her responsibility, but at least minimal alternatives must be present in order for ultimacy to be a possibility. Timpe explains: "... the presence of any alternative possibilities is a sufficient condition for the falsity of causal determinism, which according to incompatibilists of all stripes is itself a necessary condition for moral responsibility."¹⁷⁴

The Source Incompatibilist Solution

There seem to be two related issues with the "narrow" version of source incompatibilism. As Timpe points out, the narrow source incompatibilist, in order to be a CD incompatibilist at all, must insist on the presence of indeterminism in the causal history of the agent's action in order for the agent to be free concerning it. But what is indeterminism if it does not require at least some alternatives, however non-robust they may be? If there is only one alternative available, this just *is* what determinism looks like. That is, causal indeterminism is the state of affairs such that the past and laws of nature are compatible with at least two alternative possible futures. If they were only compatible with one unique future, this would be causal determinism and no one would be free (in the libertarian sense) concerning that one future. So it looks like a CD incompatibilist *must* accept the presence of some alternative possibilities, because these alternatives are at the heart of indeterminism.

But the narrow source incompatibilism could insist that this is consistent with their view, but that something else, non-causal, could determine that only one of these alternative futures are

¹⁷¹ Timothy O'Connor, "Freedom with a Human Face," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 29.1 (2005): 209ff. Print.

¹⁷² In fact, Timpe doesn't think these alternatives need even be voluntary. Fellow source incompatibilist Robert Kane disagrees with Timpe (Timpe "Source Incompatibilism" 18-19).

¹⁷³ Timpe "Source Incompatibilism" 16.

¹⁷⁴ Timpe "Source Incompatibilism" 15.

open.¹⁷⁵ Thus, though they are incompatibilists about causal determinism, they may be compatibilists about non-causal determinism. There are a few things, I think, that can be said in response here. First, it is up for debate about whether or not a CD incompatibilist could allow for non-causal determinism and still remain a CD incompatibilist. In fact, that is the very issue at the heart of the foreknowledge dilemma. For it seems that anything outside of the agent that renders her actions completely inevitable seems at least a candidate for being freedom-removing. And so to simply stipulate that non-causal determinism is not problematic does us no good. The only (possibly) non-problematic cases of non-causal determinism seem to be the counterfactual cases represented by Frankfurt-style cases. And in these cases, it seems that causal indeterminacy *does* still provide alternative possibilities. In Frankfurt-style cases, the agent comes to a point where she must do something (either make a decision, or start to form an intention) or fail to do so, where either her action or omission of action serves as the trigger for the alternative sequence (counterfactual intervener). If she does not have even this minimal choice, such that which path she takes will determine whether or not the neuroscientist gets involved, then it seems that she is (causally) determined. And so this alternative must be present in order for there to be causal indeterminacy, and no amount of non-causal determinism (the counterfactual intervener in this case) can remove these non-robust alternatives. So, as Timpe insists, the alternatives at the heart of causal indeterminacy are a problem for the narrow source incompatibilist. To remove such alternatives would be to allow causal determinism to obtain, something not even the narrow source incompatibilist wishes to allow.

A second, related worry, concerns the agent's role in the actual causal sequence. The source incompatibilist does not simply wish to insist upon the presence of indeterminism in the actual causal history of an agent's actions. She also insists that the agent is the ultimate source of this history; i.e., that the agent adds something undetermined that would not have been there had she not added it. But there seems to be, at the heart of this ultimacy, some alternative possibilities. At bare minimum, there are two alternatives: one in which the agent (chooses to) adds the "necessary" condition, thus bringing about the action and one in which she does not and the action is not performed. If she *must* add this necessary condition, then it seems she is hopelessly determined, and hence not free. Thus, for every action over which she is an ultimate

¹⁷⁵ In fact, this is Hunt's view: while freedom is incompatible with causal determinism, it is compatible with divine foreknowledge, a non-causal determinism. Linda Zagzebski also defends a view of this form ("Does Libertarian Freedom Require Alternate Possibilities?," Philosophical Perspectives 14 (2000): 231-246.)

source, the agent, of necessity, must have two options (even if they are non-robust). This, however, is problematic on the narrow source incompatibilist view, for these CD incompatibilists wish to insist that alternative possibilities of all forms are unnecessary for libertarian free will. At this point, the obvious question is, if the agent does not have at least this minimal decision between two alternatives, then in what does her control consist? The CD compatibilist can give a compatibilist analysis of the agent's control, one that is consistent with her control being causally determined. And the leeway and wide source incompatibilists can offer some sort of control condition that requires the agent have at least two options (whether it is these options that ground her responsibility or not). But where is the middle ground for the narrow source incompatibilist? If she rejects the need for alternatives, no matter how non-robust, in what way is her control or ultimacy condition going to differ from the compatibilist? In her insistence that indeterminacy and/or the agent's own control over her action do not require alternative possibilities, the narrow source incompatibilist takes that one final step out of the CD incompatibilist camp, for her sense of the agent's control has lost all meaning unless she embraces a CD compatibilist understanding of the concept.

It's hard to imagine, as Timpe argues, what incompatibilist ultimacy would look like if there are *no* alternative possibilities. How can the agent add an undetermined necessary condition for her actions without her having some options regarding whether or not she adds this condition? Even if these alternatives fail to be robust, they alone can guarantee that the agent is not determined regarding her action. So it seems to me that Timpe is right, and even the source incompatibilist must embrace alternative possibilities for they are required to make sense of both indeterminacy and ultimacy.

But what does this revelation, that even the source incompatibilist must embrace alternatives, do to Hunt's solution to the foreknowledge dilemma? Recall that he appeals to source incompatibilism to argue that God's foreknowledge is compatible with libertarian free will. This is because libertarian free will doesn't, after all, require alternative possibilities and so God's foreknowledge which renders all future events (including human actions) inevitable, is unproblematic. So long as God's omniscience is compatible with agents' acting as the ultimate source of their actions (and Hunt argues that it is for it has no *causal* role to play), it does not threaten human free will. Thus, if we simply redefine libertarian free will, according to Hunt, the problem posed by the foreknowledge dilemma simply disappears. But what if Timpe is right

(and I really see no way around his conclusion) and we cannot get rid of alternative possibilities, even by redefining free will in terms of ultimacy? Does this completely undermine Hunt's solution?

It seems to me that if Timpe is right, this is fatal to Hunt's solution to the foreknowledge dilemma. This is because God's foreknowledge eliminates *all* alternatives. The only way a source incompatibilist redefinition of free will could help is if it offers an analysis of indeterminacy and control that does not require *any* alternatives. But this seems improbable at best, contradictory at worse. According to the view that we have been considering, alternative possibilities (even if they are non-robust) are required to ensure the agent's freedom. If she has only one possible course of action, she cannot have libertarian free will. Now Hunt could retort (though he does not actually do so) that God's foreknowledge does not remove *causal* indeterminism and so the agent retains her ability to do otherwise. But what good is causal indeterminism to the agent if all but one of her multiple options are stripped away by a non-causal form of determinism? While these alternatives may exist, in theory, they do the agent no good for she is determined in another way. What the agent needs is *full* indeterminacy, not illusory alternatives that are never really open to her. Furthermore, to argue that the agent retains some alternative possibilities in spite of God's foreknowledge is to diverge quite sharply from Hunt's proposed solution. It will be recalled that Hunt's solution is one that takes seriously the incompatibility of God's foreknowledge and the ability to do otherwise. Hunt proposes that we remove the requirement that free will requires alternative possibilities. So if Hunt were to argue that God's foreknowledge leaves intact causal alternatives, he is no longer offering a redefinition of free will and is rather offering a DO compatibilist solution to the dilemma (not unlike those I discussed and rejected in the first chapter).

But even if we grant that God's foreknowledge *does* allow, in theory, alternative possibilities because it leaves intact causal indeterminism, this is not enough to save Hunt's solution. This is because, on Hunt's view, control or ultimacy has been left unanalyzed. And if one wants to give a CD incompatibilist analysis of the agent's control over her own actions, this *does* seem to require alternatives that would be impossible in a world in which God has complete foreknowledge. That is, if at the heart of an agent's libertarian control is that she has at least two options, i.e. to initiate an action (add an undetermined necessary condition to the causal chain that leads up to the actions) or fail to so initiate, God's foreknowledge would be incompatible

with this kind of control. This is because God's foreknowledge would include knowledge about her decisions and the way in which an action is brought about. That is, God would foreknow whether or not an agent would choose to act and so become the "ultimate source" of her action. But if God foreknows it, then she is not free for she really has no other choice. That is, her very choice is non-causally determined by God's knowledge and she can choose nothing but. Thus, it is questionable that the agent herself does anything, for she could not have failed to so choose. The only way that Hunt's solution will work is if alternative possibilities are not central to the agent's *control* but to go this far is to abandon the libertarian sense of freedom and control Hunt is trying to defend. And until Hunt or another narrow source incompatibilist offers an analysis and differentiates it from a CD compatibilist view of control, it seems that Hunt's project is doomed. So it seems to me, then, that Hunt's solution is completely untenable so long as he insists that it embraces libertarian free will. This is because both the indeterminacy and the control that the CD incompatibilist insist upon as necessary for free will are rendered impossible in a world where God has complete foreknowledge of the future.

Robust Alternatives

The motivation for source incompatibilists to reject PAP and instead look for a CD incompatibilist version of free will that relies upon ultimacy rather than alternatives is that it seems possible to construct a Frankfurt-style that lacks significant alternatives. That is, with the countless number of Frankfurt-style cases offered in the literature, some effectively cut out all robust alternatives while leaving intact our intuition that the agent acts freely and is thus morally responsible for her actions. And if there are cases in which it is clear that the agent can be held morally responsible for her action, even though she has no robust alternative to her course of action, then it must not be the presence of alternatives at all that grounds her free will for the only alternatives present are too insignificant to ground something as important as free will. In this section, I would like to consider a few recent Frankfurt-style cases and argue that it is plausible to think that they *do*, in fact, contain some morally robust alternatives. If this can be shown, then it seems plausible that these morally robust alternatives have a grounding role to play for free will, as leeway incompatibilists have insisted all along.

Before turning to these cases, however, we need to first get straight on what we mean by robustness. Once we establish conditions that must be met in order for an alternative to be robust, we can then ask if any of our cases actually succeed in showing that all the alternatives present fail to meet these conditions. Michael McKenna offers two such necessary conditions for robust alternatives and argues that Frankfurt-style cases can be offered that fail to meet at least one of the conditions. McKenna's conditions are as follows (in his words):

- 1) The alternative is morally significant. It would tell us something (different from what we are told in the actual world) about the moral quality of the agent's conduct were she to have so acted in this alternative scenario.
- 2) The alternative has to be within the control of the agent.¹⁷⁶

McKenna also considers a third, epistemic, condition. Roughly, if an agent does not know that a particular path is open to her, it cannot be a robust alternative.¹⁷⁷ Furthermore, the alternative must be *deliberatively* significant; it must be an alternative that is relevant to the agent's deliberative process concerning the action in question.¹⁷⁸

While McKenna's first two conditions seem at least initially plausible (I will express some misgivings about the first condition later in the section), I think we need to be careful concerning this third condition. It seems clear that we must endorse an epistemic condition of some kind, but we shouldn't make it too strong. In defending this condition, McKenna asks us to consider a case of moral deliberation in which Betty is deliberating about whether or not to cheat on her taxes. The deadline for filing her taxes is 5:00 so if she does not file by that time, she will have cheated on her taxes. McKenna proposes that Betty has alternatives to either deliberately cheating on her taxes or deliberately failing to do so, such as roasting a chicken or going to the gym. But "given Betty's deliberative perspective," McKenna argues, these alternatives are not robust.¹⁷⁹ But surely this can't be right. The reason it may seem that these alternatives are deliberatively insignificant may be because of how we describe them, as "roasting a chicken" or

¹⁷⁶ Michael McKenna "Robustness, Control and the Demand for Morally Significant Alternatives: Frankfurt Examples with Oodles and Oodles of Alternatives," *Moral Responsibility and Alternative Possibilities*, ed. David Widerker and Michael McKenna (Burlington: Ashgate, 2006) 204.

¹⁷⁷ McKenna "Robustness" 208.

¹⁷⁸ McKenna "Robustness" 207.

¹⁷⁹ McKenna "Robustness" 206-207.

“going to the gym.” But these alternatives and countless others like them fall under a more general description, such as “doing something other than my taxes, such that choosing this alternative, I will, by default, fail to file my taxes.” Surely Betty can see that the result of choosing one of these alternative courses of action results in her not filing her taxes, and if this is a foreseeable result, it is completely unclear why this alternative is *not* deliberately significant. We, in fact, do this all of the time. I could deliberately sit down to write the next chapter of my dissertation or I could deliberately choose not to. Or, alternatively, I could roast a chicken or go to the gym. But I certainly know that in choosing these other alternatives, my dissertation chapter will not be completed and I can be held morally responsible for not writing precisely because I chose to do something else instead. Thus, McKenna is certainly right that Betty needs to know about her alternatives for them to count as robust. And she must know that these alternatives may have an impact on her moral responsibility should she choose to act on them. Furthermore, these alternatives may need to be deliberately significant to her for them to count as robust, but this deliberative significance, whatever it is, cannot amount to a rejection of all alternatives that, as described, seem like mundane, morally neutral actions. For they are to be considered, and should be considered by Betty herself, as morally significant *in relation to* the course of action she avoids by performing them.

A similar exaggeration of this epistemic condition can help explain how Pereboom fails to get rid of all alternative possibilities in his Frankfurt-style case, discussed earlier in this chapter. As it will be recalled, Pereboom asks us to consider a case in which Joe is considering whether or not to claim an illegal tax deduction. He understands that doing so is wrong but that he probably won't get caught. While he tends to care most about his own self-interest, this desire is not over-riding and so he can, and sometimes does, choose against it. In this case, a necessary (though not sufficient) condition for his choosing not to take the tax deduction is to imagine the negative consequences of getting caught. It turns out, however, that a neuroscientist wants to ensure that Joe takes the deduction, so if Joe were to imagine the negative consequences of taking the deduction, the neuroscientist would intervene and cause Joe to choose to evade. It turns out, however, that Joe never imagines the negative consequences of his actions and so the neuroscientist is not forced to interfere. Joe evades on his own.¹⁸⁰

¹⁸⁰ Pereboom “Meaning” 12-13.

It is clear that Joe has alternatives in this case. He could imagine the negative consequences or he could fail to imagine them. While the former alternative does not guarantee that he will choose against evading, it is a necessary condition and it, also, guarantees that the counterfactual intervener step in and force Joe's choice. Now Pereboom argues that this alternative, while present, is not robust. This is because it fails an epistemic condition similar to the one offered by McKenna. Pereboom's version of the epistemic condition is as follows: the agent must understand that "she could have willed something different from what she actually willed, and she has some degree of cognitive sensitivity to the fact that by willing it she thereby would be, or at least would likely be, precluded from the responsibility she actually has."¹⁸¹ This condition is not met, Pereboom argues, because Joe has no idea that imagining the negative consequences of getting caught will trigger the neuroscientist's intervention (and furthermore, he is not culpable for this lack of knowledge) and will thereby cause Joe to avoid moral blameworthiness.¹⁸² But, again, this epistemic condition is too strong. For certainly knowledge of a counterfactual intervener is not required for the agent to consider an alternative relevant to his own moral culpability in a situation. Surely, Joe knows that he has an alternative, namely voluntarily imagining the negative consequences of his actions. And it seems plausible to assume that Joe knows enough about himself to have at least a "degree of cognitive sensitivity" to the fact that this sort of imagining exercise is necessary for him to make the morally right choice. Furthermore, Joe must be aware that in not taking this necessary step, he effectively cuts himself off from any path that would result in his failing to be morally responsible for evading. And this amount of knowledge seems enough for us to claim that he has enough awareness of his current situation to meet an epistemic condition for robustness; it is unclear why the fact that he does not have the *further* knowledge of the existence of a counterfactual intervener should make us reject this alternative as non-robust. All he need believe is that this path is the only one he can take if he is to be morally appraised differently. It is certainly too strong for us to require that he believe in the existence of the neuroscientist -- all an adequate epistemic condition requires is that he know that this path is the only one that can help him avoid being responsible for the morally wrong decision. And if this is all that we require, then Pereboom's Frankfurt-style case clearly has a robust alternative. For imagining the negative consequences clearly meets McKenna's

¹⁸¹ Pereboom "Further thoughts about a Frankfurt-style Argument" 112.

¹⁸² Pereboom "Meaning" 13-14.

second condition (is within his voluntary control) and can also be plausibly seen as morally significant (as meeting the first condition).¹⁸³ The problem is that Pereboom's version of an epistemic condition is far too strong for robustness. If our epistemic standards were this high, it is unclear if many would share Pereboom's intuition that Jones is free at all in this case.

David Hunt has recently turned his attention to similar Frankfurt-style cases, namely ones that focus on necessary, though not sufficient, conditions for actions. Because Hunt's Frankfurt-style cases are structurally identical to Pereboom's, for the sake of simplicity, I'll apply Hunt's comments about his own Frankfurt case to Pereboom's case. Like Pereboom, Hunt argues that all the alternatives in Pereboom's case fail the test for robustness. But, unlike Pereboom, this is not because the alternatives fail to meet the epistemic condition, but rather that they fail to meet McKenna's first condition, i.e. they are not morally significant.¹⁸⁴ The problem, to me, lies in Hunt's understanding of the first necessary condition for robustness (and perhaps McKenna shares this understanding). For Hunt, a condition for robustness is that the alternative is such that, "accessing it [the alternative], the agent would avoid (or mitigate) blame." However, he argues, the mere imagining of the negative consequences of evading "would have no effect by itself on [Joe's] blameworthiness."¹⁸⁵ Presumably, this is because this mental exercise is not enough, by itself, to guarantee that Joe actually does not cheat on his taxes. While it is true that simply considering negatives consequences is not enough to rid Joe of blame, surely his doing so is *significant* to whether or not he is held morally responsible in this case. This is because while it is not sufficient to change our moral responsibility attributions, it is certainly a required step and as such, much rides upon Joe's *free* decision to make such considerations. If, in order to be robust, an alternative must *solidify* a change in moral responsibility attributions, then this condition on robustness seems too strong (even, though, in this case it would do so, for if Joe took this alternative pathway, he would be caused by the neurosurgeon to cheat on his taxes and would thereby escape moral responsibility for doing so). As in Joe's case, there are alternatives available that have a significant impact on whether or not we hold him responsible. It's hard to understand how an alternative that is highly relevant to one's moral responsibility can simultaneously fail to be robust simply because it does not solidify a change in one's

¹⁸³ I will discuss an objection to this claim later when discussing Hunt's Frankfurt-case and so will leave this as at least initially plausible.

¹⁸⁴ David Hunt "Moral Responsibility and Buffered Alternatives," Midwest Studies in Philosophy XXIX (2005): 132-34. Print.

¹⁸⁵ Hunt "Buffered" 138

responsibility. It seems, then, that all that is needed is that an alternative have a significant possibility of impacting moral responsibility, i.e. that it plays a crucial, though not necessarily definitive, role in bringing about an alternative action.¹⁸⁶ As previously mentioned, it seems plausible (if we are to assume that Joe has an adequate amount of information about his own psyche to be considered a free and autonomous agent) that Joe knows he must imagine the negative consequences of cheating on his taxes if he wants to leave open the possibility of his failing to evade. In failing to take this option, he effectively cuts off his own possibility of avoiding moral responsibility and surely this is a relevant alternative, one that is significant enough that we can hold him responsible for *it* on top of all of the other mistakes he makes. But if he can be held responsible for failing to imagine the negative consequences of his action, then certainly this alternative is robust and one that bears upon his overall moral responsibility in the case.

Hunt, however, agrees that the alternative present in this case *is* robust when determining whether or not to hold Joe responsible for failing to imagine the negative consequences of evading, but this alone is not enough to say that it is significant for the further action of Joe's actually evading his taxes.¹⁸⁷ But I think that Hunt is simply wrong about this. If an alternative is significant enough to ground one attribution of moral responsibility, then it is significant enough to ground one to which it is intimately connected. While actions could come apart, here one is a necessary condition for another and though the connection is not as strong as it would be if it were a sufficient condition, it is still a connection that carries some weight for Joe's moral responsibility for the further action of actually cheating on his taxes. If Joe imagines the negative consequences of evading, this would constitute a significantly different path (granted one with two divergent outcomes) than the one that Joe takes in the actual world. And this different path is the only one that can end up with Joe avoiding moral blame. I simply cannot see how this is not relevant and significant to our moral appraisal of Joe. More generally, the thought is that if two separate free and available actions are both necessary and jointly sufficient for Joe acting differently and therefore avoiding moral blame, then they are *both* morally significant for they

¹⁸⁶ Of course, determining whether or not an alternative is crucial in this way is slightly more difficult than when we are looking at alternatives that are sufficient to bring about a different action and thereby to solidify a change in moral responsibility, but I take it the same counterfactual imagining can be engaged. We can ask whether or not taking this alternative is the first step in a process that could, ultimately, end in a different act, even if the entire process is not actually open to the agent. If we can answer in the affirmative, then it seems that the alternative is relevant to the agent's moral responsibility and, therefore, robust.

¹⁸⁷ Hunt "Buffered" 139.

both have an impact on Joe's moral responsibility in this case, provided Joe performs these actions. If one of these actions is not available to Joe but he does, in fact, perform the other action Joe would not be held morally responsible. This is certainly because he lacks freedom in such a scenario, but we may be inclined to give him mild praise for he did all he could to avoid moral blame by taking the alternative available to him. If both actions are available to him and he chooses to do both of them, then he is morally praiseworthy, and rightly so. But what grounds this moral praiseworthiness? Certainly it must be that he took both steps necessary when he had other alternatives open to him. Just because an alternative is not such that, were Joe to take it, it would, by itself, change Joe's moral responsibility, this is not to say that this alternative lacks significance in regards to his moral responsibility. For, while it does not have a sole role to play in a change in moral responsibility, it has a large, and necessary, role to play and certainly this is enough to make it morally significant.

Hunt insists that the only way this alternative could be robust for Joe is if he chose it *as a means* to failing to evade his taxes. But it can't play this role, Hunt argues, because Joe cannot decide that he *wants* to be honest until he considers these alternatives.¹⁸⁸ But surely he need not desire this outcome prior to his imaging the consequences in order for this to be a robust alternative. For Joe knows that it is wrong to cheat on his taxes and therefore knows that there are normative reasons that exist independent of his desires. Certainly this knowledge is enough to motivate him, at least sometimes, to act in such a way as to not cheat on his taxes. I fail to see, then, how the alternative available in Pereboom's case is not significant, both to Joe in his deliberative process and to us in determining whether or not Joe is responsible for cheating on his taxes.

The problems with most Frankfurt-styles counterexamples, however, tend to center around McKenna's second condition, rather than on the first condition or the epistemic condition. As McKenna explains, the builder of a Frankfurt case is forced into a dilemma: either she gets rid of all robust alternatives and runs the risk of begging the question against the CD incompatibilist by inadvertently building determinism into the scenario (for if the agent has no control over the alternatives present, the CD incompatibilist's intuition that she remains free seems to disappear) or she does her best to avoid assuming causal determinism but then opens the door for the leeway incompatibilist to insist that there really *are* robust alternatives available

¹⁸⁸ Hunt "Buffered" 138.

to the agent.¹⁸⁹ While McKenna seems convinced that the case-builder can avoid falling into either trap, I am less convinced that this is possible given that all Frankfurt-cases to date seem to fall on either side of this dilemma and are, therefore, unsuccessful.

One such case is Eleonore Stump's recent Frankfurt-style counterexample.¹⁹⁰ Stump attempts to build a case that lacks robust alternatives (or non-robust alternatives, for that matter) but also does not assume determinism. In doing so, and attempting to defend her case, it seems clear that she must pick one of the two equally unacceptable horns of McKenna's dilemma. Stump asks us to consider a patient, Earl, and his neurosurgeon, Grey, who wants Earl¹⁹¹ to vote Republican in the 2012 election. The neurosurgeon can detect neural firings in Earl's brain that correlate to Earl's acts of willing.¹⁹² It turns out that whenever Earl wills to vote for a Republican, there is a set of neural firings that occurs before anything else¹⁹³ (his act of willing occurs upon the completion of the entire sequence of neural firings and not somewhere in the middle). Near the beginning of this set of neural firings is a sequence a,b,c of neural firings. An alternative willing to vote for Democrats is correlated, instead, with neural firings x,y,z. For the sake of simplicity, Stump asks us to assume that there are only two acts of willing possible: either Earl wills to vote for a Republican (preceded by a,b,c) or he wills to vote for a Democrat (preceded by x,y,z). Grey, then, monitors the neural firings in Earl's brain and if he detects the sequence x,y,z, he disrupts the neural firings sequence and replaces it with one that leads to Earl's willing to vote for a Republican. If, however, he detects a,b,c, Grey does nothing. Like all Frankfurt-style cases, in this case, Earl wills to vote for a Republican on his own and Grey does not need to intervene.¹⁹⁴ In Stump's scenario, then, Earl does not have any alternatives because once Grey detects even the beginnings of the neural firings sequence, he will intervene and force

¹⁸⁹ McKenna "Robustness" 206.

¹⁹⁰ Stump's example is a version of one offered by John Martin Fischer and Mark Ravizza (Responsibility and Control, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997). But it is Stump's version that has been discussed more frequently in the literature, so it is this version that I will discuss.

¹⁹¹ In Stump's example, the subject of the Frankfurt-style case is Jones but since I have already used an example with Jones, I changed the character's name to Earl.

¹⁹² Stump does not fill out the details of this correction for she wants this case to be compatible with several theories on the relationship between the mind and the brain. All she assumes here is that mental states are strongly connected in some way with neural states (Eleonore Stump, "Alternative Possibilities and Moral Responsibility: The Flicker of Freedom," Journal of Ethics 3.4 (1999): 305).

¹⁹³ It is unclear how Stump understands these neural firings: do they precede the act of will or are they a part of it? I discuss both options in the next paragraph.

¹⁹⁴ Stump "Alternative Possibilities" 303-05.

Earl's act of willing for a Republican. And since Earl's act of willing does not occur until the *end* of the sequence, the alternative firing of x,y,z is not morally robust, if it is an alternative at all.

The obvious question, then, is if these alternative sequences of neural firings are actually part of the act of willing itself or are they, rather, precursors. If the latter, the obvious worry is that they are deterministic, which would beg the question against the CD incompatibilist (a particularly worrisome result given that Stump is, herself, a CD incompatibilist). But the only way to avoid the consequence that they are deterministic is to either allow that Earl has a choice to do something *after* the firing of the neural sequence or to allow that these neural firings are themselves part of the agent's act of willing. The former seems problematic, for then this is not a successful Frankfurt-case. That is, the leeway incompatibilist could just point to these alternatives after the neural firings and claim that it is these that ground Earl's moral responsibility. But the latter is also undesirable for Stump, for then the entire sequence that involves x,y,z is an available alternative to the entire sequence that begins with a,b,c. And this is clearly a significant alternative, one that is within Earl's control. The problem for Stump is, if these alternative sequences are not in the agent's control (do not meet McKenna's second condition), then the leeway incompatibilist will simply deny that Earl is free in this case. And if they *are* in Earl's control, then they seem fairly significant (especially for those who take political decisions to be morally important!).

David Widerker has raised similar concerns about Stump's case. He writes concerning a case in which Grey is absent but all else remains as it is in the above scenario:

In that scenario, there would be no reason to think that [Earl] could not have decided otherwise.... [T]he only way in which [Earl] could have decided otherwise in [the] scenario, is by having the power to bring about the non-occurrence of a, b, c; a power that he would have before the occurrence of a, b, c and not after that. But if he has that power in the said scenario (as he surely does), he must also have it in the scenario featuring Grey. That the latter scenario includes a potentially coercive neuroscope does not change this fact, since its coercive influence would come into play only after the possible occurrence of x,

y, z, that is, at a time that is later than the occurrence of a, b, c. Hence it does not affect [Earl's] power to bring about the non-occurrence of a, b, c.¹⁹⁵

What I think Widerker is saying is this: unless we assume that Earl *never* has the ability to do otherwise, which to a CD incompatibilist like Widerker, is tantamount to assuming the truth of determinism (as I argued earlier), his ability to do otherwise in non-coercive scenarios must consist simply in being able to control which neural firing sequence occurs. But Earl maintains this ability even with the introduction of the neuroscientist. So, then, unless we assume that determinism obtains, there is clearly one robust alternative for Earl in this case.

In response to this objection, Stump argues that Widerker seems to adopt a radical view of the relationship of the mind and the body in which no mental states are ever preceded by physical events. That is, Widerker assumes that if there are any causes at all of an act of will, then it is determined. But surely, she argues, we don't want CD incompatibilism to entail substance dualism (even though some CD incompatibilists are drawn to a substance dualist position).¹⁹⁶ But it remains unclear, quite independent of substance dualism, how, on Stump's view, Earl is ever in control of his actions if he has no control over which sequence fires prior to his act of will. If he cannot do anything about this, and these neural sequences are guaranteed to end in the act of will correlated with them, then it seems that this picture of the relationship between the mental and the physical entails determinism, which would be a terrible result for a CD incompatibilist like Stump. But if there is still a chance for Earl to exercise control between the neural firings and the act of willing, then there remain alternative possibilities, even with Grey in the picture, for Earl could always "change his mind" after the neural firings a,b,c. It seems to me unavoidable that just like all prior sign Frankfurt-style cases, Stump's case is unsuccessful. It either assumes determinism or it leaves open alternatives robust enough to ground moral responsibility. And since these neural firings are not supposed to be prior signs but correlated, rather, with Jones's actual acts of willing themselves, so much the worse for Stump. For then it looks like there simply are two available acts of will open to Earl, whether or not Grey is gracing us with his presence.

¹⁹⁵ David Widerker, "Frankfurt's Attack on the Principle of Alternative Possibilities: A Further Look," Philosophical Perspectives 14 (2000): 186; quoted in Eleonore Stump, "Moral Responsibility without Alternative Possibilities," Moral Responsibility and Alternative Possibilities, ed. David Widerker and Michael McKenna (Burlington: Ashgate, 2006) 145.

¹⁹⁶ Stump "Moral Responsibility" 146.

Finally, I would like to turn my attention to a different kind of Frankfurt-style case advocated by David Hunt. Hunt noticed that the dilemma surrounding McKenna's second condition comes about largely because of the triggering event or prior sign present in so many Frankfurt-cases (including Stump's just discussed earlier). He writes,

The dilemma impeding the successful prosecution of Frankfurt's original argument appears to turn on the status of the conditions triggering the mechanism's intervention. The fact that the alternative-eliminator in the classic Frankfurt counterexamples interferes *only* when triggered plays a crucial role in persuading us that the agent is morally responsible in the actual scenario, in which the triggering conditions do not obtain and the mechanism simply idles; but it's this very dependence on a trigger that prevents the mechanism from eliminating *all* alternatives, at least in scenarios which do not simply beg the question by presupposing a deterministic environment.¹⁹⁷

Hunt's idea is to offer a Frankfurt case that doesn't rely at all, or at least not so heavily, upon a counterfactual intervener. He proposes a case, one he calls a blockage counterexample, in which the alternative-eliminator exists *in the actual world* (as opposed to merely counterfactually). We are asked to imagine that French is a student driver and White is his driving instructor.¹⁹⁸ The brakes on the car have gone out and the car is fast approaching a fork in the road. Turning to the left would bring no cataclysmic results, but turning to the right would result in striking and killing Smith. White understands that this is his chance to ensure that Smith dies (since he is not at all fond of Smith). He locks his instructor's wheel (unbeknownst to French) to prevent French from steering to the left. It turns out, however, that French never encounters this steering block for he steers to the right without ever attempting to steer left.¹⁹⁹ Thus, Hunt offers, it seems that French is responsible for killing Smith even though he was unable to do otherwise, and the mechanism forcing his hand exists in the actual world.

¹⁹⁷ David Hunt "Buffered" 130.

¹⁹⁸ Again, I switched the names of the characters in the example from Black and Jones to avoid repeating character names in multiple examples.

¹⁹⁹ David Hunt, "Freedom, Foreknowledge and Frankfurt," Moral Responsibility and Alternative Possibilities, ed. David Widerker and Michael Mckenna (Burlington: Ashgate, 2006) 169-170.

But it's hard to see how Hunt's case can avoid impaling itself on one of the two horns of our dilemma. Much like in Stump's case, either French has free and available alternatives, in which case this is hardly a successful Frankfurt-style case, or the case presupposes determinism and begs the question against the CD incompatibilist. As the case is laid out, it seems that Hunt has hardly blocked all available alternatives for it is still within French's control to *attempt* to turn left. In such an event, he would encounter the block and be forced to turn right, unlike in the actual scenario where he never encounters the block and steers right on his own. That is, while the manipulation occurs in the actual world, it remains inactive and so its power is merely counterfactual, just like in standard Frankfurt-style cases.²⁰⁰ Thus, it seems that there *is* something significant that French can do other than turning right on his own: he can attempt to turn left and be forced by the steering block to instead turn right. And if this option remains open, it seems that Hunt has not really eliminated all robust alternatives.

If Hunt wants to argue that this alternative is not a robust one (because it is not morally significant or is not actually in French's control) then he will promptly impale himself on the second horn of the dilemma. This may be easier to see if we "push back" the blockage so that it is not a course of action that is blocked, but rather a neural pathway. In a case like this, White is a neurosurgeon and he blocks all neural pathways in French's brain, except one – the one that constitutes a decision or choice to turn right.²⁰¹ Thus, in this case, French has only one possible choice, and that is to turn right. But if he builds his case in this way, John Martin Fischer notes that Hunt is faced with a dilemma: either French can mentally "bump up" against blocked neural pathways, in essence attempting to decide something other than to steer right, or he cannot. If he can, then this looks like a significant alternative and the blocking of pathways does nothing to rid the case of alternatives. If, however, French cannot attempt to decide otherwise, then this case looks suspiciously like causal determinism. In fact, it is hard to find any qualitative differences between this case and one in which we simply stipulate that French is determined to steer right.²⁰² As Robert Kane writes, "By implanting the mechanism in this fashion, a controller would have predetermined exactly what the agent would do (and when); and as a consequence,

²⁰⁰ Thank you to David McNaughton for bringing this objection to my attention.

²⁰¹ David Hunt, "Moral Responsibility and Unavoidable Action," *Philosophical Studies* 97 (2000): 218.

²⁰² John Martin Fischer, "Recent Work on Moral Responsibility," *Ethics* 110.1 (1999): 119.

the controller, not the agent, would be ultimately responsible for the outcome.”²⁰³ In other words, if all alternatives are truly blocked, then a CD incompatibilist will simply argue that French is not free in such a scenario and thus cannot be held responsible for killing Smith. Pereboom notes that Hunt could respond by arguing that in this case, the inevitability does not affect the actual causal sequence and so, while French’s decision is inevitable, it remains causally indeterministic.²⁰⁴ But then, Pereboom notes, in blockage cases like the one offered by Hunt, it is unclear what role the blockage is playing. That is, it is very difficult to be certain that the actual sequence remains untouched, for the blockage seems to preclude the possibility that the actual sequence is indeterministic.²⁰⁵ He writes, “... in a scenario in which such restrictions, despite initial appearances, could be relevant to the nature of the actual causal history of an action after all, one’s intuitions about whether the agent is morally responsible might become unstable.”²⁰⁶ In other words, Hunt cannot simply stipulate that the blockage does not affect the actual causal sequence for it seems to affect the ways in which the actual causal sequence could unfold, and this uncertainty makes Hunt’s blockage case unsuccessful. A Frankfurt case should not toe the deterministic line for it relies upon capturing the CD incompatibilist’s own intuitions about French’s freedom and responsibility. Hunt has since accepted that this weakness plagues his blockage cases and has instead turned his attention towards “buffered” cases, like the Pereboom case already discussed. But as we have seen, cases that rely upon necessary, though not sufficient conditions, are plagued with issues of their own.²⁰⁷

²⁰³ Robert Kane “Responses to Bernard Berofsky, John Martin Fischer and Galen Strawson,” Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 60.1 (2000): 162.

²⁰⁴ Derk Pereboom, “Alternative Possibilities and Causal Histories,” Philosophical Perspectives 14 (2000): 20.

²⁰⁵ Pereboom “Causal Histories” 22.

²⁰⁶ Pereboom “Causal Histories” 22.

²⁰⁷ I take it that much of what can be said in reply to Hunt’s blockage case can (and has) been said in response to another famous Frankfurt-style case introduced by Al Mele and David Robb (discussed in Chapter 2). In Mele and Robb’s case, the intervention takes place inside Bob’s brain (much like the proposed amendment to Hunt’s driving case). Mele and Robb’s case goes as follows:

At t1, Black initiates a certain indeterministic process P in Bob’s brain with the intention of thereby causing Bob to decide at t2 (an hour later, say) to steal Ann’s car. The process, which is screened off from Bob’s consciousness, will deterministically culminate in Bob’s deciding at t2 to steal Ann’s car unless he decides on his own at t2 to steal it or is incapable at t2 of making a decision.... The process is in no way sensitive to any “sign” of what Bob will decide. As it happens, at t2 Bob decides on his own to steal the car, on the basis of his own indeterministic deliberation about whether to steal it, and his decision has no deterministic cause. But if he had not just then decided on his own to steal it, P would have deterministically issued, at t2, in his deciding to steal it. Rest assured that P in no way influences the indeterministic decision-making process that actually issues in Bob’s decision (Al Mele and David Robb, “Rescuing Frankfurt-Style Cases,” The Philosophical Review, 107.1 (1998), 101-102.

Where We Are

It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to go through every Frankfurt case that has been offered in the literature to date. But from our brief discussion of attempts by three authors, all source incompatibilists, it seems unlikely that a case can be offered where all robust alternatives are eliminated without committing to determinism. That is, it seems that some version of PAP remains and that, for a CD incompatibilist, robust alternatives have a significant role to play in questions about free will and moral responsibility. This may not be too problematic for source incompatibilists such as Timpe and Pereboom who embrace the need for alternative possibilities, but this is absolutely fatal to Hunt's agenda. If Frankfurt-style cases cannot be offered that eliminate all robust alternative possibilities, let alone *all* alternatives, then Hunt cannot conclude that free will does not require alternatives. But this is exactly what he needs if his solution to the foreknowledge dilemma is to get off the ground. If it is impossible to build a case in which indeterminism obtains and all robust alternatives are eliminated, then Hunt cannot conclude that PAP is false. But his version of narrow source incompatibilism requires not only the elimination of robust alternatives but *all* alternatives, for if God has full foreknowledge of all our future actions, this eliminates all alternatives, robust or otherwise. And if Hunt is to claim that our future actions are free, he needs to offer a Frankfurt case that successfully demonstrates a libertarian free agent acting freely with absolutely no alternatives. Otherwise, it seems that if we

Mele and Robb then liken Bob's decision-making apparatus to a giant machine with multiple decision nodes and each process is like a bb. When a bb strikes a decision node, the decision node lights up, or is activated. Thus, there are two decision nodes of particular interest in the above example; the first is the decision to steal the car (N1) and the second, to not steal the car (N2). If both Bob's indeterministic process (x) and Black's deterministic process (P) hit N1, x will preempt P such that x will be the actual cause of the activation of N1. If P strikes N1 as planned, but x strikes N2 or fails to fire at all, the deterministic process is built such that P will trump x and N1 will be activated over N2 (Mele and Robb, 104). As it turns out, as in all Frankfurt-style cases, Bob decides at t2 to steal the car and so x preempts P and it seems clear that Bob is morally responsible for his decision.

Now much of what has been said in response to Hunt can be said in this case (this is because the Mele/Robb case is also a (the original) blockage case). Just as in Hunt's case, either there are alternatives in this case or it looks like a clear case of determinism. Just as Joe can attempt to turn left, so x can hit N2 instead of N1. Either x is under Bob's control or it is not. If it is in Bob's control (if Bob can attempt to decide to not steal Ann's car even though, because of Black, he never can actually decide to do so), then it looks as if this is a clear robust alternative, for taking that path would result in P trumping x and Black's device causing Bob to decide as he does, a wholly different result than what does, in fact, occur. If x is not under Bob's control (if it is not possible that Bob attempt to decide not to steal Ann's car), then it looks as if we have a case in which Bob is simply determined to steal Ann's car. Furthermore, as Pereboom notes, there are serious worries about these types of cases because the fact that there is an actual deterministic process at play seems to introduce doubts about whether or not the actual sequence has been tampered with. In avoiding a counterfactual intervener and introducing an actual intervener, one is left worried that P is not (and could not be) actually indeterministic.

want to endorse libertarian free will, we need to accept the centrality of alternative possibilities. This means that Hunt's solution to the foreknowledge dilemma concerning human free action is unsuccessful and we will need to look elsewhere for our solution.

CHAPTER FOUR

DIVINE FREEDOM

David Hunt has offered source incompatibilism as a way to avoid the problem of divine foreknowledge, more specifically the problem divine foreknowledge poses for human free actions. I have argued in Chapter 3 that this attempt at a solution is unsuccessful because it is unclear how one can both embrace CD incompatibilism and yet insist that alternatives are unnecessary. That is, it seems that in order for one to be the proper source of one's actions, one must have at least *some* open alternatives. Leaving aside the problem posed by God's omniscience and supposed foreknowledge, this demand for alternative possibilities seems (at least relatively) unproblematic in terms of human freedom, for we can imagine in most cases that an agent has more than one available path to take and that the alternatives she does have allow her to exercise the control required for her action to be free.²⁰⁸ But it may be less clear whether or not God can retain His freedom in most, if not all, situations for reasons unique to Him, namely those generated by properties that are traditionally believed to be essential to Him. On certain understandings of God's omniscience and goodness, it may seem that any alternatives that may be available to a less-than-perfect being are no longer open to God given His moral and cognitive perfection. That is, God's own nature may rule out the possibility of His freedom (assuming that freedom requires alternative possibilities) which is problematic for at least two reasons. First, freedom seems to be a perfection and is traditionally believed to be a trait possessed by God, a perfect being. Many even consider free will an essential divine property and so it would be highly problematic if it were inconsistent with God's other essential properties. And second, theists often praise and thank God for His goodness and actions in the world. While most of this adoration and praise is not a response to a perceived free choice, it is sometimes a response to a choice or action that is seen as supererogatory or gracious. This praise could not be

²⁰⁸ I understand that there are many controversies surrounding the ability to do otherwise. For instance, the kind of causation embraced by many theists, agent causation, seems problematic and difficult to fully explain. There are also issues of luck and whether or not indeterminism is itself detrimental to freedom. Questions about the problem of luck and causation in general are outside the scope of this dissertation but it seems, *prima facie*, possible that humans often have genuine alternatives and can exercise some sort of control such that these alternatives are something over which they have control. Leeway incompatibilism has a great deal of intuitive appeal and has not yet (to my knowledge) been shown to be physically impossible, so I feel warranted in taking this liberty and simply accepting that it seems possible that human freedom requires alternative possibilities and that agents can, and often do, exercise control over the alternatives available to them.

warranted if God never freely exhibits grace or makes a significant choice in favor of the person offering the praise and thanks. Just as we often praise and admire other humans for things over which they did not have control (for example, outward beauty), we often praise God for things that we do not think He could have had any control over, e.g. the fact that He is ultimately good. This kind of praise, perhaps better described as adoration or glorification, is in direct opposition to other responses like contempt and vilification. But in other instances we praise other humans for things precisely because they chose a difficult course of action²⁰⁹ when an easier path was available to them. This kind of praise is opposed to blame and is the response that is only appropriate when the agent could have done otherwise. While it is not clear that all praise directed towards God is of this latter kind, it seems clear that some of it is. For instance, when theists thank God for His grace (in particular, the grace demonstrated on the cross), they are presumably praising Him in this stronger sense, praising Him for not choosing to punish them or let them suffer in some way, an action that was actually open to God. But praise of this sort could not make sense if God never had any alternatives open Him.^{210 211} Thus, if God is not free, an important subset of reactive attitudes exhibited by theists towards God would not make sense, for God could not actually deserve such attitudes.

If it turns out that insisting upon alternative possibilities as the grounds for free will (rejecting Hunt's version of source incompatibilism) has the unhappy result that God can no longer be a free agent, then perhaps Hunt's version of source incompatibilism (one that argues no

²⁰⁹ A difficult course of action could be difficult for a couple reasons. First, it could be difficult because it requires more strength or power. Clearly, under this interpretation, no course of action could be more difficult for God than another, precisely because He is omnipotent and has unlimited power. However, a course of action could be difficult for other reasons. It could be difficult because it is costly. Traditionally, the incarnation and sacrifice of Jesus on the cross are thought to have cost God a great deal and were plausibly more costly than not sending Jesus to die for the sins of mankind. In addition, a course of action could be difficult because it is emotionally difficult. If one adopts a view of God on which He is an emotional being, capable of hurt and disappointment, certain actions could be emotionally more difficult for God than others, namely those that cause more hurt and disappointment. This view of God as a "suffering God" is not necessarily mainstream but I think it has a great deal of Biblical support. However, if one chooses to reject this interpretation of God, I think that it is clear that some courses of actions are more costly to God than others and He can (and is) praised for choosing more costly paths over those less costly to Him.

²¹⁰ For more on this distinction between types of responsibility (and the reactive attitudes linked to them), see Gary Watson, "Two Faces of Responsibility," *Philosophical Topics*, 24.2 (1996).

²¹¹ Susan Wolf, who holds an asymmetry view of moral responsibility, would disagree with my assessment here. In her paper, "Asymmetrical Freedom," she argues that praise and blame are different and that only blame requires the ability to do otherwise (*Journal of Philosophy* 77 (1980), 156). I would agree that many times, when we praise, we are offering an appraisal of one's character and so do not require the agent's ability to do otherwise. However, I do think that sometimes, when we praise, we are offering more than a mere appraisal of one's character and this stronger version of praise is simply inappropriate in situations where the agent had no alternative.

alternative possibilities are required for free will) deserves a second look.²¹² If it is true that God's nature restricts His actions and removes even the smallest, most insignificant, alternatives, then we may have reason to revisit Hunt's version of source incompatibilism or at least ask if divine freedom is different in some relevant respects from human freedom, allowing God to remain free (in the libertarian sense) even without alternative possibilities.

In this chapter, then, I will discuss divine freedom. I will argue not only that divine foreknowledge presents a (special) problem for divine freedom but that God's essential properties, when conceived of in a particular way, may rule out the possibility of alternative possibilities for God. I will then explore the possibility of a source incompatibilist understanding of God's free will that is compatible with a strong view of God's essential properties. Finally, I will argue that the source incompatibilist's response here cannot be successful for similar reasons to why her response to the problem of human freedom was unsatisfactory. Furthermore, I will argue that this lack of success aside, we have reasons to reject the strong view of God's essential properties that rules out alternative possibilities for Him. Indeed, the fact that God has alternative possibilities (i.e. that His nature does not dictate one, and only one, course of action in a given scenario) is just as intuitive and plausible as the idea that human agents have more than one open course of action in many situations. Thus, we may have independent reasons for looking for an alternative solution to the foreknowledge dilemma, one that *does* allow for alternative possibilities, both for divine and human agents.

Freedom and God's Nature

As we have seen, God's omniscience, if it includes foreknowledge of all future events, poses a problem for free will if alternative possibilities are required for free will. So far we have focused on human free will, and I have argued that alternative possibilities really *are* required for human free will and have hinted that given this, the only thing we can do at this point is to give

²¹² Recall that I differentiated between two versions of source incompatibilism: a version endorsed by, among others, David Hunt, that claims someone can still be free in the libertarian sense even if she does not have any alternative possibilities, and a version endorsed by, among others, Kevin Timpe, that insists that alternatives are still necessary, though not central, to libertarian free will. I rejected Hunt's version by agreeing with Timpe that exercising control and being the proper source of one's actions requires that one have alternatives, even if they seem fairly insignificant and are not robust enough to ground moral responsibility. And it is Hunt's version that I claim may be the only one capable of restoring God's freedom (because Timpe's would be rejected along with leeway incompatibilism for insisting upon alternative possibilities that could not be open to God).

up either God's omniscience or human free will. But the problem is more serious than this, for if God's omniscience rules out human free will, it also rules out divine free will. That is, if God knows before He performs an action that He will perform that action it looks as if this prior knowledge rules out any alternatives for God at the point of action, and thus precludes any possibility that that action can be free for God. Thus, one of God's essential properties seems to get in the way of the possibility of God's freedom. While I have yet to provide a potential solution to the problem of human free will, I believe the solution provided in that arena can, and will, also solve the problem for divine freedom posed by divine foreknowledge. However, there is another threat to God's freedom that many think lies in His essential nature, and if this is right, we have independent reason to believe that God cannot be free (if freedom requires alternative possibilities) and thus cannot be morally responsible for any of His actions.

God, theists believe, is essentially wholly morally good.²¹³ This means, minimally, that God cannot act wrongly. But there is a tradition in Christianity of interpreting God's goodness in a much stronger way, one that argues that God is, essentially, the greatest possible being. That is, God is essentially such that there could be no being (real or simply possible) who is morally better than God.²¹⁴ This conception of God's goodness coupled with His omniscience poses a problem for His free will. What if God is faced with a situation in which there is clearly a best possible option? It would seem that given His omniscience, He would know that this option is available and that it is the best. And given His goodness, He would *have* to take this option, for His goodness, on this perfectionist picture of God's essential properties, requires that He always does and is the best. If He did not take this best option and chose some other good, but not best, option, He would not be the best possible being, for one could imagine a being that had the same degree of knowledge and *did* choose the best option. It seems that this being would then be morally better than God, which is impossible given the very definition of God. But if God, due to

²¹³ When it comes to divine essential properties, it is commonly understood that God cannot cease to have them. While there may be worlds in which God does not exist, if God does exist in a particular world, then He exists for the duration of that world. A human being may have an essential property and then lose it (say, upon her death). But God's essential properties are different in that He cannot lose them because He cannot die or cease to exist. This strong conception of essential properties should be kept in mind throughout the following discussion.

²¹⁴ This conception goes all the way back to Anselm and the ontological argument for God's existence (Saint Anselm, Monologion & Proslogion, with the replies of Gaunilo and Anselm, trans. with introduction and notes by Thomas Williams (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1996)). It has been embraced by Gottfried Leibniz, Samuel Clarke (see Samuel Clarke and Gottfried Leibniz, The Leibniz-Clarke Correspondence (1717), ed. H.G. Alexander, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1956)) and many of the contemporary philosophers who write about the nature of divine freedom. It can be accepted even if one rejects the ontological argument for God's existence within which it was introduced.

His essential goodness, has only one, unique, course of action available to Him then God does not have any alternatives and, therefore, is not free regarding this action.^{215 216} And what if there are an infinite number of choices, each better than the last with no best option? It would seem that in such a scenario, God would be in a worse predicament because no matter what He did, there would be a better possible action and a better possible being that could perform that action. In fact, the existence of such a scenario, according to William Rowe, would prove the non-existence of God, understood as the best possible being, for the existence of such a scenario is incompatible with the existence of God.²¹⁷ It looks, then, as if God could only be free (if freedom requires alternative possibilities) in those situations in which there are several equally good options with no best one. Furthermore, if one accepts the account of goodness on which God is the best conceivable being, then one must accept that every choice faced by God either has a clear best possible choice (in which case He isn't free) or is one in which there are several equally good, or at least incommensurable, good options with no best; there could not be any choices in which no matter what choice God makes, there is a better one available. This may be problematic if there are scenarios that seem to have an infinite number of options ordered in ever-increasing goodness.

In the literature regarding God's freedom, most of the discussion is focused upon God's decision to create a world. It is thought, by many theists, that the decision to create this world over a host of other possible worlds is significant and worthy of a strong sense of praise. That is, theists thank God for creating the world that we see around us (and, probably most notably, for creating us), as opposed to creating a more inferior world, a world that does not include us (those doing the thanking), or failing to create at all. But, as I have been arguing, it is hard to see how God's decision to create the actual world could be worthy of praise if it were the only option open to God. Some, like Gottfried Leibniz, have argued that this must be the best possible world, given that God created it.²¹⁸ (The reason he thinks this must be the best possible world and not one among multiple, equally good, worlds is that he accepts a strong view of God's cognitive structure, in which God cannot act unless He has sufficient reason for so acting. If there are

²¹⁵ William Rowe, *Can God Be Free?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) 89.

²¹⁶ Another way to see the point is this way: God acts as He does in certain situations (those with a clear best option) because of His character and in a very real sense cannot do anything but the best. But if God is not responsible for His character (that is, it was never open to Him to change this character), then those things done purely out of character without a choice cannot be free and He cannot be responsible for them.

²¹⁷ Rowe 89.

²¹⁸ Gottfried Leibniz, *Theology* (1710; LaSalle, Ill: Open Court, 1985) 252-53. Relevant discussion: Rowe 21.

several options with no clear best option, God could not have sufficient reason for choosing between the options and so would not choose to create any. Given the existence of an actual world, then, this must be the best possible world.²¹⁹) But many have been struck by the imperfections in the actual world. Not everyone is comfortable concluding, with Leibniz, that this must be the best possible world since God chose to create it. For some theists, it is easy to imagine possible worlds that seem better than this world. In fact, for any world we can imagine, it seems that we can then imagine some world slightly better than it. Thus, many philosophers, starting with Aquinas²²⁰, have been driven to a position in which this world is one in an infinite series of worlds, each better than the last but none of which is the best, for if this world isn't the best but there *was* a best possible world alternative, God would have been driven by His nature to create that world instead. Given the presence of the actual (imperfect, though still good) world, many theists have felt the need to defend the possibility that there may have been an infinite number of good possible worlds available to God, none of which was the best possible world.²²¹ According to this line of reasoning, it seems possible that it was clearly better for God to create a world versus not creating a world at all (though this is, perhaps, not obvious) but there was no best possible world so God was able to exercise His freedom to choose between an infinite number of good, non-best, worlds (presumably God's perfection would dictate that He create a world that is overall good and so would rule out an infinite number of "bad" worlds). As noted earlier, however, William Rowe has argued that the mere existence of such a scenario would entail not merely a lack of divine freedom (as is the case when there is a best possible option) but the very non-existence of God. That is, the existence of such a scenario is a persuasive argument against God's very existence. Rowe bases his argument upon the following principle: "if an omniscient being creates a world where there is a better world it could create, then it would be possible for there to be a being morally better than it,"²²² which is an endorsement of the strong understanding of God's moral perfection that we have been assuming in the discussion thus far. According to Rowe, if such a scenario (one in which there are a series

²¹⁹ Rowe 21.

²²⁰ Discussion: Rowe 36. Also see: Bruce Reichenbach, "Must God Create the Best Possible World?," *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 19 (1979).

²²¹ It is possible to get an infinite series of ever-increasing good worlds if the "great-making" properties of worlds do not have intrinsic maximums. For instance, a great-making property could be the number of happy inhabitants, but there is no number of happy inhabitants that is too high. Another great-making property is variety, but it's not clear if there is a best degree of variety or arrangement of different qualities (Rowe 43-44).

²²² Rowe 89.

of ever-increasing good worlds with no best one) obtains, for any world that God chose to create, there would be a better one and a better (possible) being than God who would choose to create that world.

There is a lot that can be said in response to Rowe. Many theists take issue with his principle, arguing in various ways that if it is logically impossible that God create the best world (given that no such world exists), this is not something that can be demanded of even the best conceivable being.²²³ This discussion, while interesting, is somewhat tangential to my purposes in this chapter. This is because if it turns out that Rowe is wrong (as several writers on the topic are insisting), then we have no reason to turn to source incompatibilism as a way to solve the problem of God's freedom, even if we accept the strong understanding of God's nature, as Rowe does. If God's goodness (or more importantly, His very existence), on a perfectionist picture, is compatible with the existence of better worlds than the one He chose to create (if, that is, His goodness is compatible with existence of an infinite number of ever-increasing good worlds with no best one), then it seems that these cases do not pose a problem for divine freedom for these are cases in which God has an infinite number of alternative possibilities. If Rowe is correct, however, the theist (who endorses this strict definition of God) has a problem. So for now, I would like to assume that Rowe is right and this specific type of scenario (one that involves both God and a particular set of possible worlds) is impossible. Thus, while a case can (and perhaps should) be made against Rowe, for now I am more interested in the implications for God's freedom if it turns out that Rowe is correct. (In the final section of this chapter I will argue that we should reject the strict understanding of God's nature that generates the problem in the first place but I will not argue against the conclusions that Rowe reaches from accepting such an understanding.)

Rowe discusses two different scenarios involving possible worlds. The first is an ordering of possible worlds in which there is a clearly best one. In such a scenario, God must create the best world. And the second is the one he rejects as impossible (if we assume that God exists), namely an ordering of possible worlds in which there is no best one but rather an infinite number

²²³ See Daniel Frances Howard-Snyder, "How an Unsurpassable Being Can Create a Surpassable World", *Faith and Philosophy*, 11 (1994), 260-68.; Norman Kretzmann, "A General Problem of Creation", *Being and Goodness*, Ed. Scott MacDonald (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1990); Norman Kretzmann, "A Particular Problem of Creation", *Being and Goodness*, Ed. Scott MacDonald (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1990); and William Hasker, "Must God Do His Best?", *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 16 (1984), 213-23.

of good, getting better, worlds. But there is a third possibility, one which might seem to be the most plausible: a collection of non-ordered good worlds, none of which is the best. These worlds could be non-ordered either because they are equally good or because they are incommensurably good.²²⁴ Such a world is not, at least on the face of it, incompatible with God's existence for if He chooses any of these possible worlds, we are not faced with the issue of a better possible being than God, for there is no better option to take. Furthermore, in such a scenario, God has alternatives and thus there is no obvious problem for His freedom. I think pointing to the possibility of such scenarios and, perhaps, arguing that this sort of situation is plausibly common, is the best response to Rowe's argument. But there are a couple reasons why a theist may not see this as an available response. For one thing, if one is endorsing such a strong view of God's essential goodness one may be tempted to take an equally strong view of God's cognitive structure and argue, with Leibniz, that God could not create without having a sufficient reason for so creating. This would mean that He would need to have a best course of action available or He would not act. I don't think that one should take such a strong view of God's cognitive structure, as I will argue in the next section, but I could see why it would be very tempting to someone already taking a strict view of God's nature. More worrisome, though, are the motivations that have led so many theists to attempt to defend the infinite-series-of-ever-increasing-good-worlds approach and argue against Rowe's conclusion. As the reader will recall, these theists were (presumably) motivated by the fact that we can imagine worlds better than the actual world. These possible worlds aren't merely different but clearly *better*.²²⁵ But given the conception of God's goodness being adopted here, this would be impossible. The only way God could be wholly good is if there were no worlds better than the actual (because this is the best world or all others are equal or inferior). Thus the motivation to reject Rowe's dilemma has been to point to seemingly better possible worlds than the actual, and this motivation also tells against a picture on which there is no best world but several equally good worlds. That is, some might

²²⁴ One reason for endorsing the reality of this third scenario is to note that what makes a world good is not as simple as adding more good things to it. Rather, a good world is defined by the relationship of its parts. (Perhaps this could be understood similarly to G.E. Moore's conception of organic wholes as described in *Principia Ethica*.) If we take a more holistic approach to the goodness of worlds, then it would seem highly implausible that we could come up with an infinite ordering of good worlds (and possibly implausible that we could come up with a finite ordering of worlds with a clearly best one).

²²⁵ This is not simply that we can imagine worlds with more sunshine or more people, but is rather a worry connected with the problem of evil, at least the problem posed by natural evil: we can imagine worlds that have far less pointless suffering than our world. That is, the actual world has a lot of suffering that does not contribute to the overall goodness of our world and it seems quite easy to picture a world with less (or no) pointless suffering.

claim that it is clearly false that this world is one of several equally, or incommensurably, good worlds precisely because we can imagine worlds that are clearly better.

Worse yet, we could reach a similar conclusion when considering other divine acts, such as the most important divine decision in the Christian belief system: the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross and the grace that this represents. It is difficult to see how this could not be the morally best response to human sin available to God for what other responses could be seen as equally good? It is the very fact that it is so unthinkable and unsurpassably good that Christians praise God for His sacrifice and grace. But if there was no better response to human sins, then God's own nature would have dictated that He sacrifice Himself and forgive all sins and thus He was not free concerning His decision to do so. This would mean that while adoration and glorification would be appropriate, gratitude towards God for something that He didn't have to do would make no sense at all, even though it is this very gratitude that is central to the Christian's worldview.²²⁶

Source Incompatibilism and Divine Freedom

It is here that a source incompatibilist could offer a possible way out of the problem. A source incompatibilist (of Hunt's persuasion) could argue that we could retain divine freedom *and* such a strict understanding of God's nature by showing that, at least for God, alternatives are not required for freedom. If this could be shown, then we could hold that God is required by His nature to do the best and we may even be able to agree with Leibniz that God only does what He has sufficient reason to do but still argue that He has libertarian free will. Thus, every divine decision was made because it was the best thing to do but, contrary to the leeway

²²⁶ One might wonder why gratitude, in order to be appropriate, requires that the recipient of gratitude could have done otherwise. As David McNaughton pointed out to me, can't a child be grateful to his mother for loving him and taking care of him, even though she couldn't have done otherwise? It seems to me that if it is truly the case that she could not have done otherwise *at all*, then gratitude towards the parent seems unjustified. Perhaps the child could be grateful to God for giving him his mother, or to his grandparents for helping to shape her into the parent she became, but gratitude towards his mother seems out of place. That is not to say that the child cannot adore his mother, bless his mother, think the world of her, but gratitude is not an appropriate reactive attitude. Of course, while I have had the pleasure of knowing several wonderful parents, two of which are my own, it is not clear that any of them never had any choice but to give their children a wonderful life. For one thing, they are responsible (at least in part), for becoming a nurturing and giving person who places the needs of their children above their own. And secondly, no human parent that I have encountered, no matter how good and loving, is free from temptations and difficult choices concerning their children. For failing to succumb to temptation and for making the right choices when easier, though worse, courses of action were available, a child can appropriately be grateful to his mother. It is these temptations, imperfections in our characters, and (at least partial) responsibility for the people we become that makes the human parent significantly different than God.

incompatibilist's claims, this would not threaten divine freedom for God does not require alternatives in order to be free.²²⁷ The problem is that it is hard to see why God would be any different from humans in regards to freedom. We have seen that there is reason to reject Hunt's version of source incompatibilism in regards to human freedom,²²⁸ so what is it about divine freedom that makes us willing to reconsider?

The place to look for a significant difference, if there is one, between divine and human free will is to look at what may be unique about God's relationship to His own nature. If it is His nature that is posing a problem for His freedom, then perhaps His relationship to His nature is importantly different than our relationships to our own natures. CD incompatibilists typically hold that if a person's character dictates one unique course of action and she had no choice regarding the formation of her nature, then the actions that stem from it are not free. And there is no reason to think that the same is not true of God. God is not free regarding any actions that flow directly from His nature if He is not causally responsible for His nature. And since God exists from all eternity (has always existed), it is hard to see how He can be causally responsible for His own nature. The major difference between human natures and God's nature is that God's nature is fixed while human natures are not static nor are they (arguably) solidified from birth or before. Humans, then, can have a hand in their own character development in a way that seems impossible for God, precisely because God's nature is fixed from all eternity. But there is also another difference between God and humans: God is not causally dependent upon anything outside of Himself but is, rather, seen by theists as the creator of the world (the very origin of all that is causally efficacious in the world). So perhaps, it could be the case that God is causally responsible for His nature, much like humans, even though His nature could not have been otherwise (whereas, a human's causal connection to her own nature is grounded in the presence of alternative possibilities and her ability to choose between them²²⁹). And, in fact, Thomas Morris argues that God *is* causally responsible for His nature even though He couldn't have

²²⁷ Even if we reject Leibniz's sufficiency requirement and allowed that some, if not most, of God's decisions were between several good options, with none being the best, the theist is faced with explaining how God's own foreknowledge of His action does not, still, remove the alternatives. So even if we reject Leibniz's sufficiency requirement, the theist is still faced with the foreknowledge dilemma and thus, if successful, source incompatibilism would kill two birds with one stone.

²²⁸ This is because if we do not require alternative possibilities, then it looks as if the source incompatibilist's idea of control will not differ significantly from one endorsed by CD compatibilists, and so it seems as if one wishes to embrace libertarian freedom, one needs to allow at least non-robust alternatives.

²²⁹ See Robert Kane on "self-forming decisions" in *The Significance of Free Will* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

chosen a different nature. Morris argues that though God did not create Himself, He did create properties, including those traditionally held by Himself, such as omnibenevolence and omniscience.²³⁰ This, he argues, is because properties themselves are the content of God's mental activity and thus properties (and propositions and mathematical truths) depend upon God, even those that God Himself instantiates.²³¹ Certainly, all of God's properties are essential to Him (at least those in question), and so God could not have wanted or chosen other properties to apply to Himself, but if God is responsible for creating these properties, then He can be said to be causally responsible for His nature.²³² (Of course, God could not temporally precede His nature, but this is not a problem, Morris insists, for it is not necessary that a cause precede its effect.²³³) Now Morris's line of reasoning rests on some metaphysical assumptions, such as the assumption that properties are the sorts of things that can be created at all, that many would find dubious at best. But I think one could defend a similar position without committing oneself to the creation of properties. For instance, one could argue that God has His character of necessity and is not causally responsible for that fact, but *is* causally responsible for sustaining that character. Perhaps, one could argue that God does not change His character because He sees no reason to do so, even though He couldn't change it if He tried. The idea here would be that God is not his own generating cause but *is* His own sustaining cause, and is therefore responsible for possessing the character that He, in fact, does possess.²³⁴ If we are persuaded by this type of argument, a source incompatibilist could argue that God *is* morally responsible for all the decisions and actions that issue out of His character for He is morally responsible for His character, even though His nature could not have been otherwise.

While it seems that this may be a significant difference between divine and human freedom, there are two, I think fatal, problems with it. And as such, it seems to me that if God is

²³⁰ Thomas Morris, Anselmian Explorations (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987) 174. Discussion in: Rowe 152.

²³¹ Morris 166.

²³² For Morris, even though He could not have chosen another nature what is contingent and what is necessary is determined by God and we need to work within the framework of the necessary truths determined by God. Thus, within the framework we have, in which God has His nature essentially, we cannot say that God could have made another nature. In this way, Morris's view is dramatically different from Descartes' view that God could have made necessary truths, for instance mathematical truths, false if He so chose (Morris 169-170).

²³³ Rowe 153.

²³⁴ This distinction is meant to mirror the cause *in fieri* and cause *in esse* often brought up when discussing the Cosmological Argument for God's existence. For a discussion of this related discussion, see Paul Edwards, "A Critique of the Cosmological Argument," Philosophy of Religion: An Anthology, Ed. Louis P. Pojman and Michael Rea (United States: Thomson Wadsworth, 2008) 15-24.

forced to act in a particular way given His goodness coupled with His omniscience, then God quite simply is not free regarding that particular action. William Rowe raises the first objection. He asks of Morris, “In virtue of *what* is God eternally causing his possession of the properties constituting his nature?”²³⁵ It doesn’t seem like there is a divine property to which we can appeal because, presumably, such a property would be a part of His divine nature. One could respond by pointing to “God’s necessarily willing his being perfect” as the property that explains God’s causing His possession of the other divine properties, but then Rowe could simply ask what explains God’s necessarily willing his perfect nature.²³⁶ Any answer to this would prompt the same question from Rowe. The problem for Morris, then, comes in the form of a dilemma: either there is a property in virtue of which God causes all the other properties in His nature, but then we can simply ask in virtue of what God has *that* property and we are well on our way to an infinite regress, or there is no answer and we are stuck with at least one property for which God is not causally responsible (presumably the most important one, given that it is this property in virtue of which God causes His nature). Neither horn is desirable and so it doesn’t look like God could be causally responsible for His nature. A similar worry presents itself, I think, to anyone who wishes to argue that God is responsible for His nature because He causes it (in some way). If God can be said to be meaningfully sustaining His own character, one might wonder *why* He does so. We can’t appeal to His goodness or perfect cognitive structure, for these are the very things the existence of which we are attempting to explain. There has to be something above and beyond His nature that explains why He chooses to continue to cause it. And if there is, then it seems to be something for which He is not responsible and on this thing hangs the rest of His character.

A second problem lies in the essential nature of God’s character. Even if God could be causally responsible for His character, He could not have chosen another character. That is, there is one unique character that God can have (this, Morris grants, because he thinks that Cartesian possibilism is fatally flawed). It is, in fact, essential to Him. So even if God could be causally responsible for all of His own properties and for attributing these properties to Himself, or for continuing to possess them, He does not have a choice regarding this action. So it seems that there must be something over which God does not have control that forces His hand. And this, as

²³⁵ Rowe 156.

²³⁶ Rowe 156-157.

I argued in Chapter 3 is incompatible with the freedom required for moral responsibility. As Rowe notes, even if Morris is right and God is causally responsible for His character, He causes them necessarily for they could not have been otherwise.²³⁷ And causing of necessity is not compatible with a strong sense of freedom. Morris responds that God's causal activity, while necessary, is still free in some sense. He writes,

It is an activity which is conscious, intentional, and neither constrained nor compelled by anything existing independent of God and his causally efficacious power. The necessity of his creating the framework is not imposed on him from without, but rather is a feature and result of the nature of his own activity itself, which is a function of what he is.²³⁸

But this sounds like a CD compatibilist characterization of freedom, one I have rejected as too weak to ground moral responsibility. (Rowe notes that even Morris grants that this sort of freedom is not strong enough to ground moral responsibility.²³⁹) For we are left with the reality that God could not have possibly willed another nature than He did and thus, while He is worthy of some sort of praise, it is not the sort of praise that depends upon moral responsibility. Because of these two objections, it does not look like we can save God's freedom by pointing to Him as causally responsible for His own nature. For, in the end, we are left with God's necessarily acting, either because of His nature or, one step back, in causing His nature in the first place. Thus, it looks like source incompatibilism cannot get us out of this mess without, again, slipping into source compatibilism about moral responsibility.

Salvaging Divine Freedom

Happily, we can avoid the conclusion that God lacked freedom in some (if not all) of the important divine decisions for which He is praised and revered. As I mentioned earlier, I wanted to grant the strong characterization of God's nature and then explore the possibility of introducing source incompatibilism, in response to an argument based on this characterization.

²³⁷ Rowe 157-58.

²³⁸ Morris 170-171; Rowe 158.

²³⁹ Rowe 158.

However, I do not think we should, with Rowe, accept this characterization of God's nature. There exists a problem for divine freedom only if one wishes to hold a very strict view of God's nature. But it is not clear that this strict view of God's nature, more specifically of God's goodness, is one required, or even clearly favored, by mainstream Christianity. And if we simply reject this stringent view of God's goodness, then the problem becomes far less severe and God's freedom remains intact in many cases.

The most problematic cases for God's freedom are those defended by William Rowe in which there is no best option but several increasingly better options. Such a scenario, Rowe argues, is inconsistent with God's existence because God is a being such that no better being can be imagined. The existence of such a being is incompatible with this situation because no matter what He chooses to do, there is another imaginable being who does something better and is thus a morally superior being. But it is not at all clear why the theist must adopt Rowe's account of God's nature. The theist may wish to allow for supererogation, such that there are some good things that God is justified in not performing, but in performing He goes above and beyond His duty, and is thus worthy of thanks. (Some theists believe that God is justified, given His nature, in dealing with us justly all the time even if He sometimes chooses to act graciously rather than justly. On this view of God, grace is supererogatory for God and is not demanded of Him by His goodness. It is better that He treats us graciously but it is not required by His nature.) There is little in the Biblical view of God, nor in the traditional understanding of Him, to imply that not only is He the best being in existence, He is the best *possible* being. This seems to be more of a philosopher's concoction than a definition anchored in theology and tradition. For God to be all-good, need it be the case that no greater being can be conceived? Or can it be simply that God always does what is good and is incapable of wrong-doing? The discrepancy seems to lie in the nature of goodness. As I already mentioned, perhaps goodness is not an additive property such that one state of affairs is slightly better than another, but is rather a property that grows out of the relationships between states of affairs, and many states of affairs are good in different ways and thus cannot be weighed against one another (a case in which God acts justly versus a case in which God acts graciously may be incommensurately good, but we would have reason to thank God if He chooses the latter for we benefit more in the second state of affairs). And even if goodness is additive, it seems plausible that it lacks an intrinsic maximum, such that no matter how much you have of it, you can always have more. If the latter (and it seems plausible that this

is the case), then God's omnibenevolence cannot mean possessing all goodness but rather something less dramatic. Perhaps it simply means that God always does good, avoids wrongdoing and is better than any other being that exists. It is this lesser view of God's goodness that I think the theist has in mind and that helps us avoid Rowe's conclusion in cases in which there is no best option.

If this is right, then there may be cases in which God's nature does not, indeed cannot, dictate one particular course of action but leaves open several options from which He could choose. The choice of which world to create could be one such situation. But even this little opening seriously weakens the motivation for finding an alternative to leeway incompatibilism, at least for divine freedom. The reason I gave at the beginning of this chapter for pursuing source incompatibilism was to salvage divine freedom in the face of the seeming nonexistence of alternative possibilities for God. Rowe argued that if you agree with his definition of God's nature, that the only cases in which God could have any alternatives at all are cases the existence of which rule out God's existence all together. But it is precisely the definition of God's nature with which Rowe works that we should reject, and if we do so, then it seems that there *are* some possible cases in which God has alternative possibilities and therefore can have freedom in the leeway incompatibilist sense. But even beyond cases in which there is no best option because for every option, there is a better one, there may be scenarios in which God has several equally good options with no best option. Rowe doesn't really consider this possibility and Leibniz dismisses this scenario as impossible. But it is impossible only if we accept a strong sufficiency principle, as Leibniz does. Leibniz argues that God cannot perform an action unless He has a sufficient reason for performing *that particular action*. In a scenario in which there is no clearly best alternative, but several equally good options, God would not have sufficient reason to choose any of these options and therefore could choose none. While I think there is some sufficiency principle that we should endorse, it is not clear that it should be this strong. For God to be cognitively perfect, it seems clear that He cannot perform an action when He has sufficient reason to choose another, but why must we add to this the further condition that He must have a sufficient reason for every action He takes? Perhaps all He needs is the absence of a sufficient reason for an alternative course of action. Or even if one thinks that God needs a sufficient reason in order to act, why can it not be the case that this sufficient reason attaches to a group of actions or to the more general choice to act over failing to act, without attaching to any one

particular action? If we accept a less stringent sufficiency principle, there could be several scenarios in which God has sufficient reason to act (as opposed to failing to act) or to choose one of a particular set of actions, though He is not forced by His nature to choose any one particular action. He, then, would have alternatives and would be *free* to choose between alternatives. This would further widen the set of cases in which God has alternatives and further weakens the motivation for rejecting leeway incompatibilism for a source incompatibilist position. Thus, it seems to me that in order to motivate a move to source incompatibilism, one needs to accept Rowe's strong definition of God's nature *and* a Leibniz's strong sufficiency condition. It is not clear that many theists do, nor should, accept such major restrictions built into God's very character.

Of course, this may still leave open some scenarios in which God is clearly not free. In cases where God's nature dictates a certain course of action, God will not be free. We may still claim that God is good in such scenarios, but we wouldn't praise Him in the strong, responsibility-implicating, sense. Some may find this worrisome, but I don't think that it is. Just because God is not free in all cases, this does not mean that He is not a free being. Humans are, by and large, free beings, even though there are several times in our lives when we do not act freely. So long as God remains free (has alternative possibilities) in the cases in which we thank Him, I see no issue.

Thus, it seems that source incompatibilism is not necessary to save divine freedom. If we adopt a weaker understanding of God's nature than the one endorsed by Rowe and others, then it seems that God's nature would frequently leave open several possibilities without dictating one course of action. And if we accept a strong understanding of God's nature, one on which God is the best conceivable being, then it looks as if we would need to explain how God's relationship to His own nature is different than our relationships to our natures in order to explain why source incompatibilism is a viable solution when applied to divine freedom and not a viable solution in a case involving human freedom. Given that the only differences one finds here are ones that seem to make it more unlikely that God is causally responsible for His nature than we are for our own, this route seems unpromising and source incompatibilism is unable to save divine freedom if God's nature is understood in the way that Rowe suggests. Thus, source incompatibilism is unable to do the work we need it to do or it is unnecessary and I see no reason to endorse it in the

case of divine freedom if it is unsuccessful in the case of human freedom and divine foreknowledge.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE BEST SOLUTION

Summary

The seeming incompatibility of free will and divine foreknowledge is far more difficult to explain away than it may, at first, seem. For those who endorse a libertarian understanding of free will according to which free will is incompatible with causal determinism, the problem is notoriously difficult to solve. Most (if not all!) positions taken on the issue have serious, in some cases fatal, deficiencies and the temptation is strong to throw up our hands and reject as impossible the existence of one of these core beliefs. So far, I have not helped the situation. I have rejected each of the positions I have discussed for various reasons but have also upheld the belief that both free will and divine omniscience are critical to the theist's worldview. Hence, my project thus far has been a solely negative pursuit. I have pointed out what does not work without offering a theory that does. I would now like to change all this and offer a brief sketch of a view that I think holds the most promise. In this chapter, I will endorse Open Theism as the most promising way out of the conundrum in which the theist finds herself. While it is not without problems, the flaws from which Open Theism suffers are not fatal or even insurmountable. I will not offer a full defense of the position, nor will I endorse any one particular version of Open Theism (for there are several). Rather, I will sketch the outline of the position, explain how it provides a solution to the foreknowledge dilemma and tout its benefits, not least of which is the fact that it avoids the serious challenges faced by the other solutions we have so far discussed. But first, I will briefly summarize our journey thus far.

In the first chapter of this dissertation, I introduced the difficult problem facing the theist: how can we reconcile God's complete omniscience with the existence of free will? If God knows our actions before we perform them, then how are these same actions performed freely (for at the core of free will is the ability to do otherwise)? The core idea driving what I have called the foreknowledge dilemma is that free will requires the presence of real alternative possibilities and God's foreknowledge of our actions removes all of these alternative possibilities. Any alternatives that seem to be present are merely apparent because we can never choose to act in a way that is contrary to the knowledge God has always possessed. From the outset, I endorsed the

libertarian view of freedom in which freedom is incompatible with causal determinism²⁴⁰ and limited my discussion to solutions that also assumed this view of free will. It really is this strong view of free will that generates the worry in the first place. I rejected any theory of free will that allowed the compatibility of free will and causal determinism (most notably, Calvinism) because I do not think such an understanding of freedom is strong enough to ground significant doctrines of sin, punishment and grace long endorsed by the Christian church. I turned instead to the three major views in which free will (understood as requiring alternative possibilities) is incompatible with causal determinism (CD incompatibilist views) but yet compatible with non-causal determinism (DO compatibilist views). I rejected all three for different reasons.

I first discussed the Boethian response, perhaps the most historically popular in church history. According to the Boethian, God does not exist within the flow of time, but is rather timeless. Because God is outside of time, His knowledge of temporal events is timeless. That is, God does not know *before* I perform an action that I will do so because timeless events cannot exist in before-and-after relationships. God, of course, still knows about my action, but He knows this piece of information timelessly. The response to the foreknowledge dilemma, then, is fairly straightforward. God's knowledge makes my action inevitable only if His knowledge comes before my action, for it is the inevitability of the past that generates the dilemma. But timeless knowledge does not make my action inevitable precisely because it does not exist prior to my action. Thus, on this view God's omniscience and my free will are compatible because God can know timelessly what I will do without thereby removing my alternative possibilities. This response is by far the neatest of the three DO compatibilist responses and the only view that I admit *does* provide a solution to the foreknowledge dilemma. But this response also comes with some serious baggage that I am uncomfortable accepting. The first issue with the Boethian solution is that it is plagued with difficult metaphysical questions, most notably it must explain how a timeless God can interact causally with a temporal world and how His knowledge of that world can causally depend upon it. Second, even if this issue can be resolved, the only way to avoid the inevitability of God's knowledge is for His knowledge to depend upon our actions (otherwise, it looks as if timeless knowledge cancels out any apparent alternatives in the same way past infallible belief does). But having God's knowledge depend on us in this way seriously

²⁴⁰ Whether or not it is compatible with non-causal determinism is the very question at issue. Thus, libertarians must argue that free will is incompatible with causal determinism but some may claim (though I do not!) that it is compatible with non-causal determinism.

diminishes His providential power for any knowledge that depends upon our actual actions cannot be used to inform God's creative act (into which God must build all the information about the world, including the people that populate it and the situations in which they will find themselves). And unlike a temporal God, a timeless God cannot simply reach into an already working temporal order and affect how it operates. Thus, on the Boethian model, God may be omniscient but much of what He knows He cannot use and so the benefits the model offers with one hand are quickly taken back with the other. And finally, I argued that the theist should have a problem with the timelessness model because it diverges sharply from our standard conception of God and His relationship with us. Many theists believe that God actually listens to them and actually responds to their requests, but if God is timeless, the idea of Him listening and responding are merely metaphorical and do not reflect reality. This result, I take it, would be unacceptable to many theists and is unacceptable to me.

The next solution that I explored was the one offered by the Ockhamist. According to this position, God's beliefs *do* exist in the past, but since they are not solely facts *about* the past, they do not carry the necessity needed to generate the foreknowledge dilemma. The Ockhamist argues that facts regarding God's past beliefs about future events are soft facts, partially about the time at which God holds the belief and partially about the time at which the object of God's knowledge (the future action) occurs. They depend upon the future event for their truth and so do not necessitate them. Soft facts are to be contrasted with hard facts, facts about the past that once they are true, are always true. If God's beliefs were hard facts, solidified once He believed them, then they would pose a problem for human free will. But since they are not, according to the Ockhamist, the foreknowledge dilemma is only an apparent problem. The primary reason I reject this solution is that it seriously misunderstands the nature of beliefs. It is not clear how past events can be soft facts. It is true that past propositions can be soft facts, for part of their propositional content could be about a future time. But can events be soft in the same way? If someone has a belief in the past, it seems impossible that the actual event of believing can be akin to a soft fact, dependent upon the future. The content of the belief can be future-dependent, but the very presence of a belief cannot. The problem is that it is the very existence of God's past infallible belief that poses a problem for free will. A belief is an event, and events cannot change after they have occurred. If God's beliefs are to be soft facts, they would have to differ radically from human beliefs, and any move to suggest that this is the case seems hopelessly ad hoc. The

central problem with Ockhamism, it seems to me, is that it insists upon ignoring the key dissimilarities between logical fatalism and theological fatalism. But the dissimilarities, it turns out, make all the difference.

The final DO compatibilist solution that I discussed was Molinism. Like the Ockhamist, the Molinist argues that our free actions are explanatorily prior to God's past beliefs about them, but rather than fiddling with the nature of belief, like the Ockhamist, the Molinist introduces the concept of middle knowledge. Middle knowledge is knowledge of counterfactuals that are dependent upon what humans would do in certain situations. For every agent and every situation, there is a truth of the matter about what that agent would do in that situation. God, according to the Molinist, knows the truth value of each of these counterfactuals (He knows what would happen in each and every possible world that He could create). Moreover, He possesses this knowledge before He actualizes a particular world and uses this knowledge to determine which agents and which situations He should create. Thus, by the time He creates, He knows what each agent will do in the actual future because He knows the truth about what each agent would do in any situation and He also knows which agents and future situations are actual. The problem for Molinism comes when we try to sort out the concept of middle knowledge. First, the counterfactuals themselves seem to be groundless. They cannot depend upon God for their truth (for Molinism adopts a libertarian account of freedom) but they cannot depend upon what agents actually do, for they are true prior to any agent or situation having been actualized. Furthermore, they cannot be grounded in an agent's character, for according to the libertarian, we are free to act out of character. The Molinist often argues that the grounding of these counterfactuals lies in those possible worlds that are closest to the actual: what an agent would do in possible worlds that are very similar to the actual world ground the truth about the counterfactuals regarding that agent. The problem is that these counterfactuals are supposed to be true prior to the existence of an actual world. It is impossible to determine which worlds are closest to the actual world without the existence of an actual world and so it is impossible that these counterfactuals can be grounded in this way. This appeal to similar worlds leads to a second worry. The only way to determine which worlds are similar to the actual world, once an actual world has been determined, are to see what happens in the actual world and find worlds in which the same events occur. Thus, the truth of what would happen in close, but merely possible, worlds seems to be determined by what happens in the actual world. If this is true, then it appears that what

agents in the actual world do grounds God's middle knowledge about what they *would* do. But this leads to a viciously circular explanation, for now we have the actual world grounding the knowledge that is required to determine which world to make actual. That is, God's decision to make one world actual is based upon His middle knowledge, which is in turn based upon what agents do in the actual world. But if there is already a world that has been actualized, one that grounds God's middle knowledge, then there is no longer a question about which world to actualize. The only way to avoid the impotence of middle knowledge is to argue that the agent's actual actions do not ground her counterfactuals of freedom. But then we are left wondering how she is free, since it is no longer she who determines what she does. Thus, middle knowledge is either too late in the game to be used prior to the agent's actions (and thus is incapable of giving God any foreknowledge) or it removes the agent's freedom entirely. So it seems the only way to make Molinism work (to make sense of middle knowledge) is either to deny the presence of God's foreknowledge or the existence of human free will, both of which are typically unacceptable to the DO compatibilist.

Having rejected all three of the DO compatibilist responses to the foreknowledge dilemma, I argued that we need to be incompatibilists regarding non-causal determinism but in such a way that we do not give up either God's omniscience or our own libertarian freedom. I suggested there are two ways to do this: either modify our understanding of God's omniscience or modify our understanding of libertarian freedom. In chapters two, three and four, I investigated the second of these two options. David Hunt has offered an incompatibilist response to the foreknowledge dilemma that utilizes the idea of sourcehood. According to Hunt, what is at the heart of libertarian free will is not alternative possibilities but rather sourcehood. (Recall that the sourcehood condition we have been using is really two-fold. First, the agent must add something to the causal history that is needed to generate the end result, the action. And second, it must be the case that there are not sufficient conditions for her so acting that lie outside of her control.) If the agent is the proper source of her actions, even if she lacks alternative possibilities, she is free concerning that action and can be held responsible for it. Hunt points out that if it is truly sourcehood that grounds free will, then free will is incompatible with causal determinism

but, importantly, compatible with divine foreknowledge.²⁴¹ While I think this is a more promising route to take, I also rejected Hunt's DO incompatibilist solution for a few reasons. First, I agreed with Kevin Timpe's assessment that while source incompatibilism is a viable account of free will, it is only so if it incorporates the existence of alternative possibilities. This is because it seems impossible that an agent could be the proper source of her actions without having some alternative possibilities at least once in a while. That is, in order to meet the second condition for sourcehood, that there fail to be sufficient conditions for her actions that lie outside her control, she must have a choice between alternative paths. If she does not, source incompatibilism does not look any different from source compatibilism, and fails to offer a libertarian alternative. Second, I noted that this move to source incompatibilism is often motivated by the purported success of Frankfurt-style cases. Frankfurt-style cases are philosophical thought experiments in which an imaginary agent finds herself in a scenario in which she does not have any robust alternatives but when she acts, our intuition is that she remains responsible for her action. Hunt takes it that these cases, in principle, show that alternatives cannot lie at the heart of free will and are not even necessary for free will and responsibility. I argued that while many Frankfurt-style cases have been offered, none has successfully eliminated all robust alternatives unless they do so whilst removing the intuition that the agent in question retains her freedom. But without a successful story in which an agent is clearly acting freely, but lacks alternatives, we are left with no reason to think that free will can exist without the ability to do otherwise. If this is so, then divine foreknowledge is *not* compatible with free will.

In chapter four, I turned my attention to divine free will and asked if we need to endorse a view like Hunt's to save God's free will in light of His own moral perfection. I argued that we do not. I noted that if one endorses a strong view of God's nature (one on which God is the best possible being and on which God cannot act without sufficient reason to do so), then it looks as if this must be the best world and God's nature dictated that He create it. Thus, He did not have any alternatives to the course of action He took. Furthermore, the same can be said for all of God's decisions and actions. I noted that if we can claim that God is somehow responsible for His nature or character (perhaps by being its source), then He would be responsible for

²⁴¹ While Hunt argues that free will is compatible with divine foreknowledge, I refer to his view as a DO incompatibilist view (concerning free will and divine omniscience) because he needs to modify the libertarian account of free will to gain compatibility.

everything that issues from it. But I rejected the possibility that God can be responsible for His own nature precisely because God's nature is essential to Him and He couldn't have chosen a different one if He wanted to (and couldn't even want a different nature) and because it is unclear how God could be responsible for His nature without using some part of that nature to do so. There has to be some element of God's character in virtue of which He wills the rest but over which He has no control. Thus, I argued that if one adopts this strong version of God's character, then we are simply left with no divine freedom. Source incompatibilism cannot help us. Furthermore, if we reject a strong understanding of God's nature (which I think we should) source incompatibilism is unnecessary because then God will often have several alternatives and we can easily claim that such alternatives are necessary for His freedom. Thus I rejected a need to introduce source incompatibilism in order to save divine freedom.

There is one solution to the foreknowledge dilemma that I have not yet discussed. And it should not come as a surprise that it is the solution I find most promising. I left the first chapter offering two directions we could take, both arguing that God's omniscience, *traditionally understood*, is incompatible with libertarian free will, *traditionally understood*. The first, Hunt's solution, argues that we need to redefine libertarian free will. I rejected this route. But the second, often referred to as "Open Theism," argues that we redefine God's omniscience. On this view free will is compatible with God's omniscience but not with God's foreknowledge of human free action. Since we have free will, it is clear that God does not have foreknowledge of our actions, though He remains omniscient. It is to this view that I now turn.

Open Theism

According to traditional Christian theology (following Anselm), God is understood as the greatest thing, than which none greater can be conceived. But what does this mean? Critically, it means that God is all-good, all-knowing and all-powerful. As we have seen in Chapter 4, omnibenevolence is not as simple to define as it may, at first, appear. But it may seem that omnipotence and omniscience are self-explanatory: God can do anything and knows everything.²⁴² But traditionally, theists have not left omnipotence unqualified and should not, I

²⁴² "God knows everything" can be understood, perhaps, as God has the ability to answer correctly any question that may be asked of Him.

would suggest, leave omniscience unqualified. Omnipotence, rather than involving the ability to do *anything at all* is better understood as the ability to do *anything that is logically possible*.²⁴³ Thus, it is not a criticism of theism to come up with some logically impossible task that God cannot perform, e.g. creating a round square. (All of the theists working on the foreknowledge dilemma, it is worth noting, implicitly or explicitly accept this modified definition of omnipotence as evidenced by the fact that they find a real tension between God's foreknowledge and human free will. If one thinks that God is capable of the logically impossible, then one thinks that God can bring about contradictions and so the foreknowledge dilemma would not pose a problem.) Now many theists leave omniscience unqualified and believe that God knows absolutely everything. But the Open Theist proposes a modification directly parallel to the modification of omnipotence. Why? Because, as Peter van Inwagen notes, God's "great-making properties need to be metaphysically possible and omniscience, as traditionally understood, is metaphysically impossible."²⁴⁴ William Hasker offers the following (re)definition of God's omniscience:

God is omniscient =_{df} It is impossible that God should at any time believe what is false, or fail to know any true proposition such that his knowing that proposition at that time is logically possible.²⁴⁵

The revisionist element of this definition is the latter half: God can still be omniscient and fail to know some true things, provided these true things are logically impossible for God to know at that particular time. And according to the Open Theist who responds to the foreknowledge dilemma, knowledge of future free actions (be they human or divine) is logically impossible. As van Inwagen writes, "[t]o ask an infallible being now to have or now to acquire any determinate belief about the future actions of a free agent is to ask it to bring about a metaphysically impossible state of affairs."²⁴⁶ This is not to say that God cannot know *anything* about the future, but rather He cannot know free actions in advance of their occurrence. He may know about future events that are logically necessary and about future actions that He will have overriding

²⁴³ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, Q. 25, ad. 3

²⁴⁴ Peter Van Inwagen, "What Does an Omniscient Being Know about the Future?", *Oxford Studies in Philosophy of Religion*, Vol 1, Ed. Jonathan L. Kvanvig (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) 225-26.

²⁴⁵ William Hasker, *God, Time and Knowledge* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989) 187.

²⁴⁶ Van Inwagen 224.

reason to perform, depending on whether or not these things are logically possible to know at that particular time.^{247 248} But there are some things that seem highly definite but that He cannot know for certain, such as causally determined events that can only be prevented by God's own intervention, e.g. the rising of the sun. Unless God knows that He has overriding reason not to intervene, He cannot know for sure in advance that even these events will occur. Furthermore, the class of future events that God cannot know anything about includes all future free actions and their ramifications, or in other words, the class of future events that generate the foreknowledge dilemma.

Reading this, one may wonder if I have in mind a revisionist conception of knowledge, one on which someone cannot know something about the future unless it is certain (the probability is 1) that it will happen. On such a conception of knowledge, it would be impossible for anyone to know in advance what someone will freely do. But this seems wrong, since we often know in advance what our loved ones (those we know very well) will do. Take, for example, a husband Joe and his wife Susan. Joe can know for certain that in spite of their current rough economic patch, Susan will, in fact, not hold up a bank tomorrow. We certainly think that if it turns out that Susan does not rob a bank tomorrow, that Joe knew in advance that she would not do so. I am perfectly comfortable with claiming that Joe knows in advance that Susan will not rob a bank and thus I do not mean to offer a revisionist account of knowledge in the typical case (that of a fallible knower). But the existence of an *infallible* knower (of Susan's free actions tomorrow) is ruled out by the presence of Susan's libertarian free will. This is because, while Joe could turn out to be wrong about his belief that Susan will not rob a bank, an infallible knower cannot be wrong. Thus, if the infallible knower believes (and belief is a necessary condition for knowledge) that Susan will not rob a bank tomorrow (and not, the weaker claim that Susan is highly unlikely to rob a bank tomorrow), then Susan's failure to rob the bank cannot be free. So, perhaps, I am relying on a revisionist account of divine knowledge but it is not simply my own revision for it is precisely this understanding of divine knowledge that drives the entire foreknowledge dilemma. As Nelson Pike notes, the "problem of divine foreknowledge has as one of its pillars the claim that truth is *analytically* connected with God's *beliefs*" whereas

²⁴⁷ Richard Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) 180-81.

²⁴⁸ The last portion of this sentence is extremely important. It may be the case that the logical necessity or the overriding reasons are generated by, at least in part, human free actions and so God could not know these things until the requisite human actions take place. This may be well in advance of these future events or could be immediately prior to them but this type of foreknowledge is possible under this definition of omniscience.

human foreknowledge is merely “contingently conjoined to belief.”²⁴⁹ So, I am claiming here that God cannot know for certain that Susan will not rob a bank; that is, God cannot have the unqualified belief that Susan will not freely rob a bank tomorrow. If God has such an unqualified belief about a future action, that future action cannot be free because it is not possible that God’s belief turn out to be false. So what I think is impossible, if we assume that libertarian free will does exist, is that God believes that Susan will freely not rob a bank tomorrow. God can believe that the probability of Susan freely robbing a bank tomorrow is very low, for the truth of this belief is compatible with Susan actually robbing the bank tomorrow, but God cannot believe that it is certain that Susan will freely not hold up the bank tomorrow. Thus, when I say that God cannot know in advance that Susan will not rob the bank, I mean to say that God cannot believe that it is certain that Susan will not rob the bank tomorrow. In a weaker sense of knowledge, one on which God merely believes that the probability is very close to 0 that Susan will rob the bank tomorrow, God can have foreknowledge but it is not this kind of foreknowledge that proponents of a strong sense of omniscience have in mind. Because this is not typically what is meant by divine foreknowledge, then, I hesitate to call this knowledge at all but rather a belief that something is unlikely to occur, which is structurally different from Joe’s belief that Susan will certainly not rob the bank tomorrow.²⁵⁰ Thus, for the remainder of the chapter, when I say that God did not (or could not) have a prior belief (or knowledge) of a certain future free action, I mean that God cannot believe that this future free action is certain. He can have a probabilistic belief about the future free action, but this, I would like to posit, is an entirely different belief.

Open Theists all agree on a central tenet that, in the words of John Martin Fischer, Patrick Todd and Neal A. Tognazzini, “there are things that happen that God has not always believed – and hence has not always known – would happen.”²⁵¹ This main thesis of Open Theism is the key element that allows such a neat response to the foreknowledge dilemma. But Open Theists offer different reasons for thinking that God cannot know everything. There are

²⁴⁹ Nelson Pike, “Divine Omniscience and Voluntary Action,” *The Philosophical Review* 74 (1965) 43.

²⁵⁰ While it is possible to speak of degrees of belief, I don’t think this is the best model for God’s beliefs precisely because they are infallible. Thus, when God believes that Susan is highly unlikely to rob the bank tomorrow, this is a different belief (albeit a weaker one) than if God believed that Susan would not rob the bank tomorrow. It is not a weaker version of the same belief but is rather a wholly different one. This is another difference, I think, between God’s knowledge and our knowledge for I think it makes complete sense to speak of Joe’s beliefs about Susan’s future actions as coming in degrees.

²⁵¹ John Martin Fischer, Patrick Todd, and Neal A. Tognazzini, “Re-Reading Nelson Pike’s, ‘Divine Omniscience and Voluntary Action,’” *Philosophical Papers* 38.2 (2009) 252-53. Online.

three main versions of Open Theism, each with a different explanation for why God is incapable of knowing some future events. According to the first camp (OP1) there are truth values that attach to future free actions but God cannot know these in advance. That is, on this view, it is currently either true or false that I will freely go for a walk with my son this afternoon. But God does not know (for certain) which one it is because there is nothing at this time that guarantees that I will or will not go for that walk.²⁵² If there were such a guaranteeing factor, then my future action would fail to be free. Thus, while propositions about what future free actions may be true or false, God cannot know them. On this version of Open Theism, the very nature of freedom makes it impossible to know (for certain) before the action that it will occur. If God were to infallibly believe right now that I will go for that walk this afternoon, then by infallibly believing it, God renders my action unfree. Thus, it is built into the definition of freedom that if I act freely, it is logically impossible to know in advance how I will freely act.²⁵³

A second version of Open Theism (OP2) holds that the future is indeterminate and so there are no true propositions for God to believe about the future. This view takes seriously the “branching paths” understanding of the future and argues that no one can know future free actions because there is nothing yet to know. It is not yet true or false that I will take a walk with my son this afternoon and so God cannot have a belief of the certainty of the occurrence or nonoccurrence of this possible future action. John Sanders explains this understanding of God’s omniscience:

God has exhaustive knowledge of the past and the present and knows the future as partly definite (closed) and partly indefinite (open). The future is not completely fixed, but open, to what both God and humans decide to do, so there

²⁵² Swinburne 181-182.

²⁵³ Richard Swinburne wonders if God could have enough information about our characters to accurately predict beforehand how we will act because our actions are so intertwined with our characters. (The idea here, I think, is that humans are connected to their characters in a way that it is very difficult to act wholly out of character. Thus, human freedom might be such that it is a diminished freedom, diminished just enough that God can always tell in advance what we will do by reading off of our characters. I worry that the only way to get accurate predictability is to diminish freedom to such an extent that it is no longer the strong libertarian kind of freedom that we have in mind.) He leaves open this possibility (a possibility most other Open Theists would explicitly reject) and so allows that human free will may be compatible with divine foreknowledge but argues that God’s future free actions cannot be determined by his character because divine freedom is more perfect than human freedom. And thus, Swinburne leaves open the possibility that it is only divine free actions that are logically impossible to know in advance, though he expresses serious doubts that human free actions aren’t likewise impossible to know beforehand (Swinburne 176-77).

are numerous possible futures (not just one). God knows as possibilities and probabilities those events which might happen in the future. God, together with his creatures, creates the future as history goes along. Hence, God's omniscience is dynamic in nature.²⁵⁴

According to OP2, it is impossible for God to know future free actions not because the nature of freedom renders foreknowledge impossible, but rather because it is logically impossible to know that which does not have a truth value. It should be noted that neither this view nor OP1 claims that God is completely ignorant about future free actions. God knows a lot more about the world, including about our characters, than any of us know, even about ourselves. Thus, He is intimately familiar with all the possibilities and the probabilities of different events taking place, even if He cannot know definitively which it will be. Hasker writes, "God does not know the future free actions of agents, sure, but he does know all the possibilities of the future as well as the probabilities of each of these possible outcomes. As the probabilities change, God's knowledge of them will change accordingly."²⁵⁵ Sanders expresses a similar thought when he writes, "God knows all that can possibly happen at any one time and through his *foresight* and wisdom God is never caught off-guard."²⁵⁶ Even though God cannot know (for certain) how things will play out, He still knows all of the possibilities and is able to plan for each of them. He also knows which are more likely to come to fruition based on our characters, past actions and the possible future situations. It should be remembered that God knows all that it is logically possible to know and so knows vastly more than we can even comprehend and is able to use this knowledge to adequately prepare for all the possibilities that the future holds. However, as Hasker points out, the God of Open Theism is one who takes risks.²⁵⁷

A third way that an Open Theist can explain why God cannot know future free actions (OP3) has been recently offered by John Martin Fischer, Patrick Todd and Neal A. Tognazzini. On this view, not only are there truths about future free actions but God can also know them. What makes OP3 an Open Theist position is that it holds that the future changes and when it

²⁵⁴ John Sanders, The God Who Risks: A Theology of Divine Providence 2nd Edition (IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007) 206.

²⁵⁵ Hasker 189.

²⁵⁶ Sanders 206.

²⁵⁷ Hasker 197-98.

does, God's knowledge changes with it.²⁵⁸ OP3 finds a home between OP1 and OP2 for it agrees with OP1 that there is a truth to the matter about how the future will go but agrees with the branching paths view endorsed by OP2 and claims that the future is not thereby solidified. Just as it can be the case that I am writing now but will not be writing in 30 minutes from now, so it can be the case that it is true now that I will walk with my son this afternoon but will be false this afternoon when I am tired from running errands and decide to watch TV instead. God, according to OP3, knows at each time the truth value of the proposition "Tina will walk with her son on the afternoon of November 2nd, 2011," even if this truth value changes. God never holds false beliefs but rather when a proposition is true, he believes it and when it is no longer true, he no longer believes. His knowledge is therefore "fluid." On this view, then, God will know something about my afternoon walk, namely that I will freely go for a walk, but this knowledge hardly solidifies my afternoon activities. Rather, whether or not I go for that walk could change several times between now and then and ultimately will be decided by my free choice.²⁵⁹

I will not defend any one particular version of Open Theism, though I tend to think either OP1 or OP2 is the preferable version. Each makes some metaphysical claims about the future that could be challenged. However, it seems that one of the following has to be true: propositions about future free actions have truth values now that cannot change, propositions about future free actions have truth values now but these truth values can change or propositions about future free actions do not now have truth values. For each of these possibilities, Open Theism has an explanation for why God's omniscience does not pose a threat to free will. The first version has the added bonus that it shares its view of the truth value of future propositions with the defender of God's full foreknowledge. For divine foreknowledge of future free actions requires that there is something to know and thus all of the other solutions to the foreknowledge dilemma that I have rejected must assume that future free actions have current truth values that cannot change.

Just as every other proposed solution to the foreknowledge dilemma has certain issues with which it must contend, so too does Open Theism. The most commonly cited problem is the one posed by prophesy. If God does not know what humans (or Himself, for that matter) will freely do in the future, how can we make sense of the numerous prophesies in the Old and New Testament in which God seemingly predicts future free actions? This is a problem I cannot

²⁵⁸ Fischer et al. 263.

²⁵⁹ Fischer et al. 265-66.

adequately handle in this chapter, but it is worth noting that this is an issue of Biblical interpretation (how we make sense of certain passages in the Bible that claim that God offers insight into the future) and not a difficult metaphysical concern. It is a serious challenge, nonetheless. The Open Theist is not without a response, however. First, many prophecies are conditional.²⁶⁰ For instance, God often warns the Israelites that should they turn from the Law He has given them, He will punish them. But this is not a claim about what is true *now* about the future, but rather what will be true if the Israelites turn from their God. These prophecies are consistent with God's lack of knowledge about the future and with the changing truth value of future-tensed propositions.²⁶¹ Second, not all prophecies make claims about future free actions. Rather, some concern what God has overriding reason to perform, no matter what humans freely perform in the meantime, such as bringing the whole world to a final judgment day, perhaps, or human actions that God makes causally inevitable, such as the "hardening of Pharaoh's heart."²⁶² These actions are knowable by God in advance because they will not be performed freely. As Hasker points out, "God's capacity to control the detailed course of events is limited only by his self-restraint, not by any inability to do so."²⁶³ Open Theism should not be interpreted as a limit on God's power but rather His knowledge and so He is perfectly capable of telling us in advance what His plan for the future involves. And third, just as we make predictions about the future actions of those we know based on past involvement or knowledge of their characters, so God can make predictions about the future that are based on a vast wealth of knowledge about the past, present, and future possibilities.²⁶⁴ God will know the likelihood of any possible future event (at least, the likelihood based on everything that it is logically possible for Him to know at the time) and so may believe that certain things are highly likely to occur. He can then make predictions based on these beliefs, though such predictions do not guarantee that the event will happen. As Peter van Inwagen points out, the Open Theist may have to bite the bullet and claim here that God makes promises based on incomplete information, though the information He has available to Him far surpasses the knowledge that we possess.²⁶⁵ But I don't think that this need

²⁶⁰ Sanders 209.

²⁶¹ William Hasker has argued that even prophecies that are not explicitly conditional should be understood as such and finds Biblical support for such an understanding of prophesy (194).

²⁶² Sanders 209.

²⁶³ Hasker 196.

²⁶⁴ Hasker 194-195, Sanders 209.

²⁶⁵ Van Inwagen 229-230.

constitute a huge concession of the part of the Open Theist, for there is no reason to believe that the majority of prophecies are of this form (or any, for that matter).

On the other hand, there are numerous benefits to adopting Open Theism as the solution to the foreknowledge dilemma, not least of which is the fact that Open Theism avoids the major (I would argue, fatal) issues faced by the other solutions. First, Open Theism avoids the metaphysical problems that plague both the Boethian and Molinist solutions. Both of these views are tasked with explaining the causal relationship between God and humans. But both have difficulty explaining how God knows what our temporal actions will be, the Boethian because God and humans do not interact within time, and the Molinist because the concept of middle knowledge is metaphysically challenged. Open Theism has no such problematic metaphysical commitments and easily explains how it is that God knows what He knows: He learns about free actions in much the same way that we do. Second, Open Theism can better explain God's personal relationship with us than can the Boethian solution. God learns about our actions in time and responds to them. He does not know in advance how we will act and so He can have a wide variety of emotional and psychological responses. This, I would argue, makes more sense of the Biblical image of God, an image that the Boethian must dismiss as metaphorical. Third, while Open Theism does not offer a view on which God has *more* sovereignty than the other views, it does not offer less than they do. One of the problems with the Boethian and Molinist pictures is that they claim to save God's sovereignty by ascribing to Him more knowledge than Open Theism, but this knowledge, I have argued, is largely useless for God's actions in the world because they come "too late" for God to use them. According to Open Theism, God lacks this knowledge of the future, but since this knowledge would be largely useless anyway, I fail to see how this could be a challenge to Open Theism. Just as on every other theory that takes seriously libertarian free will, on an Open Theist picture, God is a risk-taker. But this does not mean that He is not still in control. He can make things turn out as He wishes by simply removing free will when necessary. And He has wisdom and knowledge far beyond our comprehension, even without knowing certain portions of the future. Furthermore, God remains omnipotent and so is free to respond to our free actions as He chooses. As John Sanders points out, God is still capable of deciding how the world will operate on the Open Theist view:

God is the sovereign determiner of the sort of sovereignty he will exercise. God is free to sovereignly decide not to determine everything that happens in history.... In the God-human relationship God sometimes decides alone what will happen; at other times God modifies his plans in order to accommodate the choices, action and desires of his creatures.²⁶⁶

Fourth, Open Theism is not guilty of seriously misinterpreting words, such as “belief,” as is the Okhamist. Everything the Open Theist offers seems at least *prima facie* consistent with what we know about how the world operates. One could claim that Open Theism similarly misunderstands and redefines the term “omniscience” and so *does* suffer from this same issue. However, I have attempted to motivate the redefinition by pointing out that it mirrors the redefinition of omnipotence endorsed by traditional Christian theology. Thus, this redefinition is not *ad hoc* and should not be regarded with the same suspicion that should be afforded the Ockhamist’s usage of the term “belief.” And finally, unlike source incompatibilism, Open Theism works with the traditional view of human free will and thus can easily distinguish itself from CD compatibilist views. While some source incompatibilists can explain this difference, those who wish to use their redefinition of free will to solve the foreknowledge dilemma cannot do so without first offering a much fuller explanation of control and ultimacy on their model.

In addition to avoiding all the pitfalls of the other solutions, Open Theism provides a unique response to William Rowe. As discussed in Chapter 4, Rowe argues that for every particular divine action, either there is a best option or there is not. If there is a best option, God cannot be free, for His nature would dictate how God should act. If there isn’t a best option, then God cannot act because He needs sufficient reasons for acting. Given the existence of the actual world, Rowe concludes, either this is the best possible world and God cannot be free concerning it or God does not exist, because if He did He could not create a world knowing there was a better one available. Rowe notes that both alternatives are problematic for the theist. The Open Theist, however, has a response. For many theists, it seems plausible that the current world is not the best possible world, but much of what is wrong with the world (the parts that could be

²⁶⁶ Sanders 174.

improved) can be attributed to human choices.²⁶⁷ So the Open Theist can offer a third alternative. Regardless of whether or not there is a best possible world, God cannot know in advance which world is the best or even which is better than another, for these relationships are determined by what creatures freely do in that world. The possible choice that God faces is between the creation of a world with free beings, the creation of a world without free beings and the creation of no world at all. If He chooses a world that includes free agents, He cannot know which set of free agents and situations will bring the best result for, as we have seen, such knowledge is metaphysically impossible.^{268 269}

Not only does Open Theism explain how God could be free regarding His creative act but it also explains how He could be free regarding countless other actions. I have conceded that in cases where there is a best possible action and God knows which action it is, God is not free concerning that action because His nature would determine how He is to act. But if Open Theism is correct, then that class of actions may be very small indeed. If God had full foreknowledge of the future (and this foreknowledge were useful to Him, as is thought by those who argue for God's foreknowledge), then it is quite conceivable that, given what He knows about the future, there are several cases in which there is a clear best option. This is because God has available to Him all the facts about the case. But according to Open Theism, God does not have full

²⁶⁷ Some may claim that one area in which the world could easily be improved is through a reduction of natural evil. This may be true but the theist (not just the Open Theist) is faced with the problem of evil and needs to explain its existence. Some have argued that natural evil is required for soul-making (for an example of this kind of argument see John Hick, *Evil and the God of Love* (London: Harper & Rowe, 1977)), others have argued that perhaps natural evil is such that while it looks as if this is a less-than-ideal distribution, that this is the minimum necessary for the best kind of world (it is intricately connected to other good-making qualities about this world) (an example of such an argument is offered by the character Demea in: David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (1779) (London: Longmans Green, 1878)). The theist could also argue that much natural evil is really moral evil because it is within the power of human kind to eradicate it (such as world poverty and malaria) and so the failure to do so is really due to human choices (David McNaughton brought this possibility to my attention). And finally, some theists have argued that all natural evil is really moral evil perpetrated by non-human moral agents, i.e. Satan and his demons (see: Alvin Plantinga, *Nature of Necessity*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974)). At any rate, for those theists who think that it is less than obvious that this is the best world, much of their concerns centers around human choices and for these the Open Theist has an easy response.

²⁶⁸ Whether or not His choice to create a world with free agents was a free one is up for debate (see Chapter 4) but once this decision was settled, God had all kinds of choices none of which were better than any others (as far as He knew). Rowe fails to consider a case in which God has several choices, none of which are clearly better than the others. And if we reject, as I have argued that we should, a strict sufficient reasons condition for action, then God has many alternatives and is therefore free concerning His creative choices.

²⁶⁹ Here a soul-making argument could be used quite nicely to explain natural evil. God not only doesn't know what each free creature will do in the future but also doesn't know in which situations they will exercise their freedom in a way pleasing to Him. So perhaps natural evil is required but God can't know in advance just how much is required and so the presence of superfluous natural evil can be explained through God's lack of knowledge about our future free actions.

knowledge of the future and so He often will not know which is the best course of action. Rather, He will have reasons for performing several actions based on the possibilities but since He does not know how we will act, He would rarely know for certain how things will turn out. Thus, if Open Theism is true, the class of actions in which God acts freely is conceivably much larger than the same class of actions in a world where God has exhaustive foreknowledge.

And finally, Open Theism offers a neat solution to the Problem of Moral Evil. Many theists appeal to free will to explain the evil in the world. It was better that God created us free rather than determined to always do good. Because it is logically impossible for God to causally determine free agents, in choosing to make us free, it is we who become responsible for the moral evil in the world, not God. Thus, there is no inconsistency between God's power and goodness and the existence of evil.²⁷⁰ But those theists who also believe that God has foreknowledge (or middle knowledge) of how humans will (or would) act are faced with the problem of explaining why God, knowing we would mess things up as badly as we have, would still create us or allow us to get to this point. Isn't God complicit in our guilt if He knew we were going to act this way and still created us and allowed us to continue on our current path? Isn't He responsible for creating us as opposed to other free agents who did less evil or none at all? The Open Theist, however, need not face these questions. It is logically impossible for God to know how we will use our freedom in the future (or how other possible agents would act should He create them). And thus, He creates us truly hoping for the best but without prior knowledge of how we will act. Thus, a fuller free will response to the Problem of Moral Evil is available to the Open Theist, a response that is not as unproblematic as the one offered by someone who endorses God's full foreknowledge.²⁷¹

²⁷⁰ For an in depth discussion of the Free Will Defense, see Alvin Plantinga, God, Freedom, and Evil (Grand Rapids: Harper & Row, 1974).

²⁷¹ I do not wish to claim that the Open Theist's response to the Problem of Evil is wholly adequate for I'm not sure that any theodicy or defense can be wholly adequate in explaining some evil in the world. I am largely persuaded by Marilyn McCord Adams' argument that there is some suffering so horrible that no appeal to free will or any other defense can explain it away. All we know is that there must be *some* reason God allows evil, even if we don't know exactly what that reason might be ("Horrendous Evils and The Goodness of God," The Problem of Evil, Ed. Marilyn McCord Adams and Robert Merrihew Adams (Oxford: Oxford University Press)). The reason I tout this response to the Problem of Moral Evil as a benefit of Open Theism is that the free will defense is often offered as the best defense we have, albeit inadequate, of the presence of moral evil and suffering in the world. Insofar as this is right, I would like to suggest that the Open Theist's version of the Free Will defense is the strongest and this is a merit of the view. However, even the Open Theist must face a multitude of challenges, including the one posed by Natural Evil and the presence of atrocities such as the Holocaust. The merits of Open Theism in this area, while significant, are not all-encompassing.

It is for these reasons that I think an Open Theist response to the foreknowledge dilemma is the promising path moving forward. And it is one that has implications in other areas, such as discussions surrounding the Problem of Evil, divine sovereignty and divine emotions. The benefits of Open Theism start, but certainly do not end, with its neat response to the Foreknowledge Dilemma.

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