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Recent critiques of theological fatalism—the position that divine foreknowledge is incompatible with creaturely freedom—have tended to attach themselves to one or another of the analyses put forward by various medieval thinkers. The latter include Boethius, Aquinas, Scotus, Ockham, and (under a sufficiently generous conception of 'medieval') Molina.[1] Notable by his absence from this list is St. Augustine, whose *De Libero Arbitrio* is perhaps *the* Ur-text for the problem as it arises within a specifically theistic context.

1. The sheer number of critiques that draw on these figures is too great for me to do more than offer a few examples here. For Boethius, see Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann, "Eternity," *Journal of Philosophy* 78 (1981): 429–58; and Brian Leftow, "Timelessness and Foreknowledge," *Philosophical Studies* 63 (1991): 309–325. For Scotus, see Anthony Kenny, *The God of the Philosophers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), chap. 5; and Martin Davies, "Boethius and Others on Divine Foreknowledge," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 8 (October 1983): 313–29. For Ockham, see Marilyn McCord Adams, "Is the Existence of God a 'Hard' Fact?" *Philosophical Review* 76 (October 1967): 492–503; Joshua Hoffman and Gary Rosenkrantz, "Hard and Soft Facts," *Philosophical Review* 93 (July 1984): 419–34; Alvin Plantinga, "On Ockham's Way Out," *Faith and Philosophy* 3 (July 1986): 235–69; and William Lane Craig, "William Ockham on Divine Foreknowledge and Future Contingency," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 69 (June 1988): 117–35. For Molina, see David Basinger, "Divine Omniscience and Human Freedom: A 'Middle Knowledge' Perspective," *Faith and Philosophy* 1 (July 1984): 291–302; and Alfred J. Freddoso, "Introduction," Luis de Molina, *On Divine Foreknowledge (Part IV of the "Concordia"),* trans. Alfred J. Freddoso (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988). There is no single Thomistic approach since Aquinas has a number of resources available for responding to the problem, but especially noteworthy is the "Thomistic Ockhamism" found in William P. Alston, "Does God Have Beliefs?" *Religious Studies* 22 (September/December 1986): 287–306; and Linda Trinkaus Zagzebski, *The Dilemma of Freedom and Foreknowledge* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), chap. 3.

Whereas Augustine is often cited respectfully when the problem itself is raised, he is virtually ignored when the time comes to offer a solution to the problem—unless, of course, he is being featured in a cautionary tale about how *not* to avoid theological fatalism.[2]

The reasons for such treatment are not far to seek. There has been a considerable advance in our understanding of the problem during the last thirty years, owing largely to attempts to grapple with Nelson Pike's landmark essay "Divine Foreknowledge and Voluntary Action."[3] Viewed in that light, Boethius et alii can be seen to anticipate (at least inchoately) what are now regarded as the crucial nodes in the argument, whereas Augustine appears to have missed them altogether. For one thing, Augustine seems unclear about the real origin and nature of the necessity by which divine foreknowledge threatens future actions. Because there is no unequivocal recognition by Augustine of the important distinction between simple and conditional necessity (as there is in his near contemporary Boethius), it is not surprising that he fails to identify the strongest form of the argument as one that involves simple necessity and so misses the crucial role played by the *pastness* of God's beliefs (which generates the simple necessity) and the *essential inerrancy* of those beliefs (which transfers that necessity to the future, making divine foreknowledge problematic in a way that human foreknowledge is not).[4] For another thing, Augustine seems unclear what it is about free agency that is really threatened by this necessity. It is now recognized that only the robust power-to-do-otherwise endemic to the libertarian conception of freedom is at risk;[5] Augustine, however, often sounds like a compatibilist, and even when he doesn't, the reader may be understandably reluctant to attribute full-blooded libertarianism to someone who could write at the end of his life, "On the solution to this question I tried hard to maintain the free decision of the human will, but the grace of God was victorious."[6] Finally, it is unclear just what solution Augustine means to offer in *De Libero Arbitrio*. Whereas the relevant chapters contain a couple of fairly crisp statements of the problem, the ensuing discussion has a complex and confusing dialectical structure and that part of it that is most readily isolable as a solution to the problem is (so construed) straightforwardly question begging.[7] It is no wonder that recent efforts to clarify the dilemma of foreknowledge and freedom have looked elsewhere for their inspiration.

2. See, for example, Plantinga, "Ockham's Way Out," pp. 235–36.

3. Nelson Pike, "Divine Foreknowledge and Voluntary Action," *Philosophical Review* 74 (January 1965): 27–46.

4. Pike argues in the last section of his article, "Divine Foreknowledge," that Augustine is "instructively incorrect" on these two points.

5. For discussion of this issue and the constraints it imposes on solutions to the problem, see William P. Alston, "Divine Foreknowledge and Alternative Conceptions of Human Freedom," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 18 (1985): 19–32.

6. *Retractationes* 2.1.

7. The reference is to bk. 3, chap. 3, 32–35.

I shall argue, however, that this assessment of Augustine's position rests on a misreading of the text and that his escape from the dilemma, far from constituting a dead end, is actually quite plausible—certainly more so than the usual summary dismissal of his argument would suggest. I happen to think that it is also superior to those of the medieval and modern luminaries who have followed him; but a defense of this claim with respect to each of Augustine's competitors would obviously be impossible in a single article. I shall settle instead for some brief concluding remarks on the relevance of Augustine's solution to the contemporary post-Pikean phase of the debate.

I

It is in chapter 2 of book 3 that De Libero Arbitrio first broaches the problem of theological fatalism, but it is important to begin our analysis with chapter 1, where a larger issue is raised and crucial assumptions are made. The work as a whole is devoted to the general question, What is the cause of evil? And the general answer it offers is free choice of the will. Book 3 tests this answer by examining some of the more problematic conditions under which free choice must operate, conditions that include the Fall, as well as the existence of an all-knowing God.

The examination is inaugurated in chapter 1 by Evodius's opening query: "What is the origin of that movement by which the will [uoluntas] is turned away from common and immutable goods, and toward goods of its own or those of others, that is, the lowest goods and every kind of transitory good?" (3.1.1).[8] His reason for asking, he explains, is that "if free will has been given in such a way that this movement is natural to it, then it is turned to lesser goods by necessity. There is no blame to be found where nature and necessity rule [natura necessitasque dominatur]" (1.2). This is the first and most important of a series of statements in this chapter that set forth logical connections between key concepts, and it is worth formulating these connections as we go along so that we can refer to them easily. Once the formal relations between the concepts are made explicit, we can appeal to these relations (along with other clues from the text) in illuminating the content of the concepts.

Letting 'W' stand for any movement of the will away from immutable

goods and toward transitory goods, Evodius's explanation of his interest in "the origin of that movement" involves two claims:

(1) W is natural → W is necessary;

(2) (W is necessary . W is natural) → ~(W is blameworthy).[9]

Augustine next gets Evodius to admit that such a movement is undoubtedly blameworthy, upon which Augustine himself draws out the consequence: "You should have known with certainty that the movement does not lie in the nature of the will, since you are so certain that it deserves blame" (1.4). This principle is affirmed three more times in the chapter, once in the contrapositive, when Evodius says of the natural downward motion of a stone, "It is not right to blame it because of the fact that the movement arose naturally" (1.7). So let us add

(3) W is natural → ~(W is blameworthy).

This is not, of course, a separate premise since it follows from (1) and (2); but it is worth special note given the number of times that Augustine sees fit to give it distinct and explicit recognition in the course of the chapter.

Augustine then extends the implicatory chain to include the voluntary, avowing that "this movement by which the will is turned from immutable to transitory goods . . . is voluntary and therefore blameworthy [*uoluntarium et ob hoc culpabilem*]" (1.11), a principle for which Evodius supplies the converse in the chapter's final sentence: "If the movement by which the will is turned this way and that were not voluntary and within our power [*uoluntarius atque in nostra positus potestate*], we could not be praised when we turn toward higher things, or blamed when, as if on a pivot, we turn toward lower ones . . ." (1.13).[10] Taken together, we get

(4) W is blameworthy ↔ W is voluntary.

9. It should be noted that an alternative reading, which replaces (2) with

(2′) [W is necessary → ~(W is blameworthy)] . [W is natural → ~(W is blameworthy)],

may also be compatible with the passage from 3.1.2. But all else being equal, (2) is preferable on the grounds that it is both weaker than and also entailed by (2′). Moreover, everything else is *not* equal since there is evidence disconfirming (2′). First, there is no independent passage in which Augustine affirms the entailment of the blameless by the necessary, whereas there are several in which he affirms the entailment of the blameless by the natural—an odd imbalance if his intention is to endorse both conjuncts of (2′). Second, he later (chaps. 2–4) employs "necessity talk" in cases in which he thinks blame is clearly appropriate, making it doubtful that he would want to assert in chap. 1 that necessity *simpliciter* does entail blamelessness. All things considered, (2′) must be rejected in favor of (2).

10. For parallel passages in bk. 2, see 2.1.7, "Both punishment and reward would be unjust if man did not have free will," and 2.19.200, "This turning away and turning toward result in the just punishment of unhappiness, because they are committed, not under compulsion, but voluntarily."

(Of course the full biconditional is not true for every movement of the will but only for those, like W, in which the movement is from better to worse.) Finally, we have

(5) W is natural $\rightarrow$ ~(W is voluntary).

Like (3), this is not a separate premise, but it follows from the other premises; it also acquires independent support from the contrast between W and the movement of a stone, which Augustine elaborates in the middle section of the chapter. Augustine asks Evodius to consider "the movement with which the stone by itself swerves toward the earth and falls" (1.6), reminds him of their conclusion in book 1 that the will cannot be compelled by anything external (1.8), and notes that the falling stone and W are alike in that "as the one movement belongs to the stone, so the other belongs to the spirit" (1.9). They differ, however, in that "the stone does not have it in its power to check its downward motion, whereas so long as the spirit does not will to neglect higher goods and love lesser ones, it does not move in that direction" (1.9). It is because of this difference in power that "the movement of a stone is natural, while that of the spirit is voluntary" (1.10). This assignment of the natural and the voluntary to mutually exclusive categories is ample evidence that the discussants are not only committed to (5) but also aware of that commitment.[11]

   Given that (1)–(5) are securely grounded in the text, what implications does this have for Augustine's own position on these matters? Assertions collected willy-nilly from the text prove little: those attributed to Evodius are certainly suspect, while even those attributed to Augustine are not ipso facto trustworthy—a judgment that rests less on a tendentious deconstructive wedge between Augustine and "Augustine" than on the fact that a common and effective response to dubious assumptions is to accept them for the sake of argument and then show the absurd consequences that follow from them. In the case of (1)–(5), however, there is little doubt that we are face-to-face with Augustine's own position. His major speech in the first part of the chapter, in the course of which he appeals to premises (1)–(3), begins with the words "Let us examine why this truth [that W is blameworthy] . . . is so indubitable" (1.3)—an astonishingly duplicitous move if Augustine in fact rejects one or more of these premises. The remaining premises make their appearance in Augustine's longest peroration of the chapter, where they are supported by principles "established" (1.8) in book 1 and a dissenting opinion is said to be "simply insane" (1.10). In face of

11. For a single passage setting forth most of the connections in (1)–(5), see *De Duabus Animabus Contra Manichaeos* 12.17: "Whatever these souls do, if they do it by nature not will, that is, if they lack a movement of the mind free both for doing and for not doing; if in fact they are not granted the power of refraining from operating, we cannot maintain that a sin is theirs."

such language it is impossible—perhaps even insane—to regard (1)–(5) as anything other than the considered views of their author.

These views are noteworthy in two respects. First, they settle the question whether Augustine is an incompatibilist, at least in one important sense: the natural is *incompatible* with the blameworthy and thus with the voluntary. Second, they conspicuously *fail* to settle the question whether Augustine is an incompatibilist in another sense: while both the *conjunction* of the natural and the necessary, as well as the *natural alone,* are said to be incompatible with the blameworthy, nothing is said about whether the *necessary alone* is incompatible with the blameworthy; nor can this question be decided by anything that can be inferred from the pronouncements in this chapter [as it would be, e.g., if the text anywhere licensed the converse of (1), something that it pointedly fails to do].

This omission makes the necessary appear superfluous. If Augustine does *not* presuppose in chapter 1 that necessity entails blamelessness, it is unclear what role necessity is playing in the argument. What is the point of insisting that the conjunction of the natural and the necessary entails the blameless if the natural by itself entails the blameless? Why doesn't he just start off with premise (3) and leave the necessary out of it altogether? This problem disappears as soon as we look for the role of necessity, not in its contribution to the truth-functional work of the argument, but in its elaboration on what makes (3) true. Of the various properties that are characteristic of the natural, necessity is the one that is connected to blamelessness; nor is it simply generic necessity that is so connected, but the particular kind of necessity endemic to the natural. Call this kind 'natural necessity'. What (1) and (2) add to (3), then, is the idea that the natural is characterized by natural necessity [premise (1)] and that it is in virtue of natural necessity that the natural entails the blameless [premise (2)]. This reading not only solves the major problem for (2) but also is supported by two other passages in which the notion of natural necessity is expressly employed. The first is this: "I deny, however, that the soul is to be blamed . . . if its nature is such that it is moved by necessity [*si eius natura talis est ut eo necessario moueatur*]" (1.5). Note that he is not denying blame in just any case in which necessity is at work but only in that case in which the necessity reflects the nature of the thing. The second passage confirms this: "It is not right to blame it because of the fact that . . . it is driven by the necessity of its own nature [*naturae suae tamen necessitate compellitur*]" (1.7). Though both of these comments are put in the mouth of Evodius, there is nothing to suggest that Augustine does not endorse them as well.

Before leaving chapter 1, something should be said about the term 'voluntary' as it is occurring at this point in Augustine's exposition. Its meaning comes into focus only gradually as the argument proceeds into chapters 2–4, and I have therefore left it largely a cipher thus far, except insofar as its interpretation is constrained by the (charitably construed) truth of (4) and (5). It is important, however, to know whether Augustine

is using the term here in a "minimal" or a "maximal" sense. There are places where 'voluntary' appears to mean little more than ."in accordance with will"—for example, in chapter 3, where Augustine rebuts the view that "we do not will anything voluntarily" (*non uoluntate aliquid uelimus*) on the grounds that, even though happiness is not something that lies completely within our power, nevertheless "when you are to be happy, you shall not be happy against your will [*inuitum*], but because you will [*uolentem*] to be happy" (3.28). This minimal sense may also be present in chapter 1 to some degree, but it is hard to see this as the sense reflected in (4) and (5). For one thing, the network of relations into which Augustine places the voluntary in 1.8–13 (where *voluntarius* occurs four times and *voluntas* nine times) is richer than a minimalist conception can sustain. These relations include not only (4) and (5) but also the "tests" by which Augustine demonstrates these propositions: that W be genuinely *of* (occurring in and belonging to) the subject ["it belongs to the spirit alone" (1.11)], that W be approved by the subject ["we accuse a spirit of sin when we prove that it has preferred to enjoy lower goods" (1.10)], and that W lie within the subject's power ["the stone does not have it in its power to check its downward motion" (1.9)]. One or more of these strictures may be satisfied by the minimal sense of 'voluntary' (perhaps the second test just *is* the minimal sense and so is satisfied trivially), but the total package surely requires more than the minimum. For another thing, the passages that support premise (4) recapitulate discussions in book 2 of the volitional conditions for human responsibility (praiseworthiness and blameworthiness). Those discussions, more consistently than in book 3, identify what is at stake not just as *will* but also as *free* will or *free choice* of the will. The most plausible view, then, is that the references to the voluntary in 1.8–13 are an abbreviation of the more robust *liberam uoluntatem* with which book 3 begins and by which it is connected to the discussion of human responsibility in book 2.

In sum, the business of chapter 1 is to identify the threat to human responsibility and free choice of the will posed by a specific kind of necessity: natural necessity. If the will were moved by natural necessity, its movement would be neither blameworthy nor voluntary. There is nothing, however, to suggest that the threat is a live one. In the first place, no reason is given for thinking that W is ever characterized by natural necessity; this being the case, the orthodox Christian can grant that the natural entails the blameless and happily proceed with *modus tollens*, denying blamelessness and thereby denying that the will is moved by natural necessity (something he or she might want to deny in any case).[12] In the second place, nothing is said about whether other (more likely) forms of necessity pose a similar threat: if a thing does what it does by nature, this endows its activities with

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12. This is, in fact, the other main business of chap. 1: Evodius's insisting indignantly on his commitment to the blameworthiness of a sinful will, and Augustine's pointing out the consequences of this stand for the thesis that the will is moved by natural necessity.

a kind of necessity that is inimical to responsibility, but it is an open question at this point whether other kinds of necessity have the same consequence.

II

This preliminary discussion leads directly to the challenge posed by theological fatalism. The argument setting up this challenge is stated twice, the first time by Evodius at the beginning of chapter 2:

> Since this is so, I am deeply troubled by a certain question: how can it be that God has foreknowledge of all future events, and yet that we do not sin by necessity [*necessitate*]? Anyone who says that an event can happen otherwise [*aliter euenire aliquid posse*] than as God has foreknown it is making an insane and malicious attempt to destroy God's foreknowledge. If God, therefore, foreknew that a good man . . . would sin, the sin was committed of necessity [*necesse erat id fieri*], because God foreknew that it would happen. How can there be free will [*uoluntas libera*] where there is such inevitable necessity [*ineuitabilis necessitas*]? (2.14–15)

"You have knocked vigorously at the door of God's mercy," Augustine responds. "May it be opened to those who knock" (2.16). Augustine then devotes the remainder of chapter 2 to expatiating on the proper method of knocking. "A great number of men are tormented by this question," he says, "for no other reason than that they do not ask it in the right way, but are too swift to excuse their sins, instead of confessing them" (2.16). For such people it is an open question whether we sin voluntarily and so responsibly, a question whose answer hinges on the success of the argument for theological fatalism (such people may even have an ulterior motive for taking the argument's conclusion seriously). But Evodius is evidently not among these men ["I have no doubt that you are already persuaded of this" (2.20), Augustine says], and theological fatalism can only raise for him an "aporetic" difficulty: it cannot threaten his belief *that* the will is free, it can only threaten his understanding of *how* it can be free.[13] It is this second threat that remains for Augustine to defuse, and he closes chapter 2 by asking Evodius to "observe how easily I shall answer such an important question for you after you have given a few answers to my question" (2.20).

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13. Evodius's difficulties in the dialogue are typically aporetic in this sense. In bk. 2, for example, he says of God's wisdom in giving men free will, "Although I believe this with unshaken faith, nevertheless I do not understand it" (2.11). This is, of course, the attitude of "faith seeking understanding," which Augustine sanctions in bk. 1, chap. 2.

It is perhaps owing to this extended excursus on the dialectical situation that Augustine feels the need to open chapter 3 with a restatement of Evodius's aporetic difficulty:

> Surely this is the question that troubles and perplexes you: how can the following two propositions, that God has foreknowledge of all future events, and that we do not sin by necessity but by free will [*non necessitate, sed uoluntate*], be made consistent with each other? "If God foreknows that man will sin," you say, "it is necessary that man sin." If man must [*necesse*] sin, his sin is not a result of the will's choice [*uoluntatis arbitrium*], but is instead a fixed and inevitable necessity [*ineuitabilis et fixa necessitas*]. You fear now that this reasoning results either in the blasphemous denial of God's foreknowledge or, if we deny this, the admission that we sin by necessity, not by will [*non uoluntate sed necessitate*]. (3.21–22)

There are minor differences in wording and emphasis between this formulation and Evodius's in chapter 2, and even within a single formulation a variety of expressions is used for the key concepts. Necessity, for example, is adverted to a total of nine times under nearly as many locutions.[14] And what is it with which necessity is supposed to conflict? Is it the existence of *uoluntas libera* (Evodius at 2.15), the supposition that *uoluntate peccemus* (Augustine at 3.21), the idea that sin arises from *uoluntatis arbitrium* (Augustine again at 3.21), or all three? (Whichever it is, some species of the robust sense of 'voluntary' from chapter 1 is surely what is at issue here.) Since Augustine clearly regards the diversity of formulations as contributing toward a single argument, let us set aside these differences for the moment and represent this common argument as follows:

(P1) W is foreknown (by God) → W is necessary
(P2) W is necessary → ~(W is voluntary)
∴ W is foreknown (by God) → ~(W is voluntary).

If the argument is sound, its conclusion leaves the theist with the unpalatable option of affirming the antecedent (and losing free will) or denying the consequent (and losing divine foreknowledge). Since the argument is formally valid, it can be defeated only if one of its premises is false or if it commits an informal fallacy, the most likely candidate for the latter being an equivocation on its middle term, 'necessary'.

Which of these critiques we are predisposed to find Augustine pursuing in his response to the argument may depend on how we understand chapter 1 and its connection with the chapters that follow it. A careless reading

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14. These are Evodius's locutions: *necessitate peccemus, [non] aliter euenire aliquid posse, necesse erat id fieri, ineuitabilis adparet necessitas;* and these are Augustine's: *necessitate . . . peccemus, necesse est ut peccet, autem necesse est, ineuitabilis et fixa necessitas, necessitate peccari.*

of chapter 1 could easily suggest that Augustine is committed to (P2) and that his analysis of theological fatalism will therefore issue in some indictment of (P1). The virtue of this reading is that it makes the connection straightforward: chapter 1 establishes the second premise in the argument for theological fatalism, and chapter 2 adds the first premise and shows what follows when the two premises are combined. Its vice, as we saw, is that the posited connection simply does not exist: what is licensed by chapter 1 is

(5) W is natural → ~(W is voluntary),

wheras (P2) is conspicuous by its absence. A better reading recognizes this but still finds the connection in (P2), understanding its use of 'necessity' as an abbreviated reference to the *natural* necessity of chapter 1; thus (P2) is again supported by (5) and Augustine's solution will have to be found in his analysis of (P1), which is either straightforwardly false or else true in a sense other than that established in chapter 1. But there are two problems with this position, one exegetical and one logical. The exegetical problem is that '*natura*' and its cognates, which figure so prominently in chapter 1, are completely absent from chapters 2–4. This can hardly be an oversight: it is much more plausible to suppose that Augustine is signaling a new phase in the discussion than that he is continuing to employ the same concept of necessity while dropping all the characteristic locutions by which he formerly designated it. The logical problem with this reading is that a refutation of Evodius's argument would patently fail as a refutation of theological fatalism. If (P2) did no more than threaten human responsibility with *natural* necessity, the argument could be refuted by showing that divine foreknowledge does not bring foreknown actions under *that kind* of necessity. Since there is absolutely no reason to think that divine foreknowledge entails natural necessity, Augustine would be setting up a straw man whose demolition would leave intact the possibility that divine foreknowledge entails other forms of necessity that are equally destructive of human responsibility. The question of theological fatalism would therefore remain wide open.

If we refrain from reading (P2) as synonymous with (or at least implied by) (5), we have to understand the connection with chapter 1 in a wholly different manner. The following seems to me to be the most plausible way to do this. Chapter 1 presents a threat that one species of necessity poses for free will. It's a purely theoretical threat, as there is no reason to think that we do what we do or will what we will by natural necessity, nor is any reason so much as hinted at in the text; but Augustine's investigation of the threat is nevertheless useful in that it shows what a successful threat looks like and sets forth the standards by which success is to be measured. Chapters 2–3 then present a threat that another species of necessity poses for free will. This one is not a merely theoretical threat, at least for the orthodox theist, since divine foreknowledge provides at least some reason for thinking that human actions are indeed governed by a species of

necessity; but in investigating this new threat Augustine can look to chapter 1 for a model of how to proceed. We can then expect him to show in chapter 3 how the threat from foreknowledge and its associated necessity fails to meet the standards laid out in chapter 1.

III

Chapter 3 is generally regarded as the heart of Augustine's response to theological fatalism, and it has consequently attracted the bulk of critical attention. I think this assessment is mistaken and the attention misdirected. Chapter 3, it must be said, is the most difficult of the four chapters under consideration (perhaps of the book), and I don't have a reading that makes perfect sense of it in the minutest detail. I don't know anyone who does; there's enough slippage in Augustine's usage of key terms that a completely coherent reading is probably impossible. But I do think that the broad picture is as follows.

First, Augustine nowhere denies (P1); to the contrary, he explicitly recognizes a sense in which (P1) is true. In chapter 2, as we saw, Evodius says of the objects of God's foreknowledge that they are "committed of necessity [*necesse erat id fieri*]" (2.15), assigns them "inevitable necessity [*ineuitabilis ... necessitas*]" (2.15), and denies that they "can happen otherwise [*aliter euenire aliquid posse*]" (2.14). These characterizations may be suspect because they come from the initial statement of the problem; Augustine, however, adds others in chapter 3 that are clearly meant to be accepted, such as that "nothing happens otherwise [*non potest aliud fieri*] than as God foreknew" (3.30); that what God foreknows is "certain [*certa*]" (3.29), "cannot be otherwise [*nec aliter aliquid fieri possit*]" (3.28), and "will more certainly be present [*certior aderit*]" (3.35); and finally, that "whatever God foreknows must come to be [*necesse esse fieri quaecumque praesciuit Deus*]" (3.36). Borrowing a phrase from chapter 4, where the pattern continues, we might say that Augustine regards the objects of God's foreknowledge as *necesse enim certa* (4.38), or "necessary because certain."[15]

Second, Augustine also declares a sense in which (P2) is true. The expression he uses repeatedly throughout chapter 3 to designate the necessity that is inimical to human responsibility is *non uoluntate sed necessitate.* I read this phrase, not as suggesting that necessity in general is opposed to the voluntary [a suggestion that would contradict point (1) and the evidence supporting it], but as a cue that 'necessity'—which is associated with a variety of meanings in Augustine—should *here* be read in such a way that

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15. The entire passage from which this phrase is distilled goes as follows: "*Immo necesse esset ut peccaret. Non enim aliter esset praescientia mea nisi certa praescirem.*"

the voluntary is excluded.[16] Chapter 1 showed that *naturae suae necessitate* is *non uoluntate sed necessitate*. The question posed in chapter 3 is whether *necesse enim certa* is also *non uoluntate sed necessitate*.

Third, Augustine's answer to this question is negative: while there is a sense in which (P1) is true, and also a sense in which (P2) is true, there is no single sense of 'necessary' in which both these premises are true. The argument can therefore be said to fail through equivocation. This is in fact the way Augustine presents the matter at the beginning of *De Civitate Dei* 5.10, where he distinguishes a sense of necessity that opposes free choice but does not characterize our wills from one that does characterize our wills but does not oppose free choice. In *De Libero Arbitrio* 3.3, in contrast, his tendency is to disequivocate the argument in such a way that (P1) is true and (P2) is false.This is shown, for example, when Evodius summarizes what has been accomplished at the end of chapter 3: "I no longer deny that whatever God foreknows must [*necesse*] come to be, and that he foreknows our sins in such a way that our will still remains free in us and lies in our power" (3.35). First, he affirms that divine foreknowledge entails necessity—that is, he has been brought to see that *this* is not the place that the argument goes wrong. Second, he denies that divine foreknowledge excludes free choice of the will. Given these two conclusions, it must be that necessity does not entail the absence of free will, and he was wrong to link them unreflectively in his original formulation of the argument. This makes Augustine's analysis of the problem very different from that of most recent opponents of theological fatalism, who tend to construe (P2) or its equivalent as true and then argue that (P1) is (in that sense) false.[17]

16. Thus I differ from William Lane Craig, "Augustine on Foreknowledge and Free Will," *Augustinian Studies* 15 (1984): 41–63, who maintains that "Augustine equates necessity with causal necessity and opposes it to freedom and voluntary action" (p. 49) and, again, that "Augustine seems to use 'not voluntarily' and 'by necessity' as synonyms" (p. 50).

17. In fairness I should also cite the passage that is thought by some (e.g., William Craig) to constitute the strongest evidence for a contrary reading according to which Augustine sees (P1) as false and (P2) as true:

> *Augustine.* See, please, how blindly a man says, "If God has fore-known my will, it is necessary [*necesse*] that I will what God foreknows, since nothing can [*potest*] occur except as he has foreknown it. If, moreover, my act of will is subject to necessity [*necesse*], we must admit that I willed it not by will, but by necessity [*non iam uoluntate, sed necessitate*]." Strange foolishness! How could it be that nothing happens otherwise than as God foreknew, if He foreknows that something is going to be willed when nothing is going to be willed? I pass over the equally astounding assertion that I just said this man makes: "It is necessary that I will in this way." By assuming necessity, he tries to exclude will. If it is necessary that he will, how can he will, if there is no will? (3.30–31)

A careful reading, however, shows this passage to be far less damning than it appears. It begins with another statement of the argument for theological fatal-

Fourth, Augustine arrives at this position on the argument by applying various tests to W under the supposition that it is *necesse enim certa*. It is useful in understanding the logic of Augustine's argument to think of these tests as supplying necessary conditions for free will, though Augustine may not have thought of them precisely in this way. It is not even clear that Augustine thought of them as *distinct* tests: at times they appear to be distinct, while at other times the distinctions appear to collapse. With this caveat in mind, however, there should be little harm in identifying three tests at work in chapter 3: (a) whether W belongs to or is located in the subject ["God's foreknowledge . . . does not take from you the will to be happy when you begin to be happy" (3.29)], (b) whether W is approved by the subject ["When we will, if the will itself is lacking in us, we surely do not will" (3.32); this is the minimal sense of 'voluntary'], and (c) whether W lies within the subject's power ["Nor can it be a will if it is not in our power" (3.34)]. These are the same three tests we identified in chapter 1, though they yield a more favorable result for *necesse enim certa* in chapter 3 than for *naturae suae necessitate* in chapter 1.

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ism. The partisan of this argument is said to be blind and foolish, but there is nothing at this point to suggest that it is commitment to (P1) that makes him so. Augustine's response to the argument comes in two parts. The first employs the rhetorical schema "How could it be that M, if N?" The answer to this rhetorical question is, of course, "It can't!" But whether this answer counts against M ("nothing happens otherwise than as God foreknew") or against N ("He foreknows that something is going to be willed when nothing is going to be willed") depends on which is being used to undercut the other. Since N is *clearly* objectionable, it can't be used to undercut M, and (P1) therefore survives this first phase of Augustine's analysis. [While M lacks the modal force of (P1), it also lacks the modal force of the principle actually employed in the *stultitiam singularem* under discussion, namely, "nothing *can* occur except as he has foreknown." This principle, to which M is clearly an abbreviated reference, both packs the requisite modal punch and also entails (P1).]

The second part is the toughest for my interpretation, since it extends the opprobrium to the necessity claim as well. But *which* necessity claim? Notice that the claim Augustine labels "astounding" is nowhere asserted in the argument; rather, it forms the consequent of the conditional that plays the role here of (P1) and the antecedent of the conditional that plays the role of (P2). Is it astounding in both places or only in one? What is wrong with it, Augustine says, is that "by assuming necessity he tries to exclude will." This is what (P2) does; so it is at least arguable that (P2) is the astounding claim while (P1) gets off scot-free. The last part of the passage can then be read this way: "If it is necessary that he will," then both (a) he wills (since necessity entails actuality) and (b) he does not will (since the objector understands necessity to exclude will). But this is a contradiction: "How can he will, if there is no will?" So we must reject either the initial supposition that it is necessary that he will or the objector's interpretation of that supposition as excluding will. Since the passage itself leaves this choice open, it does not force any reassessment of the evidence in other passages that Augustine construes (P1) as true and (P2) as false.

For a diametrically opposed reading of this passage, see Craig, "Augustine on Foreknowledge," p. 55.

Fifth, this result is unsatisfactory because it is one that a compatibilist or "soft determinist" could accept; it therefore fails to establish how divine foreknowledge can coexist with libertarian free will. This is not to say that Augustine shows himself to *be* a compatibilist in chapter 3. Whether he does so is a much disputed question, which I suspect to be ultimately unresolvable, inasmuch as it comes from anachronistically foisting upon Augustine a distinction that is important to us but may not have been important to him.[18] (Perhaps it should have been; but that does not mean that it was.) It is not, however, anachronistic to go in the other direction and ask whether Augustine's solution might be relevant to our own dilemmas, which require careful attention to the distinction between compatibilism and incompatibilism. The evidence for this in chapter 3 is not very encouraging.

Since *necesse enim certa* cannot affect Augustine's two nonmodal tests for free choice—that W belong to the subject and that it be at least minimally voluntary—let us skip over Augustine's discussion of these and move directly to the modal requirement that W lie within our power. Augustine offers a conditional analysis of this requirement: something X is in our power if and only if its coming about depends on our will, that is, *if* there is some act of willing such that (a) were we to engage in that act of willing, X would come about, and (b) were we not to engage in that act of willing, X would not come about.[19] Now if power is defined in terms of willing in this way, then it is trivially true that willing itself is always in our power. If X = dying, growing old, or being happy (to take Augustine's examples), there is no act of willing such that (a) and (b) are both true; but if X = *willing that Y*, there is some act of willing such that both counterfactuals are true, namely, the act of willing that Y. On this account, which places the will in our power by definition, divine foreknowledge cannot possibly

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18. For a sampling of critical disagreement on the Augustinian view of free will, compare these two judgments: "Man is a puppet, free in the sense only of being arranged to act in a way which is not subject to external pressures"—John M. Rist, "Augustine on Free Will and Predestination," *Journal of Theological Studies* 20 (October 1969): 440; and "The will is not free merely in the sense that its choices are not externally coerced, but also in the sense that, confronted with two options, it has the power to choose either one"—Craig, "Augustine on Foreknowledge," p. 44. Or consider this pairing: "Augustine's view of free will amounts to liberty of spontaneity. It is not so much the ability to do otherwise, as the ability to act free of compulsion or constraint"—Gerard O'Daly, "Predestination and Freedom in Augustine's Ethics," in *Philosophy in Christianity*, ed. Godfrey Vesey, Royal Institute of Philosophy Lecture Series, vol. 25, supp. *Philosophy* (1989), p. 96; and "There can be no doubt that Augustine generally demanded for sinners more freedom than the first, 'slight' degree [i.e., liberty of spontaneity]. . . . All men have two-way power, and exercise it in some of their voluntary actions"—Christopher Kirwan, *Augustine, The Arguments of the Philosophers* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989): 84, 88.

19. Cf. *De Spiritu et Littera* 31.53: "We say there is power, when to the will is joined the possibility of doing. Hence someone is said to have in his power what he does if he wills, and does not do if he wills not to."

jeopardize this power. Suppose God foreknows that I will will to sin and that my willing will issue in the sinful act. This is compatible with the act being in my power, that is, with it being the case that *were* I to refrain from willing, I would not perform the act; it is also compatible with the will being in my power, i.e., with it being the case that, *were* I to refrain from willing, I wouldn't will. So W continues to pass all of Augustine's tests for free agency even when divine foreknowledge is introduced into the equation.

Augustine's procedure here raises the critical question of whether he has really fulfilled any part of his obligation to show that the will is *free* in these circumstances. Augustine evidently thinks that he has: "Our will, therefore, is not a will unless it is in our power. And since it is indeed in our power, it is free in us" (3.33). Christopher Kirwan rightly complains that Augustine "is altogether too cavalier about the distinction of will from free will,"[20] a judgment that can be confirmed in the present case by taking Augustine's "power test" for free will and using it to show that W is free even when causally necessary. Suppose it is causally determined that I will will to sin and that my willing will issue in the sinful act. Again, it may be true that *were* I to refrain from willing I wouldn't sin (since the sinning was causally dependent on the willing); and it is certainly true that *were* I to refrain from willing I would refrain from willing. But to conclude from this that either the sinning or the willing was in my power, even though both were causally determined, reflects a sophistical view of power that no libertarian would accept. This means that Augustine's analysis in chapter 3 will not be helpful in resolving the contemporary post-Pikean version of theological fatalism, for which libertarian freedom is part of the puzzle conditions.

Sixth and last, it is a mistake to look to this chapter for Augustine's final word on the matter. [This is fortunate indeed, given point (5).] When Evodius sums up the chapter with the admission "I no longer deny *that* whatever God foreknows must come to be, and *that* he foreknows our sins in such a way that our will still remains free in us and lies in our power," there is an air of conclusiveness about his statement that makes it tempting to think that the problem has been solved and that it has been solved in chapter 3. But the conclusiveness is evidently a chimera since the discussion continues in the next chapter in response to Evodius's confession that he "still cannot see *how* God's foreknowledge of our sins can be reconciled with our free choice in sinning" (4.37). This should not be at all surprising. It's unclear that Evodius ever really denied what he says he no longer denies; at least Augustine has been assuming all along that his problem is a purely aporetic one. By building up his confidence in the compatibility of divine foreknowledge and free will, chapter 3 has made the problem more than

20. Kirwan, *Augustine*, p. 101.

ever an aporetic one.[21] But the aporia nevertheless remains. By having Evodius explicitly avow "that whatever God foreknows must come to be," Augustine implicitly traces the aporia to (P2), leaving it right where it was when Evodius closed his formulation of the argument in chapter 2 with the query "How can there be free will where there is such inevitable necessity?" (2.15)

This shows how far Augustine has yet to go in solving the problem he has set for himself. Yet commentators consistently focus on chapter 3 when formulating Augustine's solution.[22] William Rowe finds in chapter 4 a clue that Augustine *should* have developed, but he sees in chapter 3 the line that Augustine actually does develop.[23] The same is true of William Craig, who treats chapter 4 as a place for Augustine to tie up loose ends after the main work has been done in chapter 3.[24] Christopher Kirwan, in a book on Augustine that pays special attention to issues surrounding the will and explores the problem of theological fatalism at some length, manages to keep chapter 4 out of it altogether.[25] This can only result in a distorted view of Augustine's solution.

The inadequacy in chapter 3 that leads Augustine to pursue the issue into chapter 4 may have less to do with Augustine's conception of free will than with the tests he deploys in that chapter. These tests, as we saw, are unable to differentiate between cases of libertarian freedom and cases in which the will itself (as opposed to outward action) is causally determined or compelled. Augustine, however, rejects the latter possibility (at least for the pure case of a will uncontaminated by sin, which is the context for the discussion at the beginning of book 3). In *De Libero Arbitrio,* for example, there is his argument in book 1 (11.75–76) that the mind cannot be

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21. In chap. 2 what makes the problem merely aporetic is the requirements of faith; in chap. 3, in contrast, it is the developing sense that—regardless of theological commitments—there is just something very bizarre about the idea that foreknowledge should rule out free will. The modern debate has done nothing to diminish this sense of bizarreness. Pike himself allows that the idea "has a sharp counter-intuitive ring" ("Divine Foreknowledge," p. 27), and William Craig states the point well in *The Only Wise God:* "No matter how ingenious the argument, fatalism must be wrong. For it posits a constraint upon human freedom which is altogether unintelligible. The fatalist admits that our decisions and actions may be causally free—indeed, they could be utterly uncaused. Nevertheless, such actions are said to be constrained—but by what? Fate? What in the world is that?" (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1987), p. 69.

For more on the two *aporiai,* see the last section of my "Does Theological Fatalism Rest on an Equivocation?" *American Philosophical Quarterly* 32 (April 1995), pp. 153–65.

22. A notable exception is David De Celles, "Divine Prescience and Human Freedom in Augustine," *Augustinian Studies* 8 (1977): 151–60.

23. William Rowe, "Augustine on Foreknowledge and Free Will," *Review of Metaphysics* 18 (December 1964): 356–63.

24. Craig, "Augustine on Foreknowledge," pp. 56–57.

25. Kirwan, *Augustine,* chap. 5.

compelled by anything superior, equal, or inferior—the superior and equal because they are too just to coerce the will, the inferior because it is too weak. It is unclear whether this argument is supposed to rule out *internal* as well as *external* compulsion. But in book 12 of *De Civitate Dei* matters are less ambiguous:

> The bad will is the cause of the bad action, but nothing is the efficient cause of the bad will. . . . For if two men, alike in physical and moral constitution, see the same corporal beauty, and one of them is excited by the sight to desire an illicit enjoyment while the other steadfastly maintains a modest restraint of his will, what do we suppose brings it about, that there is an evil will in the one and not in the other? . . . For, not to delay on such a difficulty as this, if both are tempted equally and one yields and consents to the temptation while the other remains unmoved by it, what other account can we give of the matter than this, that the one is willing, the other unwilling, to fall away from chastity? And what causes this but their own wills, in cases at least such as we are supposing, where the temperament is identical? The same beauty was equally obvious to the eyes of both; the same secret temptation pressed on both with equal violence. However minutely we examine the case, therefore, we can discern nothing which caused the will of the one to be evil. (12.6)

If anything, the stress here is on the similarity of *inner* conditions ("alike in physical and moral constitution," "tempted equally," "identical temperament," "same beauty equally obvious," "same secret temptation pressed with equal violence"), a similarity that precludes these conditions from explaining the differential outcome.

Augustine's argument in book 1 may be unsound and his analysis in *De Civitate Dei* flawed. But whether or not he has come to this position honestly, the fact that he has come to it means that he must explain how divine foreknowledge can be compatible with *uncompelled* free will. Chapter 3 fails to do this, but Augustine's argument is not on that account a failure since it is not the job of chapter 3 to provide this explanation. That is the job of chapter 4.

IV

Augustine begins chapter 4 by citing the "compulsion test" argued for in book 1: "Will you deny that we sin by will and not under compulsion [*cogente*] from anyone, either higher, lower, or equal?" (4.36). This test had also been broached in chapter 1, though it was not completely clear at that point how it fit in with the other tests for free will as they were being marshaled against a naturally necessary W. It is not broached at all in

chapter 3; in fact, the word 'compel' (Latin: *cogo*) and its cognates are completely missing from the text in chapters 2–3. The fact that the "compulsion test," which was trotted out during the examination of *naturae suae necessitate*, is not brought into the examination of *necesse enim certa* until chapter 4, is itself some reason to think that Augustine did not intend his analysis in chapter 3 to be regarded as a complete defense of free choice in the face of divine foreknowledge. A set of necessary conditions for free will may be enough to show that free will is absent in particular cases, like that of natural necessity, where one of the necessary conditions fails; but it is insufficient to show that free will is present, as Augustine wishes to do in the case of divine foreknowledge, unless the set is complete. Lack of compulsion provides the final necessary condition for free will as Augustine understands it during this last phase of the discussion.

This is certainly closer to a libertarian conception than that which can be gleaned from chapter 3, though a compatibilist could still accept it if "compulsion" were hedged about with enough qualifiers (e.g., that it be *external* to the agent). Augustine himself does enough hedging that, absent passages like the one just cited from *De Civitate Dei*, one could well conclude with John Rist that Augustine "only recognizes external compulsion as compulsion. What we should call psychological compulsions are not compulsions for Augustine. They are simply the individual working out his own nature."[26] But even if this is largely true, there is no opportunity for such a qualification to enter into the analysis in chapter 4. Whether or not Augustine is himself soft on compatibilism, it would appear that foreknowledge is unimplicated in *any* form of genuine compulsion, not just the narrower forms recognized by soft determinists.

Following Evodius's statement of his remaining concerns, Augustine begins his reply by asking whether the problem arises from foreknowledge per se or from the fact that it is *God's* foreknowledge that is at issue. Evodius indicates the latter; Augustine thinks otherwise:

> A. If you foreknew that someone was going to sin, would it not be necessary [*necesse*] for him to sin?
> E. Yes, he would have to [*necesse*] sin, for my foreknowledge would not be genuine unless I foreknew what was certain [*certa*].
> A. Then it is not because it is God's foreknowledge that what He foreknew had to [*necesse*] happen, but only because it is foreknowledge. It is not foreknowledge if it does not foreknow what is certain [*certa*].
> E. I agree. But why are you making these points?
> A. Because unless I am mistaken, your foreknowledge that a man will sin does not of itself necessitate [*cogeres*] the sin. Your foreknowledge did not force [*cogeret*] him to sin even though he

26. Rist, "Augustine on Free Will," p. 422.

> was, without doubt [*sine dubio*], going to sin; otherwise you
> would not foreknow that which was to be. Thus these two
> things are not contradictories. As you, by your foreknowledge,
> know what someone else is going to do of his own will, so God
> forces [*cogens*] no one to sin; yet He foreknows those who will
> sin by their own will.
>
> Why cannot He justly punish what He does not force
> [*cogit*] to be done, even though He foreknows it? Your recol-
> lection of events in the past does not compel [*cogis*] them to
> occur. In the same way God's foreknowledge of future events
> does not compel [*cogit*] them to take place. As you remember
> certain things that you have done and yet have not done all
> the things that you remember, so God foreknows all the
> things of which He Himself is the Cause [*auctor*], and yet He
> is not the Cause [*auctor*] of all that He foreknows. (4.38–40)

What do we learn from this? Foreknowledge entails necessity, in the sense
that what is foreknown *has to* happen, is *certain*, and will occur *without doubt;*
it does *not* entail necessity by *compelling* or *causing* what is foreknown.
Because it does not carry the latter implications, Augustine claims, it is not
in conflict with free choice of the will or with God's justice in punishing us
for the wrong use of the will.

Let us review the situation and how Augustine means to resolve it in
chapter 4. He argues in chapter 3 that there is a sense in which it is true
that

(P1) W is foreknown (by God) → W is necessary,

and he establishes this as the canonical sense for purposes of examining the
argument. He then asks in chapter 4 whether it is in the same sense true
that

(P2.1) W is necessary → W is compelled.

This question is important because Augustine is now adding to the three
tests employed in chapter 3 what I have called the "compulsion test":

(P2.2) W is compelled → ~(W is voluntary).

Given that Augustine accepts (P2.2), if (P2.1) is also true, it follows that
(P2) is true; and given that Augustine accepts (P1) as well, it then follows
that theological fatalism is true. Augustine must therefore show that (P2.1)
is false. If he can do this, he will not only turn back an important argument
for (P2) but also show that (P2) is false. His title to this stronger conclusion
rests on the fact that (P2.2) is the fourth and last in a series of tests that are
severally necessary and *jointly sufficient* for W being voluntary. So *W is*

necessary cannot entail ~*(W is voluntary)* without thereby entailing that at least one of these tests is unsatisfied. But with respect to the first three tests, as Augustine shows in chapter 3, there are no grounds for thinking that *necesse enim certa* undermines voluntariness.[27] If Augustine can show the same for the fourth test, represented by (P2.2), it will follow that W is voluntary even if divinely foreknown (and thus necessary). And this is accomplished by showing that (P2.1) is false.

Suppose the only reason we have for thinking that W is compelled derives from the fact that W is foreknown (by God). What could this reason be? The first possibility to consider is that

> (A) W is foreknown (by God) → W is compelled (by God's fore-
> knowledge).

The idea that divine knowledge might itself cause or compel what it knows seems implausible on its face, though it has not been entirely absent from the twentieth-century debate. Douglas Lackey, for example, argues that the divine case, no less than the human, presupposes a causal theory of knowledge, and that this requires a causal chain from God's knowledge to the foreknown event.[28] Another strategy, discussed in Jonathan Kvanvig's book *The Possibility of an All-knowing God,* rests on a conception of divine omniscience under which *p* would be true were God to believe that *p,* and *p* would be false were God not to believe that *p*—a formula which, on a counterfactual analysis of causation like that of David Lewis, implies the causal dependence of the state of affairs expressed by 'p' on God's believing that *p.*[29] As for Augustine's reason for addressing (A), Jasper Hopkins appeals to Evodius's temptation "to picture God's foreknowledge as having some causal effect upon human free choices—perhaps because, in general, he pictures God as so very powerful."[30] Alternatively, Evodius might find the picture unattractive but also unavoidable inasmuch as he unreflectively equates necessity with causal necessity and thinks himself stuck with the latter once he admits the *necesse enim certa* of divine foreknowledge. Either

27. I think Augustine does show this. My earlier criticism (point 5 in sect. III) assumed that Augustine's response in chap. 3 is complete and that the "power test" therefore carries the whole modal load for free will. Once the "compulsion test" is added to the mix, this criticism largely vanishes (leaving in its wake a purely semantic question of whether the counterfactual analysis gives an accurate rendering of the word 'power').

28. Douglas Lackey, "A New Disproof of the Compatibility of Foreknowledge and Free Choice," *Religious Studies* 10 (September 1974): 313–18. (But shouldn't the causal chain go in the other direction?)

29. Library of Philosophy and Religion (Houndmills, U.K.: Macmillan, 1986). Kvanvig's counterargument (p. 82) is that the converse of the counterfactuals also holds, making the relation inappropriately symmetrical for one of causal dependence.

30. Jasper Hopkins, "Augustine on Foreknowledge and Free Will," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 8 (1977): 125.

way, Augustine regards it as crucial to the case against (P2.1) that (A) be defeated.

Augustine's argument against (A) in chapter 4 rests on a comparison of divine with human knowledge. Letting 'F' abbreviate 'W is foreknown', 'C' abbreviate 'W is caused or compelled', and 'Jones' stand for any human knower, we represent the argument as follows:

(1a) [F (by God) → C (by God's knowledge)] ↔ [F (by Jones) → C (by Jones's knowledge)]

(2a) ~[F (by Jones) → C (by Jones's knowledge)]

∴ ~[F (by God) → C (by God's knowledge)].

(1a) is intuitively attractive in its own right, but Augustine provides an implicit argument on its behalf. The logic of *knowledge* should be the same whether the knower is human or divine. If divine foreknowledge did compel what it foreknows, it must be in virtue of its certainty: its *necesse enim certa.* But human foreknowledge is also certain (otherwise it would not qualify as knowledge). Thus the two foreknowledges, however different in other respects, are alike when it comes to the characteristic relevant to compulsion. It is therefore rational to regard (1a) as true. As for (2a), Augustine is so sure that Evodius would assent to it that he doesn't even offer him the ritual opportunity to do so. And indeed it is only in the most contrived case that (2a) might turn out false. This disposes of (A).[31]

Of course, the fact that God's foreknowledge does not compel me to sin would not of itself show that I am blameworthy unless nothing else compelled me either. But suppose foreknowledge to be impossiblé except insofar as my actions are compelled by prior conditions; that is,

(B) W is foreknown (by God) → W is compelled (by something).

If (B) were true, foreknowledge would be incompatible with uncompelled free will even though it is not foreknowledge that is doing the compelling. Richard Swinburne, for example, maintains that when a knower holds a belief about the future, if nothing is present to the knower that causally guarantees the believed state of affairs, the belief can only be true as a matter of *luck*, not *knowledge.*[32] This would be the case whether the knower is human or divine. Martin Davies calls this the "causal-epistemological" version of theological fatalism and claims that Boethius had it as his main concern.[33] Boethius, of course, addresses the concern by rejecting the

31. A plausible extension of the argument yields the broader conclusion, endorsed elsewhere, that W is not even *explanatorily dependent* on God's foreknowledge of W. See, for example, *De Civitate Dei* 5.10: "For a man does not therefore sin because [*quia*] God foreknew that he would sin."

32. Richard Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism*, Clarendon Library of Logic and Philosophy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), chap. 10.

predictive model of foreknowledge that underlies it, replacing it with a timeless vision of (what from our perspective is) the future. Augustine is also concerned with the causal-epistemological problem and responds to it with an alternate model of divine knowledge. Elsewhere the model is much like the Boethian; but in *De Libero Arbitrio* 3.4, his response is drawn from an ordinary example of human cognition.

In selecting the example, Augustine cannot proceed exactly as he did against (A) because the corresponding comparison of divine to human foreknowledge—

(1b*) [F (by God) → C (by something)] ↔ [F (by Jones) → C (by something)]

—is dubious. Whereas my foreknowledge of someone else's action might not compel or cause that action, it may seem that human beings cannot achieve foreknowledge except in cases in which some present factor, accessible to present knowledge, is operating to compel or cause the foreknown action. Since compulsion is acknowledged by Augustine to be inimical to free will, this would mean that human foreknowledge is possible only under conditions in which free will is in fact excluded. That Augustine does indeed take this view is suggested by his discussion of foreknowledge in *Confessions* 11.18[34] and by the infallibilist position on knowledge that he adopts in our text ("my foreknowledge would not be genuine unless I foreknew what was certain"). It is plausible to suppose that I cannot know infallibly what someone else will do of his or her own free will. If I can be said to know that my wife will choose the pecan pie, this must be on a less stringent account of knowledge than an infallibilist could accept; but I can still have infallible foreknowledge (more or less) of what is not subject to her will—for example, that she is about to hit the floor (since she is presently falling from the stepladder). My foreknowledge does not cause or compel what it foreknows, but it can foreknow only what is caused or compelled. So the comparison with human foreknowledge does not seem to get the situation with divine foreknowledge quite right since Augustine clearly holds that God can know the future whether or not it is caused or compelled.

It is the ineffectiveness of (1b*) that explains why, having begun by comparing divine foreknowledge to human foreknowledge, Augustine sud-

33. Davies, "Boethius and Others," pp. 327–29.
34. "When, therefore, they say that things future are seen, it is not themselves, which as yet are not (that is, which are future); but their causes or their signs perhaps are seen, which already are." For references to further texts, see Hopkins, "Augustine on Foreknowledge," who argues that the thought experiment in which Evodius is asked to suppose that he foreknows W is purely counterpossible: "Augustine does not believe that any human being has foreknowledge of another's free choice—except in the rare case where this knowledge has been revealed to him by God" (p. 124).

denly switches to a comparison to human memory. Let 'R' stand for 'W is remembered.' The counterargument to (B) then goes like this:

(1b) [F (by God) → C (by something)] ↔ [R (by Jones) →
    C (by something)]

(2b) ~[R (by Jones) → C (by something)]
    ∴ ~[F (by God) → C (by something)].

The second premise of the argument is again beyond dispute. As for (1b), it presupposes a particular way that divine foreknowledge operates, one in which the logical and chronological orders diverge. In the words of David De Celles, "Though God infallibly knows what a man will decide before he decides it, yet nonetheless, His knowledge depends upon that decision."[35] God's knowledge, we might say, is upstream of W in the order of time but downstream of W in the order of explanation. If God's beliefs about future events depend on those events, His beliefs may be accounted for independently of His awareness of conditions causally determining the events. In that case there is no more reason to assume causally necessitating conditions than there is in the case of human memories, which also depend on the remembered events. Not only is there nothing present to the rememberer that causes the remembered event, but there is nothing present to the rememberer from which the rememberer infers the remembered event: human memory is not retrodiction, as divine foreknowledge is not prediction. On this model of God's foreknowledge, (1b) is true. As long as there are no crippling objections to that model, Augustine is within his rights in rejecting (B).[36]

There may be some question whether the critical feature of this model—the explanatory dependence of foreknowledge on the foreknown—is consistent with what Augustine says elsewhere. In the *Confessions*, for example, we find Augustine entertaining another model, this one also inspired by the case of human memory. After noting that memory involves a mental image by which something from the past is perceived in the present, he adds,

> Whether there be a like cause of foretelling future things, so that of
> things which as yet are not the images may be perceived as already

35. De Celles, "Divine Prescience," p. 160.
36. Perhaps the most salient objection is that the model presupposes a B-theory of time. Whether it does, as well as whether its doing so is objectionable, is too large an issue to address here, though I briefly defend the propriety of drawing on the B-theory when responding to theological fatalism in my "Does Theological Fatalism Rest on an Equivocation?"
    Notice that the shift in cognitive model does not undermine the case against (A) since human memory has just as much title to knowledge (and thus to certainty) as has human foreknowledge. But the case of human memory illustrates more clearly than the case of human foreknowledge the relations of dependence that do (and do not) link divine foreknowledge with what God foreknows.

> existing, I confess, my God, I know not. This certainly I know, that we generally think before on our future actions, and that this premeditation is present; but that the action on which we premeditate is not yet, because it is future. . . . (11.18)

On this "premeditation" model, someone knows the future by knowing his own intentions for future action. If Christopher Kirwan is to be believed, the same idea may be found in *De Civitate Dei* book 5, where a crucial assumption of the Stoic argument Augustine is addressing "is that universal knowledge of the future comes not by foreseeing how things will be, but only by deciding or ordaining how things shall be."[37] Applied to God, the "premeditation" model suggests a further consideration in favor of (P2.1), namely,

(C) W is foreknown (by God) → W is compelled (by God).

Here it is neither God's *foreknowledge*, as in (A), nor something *outside* God, as in (B), but *God Himself* who compels the foreknown event (and does so as a necessary condition of foreknowing it).

Is there any evidence that Augustine accepts the "premeditation" model, thereby incurring an obligation to respond to (C)? Nothing in his rebuttal of theological fatalism in *De Civitate Dei* suggests that he agrees with the Stoics on this point, and the passage from the *Confessions* is clearly considering possibilities for human foreknowledge rather than proposing a model for divine foreknowledge. Better evidence of the "premeditation" model at work might be sought in *De Trinitate*, where Augustine writes, "God is not acquainted with any of his creatures, whether spiritual or corporeal, because they are, but they are because he is acquainted with them. For he did not lack knowledge of the things he was to create; he created, therefore, because he knew, not knew because he created" (15.13.22). Here, however, he is talking about the *existence* of creatures, not the particular facts about what they freely do. We know that God cannot be causative for everything He knows if only because some of what He knows is evil: "He can foreknow even those things which he himself does not do, such as whatever sins there may be."[38] Such knowledge is simply unavailable under the "premeditation" model. All in all, I see no reason to doubt Augustine's seriousness in proposing that future acts of will escape freedom-annihilating compulsion because divine foreknowledge operates like "re-

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37. Kirwan, *Augustine*, p. 100. But Kirwan seems to me to be overreading the text: the Stoic assumption is surely (B), not (C).

38. *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* 10.19. See also *Tractatus in Joannis Evangelium* 53.4: "The Lord, as prescient of things future, did by the Prophet predict the unbelief of the Jews; predict, however, not cause. For it does not follow that the Lord compels any man to sin, because He knows already men's future sins. . . . If they had wished to do not evil, but good, they would not have been hindered. . . ."

verse memory." This is perfectly compatible with God's creative and provi-
dential endeavors requiring a complex interplay between foreknowledge
and agency in which much of the future is also available to Him through
premeditation.[39]

Before concluding this section, I should say something about the
absence in 3.1–4 of any appeal to "timeless eternity" as the proper mode of
divine existence. Augustine, after all, endorses this conception of God
elsewhere.[40] Since this gives him the resources for a "Boethian" response to
the problem, it may seem that he has missed a golden opportunity in
neglecting to avail himself of those resources when addressing the argu-
ment for theological fatalism; at the very least, it is surprising that he does
not even correct the argument's assumption (erroneous from an atem-
poralist standpoint) that God knows what will happen *beforehand.* The puz-
zle of how Augustine's response to theological fatalism fits in with what he
says elsewhere about God's relation to time—a puzzle that confronts any-
one who attempts to make sense out of Augustine's position in our pas-
sage—has a neat solution on the interpretation I have been offering. If free
will, while excluding causal determinism and compulsion, is nevertheless
compatible with divine foreknowledge because the latter necessitates with-
out causing or compelling what it foreknows, presumably free will would be
compatible with divine *timeless* knowledge for the same reason. In either
case, God's knowledge does not cause or compel what it knows. This is
Augustine's basic explanation for why divine knowledge is benign in its
effects on free will, and the explanation applies whether or not God exists
in time. Since the argument's assumption that God exists and knows in time
is not part of what makes the argument go wrong, there is no need for
Augustine to correct this assumption in offering his own solution to the
problem. Were he to correct it, he would still have to explain how God's
timeless knowledge is compatible with free will, and this explanation would
not differ in any essential respects from the one he actually offers in
response to the conventional formulation of theological fatalism in terms
of divine *fore*knowledge. If I have understood Augustine's position correctly,
introducing divine atemporalism into the discussion in chapters 1–4 would
be irrelevant to the points at issue there and simply delay arrival at the real
solution to the problem.

Augustine is evidently satisfied with what he has accomplished in chap-
ter 4 because his response to Evodius's aporia ends at that point. And what

39. Against the common objection that complete foreknowledge stultifies
rather than abets providential agency, see my "Omniprescient Agency," *Religious
Studies* 28 (September 1992): 351–69; "Divine Providence and Simple Foreknowl-
edge," *Faith and Philosophy* 10 (July 1993): 394–414; "Prescience and Providence: A
Reply to My Critics," *Faith and Philosophy* 10 (July 1993): 430–40; and "The Compati-
bility of Omniscience and Intentional Action: A Reply to Tomis Kapitan," forthcom-
ing in *Religious Studies.*

40. For example, *Confessions* bk. 11, *De Trinitate* bk. 15, *Ad Simplicianum de
Diversis Quaestionibus* 2.2.2.

has he accomplished? First, he makes up for the anemic "power test" of chapter 3 by adding a robust "compulsion test," one that (in conjunction with the three tests from chap. 3) is finally *sufficient* for free will. He then turns back two challenges to W's freedom based on the compulsion test: (A) on grounds of rank implausibility, (B) because it overlooks the dependence of God's foreknowledge on the future event. With no other plausible challenges on the horizon, Augustine concludes that *necesse enim certa* does not involve compulsion. Since the other tests were already satisfied in chapter 3, free will escapes unscathed from the threat of theological fatalism.

In sum, Augustine's response to the argument for theological fatalism is to affirm (P1) and deny (P2), the denial resting on an analysis of free will under which it is jeopardized only by a necessity stronger than that generated by divine foreknowledge. Whether this assessment entitles Augustine to a place of honor alongside others who have taken the measure of theological fatalism is, of course, another question. Settling this question requires situating Augustine's contribution in the context of the current debate.

V

There are two basic reasons for doubting whether Augustine's argument against theological fatalism is relevant to the contemporary, Pikean version of the problem. Since these reasons correspond to the argument's two premises, I take them in that order.

The first reason rests on doubts about whether Augustine's sense of necessity is sufficiently similar to Pike's to make his solution transferrable. I have said almost nothing about the kind of necessity that Augustine associates with divine foreknowledge, other than to note some of the expressions by which Augustine refers to it (such as *necesse enim certa*) and to distinguish it from natural and causal necessity. But commentators who get as far as chapter 4 tend to regard it as a *conditional* necessity (Rowe and Craig are examples). The expression "If P, necessarily Q," can be read as either "P → □Q" or "□(P → Q)." On the first reading necessity attaches directly to the *simple* proposition Q (given P), whereas on the second it attaches only to the *conditional* linking P and Q. On the view we are considering, then, (P1) expresses nothing more than the conditional necessity: □(W is foreknown (by God) → W will obtain). And then the problem of theological fatalism is quickly solved by pointing out that only simple necessity, not mere conditional necessity, is inimical to free will and that (P2) is therefore false.

In contrast, the necessity at work in Pike's argument is a form of simple necessity, namely, "accidental necessity" or (my preferred term) "temporal

necessity." Its primary instance is past events, which are necesary in the sense that they are now unavoidable. There may have been a time when they were avoidable (when they still lay in the future), but they are not avoidable now. The future may be temporally contingent, or "open," but the past is temporally necessary, or "closed." No one—not even God—can do anything about it now. The secondary instance of temporal necessity is future events that are entailed by past events, for these are no more avoidable than are the past events that entail them. Since temporal necessity is relative to times (one and the same event may be temporally contingent at a time prior to its occurrence but temporally necessary at a time posterior to its occurrence), let us use the symbol '$\Box_t$' to designate temporal necessity, with 't' indexing the time with respect to which the event in question is temporally necessary. Then Pike's version of the argument has the following form, where t is the present, P is God's knowing yesterday that you will perform a certain action tomorrow, Q is your performing that action tomorrow, and R is your performing of that action freely:

$$(P1) \ P \to \Box_t Q$$
$$(P2) \ \Box_t Q \to {\sim}R$$
$$\therefore P \to {\sim}R.$$

Pike's reason for thinking (P1) to be true is that God's foreknowledge of your future action belongs to the past and so is temporally necessary relative to the present; but since God is essentially omniscient, His believing that you will perform this action entails that you will perform it. This transfers the temporal necessity from God's past belief to your future action, and (P1) is therefore true. Augustine's critique of conditional necessity leaves this version of the argument untouched.

The problem with this objection is that its interpretation of Augustine's argument is unconvincing. First, there is little evidence in the text of a scope ambiguity, or of Augustine's resolution of it in favor of conditional necessity.[41] His own summary of the argument for theological fatalism at the beginning of chapter 3 refers to the necessity engendered by God's foreknowledge as *fixed* and *inevitable*. This is not only hard to understand as a conditional necessity but also strongly suggests the very kind of simple necessity at work in Pike's argument: temporal necessity.

Second, the interpretation can find no support in the famous passage in *De Civitate Dei* where Augustine distinguishes between a necessity that threatens free will but which foreknowledge does not entail and a necessity that foreknowledge does entail but which does not threaten free will. On the Craig-Rowe reading, the latter, harmless necessity should be conditional necessity; but that's not how Augustine characterizes it. It is, he says, the necessity according to which "it is necessary for something to be as it is, or

41. Cf. Hopkins, "Augustine on Foreknowledge," pp. 116–17.

happen as it does," and he gives as examples the necessity by which it is "necessary for God to live forever and to foreknow all things" and "necessary, when we exercise will, to do so of our own free will." Now it is true that there are *de dicto* necessities connected with both of Augustine's examples. The proposition "God is indestructible and omniscient" is necessarily true since anyone not indestructible and omniscient would not count as God; so is "any exercise of will is an exercise of free will" since (in Augustine's idiolect) it would not count as will if it were not free. But this does not mean that this second harmless variety is *de dicto* since there are *de re* necessities here as well. The divine attributes are *de re* essential to God. Likewise, though a particular bachelor is not *essentially* unmarried (the connection here being merely *de dicto*), a particular act of willing, like W, is *essentially* free. There is no indication that Augustine thought divine foreknowledge compatible with these necessities in virtue of their being merely conditional or *de dicto*.

Third, what has most attracted critics to the scope ambiguity interpretation is Augustine's comparison of divine to human foreknowledge in chapter 4. The point of comparison seems to be that $\Box(X\ knows\ that\ p \supset p)$, whether X is divine or human. But then the necessity Augustine is assuming must be merely conditional. This evidence fails, however, if the point of the comparison is different, as I argued earlier when we examined that passage. My suggestion, again, is that Augustine thinks humans know the future only when the future is compelled or causally necessary. It is this *difference* between divine and human foreknowledge that leads him to drop the comparison with human foreknowledge for a comparison with human memory. If Augustine errs in attributing the same logic to divine and human knowledge, it is not because he ascribes to divine foreknowledge nothing more than the conditional necessity by which human foreknowledge is connected with truth but because he asserts in the human case the same *un*conditional necessity that attaches to foreknown events in the divine case.

Finally, the solution Augustine actually offers is not the minimal one needed to solve a problem generated by mere conditional necessity. His position is that necessity invalidates free will only if the necessity is causal in nature or at least makes the will explanatorily dependent on something outside the agent's power. But not only does conditional necessity fail to generate either form of necessity, temporal necessity fails to do so as well. If Augustine is right about this, both resolutions of the scope ambiguity are encompassed by his solution. This suggests either that he did not in fact understand the problem as resting on a scope ambiguity or that his solution is more powerful than he realized. In either case the contemporary relevance of Augustine's analysis is unaffected.

So much for the first reason why Augustine's solution may seem disconnected from current debates over theological fatalism. The second is that, if he does indeed interpret "necessary" to include the temporally necessary,

his rejection of (P2) marks him as a compatibilist. But Pike's argument is not devised to raise a problem for compatibilistic freedom, only for libertarian freedom. It is commitment to libertarian freedom that has made (P2) more or less sacrosanct in the contemporary discussion and focused critical acumen onto (P1). Augustine's solution is an end run around libertarian freedom, making it no more instructive for philosophers interested in solving the Pikean problem than one that throws out another puzzle condition such as divine omniscience.

Is Augustine's solution acceptable only to a compatibilist? That's not at all clear. We saw that Augustine is an *in*compatibilist with respect to natural necessity in chapter 1; more relevantly, we saw that he is an *in*compatibilist with respect to causal necessity in chapter 4. But we also saw that he is a *compatibilist* with respect to temporal necessity in chapter 4, inasmuch as an action that is temporally necessary without being causally necessary is not thereby precluded from satisfying the conditions for free will. It makes little sense, then, to ask whether Augustine is a compatibilist *tout court*, nor is it at all obvious that the respect in which he is a compatibilist debars him from being a libertarian as well. Even if his final position on the will makes him a soft determinist (or worse), his analysis of the problem of theological fatalism does not presuppose such a low view of human capacities.

A libertarianism that accepts compatibilism with respect to temporal necessity, while remaining incompatibilist with respect to causal necessity, is appealing quite apart from the theistic motive to reconcile human freedom with divine foreknowledge. A related problem in philosophical theology, for example, is how divine omnipotence is to be squared with essential goodness. The fact that I am capable of sinning, while for God this is metaphysically impossible, should not have as a consequence that God is in this respect less powerful or free than I am. Further, God's situation here may just be the limit case of a range that includes human acts that are psychologically impossible (e.g., my intentionally torturing my daughter to death) but that do not seem best understood as limits on our *power*.[42] Seeing how this consequence can be avoided, in both the divine and human cases, might also help us see how I could have the libertarian power to do what is temporally impossible.

Another reason for doubting whether libertarianism is inconsistent with temporal necessity, this time having nothing to do with theological commitments, arises from Frankfurt-type counterexamples to the "principle of alternate possibilities." Suppose Jones intentionally murders Smith, with all the circumstances of the case satisfying the most demanding libertarian strictures but with this one exception: that a device implanted in his

brain would have compelled Jones to murder Smith if he had not decided to do so of his own volition. In such cases, Frankfurt writes, there are

> circumstances that make it impossible for a person to avoid performing some action without those circumstances in any way bringing it about that he performs that action. It would surely be no good for the person to refer to circumstances of this sort in an effort to absolve himself of moral responsibility for performing the action in question. For those circumstances, by hypothesis, actually had nothing to do with his having done what he did. He would have done precisely the same thing . . . even if they had not prevailed.[43]

Frankfurt himself draws a compatibilist moral from such cases, but others have seen in them the basis for a modified libertarianism that abandons alternate possibilities while retaining causal indeterminism.[44] If the latter is a defensible position,[45] divine foreknowledge presents us with Frankfurt-type cases of libertarian free will in which alternatives to W are temporally impossible but the circumstances that render them impossible do nothing to explain why W occurs:[46] as Augustine notes, "A man does not therefore sin *because* God foreknew that he would sin."[47]

Perhaps the most important question bequeathed to libertarians by Augustine's analysis of theological fatalism is whether the freedom worth having is compatible with temporal necessity when it is not causally determinative. Recent work on theological fatalism simply assumes that libertarians must answer in the negative.[48] Augustine's *De Libero Arbitrio* suggests—correctly, in my view—that the assumption is worth reexamining.

43. Harry Frankfurt, "Alternative Possibilities and Moral Responsibility," *Journal of Philosophy* 46 (1969): 837.
44. For example, Eleonore Stump, "Intellect, Will, and the Principle of Alternate Possibilities," in *Christian Theism and the Problems of Philosophy*, ed., Michael Beaty (Notre Dame, Ind.: Notre Dame University Press, 1990): pp. 254–85. Stump's own positive account of incompatibilist free will comes remarkably close to the fourfold test employed by Augustine in *De Libero Arbitrio* 3.3–4, though her interests in this essay lead her instead to develop a connection with Thomas Aquinas.
45. An important threat to its defensibility may be found in John Martin Fischer, *The Metaphysics of Free Will* (Oxford, U.K. and Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1994), where it is argued that the abandonment of alternate possibilities undercuts any motive for retaining causal indeterminism as a requirement of moral responsibility. William Hasker has made the same claim in correspondence. I intend to address this point on another occasion when I can give it the attention it deserves.
46. I defend divine foreknowledge as a source of Frankfurt-type counterexamples to the principle of alternate possibilities in my "Frankfurt Counterexamples: Some Comments on the Widerker-Fischer Debate," forthcoming in *Faith and Philosophy*.
47. *De Civitate Dei* 5.10.
48. One exception to this claim is Linda Trinkaus Zagzebski, who in *The Dilemma of Freedom and Foreknowledge* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), chap. 6, sect. 2.1, applies to the problem of theological fatalism a Frankfurt-type skepticism regarding the principle of alternate possibilities.