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I begin by developing an argument for the conclusion that God's *causally determining* everything we do is compatible with human free- dom. Libertarian theists (and not *just* libertarians) will suspect that something must be wrong with the argument. They are right, and I explain why. I then point out that certain influential arguments for the conclusion that God's *foreknowing* everything we do is compatible with human freedom are in the same logical boat as this fallacious argu- ment. I look closely at two of these, showing how they go astray. I conclude with some morals suggested by this cautionary tale.

Since *omnipotence* concerns only power and says nothing about its exer- cise, a being might be omnipotent even if it never actually did anything. Such a being would obviously not be God, who is (among other things) creator of the universe.[1] But *how much* of an omnipotent being's powers must the being exercise in order to count as God? Some theists will be inclined to impose relatively minimal requirements on the deployment of God's omnipotent powers, while others can be expected to take the opposite tack. The latter position is probably more interesting from a metaphysical standpoint (leaving it for now an open question whether it is interestingly true or interestingly false!). It is therefore worth consid- ering how a "maximalist" answer to this question might be defended, and what morals might be drawn from the success or failure of this defense.

I

If an omnipotent being is one that *can* do *anything* (that is doable), an "omnificent" being (let us say) is one that *does* do *everything* (that is done). This is, of course, the merest gesture in the direction of an adequate con- cept; there is no reason to think that a philosophically sound analysis of "omnificence" would be any easier to obtain, or any less fraught with con- troversy, than the corresponding analysis of omnipotence.[2] For the pur- poses of this paper, however, the following may be sufficient elaboration:

A being X is *omnificent iff* everything Y that happens is such that X *uniquely determines* Y to happen, i.e., something X does is (causally)

sufficient for Y to happen, and nothing else is (causally) sufficient for Y to happen.[3]

With the concept of omnificence so understood, we can state our maximalist response to the question as follows: for a being to count as God, the being must be not only omnipotent but also omnificent.

How should this "doctrine of divine omnificence" be received? The fact is that it has a number of things going for it. It fits well with the Aristotelian view that God is pure actuality; it sanctions a straightforward approach to God's role as Ultimate Explainer; it provides a superlative foundation for divine sovereignty and providence; and it enjoys other advantages as well. There is one consideration, however, that would appear to trump this doctrine's manifold merits. If God does everything, then creatures do nothing; and if there is no free agency (other than God's), there is no moral responsibility (other than God's). This is a religiously (not to mention humanistically) unacceptable consequence. It is for this reason, presumably, that theists who might otherwise find much to attract them in the doctrine of divine omnificence—theists like, for example, the great medieval theologians Augustine, Anselm and Aquinas, and the great Reformers Luther and Calvin—approach this doctrine only asymptotically, as it were, seeking in the end to distinguish it from their own positions, or at least to qualify it in such a way that human responsibility is somehow preserved.

But perhaps this skittishness in the face of divine omnificence is unwarranted. Theists, no less than nontheists, like to have their cake *and* eat it whenever possible, and this is arguably a case in which it is indeed possible.

Let's first restate the problem a bit more carefully. If God *is* omnificent, omnificence is presumably one of His essential attributes; so God would be omnificent in every world in which He exists. Moreover, there is no world in which He does not exist. So

(a)   God exists in all possible worlds and is omnificent in all possible worlds.

Now consider some presumptive instance of agency whose freedom we may fear threatened by the doctrine of divine omnificence—say,

(b)   Adam freely eats of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

If (b) is true, then so is

(c)   Adam eats of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

But given (a) and the analysis of 'omnificence', it follows from (c) that

(d)   God uniquely determines Adam to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

And (d), the theological faint-hearts affirm, is inconsistent with (b), at least

on any robustly libertarian understanding of what it is for someone to do something *freely.*

If the following argument is sound, however, this concern would appear to be misplaced. Whatever one might think about the consistency of (b) and (d), surely *(b) and (c)* are consistent with each other. Given that (b) entails (c), these two propositions could be *in*consistent only if (b) were logically impossible. But no one who is seriously concerned that divine omnificence threatens creaturely free agency will allow that (b) is logically impossible, since in that case there could be no Adamic freedom for divine omnificence to threaten. But if (b) and (c) are consistent, then so are (b) and (d)—at least on the assumption of divine omnificence. For given (a), propositions (c) and (d) are *strictly equivalent* to each other—there is no logically possible world in which one is true and the other is false. But if (d) is strictly equivalent to (c), and (c) is consistent with (b), it follows necessarily that (b) is consistent with (d). There is no good reason, then, to reject the doctrine of divine omnificence—at least there is no good reason rooted in a concern for creaturely free agency.

Call this defense of divine omnificence 'The Proposal.' Since the advantages of divine omnificence are real, and The Proposal shows this doctrine's only identified disadvantage to be bogus, theists ought to embrace divine omnificence.

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II

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I don't suppose for a moment that The Proposal is really sound. This is a "modest proposal" in the Swiftian sense: the compatibility of divine omnificence with libertarian freedom and the argument just used to demonstrate this compatibility are about as worthy of serious acceptance as Jonathan Swift's satirical proposal for alleviating the famine in Ireland and the sophistical arguments he marshaled on behalf of this scheme. But if this is correct (and it surely is), where exactly does The Proposal go astray?[4]

At the heart of The Proposal is an argument of this form:

(1) p is consistent with q
(2) q is strictly equivalent to r

therefore

(3) p is consistent with r

There are at least a couple of ways of interpreting the propositional relations which occur in this argument-form, and the surface plausibility of The Proposal not surprisingly turns on the resulting equivocation.

One univocal reading of these relations goes something like this (call this the "A-reading"):

(1A) There is nothing about p, just by itself, which rules out the possibility that q is also true.

(2A) There is no difference in the informational content of q and r—
      they constitute the very same fact.

Therefore

(3A) There is nothing about p, just by itself, which rules out the pos-
      sibility that r is also true.

This is the more colloquial of the two readings, and it is correspondingly
less precise. What exactly is "informational content," and what are its
identity conditions? And what is it to take a fact "just by itself"—espe-
cially when considering this fact's implications for some other fact? But
the penumbra of vagueness surrounding these concepts is not so murky
as to render this argument-form unusable. If q and r are the *very same
fact*, any proposition that does not effectively exclude the possibility of q
cannot effectively exclude the possibility of r. This is surely a valid
inference, even if there are outstanding questions about how best to ana-
lyze the inference.
   Here is the other univocal reading (call this the "B-reading"):

(1B) There is a possible world in which p and q are both true.
(2B) In every possible world q and r have the same truth-value.

Therefore

(3B) There is a possible world in which p and r are both true.

This argument-form, too, is valid. Moreover, it's clearly different from the
A-reading, and the difference is not merely verbal. For example, when q =
2+2=5 and r = *James is a married bachelor*, (2B) is true (because q and r are both
necessarily false) but (2A) seems *not* to be true: surely q and r cannot be say-
ing the same thing (can they?), since the one is about arithmetical relations
between *numbers* and the other is about the marital status of a *person*.
Likewise, when p = *Caesar died in 44 BC* and q = *There is a greatest prime num-
ber*, (1B) is false, since there is no possible world in which there is a greatest
prime number, and so *a fortiori* there is no possible world in which there is a
greatest prime number and Caesar died in 44 BC. But given this same valua-
tion for p and q, (1A) is intuitively true: while the existence of a greatest
prime number is indeed inconsistent with certain facts, the facts with which
it is inconsistent are the various axioms and lemmas making up the premises
of the Prime Number Theorem, not the fact of Caesar dying in 44 BC.
   Given these two valid but distinct argument-forms, which one offers the
best way of understanding The Proposal? This question turns out to be
moot, since neither one yields a sound argument. Substituting (b) for p, (c)
for q, and (d) for r, the A-reading becomes

(1a) There is nothing about *Adam freely eats of the tree of the knowledge
      of good and evil*, just by itself, which rules out the possibility that
      Adam eats of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is also true.

(2a) There is no difference in the informational content of *Adam eats of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* and *God determines Adam to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*—they constitute the very same fact.

Therefore

(3a) There is nothing about *Adam freely eats of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, just by itself, which rules out the possibility that *God determines Adam to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* is also true.

So interpreted, there is absolutely nothing to recommend the second premise of the argument.[5]

Perhaps the A-reading's failure is rooted in its relative lack of logical precision, and the argument will show itself to better effect when the notions of 'consistency' and 'equivalence' are cashed out in terms of possible worlds. Here, then, is the B-reading:

(1b) There is a possible world in which *Adam freely eats of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* and *Adam eats of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* are both true.

(2b) In every possible world *Adam eats of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* and *God uniquely determines Adam to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* have the same truth-value.

Therefore

(3b) There is a possible world in which *Adam freely eats of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* and *God uniquely determines Adam to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* are both true.

This argument is perhaps not so obviously defective as its A-reading counterpart, but it fails nonetheless. The argument is supposed to refute the critic of divine omnificence who objects that universal divine determinism is incompatible with creaturely libertarian freedom. According to this critic, if the doctrine of divine omnificence is true, there is no world in which Adam (or anyone) freely does anything. But in that case (1b) is clearly false. Insofar, then, as The Proposal appeals to (1b) as a premise, it simply begs the question against the critic of divine omnificence.

The Proposal is seductive because it's easy to miss the equivocation that occurs when one's attention shifts from the truth of its premises to the validity of its inference. 'Consistency' has a well-established meaning in ordinary language and it is therefore natural to construe the first premise in accordance with the *A*-reading, on which it is true; 'strict equivalence' is a term of art and it is therefore natural to construe the second premise in accordance with the *B*-reading, on which it is also true. Anyone approaching The Proposal in a spirit of charity will therefore find it easy to interpret

the premises so that both are true. As to whether the conclusion follows from the premises, the most straightforward way to operationalize the notion of 'consistency' when assessing the argument's validity is in the explicitly modal terms provided by the B-reading, and on this interpretation The Proposal is clearly valid. Unfortunately the B-reading of premise one is not a neutral paraphrase displaying *the* meaning of this premise and differing from the A-reading only in its greater analytical utility; it is an *alternative* to the meaning provided by the A-reading, and it is on the A-reading that this premise was judged to be true. In fact (as we have seen), the opponent of divine omnificence who regards (1a) as unexceptionable, and on those grounds concedes the first premise, does not accept (1b)—indeed, her very reason for opposing divine omnificence commits her to the position that, if God *is* omnificent, (1b) is false.

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III

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No one to my knowledge has embraced The Proposal, at least not in the bald fashion in which it has been presented here. What makes it worth refuting is that similar arguments crop up in other contexts. The contemporary debate over the compatibility of human freedom and divine *omniscience* provides an especially rich breeding ground for such arguments. I want now to look at two examples of compatibility arguments which, though they concern omniscience rather than omnificence, nevertheless belong to the same logical family as The Proposal. One of these is The Proposal's identical twin, while the other is merely a close relation.

The first example comes from Ted Warfield, so let's call it 'Warfield's Argument.'[6] Warfield's Argument is directed against "theological incompatibilists" whose doubts about the compatibility of divine omniscience and human freedom rest on grounds of the following sort. Given the traditional doctrine of divine omniscience,

> (α)   God exists in all possible worlds and is omniscient in all possible worlds.

Now consider some presumptive instance of agency whose freedom we may fear threatened by the doctrine of divine omniscience—say,

> (β)   Plantinga will freely climb Mount Rushmore in 2000 AD.

If (b) is true, then so is

> (γ)   It was true in 50 AD that Plantinga will climb Mount Rushmore in 2000 AD.

But given (α), it follows from (γ) that

> (δ)   God knew in 50 AD that Plantinga will climb Mount Rushmore in 2000 AD.

The theological incompatibilist then avers that (β) and (δ) are inconsistent with each other. In defense of this claim, the incompatibilist appeals to some version of a familiar argument, dating back at least to St. Augustine[7] and revived in a particularly powerful form by Nelson Pike,[8] to the effect that, necessarily, Plantinga (i) *can* fail to climb Mount Rushmore in 2000 AD if (β) is true, but (ii) *cannot* fail to climb Mount Rushmore in 2000 AD if (δ) is true; hence (β) and (δ) are not cotenable. Call this argument for theological incompatibilism, in its most cogent form (whatever that might be), the *ATI*.

Warfield's strategy in responding to the foregoing concern is to ignore the ATI and construct instead a direct defense of the consistency of (β) and (δ). This defense is identical in form to the one The Proposal offers on behalf of the consistency of (b) and (d); that is, Warfield's Argument employs the argument-form

(1) p is consistent with q
(2) q is strictly equivalent to r

therefore

(3) p is consistent with r[9]

But for p Warfield's Argument substitutes (β) instead of The Proposal's (b); for q it substitutes (γ) instead of (χ); and for r it substitutes (δ) instead of (d).

In defense of the relevant substitution-instance of (1), Warfield notes that he is not offering an argument against the "logical fatalist," for whom the denial of (β) is supposed to follow from (γ) alone. Rather, he is defending the foreknowledge component of the doctrine of divine omniscience from concerns that have been raised within the ongoing debate over divine foreknowledge, and there is (he avers) "no participant in the foreknowledge debate (compatibilist or incompatibilist) who does not accept the falsity of logical fatalism." For this reason, he adds, "[r]elevant interlocutors… have no room to disagree with this assumption."[10]

It should be clear from our analysis of The Proposal what is wrong with this line. The "relevant interlocutors" agree with Warfield that the existence of true future-tense propositions about human actions does not by itself have any deleterious consequences for human freedom. But this only means that they accept the first premise of Warfield's Argument under the A-reading, which parses the argument as follows:

(1α) There is nothing about *Plantinga will freely climb Mount Rushmore in 2000 AD*, just by itself, which rules out the possibility that *It was true in 50 AD that Plantinga will climb Mount Rushmore in 2000 AD* is also true.

(2α) There is no difference in the informational content of *It was true in 50 AD that Plantinga will climb Mount Rushmore in 2000 AD* and *God knew in 50 AD that Plantinga will climb Mount Rushmore in 2000 AD*—they constitute the very same fact.

Therefore

> (3α) There is nothing about *Plantinga will freely climb Mount
> Rushmore in 2000 AD*, just by itself, which rules out the possibili-
> ty that *God knew in 50 AD that Plantinga will climb Mount
> Rushmore in 2000 AD* is also true.

But (2α) is prima facie absurd: on the A-reading, the second premise of
Warfield's Argument is no more acceptable than the second premise of
The Proposal.[11]

This leaves the B-reading, which Warfield himself clearly favors. So
construed, Warfield's Argument looks like this:

> (1β) There is a possible world in which *Plantinga will freely climb
> Mount Rushmore in 2000 AD* and *It was true in 50 AD that
> Plantinga will climb Mount Rushmore in 2000* are both true.

> (2β) In every possible world *It was true in 50 AD that Plantinga will
> climb Mount Rushmore in 2000 AD* and *God knew in 50 AD that
> Plantinga will climb Mount Rushmore in 2000 AD* have the same
> truth-value.

Therefore

> (3β) There is a possible world in which *Plantinga will freely climb
> Mount Rushmore in 2000 AD* and *God knew in 50 AD that
> Plantinga will climb Mount Rushmore in 2000* are both true.

But why should this rendition have any more bite for the "relevant inter-
locutors" than the A-Reading? Theological incompatibilists, after all, will
either *deny* (1β) or regard it as the very point at issue, given the doctrine of
divine omniscience.

Warfield has recently responded in this journal to two published cri-
tiques of his argument.[12] One comes from William Hasker,[13] who claims
(among other things) that Warfield's Argument assumes (β) to be logically
possible. Warfield's counterclaim is that (β)'s logical possibility is not an
"assumption" but "a strict consequence of something Hasker and I both
accept, namely, that [(β)] and [(γ)] are compatible," adding: "I assume that
there is nothing dialectically inappropriate in accepting a proposition
implied by a claim of my opponent."[14]

But Hasker and like-minded critics of divine foreknowledge clearly do
not accept that there is a logically possible world in which (β) is true if (α) is
true, so *a fortiori* they do not accept that there is a logically possible world
in which both (β) *and* (γ) are true if (α) is true. What they can be expected
to accept, given their rejection of logical fatalism, is the A-reading of the
first premise, and this reading is useless to Warfield's Argument. It is of
course open to Warfield to dismiss the A-reading's construals of 'consisten-
cy' and 'strict equivalence', perhaps on the grounds that they are not suffi-
ciently well-behaved from a logical standpoint to be countenanced in polite

philosophical conversation. But then Warfield should be questioning whether and in what sense his opponents really accept the first premise of Warfield's Argument, not attributing to them a reading of this premise which their very position commits them to rejecting.

The other critique comes from Anthony Brueckner,[15] who points out that there are bad arguments for true conclusions, and that a person can therefore reject the standard *arguments* for logical fatalism without thereby accepting that there are any possible worlds containing instances of free agency. (Such persons might think that free agency is impossible because they think that the relevant concept of 'freedom' is incoherent, or because they subscribe to some metaphysical position like divine omnificence or the principle of sufficient reason that they regard as incompatible with free agency.) Warfield's response is that Brueckner's point, while undeniable, fails to connect with anything in Warfield's Argument. The relevant premise of this argument is that (β) and (γ) are *consistent*, not merely that a certain argument from (γ) to the denial of (β) is unsuccessful. Since his opponent accepts the consistency claim, Warfield maintains that he is entitled to use this claim in arguing against the opponent.

Unfortunately Warfield's entitlement to this claim, even under the favorable B-reading, makes absolutely no difference to the success of his argument. Suppose Warfield's target audience is limited just to those who agree that there is a possible world in which (β) is true. This audience will assent to the conditional, *if* (α) is true, *then* there is a possible world in which (β) and (δ) are both true. But part of this audience—the very part that Warfield is trying to win over—has (in the ATI) what it regards as good reasons for thinking that there is *no* possible world in which (β) and (δ) are both true; moreover, there is nothing in Warfield's Argument that so much as addresses let alone refutes these reasons. For *this* audience the above conditional is the first step in a *modus tollens* argument demonstrating the untenability of (α), not a *modus ponens* proving the consistency of (β) and (δ). In the end, Warfield's Argument simply begs the question against the opposition.[16]

<center>*IV*</center>

Warfield's Argument provided the model I used when constructing The Proposal, so it's not surprising that it fails in exactly the same way. Similar Proposal-like efforts to reduce theological to logical fatalism have been made by Susan Haack, who regards the former as "no more than a needlessly (and confusingly) elaborated version of the argument for fatalism discussed by Aristotle in *de Interpretatione* 9,"[17] and by William Lane Craig.[18] It's not clear that an analysis of these arguments would add much to what has already been said about Warfield's Argument. I suggest then that we turn for our second example to an argument put forward by Alvin Plantinga—call it 'Plantinga's Argument'—which exhibits a bit more variation on the theme.[19]

Plantinga's Argument is like Warfield's in a number of respects: (i) it is directed against theological incompatibilists who deny the consistency of (β) and (δ) on grounds provided by the ATI; (ii) it is designed to settle a key dispute in favor of the ATI's critics while avoiding a direct engage-

ment with the ATI's defenders; and (iii) the theological incompatibilists who constitute the "relevant interlocutors" for the argument are those who agree with Plantinga that *logical* fatalism is a nonstarter. But instead of resting his argument, like Warfield, on the agreed consistency of (β) and (γ), Plantinga appeals to other common ground he shares with his opponents, namely, the judgment that (γ) is a so-called "soft fact" about the past. For readers unfamiliar with the hard fact/soft fact distinction and its relevance to fatalism, a little background is in order.

If the (logical or theological) fatalist's argument has the form
P, $\Box(P\supset Q)$, / $\therefore$ $\Box Q$,

it commits a modal fallacy, but if it takes the valid form

$\Box P$, $\Box(P\supset Q)$, / $\therefore$ $\Box Q$,

the fatalist must justify premising P as necessary. If P is a so-called "hard" fact about the past—one that is genuinely and solely about the past[20]—the premise is arguably justifiable: relative to the present, P would be "accidentally" or "temporally" necessary (not even God, Aquinas notes, can undo the past[21]). Such necessity would validly "transfer" to Q, and this implication of the future in the necessity of the past is precisely what the fatalist is after. (As Richard Taylor, a card-carrying logical fatalist, succinctly explains, "A fatalist . . . thinks of the future in the way we all think of the past."[22]) But if P is only a "soft" fact about the past—if it is only superficially about the past, or concerns the future as well as the past—then $\Box P$ is unavailable as a premise. Indeed, those who reject logical fatalism typically do so because they agree that the facts that play P's role in the logical fatalist's argument—facts like

(γ)   It was true in 50 AD that Plantinga will climb Mount Rushmore in 2000 AD

—are paradigmatically "soft" facts about the past. (One may also avoid logical fatalism by denying that there are any such facts as (γ), whether hard *or* soft; but then neither could an omniscient God know such facts, making this strategy unavailable to defenders of divine *fore*knowledge.) Plantinga is therefore entitled to assume that his theological incompatibilist opponents who reject logical fatalism will agree with him that propositions like (γ) may be true (since otherwise divine omniscience would not include the problematic foreknowledge) and that, when true, they constitute mere soft facts about the past (since otherwise there would be a good argument for logical fatalism).

With this common ground secured, Plantinga's Argument proceeds as follows. For divine foreknowledge to be incompatible with human freedom, at least on the grounds cited by the ATI, God's foreknowledge of creatures' putatively free future actions must be expressible as a hard fact about the past. Because God's past beliefs about the future count as *knowledge* only in virtue of the future turning out as God believed it would,

(δ)   God *knew* in 50 AD that Plantinga will climb Mount Rushmore
in 2000 AD

is not itself a hard fact about the past. For this reason a sophisticated theo-
logical incompatibilist would appeal instead to

(δ') God *believed* in 50 AD that Plantinga will climb Mount Rushmore
in 2000 AD,

a proposition that would appear to depend for its truth only on the charac-
ter of God's past cognitive states and so to constitute a genuinely hard fact
about the past. But Plantinga has an argument to show that (δ') no less
than (δ) must be a *soft* fact about the past. The relevant interlocutors agree
that (γ) is a soft fact about the past. But given that

(α)   God exists in all possible worlds and is omniscient in all possi-
ble worlds,

(γ) is strictly equivalent to (δ'). Since (γ) is a soft fact about the past and (γ)
is strictly equivalent to (δ'), it follows that (δ') is also a soft fact about the
past. But this undercuts the theological incompatibilist's only ground for
supposing that (δ') is necessary (prior to 2000 AD), and without such
necessity, the ATI cannot succeed. By misidentifying the crucial fact about
the past as *hard*, the argument for *theological* fatalism turns out to involve
the same mistake as the argument for *logical* fatalism.
    Plantinga's Argument employs the inference-form

(1*) q is a soft fact about the past
(2) q is strictly equivalent to r

therefore

(3*) r is a soft fact about the past,

with $q = (\gamma)$ and $r = (\delta')$. Is this inference-form valid, and does it remain
valid when its premises are interpreted so that they come out true?
Leaving aside the multiple ways of interpreting 'soft fact' in (1*) and (3*),
substitution-instances of (2) are susceptible to the same two readings as the
second premise of Warfield's Argument. The A-reading of (2), on which q
and r are the very same fact, does make it virtually undeniable that, if q is a
soft fact, r must be a soft fact as well (for *any* plausible interpretation of
'soft fact'); so construed, the argument-form is surely valid. Unfortunately
the relevant substitution-instance of (2), namely,

(2α)   There is no difference in the informational content of *It was true
in 50 AD that Plantinga will climb Mount Rushmore in 2000 AD*
and *God knew in 50 AD that Plantinga will climb Mount Rushmore
in 2000 AD*—they constitute the very same fact,

is just as surely false, since the one fact concerns *what Plantinga will do* and the other concerns *what God cognized.*[23]

The corresponding B-reading of this premise, namely,

(2β) In every possible world *It was true in 50 AD that Plantinga will climb Mount Rushmore in 2000 AD* and *God knew in 50 AD that Plantinga will climb Mount Rushmore in 2000 AD* have the same truth-value,

is not similarly dubious (given (a)), but the resulting argument is now of doubtful validity. For one thing, it's not at all clear that *having the same truth-value in every possible world* (as opposed to *being the same fact*) is enough to make *r* a soft fact just because *q* is a soft fact. This would, at the very least, require some argument.[24] But even if this inference were granted, there would still be no reason to employ it in the *modus ponens* favored by Plantinga rather than the *modus tollens* favored by his opponents. The incompatibilist, after all, has offered *reasons* for thinking that (δ') cannot be a soft fact about the past.[25] If (α) is true and the set of soft facts is closed under strict equivalence, these reasons for thinking that (δ') cannot be a soft fact about the past become reasons for thinking that (γ) cannot be a soft fact about the past. But the "relevant interlocutors" all agree that (γ) *is* a soft fact. Why then shouldn't they conclude, *so much the worse for* (α)? Plantinga's Argument, like Warfield's, provides the incompatibilist with no grounds for revising this judgment.[26]

A paradoxical feature of these various efforts to use some substitution-instance of (2) to preserve human freedom from divine determinism, whether it is determinism arising from God's exercise of power (as in The Proposal) or from His knowledge of the future (as in Warfield's Argument and Plantinga's Argument), is that a *less* maximalist line on these divine attributes might make the threat to human freedom *more* serious. If there is only "local" omnificence or omniscience—if, for example, everything that *I* do, but not everything that *everyone* does, is uniquely determined or infallibly foreknown by God—nothing in these various arguments is even relevant to showing that the affected agents remain free.[27] If there are cogent grounds for thinking that freedom is abridged when divine determinism makes God the true cause of an action or when divine foreknowledge precludes all alternatives to the action (and the grounds for the latter, at least, are admittedly controversial), these grounds should remain cogent as more and more of what happens gets done by God, and more and more of the future gets fixed by God's foreknowledge. But according to the compatibility arguments we have been considering, things get worse for human freedom only until God's agency and/or knowledge achieve complete ubiquity across events and worlds, at which point the relevant instance of (2) becomes true and my freedom (and everyone else's) is suddenly restored. This claim is (to say the least) highly counterintuitive.

It's not clear what the defenders of these arguments could say to make this result seem even half-way plausible, but the arguments' critics may suspect where the problem lies. If God's essential omnificence or omniscience means that His uniquely determining Adam to eat, or His infallibly

foreknowing that Plantinga will climb, is *nothing more* than the fact of Adam's eating or Plantinga's climbing, then it's hardly surprising that these facts about God should have no deleterious implications for human freedom. But it's also hard to see how 'omnificence' and 'omniscience', on this account, would be more than empty names, or why it should matter theologically whether God possesses these attributes.

<div style="text-align:center">*V*</div>

Responding to Hasker's charge that he simply assumes the truth of (α), Warfield claims that he assumes it only for the purpose of conditional proof, using it to "show that the consistency of [(β)] and [(δ)] follows . . . in just the way that one might argue that causal determinism is incompatible with human freedom by assuming the truth of determinism and deriving a 'no freedom' conclusion."[28] But in fact this is precisely how Warfield's *opponents*, the theological incompatibilists, make their case: by assuming the truth of divine omniscience and deriving a "no freedom" conclusion. The proper parallel to Warfield's brief for theological compatibilism would be a (nontheological) compatibilist who replies to the defender of an incompatibilist argument, like Peter van Inwagen's "Consequences Argument,"[29] as follows:

> You and I both agree that (i) there are instances of free agency. I believe, in addition, that (ii) universal causal determinism is true. You claim that I should reject (ii) because it is incompatible with (i). *Au contraire, mon frère!* Given (ii), to which I am entitled for the sake of argument, and then adding (i), which you cannot begrudge me because you accept it yourself, it *follows* that (i) is compatible with (ii).

This absurd *petitio principii* simply ignores all van Inwagen's reasons for thinking that causal determinism and freedom of will are *not* compatible. Likewise Warfield's Argument simply ignores all the reasons theological incompatibilists like Jonathan Edwards (who resolves the incompatibility one way) and William Hasker (who resolves it the other way) have offered for thinking that infallible foreknowledge and free agency are not compatible.

Call this type of defense, whose general form is given by omitting the specific content of (i) and (ii) in the indented passage above, 'The Shorter Proposal'. (Of its omniscience-version Hasker rightly notes that it does "everything Warfield's original argument does, with somewhat greater economy."[30]) An apparent example of The Shorter Proposal may be found in Augustine's classic discussion of the problem of divine foreknowledge *v.* human freedom in Book III of *On Free Choice of the Will*, when at the end of chapter 3 he summarizes the results of his investigation as follows:

> Thus, we believe both that God has foreknowledge of everything in the future and that nonetheless we will whatever we will. Since God foreknows our will, the very will that he foreknows will be what comes about. Therefore, it will be a will, since it is a will that he fore-

knows. And it could not be a will unless it were in our power. Therefore, he also foreknows this power. It follows, then, that his foreknowledge does not take away my power, since he whose fore-knowledge never errs foreknows that I will have it.[31]

In other words, if we begin by assuming (free) will, the truth about reality will include truths about future freely-willed actions; and if we further assume an omniscient deity, he will obviously foreknow these truths, since otherwise he would not know *everything*. Treated as an *argument* for the compatibility of divine foreknowledge and human freedom, this passage from Augustine clearly assumes the very point at issue.

Augustine does, however, do something that Warfield does not do: he goes on (in chapter 4) to explain how it is, by his lights, that the ATI goes wrong. The fact that he resolves the problem (to his satisfaction) in chapter 4 is some reason to think that he does *not* do so in chapter 3, and that the quoted passage must therefore play some other role in his exposition. Elsewhere I have argued that Augustine's real objective in chapter 3 is to encourage in the reader a lively sense that this (so far unresolved) problem is merely *aporetic* in nature.[32] For example, when responding to someone tempted to accept Zeno's Achilles argument, the first step might be to remind this person of everything that is implausible about Zeno's conclu-sion, thereby encouraging the suspicion that there *must* be something wrong with the argument; and this first step might be accomplished suc-cessfully without its contributing anything at all to the second step, which would be the actual unmasking of the fallacy on which the argument rests. Likewise, one of Augustine's points in chapter 3 (including the passage quoted above) is that knowledge *per se* does not appear to make any differ-ence to its objects: given a situation S, adding knowledge to S ought to leave the original features of S exactly as they were. If the truth is that Plantinga freely climbs, one would expect divine omniscience (absent some other exercise of divine power) to simply track this truth. There is some-thing deeply baffling, then, about the idea that divine foreknowledge alone could overturn the freedom of what might otherwise be a paradigmatic instance of free agency.[33]

That it's baffling is not, of course, a proof that it is *false*. (There are many baffling truths, and the preemption of human freedom by divine fore-knowledge might be one of these.) Nor, for that matter, does the experien-tial evidence against Zeno's conclusion demonstrate the falsity of the Parmenidean metaphysics for which Zeno was arguing. These are matters for further argument. Augustine supplies this further argument in chapter 4. His resolution of the foreknowledge problem turns out to anticipate Harry Frankfurt's position that a person who cannot do otherwise may nevertheless be free in the sense required for moral responsibility so long as the conditions which eliminated the person's alternatives "played no role at all in leading him to act as he did," so that in their absence "[h]e would have acted the same."[34] Divine foreknowledge, Augustine argues, is just such an alternative-eliminator ("God's foreknowledge does not force the future to happen"), and its implications for free will are benign.[35]

My purpose here is not to defend Augustine's particular solution to the

problem, which I have undertaken elsewhere (and which in any case would require much more than the two sentences at the end of the preceding paragraph!), but to contrast his approach with the fallacious blandishments of The Proposal and its ilk. Libertarians like Plantinga and Warfield who are compatibilists about human freedom and divine omnscience are presumably *in*compatibilists about human freedom and divine omnificence. If they are right on both counts (and I believe that they are), this must be in virtue of some difference between omniscience and omnificence. Justifying their position requires identifying this difference and explaining why it makes a difference. Their own arguments, which sidestep this issue, fail to engage their opponents' arguments, leaving them vulnerable to The Proposal and its defense of divine omnificence.

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NOTES

1.   Given that there *is* a universe. Of course this is just a *contingent* reason for rejecting this being's title to deity—assuming (with traditional theology) that there are worlds in which God exists but does not create a universe.

2.   Peter Geach, for example, finds the notion of 'omnipotence' unsalvageable and urges its replacement with the related notion of 'almightiness' in his "Omnipotence," *Philosophy* 48 (1973), pp. 7-20. Thomas P. Flint and Alfred J. Freddoso salvage the notion in their "Maximal Power," in *The Existence and Nature of God*, ed. Freddoso (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983), pp. 81-113, but the complexity of the task is revealed in their final formulation:

> (D)   S is omnipotent at t in W if and only if for any state of affairs p and world-type-for-S Ls such that p is not a member of Ls, if there is a world W* such that
> > (i)   Ls is true in both W and W*, and
> > (ii)   W* shares the same history with W at t, and
> > (iii)   at t in W* someone actualizes p,
> then S has the power at t in W to actualize p.

For a recent discussion in this journal, critical of some leading analyses of omnipotence, see Erik J. Wielenberg, "Omnipotence Again," *Faith and Philosophy* 17 (January 2000), pp. 26-47.

3.   The *id est* clause does not propose a definition or analysis of 'uniquely determines', a subject fraught with its own difficulties. Think of it instead as *stipulating* how 'uniquely determines' is to be understood for purposes of the present definition of omnificence. Two other comments on this clause: (i) since some will find the qualifier 'causally' overly restrictive while others will find the notion of divine determinism empty without it, I have left this decision up to the reader by putting the qualifier in parentheses; and (ii) the requirement that *nothing else* be (causally) sufficient for Y, inasmuch as it rules out the possibility that other beings may be co-agents with X, simply makes the subsequent argument cleaner—it is not intended to suggest that weaker requirements won't also raise problems of the sort mentioned in the next paragraph of the paper.

4.   Perhaps an even more pertinent question for some readers is this: why *care* where The Proposal goes astray, given that omnificence is a purely concocted attribute? An answer to this question may be found at the beginning of section III.

5.   And what if a hypothetical defender of divine omnificence were to dig in his heels at this point, insisting that our intuitions mislead us and that these really *are* the same fact, given (a)? Then the A-reading's fatal weakness will simply shift from premise two to premise one; for if (c) and (d) are *the same fact*, all the critics' reasons for thinking that (b) is incompatible with (d)—reasons that The Proposal does not so much as address let alone rebut—become reasons for thinking that (b) is incompatible with (c), i.e., for thinking that premise one is false. The A-reading therefore fails to supply a cogent version of The Proposal *whether or not* the second premise (on this reading) is judged to be true.

6.   Ted. A. Warfield, "Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom Are Compatible," *Nous* 31 (1997), pp. 80-86.

7.   *On Free Choice of the Will*, Book III, chaps. 2-3. Concerns about fatalism based on divine foreknowledge certainly antedate Augustine (e.g., among Stoic thinkers); but it's not clear that these concerns are really warranted, given that the deities in question appear to lack one or more of the attributes (such as *essential* omniscience and *necessary* existence) that are crucial to the argument's success.

8.   Nelson Pike, "Divine Foreknowledge and Voluntary Action," *Philosophical Review* 74 (January 1965), pp. 27-46.

9.   The same argument-form occurs in Alicia Finch and Ted Warfield, "Fatalism: Logical and Theological," *Faith and Philosophy* 16 (April 1999), pp. 233-38, where Finch and Warfield argue that the problem of "theological fatalism"—the problem of the consistency of, e.g., (b) and (d)—is no more difficult than the problem of "logical fatalism"—the problem of the consistency of, e.g., (b) and (g)—if (g) implies (d) (as it does on the assumption that (a) is true). The reasons I offer for thinking that Warfield's Argument fails are *ipso facto* reasons for thinking that the Finch-Warfield argument fails.

10.   "On Freedom and Foreknowledge: A Reply to Two Critics," *Faith and Philosophy* 17 (April 2000), pp. 255-59. The quoted passages are on page 258.

11.   Is it possible that the absurdity of (2a) is *merely* prima facie, and that once the full implications of divine omniscience are realized it can be seen that this second premise is nothing less than the sober truth? Then the problem with the A-reading will simply shift to premise one—see note 5.

12.   "Reply to Two Critics," *op. cit.*

13.   William Hasker, "No Easy Way Out: A Response to Warfield," *Nous* 32 (1998), pp. 361-63.

14.   Warfield, "Reply to Two Critics," p. 256.

15.   Anthony Brueckner, "On an Attempt to Demonstrate the Compatibility of Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom," *Faith and Philosophy* 17 (January 2000), pp. 132-34.

16.   I have also addressed Warfield's Argument on pp. 14-16 of my "On Augustine's Way Out," *Faith and Philosophy* 16 (January 1999), pp. 3-26.

17.   Susan Haack, "On a Theological Argument for Fatalism," *Philosophical Quarterly* 24 (April 1974), pp. 156. Near the end of her brief article Haack sums up what she takes herself to have shown in this way:

> The theological argument may—on account of its greater complexity—seem more *plausible* than the logical argument; but it cannot be more *sound*.
>
> I suggest, then, that whatever reaction is appropriate to the logical argument for fatalism is also appropriate to the theological argument. (p. 158)

18. Craig quotes Haack approvingly in *The Only Wise God* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987), p. 68; he develops the point in his *Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom* (The Coherence of Theism: Omniscience), E.J. Brill (Brill's Studies in Intellectual History), Leiden, 1991.

19. Alvin Plantinga, "On Ockham's Way Out," *Faith and Philosophy* 3 (July 1986), pp. 235-69. Since Plantinga also anticipates Warfield's Argument (both arguments may be found on pp. 247-51 of the cited article), it would be more accurate to say that Warfield's Argument is a variation on Plantinga's

20. Anyone acquainted with the vexed debate over the right way to distinguish hard from soft facts will recognize that "genuinely and solely about the past" is woefully naive as a definition of 'hard fact' (as is, somewhat later in this paragraph, "only superficially about the past or . . . concerns the future as well as the past" as a definition of 'soft fact'). Nevertheless, since I am only giving a rough overview of the terrain, this vague appeal to intuition should be sufficient. That is indeed fortunate, since sophisticated state-of-the-art analyses of the distinction are mind-bogglingly complex. Linda Zagzebski speaks my mind in the following comment from her book *The Dilemma of Freedom and Foreknowledge* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991): "It is a tribute to the patience and the talent of philosophers that such elaborate recursive definitions of hard facts have been devised. But to present a definition is not to show that it bears any connection to a distinction in the nature of things" (p. 74). On this subject, I highly recommend pp. 70-76 of Zagzebski's book.

21. *Summa Theologica* I q. 25 a.4.

22. Richard Taylor, *Metaphysics*, 3d ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1983), p. 52.

23. The A-reading of Plantinga's Argument, like the A-reading of Warfield's Argument (and the A-reading of The Proposal), might attract some defense on this score; but a slight variation on the argument in note 5 shows how the problem with the A-reading would simply shift to premise one. If (γ) and (δ') are *the same fact*, all the critics' reasons for thinking that (δ') is a hard fact about the past are now reasons for thinking that (γ) is a hard fact about the past, i.e., for thinking that premise one is false. The A-reading once again fails to settle the issue in favor of theological compatibilism *whether or not* the second premise (on this reading) is judged to be true.

24. In "Hard Facts and Theological Fatalism," *Nous* 22 (1988), pp. 419-36, for example, William Hasker argues that the set of hard facts is not closed under entailment. A supporter of the B-reading of Plantinga's Argument would need to supply some counterargument.

25. The principal reason is that yesterday's *human* cognitions certainly count as hard facts about the past, whether or not their content concerns tomorrow, and this creates a presumption that the same will be true of *divine* cognitions. It is of course open to the compatibilist critic to cite some relevant difference between divine and human cognitions that would warrant overturning this presumption. It's hard to see how else this could be done except by proposing some coherent account of God's beliefs such that one and the same state of the Divine Mind—the one which, as matters actually stand, constitutes God's believing that Plantinga will climb—would instead count as a different belief—namely, the belief that Plantinga will *not* climb—if Plantinga does not climb. While this may seem pretty dubious, there is at least some theoretical space for this maneuver. For example, in *The Dilemma of Freedom and Foreknowledge*, *op. cit.*, ch. 3 §4, Linda Zagzebski formulates a position she calls "Thomistic Ockhamism" under which God's cognitive act is part of His very essence; in "Freedom and Foreknowledge," *Philosophical Review* 92 (January 1983), John Fischer suggests (on p. 94) the application to divine foreknowledge

of Hilary Putnam's notion of "wide content;" and in "Does Theological Fatalism Rest on an Equivocation?" *American Philosophical Quarterly* 32 (April 1995), pp. 153-65, and "Dispositional Omniscience," *Philosophical Studies* 80 (December 1995), pp. 243-78, I lay out a "dispositional omniscience scenario" in which God knows everything without actively thinking about it all the time. If any of these moves succeeds, the compatibilist is home free; for if God's belief is constituted as the belief that Plantinga will climb only retroactively, once Plantinga acutally climbs, then nothing about God's prior belief would appear to be inconsistent either with Plantinga's freedom to climb or his freedom not to climb It is worth noting, however, that all three of these suggestions come from people who finally *reject* the position that God's past beliefs about the future are "soft," and that those who *accept* this position rarely if ever make any alternative suggestions.

26. For a different (but I think complementary) critique of Plantinga's Argument, see Dale Eric Brant, "On Plantinga's Way Out," *Faith and Philosophy* 14 (July 1997), pp. 334-52.

27. Nelson Pike has also drawn attention to this curious feature of the compatibility arguments in question; see, for example, his "A Latter-Day Look at the Foreknowledge Problem," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 33 (June 1993), pp. 129-64.

28. Warfield, "Reply to Two Critics," pp. 256-57.

29. Peter van Inwagen, *An Essay on Free Will* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983).

30. Hasker, "No Easy Way Out," p. 362.

31. The translation is by Thomas Williams (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1993).

32. David P. Hunt, "Augustine on Theological Fatalism: The Argument of *De Libero Arbitrio* 3.1-4," *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 5 (March 1996), pp. 1-30.

33. I argue that the problem is indeed an aporetic one in my "What *Is* the Problem of Theological Fatalism?" *International Philosophical Quarterly* 38 (March 1998), pp. 17-30.

34. Harry Frankfurt, "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility," *Journal of Philosophy* 66 (December 1969), p. 836.

35. I present Augustine as a proto-Frankfurtian in my "On Augustine's Way Out," *op. cit.*, and I argue that this Augustinian-Frankfurtian line provides the best solution to the foreknowledge problem in my "Freedom, Foreknowledge, and Frankfurt," in *Freedom, Responsibility, and Agency: Essays on the Importance of Alternative Possibilities*, edited by Michael McKenna and David Widerker (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Co., 2002, pp. 159-83).