ABSTRACT

Augustine's Solution to the Problem of Theological Fatalism

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In Augustine's dialogue *De Libero Arbitrio*, his interlocutor Evodius presents an argument for the incompatibility of divine foreknowledge and human freedom, a position we now call "theological fatalism." Since this position is irreconcilable with Augustine's theological commitments, he endeavors to reveal some flaw in Evodius' reasoning. The tradition of modern analytic philosophy has misinterpreted Augustine's arguments against theological fatalism, and as a result, his arguments are underappreciated and often ignored. Augustine is often characterized as accepting a deterministic understanding of free will (called compatibilism), even though the text of *De Libero Arbitrio, De Civitate Dei,* and several late anti-Pelagian do not support such a view.

A more promising interpretation of Augustine's argument is that he endorses a version of free will whereby free actions have alternative possibilities only in reference to causation, but not in reference to foreknowledge. He argues that to exercise free will is to be the cause of what is willed. Thus, no loss of freedom is implied by advance knowledge of a volition, even if that volition has no alternatives relative to foreknowledge. This interpretation embodies a unique way to solve the problem of theological fatalism which

has various benefits: it is more harmonious with Augustine's other works, it avoids various paradoxes of God's involvement in human affairs, and it can be combined fruitfully with other methods of solving the fatalism problem to make a comprehensive theory of foreknowledge, providence and free will.

A particularly strong objection to Augustine's solution is that an agent cannot be truly free without the ability to do otherwise, regardless of the contents of God's foreknowledge. I argue that the important, intuition-bearing quality of alternative possibilities is the leeway within causality. Since Augustine's solution accepts alternative possibilities relative to causality (in fact giving more reasons to affirm this type of alternative possibilities), he does not compromise robust freedom of the will by rejecting leeway within foreknowledge.

Augustine's Solution to the Problem of Theological Fatalism

by

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CHAPTER ONE

The Problem of Theological Fatalism

Introduction

In book three of his early dialogue *De Libero Arbitrio* (*DLA*), the fourth-century African bishop St. Augustine examines a problem for Christian theologians and philosophers: divine foreknowledge and human free will are apparently contradictory. Numerous scholars have since attempted to resolve the apparent contradiction, claiming that the arguments in favor of the contradiction contain logical errors and mistaken hidden assumptions. Although Augustine introduced this problem to Christian philosophy, his solution is currently misunderstood and mischaracterized, and consequently, underappreciated. The aim of this dissertation is to rehabilitate Augustine's solution to theological fatalism by charitably reconstructing it using the tools of modern analytic philosophy, and to show where it fits into the current constellation of positions on divine foreknowledge and freedom of the will. In this first chapter I identify the apparent contradiction between divine foreknowledge and human freedom, describe Augustine's formulation, and outline the modern debate surrounding the problem. The second chapter presents the standard interpretation of Augustine's solution along with my critique of its conceptual and textual value. In the third chapter I disentangle Augustine's key terms and use them to defend a minority interpretation of his solution. Finally, in the fourth and fifth chapters I situate Augustine's solution to theological fatalism among current positions on foreknowledge and freedom, respectively.

Theological fatalism is a problem for Christianity because the Scriptures have traditionally been understood to teach that God knows all things and that human beings have free will.[1] In his formulation of the problem, Augustine identifies the strongest argument for theological fatalism and describes what is at stake if it succeeds. In this chapter, I distinguish between theological fatalism and other freedom-excluding arguments, describe the problem's foundational premises and Augustine's formulation of the problem, and examine a close modern equivalent to Augustine's original formulation of the problem.

Distinguishing Theological Fatalism from other Freedom-Excluding Arguments

In *De Libero Arbitrio*, neither Augustine nor his interlocutor Evodius use the term "theological fatalism" to describe the puzzle about divine omniscience and human freedom. Though Augustine is familiar with the concept of fate from the Stoics, he is not always clear about *what* exactly "fate" is or *why* a Christian should worry about it. Before examining Augustine's arguments on theological fatalism, I think it helpful to first draw a conceptual perimeter around the term and its near relatives.

Determinism, Causal and Theological

Determinism and fatalism are deceptively similar since they both are commitments to a lack of alternative possibilities with respect to the future. Both of these positions entail the unavoidability of the future, and thus, if either is true, future actions are not free. The most helpful way to distinguish them from each other is to focus on the

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[1] The meanings of "God knows all things" and "humans have free will" are continuously debated. Nonetheless, on the whole, Christian philosophers and theologians try to preserve some version of divine omniscience and human freedom.

causation of future actions. I do not intend to convey any specific theory of causation by the term "cause." Something as simple as: "*x* causes *y* iff *x* brings about *y*," will suffice. Whether *y* is an action, true proposition, state of affairs, or atomic fact makes little difference for our purposes. Generally, saying that "*x* determines *y*" is shorthand for "*x* causes *y*." If *y* is determined by *x*, *y* is ensured by the being or activity of *x*. Since I use "cause" in a very generic sense, I intend it to be roughly synonymous with "determine," "bring about," "ensure," and so on. Causation, in this case, is a kind of production or modification of reality, not a simple logical relation. Thus, the caused is always dependent on the cause, unlike the relation of the antecedent to the consequent in a material conditional, which requires no such dependency.[2] A cause and what it brings about can be "zoomed out" like the historical claim that "America's involvement in World War II caused the end of the Great Depression," or "zoomed in" such as the most immediate effect of one change in a single atom. This general idea of "bringing about" or "making it so" is what I mean by causing and determining.

"Determinism" is the position that all events are ensured by prior causes. In ordinary experience, human beings are not reticent to claim to be the cause of external events, and at other times to claim to suffer the effects of external events. A football player who successfully sacks the opposing quarterback caused/determined/brought-about the quarterback's shoulders to contact the ground. The quarterback's shoulder was caused/determined to contact the ground by his opponent. External causation and determination are not controversial in these everyday examples. Determin*ism*, on the other hand, is the position that *all* events are, ultimately, externally caused; this is the

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[2] This statement is true: "If I eat breakfast tomorrow then four is half of eight." However, the consequent does not depend on the antecedent. My activities do not bring about any mathematical truths.

more controversial claim. If determinism is true, the football player does, in fact, cause the quarterback to fall, but the lineman's actions are themselves ensured by prior events. The position that all events are brought about by an uninterrupted series of physical causes is called "causal determinism." Accordingly, the position that all events are brought about by the will of God is called "theological determinism."[3] However, regardless of the type of determinism, if *x* brings about *y, y* is an action I perform, and I am not *x*, I am not free to refrain from doing *y*. In summary then, "determinism" is the position that all events, including the actions of allegedly free persons, are ultimately the result of external causes. Subtypes of determinism name the source of causation.

Destiny and Fatalism, Logical and Theological

Fatalism, on the other hand, is not as easy to define as determinism. The nineteenth century German idealist F. W. J. Schelling calls fate a "hidden necessity… a relationship whereby men through their own free action, and yet against their will, must become cause of something which they never wanted…."[4] He links "fate" with "providence," saying little more since he thinks neither term expresses a clear idea. The concept Schelling has in mind is "destiny" – the idea that history inexorably fulfills its purpose. Even though we act freely, destiny will accomplish its own ends. The character of Oedipus is a particularly clear example of destiny: no matter what he does to avoid his

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[3] If theological determinism is true, everything that occurs is caused by God, and therefore God is responsible for all events. If causal determinism is true, and the initial condition of the universe as well as the laws that govern its progression were both caused by God, then theological determinism is also true. In other words, God can employ the mechanism of natural laws to ensure the outcomes He wills. If God delights merely in the orderliness of the universe, and has no particular end, it might be better to call such a position "theologically initiated causal determinism."

[4] F. W. J. Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism (1800)*, trans. Peter Heath (Charlottesville, Virginia: University Press of Virginia: 1978), 204.

fate, his actions only propel him toward his tragic end. Paradoxically, he acts freely, but against his will. He is the cause, but of something he never wanted. This description of fate, which is called "destiny" if blind, "providence" if by God's will, is not necessarily incompatible with freedom, or at least, not obviously so.

Schelling's protestations notwithstanding, his phrase "hidden necessity" aptly describes the kind of fatalism at the center of Augustine's arguments in *DLA* III. I use the term "fatalism" to refer to the position that there is some hidden necessity that makes it impossible for events to occur differently than they do. Arguments in favor of fatalism do not appeal to causation, else they are arguments for determinism. Instead, a fatalist's general strategy is to take commonly held commitments and show that their conjunction validly implies that no one has free will. Thus one must either abandon one of the premises or become a fatalist – that is, admit that no actions are freely performed, regardless of all the intuitions and appearances to the contrary. If at least one of the premises is a theological commitment, the argument supports "theological fatalism." If none of the premises come from a religious tradition, the argument supports "logical fatalism."[5] While some premises for logical fatalism are better established by theology, theological fatalism can use premises believed solely for religious reasons.[6]

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[5] My definition for "theological fatalism" is more broad than others appearing in the literature. Linda Zagzebski defines the term as "the thesis that infallible foreknowledge of a human act makes the act necessary and hence unfree." Even though Zagzebski's definition covers the problem Augustine addresses in *DLA,* it excludes other theologically-based freedom-excluding arguments. For example, Schelling is concerned that the eventual realization of the *Absolute* is incompatible with freedom. Though his worry does not depend on infallible foreknowledge, it would still be "theological fatalism" using my definition above. I imagine other religions may have freedom-excluding commitments apart from infallible foreknowledge. See Linda Zagzebski, "Foreknowledge and Free Will", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2008 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/free-will-foreknowledge/> and Schelling, *Transcendental Idealism (1800)*, 203-5.

[6] For example, a traditional argument for fatalism rests on the truth-value of future-tense propositions. One need not appeal to theology to argue that future-tense propositions do indeed have truth-

Some find the hidden necessity of fatalism so absurd that they are convinced that all arguments for fatalism either rest on false premises or have invalidly derived conclusions, even if the error has yet to be demonstrated.[7] For example, everyone has had their body location determined by an external force (at least as an infant) and these experiences make it easy to imagine a world in which all events are determined by external forces. Nearly everyone has experienced a serendipitous confluence of causes and can generalize that experience into believing in destiny or providence. In contrast to determinism and destiny, nobody has ever experienced "hidden necessity." After all, once we appeal to a cause we are discussing determinism. Fatalism's only evidence is the rules of logic and philosophical or theological commitments.

Scriptures and Fatalism – Alternative Possibilities

Before introducing Augustine's formulation of the problem of theological fatalism, it is useful to examine first what prompts Augustine to discuss the problem. He is motivated by the authority of the Scriptures and its teachings about the divine nature and the freedom of human beings.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells a parable about the kingdom of heaven. In it a rich man entrusted his wealth to his servants before leaving on a long journey. When he returned, he found that not all his servants had performed adequately. This is what happened when the worst servant tried to explain himself:

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value. However, one could argue that God's foreknowledge of all events would remove all doubt about the matter. Thus, it is possible to have theological reasons for adopting logical fatalism without thereby adopting theological fatalism.

[7] Craig, like Schelling, finds fatalism "unintelligible." Kvanvig considers fatalism's single possible world thoroughly implausible. See William Lane Craig, *The Only Wise God*, 68-9 and Jonathan Kvanvig, *The Possibility of an All-Knowing God*, 92-3.

And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed. And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.' But his master answered and said to him, 'You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed. Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.'

For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.[8]

Leaving aside the kingdom of God, I want to draw attention toward the master's response. Note that not only did servant do the wrong thing, but there was also something else he could have done to avoid blame. The servant offers excuses, and weak ones at that, but the master claims that the servant could have easily avoided blame but simply chose not to do so. According to the master, there is no excuse good enough for doing nothing. As a result, the master regards himself justified in punishing the blameworthy servant – and the punishment is harsh by any standard.

The above parable is just one of many Biblical stories where the ability to do otherwise is important for attribution of praise and blame. The implication of the story is that the other servants would have merited similar punishment if they had done what the lazy servant had done, and the lazy servant could have avoided his fate by avoiding the blameworthy action. The Bible is replete with such stories. In the fourth chapter of Genesis, God pleads with Cain to turn away from the anger that would destroy him,[9] and in the book of Revelation, Jesus stands at the door and knocks, waiting for the church to

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[8] Matthew 25, emphasis mine. Unless otherwise noted, all Biblical quotations are from the New American Standard version.

[9] Genesis 4:6-7.

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let Him in.[10] From the biblical authors' perspective, we are continually confronted with moral choices – we can choose righteousness or choose sin. Often when we choose sin, not only do we realize that we are blameworthy, but we know what we should have done instead to avoid blame. We are, as the lazy servant is in the parable, without excuse. We act wickedly, but we could have acted blamelessly if we had acted differently – and we were free to do so. Moral responsibility requires the ability to do otherwise.

<center>*Scriptures and Fatalism – Divine Foreknowledge*</center>

The writer of Hebrews, after encouraging believers to remain obedient to the gospel, declares, "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."[11] All things are exposed to God's sight; nothing escapes His notice. Surely God knows all things, but His knowledge is not limited to the present. Isaiah records God's challenge to the idols His people were following

> "Present your case,' says the LORD. 'Set forth your arguments,' says Jacob's King. 'Bring in your idols to tell us what is going to happen. Tell us what the former things were, so that we may consider them and know their final outcome. Or declare to us the things to come, tell us what the future holds, so we may know that you are gods. Do something, whether good or bad, so that we will be dismayed and filled with fear. But you are less than nothing and your works are utterly worthless; he who chooses you is detestable."[12]

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[10] Revelation 3:20.

[11] Hebrews 4:12-13.

[12] Isaiah 41:21-24.

"Jacob's King" taunts His competition by accusing them of being powerless, being ignorant of the past, and *being unable to reveal the future*. God considers awareness of the future to be a necessary condition of being worthy of worship and devotion. In addition to these conceptual passages, the Bible contains numerous *examples* of foretelling, some of which concern morally blameworthy acts.[13]

The challenge to free will comes from alleged implications of God's omniscience of the future. At first glance, the incompatibility of freedom and omniscience seems implausible. How could it be that someone (even God) knowing what I do has any bearing at all on whether I do something freely? If I know that my wife will decide to skip lunch tomorrow, surely her decision is still free. However, human knowledge of the future is fallible. If my wife decides to eat breakfast tomorrow we merely revise the claim that I knew P. Instead, we say that I thought I knew P, or perhaps that I mistakenly believed P. Divine knowledge is not like human knowledge in at least this respect. The rational noose tightens when we recall a crucial feature of God's foreknowledge: whatever God knows, He knows infallibly – that is, He cannot possibly be mistaken about anything He knows. If God cannot be mistaken about my future actions, it seems that I cannot avoid doing them. However, I need to have the ability to avoid doing an action in order to be blameworthy. Recall that the parable from Matthew 25 presupposes that one of the things that makes the lazy servant blameworthy, one of the conditions for

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[13] For example, God foreknew that the king of Egypt would not allow the Israelites to leave except "under compulsion." Exodus 3:19 It is worth noting that Christians have held different opinions on both God's foreknowledge and human freedom. There are Christians who do not believe human beings have libertarian free will (some brands of Calvinism and Thomism), and Christians who believe God's omniscience does not extend to future free acts (Open Theism). Deniers of libertarian free will and/or foreknowledge claim that their positions are also motivated by interpretation of Scripture. However, Augustine believes that God's foreknowledge and human freedom are clearly taught by both the bible and tradition. His goal, then, is to reconcile the two.

him being deserving of his punishment, is that there was something he could have done, something in his power such that if he had done that other action, he would have not been blameworthy.

An Initial Argument for Theological Fatalism

At this very point the conception of freedom and responsibility we are relying upon collides with God's infallible foreknowledge. If God knew, without possibility of error, that I would do something, then it appears that I cannot avoid doing it. But then we are already committed to the position that being able to avoid an action is necessary in order to be responsible for doing it. If I cannot now prevent nor ever could have prevented something from occurring, I cannot be responsible for it and it would be unjust to punish me for its occurrence. This general rule is enshrined as the Principle of Alternative Possibilities (or PAP).[14] It has many formulations, but the core idea is this: the ability to refrain from an action is a necessary condition for moral responsibility and freedom of the will.[15]

With these two philosophical and theological commitments in mind we can make an argument for the incompatibility of human freedom and divine foreknowledge. This

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[14] Though the use of the acronym is a fairly recent contribution by twentieth-century philosophers (namely Chisholm, Van Inwagen and Frankfurt), the concept is at least as old as Augustine, and even he does not claim originality in its use. Aristotle alludes to it in *Nicomachean Ethics* III:1, "Now the man acts voluntarily; for the principle that moves the instrumental parts of the body in such actions is in him, and the things of which the moving principle is in a man himself are in his power to do or not to do." Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon, trans. W. D. Ross (New York: Random House, 1941), 965.

[15] The link between alternative possibilities, freedom of the will, and moral responsibility, though intuitively strong, is not universally acknowledged. See chapter 5 for an extended critique of this connection.

argument is not rigorous or precise, but it reflects the intuitive worry that God's foreknowledge and human freedom are not compatible.

1. All actions I perform are actions God foreknows. (foreknowledge)
2. All actions God foreknows are actions that cannot fail to occur. (infallibility)
3. No actions that cannot fail to occur are free actions. (PAP)
4. No actions God foreknows are actions that are free. (from 2 and 3)
5. No actions I perform are actions that are free. (from 1 and 4)

For any future act of mine, no matter how insignificant, if God foreknew it, then before the act (in fact, before I was born) God would know that I would perform that act at that time, place, in that manner, and with that intensity. If God infallibly knows that I will perform some act, then I will perfom it, it seems, no matter what. Long before I even considered acting, God's knowledge of my action is already a part of the past. If God has infallible foreknowledge of all my actions then those actions are as irrevocable as squeezed toothpaste. But then it seems that such irrevocable foreknown human acts are inevitable actions – actions that cannot be changed.

If I cannot change the course of my life, it seems that I am not free in any meaningful way. And if I am not free in any meaningful way, how is it that I can be blamed or praised for doing what God infallibly foreknew? Certainly, as the fatalist argument continues, the kind of freedom that the lazy servant had cannot apply here. Recall that his master was not only upset at what the servant did, but also that he did not do something he should have and could have done to avoid blame. If infallible foreknowledge cuts off alternative possibilities then nobody would ever deserve the master's rebuke. Augustine worries that "You ought to have..." cannot possibly apply to beings whose actions are exhaustively foreknown. Though we will return to examine

PAP more closely later in this dissertation, these initial considerations will serve to situate Augustine's presentation of the problem.

The Problem According to Augustine

Augustine saw the importance of arguing against the incompatibility of freedom and foreknowledge very early in his career. In defending the free choice of the will he saw the need for responsibility for sin to be squarely on the shoulders of humanity. For God to be the author of sin is to deny the reality of sin. If Adam partakes of the tree by divine decree rather than in opposition to divine decree the Gospel as traditionally understood is meaningless since there would be nothing from which to be saved – nothing for which we were guilty. A theological challenge to human moral responsibility is disturbing indeed. Toward the end of *DLA*, his interlocutor Evodius asks what has become one of the most perplexing questions in philosophy of religion:

> These things being so, I am unsettled in a manner beyond expression by this problem – How God foresees all facts and we sin by no kind of necessity. For whoever says that a thing can come to pass otherwise than as God has foreknown is laboring in unreasonable irreligion, to disprove the foreknowledge of God. Therefore, if God foreknew that the first man would sin, which he must grant who with me acknowledges that God foreknows all things – if, therefore, this is so... That because He foreknew [the future fact of sin] it was necessary that what God foreknew should be. How, then, is the will free where there appears to be such inevitable necessity?[16]

From Evodius' point of view, there seems to be an incompatibility between human freedom and God's knowledge. Evodius claims that it is irreligious to say that the future can happen differently than God foreknows it. It is not possible for God to be in error – that is, it is not the case that God merely happens never to be mistaken about the

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[16] Saint Augustine, *De Libero Arbitrio (Libri Tres): The Free Choice of the Will (Three Books)* trans. Francis E. Tourscher (Philadelphia: The Peter Reilly Company, 1937), 245-7.

future, but rather that it is impossible for Him to be mistaken.[17] The future cannot be other than as God foreknows it to be. The result is that everything that occurs is inevitable. In Evodius' estimation there is no way to combine the inevitability of the future with the way we generally regard responsibility. To be free and genuinely responsible for one's actions those actions must be avoidable. If it is literally impossible for a person to refrain from doing some sin, how could she be held responsible for its commission? After being questioned by Augustine about obviously blameworthy actions, Evodius makes a clarification:

> I said that the impulse itself is blameworthy, and therefore I approve it not; and I cannot doubt that it is to be blamed. But the soul which is drawn by this impulse from the immutable good to changeful things – that, I say, is not to be blamed, if its nature is such that it is necessarily moved thereto.[18]

In this passage Evodius takes care to note the difference between a particular action being bad and a person being an appropriate subject of blame or fault. If human beings are creatures that do various blameworthy actions by nature, then the fact that the actions are reprehensible is undiminished. What is diminished is the attribution of blame to the human mechanism. Perhaps blame still has to be attributed somewhere, but Evodius may not need to name the only remaining Agency that could be responsible.

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[17] Augustine agrees with Evodius that it is not possible for God to be mistaken about the foreknown. During their entire conversation, Augustine never questions Evodius' premise that it is not possible for anything to be otherwise than as God knows it. Instead, Augustine often repeats it. See *DLA* III:3, "...nothing can be done other than He foreknows, otherwise there would be no foreknowledge..." The two interlocutors are constantly referring to the certainty and comprehensive nature of divine foreknowledge, even calling it "shameful" to consider the contents of foreknowledge less than perfectly certain. *DLA,* 251. This perfect certainty and necessary connection between God's knowledge and reality is normally called infallibility. Augustine and Evodius clearly intend to represent God's foreknowledge as infallible.

[18] De Libero *Arbitrio*, 289.

Augustine, after praising Evodius for calling attention to the apparent contradiction, restates and clarifies the argument for his interlocutor:

> If God knows that a man will sin, you say, it must be that he sins [in fact]. The fact then must be. It is not, therefore, the choice of the will, but rather inevitable and fixed necessity that makes it a fact. In this reasoning now you fear that this is established, namely − Either it is denied shamelessly that God has foreknowledge of all things; or, if we can not deny that, then we must acknowledge that man sins, not by reason of will, but by necessity.[19]

Augustine's formulation is very tightly compressed, with several transitional premises left unstated, but the argument relies on the commitments to divine foreknowledge and alternative possibilities explained above. His first step is to call attention to a link between foreknowledge and inevitability. His second step is to exclude inevitable actions from the class of free actions. In what follows I combine Evodius' argument with Augustine's modifications. While the argument is not rigorous, this informal presentation captures their worries:

1. God foreknows all things that will occur (omniscience).
2. What God foreknows must necessarily come to pass (infallibility).[20]
3. I sinned (history). Therefore,
4. God foreknew my sin prior to its occurrence (from 1 and 3). Therefore,
5. My sin was necessary (from 2 and 4). But,
6. It is impossible for an act to be both necessary and free (PAP). Therefore,
7. My sin was not free (from 5 and 6).[21]

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[19] *De Libero Arbitrio*, 251.

[20] William Rowe suggests that this premise commits a fallacy with respect to the scope of "necessarily." I will discuss this objection in more detail in the next chapter.

[21] The fatalism argument appears at least three times in *DLA* III, each time slightly different. All three arguments share the same commitments to the inevitability of the foreknown and moral responsibility requiring the ability to do otherwise, but the interlocutors, even in the context of possible solutions, do not stick to a single way of stating the premises. For this reason, I do not think it possible to find *the* argument for theological fatalism as it appears in *DLA*. Instead, since the interlocutors think freedom and foreknowledge clash in an obvious way ("*contraria et repugnantia*"), they see no need to have a single argument express that apparent contradiction. The argument above is, as far as I can tell, a fair restatement of what puzzles them, but it is not the only way to formulate it. For more variations, see Jasper Hopkins, "Augustine on Foreknowledge and Free Will" *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 8, no. 2 (1977): 115-7.

This version of the argument ignores at least one modification Augustine makes in his restatement of Evodius' argument. In the process of converting the argument into a dilemma, Augustine changes 7 from "My sin was not free," to "My sin was not done by will, but by necessity." Evodius, however, was arguing that the will could have its freedom taken away by necessity, *not* that the argument proves that "necessity" instead of the will is what is responsible for actions. However, Augustine is justified in restating the conclusion in this way because, as he points out, there is no such thing as a will that is not free.[22] Given this understanding of the will, 5 implies 7.

Augustine's final statement is that actions are done not "by will" but "by necessity." This is a curious way to phrase the loss of human agency. Surely, he suggests, *something* has to be active in causing the sin. If it is not the will (the faculty within us that initiates action), then it must be this mysterious necessity that causes the sin, or that the sin is a necessary effect of some other hidden cause. Apparently, Augustine worries that Evodius has mistakenly conflated theological fatalism with theological determinism. As we will see in chapter 3, Augustine will use the ability to cause one's own actions in his solution, even though the problem itself does not require "necessity" to play a causal role. On the other hand, his suggestion that actions are done "by necessity" may be a rhetorical flourish meant to make the problem even more vivid. I suspect, however, that the interlocutors find something more puzzling about foreknowledge than the worry that foreknowledge implies causation. This deeper puzzle is evident since, after Augustine

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[22] Augustine asserts that those who look to necessity to explain the will do so in an attempt to disregard the will entirely. In *DLA* III:3, he states, "For, if it must be that he will, whence can he will, where there is no will?" The will that must be is no will at all.

conceptually separates foreknowledge from fore-ordination, Evodius asks a second time for an account of how divine foreknowledge does not in some way rule out free choice.[23]

Now that we have a rough version of Augustine's formulation of theological fatalism, with its emphasis on inevitability and alternative possibilities, let us turn to the modern debate.

Pike's Argument for Theological Fatalism.

In 1965, Nelson Pike brought considerable attention to the problem of theological fatalism by employing familiar techniques and concepts in modern analytic philosophy. His essay stimulated a renewed interest in the issue among philosophers and theologians and is almost universally cited in current discussions of divine foreknowledge and human freedom. I begin with his essay, not only because Pike's argument inspired the current debate, but also because it is inspired by Augustine's own worries. [24] Indeed, I think Pike vindicates Augustine's concerns in *DLA* that there is something profoundly perplexing about claiming that God has infallible foreknowledge of free human actions. I chose Pike's argument because it is much more rigorous and precise than what we find in *DLA* and it closely approximates the arguments Evodius and Augustine offer. Using Pike's argument allows one to identify clearly some of the responses available and allows me to identify and distinguish them from Augustine's response.

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[23] *DLA*, 261.

[24] Pike sets out to develop the argument from the same starting points Boethius and Augustine use. Pike states that "Traditional formulations of the problem of divine foreknowledge (e.g., those of Boethius and Augustine) made use of the notion of what is (and what is not) *within one's power*." He follows their method in his trilemma, while avoiding ambiguous premises like premise 2 above: "What God foreknows must necessarily come to pass." Nelson Pike. "Divine Omniscience and Voluntary Action" *The Philosophical Review* 74, No. 1 (January 1965): 31.

Pike argues by way of trilemma. For any choice I make God foreknows that choice. If God foreknows my choice and He cannot be mistaken, then for me to be able to choose otherwise than as God knows would mean that I have the power to bring about a state of affairs I clearly have no power to bring about:

1. "God existed at T1" entails "If Jones did X at T2, God believed at T1, that Jones would do X at T2.
2. "God believes X" entails "'X'is true."
3. It is not within one's power at a given time to do something having a description that is logically contradictory.
4. It is not within one's power at a given time to do something that would bring it about that someone who held a certain belief at a time prior to the time in question did not hold that belief at the time prior to the time in question.
5. It is not within one's power at a given time to do something that would bring it about that a person who existed at an earlier time did not exist at that earlier time.
6. If God existed at T1, and if God believed at T1, that Jones would do X at T2, then if it was within Jones's power at T2, to refrain from doing X, then (1) it was within Jones's power at T2, to do something that would have brought it about that God held a false belief at T1, or (2) it was within Jones's power at T2, to do something which would have brought it about that God did not hold the belief He held at T1, or (3) it was within Jones's power at T2, to do something that would have brought it about that any person who believed at T1, that Jones would do X at T2, (one of whom was, by hypothesis, God) held a false belief and thus was not God – that is, that God (who by hypothesis existed at T1) did not exist at T1.
7. Alternative 1 in the consequent of item 6 is false (from 2 and 3).
8. Alternative 2 in the consequent of item 6 is false (from 4).
9. Alternative 3 in the consequent of item 6 is false (from 5).
10. Therefore, if God existed at T1, and if God believed at T1 that Jones would do X at T2, then it was not within Jones's power at T2, to refrain from doing X (from 6 through 9).
11. Therefore, if God existed at T1, and if Jones did X at T2, it was not within Jones's power at T2, to refrain from doing X (from 1 and 10).[25]

Pike contends that no human being has the power to actualize any of the three options in line 6, and therefore foreknowledge and freedom are incompatible. Pike's

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[25] Pike, "Divine Omniscience and Voluntary Action," 33-4.

conclusion is that if we affirm God's foreknowledge, we commit ourselves to fatalist consequences.

Pike's trilemma has one important difference from the preliminary formulation of Augustine's argument above: Where Augustine's fatalism argument contains a principle like, "what God foreknows must necessarily come to pass," Pike restricts his argument to plausible human powers. Though Pike's argument diverges from Augustine's in this respect, his concern is inspired by Augustine's methods. Indeed, Augustine's longest single argument in *DLA* III:1-4 concerns what is within one's power. Pike takes this concern and makes it the primary feature of the proposed incompatibility of freedom and foreknowledge.

If Pike's conclusion (line 11) is sound, then if we believe that God knows the future, we must restrict our definitions of human freedom to versions without the ability to do otherwise. To see how Pike considers foreknowledge to render our perceptions about our freedom illusory, let us take a mundane scenario: suppose that God foreknew that I would not eat cereal for breakfast tomorrow. Tomorrow I wake up and walk to the kitchen. While it appears to me that I could, at any moment, change my mind about what to eat – I could easily pick up the box of cereal, pour its contents into a bowl, and so on. While I am physically and mentally able to do so (I am not handcuffed or the victim of a brainwashing experiment), if God has infallible knowledge of what I am about to do, it appears that there is no way for me to eat cereal without falsifying His knowledge. It appears that if we want to describe my actions as free, we have to give a description of freedom that does not rely on PAP.

Thus, Pike clarifies Augustine's original worry: either we deny that God has certain foreknowledge, or we deny that human beings have libertarian freedom, that is, freedom which includes the ability to do otherwise. Even though Augustine is comfortable connecting foreknowledge with the necessity of the foreknown, Pike's version of the argument does not rely on this principle, which suggests that it is not needed for a fatalistic conclusion. Augustine's task is now clear: he cannot merely argue that God's foreknowledge does not replace the will with "necessity." He must show that God's holding beliefs[26] about the future does not lead to fatalism. We will soon see if he is successful.

Possible Solutions

Pike's argument allows us to categorize the solutions to his problem by noting which premise or inference is denied or modified. The position traditionally associated with Boethius denies line 1: "'God existed at T1' entails 'If Jones did X at T2, God believed at T1, that Jones would do X at T2.'" If God is not properly understood as temporal, this first premise is false and the argument fails. The position traditionally associated with Ockham denies premise 4: "It is not within one's power at a given time to do something that would bring it about that someone who held a certain belief at a time prior to the time in question did not hold that belief at the time prior to the time in

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[26] Asserting that God has beliefs is not without controversy, even though the foreknowledge literature is not squeamish about the term. I use the verb "believe" to mean "thinking with assent." We say that S believes P iff S thinks about P and considers P to be true. On this analysis, belief in P is independent of whether P is actually true. And though for God all beliefs that P entail P, I will employ belief-language when it is philosophically important to convey that God's mental assent is something that occurs, even if it occurs eternally. When the emphasis is on the certainty of God's thoughts, I will use knowledge terms rather than belief terms. For an opposing view, see William P. Alston, "Does God Have Beliefs?" *Religious Studies* 22, No. 3/4 (September – December 1986): 287-306. Alston raises several objections to God's having beliefs, including that God's knowledge is not propositional, so all statements of the form "God believes that P," are incorrect.

question." If human beings can indeed have power over the past, then premise 4 is false and the argument fails. The position traditionally associated with Molina modifies premise 1. According to the Molinist, premise 1 should state something like: "'God existed at T1' entails 'If Jones did X at T2, God believed at T1 that if Jones was in circumstance C, and if C does not necessitate Jones performing X, Jones would freely do X at T2.'" A variant premise of this sort, the Molinist claims, preserves Jones' ability to do otherwise.

Another alternative is to deny that we have libertarian freedom (PAP), but that there are accounts of responsibility that do not require it. Thus Pike's conclusion, that "if God existed at T1, and if Jones did X at T2, it was not within Jones's power at T2, to refrain from doing X," has no bearing on whether an action is freely performed. If we can still be responsible for our actions without needing *libertarian* freedom, then God's omniscience entails no fatalist conclusion. We would have to replace libertarian freedom with some other kind of freedom. Acting freely and having moral responsibility may only require the agent to be free from external *coercion*. As long the only thing meant by freedom is that one's will is not forcibly impeded by external causes, then alternative possibilities are not a necessary condition for moral responsibility. Thus, one's actions can be both necessary and free. As we will see in chapter two, this is how recent interpreters believe Augustine to have solved the problem.

Now that we understand what is at stake, have Augustine's formulation of the problem is in mind, and see important traps to avoid both in the articulation of the problem and in its solution, we can turn to the Augustinian resolution as widely understood. If he accepted the soundness of his fatalist argument, leading him to abandon

a robust, libertarian freedom, then unless we reinterpret the Scriptural support for alternative possibilities, Christians may responsibly abandon St. Augustine's solution.

CHAPTER TWO

Problems with the Standard Interpretation

Introduction

William Rowe's interpretation of Augustine's argument against theological fatalism in *De Libero Arbitrio* is the dominant, standard one. What Rowe defended in 1964 (revised by Jasper Hopkins in 1977) is echoed by the majority of contemporary scholars in analytic philosophy.[1] It is common practice to interpret Augustine as a proto-compatibilist. In this chapter I first summarize the interpretation, discuss the interpretation's weaknesses as a solution to the problem of fatalism and finally examine its textual support. I intend to show that not only is the standard interpretation inconsistent with the contents of *De Libero Arbitrio*, but is also discordant with the other texts in which Augustine discusses theological fatalism.

Interpretation by Rowe and Hopkins

William Rowe and Jasper Hopkins give an initially compelling interpretation of Augustine's text. Though Hopkins harshly critiques Rowe's original essay, Hopkins' comments primarily clarify and correct minor errors in Rowe's interpretation rather than overturn it. Rowe's initial work and Hopkins' refinements are cited in nearly all instances

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[1] Some of the modern authors (Rowe, Hopkins, Kirwan, Craig) are attempting an interpretation and critique of Augustine's position. Others (Plantinga, Hasker, Kvanvig) are interested in the standard interpretation as illustrative of a solution to theological fatalism that is not as attractive as the solution they offer. For the authors in the second category, very little, if any, of their overall projects is lost by rejecting a particular interpretation of Augustine.

of the standard interpretation. Beginning with them is instructive, since the other commentators primarily reinforce and qualify Rowe's work.

In the twentieth century, William Rowe re-introduced Augustine's argument against fatalism to Anglo-American analytic philosophy of religion. Rowe's interpretive approach is to focus on the argument from control, certainly the longest and most detailed argument in *DLA* III, and then fill in gaps with other arguments in *DLA* III. Because the arguments in *DLA* III leave many questions unresolved, Rowe finds passages from other works in the Augustinian corpus to bolster and expand his interpretation. Jasper Hopkins, in his essay on Rowe's interpretation of *DLA*, systematizes the standard interpretation by identifying five distinctives of the standard interpretation. In order to make the standard, compatibilist reading of *DLA* clear, I follow Hopkins' outline to examine each distinctive, starting with Rowe's initial work and adding relevant modifications from Hopkins and later philosophers. The five distinctives are: 1) Augustine's articulation of the problem, 2) Augustine's solution, 3) Rowe's criticism of Augustine's solution, 4) Rowe's solution to the initial problem, and 5) Augustine's argument from human foreknowledge. Once the standard interpretation is firmly in mind, I will argue that it is a weak interpretation of *DLA*.

Augustine's Articulation of the Problem

Rowe represents Evodius's version of the fatalism argument as follows:

1. God has foreknowledge of all future events.
2. Hence, for any person S, if S is going to sin, God foreknows that S will sin.
3. Whatever God foreknows must necessarily happen.
4. Hence, if God foreknows that a man will sin, he must necessarily sin.
5. But if such a man must necessarily sin, there is no voluntary choice in his sinning.
6. Therefore, S has no free will in sinning.[2]

Rowe develops this version from the set of passages discussed in the previous chapter. Hopkins worries that this version of the argument insufficiently captures Augustine's logical procedure. The argument in *DLA* III is, after all, a *dilemma*, not an argument against free will. Augustine's procedure is not, as Rowe makes it appear, to straightforwardly affirm divine foreknowledge, note the incompatibility with libertarian freedom, and then try to reformulate freedom in such a way that it is compatible with divine foreknowledge. Rather, Augustine considers *both* foreknowledge and human freedom to be essential for a theology that neither makes impious assertions about God's nature nor places responsibility for sin on God's shoulders. Hopkins points out that Augustine's historical interlocutors[3] grasp one horn of the dilemma and wonder, in light of the evident truth of human freedom, if any being can have foreknowledge (or in pagan cases, "divination").[4] However, Hopkins notes, we can begin by assuming either foreknowledge or freedom, and then argue that the other is not excluded. Rowe's

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[2] William L. Rowe, "Augustine on Foreknowledge and Free Will," *Review of Metaphysics* 18, No. 2 (December 1964): 356-7.

[3] Hopkins notes that Augustine is primarily responding to Cicero's *De Fata.* Jasper Hopkins, "Augustine on Foreknowledge and Free Will," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 8, No. 2 (1997): 116-117.

[4] Jasper Hopkins, 115-6.

restatement of Augustine's argument does not capture all the nuances of the dialogue, but it is sufficiently accurate for the purposes of understanding the solution.

Augustine's Solution

On Rowe's interpretation, *DLA* III resolves the compatibility of free will and foreknowledge through an analysis of "within one's power," ultimately allowing Augustine to deny premise 5, which opposes the necessary to the voluntary. According to Rowe, Augustine argues that some act can be within one's power and also be necessary. If no contradiction is implied by "necessity" and "within one's power," and if Augustine can successfully argue that all actions within one's power are also free, then Augustine will have demonstrated the compatibility of necessity and freedom. Rowe appeals to this passage in *DLA* that I refer to as the control argument:

> But if he (a denier of free will) . . . says that, because he must necessarily so will, his will is not in his own power, he can be countered by the answer you gave me when I asked whether you could become happy against your will. You replied that you would be happy now if the matter were in your power; for you willed to be happy but could not achieve it . . . we cannot say we do not have the power unless we do not have what we will. If we do not have the will, we may think we will but in fact we do not. If we cannot will without willing those who will have will, and all that is in our power we have by willing. Our will would not be will unless it were in our power. Because it is in our power, it is free. We have nothing that is free which is not in our power, and if we have something it cannot be nothing. Hence it is not necessary to deny that God has foreknowledge of all things, while at the same time our wills are our own. God has foreknowledge of our will, so that of which he has foreknowledge must come to pass. In other words, we shall exercise our wills in the future because he has foreknowledge that we shall do so; and there can be no will or voluntary action unless it be in our power.[5]

Augustine asserts that the will would not exist were it not in our power, and whatever is in our power is free. Because God foreknows our wills, He must foreknow

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[5] *Rowe*, 357-8.

our free wills, since the two are identical. Rowe then proceeds to refine Augustine's phrase "within one's power." Rowe uses this passage from *De Civitate Dei* to propose a more precise definition of the key phrase:

> For if that is to be called *our necessity* which is not in our power, but even though we be unwilling effects what it can effect – as, for instance, the necessity of death – it is manifest that our wills by which we live uprightly or wickedly are not under such a necessity; for we do many things which, if we were not willing, we should certainly not do. This is primarily true of the act of willing itself – for if we will, it *is*; if we will not, it *is* not – for we should not will if we were unwilling. But if we define necessity to be that according to which we say that it is necessary that anything be of such a nature, or be done in such and such a manner, I know not why we should have any dread of that necessity taking away the freedom of our will.[6]

Rowe reads the above passage as an argument for the compatibility of necessity and freedom. Combining the early text of *DLA* with the paragraph above from *DCD* (*De Civitate Dei*) Rowe arrives at a definition for "within one's power" which he believes conforms to Augustine's overall intent. Rowe offers a negative definition: *x* is not in one's power iff either 1) "*x* fails to occur even though the man wills to do *x*" or 2) "*x* occurs even though the man does not will to do *x*."[7] Using this definition, discovering whether any act is in my power is fairly straightforward. Take one of the standard examples from discussions of logical fatalism: was it in the admiral's power to initiate a naval battle even if it is necessary that he do so?[8] Does the battle 1) fail to occur even though he wills it? No. Does the battle 2) occur even though he does not will it? No.

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[6] *DCD* V:10. Augustine, *City of God* in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, first series: Augustin: City of God, Christian Doctrine*, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. Marcus Dods. (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), 92-3.

[7] William Rowe, 358.

[8] The naval warfare example is from Aristotle's *On Interpretation* chapter 9. Whether or not a sea-fight takes place tomorrow is often used as a canonical illustration of logical fatalism. For an interpretation and analysis of this text, see Jaakko Hintikka, "The Once and Future Sea Fight: Aristotle's Discussion of Future Contingents in De Interpretatione IX" *The Philosophical Review* 73, no. 4 (October 1964): 461-492.

Since neither condition is satisfied, it is in his power, and therefore free in the relevant sense. There is no need to discuss whether or not the admiral could have done otherwise since Rowe's formula relies only on what in fact took place, not on what *could have* taken place.

In Rowe's formulation of the argument, the denial of premise 5 provides a solution to the problem of theological fatalism though his solution is consistent with theological determinism. For, even if an action is necessary due to external causes, it does not follow that the action is outside one's power or done *against* one's will. For example, if I were to will *x* purely due to causal necessity, I am not suffering from a "will against my will." If *x* were not in my power, it would have to be true that the presence or absence of *x* is not the result of my will, but that is not the case. If Augustine is correct that volitions are always in one's power, thus there are no occasions of someone "willing unwillingly."[9]

The standard interpretation of Augustine's solution helps dispel the concern that theological fatalism entails that we "will against our will." If all one's actions, past and future, are necessary, then our foreknown volitions are not violating our actual willings. And since a will within one's power is free – perhaps even the measure of freedom to which all others are compared[10] – the standard interpretation goes about fitting a definition of freedom into the conceptual space allowed by necessary foreknowledge. That is, the standard interpretation views Augustine as embracing a compatibilist version

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[9] There are cases of first and second order wills conflicting, and of contrary first-order wills. The compulsive smoker may light his cigarette while a part of himself screams his disapproval at his own actions. This would be a case of a "divided" will, not willing unwillingly. Willing unwillingly is self-contradictory, according to Augustine.

[10] John J. Davenport, "Liberty of the Higher-Order Will: Frankfurt and Augustine," *Faith and Philosophy* 19, No. 4 (October 2002): 439-40.

of freedom in response to the alleged incompatibility of foreknowledge and the ability to do otherwise.

Further aiding the standard interpretation, Augustine seems not to distinguish between "will" and "free will." On his view, the will is always in one's power. In the standard interpretation, since it is possible for a specific volition to be both free and necessary, foreknowledge is no threat to freedom. Hence, there is no need to worry about theological fatalism because even if foreknowledge renders foreknown actions necessary, it is possible for necessary actions to be free.

Primary Criticism of Augustine's Solution

Rowe's primary dissatisfaction with what he understands to be Augustine's solution is that it seems to ignore *akratic* actions.[11] That is, willing unwillingly may in fact be possible. Rowe and Hopkins are in general agreement that Augustine considers it impossible to will unwillingly. However, Rowe argues that Augustine is mistaken, while Hopkins defends Augustine against Rowe's critique. The locus of the disagreement is Rowe's invocation of second-order volitions. Rowe cites cases in which someone makes an effort to will something but is unsuccessful, and on those grounds finds fault with the proposed Augustinian solution. In other words, Rowe considers the dynamic between first- and second-order willings to be counterexamples to Augustine's analysis of "within one's power." And, depending on how the proposed counterexamples are described, ineffectual second-order willings are in fact occasions of willing unwillingly.[12] However, as Hopkins argues, Rowe's use of second-order willings is not relevant. For necessity to

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[11] William Rowe, 360 and Jasper Hopkins, 114.

[12] For example, in Romans 7:7-21 Paul states that he performs actions against his will.

be a problem for freedom, the correct description of some person, S, doing A, is that S willed, but did not will, to do A. That is, the person willed but did not will. But this is absurd.[13] There is no such thing, from a conceptual standpoint, as willing without will. Augustine's analysis of psychological examples of a divided will is another matter entirely. The conceptual impossibility refers to the contradiction of a person willing and not willing at the same time, in the same manner, and so on. The psychological examples involve conflicting wills, so "willing unwillingly" in a psychological context means that the will is not whole, but divided. Augustine intends "willing unwillingly" to be obviously false, something to this effect: "S performs A by means of M, but not by means of M." This is quite different from the psychological examples Rowe presents. The psychological examples are realistic, and in fact, Augustine appeals to them in *Confessions*.[14] Instead of a divided will, "willing unwillingly" describes willing without will – which Augustine claims *is* a contradiction.[15] Certainly, if Augustine intends to argue that second-order volitions never occur then he deserves criticism, but Augustine does not so argue. Thus Rowe's criticism is founded on a misreading of *DLA*.

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[13] *Hopkins.*, 121-3.

[14] The *Confessions* is saturated with examples of the battle of contrary internal wills, especially his conversion in *Confessions* VIII where he tries to mitigate his desire for salvation by promising himself to become a Christian "soon" instead of immediately.

[15] Jasper Hopkins, 123 and Barry David, "The Meaning and Usage of 'Divine Foreknowledge' in Augustine's De Libero Arbitrio," *Augustinian Studies* 32, Vol. 2 (2001): 144. Saint Augustine, *De Libero Arbitrio (Libri Tres): The Free Choice of the Will (Three Books)* trans. Francis E. Tourscher (Philadelphia: The Peter Reilly Company, 1937), 259. "If the will itself is wanting in the act of willing, then we do not will."

Rowe's Solution to the Initial Problem

Rowe, however, argues that a more fruitful way to refute the argument for fatalism is to show that the inference from 3 to 4 is logically invalid. Rowe suspects that Augustine, in his statement of the problem, commits a fallacy with regard to the scope of the modal operator. The crucial premise is number 3, which is ambiguous regarding the necessity foreknowledge imparts to the foreknown. Proposition 3 states, "Whatever God foreknows must necessarily happen," which supposedly entails 4: "Hence, if God foreknows that a man will sin, he must necessarily sin." Rowe sees two options for premise 3:

3a. "It is necessary that if God foreknows *p*, *p* will happen"

or

3b. "If God foreknows *p*, *p* will happen necessarily."[16]

Rowe correctly notes that in 3a, necessity applies to the conditional as a whole, whereas in 3b, necessity applies to the consequent of the conditional. Now, the inference from 3 to 4 is valid if we substitute 3b for 3. If we substitute 3a for 3, then we cannot validly infer 4. Rowe contends that this argument for fatalism fails because 3a is "true within the context of classical theology," but 3b is both likely false and not required by Christian theology.[17] Therefore either the argument for theological fatalism is invalid (we interpret 3 as 3a) or it has a false premise (we interpret 3 as 3b). Rowe finds this more promising than Augustine's solution. Rowe concludes that Augustine's purported denial

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[16] William Rowe, 361.

[17] *Ibid.,* 361.

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of proposition 5 allowing for the compatibility of freedom and necessity is in response to a flawed, unsound argument.

Hopkins worries that Rowe is too hasty in dismissing 3b. After all, he states, 3b is not *obviously* false. Rowe's claim that 3b is not required by Christian theology is not universally held. Certainly Boethius believes that only the necessary can be foreknown.[18] Jonathan Edwards considers the denial of 3b a glaring contradiction.[19] Neither of these thinkers derive 3b from 3a, which would be fallacious. Instead, they use an analysis of time and knowledge to arrive at 3b.[20] From his constant use of "inevitable," Augustine seems committed to something like 3c:

3c. If God foreknows A will occur at T, A inevitably occurs at T.[21]

Rowe is surely correct that in the original statement of 3, the phrase "must necessarily" is ambiguous. If we read "necessary" as "logically necessary" then 3b is too strong. If we read "necessary" as "inevitable" then 3c results, and it is a principle worthy

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[18] Rowe claims that Boethius distinguishes between the two types of necessity represented by 3a and 3b. Rowe is correct in that Boethius does not believe God's knowledge entails 3b. However, Boethius believes God's *foreknowledge* (if God were to have foreknowledge) entails 3b.

[19] "If that, whose existence is indissolubly connected with something whose existence is now necessary, is itself not necessary, then it may possibly not exist, notwithstanding that indissoluble connexion of its existence – Whether the absurdity be not glaring, let the reader judge." Jonathan Edwards *Freedom of the Will* Part 2:XII:3.

[20] For example, one may argue that knowledge of P cannot be more certain and unalterable than P: the knowledge of P is dependent on P and it is self-evident that an effect cannot be greater than its cause. Thus, if God foreknows P, and God's foreknowledge is certain and unalterable (which it must be), then P must be no less certain and unalterable since P is the cause of foreknowledge of P. In other words, if God foreknows P, then necessarily P. We need not think that the necessity of P is caused by God's foreknowledge of P. Instead, God only foreknows necessary events.

[21] I think what Augustine means by "inevitable" is similar to what A. N. Prior identifies as the necessity of "now-unpreventable." Everything past is now-unpreventable, even if logically contingent. Everything entailed by now-unpreventable propositions are themselves now-unpreventable. God's foreknowledge, being now-unpreventable entails that the foreknown is now-unpreventable as well. The problem with Rowe's 3b is that it does not reveal the kind of necessity Augustine has in mind. See A. N. Prior, "The Formalities of Omniscience" *Philosophy* 37, no. 140 (April 1962): 119ff.

of consideration. Using the language of possible worlds, we can restate the difference this way: Augustine does not argue that A occurs at T in all possible worlds, only in those possible worlds where God foreknows that A occurs at T. But since, presumably, we are in one of those possible worlds (since God already foreknows that A occurs at T), A cannot, now that God has foreknown it in this actual world, fail to occur. If Rowe is incorrect in his analysis of 3, then Augustine's denial of premise 5 may be the best approach to avoid the fatalist conclusion.

Hopkins remarks that the standard interpretation and refutation properly end here. The final essential characteristic, Augustine's discussion of human foreknowledge, is an additional argument usually interpreted in light of the other four characteristics.[22]

Augustine's Argument from Human Foreknowledge

There is widespread disagreement over what, exactly, Augustine's analogy to human foreknowledge accomplishes in the dialogue. Rowe claims that the intimate friend analogy is an *ad hominem* argument (probably an *ad hominem tu quoque*): since Evodius accepts human foreknowledge without loss of freedom, he must also accept divine foreknowledge without loss of freedom. Rowe suggests it reopens the debate about whether there is a generic problem of foreknowledge and freedom or a specific problem of *divine* foreknowledge and freedom.[23] Other authors see the friend analogy as more central to Augustine's solution. For example, Jonathan Kvanvig in *Possibility of an All-Knowing God* presents the friend analogy as Augustine's solution. Kvanvig criticizes the analogy because Augustine does not take God's essential omniscience into account and

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[22] Jasper Hopkins, 114-5.

[23] William Rowe, 362-3.

its primary intent (showing God's foreknowledge to have no causal influence over the future) does not have much to do with the kind of fatalism generated by Augustine's original articulation of the problem.[24] Likewise, Nelson Pike considers the intimate friend analogy the locus of Augustine's solution. In *Divine Omniscience and Voluntary Action* Pike writes that Augustine holds a position later advanced by Schleiermacher – a position Pike finds unsatisfactory: "But what I propose to argue … is that Schleiermacher and Augustine were mistaken in supposing that the case of an intimate friend having foreknowledge of the other's actions has the same implications for determinism[25] as the case of God's foreknowledge of human actions."[26]

Hopkins argues that the intimate friend analogy/argument is widely misapplied.[27] In order to understand the analogy, we have to take into account the dialogical nature of *DLA* – and dialogues are difficult to interpret. *DLA* is not a treatise, and the arguments offered are not always the best ones in favor of the interlocutor's purpose. Nor are the arguments in a dialogue always intended to be decisive for the problem in general, but often reveal particular issues shackling the interlocutor – and by extension they might be mistakes readers are also tempted to commit. To better situate the intimate friend analogy in Augustine's overall argument, Hopkins appeals to passages in *DCD* where Augustine

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[24] Jonathan Kvanvig, *The Possibility of an All-Knowing God* (London: MacMillan Press, 1986), 73.

[25] As far as I can tell, he uses "determinism" to mean what I define as "theological fatalism" in chapter 1.

[26] Nelson Pike. "Divine Omniscience and Voluntary Action" *The Philosophical Review* 74, No. 1 (January 1965): 41. I suspect that because Schleiermacher finds the argument interesting in just this way (that intimate friends really can have foreknowledge of another's actions) there has been widespread desire to read Augustine in a similar fashion.

[27] Jasper Hopkins, 123-5.

denies that *any* human actually foreknows the free actions of another (even their close friends). Surely Augustine is not claiming that human foreknowledge is similar enough to divine foreknowledge that the intuitions concerning freedom in one case transfers to the other.

Instead of arguing from the freedom-neutrality of human foreknowledge to a similar freedom-neutrality of God's foreknowledge, Hopkins contends that Augustine intends to break Evodius' lingering suspicion that God's foreknowledge has some kind of causal efficacy. By considering the lack of causal power that human foreknowledge might have, Augustine hopes to dissipate Evodius's worry that God's foreknowledge has causal power. Hopkins agrees with Evodius that there is a foreknowledge problem specific to God's knowledge of the future (rather than a general foreknowledge problem), but also agrees with Augustine that God's foreknowledge does not by itself intrude into the causal sequence.[28]

Hopkins does not clearly state the importance of having a *special* problem of divine foreknowledge rather than generic foreknowledge problem, though he may mean that only God has knowledge of the future that is perfectly and indissolubly connected to what occurs in the future. Any *realistic* human foreknowledge will include various fallibilist caveats and contingencies so that there is no strict entailment relation.[29] Though he does not directly mention them, Hopkins probably sees such fallibilist caveats and contingencies as the very things that make human foreknowledge unproblematic. If a

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[28] Jasper Hopkins, 124-5.

[29] In the intimate friend analogy Augustine keeps the same certainty he demands of divine foreknowledge, so the entailment relation would still be present. If I actually *foreknow* my friend's choice, his making that choice is entailed.

human being had foreknowledge of his friend's action, and this knowledge was perfectly and indissolubly connected to the friend's action, then the foreknowledge problem would be general. But human foreknowledge is not of this sort; it rarely rises above a carefully crafted guess. Since God is the only being that has foreknowledge of the sort Augustine and Evodius discuss throughout *DLA* III, it seems we *do*, in fact, have a special problem of divine foreknowledge.

For the intimate friend analogy to succeed, God's foreknowledge and human foreknowledge have to be relevantly similar, but this is clearly not the case since it is God's infallibility that makes His foreknowledge dangerous for freedom. In other words, human and divine foreknowledge are similar enough that we can conclude that because human foreknowledge does not compel, neither does divine foreknowledge compel. However, human and divine foreknowledge are not similar enough that we can conclude that because we have alternative possibilities relative to human foreknowledge, we also have alternative possibilities relative to divine foreknowledge. Hopkins argues that Augustine is trying to show Evodius that there is no causality implied by God's knowledge. If Evodius is comfortable with a human having the same kind of certain foreknowledge God has of free actions, then the foreknowledge itself is not the concern but some other divine characteristic.

Yet, there may be a way of giving humans foreknowledge that *would* be relevantly similar to God's foreknowledge. Cicero's worry about theological fatalism is generated by divination, and in divination, a *human* obtains certain foreknowledge of the future. In both the case of foreknowledge and divination, the characteristic that makes them unlike the ordinary beliefs I might have of my own friend's future actions is their

certainty.[30] It is, in fact, the certainty of foreknowledge that entails the truth of the foreknown proposition. It makes no difference whether a human being or God holds the belief, provided what is known is certain, since necessarily, if S knows P, then P. And since it is possible for humans to have certain foreknowledge, Hopkins' evaluation of the intimate friend analogy is incomplete.[31] A modern reader might be tempted, as Evodius is, to ignore the similarity between foreknowledge and divination. The way we might ordinarily obtain true beliefs about a friend's future actions (using knowledge of her character and desires and making predictions about her behavior) obscures that we could simply be told about our friend's future actions by an infallible source. If beliefs about the intimate friend are obtained through means like prophecy or divination, then human foreknowledge of someone else's actions would be more similar to God's foreknowledge.

The analogy is taken up by other interpreters, such as William Hasker, who, in his 1989 book *God, Time, and Knowledge* cites the intimate friend analogy as illustrating Augustine's solution to theological fatalism. Hasker explains that in this passage,

> Augustine deploys two of the classical arguments for the compatibility of foreknowledge and free will – or, as we shall say henceforth, for compatibilism: Knowledge as such does not compel, and human beings are able to foreknow the free actions of others without removing their freedom. Nevertheless, there remains the implication, accepted by both Euodius and Augustine, that if a

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[30] In the divination and foreknowledge cases, "certainty" is not meant to convey a high degree of confidence in what is known. Indeed, it would be strange to talk about God having degrees of confidence in what he knows. Rather, in this context, "certainty" refers to the strength of evidence or grounds for the knowledge. If God is observing P, then the grounds for P (direct observation) give the highest justification for believing P. If I have ordinary human foreknowledge of my friend's actions, I may be very confident about the truth of my beliefs, but the knowledge is grounded in a kind of prediction that is fundamentally uncertain. In the case of divination, the person may be incredulous about what was revealed and thus they are not certain (have no confidence). Yet what was actually revealed may have certainty in the sense that the divination could not have been the same and the future be different. For an extended discussion of these two types of certainty and their application in skeptical arguments, see Jason Stanley, "Knowledge and Certainty," *Philosophical Issues 18: Interdisciplinary Core Philosophy*, 2008: 33-55.

[31] Hopkins knows this. He generally adds the proviso: "… unless God revealed the friend's future actions." Jasper Hopkins, 124.

person's sin is foreknown, whether by God or by another person, it is necessary that the person should sin; the necessity involved here, however, is held not to be incompatible with free will.[32]

Hasker claims that neither argument has anything at all to do with a libertarian view of free will as uncaused, but instead both arguments are consistent with a compatibilist conception of freedom.[33] That is, Hasker argues that because Augustine (rightly) concludes that foreknowledge does not force what is foreknown, and since he believes that freedom from coercion is the essence of free will, foreknowledge is compatible with free will. Hasker, like Rowe, supplements Augustine's solution in *DLA* with passages from *DCD* where Augustine directly responds to Cicero's fatalist arguments.[34] Hasker bolsters the interpretation of Augustine as a proto-compatibilist by appealing to a passage in *DCD* where Augustine talks about God's knowledge of the comprehensive order of causes. The lack of anything resembling the modern discussions of agent causation in the passage and the use of the phrase "order of causes" lead Hasker, like Rowe, to conclude that Augustine endorses a "rather clear statement of theological determinism."[35] The main project left for Augustine is to defend a compatibilist conception of freedom, since he considers foreknowledge incompatible with alternative possibilities.

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[32] William Hasker, *God Time and Knowledge* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 3.

[33] Hasker uses "Soft Determinism" to indicate compatibilism between freedom and determinism. Since the passage under discussion from *DLA* is not *about* soft-determinism, I see no reason why he assumes that a successful argument against fatalism must also be usable against soft-determinism. A successful argument might be applicable in both arenas, but I see no reason why it must be.

[34] Hasker is attempting to show how Augustine becomes *less* libertarian in his later writings.

[35] William Hasker, *God, Time, and Knowledge,* 6.

In conclusion, there seems to be no agreement among the standard interpretations on what exactly the intimate friend analogy accomplishes. Apparently, Augustine believes there to be an illuminating parallel between divine foreknowledge and human foreknowledge. It may be that the parallel is an analysis of some essential properties of foreknowledge, or an argument against the causal power of divine foreknowledge, or it may be an argument specifically tailored to Evodius' prior commitments (the *tu quoque* Rowe suggests). Regardless of which of these options seem most appropriate for the standard interpretation, the intimate friend analogy is consistently cited as further evidence of Augustine's compatibilism.

After examining these five distinctives of the standard interpretation Hopkins concludes that all five should be abandoned.[36] This is surely too strong a dismissal. While I agree with Hopkins that Rowe's critique of Augustine's solution is flawed and his subsequent critique of the initial problem is too hastily concluded, three of the distinctives are initially plausible. The final version of Augustine's solution according to the standard interpretation is: 1) Augustine believes the argument for theological fatalism is valid, but 2) it contains the false premise that necessity and freedom are opposed, which is further confirmed by realizing that 3) knowledge as such does not circumvent the efficacy of the will. Now that the standard interpretation is clear, I will show how it is not consistent with *DLA*.

Textual Weaknesses of the Standard Interpretation

Some passages make the compatibilist interpretation attractive, but a more complete examination of *DLA* shows it to be a distortion of Augustine's intent. Here I

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[36] Jasper Hopkins, 126.

discuss what I consider to be the three most important problems with the compatiblitist interpretation. The first two involve inadequacies internal to the discussion in *DLA*. The third problem is the compatibilist interpretation's disharmony with other works in the Augustinian corpus, specifically the works marshaled by advocates of the standard interpretation. Of the two internal textual inadequacies, the first weakens the compatibilist interpretation, while the second invalidates it.

First Weakness: Reductio Argument

Augustine's initial attack on theological fatalism opens chapter three of *DLA* III. After Evodius admits that if God foreknows human actions, He must also foreknow His own actions, Augustine responds: "Are you then not on your guard, lest it be said to you that God also will do, not by will but by necessity, whatever He is going to do, if all things of which God has foreknowledge are done of necessity, not by will?"[37] Augustine argues that if foreknowledge is incompatible with freedom and God foreknows His own actions, then God is not free. If humans are not free due to divine foreknowledge, then for the same reasons, God is also not free due to divine foreknowledge. But this is an absurd conclusion. I call this the *reductio* argument.

This argument is oddly out of character for a compatibilist. Even though the *reductio* does not decisively rule out compatibilism, Augustine develops it in such a way as to make a compatibilist interpretation highly unlikely. Chapter three of *DLA* III begins the actual disputation and dialogue between Augustine and Evodius on the problem of theological fatalism, and it is the place where arguments for a solution first appear. Augustine first observes that the claims about foreknowledge must be universal, that is, it

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[37] *DLA,* 253.

must include all actions and wills. Consequently, God must foreknow His own will and is therefore subject to the fatalist arguments. Augustine gives two reasons for defending this inference: first, God is trivially included in the set of all things that will, "Assuredly, if I say that God foreknows my works, much more confidently should I say that He foreknows his own works; and that He foresees most surely what He is going to do."[38] Second, we know God foreknows His own will because God wills temporal responses to the actions of His creatures. In other words, God knows how He will respond to each person's good or sinful actions. Augustine explains, "If therefore God knows your will of tomorrow and wills of all men who are living, or who will live, He foresees future wills: much more surely does He foresee what He will do in reference to just men and in reference to the impious."[39] If God foreknows His responses to human volitions then the fatalist arguments are applicable to the divine will.

The interlocutors agree that even though human freedom is in question, God is free. Since God foreknows His own actions and is free, foreknowledge and freedom are compatible. Evodius is not convinced by Augustine's attempted *reductio* because Evodius believes God's knowledge and his creating and sustaining activity to be simultaneous, and therefore not relevantly similar to human actions. According to Evodius, "those things [in God] are everlasting, they are not *done* [they just are]. . . He has decreed once for all how the order of the universe, which He made, is carried out; and, in the administration of it, there is not anything [done] by a new will."[40] According

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[38] *DLA,* 253.

[39] *DLA,* 251-3.

[40] *DLA* 253.

to Evodius, God does not form "new" volitions, but rather all his volitions are timeless and simultaneous with each other. As the one who establishes the order of the universe, God never needs to revise His plans, but can will all His volitions at the moment of creation.

By appealing to simultaneous volitions, Evodius avoids the unpleasant (and absurd) conclusion that God is subject to fatalism due to His foreknowledge of His own acts. God, then, does not *foreknow* what His responses are to free human actions, though He certainly knows what His responses are to free human actions. But the reason *why* Evodius thinks God's foreknowledge of Himself is irrelevant reveals that God's will falls outside the scope of the argument. It is not the case that Evodius is arguing that it is possible to foreknow one's own actions without fatalist implications.[41] Evodius states, "When I was saying that all things in the universe, which God foreknew to be future, are done of necessity, I was looking at those things only that are done in God's creation, not in Himself. For those things [in God] are everlasting [*sempiterna*], they are not *done*."[42] The reason Evodius does not consider God's foreknowledge of Himself to be relevant is that this knowledge is not properly called "foreknowledge," but rather knowledge of His volitions simultaneous with creation. According to Evodius, God makes no "new" acts of will, so there would be nothing to foreknow. If the standard interpretation were correct, Augustine should argue that even though God's future actions *are* foreknown, and therefore necessary, yet God is still free. Doing so would seem natural given Rowe's

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[41] Though I may foreknow my actions in some sense, I do not have the kind of certain foreknowledge God has. My belief in my own future actions does not entail those actions.

[42] *DLA*, 253.

interpretation, but neither Evodius nor Augustine make a statement like this, and Augustine does not press the issue.

Surprisingly, not only does Evodius not appeal to God's choices being eternal, but he discusses His will as though it were past: God decrees the order of the universe all at once and there is no need to generate new volitions. Because God's will is already done, divine providence consists of God foreknowing all contingent facts (including the actions of free creatures) and decreeing various things in response to their actions beforehand. Due to God's divine power, He has no need to refresh, as it were, the volition to punish a person for a particular deed done at a particular time. Therefore God's responsiveness to creation does not require God to have new volitions upon various conditions in the world. So, even though God's responses *now* have the kind of necessity normally used to refer to the fixity of the past, they did not have that same necessity at the time they were willed. Up until God creates, He could have done otherwise.

Curiously, if God's responses *now* have the necessity of the past (since they were already performed at creation due to God willing all His actions prior to creation), then the actions to which God responds must *also* have the necessity of the past. If those actions to which He responds are not necessary then absurd conclusions follow. It would be possible for God to mis-respond to a situation that might not occur. It would be possible for God to have a blessing queued, as it were, only to have the agent decide to sin. Pike's formulation of the fatalism problem follows easily from the insistence on "God wills only once." Clearly, any theory whereby it is possible, no matter how unlikely, for God to misrespond to anything is a false theory. For the purpose of the dialogue, forcing Augustine to confront the strongest argument for theological fatalism,

Evodius gives the perfect response to the *reductio* – God's will is not necessary. But He can respond only to events that are fixed at the time of His will, which was prior to creation. That is, if God has a will that is fixed at one moment in the past and thus unchangeable, then temporal agents do not have alternative possibilities. Augustine will have to do better.

Regardless of whether Evodius escapes the *reductio*, Augustine's original question asks whether "necessity" plays an explanatory role: "Are you then not on your guard, lest it be said to you that God also will do, not by will but by necessity, whatever He is going to do, if all things of which God has foreknowledge are done of necessity, not by will?"[43] Augustine is pressing the issue of the initial chapters of *DLA* III, namely the difference between things done *by* necessity, rather than done *by* will. Since the control argument shows that Augustine does not consider foreknown things to be done *by* foreknowledge, we should re-examine the role the attempted *reductio* plays in the discussion. In *DCD* Augustine echoes the same conclusion from the control argument where he states that "He, whose foreknowledge is infallible, foreknew not that fate, or fortune, or something else would sin."[44] It is not "necessity" that prefers the creature rather than the Creator, but the will that exercises preference.

A promising way to make sense of the passage is to read Evodius' response as decisively refuting the *reductio*: God does not, strictly speaking, foreknow His own actions. Thus, it is appropriate to regard the immediately following argument from control as Augustine's way of showing that God *does* foreknow His own will and is

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[43] *DLA,* 253.

[44] *DCD*, 93.

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implicated in the problem of fatalism. It first seems that Augustine will argue in this direction because he asks Evodius at what time God will make him happy, and how long did He know that He would do so. Evodius then deftly and correctly avoids the temptation to abandon his position that God does not form new acts of will, even when Augustine offers him several opportunities to do so. We cannot ask whether God foreknows His actions, because they were decided, known and performed simultaneously, thus they were not foreknown – only the effects of his eternal actions are foreknown. Evodius can conclude that whatever problems for freedom attach to foreknown wills, they simply do not apply to God.

Augustine does not trap Evodius by the *reductio.* In fact, Evodius easily brushes it aside, which I think indicates that Augustine intends the *reductio* to fail. At this point in the dialogue, Evodius remains convinced that freedom and foreknowledge are contrary. As Craig argues: "The compatibilist view would also have to maintain that Augustine's solution to the problem of God's foreknowledge of His own acts (3.3.6.29–32) was that God acted of necessity, but by His own will, which seems unlikely as Augustine affirmed that God did not create or perform other actions out of necessity."[45] Evodius finds no reason to think that God, though foreknowing His own actions (or, more properly, the future effects of those actions), foreknows His own *will*. The only way to attach necessity to God's eternal responses would be to show that God *must* perform highly specific responses to the actions of His creatures – and therefore the alleged necessity of the actions produces necessary responses. But neither Augustine nor Evodius argue for anything of the sort.

[45] William Lane Craig, "Augustine on Foreknowledge and Free Will," *Augustinian Studies* 15 (1984), 55.

By defending Evodius, I do not intend to imply that there are no difficulties brought about by his view of providence, since the great care needed to protect God's will from God's foreknowledge may endanger the intelligibility and utility of God's continuing involvement in creation. Nor can divine responses be limited to isolated events while maintaining the universal scope of providence. A divine response may have any number of effects, themselves opportunities for further response. In order for God's will not to become shackled to the alleged necessity accompanying foreknown events, God would have to have the ability to map out all responses and counter-responses in advance of any actions.[46] Only *then* does God decree with a single will the entire order of causes. But then there is a lingering worry that this move only pushes the foreknowledge problem prior to the act of creation. If God foreknows which universe He will instantiate prior to His providential considerations (even if only logically prior), the *reductio* may remain. For Evodius to be able to dismiss the *reductio*, he must hold that God, prior to the consideration of universes, does *not* foreknow the one He will choose. But Evodius does not argue for this and Augustine does not press him on this point.

In the interest of charity, we should suppose that Evodius finds the burden of proof on his opponent's side – one must give good reasons that the divine simultaneity does not render the *reductio* impotent. The two actions of providential consideration and divine decree are simultaneous, so there is no foreknowledge for God's own actions. But now, this defense against the *reductio* only served to make the original problem worse. Now, not only are human actions foreknown, but they cannot have alternative possibilities lest God foreknow His own acts and thus be subject to necessity.

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[46] In other words, God would need something like middle knowledge.

It is telling that Augustine avoids affirming that God's volitions are necessary. If Augustine intends to argue that free will and necessity are not mutually exclusive, he could have Evodius argue against the *reductio* by appealing to compatibilism. Certainly, Augustine is under no obligation to give *every* argument against a position he considers mistaken. But if his intent is to argue for compatibilism, it is surprising that he would neglect such an obvious way to advance his position. In the end, the *reductio* should spur Augustine's readers to look for a better interpretation than compatibilism.

Second Weakness: Natural Impulse Argument

The standard interpretation is surprisingly silent on the natural impulse argument in *DLA* III:1, and for good reason. The natural impulse argument completely discredits the compatibilist interpretation. Augustine's first argument in *DLA* III concludes that actions necessitated by nature, regardless of the status of actions necessitated by foreknowledge, are not free. After comparing the movement of a stone falling to the earth to the movement of a soul choosing wickedness, Evodius concludes:

> If, then, in this way, the soul also has that movement [impulse from nature], it too, by consequence is natural: and from the fact that it is naturally moved it can not rightly be blamed. Because, even though it is moved to its ruin, it is impelled by necessity of its nature.[47]

Augustine agrees and adds, "In this, however, is the movement unlike, that the stone has it not in its power to check the movement by which it is carried downward, but the soul, when it wills not, is not so moved..."[48] Craig notes that by "natural" Augustine means *internal* natures, rather than a system of external causes (e.g. causal

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[47] *DLA*, 239.

[48] *DLA*, 241-3.

determinism).[49] However, context implies that Augustine also rejects natural causation as a source of blameworthy volition. Note Evodius' framing of the discussion: "Now, if you judge it opportune, I am eager to know from you whence that movement [impulse] is, by which the will is turned from the universal and changeless good to what is private…"[50] Augustine responds by saying that the question of the origin of the will's impulse has already been answered in the preceding discussions. Instead of revisiting the will's impulse, Augustine suggests an alternate question that involves distinguishing different sources of *internal* motivation, and then proceeds to offer the stone analogy. He is not trying to discover what happens to a person (external) to cause them to desire wickedness, but rather if there is a property of the person himself (internal) that causes him to turn away from the good. *External* causation, or causal determinism, is not mentioned in *DLA* III because Augustine has already argued in *DLA* I for the absurdity of an efficient cause of a will directed toward sin. He briefly summarizes the previous argument,

> that the mind is made the servant of desire by no thing but by its own will [choice] – It was shown that it can not be forced to this dishonor by one higher nor by one equal because it is iniquitous: not by one less excellent, because the lesser has not the power.[51]

This argument for the impossibility of external causes for the will applies only to sinful actions, however those are the only actions under discussion in *DLA* III. What disqualifies higher powers (God) from causing sin is that higher powers must direct the will toward higher things (righteousness), not to lower things (sin). Whether or not this

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[49] William Lane Craig, 44-5.

[50] *DLA,* 235.

[51] *DLA.,* 241.

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argument is sound, Augustine refers to it in such a way that makes it clear that he considers the matter settled.[52] He would be contradicting himself were he then to argue for a compatibilist theory of freedom.

Augustine's stone analogy in the natural impulse argument is a continuation of his argument in *DLA* I, and therefore the conclusions from that argument are implicit. He states:

> You admit, then, that the movement by which a stone is moved is not the movement of the stone – I do not speak now of that movement by which we move a stone, or if by some force not its own it is moved, as when it is hurled into the air; but [I mean] that movement by which of its own force it inclines and falls to earth.[53]

Augustine explores the potential difficulty of an inanimate object performing actions in accord with its nature only because he already considers it obvious that an action done due to an external efficient cause is not even a candidate for a free sinful action. Augustine uses a process of elimination in *DLA* I to show that the origin of *sin* cannot be external to the agent.[54] Evodius suspects that an internal source may also be a poor candidate for freedom of the will. What Evodius worries about is that the desire to sin is akin to the desire for food – a natural activity internal to human beings, and thus not free.

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[52] Augustine's argument in *DLA* I rests on assumptions that are not widely held today. One such assumption is that all things greater than the human soul have greater goodness. Yet as one who believes in a real Satan, Augustine would have to rely on principles borrowed from Platonism to establish this. One such approach is in *De Trinitate* VII where Augustine argues that goodness, greatness, wisdom, and power are all the same due to divine simplicity. Thus, by definition, for something to be greater than us it must also have more goodness. Regardless of whether or not we agree with the treatment of external causation in *DLA* I, Augustine clearly intends to restrict the will-to-sin to internal causes. Thus, the solution he advances must fit within those boundaries or else he contradicts himself. Even if we reject his argument, his intent is clear.

[53] *DLA,* 239.

[54] Augustine and Evodius summarize their findings in this way at the very end of *DLA* I.

For the internal cause of an action, Augustine indeed finds one point of similarity between the soul and the stone. The movement natural to the stone is explained by the physical properties of the stone, while the movement natural to the soul is explained by the exercise of rational powers of a human being.

> It follows, then that this movement of the will is its very own, for the enjoyment of which it turns the will from the Creator to a creature. Which movement, if it is reputed to be a fault (on which point he who doubts was seen to you to be deserving of scorn), it is not assuredly then natural, but voluntary; and in this it is like to the movement of the stone which is born downward, because, as that is proper to the stone, so is this proper to the soul.[55]

Just as it is natural for the stone to fall it is natural for a human to exercise his natural power. In a stone what is natural is expressed in only one way, in falling toward the earth, and that can be said to be necessitated. In contrast, in a soul what is natural is expressed voluntarily, that is, in a choice between alternatives. Those natural rational powers would be exercised in either the choice of sin or in the choice of righteousness. Both the soul and the stone seek lower things, but the stone falls by nature, while the soul *chooses* by nature. What, in particular, the soul chooses is not necessitated by nature, only that the soul chooses voluntarily.

It might be tempting to combine the stone analogy and control argument, since they are both in *DLA* III. Taken together, Augustine may be arguing that although the movement of the will cannot be necessitated by its own nature and remain free (just as the stone is not free), it can have an external efficient cause and remain free (like being made happy). If we were to restrict ourselves to arguments appearing in *DLA* III, this interpretation is *prima facie* plausible. But since *DLA* I excludes external causation for a sinful act of will, such an interpretation runs afoul of *DLA* taken as a whole. Augustine

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[55] *DLA.,* 241.

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claims that happiness is not in one's control, but he does not state that the *will* to be happy is also outside one's control. In fact, he thinks it insane to believe that the will to be happy is outside one's control.[56]

Craig finds the same dissonance in a compatibilist interpretation:

> Thus, as I read him, Augustine is not giving a compatibilist account of foreknowledge and human freedom.... On this view, an act qualifies as free if it is voluntary, that is, something one wills. And willing is not incompatible with necessity because although one could not will otherwise, the act is still done in accordance with one's will, not against it. Now it must be admitted that many of Augustine's statements could be read in this way, but on balance the evidence indicates otherwise. The most fundamental proof of the compatibilist interpretation is lacking in the text: a statement by Augustine that though a man necessarily wills, nevertheless he freely wills.[57]

Like Craig, I also can find no assertion of that kind in the text. There are many passages within *DLA* that make it likely, given our modern sensibilities, that Augustine will be interpreted as a compatibilist. With closer examination and attention to context, a compatibilist reading is inadequate.

If Rowe's interpretation of the argument is more accurate than my own, and Augustine claims that free will and necessity are compatible, the only possible interpretation for the stone analogy is this: if someone's specific volitions were necessitated by her nature, then she would not be free. But, if her will is necessitated by some external cause, she can still be free as long as the external cause results in a volition and not an action that violates a volition. Certainly, willing by necessity of one's nature is just what the compatibilist wishes to call free will. Yet the stone analogy rules this out.

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[56] David P. Hunt, "Augustine on Theological Fatalism: The Argument of De Libero Arbitrio 3.1-4," *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 5 (1996): 5.

[57] William Lane Craig, 54-5.

Third Weakness: Disharmony with Augustine's Cited Works

The last and final weakness of the standard interpretation is its disharmony with the other works in the Augustinian corpus. I assume my claim of disharmony is surprising. After all, it is Rowe that forms the standard interpretation out of an intersection between *DLA* and *DCD*, not from some single passage in one early dialogue. Hasker uses a similar approach in his discussion of Augustine's views on freedom's compatibility with determinism, quoting *DCD*:

> We assert both that God knows all things before they come to pass, and that we do by our free will whatsoever we know and feel to be done by us only because we will it... But it does not follow that, though there is for God a certain order of all causes, there must therefore be nothing depending on the free exercise of our own wills, for our wills themselves are included in that order of causes which is certain to God, and is embraced by His foreknowledge, for human wills are also causes of human actions; and He who foreknew all the causes of things would certainly among those causes not have been ignorant of our wills.[58]

Hasker then expresses disappointment that Augustine not only places the will within a deterministic order of causes, but also does not deny prior psychological determining of the will in his account. "Note Augustine's assertion that 'we do by our free will whatsoever we know and feel to be done by us only because we will it'; no concern is evinced here about prior, determining *psychological* causes, and the statement is strongly suggestive of what would now be termed a 'soft determinist' conception of free will."[59] I am struck by the dissonance between the quoted passage and Hasker's interpretation of it. At no point in the quoted text does Augustine suggest that the will is *determined* by other forces, but merely that God exhaustively knows the "order of causes" – the total and complete story of causes over the entire course of the universe.

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[58] William Hasker, 5.

[59] *Ibid.*, 6.

Since the will is a cause of action, it is a part of the "order of causes," and therefore God knows what it will be. There is no mention of a *deterministic* order of causes. If anything, Augustine is responding to Cicero's claim that God could only foreknow deterministic events and therefore if He were to foreknow a person's actions, those actions would have to be determined. Cicero worries, as modern readers do, that such a state of affairs is antithetical to freedom of the will. Augustine clearly denies that the concept of an all-encompassing "order of causes" implies determinism.[60]

What is even more frustrating about Hasker's evaluation of the passage in *DCD* is that the sentences immediately following his quote directly contradict his interpretation. After agreeing that God foreknows the entire order of causes, Augustine goes on to explain just what is included in that order: "For what does it help him to say that nothing takes place without a cause, but that every cause is not fatal, there being a fortuitous cause, a natural cause, and a voluntary cause? It is sufficient that he confesses that whatever happens must be preceded by a cause."[61] Fortuitous causes are simply unknown causes that are generally attributed to "chance" but are themselves efficiently caused. A fortuitous cause may remain hidden, even though its effects had *some* cause.[62] Though he does not explicate further, Augustine likely intends "natural causes" to refer to deterministic forces given the account of natural cause associated with his discussion of the stone. He has a separate third category for volitions; they are not included in the order

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[60] *DCD* V:10.

[61] William Hasker, 91.

[62] Augustine seems to have Aristotle's view of "chance" in mind, which is merely an unanticipated confluence of independent causes. Boethius gives the example of a man who finds buried treasure that he was not looking for, and which was buried by someone hoping it would not be found: this is chance. It is not, however, pure randomness. Boethius *Consolation of Philosophy* V:P1.

of "natural" causes. When searching for a natural cause, Augustine realizes that if he were to follow the causal chain backward, it would terminate in God or some other agent. However, for voluntary causes, they terminate in the wills of God, angels, people, and perhaps even some animals.[63] As a result, *all* causes are traceable to voluntary causes. But since all wills other than God's were made by God, those voluntary causes both make and are made, while God's will *only* makes.[64] These sources of voluntary causes *make –* they create, though not in the absolute sense of an unmoved mover. For this passage to support Hasker's determinist interpretation, Augustine would need to reduce voluntary causes to natural causes. Instead, Augustine reduces natural causes to voluntary causes.

Removing any doubt about his meaning, Augustine further argues that, "For, as He [God] is the creator of all natures, so also is He the bestower of all powers, not of all wills; for wicked wills are not from Him, being contrary to nature, which is from Him."[65] This passage is similar to the comparison of the stone in *DLA* III since in both texts Augustine argues that the movement natural to the will is its ability to choose freely. This sense of "nature" seems to be a clear instance of internal nature, or created order. God creates a human's will, but His creation can use that will to undermine God's created order. The choices themselves can be *against* nature. All natural things are made by God, and the powers of the will are included in the natural things. However, the *actual choices* made by the will are not attributable to anything but the will that chooses them. Augustine rejects calling the order of causes by the name "fate" because there is nothing

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[63] He mentions animal wills as a point of controversy. He does not consider human wills or angelic wills to be controversial.

[64] *DCD* V:10, 91.

[65] *DCD* V:10, 92.

"fatal" about the catalog of all causes and effects. In short, the entire contents of *DCD* V:9 indicate the opposite of Hasker's interpretation of them.

Hasker is not the only person to appeal to an order of causes to establish Augustinian determinism. Christopher Kirwan, in his 1989 book on Augustine, interprets "order" the same way. Kirwan further defends his interpretation of *ordo* by appealing to Augustine's early dialogue *De Ordine (Ord)*. He claims that,

> Order, we learn in that work, would not exist if everything were wholly good, because it would not then be needed (*Ord.* 2.1.2); but as things are, God imposes it so as to keep evil in check. Thus order is limitation, restraint, control, and we must read 'foreknowledge of the order of things' not, or not merely, as foreknowledge of which things succeed which, but as including knowledge of the rules or laws that *ensure* these successions.[66]

Kirwan's interpretation is at odds with the text. First, Augustine does not say that order would not exist if everything were wholly good, nor would he be likely to say any such thing. Rather, his interlocutor Licentius says it. Secondly, after Licentius says it, Augustine then assaults this position, arguing that "order" can exist potentially and does not depend on the presence of evil. Order, like a virtue, does not cease to exist when there are no opportunities for its exercise. The discussion of order and evil concludes with both Augustine and Monica stating that evil began *outside* God's order, but then immediately God's justice subjected evil to the order of God's providence. *De Ordine* does not discuss "*laws* that *ensure* these successions," but rather the *justice* of God finding redemptive outcomes for evil acts.[67] Agreement between Monica and Augustine on this matter is a powerful sign of authorial intent within the dialogue. Certainly no compatibilist would

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[66] Christopher Kirwan, *Augustine* (London: Routledge, 1989), 100. Emphasis mine.

[67] Augustine, *On Order (De Ordine)* trans. Silvano Borruso (South Bend, Indiana: St. Augustine Press, 2006), 79-81.

state that evil actions, which are actions for which human beings are responsible, happen *outside* the laws which govern the succession of causes, yet that is what Augustine states.

Does Rowe's use of *DCD* in his composite interpretation fare any better than Hasker's? Both he and Kirwan take *DCD* V:10 instead of *DCD* V:9 to support a compatibilist position. In that passage, Augustine distinguishes between two different meanings of the word "necessity," the first being necessity *for us* which he defines as something that will occur regardless of one's will (growing older, or becoming happy in a year). The second kind of necessity indicates that something "be of such a nature, or be done in such and such a manner," of which Augustine states, "I know not why we should have any dread of that necessity taking away the freedom of our will."[68] While Rowe stops his quotation here, Augustine goes on to give an example of that other non-destructive necessity: that God cannot die or fall into error.

How this insight can be applied to human freedom is not entirely clear from Augustine's example. If the chapter ended here, Augustine would appear to reverse his previous arguments that actions performed from "nature" are outside one's responsibility. For if one's will was inclined a particular way or the other as a consequence of her nature (the way God's omniscience is a consequence of His nature), and it turns out that such consequences of nature can still be free, then Augustine may finally be arguing for compatibilism as Rowe suggests.

However, *DCD* V:10 does not support this interpretation. Augustine clarifies his comparison of human nature to the divine nature: "Wherefore, He cannot do some things for the very reason that He is omnipotent. *So also*, when we say that it is necessary that,

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[68] *DCD*, 92.

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when we will, we will by free choice, in so saying we both affirm what is true beyond doubt, and do not still subject our wills thereby to a necessity which destroys liberty."[69] The only necessity at work here is a kind of logical necessity. Augustine argues that the will has necessary features (that of being a free will), but this necessity extends only as far as it is part of the nature of the will that it remain in one's power. At no point in this chapter does Augustine state that the *choices themselves* are governed by natural necessity or any other kind of necessity. He merely states his position that it is a necessary truth that whenever we will, we do so by free choice. Augustine closes the chapter with a reiteration of the explanatory termination for acts of the will, adding a phrase very like PAP: "Nay, it cannot be doubted but that it is the man himself who sins when he does sin, because He, whose foreknowledge is infallible, foreknew not that fate, or fortune, or something else would sin, but that the man himself would sin, who if he wills not, sins not. But if he shall not will to sin, even this did God foreknow."[70] Thus, Augustine cannot be arguing, as Rowe suggests, that "the fact that a man necessarily wills to sin does not conflict with his freely willing to sin because his willing to sin (although necessary) is still in his power – for it would not occur were he not to will to sin. . . he rejects the claim that if a man must necessarily sin, there is no voluntary choice in his sinning."[71] *DCD* V is a decisive repudiation of the compatibility of freedom of the will and causal determinism.

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[69] *DCD., 92.* My emphasis.

[70] *DCD.*, 93.

[71] William Rowe, 359.

Conclusion

After examining the text of *DLA*, it is clear that reading Augustine as a compatibilist or soft-determinist is not supported by the text of either *De Libero Arbitrio* or the cited passages in *De Ordine* or *De Civitate Dei*. Augustine does not argue that the will can be both necessary and free, and he argues that the will to sin cannot have its causal genesis in an external force or in one's internal nature. The collapse of the standard interpretation invites a different interpretation, and in chapter 3 I provide one.

CHAPTER THREE

A More Complete Interpretation of *De Libero Arbitrio* III

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I identified several textual and conceptual weaknesses in the standard compatibilist interpretation of Augustine's *DLA* III. The weaknesses of the standard interpretation sufficiently demonstrate the impossibility of Augustine arguing for compatibilism. Neither the text of *DLA* nor the passages ostensibly cited in its support from *DCD* can, on careful inspection, adequately support such a reading. The remaining question is whether *DLA* offers a better and more consistent answer to the dilemma of foreknowledge and freedom. This chapter will advance the most promising interpretation: Augustine accepts that foreknown actions do not have alternative possibilities, but denies that they are necessary in a way that destroys freedom of the will. This interpretation offers a renewed interest in Augustine's argument as a whole and proceeds with greater respect toward the Augustinian corpus outside *DLA*. After presenting the interpretation, I will examine two major objections: first, that a still more libertarian interpretation is available, and second, that Augustine argues against this version of free will in his later works.

Types of Necessity

As it should now be readily apparent, Augustine is hardly univocal in his use of the word "necessity." I argue for an interpretation that concludes that only some forms of

necessity are incompatible with freedom. Thus, it is helpful to first disentangle the different species of necessity present in *DLA*.

Natural Necessity

The initial discussion of necessity in *DLA* III is the already much-discussed "natural" necessity. Both Evodius and Augustine accept the following relationship between "nature" and freedom: if a person's created nature is the sole explanation for performing a sinful action then the person is not blameworthy, and thus not free. If we sin "by nature" then we are not blameworthy. Augustine considers it to be the most obvious of the freedom-removing necessities, calling those who deny it's incompatibility with free will "insane." He goes so far as finding it tempting to compare such deniers' reasoning power to that of a stone.[1]

According to Augustine's analogy, the stone continuously seeks to rest at the center of the universe. Even when immobile on the ground, it restlessly exerts pressure toward the earth that is preventing its movement toward the center of things. If a person placed in the world simply acts to sin in the same way as the stone acts to seek the center, forced by one's internal nature, then Augustine would consider the person blameless for those actions. We can formalize this principle in this way:

> NN1: A person S acts from natural necessity in doing A if and only if in every world in which act A is possible, a person S with nature N is driven by N to perform (or attempt to perform) A.

Since no created being is responsible for its essential characteristics, a particular action performed primarily due to NN1 is obviously not blameworthy.

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[1] Saint Augustine, *De Libero Arbitrio (Libri Tres): The Free Choice of the Will (Three Books)* trans. Francis E. Tourscher (Philadelphia: The Peter Reilly Company, 1937), 243.

I have presented natural necessity as a characteristic of particular entities, but that is not the only way to understand Augustine's use of "nature." If by "nature" Augustine means not only the characteristics of an entity, but also the system of natural causes, then Augustine's claim opposing "nature" to what is voluntary takes on a new significance. David Hunt thinks of Augustine's use of "nature" in this more expansive way since he considers it useful for determining whether Augustine is a compatibilist about free will and causal determinism. "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."[2] Following Hunt's lead, we can reformulate natural necessity as an explicitly incompatibilist condition:

NN2 – A person S acts from natural necessity in doing A if and only if in every possible world in which a being S with created nature N is in circumstance C, S is driven by N to perform (or attempt to perform) act A.

If human choices are NN2, they can be foreknown by knowing S's essential characteristics and the details of S's circumstances. In other words, given the inputs (essence and circumstance), the outputs (choices) are necessary. Such a description of human behavior is friendly to compatibilism. If Augustine excludes actions that are done by NN2 from being blameworthy, then he is not a compatibilist.

The reason to prefer NN1 over NN2 as a definition of natural necessity is that it better fits the stone analogy. Note that the primary difference between NN1 and NN2 is that NN2 appeals to the entity's changing circumstances. However, in every circumstance the stone finds itself, the stone is always "performing" the same action ("seeking" the

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2 David P. Hunt, "On Augustine's Way Out" *Faith and Philosophy* 16, No. 1 (January 1999): 6.

center of the universe).[3] The stone in Augustine's example always, and in all worlds with particular natural laws, inclines downward – making the condition of particular circumstances in NN2 an unwarranted addition to the text. Since Augustine offers no clear examples of NN2, and NN1 fits his stone analogy more closely, we should take the more conservative option and interpret "natural necessity" as NN1.

Non-Voluntary Events

The second kind of necessity is what Augustine calls necessary "for me." Evodius appeals to this kind of necessity when he states that "God's will is to me necessity,"[4] and Augustine discusses it more thoroughly in *DCD* IX.[5] If God wills for something to occur or that some change would occur in me, it is *my* necessity to the extent that I am without the power to fight against God's will. We might phrase "my necessity" as:

> MN: In every possible world where God wills that person S undergo event E at time T, S is incapable of avoiding E at T.

Davenport surmises that "my necessity" is an originally Stoic concept – no one can successfully battle fate. Thus, on the Stoic picture of the world, refusing to consent to fate will cause pain and frustration.[6] Of course, trying to avoid MN is futile. Is MN incompatible with freedom? On this point, Augustine is unclear. In one sense, MN is not

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[3] Modern readers will find it strange to talk about inanimate objects having "desires" or "performing" actions but Augustine is not anthropomorphizing the stone. All he means is that the stone has a natural inclination toward its natural place at the center of the universe, not that the stone has emotions.

[4] Saint Augustine, *De Libero Arbitrio (Libri Tres): The Free Choice of the Will (Three Books)* trans. Francis E. Tourscher (Philadelphia: The Peter Reilly Company, 1937), 255.

[5] *DCD* V:10. Augustine, *City of God* in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, first series: Augustin: City of God, Christian Doctrine*, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. Marcus Dods. (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), 92.

[6] John Davenport, "Augustine on Liberty of the Higher-Order Will: Answers to Hunt and Stump," *Proceedings of the ACPA* 81 (2008): 76.

inimical to my free will since I can always will otherwise (withhold consent). Even if I cannot avoid E, I can still *will* to avoid E. Augustine's happiness example shows this to be the case, as when he answers Evodius:

> Wherefore nothing is so completely in our power as the will itself. For when we will, immediately, without any interval, the act of the will is realized. Therefore can we say rightly that we grow old, not by reason of our will, but by reason of necessity... Wherefore, though God does know our future acts of will, it is not established from that fact, that we will not a thing by means of will. So also, what you said about beatitude – that it is not by yourself that you are made happy, you spoke as if I would deny it: but I say that when in the future you are happy, you will be so, not unwilling but willing to be happy.[7]

Presumably, one could not *will* to grow older because one has no power to resist becoming older. However, it is the case that one can *will to consent* to growing older. Augustine means that I am able to form various attitudes about growing older without any change in my necessity of actually growing older. Evodius worries that if one's consent is foreknown, then that consent is also MN. So, if it is MN *to will to perform* C, where C is consent to something that is MN, then that volition to consent would not be free.

The crux of the importance of MN is the distinction between the will and result. While the will brings about action, it is often frustrated or powerless to achieve the results it desires. From Augustine's analysis in *DCD* IX, the subjects of MN are only those things that happen to us regardless of whether we will them. Augustine does not consider all foreknown events MN since that would mean that those foreknown events, including ones that are at least apparently in my power, would be done *regardless of whether I willed them or not*. Therefore, MN cannot be a description of theological fatalism or even of divine fore*knowledge*. MN is rather a description of divine decree – that God

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[7] *DLA* 256-7.

accomplishes His will and His creatures can cooperate either willingly or unwillingly. However, Augustine is not responding to divine agency in *DLA* III, since God cannot cause sin. Instead, it is Augustine's intent to keep the blameworthy will free of MN. Even though foreknowledge reflects the future action done by will it does not replace the will with MN. It would be absurd to assert that a foreknown will is not a will – it would be arguing that all X's that are Y's are not X's. Augustine explains to Evodius that this is "illogic" and "unreason."[8] According to Augustine, foreknowledge does not convert my will into MN.

In Augustine's analysis of both "my necessity" and "natural necessity," we find an interesting parallel that will be useful for crafting an interpretation of *DLA* III. Augustine consistently protects the will from external causation. Augustine certainly believes NN1 to be incompatible with free will. Based on the discussion of external causes in *DLA* I, NN2 may also be incompatible with freedom to sin. Lastly, if an event otherwise outside my control (MN) is in accord with my will then even though the event does not occur due to my will, my assent to it is still free.

Necessity of Certainty

Finally, Augustine's most interesting usage of "necessity" occurs when discussing the total infallibility of God's foreknowledge. David Hunt, in Augustinian fashion, presents a barrage of textual evidence for this use:

> 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

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[8] *DLA* 257.

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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 [nee 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 essefieri quaecumquepraesciuit 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."[9]

Within these selected quotations we see Augustine connect the certainty of God's foreknowledge with the impossibility of the future being otherwise than as God now knows it. It is necessary *due to* its certainty. Because of God's essential omniscience, whatever God foreknows *will* happen. There is, in Jonathan Edwards' words, "an infallible and indissoluble connection" between what God believes and what will actually occur.[10] We can define the necessity of certainty as:

NC – Event E at T is NC iff S infallibly believes that event E occurs at T.

What is still debatable is if NC is Augustine's method of invoking necessity of the past – what Hunt calls, "temporal necessity," and whether this final type of necessity joins NN1, NN2 and MN in being incompatible with freedom. NC is not problematic when T is the present. However, if T is the future, then events that are NC are also temporally necessary.

I take "temporal necessity" to be equivalent to what A. N. Prior describes as the necessity of the "now unpreventable," having acquired this designation by being part of the past. Prior appeals to the principle as obvious, "*quod fuit, non potest non fuisse.*"[11]

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[9] David P. Hunt, "On Augustine's Way Out," 11.

[10] Jonathan Edwards, *Freedom of the Will* (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2007), 134.

[11] "What has been, cannot now not have been." Prior uses Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics VI, 1139 as a stock source for this principle. A. N. Prior, "The Formalities of Omniscience" *Philosophy* 37, no. 140 (April 1962): 119.

Things in the past are over and done with, a part of the historical record. Thus, so the reasoning goes, not even God can change the past. The unchangeability of the past has considerable intuitive support. It is enshrined in folk witticisms such as "no use crying over spilt milk," and in many social conventions like the irrevocability of a promise. Changing the past (retrocausation) may even be metaphysically incoherent.[12] Temporal necessity, then, is the property of being past. Temporally necessary propositions are now unpreventable.

Interpretation: Source Incompatibilism

David Hunt has recently advanced an interpretation of *DLA*, claiming that Augustine argues that freedom is compatible with NC. Since NC implies no limitations on the way a volition occurs, a person may act freely even though her actions are NC. According to Hunt's interpretation, which fits the text quite well, Augustine concedes that future free actions cannot now fail to occur. However, if those actions are properly caused by the agent, then they are free. According to this interpretation, human freedom is compatible with temporal necessity, but not compatible with natural necessity or causal necessity. Hunt's interpretation has two major advantages over the standard interpretation: first, it takes Augustine's various uses of necessity and the systematic unity of *DLA* more seriously, and second, it enjoys a much greater harmony with other works across the Augustinian corpus, including the anti-Pelagian writings so often

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[12] See William Lane Craig, "Tachyons, Time Travel, and Divine Omniscience" *The Journal of Philosophy* 85, Vol. 3 (March, 1988): 135-150. Augustine and his contemporaries assumed it to be true. Even in *De Doctrina Christiana*, he casually mentions in II:28 that, "what has been done in the past cannot now become undone; it has to be held in the succession of times, which have been established and are being controlled by God." Saint Augustine, *Teaching Christianity (De Doctrina Christiana)* trans. Edmund Hill (New York: New City Press, 1996), 152. Denying this assumption might yield interesting new answers to the foreknowledge dilemma, but such an exploration is outside the scope of this dissertation.

marshaled in favor of "Augustine the compatibilist." In the remainder of this chapter, I present and discuss Hunt's interpretation and its relation to pivotal passages in the *DLA*, and then briefly explore its consistency with Augustine's later works.

According to Hunt, those who defend the compatibilist interpretation essentially stop at *DLA* III:3. In contrast, Hunt claims that Augustine begins his defense of the compatibility of foreknowledge and freedom in *DLA* III:4, having laid the groundwork in the first three chapters of the book. Augustine is unwilling (perhaps with good reason) to deny freedom based only on God's knowledge of my future actions. There has to be *something* making the will unfree, whether that be some kind of compulsion or one's internal necessity. In other words, there must be a determinism lurking under the fatalist argument. But in the case of determinism, *something* other than the person is the ultimate cause her actions. NC seems, by itself, to be incapable of taking the place of free will as the cause of an action, nor does NC signal that something else has done so.[13] Since NC and free will are not obviously contrary, Augustine spends *DLA* III:4 searching for an analogy to make the offending features of divine foreknowledge seem more ordinary. As I will show, the first analogy (the intimate friend) is not close enough to God's foreknowledge to be useful for Augustine's purpose. The second analogy (reverse memory) is much stronger, and it convinces Augustine's interlocutor that divine foreknowledge and free will are compatible.

Finding the Right Analogy – The Intimate Friend

Augustine employs the intimate friend analogy to argue that having certainty with respect to foreknowledge does not destroy freedom. If generic foreknowledge *does not*

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[13] David P. Hunt, "On Augustine's Way Out," 20.

compel, then it is difficult to see how God's foreknowledge *does* compel. As Hunt explains,

> 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.[14]

Since Augustine considers all instances of true knowledge to be certain, then there is no difference between the certainty I could have and the certainty God could have. According to Augustine, what any of us knows (in the infallibilist sense) is also NC. Augustine needs no fallibilist caveats since his argument implies that all genuine instances of foreknowledge have NC status. But knowledge is dependent on the truth of what is known; knowledge does not cause what is known. Thus, neither the nature of knowledge nor of foreknowledge compel what is known to occur.

But even if foreknowledge does not compel the foreknown event to occur, foreknowledge might still *reveal* a necessity already at work. Foreknowledge, for Augustine, is more than an educated guess on God's part. This is the approach Boethius takes when he calls foreknowledge a *sign* in *Consolation* V.[15] For anyone to have foreknowledge of some event E indicates a prior set of causes necessitating the occurrence of event E. To impose Augustinian language on Boethius, he would say that whatever, strictly speaking, God *foreknows* about me is "my necessity," giving even particular volitions the status of MN.

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[14] *Ibid.*, 21.

[15] Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. S. J. Tester (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), V:P4.

Hunt argues for the Boethian conclusion by conceding that the analogy to human foreknowledge is difficult to maintain. Under all the situations where humans have foreknowledge, there is some limitation on free will required by the justification of that particular instance of foreknowledge. For example, I could have fallible foreknowledge of my daughter's extreme reluctance to go to bed tomorrow, but Augustine would not count it as real foreknowledge. As probable actions of my daughter go, this is a very safe prediction, yet my "foreknowledge" of her future act of will does not entail her performance of that act. It does not rise to NC.[16] As Hunt points out, I can have foreknowledge of things outside another's control that might necessitate her actions. His example is foreknowing that his wife is about to hit the floor because she is falling at that moment. Hunt concludes that "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."[17] Thus, human beings can only have foreknowledge of deterministically caused or compelled events, but God can foreknow events even if they are not deterministically caused or compelled.

Perhaps human and divine foreknowledge are even less similar than Hunt argues. As Descartes suggests in *Meditations* V, human knowledge gained through ordinary means *never* entails the truth of any future state of affairs.[18] Descartes argues that

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[16] On more than one occasion she has surprised me with a sudden desire to lie down for a nap.

[17] David P. Hunt, "On Augustine's Way Out," 22.

[18] Descartes *Meditations* replies to III, "The separate divisions of time do not depend on each other; hence the fact that the body in question is supposed to have existed up till now 'from itself' that is, without a cause, is not sufficient to make it continue to exist in the future, unless there is some power in it

regardless of the causal laws at work, there is never a point at which God is required to continue upholding the cosmos. At any moment the universe could stop existing. So even if Mrs. Hunt is falling to the floor, nobody viewing the event could then *foreknow* her painful landing based solely on her location and the relevant physical laws, at least not on the infallibilist picture of knowledge Augustine presupposes in *DLA*. Given that God could suspend the current laws of nature at any time, it would be odd to talk about Hunt's foreknowledge of his wife's collision with the floor as though there were a "firm and fixed connection" between the two.

Hunt is clearly aware of this disanalogy when he states that he "can still have infallible foreknowledge (more or less) of what is not subject to her [his wife's] will."[19] "Infallible foreknowledge (more or less)" seems already less than infallible, and thus fallible. Even on Hunt's generous reading of human foreknowledge, Augustine cannot make his case for divine foreknowledge being harmless due to its similarities with human foreknowledge. Not surprisingly, Augustine quickly turns to a more appropriate analogy with human memory. The intimate friend analogy is a false start, or at best a preparatory exercise. Though imperfect, human memory is better suited for comparison to God's foreknowledge than is human foreknowledge.

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that as it were recreates it continuously. But when we see that no such power is to be found in the idea of a body, and immediately conclude that the body does not derive its existence from itself, we shall then be taking the phrase 'from itself' in the positive sense." Rene Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*. trans. John Cottingham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1996), 88.

[19] David P. Hunt, "On Augustine's Way Out," 22.

Finding the Right Analogy – Memory

The memory analogy allows Augustine to find some human activity that is relevantly similar to divine foreknowledge. As Hunt explains:

> 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.[20]

Knowledge from memory and foreknowledge are similar in these four respects: first, the cause for the belief is an event; the event is not explanatorily dependent on the belief. Second, the knowledge in both cases is of events that have NC status. Third, memory does not depend on the reality of times other than the present, and neither does foreknowledge. Fourth, and finally, the knowledge is *direct* – it is not mediated through inferences. Obviously, there are differences between memory and foreknowledge since one involves the past and the other the future. Remember, we cannot change the past – it is temporally necessary. Even though it is temporally necessary, we are not concerned about the past being more necessary than it was.[21] Likewise, we should not conclude that temporal necessity, that is, God's infallible certainty of P prior to the occurrence of P, makes P necessary in some additional way.

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[20] *Ibid.*, 23.

[21] To borrow Kierkegaard's clever phrase from *Philosophical Fragments.* He questions whether using the term "necessary" to describe temporal necessity is misleading: "What has happened has happened, and cannot be undone; in this sense it does not admit of change (Chrysippus the stoic – Diodorus the Megarian). Is this immutability identical with the immutability of the necessary?" Soren Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments*, trans. David Swenson and Howard Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), 95.

If this interpretation is fair, then the distinction Augustine draws between free and non-free acts is not grounded in the necessity of non-free acts and the utter lack of necessity of free acts. The reason Augustine is not a compatibilist about events that are NN1 is because such events are caused in the wrong way. For NC, God's certainty is not the explanation for foreknown events. If temporal necessity is a freedom-excluding type of necessity, then Augustine would be inconsistent in regarding temporal necessity (or NC) to be compatible with free will.

Augustine's Definition of Free Will: Authorship

Augustine's answer to this puzzle must satisfy an additional criteria – it must explain *why* temporal necessity and NC are irrelevant for free will. Up until this point Augustine has only argued *that* the two are compatible, not *how* they are compatible. As Augustine explains the memory analogy:

> Why then not punish in justice what foreknowing He does not force to be done? As you by your memory do not force *to be*, the things that have passed; so God by his foreknowledge forces not the things to be done that are in the future. And as you remember certain things that you have done; and yet you have not done all that you remember: So God foreknows all things of which He is the author, yet He is not author of all things that He foreknows. But of things, of which He is not the evil author, He is yet the just avenger.[22]

In this passage, after reiterating the lack of external causes for free actions (force), Augustine explains to Evodius that *authorship* is the crucial element of freedom that is not threatened by temporal necessity but is incompatible with the kinds of necessity expressed by NN1 and NN2. The property of authorship or origination is violated if my sins were caused by external events (making me someone's puppet, not an *author* of my own actions). Likewise, if the explanation of my will is my own nature, then the author of

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[22] *DLA* 263-5.

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that nature is the author of the action I take – if I am not the author of my actions then I am a conduit of another's authorship. In order to ascribe responsibility for an action, we have to find that action's proper author.

It seems then that a single understanding of PAP is not specific enough to reflect Augustine's solution. A principle such as PAP, that freedom and moral responsibility requires the ability to do otherwise, is too broad. As I will show, to make sense of Augustine's solution we need to make relative, narrow versions of PAP. Since Augustine concedes that God's foreknowledge is temporally necessary he denies PAP-F: moral responsibility requires the ability to act otherwise than as God foreknows. On the other hand, he argues that we have alternatives relative to causality. One may, without contradiction, deny PAP-F while affirming PAP-C: moral responsibility requires the ability to act otherwise than as the causal history normally determines. We may tease out the difference between these relative principles by modifying Thomas Flint's helpful and comprehensive definition of PAP:

> TF-PAP: Necessarily, for any human agent S, action A and time t, if S performs A freely at t, then the history of the world prior to t, the laws of nature, and the actions of any other agent (including God) prior to and at t are jointly compatible with S's refraining from performing A freely.[23]

If we take his general wording but restrict the principle to causation:

> TF-PAP-C: Necessarily, for any human agent S, action A and time t, if S performs A freely at t, then the causal history of the world prior to and at t is jointly compatible with S's refraining from performing A freely.

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[23] Thomas P. Flint, "Two Accounts of Providence," in *Divine and Human Action*, ed. T. V. Morris (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1987), 175.

If we take his general wording but restrict the principle to foreknowledge:

> TF-PAP-F: Necessarily, for any human agent S, action A and time t, if S performs A freely at t, then God's knowledge prior to and at t is jointly compatible with S's refraining from performing A freely.

Flint's original definition is an unrestricted PAP – an action is free only if *everything* prior to the action is compatible with performing the action and refraining to perform the action. However, from Augustine's arguments in *DLA*, it seems that an unrestricted PAP is too strong. For his solution to be successful, all he needs is a version of PAP restricted to something that would interfere with the agent's power to originate actions. He only needs to defend the position that agents have the freedom described by a version of PAP-C, and that this kind of freedom is compatible with divine foreknowledge.

Authorship is the essence of the Augustinian solution. I contend that Augustine avoids fatalism by denying that persons have alternative possibilities relative to foreknowledge (PAP-F), but that not having PAP-F is compatible with genuine human freedom by virtue of one's being the author of one's actions. Appealing to authorship allows Augustine to sidestep the issue of whether or not an agent had some non-actualized power to do an action other than what he in fact does. Augustine's reflections lead him to think that having such a power is not essential for freedom of the will. This theory about free will is often called "source incompatibilism."[24] Free will is incompatible with determinism because determinism posits external sources for a

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[24] Hunt and Fischer use the term "hyper-incompatibilist" to describe someone who denies leeway incompatibilism while embracing source incompatibilism. Fischer introduces this term to refer to the position that even if PAP were false, freedom would still be incompatible with causal determinism. Like many of Fischer's definitions, it has a touch of good-natured humor. John Martin Fischer, *The Metaphysics of Free Will* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 1995), 180.

person's actions. In order to secure the freedom of an agent, it is not enough for an action to be externally caused in the right way (per compatibilism), but that the action not have any external cause.

Throughout the text the authorship issue is firmly in view, even when Evodius gives his final restatement of the problem of theological fatalism. At the beginning of *DLA* III:4, after the natural impulse argument, the attempted *reductio*, and the argument from control, Evodius asks, "But I would like to know by what kind of justice He punishes sins which are done necessarily: or how the things which He foresees in the future are not necessarily done: or how, whatsoever is done necessarily in his creation is not to be attributed to the Creator."[25] By offering the memory analogy, Augustine is answering Evodius by arguing that only some kinds of necessity (MN, NN1, NN2) interfere with authorship, origination, and attribution. Others (temporal necessity and NC) do not. Since temporal necessity is the only necessity required by divine foreknowledge, freedom and foreknowledge are not contradictory. God can hold his creatures morally accountable for their actions even if they cannot do otherwise than as He foreknows.

External Sources: De Civitate Dei

This attention to the origination of volition continues into Augustine's later work. David Hunt draws attention once again to *DCD*, but this time, instead of the oft-quoted discourse on Cicero and the role of fate, he refers us to *DCD* XII where Augustine considers the causes of blessedness and misery. After reiterating the impossibility of a

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[25] *DLA,* 261.

good thing being the efficient cause of evil, Augustine poses a thought experiment that bears quoting in full.

> 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? What produces it in the man in whom it exists? Not the bodily beauty, for that was presented equally to the gaze of both, and yet did not produce in both an evil will. Did the flesh of the one cause the desire as he looked? But why did not the flesh of the other? Or was it the disposition? But why not the disposition of both? For we are supposing that both were of a like temperament of body and soul. Must we, then, say that the one was tempted by a secret suggestion of the evil spirit? As if it was not by his own will that he consented to this suggestion and to any inducement whatever! This consent, then, this evil will which he presented to the evil suasive influence, – what was the cause of it, we ask? 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?. . . However minutely we examine the case, therefore, we can discern nothing which caused the will of the one to be evil.[26]

By stipulating no relevant difference in moral and physical properties, as well as identical temptations, Augustine makes it impossible for us to offer a compatibilist explanation for why the two people acted differently from each other. This is a decisive statement against compatibilism, and supportive of the authorship interpretation being offered in this dissertation. This thought experiment reveals the way Augustine thinks about what is essential to freedom. The thought experiment is not set up to lead the reader to the conclusion that freedom requires alternative action. Far from it, there is nothing in the story about the two men (let us call the sinner A, and the upright person B) that requires alternative possibilities relative to foreknowledge (PAP-F). However, Augustine seems to be committed to the idea that A and B *do* have alternative possibilities relative

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[26] *DCD,* 229-30.

to causation (PAP-C). The actions of A and B are certainly not *caused* by anything external, and no calculus conjoining antecedent conditions, character, human nature, and external stimulus can produce sin in A and rectitude in B.

Instead, Augustine sets up A and B to allow no recourse to prior states of affairs to explain their different actions. Their moral and physical temperaments are similar in every relevant respect. They are tempted with identical temptations with equal force. When looking for the explanation of the evil will (freely choosing evil), their character traits cannot be the reason without violating the parameters of the thought experiment. For the same reason, the source of their will cannot be the temptation itself or some physical feature in which they are unlike. Finally, we cannot cheat the thought experiment by adding extra, secret inducements to A that do not occur to B. The thought experiment stipulates that the circumstances, characteristics, and object of temptation are the same. Despite the similarity of their situation and their character, A and B choose differently.

The thought experiment is significant in three ways. First, as already mentioned, there is no mention of alternative possibilities with regard to foreknowledge nor do alternative possibilities play any role whatsoever in understanding freedom. Second, Augustine is inclined to think that the thought experiment does not describe an impossible state of affairs. A compatibilist, reading the description of A and B would not be able to justify them acting differently from each other since, since in order for compatibilism to be true, there must be *some* explanation for the difference – either a difference in character, history or stimulus. Third, this thought experiment is as close to a version of PAP found in *DCD*. Extend the thought experiment to two entire universes S

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and R where A and B reside, respectively. The universes S and R have maximally similar

causal histories, down to the most minute events. Yet A in S sins at some T while in R at

the same T, B refrains from sinning. Thus, the choices to commit or not commit the sin

are both compatible with the entire causal histories of both S and R. Surely this is a clear

endorsement of alternatives relative to causation.

Objection 1 – Leeway Incompatibilism

Clearly Augustine endorses a form of source incompatibilism – that freedom

requires the agent to be the source of action, not the recipient. Is it possible that he also,

at least in *DLA*, argues that freedom requires alternative possibilities? If so, Augustine

also endorses leeway incompatibilism. "Leeway Incompatibilism" is the position that

freedom and responsibility require alternative possibilities. One must have "wiggle

room" in order to be held responsible for one's actions. There have been notable attempts

to construct such an interpretation. William Lane Craig, for example, defends an

interpretation that leans heavily on Augustine's use of "natural necessity" to present a

very libertarian reading of *DLA*. John Davenport also interprets *DLA* this way. However,

as I will argue, it is not possible to derive leeway incompatibilism from *DLA*.

William Lane Craig writes that, as far as he can tell, Augustine uses "not

voluntary" and "by necessity" as synonyms.[27] Recall that Rowe interprets Augustine as a

compatibilist, arguing that an action can be both necessary and voluntary. So if Craig is

correct, Augustine considers compatibilism self-contradictory. Craig interprets *DLA* III as

Augustine's argument that, contrary to what Evodius imagines, what God foreknows

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[27] William Lane Craig, "Augustine on Foreknowledge and Free Will," *Augustinian Studies* 15 (1984), 53.

does not necessarily occur.[28] In order to accomplish this, Craig focuses on two key passages, the first is the identification of will with "free will" along with his interpretation:

> "See, if you will, how anyone could make such a blind assertion as this: 'If God has foreknowledge of my future will, then I am necessitated to will what He has foreknown, since nothing can happen differently than God has foreknown it. But if I am necessitated, we must admit that I no longer will freely, but of necessity.' What sheer folly!"
> This assertion is sheer folly because willing is by nature an act of the will and hence cannot be necessitated. Augustine says it is "astounding" (*monstruosum*) that anyone should assert, "It is necessary that I so will." "He is trying to destroy the will by presupposing necessity, for if he is necessitated to will how can he will when there is no will?"[29]

Here Craig reminds us of Augustine's identification of the will with the free will. There is no such thing as a non-free will for Augustine. I have argued that most forms of necessity and freedom are contradictory, but Craig interprets this passage to refer to all forms of necessity, with one exception noted below. On his reading, every time I will, it must be the case that I will freely and without necessity. Craig summarizes his findings by repeating Augustine's crucial step of denying the premise that "If God foresaw that Adam would sin, then it was necessary for Adam to sin."[30] The necessity that is inimical to freedom characterizes what is not in one's power, and thus outside the will. However, Craig argues that Augustine believes that there is one form necessity related to human actions – what Craig calls the "necessity of essential prediction." Craig maintains that Augustine did not regard the necessity of essential predication as inimical to human freedom.

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[28] *Ibid.*, 50.

[29] *Ibid.,* 52.

[30] *Ibid.*, 53.

Craig intends "essential prediction" to mean something similar to:

NEP: God essentially knows all true statements about the future. Thus, in all possible worlds, God foreknows all the events that occur.[31]

NEP is simply a description of God's nature.[32] But NEP does not entail that all human actions are necessary, only that God must know them. Since the foreknown act is not made necessary by NEP, NEP is compatible with the foreknown act being voluntary. Craig reminds us that we must not fallaciously insist that NEP entails that all that is foreknown is also necessary. The necessary connection between God's foreknowledge and the performance of an action does not determine the necessity of the action. Moreover, Craig argues against Rowe's critique that Augustine *should have*, but *did not* invoke the distinction between these different scopes of necessity. On Craig's reading, Augustine does indeed make the distinction, though albeit in a roundabout and heavily veiled way.[33]

Like the source-incompatible interpretations, Craig takes great care to highlight Augustine's constant attention to the causal histories of actions. He even uses translations of *DLA* that render passages dealing with necessity with causality-laden locutions. As a result, Craig reads Augustine as describing the free will as exclusive with external causation. On his interpretation, "necessity" acts as a kind of shorthand for external causes. Craig then reads Augustine to be asserting that, due to the lack of external causes,

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[31] *Ibid.*, 54.

[32] Stated this way, "necessary foreknowledge" is one of God's essential properties. That is, it is a statement about what God must be like, not a statement about what is foreknown. God foreknows all events in all possible worlds. It does not follow that in the actual world, all events that occur are necessary.

[33] Augustine further clarifies the two meanings of necessity in *DCD* V.

free human actions are not necessary at all. Since neither NEP, nor anything else has *made them* necessary, free human actions are voluntary with no trace of necessity.

John Davenport recently advanced a leeway-incompatibilist reading of *DLA*, though on conceptual, rather than textual grounds. In his estimation, Augustine has a conception of free will Davenport calls "freedom of identification."

> In other words, Augustine holds that evildoing consists in acting on a certain unrestrained form of 'first-order will,' namely one that desires material and social goods to an inordinate degree, or even at the cost of unjust harm to others. Thus when Augustine argues later that "only the will and free choice can make the mind a companion of cupidity" or inordinate desires, he is implying that we begin to act on such desires only because we freely accept or identify with them: whether we are reflectively aware of this or not, we will that an inordinate desire become the first-order intention on which we act. Augustine believes that we form higher-order volitions through which we actively help to shape our operative motives, accepting or even cultivating the motivational force that certain desires have for us, while resisting or working to break down the motivational force of other incentives.[34]

Freedom of the will, then, is the ability of an agent to evaluate a desire and then spontaneously identify with it or fight against it. Thus it is possible for a desire to be externally caused, but the *identification* with that desire cannot be externally caused. Davenport formalizes a version of PAP incorporating this freedom of identification, which he calls "PAP-C." In order to maintain suffix consistency I rename it:

> PAP-I: "Moral responsibility for one's inner character requires liberty of identification at the higher levels of the will, or in the capacity to form the volitional commitments that define our deep self: the agent is responsible for her higher-order volitions only if she could (at some point in her past) have voluntarily formed other volitions at these levels or voluntarily avoided her present identifications."[35]

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[34] John Davenport, "Liberty of the Higher-Order Will: Frankfurt and Augustine" *Faith and Philosophy* 19, No. 4. (October 2002): 440. Prior to this summary, Davenport acknowledges that Augustine does not use the language of first and second-order wills, but these terms are the best way for us to make sense of Augustine's concept of free will.

[35] John Davenport, "Liberty," 448.

Davenport considers PAP-I to entail what he calls "full openness," or unrestricted alternative possibilities. In order for an agent to have PAP-I, her freedom must be both source-incompatible with external causes, but also leeway-incompatible with all forms of necessity. Davenport reasons from evidence for Augustine endorsing PAP-I that Augustine must be a leeway incompatibilist in addition to being a source incompatibilist. Further, Davenport dismisses temporal necessity as mere certainty. Otherwise, he can see no way to reconcile temporal necessity with the many passages in which Augustine argues or assumes that free will includes freedom of identification. Since freedom of identification can only be held by a faculty that has the power to bring about alternative possible identifications, PAP-I entails PAP.[36]

Conceptual Problems with the Leeway Incompatibilist Interpretation

As much as it is an advance from the compatibilist interpretations, the leeway-incompatible interpretation leaves a crucial question unanswered: what are we to make of Augustine's memory analogy? It appears to run headlong into Pike's formulation of the fatalism problem. In Craig's estimation, the analogy shows that,

> God's knowledge of the future is thus more akin to our knowledge of the past. No necessity is imposed on the event simply by one's knowing about it. Therefore, God is entirely just in punishing sin and rewarding righteousness, for these are freely done and God's foreknowledge of such acts in no way brings it about that they should happen.[37]

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[36] John Davenport, "Augustine on Liberty of the Higher-Order Will," 72. Whether some truths are softly factual will be discussed in chapter 4.

[37] William Lane Craig, "Augustine on Foreknowledge and Free Will," 57.

Craig is surely correct in asserting that knowledge as such does not *impose* necessity upon an event. Boethius makes a similar argument when he makes an analogy between knowledge of *present* events and eternal knowledge of events.

However, appealing to our knowledge of the past as an analogy for foreknowledge is problematic since the past is now closed to alternative possibilities. The events of the past are impervious to change – locked away in the temporal necessity of the past. If the future is similarly locked, then the future is also temporally necessary. If Augustine's approach is to say that God knows the future in a similar way to the way we know the past, then Augustine is, for our purposes, advocating fatalism. The past is temporally necessary – it is unchangeable and fixed, even though my knowledge of the past does not impose any necessity on it. If the future is just as unchangeable and fixed as the past, then leeway incompatibilists should become fatalists. Richard Taylor defined this as *the* fatalist position – we think of the future with the same kind of unchangeableness that we think of the past.[38] If Augustine appeals to memory, rather than present observation, as an analogue for foreknowledge, then if Augustine is a leeway-incompatibilist, that is, if he affirms PAP-F, he opens the door to a fatalist conclusion. In other words, it is not helpful to compare what is remembered to what is foreknown if the very thing that makes them different (temporal necessity) is the center of the debate.

Craig does not call attention to this conclusion because he employs the Augustinian locution "of/by necessity" (used to great effect in *DCD)* when discussing fate. Craig cites *DCD* where Augustine argues that "man does not sin *because* God

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[38] Richard Taylor, "Fatalism" *The Philosophical Review* 71, No. 1 (January 1962): 56.

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foresaw that he would sin."[39] In that chapter, Augustine is recounting Cicero's argument that an action done *by fate* cannot also be an action done *by will*. Augustine extends that method to discuss actions being done *by foreknowledge*, arguing that there are no such actions that are done by foreknowledge and also done by will. If God foreknows that some person, S, will do A at T, it would be impossible for some other entity, R, (foreknowledge, fate, or anything else) to also do that very A at T. If it were not impossible then such a state of affairs would violate the initial premises of the argument (and violates the content of the foreknowledge). An action can be done *by will* or *by foreknowledge*, but not both. Therefore God foreknowing that S will do A at T *by will* implies that it is false that S will do A at T *by foreknowledge* or *by necessity*. Thus God's foreknowledge serves no explanatory role. As Craig summarizes the solution:

> God foreknew what he was going to choose, and therefore it was certain that that choice would occur. But God's knowing about it in advance in no way influenced the choice; Adam could have chosen either option. Whichever alternative he chose, God would have foreknown. In fact, God's foreknowledge that Adam would freely choose one guarantees that Adam would freely choose one. It is necessary that whatever God foreknows should come to pass, but this necessity is not antithetical to human liberty. For though it is necessary that whatever God foreknows should happen, what is going to happen does not happen of necessity.[40]

Notice Craig's conclusion that foreknowledge does not entail that foreknown events happen *of necessity*. Craig establishes that NEP does not entail the loss of contingency for the foreknown event. "The point would seem to be that my knowing something in advance can make absolutely no difference to whether and how that thing

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[39] *DCD*, V:9. Augustine, *City of God* in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, first series: Augustin: City of God, Christian Doctrine*, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. Marcus Dods. (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), 53.

[40] William Lane Craig, "Augustine on Foreknowledge and Free Will," 57.

occurs. It is certain that the event will occur, since it is foreknown, but its contingency is in no way removed by my knowing what is going to happen."[41] The sense of necessity Craig considers relevant is simple non-contingency, but non-contingency is not how Augustine uses the term "necessity." Augustine does not argue that future events are necessary because they are not contingent. Nor does he think the past has the necessity of non-contingency. The past cannot now be different than it was, but unless we presuppose fatalism, it *could have been* different, and thus it was contingent. It is true that non-contingent actions, if there are such things, would not have alternative possibilities, however there are other ways to lose alternative possibilities. As Craig interprets him, Augustine is content to have future actions be as certain and fixed as the past is, but without necessity. Thus, on Craig's reading, temporal necessity is not part of Augustine's discussion, only the necessity of non-contingency.

Rather than banish all forms of necessity from future free actions, the best interpretation of the memory analogy reveals that Augustine considers necessity of the past not to be an obstacle for free will. Augustine's continued insistence that foreknown actions have NC only strengthens this conclusion. If Augustine is a kind of leeway incompatibilist, he believes that we only need leeway in reference to causes. As long as my volition is not the result of MN, NN1 or NN2, then I have alternative possibilities relative to those types of necessities. NC, then, does not have the same affect on freedom as these other necessities and therefore even though we do not have leeway relative to "temporal necessity," we can still have free will.

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[41] *Ibid.*, 56.

Textual Issues with Leeway Incompatibilist Interpretation

Just as there are insurmountable textual difficulties with the compatibilist interpretation, the leeway-incompatibilist interpretation has its share of textual incongruities. As we have seen, in Craig's interpretation, Augustine allies himself with two necessary conditions for freedom and one sufficient condition. It is sufficient for an act to be done "by will" to be free. The first necessary condition is that what God foreknows does not happen "of necessity" – God's foreknowledge, on its own, has no role in the causal history of the act. Far be it for necessity to be *the* primary explanation.[42] These two conditions are shared by the source-incompatible interpretation, though, as I will show, the leeway-incompatibilist view of necessity is suspect. However, Craig adds a second necessary condition that he derives from Augustine's hinge analogy – the hinge of the will can turn in either direction.[43] If Craig is correct, Augustine has committed himself to PAP. First, I will examine the textual evidence for the leeway-incompatibilist view of the necessity pertaining to foreknowledge. Then I will address the role of the hinge analogy.

The leeway incompatibilist interpretation inadequately addresses Augustine's various meanings of necessity and their impact on freedom. Craig cites Augustine's argument in *DCD* IX that there are some forms of necessity that do not carry any implications for free choice. Craig is optimistic that the problem can be solved by showing that NEP does not entail MN.

> This may be the necessity operative when Augustine states that it is necessary that whatever God foreknows come to pass. That is to say, it is a

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[42] *Ibid.*, 57.

[43] William Lane Craig, "Augustine on Foreknowledge and Free Will," 55.

necessary feature of God's foreknowledge that whatever is foreknown must happen. But the foreknown event is not itself necessary in the first sense [of being outside our power].[44]

As mentioned before, the passage he discusses from *DCD* is one Augustine's most difficult passages to understand on this topic. The passage Craig quotes does discuss a harmless necessity, NEP, but on the necessity under debate, NC, Craig is silent. Augustine continues:

> But if the term necessity is used in the sense that it is necessary for something to be as it is, or happen as it does, I do not know why we should fear that it may destroy our freedom of will. In fact, we do not make the life of God, or the foreknowledge of God, subject to necessity if we say that it is necessary for God to live forever and to foreknow all things.... The case is similar when we say that it is necessary, when we exercise will, to do so of our own free will. This … is undoubtedly true, yet we do not thereby put our free will under the necessity that takes away liberty.[45]

In this passage, Augustine argues that not all types of necessity are incompatible with free will. However, Craig seems to connect the necessity of God having foreknowledge with the necessity of the occurrence of foreknown things. This connection stretches the words of the passage. Augustine puts the necessity of God's foreknowledge of all things in the same category with God's necessary existence and the impossibility of willing unwillingly. Given the series Augustine uses, his statement that, "we do not make the life of God, or the foreknowledge of God, subject to necessity if we say that it is necessary for God to live forever and to foreknow all things," simply means that NEP is true and does not interfere with God's freedom. However, NEP does not entail that "It is a necessary feature of God's foreknowledge that whatever is foreknown must happen" nor is such a feature unambiguously compatible with freedom. The necessary feature of

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[44] *Ibid.*, 53.

[45] *Ibid.*, 54.

God's foreknowledge is that what is foreknown *does* happen. It is not a necessary feature that what is foreknown *must* happen. The above passage from *DCD* states that one of God's necessary characteristics is that He foreknows all events. The passage is not about essential characteristics of foreknown events, but of God's nature, and I am in no way free to do anything about God's essential properties. Craig overreaches when he restates the line from *DCD* as: "it is a necessary feature of God's foreknowledge that whatever is foreknown must happen." If everything God foreknows *must* happen, then there would be a threat to free will since the word "must" conveys necessity. If God's foreknowledge does not have temporal necessity, we need an explanation of why not, and NEP does not suffice. If God's foreknowledge is temporally necessary we need a solution that recognizes its necessity and deals with it appropriately.

To bolster his case, Craig appeals to Augustine's use of the phrase "hinge of the will" where Evodius praises the value of moral instruction. Evodius talks about the turning (*detorqueo*) of the will as though on a pivot or socket (*cardo*). Craig interprets possibility and necessity in light of this analogy when he states:

> Just as it is absurd to will non-voluntarily, so is it absurd to will necessarily. Hence, the contrast between growing old, falling ill, and willing is now seen to be, not that one is against our will while the other is in accordance with our will, but that one happens necessarily while the other does not. Since these are meant to be illustrations of "in one's power," it seems evident that necessity is for Augustine incompatible with "being in one's power." This confirms what we saw before, namely, that the will is like a hinge, able to turn this way and that. Augustine proceeds to say that necessity removes (*auferre*) the will. He claims that it does no good to say that one's will is not within one's power because one is under necessity, for unless our will is in our power it is non-existent. If one has will it is within one's power; therefore one is not under necessity to will.[46]

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[46] *Ibid.*, 55.

I contend again that Craig extracts more from the passage then what is reasonable. The hinge analogy, while it suggests the *capacity* to turn in either direction, does not require the *possibility* to do so.[47] The context of the hinge analogy is the discussion of natural necessity. Illustrating the difference between natural necessity and freedom, Augustine compares the will to the downward motion of a stone. By nature, the stone always inclines downward, but the will, by nature, can incline in various directions. Evodius brings up the hinge in his response:

> But if the action by which the will is turned this way and that way, were not voluntary and quite within our power, then a man would not deserve praise nor blame when he turns the sway of the will to things higher or to things lower – Then a man should not be admonished to put low value on these [temporal things]; to desire things eternal, to shun evil living, to fix the will on right living. But whosoever thinks that man is not so to be admonished deserves not to be numbered with normal men.[48]

Clearly, Evodius does not consider *cardo voluntatis* a condition for freedom of the will. The will being something that sways toward righteousness or sin is compatible with that very "pivot of the will" being outside one's control. Evodius' argument is that, given the need for moral instruction, we must reject the theory that the will turns due to external causes. If the hinge of the will sways due to external causes, moral instruction is in vain. He is not arguing that the hinge of the will is incompatible with external causes, which is surprising if he intends the hinge to convey PAP. If Augustine thinks that the hinge of the will is PAP, then he can resolve the discussion by saying that a necessary feature of the hinge is that it be in our power. He neglects to do so.

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[47] A door can be propped open in such a way that it cannot close. While true that the door's hinge cannot be in the closed position without a change outside the hinge, this impossibility does not destroy the hinge. It still has the capacity of being in multiple positions (unlike a stick which breaks when bent), even when, due to external circumstances, it can only be in one of those positions.

[48] *DLA*, 245.

To be fair to Craig's interpretation, if someone were to write today about the will as though it were a hinge it would be an obvious endorsement of PAP. However, it is not at all apparent that Augustine uses the hinge metaphor in *DLA* to straightforwardly signal his endorsement of PAP. Rather, it seems to me that the hinge analogy contrasts with Augustine's use of natural necessity, since it only appears prior to the fatalism section. Consequently, it seems fair to suggest that Augustine intends the hinge analogy to distinguish the multiple positions or directions of the will from the single direction of natural objects. The question Evodius asks is how the hinge of the will is turned; he does not assume the hinge is in one's power. It is better to understand the hinge as a clarification of natural necessity rather than the centerpiece of his solution.

Thus, there is little textual evidence to support a leeway incompatible interpretation. The argument that NEP does not interfere with freedom is not sufficient to show that infallible foreknowledge does not entail NC and temporal necessity. The hinge analogy is inconclusive – while it excludes the will from being subject to NN2, it does not demonstrate openness relative to NC. One common feature of the leeway and source incompatibilist interpretations is Augustine's denial that human actions are somehow *caused* by necessity. This agreement is significant. As Craig writes 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?"[49] Craig argues that the constraint of fate is unintelligible since it has

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[49] Craig, *Only Wise God*, 68-9.

absolutely no intrusion into the causal story of an act. Augustine may fulfill his purpose in the dialogue by showing that foreknowledge does not require that actions are done *by* foreknowledge. Since foreknowledge does not intrude into the causal history of an act, divine foreknowledge does not entail theological *determinism*. Augustine can then straightaway declare victory over the problem and shift the burden of proof back onto the interlocutor who defends fatalism. Whatever necessity might be implied by foreknowledge it could not have any relevance for freedom. While there are other dragons left to be slain in exploring omniscience, no limitation on freedom is required by the affirmation of exhaustive divine foreknowledge.

Even though the leeway-incompatible interpretation is an advance on the compatibilist reading, the leeway-incompatible interpretation finds little more in the text of *DLA* than an insistence that foreknowledge cannot interfere with freedom of the will, without any explanation for why or how this is so. In order to maintain this interpretation, Augustine's statements about the unavoidability of what God infallibly foreknows have to be creatively explained away. But according to Augustine, since no one can go back in time and change the contents of God's infallible foreknowledge, no one has the ability to act otherwise than as God knows. Because of his commitment to this strong form of divine foreknowledge, Augustine cannot endorse PAP-F, and thus he is not an unrestricted leeway-incompatibilist.

Objection 2: Compatibilism in Anti-Pelagian Treatises

The second major objection to the source-incompatible interpretation is Augustine's apparent abandonment of the origination model for freedom in later works. Source-incompatibilism may succeed as one of many possible readings of the

complicated third book of *DLA,* even if it is not the superior reading of the Augustinian corpus with respect to his overall view on freedom. It may be true that Augustine does not use his own solution to theological fatalism because he fears it will collide with the theological doctrines he defends later in life.[50] However, I contend that a sufficiently strong argument can be made for Augustine's retention of a source-incompatible conception of freedom even as late as his anti-Pelagian treatises.

In one sense, interpreting the anti-Pelagian works is far easier than *DLA*. Augustine speaks plainly, as himself, with the intent to make orthodox Christianity as clear and understandable as possible. He appeals to divine mystery as a very last resort and is constantly reminding his readers of the scriptural foundation for his reflections. Though the task of discovering his meaning is easier, the chronological distance between his works and their modern readers keep us from being able to responsibly cite "chapter and verse" from his treatises. His aim is clear enough – advocate the agency of God in salvation, but also show how God's agency does not destroy human freedom. He takes great pains to quote extensively both the Old and New Testaments on the existence and importance of free will. As I will show, his treatises follow the blueprint started back in *DLA* and continued through *DCD*: 1) if free will is impossible, then moral commands and injunctions are meaningless, and 2) the key feature of free will is the agent's authorship of the action – if the agent authored the action, it is done by free will.

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[50] This assumption is almost common knowledge. It is the very first objection offered when I discuss a consistent theory of the will in Augustine's work.

Treatise – On Grace and Free Will

One representative passage dealing with the importance of free will for understanding moral commands and responsibility is in *On Grace and Free Will*. After running through an inventory of commands from the Scriptures, Augustine states:

> Now wherever it is said, "Do not do this," and "Do not do that," and wherever there is any requirement in the divine admonitions for the work of the will to do anything, or to refrain from doing anything, there is at once a sufficient proof of free will. No man, therefore, when he sins, can in his heart blame God for it, but every man must impute the fault to himself. Nor does it detract at all from a man's own will when he performs any act in accordance with God. Indeed, a work is then to be pronounced a good one when a person does it willingly; then, too, may the reward of a good work be hoped for from Him concerning whom it is written, "He shall reward every man according to his works."[51]

Here we find many unambiguous statements affirming the necessity of free will for moral commands to be meaningful. *Anytime* and *anywhere* the Scripture commands something or forbids something that, by itself, is a *sufficient proof* for free will. Since Augustine naturally assumes the Scriptures to be true, the existence of the free will, of which the Bible asserts, must also be true. Augustine does not say anything in this passage that explicitly rules out compatibilism, especially considering Augustine states that "a work is then to be pronounced a good one when a person does it willingly" – a locution friendly to compatibilism. As long as the act was not coerced and done *against* the will, it can be praiseworthy (and, as the compatibilist would say, also determined). However, even though Augustine does not directly disavow compatibilism by asserting PAP, this passage includes the agency requirement. When looking for a suitable place to lay blame, we should accuse *ourselves*. A compatibilist might resort to reading this

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[51] Augustine, "On Grace and Free Will" in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, Volume 5, Saint Augustin: Anti-Pelagian Writings*, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. Peter Holmes (Peabody: Hendrikson Publishers, 2004), 445.

phrase devotionally, so that Augustine is advising that, in accordance with humility and Christian virtue, we accuse ourselves when we sin, though we know that we are also determined. However, a source incompatibilist can take the passage at face-value. Literally, *I* am the one at fault when I sin. There is no other to look to for blame. There are no circumstances or actors that are sufficient for causing my will to sin.

Augustine does not want to allow his readers to claim that they have irresistible desires. If those desires are irresistible, then acting on them is not blameworthy.

> But when a man says, "I cannot do what I am commanded, because I am mastered by my concupiscence," he has no longer any excuse to plead from ignorance, nor reason to blame God in his heart, but he recognizes and laments his own evil in himself; and still to such an one the apostle says: "Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good;" and of course the very fact that the injunction, "Consent not to be overcome," is addressed to him, undoubtedly summons the determination of his will. For to consent and to refuse are functions proper to the will.[52]

The command not to be overcome is especially pregnant with implications about the will. Being overcome involves being swept away – it implies passivity, or being externally caused. As Augustine quotes him, Paul says "Consent not to be overcome," – as though Paul were saying, "Stop being passive; stop being swept along by your evil desires." It would be no small feat for a compatibilist to defend a command not to be overcome by evil desire.

In order to avoid special pleading when reading of *On Grace and Free Will*, we must take into account Augustine's references to the work of Grace in aiding free will. When he returns to examine the injunction "Consent not to be overcome with evil," he adds that "In order, however, that this victory may be gained, grace renders its help; and

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[52] Augustine, *On Grace and Free Will*, 446.

were not this help given, then the law would be nothing but the strength of sin."[53] Though this passage and the others like it in this treatise can be interpreted to mean that we are simply the playthings of divine providence, the tone of the text leads us in the other direction. Augustine is merely saying that we are weak – that even though the will can sometimes rise to surprising defiance of temptation, it will ultimately fail to keep the law on its own power. Yet my inability to perform what I will to do does not take away my ability to will it.[54] Having assistance in performing what I will does not thereby take away my freedom. For God to assist the will does not take away freedom of the will no more than my assistance of a friend in moving her couch thereby destroys her freedom in moving the couch in concert with my energy. We will return to the concept of divine assistance in chapter 5 of this dissertation.

There is one more compatibilist-like passage in this treatise. Near the end of *On Grace and Free Will*, Augustine discusses the scriptural accounts of God turning the wills of people both toward good and evil. After citing the various captivities of Israel he states,

> Here it is shown that God stirs up enemies to devastate the countries which He adjudges deserving of such chastisement. Still, did these Philistines and Arabians invade the land of Judah to waste it with no will of their own? Or were their movements so directed by their own will that the Scripture lies which tells us that "the Lord stirred up their spirit" to do all this? Both statements to be sure are true, because they both came by their own will, and yet the Lord stirred up their spirit; and this may also with equal truth be stated the other way: The Lord both stirred up their spirit, and yet they came of their own will. For the Almighty sets in motion even in the innermost hearts of men the movement of their will, so that He does through their agency whatsoever He wishes to perform through them, – even He who knows not how to will anything in unrighteousness.[55]

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[53] *Ibid.,* 447.

[54] At least as a secondary will.

[55] Augustine, *On Grace and Free Will*, 462.

Taken by itself, this passage seems to indicate that a person's actions actually can be caused by God, but the person still be held responsible for committing them. If we stop here, then it would seem that Augustine believes that God can cause you to want to do something and for you to do it in accordance with your will (since you now desire it), and are responsible for its commission and can be justly punished for it. If this is Augustine's final word on the topic, it supports a compatibilist interpretation. However, in the next chapter of the treatise, he offers this important caveat:

> From these statements of the inspired word, and from similar passages which it would take too long to quote in full, it is, I think, sufficiently clear that God works in the hearts of men to incline their wills whithersoever He wills, whether to good deeds according to His mercy, or to evil after their own deserts; His own judgment being sometimes manifest, sometimes secret, but always righteous. This ought to be the fixed and immoveable conviction of your heart, that there is no unrighteousness with God. Therefore, whenever you read in the Scriptures of Truth, that men are lead aside, or that their hearts are blunted and hardened by God, never doubt that some ill deserts of their own have first occurred, so that they justly suffer these things.[56]

To be given a hard heart, or to be lead aside to indulge in worthless passions are both evils. They are not, strictly speaking, spontaneous on the part of those sinning. Rather than the causes of later punishment, *they are the punishment*. The wickedness of the sinner was not made by God, says Augustine. Sinful people, deserving punishment, are condemned to *more sin*. Augustine distinguishes between God turning the will to further sin and previous deeds "of their own" which merit God's punishment. Only the self-authored action is directly blameworthy. The other is blameworthy only because it resulted from a self-authored action. This passage is an affirmation of the origination/authorship view of human freedom. Just as we see when reading *DLA* and *DCD*, to our modern ears, *On Grace and Free Will* can sound like it was written by a

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[56] *Ibid.*, 463.

compatibilist, but on balance, with a view to the whole of the treatise, a compatibilist interpretation is not sustainable.

Treatise – On the Spirit and the Letter

Even in the most compatibilist-leaning of all Augustine's anti-Pelagian treatises, *On the Spirit and the Letter*, Augustine makes the same distinction between ability and will as he does in *DLA*:

> Consider now whether anybody believes, if he be unwilling; or whether he believes not, if he shall have willed it. Such a position, indeed, is absurd (for what is believing but consenting to the truth of what is said? and this consent is certainly voluntary): faith, therefore, is in our own power. But, as the apostle says: "There is no power but comes from God," . . . Nowhere, however, in Holy Scripture do we find such an assertion as, There is no volition but comes from God. And rightly is it not so written, because it is not true: otherwise God would be the author even of sins (which Heaven forbid!), if there were no volition except what comes from Him; inasmuch as an evil volition alone is already a sin, even if the effect be wanting, – in other words, if it has not ability.[57]

Here too, Augustine is asserting that God gives the power to perform acts, but particular acts are not necessitated by the kind of power that God bestows. The volition itself (the act) is not given by God, but only the more generic power to form volitions. Augustine clarifies this position later in the treatise, "that free will, naturally assigned by the Creator to our rational soul, is such a neutral power, as can either incline towards faith, or turn towards unbelief."[58] Again, the issue of authorship continues to be central, since *we* are the ones given the power to use as we wish. Certainly no compatibilist who

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[57] Augustine, *On the Spirit and the Letter* in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, Volume 5, Saint Augustin: Anti-Pelagian Writings*, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. Peter Holmes (Peabody: Hendrikson Publishers, 2004), 107.

[58] *Ibid.*, 109.

sees the freedom of the will as compatible with "my necessity" or the result of one's own nature could say that,

> To yield our consent indeed, to God's summons, or to withhold it, is (as I have said) the function of our own will. . . For the soul cannot receive and possess these gifts, which are here referred to, except by yielding its consent. And thus whatever it possesses, and whatever it receives, is from God; and yet the act of receiving and having belongs, of course, to the receiver and possessor.[59]

God gives the gifts of grace – they are not something the repentant already have, but the *act* of receiving *belongs* to the one receiving. Again Augustine appeals to authorship and origination in his description of free actions. At the end of the book Augustine claims that only divine mystery can explain why some are not "persuaded" by grace and he exhorts his readers to refrain from presumptuous disputation. But Augustine is clear – the will is not the result of mechanistic or divine processes. Rather, the *person* wills, and that activity is ascribed to the person, and the person alone. The interaction between God's will and our will remains, ultimately, a mystery. But that mystery precludes us from reducing one to the other. It is not as though God responds to our will and gives us grace, since the grace comes unbidden and undeservedly. Nor is it that God turns our will in the direction He sees fit and we must will, and our will is free only in the sense that God does not *violate* it. Neither option is available for Augustine, however convenient they may be. He maintains this from the beginning of his authorship to the end.

Conclusion

Augustine argues against theological fatalism by offering a theory of agency that is incompatible with causal determinism but compatible with infallible foreknowledge.

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[59] *Ibid.*, 110.

He challenges the presupposition that temporal/accidental necessity is inimical to human freedom. God foreknows what we do in the future, but the explanatory history of that foreknowledge is from human action to divine knowledge, not from divine knowledge to human action. An action is free when it is 1) not compelled either by external forces 2) not compelled by internal nature, and 3) properly attributable to the agent as the author and originator of the action. The will, being our faculty of authorship, is free by definition, and its exercise is always free. Though it can be influenced by a myriad of temptations and exhortations, no influence or combination of influences can be the ultimate explanation for a free volition. An externally caused action cannot be authored by the agent. However, God's knowledge of the future, like my knowledge of the past, does not interfere with agent authorship, therefore foreknowledge does not interfere with freedom of the will. Even though Augustine's anti-Pelagian treatises introduce a category of unfree actions to which the agent freely consents, this consent is still free in that the consent is authored and originates from the person. Therefore, even though these later treatises qualify Augustine's view of agency, the essential elements are unchanged.

Since Augustine's resolution is not the only one defended in the Christian intellectual tradition, we now turn to see where Augustine fits within the spectrum of solutions.

CHAPTER FOUR

Augustine's Intersection with the Contemporary Debate on Foreknowledge

Introduction

This chapter explores the reducibility of Augustine's position to Boethianism, Molinism, or Ockhamism. I argue that none of these are possible interpretations of Augustine's solution. My intent is not to show that Augustine's position is superior to the alternatives; such a task is outside the scope of this project. Rather, I endeavor to show that his solution is different from the alternatives most often discussed today. If two solutions face identical objections, they could not be very different from each other. As I will show, the Augustinian solution has significantly different strengths and weaknesses from its competitors. Augustine's solution shares few objections with Boethius, Molina, and Ockham.

A complete analysis of these alternate solutions is outside the scope of this chapter, and I am not committed to any of the following objections being unanswerable. As far as I am aware, each of the three is a viable solution to the problem of theological fatalism. Rather, the fact that Augustine's position as presented in chapter 3 does not have to answer the same objections as they do demonstrates first that it is unique and not reducible to the other solutions. Second, the immunity to those objections shows that Augustine's solution is attractive in its own right. Its invulnerability to these objections, if nothing else, gives us an opportunity to re-evaluate the implications and dependencies of the philosophical conversation as it now stands.

Barely a century after Augustine's death, Boethius defends the most direct competitor of all the current options.[1] In summary, Boethius's strategy in *Consolation of Philosophy* is first to accept the fatalist argument, then disagree with Augustine's solution, finally resolving the dilemma by denying that God has foreknowledge. Instead, Boethius argues that God, being eternal, has eternal knowledge of all things. The reason foreknowledge interferes with human freedom is because it is temporal, but God is not temporal, and thus His knowledge is not temporal. Boethius argues that unlike foreknowledge, eternal knowledge has no fatalist consequences. In essence, Boethius argues, we have been misspeaking when we call God's eternal knowledge "foreknowledge." In the contemporary debate Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann champion Boethius's position in their article *Eternity* and its follow-up *Prophecy, Past Truth, and Eternity*.

Shared Concern with Timelessness

Following Augustine's lead in *Confessions* and *De Trinitate*, Boethius[2] capitalizes on the concept of God not having ordinary temporal existence. In *Consolation* V:P6, Boethius famously defines eternity as "the complete possession all at once of illimitable life." As a result, God always has knowledge of all times, but He knows them as present, not as past or future. As Stump and Kretzmann explain:

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[1] *Consolation of Philosophy* was written in 524, 96 years after St. Augustine's death. *De Libero Arbitrio* was completed in 395.

[2] It is worth noting that *Consolation* is a dialogue and most of what I attribute to Boethius is not spoken by the character "Boethius" but by his interlocutor "Lady Philosophy." Since Boethius makes it somewhat obvious that "Lady Philosophy" always speaks the truth, and exceeds "Boethius" in wisdom, and further that "Boethius" is fully convinced of what she says, I feel confident attributing Lady Philosophy's arguments to Boethius the author.

Because an eternal entity is atemporal, there is no past or future, no earlier or later, within its life; that is, the events constituting its life cannot be ordered sequentially from the standpoint of eternity. But, in addition, no temporal entity or event can be earlier or later than or past or future with respect to the whole life of an eternal entity, because otherwise such an eternal life or entity would itself be part of a temporal series. Here it should be evident that, although the stipulation that an eternal entity completely possesses its life all at once entails that it is not part of any sequence, it does not rule out the attribution of presentness or simultaneity to the life and relationships of such an entity, nor should it. Insofar as an entity is, or has life, completely or otherwise, it is appropriate to say that it has present existence in some sense of 'present'; and unless its life consists in only one event or it is impossible to relate an event in its life to any temporal entity or event, we need to be able to consider an eternal entity or event as one of the relata in a simultaneity relationship.[3]

Since there is nothing earlier or later than any "moment" in eternity, there is no need to worry about the accidental necessity of God's beliefs, even those about the past. This is so because God's eternity is simultaneous with all times. Since God's eternal presence is simultaneous with all times, then His knowledge never has necessity of the past since it is not, strictly speaking, in the past.[4] If Boethius's argument is sound, then God's eternal knowledge of all times is as compatible with free will as our own knowledge of the present. It is as though Boethius offers Augustine a counter-analogy to reverse memory. Instead of God's knowledge of the future being relevantly similar to human knowledge of the past, God's knowledge of the future is like our knowledge of the present. No one, Boethius argues, believes that their knowledge of present events makes those events necessary. Yet there is even a "firm and fixed" connection between my knowledge of a present action and that present action itself, but no loss of freedom is

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[3] Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann, "Eternity," *The Journal of Philosophy* 78, No. 8 (August 1981): 434.

[4] Notice that like Augustine, Boethius draws an analogy from a non-troubling everyday case of knowledge (knowledge of the present) with the mysterious and potentially conceptually threatening kind of knowledge (eternal knowledge of all times).

implied. If God's knowledge is eternally present then many of the intuitions we have about our knowledge of the present are applicable to God's eternal knowledge.

Boethius includes most of the other elements of Augustine's solution. Like his predecessor, Boethius reminds his readers what is at stake: without free will, all moral teaching and injunction is in vain, and that most who are attracted to fatalism are looking for an excuse to disclaim responsibility for their own actions.[5] He also keeps the requirement of God having infallible knowledge of the future.[6] Additionally, Boethius shares Augustine's concern that we not believe "impiously" that God is less than perfectly certain about the future.[7] Yet he rejects Augustine's solution when he discusses the ordering of causes of foreknowledge and the events foreknown. In what is likely an allusion to *DLA* and *DCD*, Boethius sets up the problem as follows:

> For neither do I agree with that argument according to which some believe that they can solve this knotty question. For they say that a thing is not going to happen because providence has foreseen that it will be, but rather to the contrary, that since something is going to be, it cannot be hidden from divine providence, and in this way the necessity slips over to the opposite side. For, they say, it is not necessary that those things happen which are foreseen, but it is necessary that those things that will happen are foreseen; as if indeed our work were to discover which is the cause of which, foreknowledge of future things' necessity, or future things' necessity of providence, and as if we were not striving to show this, that whatever the state of the ordering of causes, the outcome of things foreknown is necessary, even if that foreknowledge were not to seem to confer on future things the necessity of occurring.[8]

[5] Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. S. J. Tester (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), V:P2. This assumption, shared by so great a majority by the ancients, is not without its detractors. Among them, Derk Pereboom is the most strident and unashamed challenger of the connection between free will and moral responsibility. However, Fischer and others have given many subtle and nuanced accounts of retaining moral responsibility in the face of a deterministic world. That said, Augustine and Boethius are absolutely convinced that with necessity comes a destruction of any morally relevant form of responsibility, sin, and punishment.

[6] Boethius, *Consolation,* V:P3. "nam si cuncta prospicit deus neque falli ullo modo potest, euenire necesse est quod prouidentia futurum esse praeuiderit."

[7] Boethius, *Consolation*, V:P3.

[8] Boethius, *Consolation*, V:P3.

It is no use, according to Boethius, to simply state that the foreknowledge has no causative powers, and is instead the *effect* of our free actions. The result is the same, since only that which is necessary can be foreknown.[9] To underscore this, Boethius offers his own trilemma: Either God can be mistaken or He does not have knowledge or God only knows disjunctions about the future, but does not know future events.[10] All of these are theologically repugnant to Boethius, and he reiterates the loss of moral meaning in a world where all human action is necessary. "This once accepted, it is clear what a great collapse of human affairs follows!"[11]

Boethius agrees with Augustine that foreknowledge, by itself, does not make the event necessary. However, since knowledge requires certainty, an action being foreknown indicates that the action is necessary. Remember that Augustine argues that human authorship of an action entails that foreknowledge imposes no causal necessity on the foreknown. For Augustine, though human origination of an act is compatible with temporal necessity, human origination is incompatible with causal necessity. In contrast, Boethius thinks the correct reasoning about foreknowledge includes realizing that foreknown actions must fit into the kinds of things can be foreknown (only the necessary). Boethius argues that, given the constraints of certainty and necessity, there

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[9] For God to foreknow something, that something must be real enough for God to foreknow it. Real foreknowledge must reflect the future states of affairs. Thus, according to Boethius, if God immutably knows that S will do A at T, then S's action at T is also immutable.

[10] As far as I can tell, Boethius is anticipating the objection that if God knows true disjunctions about the future then He knows true propositions about the future. So, for example, let P = "Russell Hemati is either dead or alive at T2." Even I can have true knowledge about P at T1, even though T1 is prior to T2. Certainly neither Boethius nor Augustine intend foreknowledge to mean that God has knowledge of at least some propositions that are about the future, but rather that God has knowledge of all future events.

[11] Boethius, *Consolation*, V:P3.

can be no foreknowledge of what is not necessary. If human beings are free then God's

knowledge of our future must not then be foreknowledge, but eternal knowledge.

Initial Criticisms of Boethius' Solution

A common criticism of Boethius' solution is that it is incoherent. The quality of

being eternal is incompatible with personhood, and since God is a person, He cannot be

eternal. There is also some worry that appealing to God's eternity, though refuting

fatalism based on foreknowledge, generates another version of theological fatalism.[12] For

example, Alvin Plantinga notes that theological fatalism rests on statements of the form

"God knows P at T." However, the Boethian argues, if God is eternal, it is not the case

that God knows P at some particular time. Rather, God knows P at every time. In other

words, if God is eternal and knows P, then it is always true, even in the distant past, that

God exists and knows P. Thus, we cannot use God's eternity to avoid statements about

God knowing P at T. Linda Zagzebski argues that though it may be inaccurate to state

that an eternally known proposition is now unpreventable and temporally necessary, yet it

seems that there is nothing we can do to prevent the occurrence of something that God

eternally knows will occur. In the process of solving the compatibility of freedom and

foreknowledge, the eternalist creates a new and strikingly similar incompatibility.

I think it safe to assume that those who are attracted to Boethius' solution will not

be distressed by these initial objections. Since we are temporal beings we should expect

to have few intuitions about the nature of eternity, but these initial objections rest on such

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[12] In her book *Dilemma of Freedom and Foreknowledge*., Zagzebski argues that eternal knowledge generates a fatalism problem parallel to the foreknowledge problem. Plantinga, in *Ockham's Way Out* makes the same point. Linda Zagzebski, *Dilemma of Freedom and Foreknowledge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 43ff. Alvin Plantinga, "On Ockham's Way Out" *Faith and Philosophy* 3, No. 3 (July 1986): 239-41.

intuitions. Let us assume that these initial objections can be resolved, or at least that they will probably not convince an eternalist. I think the most fruitful way to compare Boethius' and Augustine's solutions is to examine scenarios where they offer divergent interpretations of the freedom of the agents in question. If the Boethian is unable to account for God's actions based on His foreknowledge, and the Augustinian is able to do so, then Augustine's solution is the more attractive solution.

The Problem of Foretelling

I will argue that the strongest objection to a broadly Boethian solution is that divine foretelling (prophecy and revelation) is nearly impossible to reconcile with the eternalist commitments. In contrast, foretelling presents no obstacle to Augustine's solution.

Assume for a moment that Boethius is correct that we must be careful not to say that God foreknows because foreknowledge has unfortunate consequences both for freedom and for our theology. With respect to the latter, if God has foreknowledge then God must exist sequentially, or temporally, rather than having the divine life all at once. This much seems correct. However, with respect to the former, if there is some way to make a temporal copy of eternal knowledge then its contents become "tainted" with the necessity of the past. Were such a copy to be made, then what was eternally known becomes just as necessary as the foreknown. Unfortunately for the eternal knowledge solution, there are *many* methods of contaminating the eternal with the past. Consider: if God were to have eternal knowledge of my future sins he would prepare suitable responses, or at least in many cases minimize the damage I can do by providentially

limiting the scope of damage.[13] In whatever way we understand the temporal oddities of God's knowledge of temporal events, the effects of His *actions* are straightforwardly located at particular temporal moments. So, though God may eternally will the destruction of Sodom, the effect of His act occurred at some specific temporal moment and has the same necessity of the past as any other historical event. But God is eternally willing the destruction of Sodom to take place at that time, just like He is eternally angry at the sin I commit tomorrow.[14]

But let us suppose for the sake of argument that somehow God's eternal anger over my future actions is not problematic for freedom. Since God *does* in fact perform actions with specific temporal effects in response to future free actions, God must take great care not to introduce anything into the timeline that requires future free actions to be temporally necessary. David Widerker advances this objection by making the reasonable assumption that eternalists are committed to the possibility that God can act based on His knowledge of future contingents. Otherwise, eternal knowledge is useless. But if God can and often does so act, then the eternalist must reject a principle he names PFP1: "If an object X exemplifies a property P at some past time T' relative to T, then no one has it within his power at T to bring it about that X did not exemplify P at T'."[15] Yet denying that God can act based on His knowledge of future contingents seems theologically untenable. Widerker gives two ways to deny it: "(a) Necessarily, whenever

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[13] It is not clear if God must have middle knowledge in order to prevent me from doing something He *knows* that I will do.

[14] In *Eternity*, Stump and Kretzmann offer a definition of simultaneity that can describe the unusual non-transitive simultaneity that accompanies eternity.

[15] Widerker, David. "A Problem for the Eternity Solution," *International Journal for the Philosophy of Religion*, 29, No. 2 (April 1991): 90.

God intervenes in history on the basis of his knowledge of a certain future event, that event is inevitable. (b) Necessarily, whenever God intervenes in history, he never does so because of his knowledge of future contingent events, but for some other reason which does not involve such knowledge."[16] Neither option is reconcilable with the many scriptural passages in which God does intervene in history based on his knowledge of future contingents.[17]

If an effect of my future action is its inclusion in the contents of God's eternal knowledge, then Boethius argues that those actions need not be necessary. However, if an effect of my future action include events prior to my actions, then past events can still necessitate future events. Eternal knowledge would then have temporal effects. But we cannot simply dismiss the scenario as impossible since such a constraint on providence is highly unintuitive. For example, if God wishes to bless someone in response to her prayer, even though her prayer is eternally present to God, He is barred from letting His answer have temporal effects prior to the prayer itself. If God's response has prior temporal effects, the prayer has temporal necessity. This is an odd result, since God's awareness of the prayer is not enhanced by the person's temporal performance of the prayer. In fact, nothing changes in reference to God from the time immediately preceding the prayer to the moment after the prayer since He is simultaneous with both moments. Yet if the effects of God's response occur temporally prior to the prayer, then the prayer has the necessity of the past and cannot be free. The result is that if God answers a prayer

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[16] Widerker, 92.

[17] Widerker 91. He lists quite a few: Pharaoh's initial refusal to let the Israelites leave Egypt, Pharaoh bathing in the Nile when Moses tells him about the impending plagues, Jereboam's wife coming to Elijah in secret, and so on.

too early, then without interfering with the action in any way, the answer to prayer takes away the freedom of the one who prays. If God responds in such a way that the first temporal effect occurs after the prayer, then the freedom of the one who prays is not endangered. So, depending on the temporal effect of God's eternal will in consultation with God's eternal knowledge, an action that takes place in *exactly* the same time, place, and manner, with *exactly* the same causal history can be free or not free. This result is highly counter-intuitive.

What is most striking about this unhappy consequence is that the restriction on God's actions is one of the conclusions Boethius wishes to avoid in the *Consolation*. God, being simultaneous with all events, has no temporal distance between what exists and His knowledge of it. Yet prophecy reintroduces temporal distance between temporal accounts of future actions and the actions themselves. These prophecies, like pre-answered prayer, are inserted into the temporal order out of place. While normally an effect both logically and temporally follows its cause, a prophecy logically follows what is prophesied, but temporally precedes it.

Stump and Kretzmann do their best to avoid this consequence of the argument by arguing that the specificity of the prophecy affects the necessity of the thing prophesied. So, if a prophecy is not very specific, perhaps having a very large window of time and including no personal identifiers, then that particular prophecy would offer very little for necessity of the past to attach since the prophecy could be fulfilled in many ways within the temporal window. Even with this defense, Stump and Kretzmann consider the prophecy objection to be powerful enough that an extremely specific foretelling

(including time, manner, place, person, and so on) would, in fact, indicate the necessity of the prophesied event.[18]

The Scriptures include prophecies that are specific enough to be genuine counterexamples to Stump and Kretzmann's "vague prophecy" position. The most obvious example is Peter's three-fold denial of Christ. His denial is foretold to him and the other disciples on the evening that it occurs. Does Jesus' pronouncement taint Peter's denial with the necessity of the past – is Peter's denial now unpreventable? Certainly knowledge of the event – Peter's denial of Christ – is no longer safe within the realm of eternal knowledge, since that knowledge now has an audible, temporal effect (the words Jesus speaks at the time) prior to the act. Though God simultaneously knows Jesus' statement and Peter's denial, the statement and denial are not temporally simultaneous.[19] Even though eternal knowledge is not temporally necessary,[20] surely what someone did or did not say at a particular time is without question part of the past and is inviolable.

Perhaps Jesus' foretelling is not enough to make Peter's denial temporally necessary. According to Stump and Kretzmann, we should first assess the specificity of the prophecy. It has a range of times and no particular place is specified, even though the

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[18] Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann, "Prophecy, Past Truth, and Eternity," *Philosophical Perspectives*. 5, Philosophy of Religion (1991): 404.

[19] The simultaneity that eternity has with all events Stump and Kretzmann label "E-T Simultaneity." In order to avoid absurd consequences, this kind of simultaneity is not transitive. Eternalists need not concede that yesterday and today are simultaneous relative to each other. Thus, God's eternity can be simultaneous with both the prophecy and its fulfillment, even though the prophecy is not simultaneous with its fulfillment. Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann, "Eternity" *The Journal of Philosophy* 78, No. 8 (August 1981), 435ff.

[20] Plantinga in *Ockham's Way Out* and Zagzebski in *Dilemma of Freedom and Foreknowledge* suggest that granting eternity's immunity to temporal necessity is premature. Plantinga offers in evidence propositions like, "It was true 80 years ago that God eternally knew that Jones would mow his lawn tomorrow." Zagzebski argues that eternal knowledge has no advantages over foreknowledge in resolving the problem of theological fatalism. One can replace "eternally know" with "foreknow" and the resulting argument loses none of its force.

person is a set with only one member: Simon Peter. Since no single act at a highly specific time was prophesied, Peter did not have to deny Jesus at any one time or in response to any single question. As long as he denies Christ three times before dawn the prophecy is fulfilled. Even though the general prophecy of three denials before dawn indicates that a denial is necessary, at no *particular* time is an act of denial necessary. And therefore, if no *particular* act of denial is necessary, then in Stump and Kretzmann's view, the Boethian can affirm libertarian freedom, even in regard to prophesied events. The prophesy itself has temporal necessity, but the events to which the prophecy refer do not.[21]

> However, Stump and Kretzmann concede Widerker's major charge:

> A prophecy in which an act of will is specified in all requisite detail and has at least one alternative that the agent does not find unthinkable for him is what is needed to substantiate Widerker's charge. Faced with such a prophecy, defenders of the eternity solution should, we think, simply grant Widerker's point and accept his second option: in such a case the agent of the prophesied action does not act with free will, and so his action is not free. But we are also inclined to think that no biblical prophecies are of this sort. If that's so, it's very likely to be so *just because* such prophecies would render the prophesied action unfree. If, as Christian theologians have often observed, a perfectly good God would not directly nullify the nature he has given his creatures, then neither would he deliver prophecies that would have that effect.[22]

> Stump and Kretzmann hope that they can deflect Widerker's charge by asserting

that God never makes such specific revelations. Thus, while in their estimation Widerker

is correct, his conclusion applies to very narrow circumstances. Additionally, Stump and

Kretzmann do not believe such circumstances have ever occurred, or are likely to occur.

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[21] Stump and Kretzmann, *Prophecy*, 403-4.

[22] Stump and Kretzmann, *Prophecy,* 404.

Thus, as Stump and Kretzmann see it, Wirderker's objection from prophecy is at best only a theoretical objection.

Unfortunately, this defense has two problems: it is vulnerable to a hangman's paradox,[23] and it relies on a discontinuity between the prophecy and eternal knowledge. The hangman's paradox includes the principle that for finite windows of time where something *must* occur, as the temporal window begins to close, the probability of the event occurring at the next moment approaches 1. If the event has a minimum duration, then at the temporal point where the window of time remaining is equal to the minimum duration of the necessary event, then the probability becomes 1. Since Peter's denial must have some minimum duration, we can assign an arbitrary minimum for purposes of illustration. Let a simple repetition of "I deny Him, I deny Him, I deny Him," to count as a fulfillment of Christ's prophecy, and let us assume that this phrase would take no less than 2 seconds to perform. What happens if Peter, even though he has had ample opportunity, temptation, and weakness, refrains from denying Christ throughout the night? If PAP applies at each moment, then his resistance to temptation is not impossible. Once there are only 2 seconds before the rooster starts crowing, Peter *has to perform the act* or else the prophecy is false. We must amend Stump and Kretzmann's analysis: even a prophecy that is not maximally specific may or may not describe a necessary event depending on when the action is performed within the prophesy's temporal window. In order not to fall prey to the hangman's paradox, a prophecy would have to be quite

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[23] The Hangman's Paradox as described by Martin Gardner in *The Unexpected Hanging* involves "unexpected" events occurring within temporal boundaries. If the last possible moment arrives, the unexpected event is no longer unexpected. The Paradox is generated when that logic is applied to all previous moments within the temporal boundary, thus leaving the unexpected event impossible. Martin Gardner, *The Unexpected Hanging and other Mathematical Diversions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 11-24.

vague, else the prophesied event would be in increasing danger of being necessary as its temporal window closes. Certainly, Christ's foretelling of Peter's denial is too specific. If Peter had waited just a few moments longer his actions might have been temporally necessary, thus he would have been able to avoid moral responsibility.[24]

The discontinuity between eternal knowledge and prophecy is profoundly strange. An act may be totally and completely free, except of course, if a person that knows about it tells someone else. The example Boethius uses is the observation of present circumstances. If I see a man walking, so his example goes, then I know that he is walking.[25] Knowledge is always of true things, so my knowing that he is walking entails that he *is* walking. Boethius is willing to grant necessity to this entailment relationship since it does not entail that the man necessarily walks. However, nothing I do, purely as the observer, has any effect on the circumstances that make my belief true. I can photograph the man, tell the people around me that he is walking, and write it in my memoirs. None of my actions change what I know. However, prophecy seems to be just the kind of case that makes our temporal present disanalogous to the eternal present. If God, eternally knowing Peter's denial, were to share the knowledge, the act of sharing could change Peter's denial from a free act to a non-free act. Even if eternal knowledge is revealed to someone, and thus made temporal, even if the temporal copy could not, in any way, interfere with Peter's actions, the result for freedom is the same. For example, if God revealed to S1 at T1 that at T2 (where T2 is later than T1), that S2 in a parallel

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[24] The prophecy can be reinterpreted to be less like foretelling and more like a promise: "Peter, I won't let the rooster crow until you deny me three times." Understood this way, the temporal window is indefinite, though the meaning of the verse (at least within the structure of the passion narratives) is distorted. Even if roosters are forever silent, the temporal window closes at Peter's death.

[25] Boethius 429-31.

universe to which S1 has no access will perform some sinful act A, God would thereby take away S2's freedom by making A temporally necessary. How is it that God, simply by telling someone else what He knows, can make a free action into an unfree action? Surely something has gone wrong in the argument.

As Stump and Kretzmann concede, because of the necessity-creating properties of prophecy, God must be very careful when sharing truths about the future. In their view, God must intentionally leave the prophecy vague in order to safeguard the freedom of the agents in the future. Presumably eternal knowledge requires no such vagueness in order to safeguard freedom. In fact, it is its accuracy in the most minute details that makes it so satisfying a description of God's omniscience. It is not as though God knew that Peter would, at some point during the night, deny Him at least three times, but beyond that, the details were fuzzy. On the contrary, Peter's denial is, was, and will be eternally present to God and He knows it with the same perfection that He knows the flight of each sparrow and the length of each hair on our heads. God has all His knowledge at all times, so the knowledge of what I will do tomorrow has always been present to God.

According to Stump and Kretzmann, in order to safeguard my freedom, God must either 1) not tell anyone what I do, or 2) tell someone an account so imprecise that no temporal necessity is implied by the account. It seems that for this solution to be viable, prophecy and eternal knowledge must have different implications for freedom: if the prophecy is vague enough, I may have alternative possibilities. I cannot falsify the prophecy if it is true, but since no single particular act is foretold by a vague prophecy, neither can any single act (or single failure to act) falsify the prophecy. In contrast, eternal knowledge is neither vague nor prior to the act.

Boethius suggests that having alternative possibilities relative to eternal knowledge is not different from having alternative possibilities relative to knowledge about the present, which is freedom-neutral. Prophecy disrupts this careful balance. If the disciples believe what Jesus says about Peter's future, their belief is both true and justified. Therefore, the disciples, upon hearing Jesus predicting Peter's betrayal, now have foreknowledge of Peter's actions. Though they are not essentially infallible (thus their beliefs alone do not entail the truth of what they believe), it is true that they now have genuine and certain foreknowledge about Peter's presumably free actions. Yet, since Boethius concedes that foreknown things are necessary, Peter's denial is necessary, and he is not responsible for it.

The scenario becomes even more bizarre: the disciples now have freedom-curtailing foreknowledge of Peter's denial even though the origin of their foreknowledge was God's eternal knowledge that has *no* freedom-curtailing properties. Their foreknowledge of Peter's actions is less specific and less perfect than God's eternal knowledge, yet unlike eternal knowledge, their foreknowledge has freedom-excluding consequences. Augustine need not concern himself with puzzles of this sort. He can agree that both God and the disciples have foreknowledge of Peter's denial and God also has eternal knowledge of Peter's future actions (whether the foreknowledge is a definitional extension of eternal knowledge or is a logical result of eternal knowledge), but none of these cases of foreknowledge are incompatible with freedom of the will.[26]

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[26] One objection worth making is that Augustine and Evodius are concerned with *certain* foreknowledge and second-hand knowledge of the future does not rise to that level of certainty and perfection. However, belief in Jesus' pronouncements seems to me to be justified true belief. If Jesus says that something will happen before the night is over, you can be certain that it will be as He says.

Augustine avoids these criticisms by denying that foreknowledge results in fatalism. Thus there is no need to insulate eternal knowledge from the temporally necessary past. One may then easily affirm that God has both eternal knowledge and that the word "foreknowledge" is a description of a portion of God's eternal knowledge. Choosing to follow Augustine's account of the nature of divine knowledge rather than Boethius' allows one to avoid the either absurd, or at least highly counter-intuitive notions of divine foretelling and providence.

Thus instead of a conspicuous absence in the text, it is his advantage that Augustine does not regard God's eternity as itself a solution to the problem of fatalism. Even so, his account of God's direct awareness and the description of His knowledge as a kind of observation is *compatible* with God's eternity. Augustine's solution is friendly to Boethius' emphasis on the sources of God's knowledge of our actions. An Augustinian can appeal to God's eternity to deflect the charge of retrocausation since human actions do not, strictly speaking, have *temporally* prior effects. But Augustine does not attempt to insulate God's knowledge from the temporal world. As a result, Augustine does not have to pay the price Boethius pays in intelligibility and ease of explanation.

In summary: Boethius, in an effort to avoid what he considers the fatalistic consequences of God's foreknowledge, argues that since God is not "in," or a member of the temporal order, His beliefs are not "in" the temporal order at all. His approach is valuable since, without temporally prior beliefs, the absence of temporal necessity neatly avoids the problem of theological fatalism. However, we cannot ignore the many occasions where God, using His eternal knowledge, acts in such a way that the temporal effects of His actions precede the events He eternally knows. Prophecy is the most

obvious example. Augustine's solution is immune from the problems of how eternal knowledge (1) is related to the temporal order and (2) avoids becoming tainted by the temporally necessary. Augustine's solution to theological fatalism is therefore not reducible to Boethius' solution.

<p style="text-align:center">Ockham</p>

The medieval philosopher and theologian William of Ockham produced an answer to fatalism that has received enormous scrutiny in the last 30 years. Brought to the forefront in the modern debate by Marilyn McCord Adams,[27] the discussion reached something of a saturation point in the late 1980's, finally tapering off during the mid 1990's. With the often technical and labyrinthine discussion that has followed it, it may be surprising that the Ockhamist[28] solution employs a simple and highly intuitive distinction. Unlike Boethius' solution, Ockhamism does not require any particular temporal or extra-temporal understanding of God's existence. Like Augustine, Ockhamists deny that divine foreknowledge has fatalist implications, but they differ from Augustine in that they also deny that foreknown events are temporally necessary. My strategy in discussing Ockhamism will be to first summarize it uninterrupted by reference to the intricacies of the current debate, and then examine it more carefully with the guidance from Ockhamism's modern advocates.

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[27] See Marilyn McCord Adams, "Is the Existence of God a 'Hard' Fact?" *The Philosophical Review* 76, no. 4 (October 1967): 492-503.

[28] I use "Ockhamite" or "Ockhamism" to refer to the way that Ockham's solution has been appropriated by modern philosophy of religion, not to Ockham's writings themselves. Out of deference to the author, since I have not defended a particular reading of his primary texts, I refrain from calling what is described in this chapter as "Ockham's solution" but instead the "Ockhamist solution." I take no stance on whether modern Ockhamist arguments are the only or optimal interpretations of Ockham's works. The Ockhamists apply Ockham's insight, which is fundamentally the same from each author – that not all past-tense statements are actually about the past.

Ockham's distinction is remarkably simple – it is the observation that not every past-tense sentence expresses a past-tense truth or is solely *about* the past. "Ockhamism" is a method of analyzing mixed-tense propositions expressing a combination of past and future states of affairs such as "It was true 80 years ago that such-and-such will occur in the future." Like Augustine, Ockhamists call the past "necessary" at least in that it is not subject to revision of any kind. The past is "accidentally necessary" in Ockhamist parlance. Truths about the past are necessary truths (that is, they are temporally necessary), but not due to their essential properties. A proposition becomes accidentally necessary when the state of affairs to which it refers leaves the future and present and joins the past. For example, here is a proposition about the past:

1. Russ Hemati marries Christi Williams on May 15, 2004.

This proposition refers to a state of affairs that is fully completed. It is part of the past and thus accidentally necessary. Now consider a more complicated proposition:

2. My daughter Claire is born two years after my wife and I are wed.

Is this proposition accidentally necessary? According to Ockhamism, it depends on when we are relative to the events that take place – especially if we are considering it before or after Claire's birth. If she is yet unborn, then the proposition is assuredly not accidentally necessary. It may be true, but it is not about the past. Once she is born, then the proposition is accidentally necessary. In this manner Ockhamism distinguishes between the timelessness of truth and the necessity of the past. Note that Ockhamism does not state that 2 is neither true nor false prior to Claire's birth. On the contrary, 2 is true – it has always been timelessly true. It was true long before Claire's grandparents were born. It is not, however, *done* until Claire is born. It is not a member of the

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irrevocable record of the past until she is born. While there is no reasonable way to affirm alternative possibilities about the past, up until she is born the truth of 2 does not restrict alternatives about her birth. In other words, just because 2 is true does not mean that no one had the power to delay my wife's pregnancy.[29]

The primary intuition of Ockhamism is that statements about the future written as past-tense propositions, like the status of 2 prior to my daughter's birth, are not temporally necessary, even though they are true. For example:

> 2'. It was true a century ago that my daughter Claire is born two years after my wife and I are wed.

This modification of 2 is a fact, but it is not merely about what happens a century ago – it is also about what happens two years after I get married. My daughter's birth is not something that *happens* a century before she is actually born. In order to explain what is meant by statements like 2' Ockhamists distinguish between *hard* facts and *soft* facts. True propositions that are only about the past convey *hard* facts and their contents are accidentally necessary (or temporally necessary). True propositions about the future are not yet accidentally necessary, so they are only *softly* factual. Prior to my daughter's birth 2 is a soft fact. Naturally, after my marriage there are components of the proposition that are accidentally necessary, since our marriage is now accidentally necessary. However,

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[29] William Hasker, *God Time and Knowledge* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 13-5. Because this distinction is so intuitive, there are a myriad of ways to illustrate it. Here is another: consider two statements about the year 1776. A – "In 1776, Americans declared independence from the English monarch." B – "In 1776, Lincoln's delivery of the Gettysburg Address was only 87 years away." The first sentence is obviously about what happens in 1776. The second is worded as though it is about 1776, but B is largely about what happens in 1863. From the perspective of an observer living in 1800, A is a hard fact since it describes events that are now over and done, while B is a soft fact because it waits upon events in 1863 for its fulfillment. Even though our observer at 1800 may be powerless to prevent B that powerlessness is not due to B's inclusion as part of the historical record. Conversely, our observer cannot have power to prevent A since A is a genuine part of the past – by 1800 it is accidentally necessary.

what 2 expresses cannot be a hard fact, not accidentally necessary, until my daughter is born; it is then fully accomplished.

The Ockhamist line of reasoning is a potent weapon against logical fatalism. Logical fatalism, often formulated with a reliance on prior truth of future-tense propositions as in 2' above, may be slain by appealing to the more refined logical categories Ockhamists have developed. Ockhamism gives us a vocabulary for the gap between the truth of the future and the necessity of the future. By introducing soft facts about the past as a category of true propositions that are not temporally necessary, Ockhamism reveals the hasty series of conclusions upon which logical fatalism relies. We must examine whether or not the distinction between hard and soft facts, so useful for combating logical fatalism, can be effectively applied to theological fatalism.

In order for the hard/soft distinction to be applied to theological fatalism, the Ockhamist must defend two related positions: God's knowledge of the future must be softly factual, and human beings must have alternatives relative to God's foreknowledge (PAP-F). If God's beliefs about the future are hard facts, then they are now unpreventable and the hard/soft distinction, however useful in other contexts, does not aid the demonstration of the compatibility of freedom and foreknowledge. If human beings do not have alternatives relative to God's foreknowledge, then even if God's beliefs are soft facts, humans still do not have libertarian freedom. The main difficulty will be somehow getting a proposition in the form of "At T1 S believes P about T2 where T1 is prior to T2," so obviously a soft fact prior to T1, to remain soft even after T1. It certainly seems that a person's beliefs are an irrevocable part of the past – they are as likely candidates

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for accidental necessity as anything else one can imagine.[30] I often wish that my actions and thoughts could be undone, so the possibility that mental states can be softly factual would be good news indeed. What the Ockhamist needs is an analysis of the hard/soft distinction that preserves its plausibility while also making it clear that God's beliefs about the future are soft facts. If possible, such an explanation should be genuinely explanatory, that is, it must show *why* God's beliefs are soft facts, or how we are justified in thinking His beliefs are soft facts.[31]

Hard and Soft Facts

Explaining what exactly is at the root of a fact's hardness or softness is notoriously difficult. Pike introduces the hard/soft distinction as a kind of shorthand for an intuitive principle that he considers universally held. John Turk Saunders, in his response to Pike's original argument on the foreknowledge problem, thought Pike was incorrect to assume that an agent cannot act such that if he were to do so, the past would have been different. He surmises that it is no different from asserting that there are actions an agent can do such that if he were to do so, the future would be different.[32] Pike makes the distinction between hard and soft facts because Saunders' objection, from Pike's estimation, rests on having no distinction between propositions expressing fully

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[30] This observation is a common one. See Hasker 92-4, Zagzebski 82-4, Fischer *Hard-Type Soft Facts, Free Will and Foreknowledge*, David Hunt *Augustine's Way Out* and others.

[31] Zagzebski defends the need for explanatorily powerful arguments for the compatibility of freedom and foreknowledge in her *Dilemma* book. It seems to me that Ockhamism needs to fulfill this requirement lest it be unconvincing.

[32] John Turk Saunders, "Of God and Freedom," *The Philosophical Review* 75, no. 2 (April 1966): 220-1.

accomplished events and propositions that are only softly factual. In his rejoinder to

Saunders, Pike states:

> For lack of a clearer vocabulary, let me talk freely about *facts* and attempt a distinction between two types of facts about the past. On the one hand, let us say that some facts about the past (for example, facts about Caesar's death) were "fully accomplished," "over-and-done-with, and so forth" in the past (for example in 44 B.C.). These are sometimes called "hard facts" about the past. The fact that Caesar died on the steps of the Senate is a fact of this sort. On the other hand, some facts about the past are not, relative to a given time, "fully accomplished," "over-and-done-with," and so forth at that time. The fact that Caesar died 2009 years prior to the writing of Saunders' paper is a fact of this sort.[33]

When writing this in 1966, Pike is optimistic that this "pre-analytical

understanding of the distinction," as he calls it, will suffice to make it obvious that God's

beliefs must be hard facts: facts like the death of Caesar. It seems obvious to Pike that a

past belief, *anyone's* past belief, is a hard fact. Therefore, the Ockhamist must be careful

to apply the hard/soft distinction in a way that does not sacrifice its intuitive strength.

Pike, for example, finds the hardness of past beliefs so compelling that he doubts they

could even legitimately be called beliefs if they were soft facts about the past.[34]

There is some struggle in the literature to develop the distinction in such a way as

to justify that God's beliefs about the future are soft facts. Here is one way to do so:

Alvin Plantinga expresses some consternation at not being able to give precise definitions

for the hardness and softness of facts, but he realizes that soft facts entail future states of

affairs in a way that hard facts do not. It is not as though hard facts entail *no* future truths.

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[33] Nelson Pike, "Of God and Freedom: A Rejoinder," *The Philosophical Review* 75, No. 3 (July 1966): 369.

[34] Pike, "Of God and Freedom: a Rejoinder," 378. Pike argues that if God's beliefs are soft facts, then they are no longer fit candidates for the word "belief." They must refer to some other mental state.

For example, after it becomes a hard fact, proposition 1: "Russ Hemati marries Christi Williams on May 15, 2004," entails

    3. Russ Hemati cannot get married for the first time in 2011.

In fact, 1 might entail an *infinite* number of similar future-tense propositions. But propositions like 3 do not directly correspond to any particular event in the future, much less in the present or past. That is, 3 is not temporally genuine. By "temporally genuine," I mean that the proposition refers to an event that occurs at a particular time.[35] Hard facts do not entail temporally genuine propositions about the future, while soft facts do. Thus, in Plantinga's estimation, in order for 1 to be a hard fact, it could not entail something like

    4. Russ Hemati moves to Saskatchewan in 2011.

Proposition 4, unlike 3, is about a specific state of affairs. If 1 entails 4 then 1 could not be only *about* what happens in 2004. If 1 entails 4 then 1 must also be about what happens in 2011. We would have to concede that it is worded as though it were about the past, but were it to entail something like 4, 1 would have to be partially about the future and thus softly factual. Plantinga is uncomfortable with the looseness of the relationship of "aboutness" but he is content that a "rough and ready" understanding is enough for the argument to proceed.[36] Applying this "rough and ready" understanding to theological fatalism, Plantinga's continues by examining a proposition like

    5. In 1480, God knew that Russ Hemati marries Christi Williams on May 15, 2004.

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[35] Following Fischer's usage, Widerker employs "hard property," "temporally non-relational property," and "temporally genuine property" as synonyms. See David Widerker, "Why God's Beliefs are not Hard-Type Soft Facts" *Religious Studies* 38, No. 1 (March 2002): 78-9.

[36] Alvin Plantinga, "On Ockham's Way Out," *Faith and Philosophy* 3, No. 3 (July 1986): 248.

Proposition 5 entails 1 many centuries before 1 passes from a soft fact into a hard, accidentally necessary, fact about the past. As stated before, *any* proposition that entails a proposition like 1 prior to the event simply cannot be a hard fact – it is at least partially about the future, and the future is not yet temporally necessary. A proposition like 1 is an ordinary statement of fact concerning my autobiography, just the kind of future condition that a hard fact cannot entail. Therefore, 5 is a soft fact for the same reason that 4 is a soft fact. Ockhamists then use the following reasoning: since soft facts are not accidentally necessary, and since all God's beliefs about the contingent future are soft facts, then theological fatalism is false and human freedom is possible. God's beliefs about the future are instances of infallible foreknowledge, but this does not entail that what is foreknown is necessary – even accidentally necessary.

There is an instructive contrast between the Boethian and Ockhamist solutions. Boethius must be careful not to let eternal knowledge become tainted by temporality. The Ockhamist, however, restricts the kinds of propositions that express hard facts about the past.[37] If the proposition entails some state of affairs in the future then it is soft, even if it is about the temporally past beliefs of a person. The core of Ockhamism is this inference: because God's beliefs about some future P entail the truth of P, God's beliefs about the future are soft facts.

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[37] For an exceptionally restrictive definition of hard facts, see Joshua Hoffman and Gary Rosenkrantz, "Hard and Soft Facts," *The Philosophical Review* 93, vol 3 (July 1984): 419-434. On their view "God exists at T1," "God knows that X," and because it is "a past-tense state of affairs indexed to a past time" even "Columbus walked in 1492," are softly factual. To be as convincing as possible, an Ockhamist needs a definition just restrictive enough to prevent God's foreknowledge to be temporally necessary, but not so restrictive that obviously past states of affairs are only softly factual.

What is now an ongoing problem for the Ockhamist is that this compatibility argument runs afoul of another intuitive rule about soft and hard facts – that any true statement of the form "Person X has mental state Y at time T" is a hard fact at all times after T. This is the primary objection to Ockhamism: the strength of the intuition that mental states are legitimately part of the unchangeable past. According to this objection, the intuition about the hardness of all past beliefs is a good deal stronger than the intuition that various entailment relationships bar a particular type of proposition from being a hard fact. As long as past beliefs seem obviously temporally necessary, no analysis of the hard/soft distinction that allows beliefs to be softly factual is convincing.

Distinguishing between hard and soft facts in such a way that what intuitively might be regarded as hard facts are declared, after reflection, to be soft facts creates additional paradoxes. Consider scenarios involving prophecy, an issue that posed significant difficulties for the Boethian solution to theological fatalism. The paradox is that prophesies, which intuitively are hard facts since they occur at particular times in the past, are declared soft facts according to the entailment criteria given above. Let us return to the prophecy about Peter's denial of Christ. Many aspects of this event seem as accidentally necessary as anything one can imagine: the number of people in the room, the movement of air when they spoke to each other, what they were wearing, their location, etc... However, most disturbingly,

7. Jesus says to Peter, "You will deny me three times before morning."

interferes with a simple hard/soft attribution because Jesus' pronouncement of P entails P. Since Jesus is God, in every world that Jesus says P, P is true. Therefore 7 entails the truth of

8. Peter denies Jesus three times before morning.

When 7 occurs, 8 is still future, yet 7 entails 8. If we use the entailment rule to determine whether a proposition conveys a hard or soft fact we are left with a striking conclusion: as long as 8 remains future, 7 is a *soft* fact. It is not yet accidentally necessary until Peter actually performs the three denials. If we accept the above entailment criteria for soft facts, we must conclude that Jesus' physical action of speaking, performed in front of a dozen witnesses, is a *soft fact.* Even if it is not already problematic to state that past beliefs are softly factual, it seems absurd that an act of speaking at T is also a soft fact. Yet, if we accept that a soft-making feature of a proposition is that it entails a contingent future state of affairs, then such paradoxes result.[38]

Thus far I have presented two related critiques of the Ockhamist solution. First, beliefs seem as much hard facts as anything else, yet the Ockhamist solution requires us to reject this intuition. Second, once we apply the entailment criteria, we cannot stop with the softness of God's beliefs about the future, but must also include otherwise obvious hard facts such as prophesies in the catalog of soft facts.

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[38] David Widerker offers a potential resolution for the Ockhamist, a resolution he considers inadequate. The Ockhamist can claim that God does not intervene in creation based on His foreknowledge of free actions. He does not intervene based on foreknowledge precisely because if He were to do so then the foreknown events would be hard facts and thus not free. In other words, Jesus does not give the contents of his foreknowledge of Peter's future free actions, but rather his statement must be grounded in some other way (perhaps a highly probable prediction based on Peter's present character and state of mind). As he does in his critique of the Boethian solution, Widerker gives many examples from Scripture where God *does* intervene based on His foreknowledge of free actions. David Widerker, "Troubles with Ockhamism," *The Journal of Philosophy* 87, no. 9 (September 1990): 476.

Clarifying the Hard/Soft Distinction

I contend that these Ockhamist paradoxes arise when *softness* is defined positively, rather than defined negatively (non-hardness). Throughout this section, I have identified several hard-making features that cannot be made soft, even if they are part of a soft fact. Hard-making features include movement, location, mental states, and actions. Like spilled milk, they cannot now be undone. Likewise, under normal circumstances, when we find various common features of soft facts we can make a list of properties that generally accompany soft facts. Thus far, I have identified such a feature: entailing future states of affairs that will become hard facts. But in a case where one and the same event has soft-making features (entailing the future) and hard-making features (movement and location in the past), we generate counter-intuitive results when we give weight to the soft-making features *instead of* the hard-making features. Thus 7 has features we normally associate with hard facts (What Jesus actually says at a particular time and place) and features we normally associate with soft facts (7 entails a future event that, once it occurs, will become hard). Instead of privileging softness, we should privilege hardness. This is because we have many powerful intuitions about the past being temporally necessary. For example, my actual wedding has a fixity in the past that is completely reliable. In contrast, we have few intuitions about what makes a proposition a soft fact. The burden of proof rests on the Ockhamist to convince us to privilege softness when our intuitions and experience say otherwise.

The paradoxes involving a collision between hard and soft properties in a single proposition are present even in one of the earliest re-introductions of the distinction by

Marilyn McCord Adams. She explores whether the existence of God is a soft fact.[39] Consider a conditional version of God's necessary existence: if God exists, then he always exists. Since a statement like "God exists at T1, where T1 is in the past" entails "God exists at all times after T1," then it also entails "God exists at Tn, where Tn is after T1 and is also in the future." But such a statement is a future-tense proposition of the most obvious sort. Since "God exists at T1" entails propositions about the future, then, on the Ockhamist view about how one determines soft facts, it is, oddly enough, a soft fact. Peculiarly, God's necessary existence entails that His existence is not accidentally necessary. By privileging soft-making properties over hard-making properties, we take what is otherwise obviously temporally necessary, and treat it as though it is not. But, surely, God's necessary existence is not a soft fact, but a hard fact, if anything is a hard fact. Thus, that a proposition entails a fact about the future may not be a reliable way to distinguish hard and soft facts.

In response to this problem, some commentators have suggested a middle ground between privileging hardness or softness where the proposition in question has elements of both (as we observed in the case of Jesus' prophecy about Peter). John Martin Fischer has playfully defined a few kinds of hybrid hard/soft facts such as "hard-type soft facts," "hard-core soft facts," "hard facts with soft underbellies" and so on. Likely naming these in a spirit of friendly derision, he places soft facts that also have hard-making properties in a curious limbo.

> But now a striking thing emerges. If you combine a hard property with a
> special kind of object, you can get a *soft* fact. It seems to me that having a belief
> is being in a temporally genuine state. And specifically, "believing that Jones will

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[39] Marilyn McCord Adams, "Is the Existence of God a 'Hard' Fact?" *The Philosophical Review* 76, No. 4 (October 1967): 503.

mow his lawn at T2" is a hard property relative to T1. This is implied by my account, since it is not true that for an agent, if he were to believe at T1 that Jones will mow his lawn at T2, then it would follow that some immediate fact would obtain at a time later than T1; having this belief at T1 doesn't entail that anything immediate occur after T1. But God believes at T1 that Jones will mow his lawn at T2 is (I have supposed here) a soft fact about T1. The softness of the fact seems to come, not from the softness of the constituent property, but from the "interaction" between a hard property and a special kind of bearer of the property – God. A property can be a hard property, even though an agent's having it at a time is a soft fact about that time.[40]

On Fischer's view, even if propositions describing God's beliefs about future events are soft facts, their softness does not extend to the proposition as a whole. That is, they are not fully soft, but merely have a soft component. The way Fischer's analysis would apply to our prophecy example is that "P is said" is a hard fact, though because Jesus is a "special kind of object," it is a soft fact that he actually said P. The softness does not take away the residual hardness. In the case of foreknowledge, the soft component is not "believes" but something like "believes correctly." I could generate a soft fact about my own beliefs in the same manner:

> 9. Russell Hemati correctly believes at T1 that he will eat dinner at T2, where T2 is later than T1.

Notice that the softness is not in "Russell Hemati believes X," since propositions of the form "S believes P," like all propositions describing a mental state at a particular time, are intuitively hard facts about that time. That is, such propositions describe or express something that is now *occurring*, unlike odd statements like "S will not eat dinner for the first time tomorrow." What is soft about 9 is the future-dependent component of being correct at T1 about what happens at T2. 9 is of the form "(S believes P) and (P is true)." The first half of the conjunct is hard while the second half is soft.

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[40] Fischer, "Hard-Type Soft Facts," 597-8.

Their conjunction is, of course, a soft fact. Fischer is willing to concede for the sake of argument that statements like 9 are soft facts, however, he reminds us that the softness of 9 when considered as a whole does not thereby make its hard component soft as well.[41] According to Fischer then, the Ockhamist errs by treating "God believes P at T, where P is about a time after T" as a soft fact about T and thus not fixed at T. Further, the Ockhamist should recognize that the contents of God's mental state at T, even if it is a soft fact at T, is still fixed. Fischer then returns to the original Boethian impulse to make temporally necessary truths taint otherwise temporally non-necessary truths. A hard-type soft fact, though soft, is fixed in virtue of its hard-making properties.[42]

The promise of Ockhamism, an argument showing that God's beliefs are softly factual, seems to be irreconcilable with the hard-making features of mental states. Regardless of which definition of soft facts we use, the residual hardness cannot be ignored.

Counterfactual Power over the Past: A Potential Solution

But what of the second requirement for a solution to theological fatalism? Does Ockhamism explain how agents can do otherwise in relation to God's foreknowledge? If the Ockhamist can make sense of human beings having alternative possibilities, despite God's infallible foreknowledge of future human actions, then rejecting the intuition that past beliefs are temporally necessary may be a price worth paying. Alvin Plantinga has

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[41] "Even if God's existence in the past is a soft fact about the past, it is a hard-core soft fact (relative to the past time). And even if God's belief in the past is a soft fact about a past time, it is a hard-type soft fact (relative to that past time). Thus, both facts appear to be fixed (after the times in question), and Ockhamist examples do not in any way indicate that they are not." *Ibid*., 600-1.

[42] Fischer, "Hard-Type Soft Facts," 599.

defended such a position. Central to his argument is the claim that sometimes human beings have counterfactual power over the past.

Recall that regardless of how hard or soft God's beliefs are about my future actions, Pike contends that no human being has the power to falsify God's beliefs. Pike claims that to suggest otherwise results in metaphysically incoherent outcomes. The Ockhamist must identify some kind of human power that will not falsify God's forebeliefs. The standard Ockhamist response to Pike is to characterize this power as a purely counterfactual power. Hence, it is possible that there is some action I am able to perform such that if I *were* to do it, the past *would have been* different than it in fact was. Consider 7 again: "Jesus says to Peter, 'You will deny me three times before the morning.'" If Peter has counterfactual power over the past it is not the case that

10. It is necessary that Peter deny Jesus three times before the morning.

Rather, the following counterfactual is true:

11. It was within Peter's power to act such that if he did so, Jesus would not have said to Peter, "You will deny me three times before the morning."

If 7 entails 10, then 7 is incompatible with Peter having libertarian freedom. But the Ockhamist argues that 7 does not entail 10, but rather is consistent with 11. Unlike 10, 11 does not restrict alternatives. If we assume that Peter is free and his freedom is plausibly analyzed as a counterfactual power, then the Ockhamist is entitled to conclude that Jesus' prophecy does not interfere with Peter's freedom (understood as alternative possibilities). The Ockhamist argues that instead of concluding that Peter is not free, we

should conclude merely that Jesus' prophecy would have been different if Peter had acted differently.[43]

The counterfactual dependency of the past on the future is initially attractive given the extent of God's providence. An Ockhamist would not balk at saying that some pivotal historical event, such as the writing of the fourth Gospel, could counterfactually depend on something occurring much later (even millennia later). Potentially *anything* could be counterfactually dependent on a future state.[44] Thus, if Ockhamism is true, human agents have counterfactual power over the past, and can do otherwise than as God foreknows.

Though counterfactual power over the past is initially attractive, it has corollaries that are difficult to accept. Here is an interesting and potentially damaging corollary to counterfactual power over the past. If one accepts that humans have counterfactual power over the past, a great many propositions we would ordinarily and intuitively classify as hard facts must be soft facts. For example, consider again

1. Russ Hemati marries Christi Williams on May 15, 2004.

This proposition, which we earlier claimed to be a genuine feature of the past, is not accidentally necessary if there is an action that someone can do such that, if they do it, then my wedding would have been different. Plantinga accepts this corollary and grants that there could even be an action one has the power to perform that if one were to

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[43] Plantinga has provided a general analysis of counterfactual power in several works. He goes so far as to define accidental necessity by counterfactual power: "*p* is accidentally necessary at *t* if and only if *p* is true at *t* and it is not possible both that *p* is true at *t* and that there exists an agent *S* and an action *A* such that (1) *S* has the power at *t* or later to perform *A*, and (2) if *S* were to perform *A* at *t* or later, then *p* would have been false." See Plantinga, "On Ockham's Way Out," 253.

[44] Plantinga, "On Ockham's Way Out," 257.

perform it, then God would have never created Abraham.[45] He describes such counterfactuals as instances where the qualities "about the past" and "temporally necessary" do not coincide. Recall that we earlier identified accidental/temporal necessity and hard facts with that which is solely "about the past." But with counterfactual power over the past, this very reasonable, common-sense intuition must be set aside. Put another way, the strange result of accepting human counterfactual power over the past is that only God knows which propositions are hard or soft. For all we know, there are no hard facts yet. Striking as this conclusion is, it is not without defenders. William Lane Craig summarizes his own analysis of hard and soft facts by concluding that

> … we have found that certain past facts are counterfactually open in that were future events or actualities to be other than they will be, these past facts would have been different as a consequence. God's beliefs about the future are such past facts. Moreover, the effects of actions which God would have taken had He believed differently are also such past facts. Oddly enough, then, virtually any past fact is potentially counterfactually open, and the only necessity that remains is purely *de facto*. We, of course, do not in general know which events of the past depend counterfactually on present actions, and those cases we do know about seem rather trivial. Our intuitions of the necessity, unalterability, and unpreventability of the past as opposed to the future stem from the impossibility of backward causation, which is precluded by the dynamic nature of time and becoming.[46]

William Craig is instructive on this point: counterfactual power over the past does not conform to our intuitions about the necessity of the past. If we accept counterfactual power over the past we must either jettison those intuitions or, as it were, *relocate* them. Craig provides a new home for the necessity of the past. According to Craig, the intuitive principle "what has now occurred cannot be undone," does *not* refer to the necessity of the past – that the past is now unpreventable. Rather, it refers only to the recognition that

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[45] *Ibid.*

[46] William Lane Craig, *Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom*, (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 203.

one cannot *causally* affect the past. Since, according to Craig, counterfactual power is not causal power, a past event may be counterfactually open without also being causally open.[47]

In summary, the Ockhamist position attempts to provide some logical space between the true and the temporally necessary. In doing so, Ockhamists argue that God's foreknowledge is not temporally necessary. In order to explain what kind of openness with respect to human freedom the infallible knowledge of God has, Ockhamists have analyzed human freedom as a counterfactual power and advanced the notion of counterfactual dependency in defense of libertarian ideas about PAP. Even though their distinction between hard and soft facts remains controversial, the Ockhamists' efforts to affirm both God's foreknowledge and human freedom are counter-intuitive.

Comparing Augustine and Ockham

The difference between the Ockhamist position and Augustine's position is dramatic in one way and minimal in another. The dramatic difference is as follows. The accidental necessity of providential actions is a problem for the Ockhamist, but not for Augustine. If human beings have counterfactual power over the past, too many propositions about the past are softly factual and our original intuitions about temporal necessity are misguided. Providential actions, which should be hard facts, turn out not to be so. In the reading of Augustine I have proposed, Augustine assigns temporal necessity to whatever God believes about the future, but that necessity is not relevant for deciding

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[47] I recognize that not all analyses of causation allow a difference between causal power and counterfactual power. I take no position on whether there is or is not a difference between them, only that versions of Ockhamism that include counterfactual power over the past are committed to them being different.

freedom; thus we have alternative possibilities, but only in a restricted sense. By this I mean that we do not have PAP-F, but we have PAP-C, which is what Augustine considers relevant for freedom of the will. Modern Ockhamism attempts to preserve the unrestricted sense of alternative possibilities. Despite God's infallible foreknowledge, Ockhamists maintain that human freedom includes PAP-F (that moral responsibility requires the ability to do otherwise than as God foreknows). Thus, even though God foreknew Adam's sin, the Ockhamist argues that Adam could still have done otherwise relative to what God foreknows. Conversely, Augustine argues that Adam could not have done otherwise relative to what God foreknows, but since Adam was the originator of his own action, it is not relevant that God's foreknowledge of his act was temporally necessary. Because Augustine concedes that foreknown acts are temporally necessary (since temporal necessity does not interfere with the authorship of the action), when or how often God uses that knowledge to perform other actions that are also temporally necessary causes no additional problem. If Augustine is correct, then my eating breakfast tomorrow, being temporally necessary, cannot become more temporally necessary than it already is. But certainly actions that God has performed, even if the actions were in response to some future event, are as temporally necessary as any other past action. Since Augustine already accepts that God's foreknowledge is a temporally necessary part of the past, temporally necessary providential responses create no additional burden.

There is a way to minimize the difference between Ockhamism and Augustine's solution. Foreshadowing Ockham's work, Augustine also suggests something similar to counterfactual power over the past, though he leaves it undeveloped. At the end of the chapter on fate in *DCD*, Augustine states:

For a man does not therefore sin because God foreknew that he would sin. Nay, it cannot be doubted but that it is the man himself who sins when he does sin, because He, whose foreknowledge is infallible, foreknew not that fate, or fortune, or something else would sin, but that the man himself would sin, who, if he wills not, sins not. But if he shall not will to sin, even this did God foreknow.[48]

Augustine appears to be appealing to a kind of dependency consideration that is friendly to Ockhamism. Whatever it is that we do, that is what God foreknows. In Augustine's example, even though the man chooses to sin, if the man were to choose to refrain from sin, then that refusal to sin is what God would have foreknown at the creation of the world instead of the performance of the sin. It is the dependence of the past belief on the future act that generates a counterfactual *description* of the relationship of human action and the foreknowledge that reflects it.

Unlike Ockhamism, however, Augustine's solution does not require humans to have counterfactual *power* over the past in such a way that one has alternative possibilities relative to what has already occurred (alternative possibilities relative to the past strikes several, including Pike and Zagzebski, as highly counterintuitive).[49] For Augustine, as we do the actions God has foreknown, we affect the past. Since God's foreknowledge is dependent on our actions themselves, this is not scandalous. But even with counterfactual descriptions, there is no need for a modern Augustinian to embrace a fully open future. For example, suppose it is true that tomorrow I choose to help a neighbor, but were I to choose to ignore the neighbor rather than help him, then God would have not allowed me to occupy the house in which I now live. Does it follow that I have the power to act in such a way that I would have been living elsewhere all this time?

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[48] *DCD*, 93.

[49] See Zagzebski, *Dilemma*, 80 and Pike, *Latter-Day Look*, 141-9.

A great many features of the actual past would be different if I had been living elsewhere, and if a consequence of my action is that the past occurred differently than it in fact did, then it is reasonable to assume that I cannot perform such an action. The Ockhamist disagrees. Though both Ockham and Augustine concede that the counterfactual may be true, an Augustinian will take it as evidence that he does not have the power to do otherwise. That is, the above quote indicates that Augustine accepts that there are true counterfactuals of foreknowledge, but in the interpretation I defend in the previous chapter, it is accidentally necessary that the consequents of those counterfactuals are false. Since the consequents concern what did or did not happen in the historical record, they refer to hard facts.

I wish to be charitable to the Ockhamist: though I have presented the difficulties of Ockhamism, I do not intend to convey the opinion that these difficulties are insurmountable. Also, I do not share Zagzebski's pessmism that if the difficulties are overcome it is more a testament to human cleverness than a description of the way the world actually is.[50] As long as one is willing to abandon the intuition that all beliefs occurring at T are hard facts about T, then Ockhamism is an attractive solution to theological fatalism. The consequences of adopting Ockhamism are clear, and some philosophers do not object to those consequences; instead, they find Ockham's solution illuminating.

One way to find a point of agreement between Ockham and Augustine is to think of Ockhamism as similar to Augustine's dependency description and make the hard/soft

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[50] Zagzebski, *Dilemma*, 74.

distinction a kind of relevance criteria. Kvanvig suggests such a variation of Ockhamism when he states,

> For if God is essentially omniscient, then whatever He believed in the past about the future *entails* that the future will be as He believes it will. Our account of accidental necessity then allows that what God believed in the past is not a fact strictly about the past; hence Plantinga is right and Pike is wrong in thinking that God's beliefs must be included in that part of the history of the world that must remain constant when determining what a person has the power to do.[51]

The last sentence in that paragraph indicates a promising method of analysis: the Ockhamist arguments can elucidate which parts of the history of the world must be taken into account when trying to discover what powers an agent has. Some of God's beliefs about the future are dependent on future events. Counterfactual dependence allows us to ignore PAP-F when determining whether an agent is free, even if Pike insists PAP-F is a necessary condition for freedom. The task for this version of Ockhamism is to catalog the factors that must remain constant (laws of nature, necessary truths, and so on) and know when to leave out the irrelevant factors (truth of future-tense propositions, divine foreknowledge, providence that does not interfere in the causal sequence). This relevance-criteria version of Ockhamism is very similar to Augustine's position. Kvanvig takes just this approach in "Hasker on Fatalism" where he discusses "direction of explanation."[52] Soft facts, like hard facts, cannot be falsified – yet they do not effect human freedom because they are true in virtue of what occurs in the future.

Ockhamists argue that some of God's beliefs are soft in virtue of their dependence on future states. Augustine agrees that God's beliefs are dependent on the future, but that they are temporally necessary and thus now unavoidable. If Ockhamism is an intuition

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[51] Jonathan Kvanvig, *The Possibility of an All-Knowing God*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 1986), 115.

[52] Jonathan Kvanvig, "Hasker on Fatalism," *Philosophical Studies* 65 (1992): 91-2.

about the connection between freedom and direction of explanation, then Ockhamism is an Augustinian position. If Ockhamism requires that God's beliefs about free acts be softly factual because free actions are free only if they have alternative possibilities, then the Ockhamist advances a solution different from Augustine's.

Molinism

Molinism is an unusual choice to place alongside solutions from Ockham and Boethius, primarily because it answers a different question about divine foreknowledge – namely *how* it is that God knows. In this respect it is more akin to Boethius' solution than Ockham's. While an Ockhamist can remain agnostic (or at least argumentatively neutral) about how it is God knows the content of the future, the Boethian and Molinist generate solutions to fatalism almost as byproducts of a more comprehensive theory of divine omniscience.

Before discussing the general features of Molinism, I wish to make clear that I see no reason why someone persuaded by Augustine's argument against fatalism cannot *also* be a Molinist of a peculiar sort,[53] nor do I see any deep conflict between Molinism and God's eternity. Fortunately, for God to know the future directly does not preclude Him from having other types of knowledge about the future as well. There is, admittedly, less need on the part of the Augustinian to adopt Molinism as the best way to reconcile the free actions of both creator and creation. But a reduction in motivation is a poor substitute for refutation, and there may be other good reasons to adopt Molinism apart from its use in defeating fatalism. Though some of the reasons for adopting Molinism,

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[53] As we will see, an Augustinian would need to consider carefully what it meant to be necessitated by one's nature.

like the aversion to thinking God could be passive or receptive in any way, are outside the scope of this dissertation, those reasons may independently motivate one to embrace Molinism.

Essentially, Molinism consists of the claim that God must have, in addition to knowledge of His own nature and the logical and causal consequences of everything that is true, a third kind of knowledge, "middle knowledge," that consists of, broadly speaking, knowledge of what free creatures would do when in various circumstances, what Molinists call "counterfactuals of creaturely freedom."[54] God knows, in addition to what does happen, what *would have happened,* under various descriptions.[55] By including this other kind of knowledge, the Molinist gains the ability to satisfy a remarkable number of Augustine's theological requirements. For Molinism, God is not the author of our evil actions, yet there is a kind of cooperation with human wills. Nor is God receptive[56] like Boethius' observation model. Further, although God knows future free creaturely actions, He does not do so by deduction from prior states and causes.[57]

Middle knowledge may be useful in filling gaps in Augustine's model of providence. In Augustine's model as I have presented it, every cause either is an agent cause or is traceable to an agent cause.[58] Therefore, the best way to understand

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[54] Jonathan Kvanvig prefers the term "subjunctive" to the traditionally used "counterfactual" of freedom. *Possibility of an All-Knowing God*, 124.

[55] Thomas P. Flint, *Divine Providence: The Molinist Account* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 46ff.

[56] Apparently, there is some worry that believing that God *receives* from His creation is impious. I am not sure what to make of this worry.

[57] Flint, *Providence,* 84ff.

[58] *DCD*, 91.

foreknowledge and prophecy for Augustine is to ask which agent originated the sequence – God or one of His creatures. The central question for human freedom is "Can human beings act independently enough to be legitimate authors of their actions?" Supposing they are, then in Augustine's reasoning, God foreknows all, yet He is not the cause of everything He foreknows. The result, however, is that providence becomes either mysterious or impossible to explain. The first half of *De Ordine* seems constructed to answer just this question. If God's order and justice encompass everything, how is He able to respond when His observation, action, and reaction are all simultaneous and fixed? By the time He "found out" if justice were not satisfied, it would be too late to revise His punishments. Making sense of simultaneous interaction is profoundly difficult. There are moments in *De Ordine* where Augustine speaks as though the providential actions that respond to our actions are all temporally posterior to those actions.[59] This problem needs a resolution.

If God knows with perfect certainty what a particular agent would do, then He can use that knowledge to craft providential action. It is pleasantly surprising to find that this subjunctive knowledge of free creatures also explains the Ockhamist's use of retro-temporal counterfactual dependency without resorting to retro-causal descriptions. If God has a complete catalog of what I would do in every conceivable situation, then based on what He knows that I will do, He could perform nearly any act in response, even if the initial response is temporally prior to my action. So, even though the counterfactual dependence seems to run contrary to the sequence of causes, strictly speaking this is not

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[59] In *De Ordine*, the dialogue presents God acting "immediately" upon disruptions to the order of the cosmos. See St. Augustine, *On Order (De Ordine)*, trans. Silvano Borruso, (South Bend: St. Augustine's Press, 2007), 79.

retrocausation. States of affairs are dependent on the contents of God's middle knowledge, which he has prior to the actual creation of the world. Therefore, the chain of events follows the temporal order quite naturally: God creates free essences and knows how they would act, and creates the world in such a way that He decides which essences to instantiate and how to respond to their actions – responding prior to their actions if appropriate.

There are standard objections to this solution. The most common is the "grounding" objection: in order for Molinism to be true there would have to be some fact of the matter about a near-infinite set of events that never occur. Further, none of these facts is deducible from other facts. Thus, the near-infinite set of non-existent states would have to be known separately, not in the way we know an infinite set of numbers in principle only. Also, the nature of these facts must be carefully distinguished from Augustinian "natural necessity" (act-because-of-nature). If they cannot, then the theory of middle knowledge leads to determinism. To the extent that it is possible, I will not defend the viability of Molinism, preferring to take it for granted that any such obstacles can be resolved. There are several attempted refutations of Molinism, including William Hasker's *God, Time, and Knowledge* and Dean Zimmerman's *Yet Another Anti-Molinist Argument*. There are also several comprehensive defenses of Molinism, including Jonathan Kvanvig's *Possibility of an All-Knowing God* and Thomas Flint's *Divine Providence: The Molinist Account*. In delineating Molinism from Augustine's solution, I do not intend to engage in proof-by-elimination, but simply to outline the differences in the solutions themselves.

Since God may have both middle knowledge and foreknowledge, an Augustinian could also be a Molinist. God's use of middle knowledge does not generate foreknowledge, strictly speaking, though its contents could be used to deduce the future. Such a parallel is not surprising since, in the same way, an eternal God could both directly know the location of some particle in the far reaches of space but also deduce its location though application of the relevant laws of nature to the starting conditions of the universe. Thus, God would have at least two methods or sources from which to arrive at true beliefs about the future of deterministic events. However, due to the observational language that Boethius and Augustine use, "foreknowledge" probably does not mean fore-deduction, so middle knowledge would not be a substitute for foreknowledge in a hybrid solution. Likewise, an eternal God with middle knowledge could reconstruct the complete narrative of creation without "looking" at what actually happens. Molinism's viability depends upon such calculations being possible. It is easier to explain providence if eternal knowledge or foreknowledge are not the *only* means God has to obtain information about the future. Thus, in a hybrid solution, even if God uses middle knowledge to calculate providence,[60] He does not need to use middle knowledge to know future states of the cosmos.

Notwithstanding these points of overlap, there are two elements of the Molinist account that are in tension with Augustine's solution; both concern the recurring issue of what counts as natural necessity. An attempt to ground middle knowledge may involve a kind of natural necessity (something like NN2, where an agent's nature, when that agent

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[60] Flint, Hasker, and Craig have all argued that foreknowledge, on its own, makes no contribution to providence. This shortcoming was one of the original reasons Molina cites for developing his theory. Thomas Flint *Divine Providence: the Molinist Account* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 35-8.

is placed in a particular circumstance, compels her to choose one alternative over another), though I see no reason why this must be the only method a Molinist can employ to ground counterfactuals of freedom. As long as middle knowledge is plausibly grounded in some other way, one may combine Augustine's solution with Molinism.

There is one additional problem for a hybrid solution. The identical temptations thought experiment from *DCD* XII:9 appears incompatible with divine middle knowledge, since the two people, alike in every way (body and soul as Augustine puts it), could choose differently than each other when faced with identical temptations. They can do so without any incompatibility with God's knowledge or decree of creation. Though certainly Augustine believes that God foreknows what the tempted person will choose, it is difficult to allow the thought experiment to have the force it requires if it is also true that God is privy to various facts about natures such that the two choosing differently from each other was infallibly *predictable*. In fact, the "alike in body and soul" may preclude such an answer. If one of them "would have done" the sin and the other "would not have done" the sin based on truths about their essences, then the Molinist explanation denies a condition of the thought experiment. However, as long as there is nothing about the agent's essence that necessitates his blameworthy actions then Augustine's solution is compatible with some descriptions of middle knowledge.[61] It is important to note that, notwithstanding their compatibility with each other, Molinism uses a non-observational,

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[61] For example, Flint refers to counterfactuals of freedom such that they "concern" a particular individual. Locutions of this sort are friendly to an Augustinian worried about natural necessity (more precisely, NN2). Connecting middle knowledge to the person such that subjunctives of freedom are part of the essence of the person may give the Augustinian pause. As long as the true counterfactuals are extrinsic to the agent, perhaps a hybrid solution can proceed. Even so, supplementing Augustinian freedom with middle knowledge is not painless since the synthesis inherits the objections from both sides. For example, Augustine's model and Molinism potentially offer different answers to the "rewinding universe" thought experiment Peter van Inwagen recently reiterated in "Free Will Remains a Mystery," *Philosophical Perspectives* 14 (2000), 13-8.

fore-deduction model to explain foreknowledge. Even though it is tempting to solve both the foreknowledge and providence problems with a single stroke, the grounds for fore-deduction are hotly debated and remain controversial. A Molinist must defend her use of counterfactuals of freedom in order to explain foreknowledge, while an Augustinian can use an observational model to explain foreknowledge. For the Augustinian, foreknowledge and providence are different issues, and thus middle-knowledge is optional.

Conclusion

After examining the three closest competitors to Augustine's solution to the problem of theological fatalism, my conclusion is that though there are intriguing similarities, none of the competitors describe Augustine's solution. Augustine's account focuses on agency and its role in understanding freedom of the will. His declaration of agency and authorship of one's own actions is so strenuous that it allows him to overlook the traditionally required ability to do otherwise relative to foreknowledge. Thus, he can ignore the temporal necessity of God's foreknowledge, which Boethius and Ockham must explain. Even though Augustine's solution does not preclude God having middle knowledge, Augustine uses observational language to describe foreknowledge. Thus, he is not arguing for proto-Molinism, regardless of how well middle knowledge explains God's providence. Having discussed Augustine's understanding of foreknowledge with the help of some formidable foils, in the final chapter of this dissertation I will explore Augustine's characterization of freedom. Is freedom possible without PAP-F?

CHAPTER FIVE

Augustinian Freedom Compared to Modern Formulations

Introduction

In the previous four chapters I identified Augustine's solution to the problem of theological fatalism and compared it to solutions defended by modern Ockhamists, Boethians, and Molinists. Because Augustine's solution need not answer the same objections faced by its three competitors, it is a unique and potentially attractive alternative. However, Augustine's solution is not compatible with the second of Aristotle's two widely accepted conditions for voluntary action. This incompatibility is the greatest obstacle to the solution's usefulness. In this chapter I discuss whether Augustine's solution adequately supports freedom of the will. Since Augustine ultimately rejects PAP-F (alternative possibilities relative to foreknowledge) as a necessary condition for freedom, my strategy in this chapter will be to first describe the philosophical doctrine of the principle of alternative possibilities (PAP), defend the importance of PAP against causal determinism and recount the attacks on PAP. Then, I argue that even though the attacks on PAP are not successful, we have independent reasons for preferring source incompatibilism as the primary conception of free will. Finally, I revisit Augustine's memory analogy in light of this preference, arguing that it is an illuminating illustration of freedom and temporal necessity.

If PAP is a necessary condition for freedom, then no theory of free will that rejects PAP is viable, regardless of how well it accommodates divine foreknowledge.[1] However, if there are successful counterexamples to PAP being a necessary condition for moral responsibility, then Augustine's denial of PAP is no obstacle.[2] I argue that the proposed counterexamples do not succeed as a general refutation of PAP. Hence, we have no independent reason to deny PAP. Instead, Augustine argues that only PAP-C is necessary for freedom, in fact giving us further reason to believe it to be true. The Augustinian position is to deny PAP-F simply because it is incompatible with foreknowledge. However, under Augustine's conception of freedom, PAP-C is relevant to freedom of the will while PAP-F is not.

Libertarianism and the Widespread Acceptance of PAP

Robert Kane notes that there are two meta-positions on free will and necessity.[3] One is compatibilism: the position that an action can be both free and necessary. The second is incompatibilism: the position that no action can be both free and necessary. Within that second category are philosophers who endorse incompatibilism, assent to causal determinism, and then conclude that no human being is free.[4] Also within that second category are philosophers called *libertarians*, who endorse incompatibilism and

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[1] Since relative forms of PAP are not common in the literature, I use "PAP" as a generic principle that is not restricted to a single potential alternative eliminator. Unlike PAP-C, which is restricted to alternatives eliminated by casual laws, "PAP" is unrestricted.

[2] David P. Hunt. "On Augustine's Way Out" *Faith and Philosophy* 16, No. 1 (January 1999): 18-9.

[3] In this context, "necessity" usually means causal determinism. Robert Kane. *Free Will* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 9. In this context, "necessity" usually means causal determinism.

[4] Derk Pereboom. "Determinism al Dente" *Nous* 29, No. 1 (March 1995): 21-45. Pereboom does not think that all moral principles and values are void, so in that way he does not consider himself the "hardest of the hard determinists" but he is only a step or two removed.

insist that human beings *are* truly free (and thus, their actions are not determined or necessary). Because both the compatibilist and incompatibilist often use the same terminology (freedom, choice, responsibility, and so on), a philosopher that sounds very much like a libertarian, when pressed, may reveal many compatibilist assumptions. In order to better navigate the theories, differences in vocabulary assist the reader: libertarians often discuss "agents" and "alternatives" while compatibilists seem most concerned with describing appropriate chains of causation from the world of inanimate objects to the world of persons. For example, compatibilists are careful to ensure that the description of free choices properly rule out coercion. When a definition of freedom focuses on potential coercion it is likely for that definition to be used by the author in support of compatibilism (since coercion is one of the inappropriate chains of causation). When the definition of freedom focuses primarily on the origin of the allegedly free act (agency) and on alternative possibilities, then the definition is likely in support of libertarianism. One reason Augustine's theory of free will is so puzzling is that he defends a kind of libertarianism, but does so by analyzing appropriate chains of causation. For Augustine, an appropriate chain of causation terminates in an agent's volition. Conversely, a compatibilist argues for appropriate chains of causation extending prior to a volition – as long as the chain of causes appropriately passed through the person, the volition is free.

It is surprising that Augustine spends so few pages on whether an agent could have chosen differently, especially since definitions of freedom that include the ability to choose differently appear early in the philosophic tradition. In *Nicomachean Ethics* III, Aristotle identifies two conditions for voluntary choice. The first is authorship and

origination.[5] The second is the ability to do otherwise.[6] The ability to do otherwise is not only old, but widespread. Peter van Inwagen states that PAP or something like it is so intuitively strong that it is considered universal common sense and plays an important role in everything from raising children to courts of law.[7] The lack of alternatives other than the action performed is generally considered a guilt mitigator. If no actions ever have alternatives, then, assuming this guilt mitigation is general, no one is ever guilty.

In addition, the Principle of Alternative Possibilities (or PAP) is useful as a kind of litmus test for libertarianism. If a theory about freedom is consistent with PAP, it is a candidate for being a form of libertarianism. If not, then as the libertarian position goes, the theory is yet another version of compatibilism. In affirming PAP, the libertarian insists upon a condition of freedom that not only has strong common-sense support and a long history, but is also incompatible with determinism.

The centrality of PAP to libertarianism does not extend to an identification of the two. PAP is not a sufficient condition for responsibility since PAP is also compatible with indeterminism, which does not have the rich moral language of agents and

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[5] In *Nicomachean Ethics* III.1.1110, Aristotle states, "…the voluntary would seem to be that of which the moving principle is in the agent himself, he being aware of the particular circumstances of the action." In III.5.1113 he suggests that each man "is a moving principle or begetter of his actions as of children."

[6] In *Nicomachean Ethics* III.5.1113, Aristotle concludes, "Therefore virtue also is in our own power, and so too vice. For where it is in our power to act it is also in our power not to act, and *vice versa*; so that, if to act, where this is noble, is in our power, not to act, which will be base, will also be in our power, and if not to act, where this is noble, is in our power, to act, which will be base, will also be in our power."

[7] Peter van Inwagen asserts that this principle, which has a great deal of intuitive support and has been offered under many names and many formulations, was codified as "PAP" by Harry Frankfurt in his 1969 article "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility." Peter van Inwagen "Ability and Responsibility" *The Philosophical Review* 87. No. 2. (April 1978): 201. See also Harry Frankfurt "Alternative Possibilities and Moral Responsibility" *The Journal of Philosophy* 66. No. 23 (December 1969): 829.

volitions.[8] For an indeterminist, human free will could be a kind of random-number generator in the brain that is consulted whenever the brain needs to produce a choice. In this sense, indeterminism is compatible with PAP, but it is not sufficient for the kind of freedom of the will libertarians envision. Essentially, indeterminism is the position that there are some physical laws that have multiple possible outcomes and "free will" is the result of a process involving such a law. If indeterminism is true, a narrative of my deliberations about some decision is little more than an enchanting tale – a story that masks a random-number generator in my brain. Since indeterminism is compatible with PAP, libertarianism must offer more than an identification of PAP with libertarianism. Otherwise we are left with alternative possibilities without the rich notion of freedom and responsibility libertarianism seeks.[9] Thus PAP is a necessary, though not sufficient condition for libertarian freedom.

First Objection to PAP: Science and the Resulting Redefinitions of Free Will

So then, if PAP has such intuitive and practical support, why attack it? Though causal determinism is not new (ancient atomists had something very like causal determinism), it has gained a higher degree of plausibility due to the advancements of science. Once all the brain's activity is explained in terms of particles in motion with mathematically describable interactions it will be hard to resist the conclusion that all

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[8] John H. Conway and Simon Kochen, "The Strong Free-Will Theorem" *Notices of the AMS* 56, No. 2 (February 2009). Conway and Kochen use elements of quantum mechanics to extend the "free will" principle to individual particles. If quantum indeterminacy is true then particle freedom is not qualitatively different from agent freedom.

[9] Timothy O'Connor "Indeterminacy and Free Agency: Three Recent Views" *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 53, No. 3. (September 1993): 499-526.

actions of agents are also fully reducible to the deterministic interactions of various particle systems.

For those familiar with advances in neuroscience, these conclusions are even more difficult to resist, since the behavior of the mind now can be plausibly described as brain activity. At the time of this writing, the nomenclature of neurotransmitters, receptors, reuptake, dendrites, and plaques is supposing that mental states like severe depression, dementia, and euphoria are explainable by purely physical states.[10] For many, we may have passed already the threshold such that believing in a "soul" distinct from the body is as unacceptable as believing in a flat earth. So then, what is a volition? If we describe it physically it is a particular brain-state brought about by the mechanistic interaction of various parts of the brain. Those prior physical states are themselves the result of prior physical states, and so on. PAP and the moral responsibility it safeguards are threatened by the purely physical description currently being advanced in scientific research.

A purely physical description of the mind offers three possible conclusions: either the physical picture is a necessarily incomplete description of the mind, or human beings are not free, or human beings are free but their freedom is realized within a purely physical framework. The last option will require a different conception of freedom. The first option is libertarianism, and the second incompatibilist determinism. The third option is "compatibilism." Any philosopher offering a compatibilist theory of freedom must leap two hurdles: first, they must offer a description of freedom that supervenes upon purely physical processes, and second, they must explain why it is that their version

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[10] Product literature for any commonly-prescribed anti-depressant will support this assertion.

of freedom captures what is meant by ordinary discourse about free will. Refusing to do the first can do no more than produce a theory of otherwise freedom-relative goods (such as law or punishment) without freedom. Failing to do the latter indicates that our ordinary concept of human freedom is inadequate and must be replaced with another concept that accounts for some of the traditional features of the ordinary concept of freedom. Correlatively, we must realize that the freedom we appear to have is an illusion.

The seemingly inevitable result of scientific investigation – a picture of the world consisting of nothing more than an uninterrupted sequence of causes and their necessary effects – is a strong motivation to adopt compatibilism. Something must be done to preserve the things that freedom safeguards – personal responsibility, justice, and reform. For those wishing to affirm both the weight of scientific discovery and freedom of the will, the task is to find some plausible way to deny that causal necessity is irreconcilable with freedom. Part of this task is uncomplicated since science provides its own boundary conditions. The literature on freedom of the will provides very few boundary conditions that are not debated. In other words, while the science on one side constrains the solution, there is plenty of space for creativity in formulating a definition for freedom. However, science as yet does not actually constrain libertarianism since there is no comprehensive and experimentally proven neurological explanation for the will. Though we do not have a complete neurological explanation, we must be concerned that one day such an explanation will come forward.[11]

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[11] Timothy O'Connor, *Persons & Causes: The Metaphysics of Free Will*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000): 125.

Defining Free Will

Freedom can be defined using two different approaches: arguments from intuitively powerful examples of free will, and arguments from situations where free action is in some way constrained without our intuitions of its freedom being altered. The first method uses paradigmatic examples of freedom (maximum freedom); the second method uses border-cases where our definitions are stretched (minimum freedom). Jonathan Edwards defends compatibilism by giving arguments of the first sort. He invites us to examine a person so elevated in virtue that they could not violate their moral commitments. Modern authors[12] tend to use examples involving deeply held moral commitments, and Edwards is no different. He uses the example of a morally mature woman who simply cannot countenance becoming a prostitute.[13] These cases are justifiably paradigmatic of the highest degree of freedom since the person is acting with sobriety, full understanding of their actions and a powerful internal resolve. As Descartes notes, in these cases where the agent is not indifferent we are most confident to describe the agent as free. The cases where we find the agent able to choose otherwise are the ones that we are apt to write off as "chancy" or capricious. Descartes observes that the cases where the whole person orients herself to one choice, in full consistency with her nature and history, being so resolute that the alternatives are not even attractive are the cases

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[12] Dennet uses Martin Luther's exclamation that "Here I stand, I can do no other," to be a counterexample of PAP (which he terms CDO – "could have done otherwise"). Whatever Luther is doing by stating he cannot do otherwise, he certainly is not disclaiming responsibility for his actions. Daniel Dennet "I Could not have Done Otherwise – So What?" *The Journal of Philosophy* 81, No. 10 (October 1984): 555-6.

[13] Jonathan Edwards, *Freedom of the Will*, Part1 Section IV. In this section Jonathan Edwards defends the idea of "moral necessity" where there might be a "*sure* and *perfect* connection between moral causes and effects."

where the person is most free.[14] All of these cases reduce PAP's clear intuitive support. At least in terms of psychology and moral character, these "most free" scenarios have no alternatives. The only way Edwards' virtuous woman could become a prostitute would be to do so against her will. Her character constrains her alternatives, yet she is most free when maintaining her virtue and is obviously morally responsible for her actions.[15] Descartes and Edwards chastise the partisans of "indifference" (i.e. PAP) for not being able to explain these examples. In fact, Edwards claims that his opponents must argue that, in having no alternative possibilities, the virtuous woman must not be free at all, but, as he scoffs, this is absurd.[16] Instead, Edwards reasons that the best description of freedom is to be able to act with consistency with one's own desires and ideals. Being restrained from so acting is how one loses freedom, not by having only one possible choice for her decision.

Note that this strategy of discussing paradigmatic examples of freedom can weaken the appeal of PAP, but it does not invoke determinism as part of the explanation. Instead, by casting doubt on PAP in cases of psychological impossibility, these proto-compatibilists endeavor to weaken the intuitive support PAP commands and thereby make compatibilism more attractive on its own merits.

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[14] Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*. IV, 8.

[15] Likely this is a continuation of Plato's intuition that were someone to truly understand the Good, they could not help but act in consistency with it (they would have to participate in it). Especially if we include virtuous habituation in the larger picture of "understand" (combining Plato and Aristotle), we find even stronger argument for libertarian freedom to be not always desirable, especially in cases where severe moral reprobation is possible. It is no virtue that I be capable of great evil. From this point of view, being able to sin is no great good.

[16] In Part 1, Section V of *The Freedom of the Will* Edwards calls this kind of freedom of the will "not good sense, if we judge of sense and nonsense by the original and proper signification of words."

Second Objection to PAP: Locke's Counterexample Strategy

In *Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* John Locke famously attempts to refute PAP using a minimal freedom strategy. His locked room thought experiment undermines PAP's intuitive obviousness. He sets up the scenario thus: Imagine being in a room where you very much wanted to be and simply do not wish to leave. Further, imagine that the room is, unknown to you, locked from the outside so that you could not escape the room, even if you attempted to do so. Is it possible to stay in the room of your own free will even though you cannot fail to stay in the room? Obviously you stay freely, and, as Locke argues, you can freely stay even if you cannot leave.[17]

However, Locke's locked room example is not an effective counterexample for PAP. If I suddenly decided that I no longer wished to be in the room and attempted to escape, I would find the door locked and no escape was possible. So, while it is impossible for me to be in another place than the room, it is *not* true that I have no alternative possibilities. I can sit quietly, bang on the door, yell obscenities, or perhaps even self-mutilate in frustration. While I am not free to leave the room, there are alternative actions available. "Staying in the room" is a very broad description – there are countless actions that can fulfill it. Likewise, a libertarian can point out that if the locked room experiment also includes the inability of the person even to attempt to leave the room we are less inclined to say the person is free. Further, if the person cannot even form a volition to attempt to leave the room, confidence in Locke's success in refuting PAP wanes.[18] The modified, fine-grained version of Locke's room no longer describes a

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[17] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Book II, Chapter XXI, Section 10.

[18] Unless, of course, one found the character examples (Martin Luther, Edwards' virtuous woman) convincing already.

situation with an *obviously* free agent. In order to avoid coarse-grained examples, libertarians use phrases such as "attempted" or "endeavored to" or "made an effort to" in order to call attention to the relevance of PAP to initiating actions, rather than on their successful outcomes.[19] Clearly a single outcome can result from any number of causal histories, but determinism requires a single set of causes and necessary effects. Compatibilism requires that I stay in the room, but also that my doing so results from a single possible causal history.

If identifying actions rather than outcomes is an effective strategy against the locked room thought experiment, it might be equally illuminating to apply the same logic on behalf of PAP to the cases of psychological impossibility. While it may be true that Edwards' virtuous woman might not be able to actually become a prostitute, could she consider it, even for the briefest moment? It seems that she could, but perhaps it is more excellent to be incapable of considering sinfulness of that magnitude. However, even if it is more morally excellent to be incapable of even estimating one's ability to perform an evil action, that moral state is the result of a great many other actions. Some of those actions, especially early in life, did not have this moral perfection. We cannot appeal to the final virtuous state apart from the many imperfect and character-contingent states that preceded it. Like the criticism of the locked room thought experiment, once the thought experiment reaches a high enough degree of specificity, we no longer think it obvious that the person is freely acting.[20] A determinist is committed to each and every thought

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[19] Roderick Chisolm, "He Could Have Done Otherwise," *The Journal of Philosophy* 64, No. 13 (July 1967): 409-417.

[20] Kane argues that even if the virtuous woman *cannot* do otherwise, we at least attribute her moral fortitude to previous decisions where she could have done otherwise. Her present inability is the desired result of many actions that were not so perfect. Thus, even if the virtuous woman cannot do otherwise, she is still responsible due to the previous free actions that made her the way she is. See his introduction to *The*

being a kind of locked room, so it is entirely appropriate to insist on extending these illustrations to a very high degree of specificity. But challenging PAP by counterexample cannot end here. If a counterexample to PAP can satisfy this higher degree of precision then the principle might yet be false, venerable and intuitive as it is.

Second Objection to PAP Strengthened: Frankfurt Counterexamples

Harry Frankfurt offered a much more precise way of questioning PAP – a method that now bears his name, called Frankfurt examples/scenarios/counterexamples.[21] Like the locked-room thought-experiments, Frankfurt devises a situation where a person would be prevented from actualizing a particular outcome, but the prevention never occurs. Unlike the locked room thought experiments or illustrations involving extremely virtuous persons, Frankfurt counterexamples take place at a micro level (usually the level of neural events) and thus initially appear to be immune from criticisms leveled against the imprecise nature of the traditional counterexamples. If they are successful, then PAP is false. Again, if PAP is false then Augustine's denial of PAP is no obstacle to his solution. Here is a typical Frankfurt scenario:[22] George is a diabolical scientist intent on controlling William's life and has secretly implanted a mind-control device in William's brain. This device also monitors all the activity of William's mind so that George knows everything that William knows. William is torn between marrying Martha or Justine.

Oxford Handbook of Free Will (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 16. In *Nicomachean Ethics* III, Aristotle discusses voluntary ignorance in the same way. If one chooses to become drunk, then even though they may act without deliberation or choice while drunk, they are responsible for their drunken actions by virtue of their choice to become intoxicated.

[21] I call them Frankfurt examples, Frankfurt scenarios, and Frankfurt counterexamples interchangeably merely as a stylistic device. I make no distinction between them.

[22] Current literature is replete with many variations on this theme with everything from voting in a political election to assassinating a rival, and all points in between.

Since George wants Justine for himself, he finds a way to ensure that William chooses Martha. He programs his device so that if William is about to choose Justine, the device will intervene and cause William to choose Martha. If William is about to choose Martha, then the device does nothing at all and William chooses Martha without any interference. As in all Frankfurt examples, the situation that would cause the device to trigger does not occur. William winds up deciding to choose Martha on his own and the device lies dormant. Frankfurt scenarios suggest two questions: first, whether the agent (in this case, William) freely chooses, and second, whether the agent can act otherwise than he does.

Frankfurt intends the response to the first question to be an uncomplicated "yes." Clearly if the device never triggers then William's actions are as free as the action would have been had the device not been present. Frankfurt intends the second question to be answered "no" since the device will prevent William from choosing Justine. William cannot do otherwise than to choose Martha. Hence, Frankfurt illustrations are potential counterexamples to PAP – they are situations where there are no alternate possibilities yet the person is still free. If the counterexample is successful, then even though PAP enshrines deeply held intuitions, this principle, like many other common sense intuitions, is false.

However, like the aforementioned problems with the locked-room experiment, a libertarian might answer the second question by emphasizing the fact that while William cannot do otherwise than choose to marry Martha, such a description is not fine-grained enough to conclude that no alternative possibilities exist. As Fischer notes, this detail-oriented strategy involves the agent "flickering" toward one act before being interrupted by the device. The "flicker of freedom" is enough to show that alternative possibilities

are assumed by the counter-example, rendering it ineffective.[23] According to the thought experiment, if William is about to choose Justine the device triggers and causes William to choose Martha – therefore the choice to marry Martha is not free when initiated by the device. Thus, two distinct possibilities can be actualized: either William freely chooses Martha, or the device forces him to choose Martha. Though in either case he chooses Martha, the causal histories of each choice are different and so the two possibilities are not identical even though they have identical outcomes. The multiple causal histories reveal alternatives implicit in the proposed counterexample. This defense of PAP, known as the "flicker of freedom" defense, demonstrates that the scenario and its outcome, when presented in sufficient detail, assume alternative possibilities. Thus, the counterexample is not successful.

Robert Kane capitalized on this attention to detail in another way by questioning how the device detects William's choice.[24] Kane's method involves a closer examination of what occurs in between William starting to make a choice and the device triggering or not triggering. Kane observes that *something* must occur there for the device to detect. There are only two options for what that *something* is: either it is some causally sufficient condition for William to choose between one of his loves, or it is the very first neurological event that results from William's choice. If this *something* that the device detects is neither of these, then the device is not reliable.

Kane argues that the effort to disprove PAP using these counterexamples fails because the counterexample must assume either PAP or determinism. If the device

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[23] John Martin Fischer. *The Metaphysics of Free Will* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1994), 134-147.

[24] Robert Kane *Free Will and Values* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985).

detects a chain of causes sufficient for William's choice, then determinism is assumed in the premises. If so, the history of the choice would begin with a neural event sufficient to choose Justine, then to detection, intervention, the imposition of a new neural event sufficient to choose Martha, and finally the choice itself. However, no libertarian should concede that this sequence of events is compatible with freedom. The sequence assumes causal determinism from the neural event (not yet a choice) to the volition – essentially assuming causal determinism about neurons and choices. Further, if Kane's second option is correct and the device detects the very first result of the choice, then the chain of events goes from choice, then to first physical outcome of that choice, detection by device, intervention, and finally to the imposition of a new choice. It is as if William's choice of Justine "flickers" and is over-ridden by the device. But such a sequence affirms PAP, and thus cannot be a counterexample to PAP.

Kane's second option seems to be a dead end for defenders of Frankfurt examples since it presumes PAP. But Kane's first option has its defenders. Eleonore Stump recently attempted to salvage it by attempting to offer a more detailed neurological picture than the defenders of PAP use.[25] She argues that given what we know about neurological events and mental events, it is an oversimplification to claim that a neural event read by the device has to cause the choice in order for it to be a reliable pre-indicator of the choice. Instead, several neural events working in concert constitute the choice. Stump argues that surely the device could detect the pre-choice neurons.

Consider that if 30 neural events are required to make a choice and the device interrupts at 25, then no choice was made. The 25 neural events are not a complete

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[25] Eleonore Stump "Alternative Possibilities and Moral Responsibility: The Flicker of Freedom." *Journal of Ethics* 3 No. 4 (1999): 299-324.

choice, but the *actual choice in the process of being made*. This variation on the counterexample has been categorized by the "flicker" theorists as being simply another flicker of freedom.[26] Subdividing the choice into constituent neural events does not overcome the dilemma since either 1) once those 25 (or other arbitrary number) events have occurred they are causally sufficient for the remaining events and thus this variation assumes determinism, or 2) those 25 events are not sufficient and the device could not reliably interrupt the sequence.

Another way to illustrate the assumptions latent in Frankfurt examples is to take away the element of speed. We can slow down the intervention and see where our intuitions lead. Suppose, for example, that Jimmy is entrusted with some vital secret, subsequently captured, and then told that he could either willingly divulge the information or be subjected to intense mental torture and psychotropic manipulation that will, without fail, make him choose to divulge the information. Does Jimmy have alternative possibilities in such a situation? Even if he resists he will divulge the information eventually. But the two possible courses of Jimmy's life are wildly divergent. Jimmy is a coward if he gives in prior to the coercion, but a hero in the second if he is coerced. Of course, we have greater epistemic access to Jimmy's moral status than we do in the standard Frankfurt examples. But in both cases the victim has morally relevant alternatives. If choosing Martha involves some moral fault (if William knows Martha to be a temptress that will degrade his moral life), then choosing her freely could be

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[26] Fischer concedes that *beginning* to make a choice is at least as good as a "flicker" and in fact is likely much more robust. However, in Fischer's estimation, Stump's neurological variant of the counterexample casts doubt on the usefulness of "flickers" as a strategy to defeat Frankfurt's attack on PAP. *Frankfurt-style Examples, Responsibility and Semi-Compatibilism* in Robert H. Kane (ed.), *Free Will* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 103-4.

inconsistent with virtue. Conversely, it is not blameworthy to be forced to perform an act by another's device. The fact that the device is never triggered allows us to say that William is responsible for his choice. If the device *did* trigger, William is not responsible unless we assume of compatibilism.[27]

To better mirror the Frankfurt scenario, Jimmy's tormentors can make a pact in advance – they agree to torture him if he does not give the information willingly. If he refuses, then they automatically do their worst, that is, they do not deliberate upon his refusal. The difference between this example and the device poor William has in his brain is only one of speed and awareness. It takes longer for Jimmy's questioners to realize they need to coerce his cooperation, though this difference is only one of degree since the mental device cannot, as Widerker notes, trigger *before* the event which it detects.[28] As for the subject's awareness, his tormentors erase all memory of the manipulation. Just as William would not realize he was manipulated, Jimmy simply wakes up with an overwhelming desire to do everything his questioners ask. Just the same, Jimmy is either guilty of treason or the victim of terrifying manipulation – he has morally relevant alternative possibilities. So, even though *eventually* Jimmy will have to tell the secrets, causal over-determination of his future events does not overwrite, coerce, or determine his decision. Causal over-determination does not, on its own, exclude spontaneity.

In conclusion, Frankfurt scenarios are an improvement on Locke's locked-room scenarios since they are more fine-grained and more carefully constructed. However,

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[27] This line of argument is a restatement of an argument by William Rowe "Two Concepts of Freedom" *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 61, No. 1 (September 1987): 43-64.

[28] David Widerker, "Libertarianism and Frankfurt's Attack on P.A.P." *Philosophical Review* 104, Vol. 2 (April 1995): 251-2.

Frankfurt scenarios still rely on alternative possibilities in order to appear intuitively plausible, though this reliance is hidden within the narratives. Since Frankfurt scenarios contain these flaws, they are not successful counterexamples to PAP. If a counterexample can be constructed that avoids the hidden, flickering alternatives, then PAP might still be independently refuted.

Final Attempt for the Second Objection: Blockage Frankfurt Counterexamples

David Hunt, in commenting on PAP and Frankfurt-style examples (the one he uses he refers to with the shorthand "BSJ"), suggests returning the counterexamples to their Lockean roots:

> The basic principle that immunizes moral responsibility against Locke's locked door does not appear to depend on the amount of "elbow room" between the agent's will and external obstacles to alternative courses of action; it has to do solely with the fact that these obstacles are not part of the sequence of states actually productive of the agent's behavior. (It wouldn't alter our ascription of moral responsibility one iota if we learned that the locked door was right at the man's elbow rather than on the far side of the room, or that the room itself was 50 sq. ft. rather than 500 sq. ft.) What is needed is a case in which unavoidability arises solely from blocked alternatives (rather than compulsion in the actual sequence), and the amount of elbow room remaining to the agent approaches zero. Imagine then a mechanism that blocks neural pathways rather than doorways. Suppose that the actual series of Jones's mental states leading up to the murder of Smith is compatible with PAP, except that the mechanism is in operation. The mechanism is not intervening directly in the series itself; it is allowing the series to unfold on its own, but simply blocking all alternatives to the series.[29]

In his explanations of Augustine's position on divine foreknowledge,[30] Hunt presents foreknowledge as a unique kind of Frankfurt counterexample without the counterfactual intervention. In foreknowledge cases no intervention is possible without

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[29] David P. Hunt, "Moral Responsibility and Unavoidable Action," *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition* 97, no. 2 (January 2000): 217-8.

[30] From what I can tell, Hunt believes Augustine to deny PAP, not only PAP-F.

violating the contents of foreknowledge. Counterfactual intervention is not similar enough to the foreknowledge problem. To better illustrate how foreknowledge might restrict alternatives, he develops his own variant of Frankfurt examples that involve what he calls a "passive alternative-eliminator."

In these passive variants, there is no detection mechanism that tries to circumvent various actions as they occur (or immediately before they occur). Instead, the neural pathways needed for William to choose Justine are pre-emptively disabled. While Hunt is concerned that such a conception might be too deterministic to be helpful, the switch from a potentially active to completely passive method of preventing alternatives invites us to re-think the original counter-arguments to Frankfurt scenarios. It should pass the detail test since it takes place at the level of single neural events. Kane's dilemma is not applicable since the blockage does not interrupt a volition as it is being made. However, blockage examples might presuppose causal determinism since the chain of neural events must be sufficient to form or initiate a choice.

In fact, a pre-emptive blocking of all alternative neural pathways appears to assume determinism in a more dramatic way than the traditional Frankfurt counterexamples do. In order to avoid this assumption of determinism, Gerald Harrison defends "blockage" versions of Frankfurt counterexamples by drawing attention to what he considers a crucial difference between types of ability.[31] He distinguishes between "ability" and "opportunity." Harrison argues that a person may have the opportunity to do otherwise yet still lack the ability to do otherwise. The example Harrison gives is a bank robber named Boris. When faced with a locked safe, he has the *opportunity* to open the

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[31] Gerald K. Harrison "Frankfurt-style Cases and Improbable Alternative Possibilities" *Philosophical Studies* 130 (2006): 399-406.

door (all he must do is enter the correct combination, and he certainly is physically capable of pushing the buttons), even though he does not have the *ability* to open the safe. Harrison explains that he lacks the ability to open the safe, "because his doing so is contingent upon something highly improbably happening, namely his entering the right combination."[32] Harrison invokes Fischer's "access control" principle from "Ought Implies Can, Causal Determinism and Moral Responsibility" to make the distinction more precise: essentially, because Boris the Thief cannot envision another possible world and see the connection between his action and bringing about that possible world, he cannot *choose* to open the safe.[33] On this analysis, the improbability of his success strips him of ability, leaving him with only opportunity. Opportunity, on the other hand, is more straightforward – Boris has the opportunity to open the safe iff he can perform certain actions such that, were he to perform them, would bring about the opening of the safe. For Boris to have the ability to open the safe, he must have the opportunity to open the safe and also have the power to choose a means that will result in the safe being open. Harrison argues that it is possible to have highly improbable opportunity-alternatives without having any ability-alternatives. In Harrison's view, if an agent had all her ability-alternatives blocked and only maximally improbable opportunity-alternatives open, she would no longer possess PAP in a meaningful way. The presence of opportunity-alternatives, even though infinitesimally improbable, keeps the blockage examples from assuming determinism.

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[32] Harrison, 402.

[33] Using Aristotle's analysis of volitions, Boris can wish to open the safe, but he cannot use rational deliberation to direct his choice of buttons to press. Thus he cannot, strictly speaking, "choose" to open the safe.

Harrison's distinction, though intriguing, is not useful in the foreknowledge debate. Imagine Boris staring at the safe. Boris will no doubt start pushing buttons as quickly as he can. If he is extraordinarily lucky he will punch in the correct sequence, but he is not so lucky. His actions are catalogued in the comprehensive order of causes God foreknows, so even though Boris has opportunity-alternatives to open the safe, he still does not have PAP-F. Therefore, for the purposes of examining PAP and foreknowledge, a distinction between broadly probable and extremely improbable alternative possibilities accomplishes nothing. Because neural pathways are pre-emptively disabled so that S performs A, the actions of the blocker ensure the performance of A. Blockage variants are too similar to determinism to serve as counterexamples to PAP.

As we have seen, the overall trajectory of the Frankfurt examples is to propose a counterexample to PAP, only to have it implicitly imply PAP or determinism. Hunt proposes the blockage variations in the attempt to bring the argument back to its counterfactual roots: what is the difference between an action that had no alternative possibilities and one that *did* have alternative possibilities if the *actual* sequence is the same? In other words, what freedom is lost if I were to take a paradigmatically free action, and then state that the agent, unbeknown to him, was unable to choose otherwise? Perhaps nothing changes. But then we encounter competing intuitions: compatibilists are content that both actions are equally free while libertarians insist that all such contrived examples fail due to their controversial assumptions. Even though blockage counterexamples have an advantage over traditional Frankfurt counterexamples because they are not vulnerable to Kane's objections, the two camps remain entrenched.[34]

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[34] The libertarian may still deny the freedom of an agent with blocked neural pathways on some other grounds.

The Repercussions on Foreknowledge from the Attack on PAP

What must now be clear is that if Frankfurt examples are successful in refuting PAP, then the fatalist arguments we have examined so far, since they depend heavily on PAP, are all unsound. However, there are two problems with the application of Frankfurt examples to the problem of foreknowledge. First, Frankfurt examples, as a refutation, do not explain why PAP is false. They present only very contrived situations where PAP does not hold and we still ascribe moral responsibility to the actors involved. Frankfurt examples, at most, only show that it is not the case that PAP is true without qualification. They might provide scenarios where PAP is not applicable, even though our intuition about PAP holds in nearly all other situations. But, of course, that is a generous evaluation of the impact of Frankfurt examples on PAP. Based on the preceding analysis, it is better to conclude that Frankfurt counterexamples do not successfully challenge PAP. One insight grounding PAP is that free actions are not necessary. For Augustine's solution to theological fatalism, this insight will not suffice, God's foreknowledge of human actions is temporally necessary, so *every* human action is temporally necessary even if it is causally contingent. If all foreknown events are temporally necessary events, then foreknowledge and PAP are incompatible, so PAP does not merely have exceptions, but it is false. Thus, since PAP comes through the Frankfurt challenge without being significantly damaged, we must find another way to make sense of the freedom Augustine finds compatible with the temporal necessity of divine foreknowledge. We cannot, as David Hunt suggests, justify rejecting PAP on the grounds that it is already under siege and likely false.[35]

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[35] David Hunt, "On Augustine's Way Out," 17-8.

Non-Compatibilist Freedom without PAP

There has been some rehabilitation of Frankfurt scenarios within the foreknowledge literature. Rather than being used to refute PAP, Frankfurt scenarios illustrate and refocus the role of alternative possibilities in fatalist arguments. Linda Zagzebski defends the use of Frankfurt counterexamples within the context of foreknowledge by calling attention to the counterfactual nature of the intervention – that is, especially in the case of foreknowledge, the hypothetical intervention *always* corresponds to what the person would have done anyway.[36] The dormant device *never* enters into the causal sequence and therefore plays no part in the description of William's choice as a free choice. As Zagzebski argues, there is a sense in which William *does* have alternative possibilities since the device is always preset to what he would have done had the device not been present. Zagzebski introduces a subtle difference in her defense of Frankfurt examples: in the case of foreknowledge, the counterfactual intervention can never occur. Let us suppose that William chooses Martha – what role does George's device play in the decision? Obviously, none at all. On the standard Frankfurt counterexample interpretation, William freely chooses Martha, despite having no alternative possibilities. In the foreknowledge version Zagzebski suggests, since William can do otherwise (counterfactually), he cannot ever act in such a way that the machine intervenes since if he chooses differently, then the device also would have been programmed differently. However, by the time William makes his choice, the device has already been set, and since it was set *because* of William's choice, William already has

    [36] Zagzebski summarizes her argument from *The Dilemma of Freedom and Foreknowledge* in her article, "Recent Work on Divine Foreknowledge and Free Will" in *The Oxford Handbook of Free Will* ed. Robert Kane (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 59.

the results of his actions. There is a sense in which the device's programming is up to William. On the other hand, the device's programming is part of the actual past, and it is now "too late" to do anything about the past. In order to solve this puzzle we must refocus our investigation. If foreknowledge is incompatible with any restricted PAP-n, then foreknowledge is incompatible with unrestricted PAP. The task remains to argue for a description of freedom that does not rely on unrestricted PAP – a description that lets our actions be up to us, even if it is "too late" to do anything about them.

Augustinian Solution: Source Incompatibilism

Since the direct attacks on PAP have reached an impasse, it is appropriate to investigate freedom from another direction. Instead of examining what states of affairs are incompatible with freedom, let us return to actions that we are confident are freely performed. In the next few pages, I will investigate those paradigmatic cases and attempt to generalize their essential characteristics in such a way as to deliver insight into the borderline/ambiguous scenarios.

Augustine's embrace of source incompatibilism is a serious attempt to deliver such an essential characteristic. Source incompatibilism is the de-emphasis on Aristotle's second condition for free will (PAP) in favor of his first condition (agent origination). Like traditional compatibilism, source incompatibilism emphasizes the actual sequence of events leading up to an action. Source incompatibilism borrows from compatibilism the insistence that the actual causal sequence is inseparable from an act's freedom. Yet source incompatibilism borrows libertarianism's rejection of causal determinism. Agents who perform blameworthy actions must not be mere conduits of external efficient causes.

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Source incompatibilism is a way to identify the *real* problem with causal determinism. We might find ourselves having no alternative possibilities in strikingly different ways, not all of which are inimical to freedom. An objection to causal determinism based on the sources of actions is a more focused attack on *what it is* that makes causal determinism incompatible with freedom.

We can see a trend in the standard paradigmatic examples for compatibilism and libertarianism: the terminus of explanation for an action is the agent herself. Jonathan Edwards' virtuous woman is *herself* the explanatory terminus of her decision to remain virtuous. Her action is not the result of any external cause. In Augustine's examples, free assent to something that is "my necessity" still comes from within the agent.[37] Even if the spatial language of "within" is imprecise, we can still say that the assent is not reducible to something external to the agent. As a working definition of free choice, then, we can borrow Linda Zagzebski's version from *Dilemma* as a point of departure.

> Definition of Free Choice: A choice is free if and only if a) it could have not occurred even if the causal history of that choice had been identical to the one that actually obtains and b) it would still have occurred even if non-causally necessitating factors had not obtained.[38]

Her first condition is essentially an endorsement of PAP-C: both choosing X and failing to choose X are compatible with the entire causal history of the choice. Her second condition is indifference to non-causal necessities. That is, the agent still would have chosen X regardless of whether God has foreknowledge or whether there are any other necessitating factors that are not causal. Zagzebski notes that her definition is

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[37] Augustine, *DCD* V:10.

[38] Zagzebski, *The Dilemma of Freedom and Foreknowledge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 161.

compatible with divine foreknowledge (condition b) but incompatible with causal determinism (condition a). Her definition explicitly excludes free will from being the result of an external efficient cause while also keeping free will from being dependent on "necessitating factors" that ultimately result in modal overdetermination. That is, it is not true that I choose A at T *because* God foreknows my choice to do A at T or *because* it was already true that I do A at T. According to Zagzebski's definition, the only form of necessity that is incompatible with freedom is causal necessity. The paradigmatic virtuous woman easily satisfies both conditions of Zagzebski's definition: her choice is independent of prior external causes, and her choice is not meaningfully explained by non-causal necessitating factors (foreknowledge, the truth of future-tense propositions, etc…). This definition seems to have no trouble with compatibilism's paradigmatic examples.

If successful with Frankfurt scenarios, Zagzebski's definition should provide an answer to them that is both intuitively strong and avoids giving any ground to determinism. We might expect it to do well against these counterexamples since, like Frankfurt, source incompatibilism is concerned with the *actual* sequences of events, not what might have happened. In our Frankfurt example above, we have two possible causal histories of William choosing Martha. One possible causal history involves William authoring the choice of marrying Martha, in the other William's choice is not his own – he is not the explanatory terminus for that decision, and therefore is not free. If the device never triggers and William chooses Martha, he chooses her freely, even if, had he flickered in the other direction, he would have been forced to choose her.

As noted above, a definition of freedom based on actual sequences of events should be able to navigate these margin cases. Zagzebski's definition is more difficult to apply to the blockage examples. Hunt, in his blockage article, anticipated the objection that his modified Frankfurt scenario implicitly assumes that the choices resulting from blockage are themselves causally determined. As Harrison argues, it is incoherent to assert that one and the same causal sequence can be both deterministic and non-deterministic depending on some state of affairs outside that sequence.[39] This much seems true enough, so Hunt's blockage counterexample to PAP does not implicitly assume causal determinism (Zagzebski's first condition).

What the blockage example does do, however, is make us less sure about the explanatory terminus of the action. If I arrange a system in such a way that only one outcome and only one path toward that outcome is possible, then it seems fair to call myself the author of the system's outcomes. The individual links in that causal chain cannot serve as the explanatory terminus for the outcome. Even if there *could* be an explanatory terminus other than the agent, the authorship of those actions remains an open question. Thus, for the blockage-style examples, it is plausible that if a third party arranges William's neural pathways in such a way that the *only* mental events that he can actualize are ones that lead to him choosing Martha, then the arranger may be the real author of those actions. William's thoughts were not directly altered, nor was he coerced, nor was there even counterfactual interference from some inactive device. In the blockage example, the blocks prevent neural pathways that would not have been utilized anyway. Nevertheless the blockage makes it difficult to determine whether William can

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[39] Harrison, 403.

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be described as the origination point, explanatory terminus, author, begetter, or source of his action – even if the causal history is *identical* in both cases. I find these scenarios interesting because they highlight the possibility for causation and authorship to diverge. However, if we stipulate that the source of the mental event is the agent, and the "blocks" play no role in the actual history and sequence of the event, then the actual sequence is the most relevant feature of the counterexample. Therefore, it is possible that the agent in the blockage scenario acts freely.

More Precise Description of "Authorship"

Since Augustine's solution rests on the foundation of authorship and agency, "authorship" must be a coherent and explanatory concept. Unfortunately, so far "authorship" has been given only an imprecise definition. Further, if we assume a deterministic understanding of human action, then the term "authorship" or "source" is itself a poor term or analogy. In such a deterministic world, there are no actual "sources" of action, and someone being an "author" is shorthand for identifying a temporally proximate member of the causal chain. There would be no privileged position for the person who "authored" his own actions.

The central feature of source incompatibilism is the foundational premise that some causes and explanations can indeed terminate in individual persons. Source incompatibilism, borrowing from theories of agent causation, states that by terminating the explanation of an action in a person we are not misspeaking, but stating the facts. We can add it as a third condition to Zagzebski's formula for free will:

> … and c) its true and ultimate explanatory and causal origin is the agent who performed it.

We retain from Zagzebski's definition the incompatibility with causal determinism and irrelevance of non-causal necessitating factors. This third condition makes the definition of free choice explicitly incompatible with causal indeterminism, since it states that the action *does* have an ultimate causal explanation and is not merely random or arbitrary. Based on this definition, agents must have the power to generate new causal chains, else there is no free will.

Does this account of agent causation without an unrestricted PAP shed light on those thorny blockage scenarios? It is, after all, the "ultimate explanatory origin" condition that makes the blockage examples contested. If someone had pre-emptively blocked all my neural pathways other than one, it is hard to imagine how I could legitimately be called an ultimate explanatory terminus for any actions I performed based on one and only one neural pathway. Or if it is both coherent and plausible to identify an action of mine as having its explanatory terminus in me, then we need to appeal to more than our ordinary intuitions about agent freedom to reach that conclusion. Either way, the question of whether or not the blockage example curtails freedom would then depend on how we answer the authorship question. Alternative possibilities are not explanatorily relevant.

I anticipate those who favor the blockage examples will object that my definition does not take into account the identical causal histories in the scenario. Surely if the causal histories are identical, then the only way to critique the blockage example would be to include something outside the actual causal sequence in the criteria for actions performed by free will – something like PAP. I think an authorship source-incompatibilist can concede that charge as long as not all mental events are neural events.

Because neural events are governed by cause and effect relations, "identical causal histories for neural events" results in "identical neural events." Attempts to find differences in *ex hypothesi* identical things are doomed to failure.

Mental events, however, are not subject to *a priori* dependence on cause/effect relations. While mental events might be nothing more than arrangements of neural events, and therefore identical mental events are identical neural events, this remains a debatable issue.[40] Neural-mental identity is certainly not a required assumption for the blockage examples. Even if there are some reasonable arguments for identifying the two, Augustine did not assume this identity.

In fact, one may assume that mental events have causal relations. All that is required for this definition of free will is that among the many mental events, some initiate new causal sequences while others are the causal results of such initiations. It is possible to remain agnostic about whether some mental events involve or supervene on neural events. Requiring that some mental events are not neural events may alienate one who might otherwise gravitate to solutions that involve actual causal sequences. However, by my lights, Frankfurt examples in general, and the blockage examples in particular, show that attention to actual causal sequences without an origination requirement will lead to compatibilism regarding free will and determinism. Origination is not compatible with neural/mental identity.

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[40] There is no shortage of writers asserting the identity of neural events with mental events. Patricia Churchland's 1994 address "Can Neurobiology Teach Us Anything about Consciousness?" *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 67, No. 4 (January 1994), 23-40 is particularly direct in its affirmation. Conversely, Timothy O'Connor in *Persons & Causes: The Metaphysics of Free Will*, objects to what he calls "The Emergent Scientific Picture of the World." 108-125.

Here is why: in the blockage examples, if an internally caused mental event sets off the sequence that follows along the exact path that the arranger set up, then whether the agent could have done differently is irrelevant since the ultimate source of the action is the agent herself. However, neural events, being physical, are always caused by prior states. Inasmuch as this example denies PAP, it only collapses into compatibilism if the originating mental event is some species of neural event. If no identity of mental events and neural events is presupposed then the solution can go forward. In fact, that is the only way it can go forward since there is no such thing as a neural event that is its own cause.

We now turn to two objections of source incompatibilism. The first objection is that too much our moral language and our intuitions are lost by affirming PAP-C but not PAP. The second is that source incompatibilism, though effective for the problem of evil, contradicts Augustine's commitment to salvation by grace.

First Objection to Source Incompatibilism: The Loss of PAP

If source incompatibilism succeeds without PAP, is there any reason to prefer PAP or PAP-like conditions as a hallmark of freedom? It seems there are at least two reasons for doing so: first, there are very strong intuitive and common sense reasons for saying that where no alternative possibilities exist, even relative to foreknowledge, *some* form of determinism or fatalism must prevail. The Frankfurt counterexamples mitigate this moral intuition, but not decisively. Frankfurt counterexamples succeed in generating doubts about our common-sense worries about freedom when there is only one possible action. If the action were the result of coercion, then certainly the agent is not morally culpable. But in the case of only Frankfurt-style counterfactual coercion, it seems clear enough that agents can still choose freely.

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Second, and perhaps more importantly, PAP preserves a firm dedication to the openness of an agent's free actions. Source incompatibilism concedes that an agent's actions must be open in one sense (in the agent's self-determination), yet not necessarily open in another (the agent might, oddly, have only one possible action she can perform). Where the traditional libertarian can boldly assert that free beings have alternative possibilities, an Augustinian libertarian cannot do so but instead must argue that alternative possibilities over causal sequences are needed for freedom, but not alternative possibilities in an absolute sense.

One way to tease out the difference between the two kinds of possibility is to ask whether God could know the outcome of a truly random, causally indeterminate event. If not, then foreknowledge is based on antecedent causes, and where there are no determinative antecedent causes, then God cannot know what will occur.[41] If God *can* foreknow the outcome of a truly random event, then foreknowledge is analogous to observation. Since, as Boethius might style it, God is already there watching the outcome, He can know it with total and perfect certainty in eternity even without any prior determining causes.

If God can know the outcome of an indeterministic process, we are left with an odd paradox since in one sense, the event is truly random. It is, by hypothesis, not subject to any determining causal laws or events. Why assert that the only possible outcome is the one that God has foreseen? It is illuminating because, when approached from the direction of causes, the event does not lose its alternative possibilities. When approached from the direction of divine knowledge, then it has no alternative possibilities. The

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[41] Note that divine decree is an antecedent cause, so God could not decree the outcome of a truly random event and for it to remain random.

random event *will* produce the one and only outcome God foreknows even though it was not causally necessary.

Second Objection to Source Incompatibilism: Good Actions and Christian Freedom

The final challenge to source incompatibilism comes from within Augustine's philosophy. Even though we must be the origin of our own sinful actions, are we also free to do good without divine assistance? Augustine may be more comfortable with God's power overcoming our weakness when it comes to good works since what is done in holiness is done in concert with the Holy Spirit. However, Augustine is no compatibilist when it comes to evil deeds since God cannot be the source of our sins, nor could we be held responsible for actions initiated in us by demonic forces.[42]

But we should not be troubled by this result. For Augustine, once a person becomes a Christian, their life is inextricably bound up in the life of Christ. The distinctions between *my* works and *Christ's* works become blurred. I am able to participate in Christ's works through my own good works – which He himself makes possible and initiates. For me to say that I am now "slave to Christ" is an affirmation of humility and dependence, not one of despair or helplessness. The life that I now ardently desire is a gift, and the deeds that I may be able to perform are also a gift. But then I must remain open to both God's leading and His decree. It is no small theme of the Scriptures to speak of God writing new desires on the hearts of His people, and this can affect the way we evaluate the action's origin.

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[42] Augustine argues for as much in *De Spiritu et Littera* especially chapters 57 and 58. He states at the end of 58: "But whoever shall put his trust in Him, and yeild himself up to Him, for the forgiveness of all his sins, for the cure of all his corruption, and for the kindling and illumination of his soul by His warmth and light, shall have good works by his grace; and by them he shall be even in his body redeemed from the corruption of death, crowned, satisfied with blessings, – not temporal, but eternal, – above what we can ask or understand."

Augustine also avoids arguing that all manipulations of the will are morally wrong. Since desires are morally pregnant mental states, a desire for good works is itself good. For similar reasons, if God gave a desire for sin, that act would be itself an act of evil. This is why in *DLA* Augustine has to locate the source of evil in the free action of the will, and nowhere external to the agent. On the contrary, God, being morally praiseworthy for the desire he causes to spring up from His people, is counted as a benefactor when He creates a "new heart" for His worshipers.

Do we then have two freedoms at work? If so then we would have a separate freedom that is the Christian's ability to do the good works set before her by Christ – and this freedom may be compatible with theological determinism. The other freedom is the kind of freedom needed for moral culpability from sin: the agent is the sole author of their own sinful or evil actions – and this freedom cannot be compatible with any sort of determinism. As much as I wish to avoid discussing the issue of freedom for the Christian, it is worth exploring to see if the two types of freedom are closely related. It seems to me that when considering Christian freedom Augustine does not have an Edwardsian view of the will since he does not argue that the will simply is the most powerful desire of the mind. If he were to do so, God re-writing an agent's desire is merely another way of saying that God re-determines the agent's will and actions. In that case, it is not that authorship of actions becomes blended, but that authorship becomes re-assigned away from the person, and instead ascribed to God.

Rather, Augustine argues that agents act in accord with their desires, even though the desires are often in conflict, but this is short of identifying the will with the desires.[43]

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[43] In *Confessions* VIII:10, Augustine describes being of two wills regarding his desire to leave his life of sin and his desire to retain his sinful pleasures and autonomy.

But again, even if Augustine's view of Christian freedom is reducible to compatibilism, it need not interfere with his arguments defending the freedom to sin. It would be no insult to Augustine to claim that the freedom of a Christian performing good works is qualitatively different from the freedom of the same person performing a sinful action.

Moreover, assignment of guilt requires particular care in determining the authorship of the act. The assignment of blessedness, however, has no such requirement, and is perhaps cheapened by a person insisting on strict descriptions of authorship and exacting standards of causal sequences. While a sinner alone must be guilty before God, the saint can truthfully state that her actions were not her own – the saint is the *recipient* of those actions. Only her cooperation, such as it was, was free. Stated more simply, I should be grateful if someone were to pull me from danger while I, under a delusion, resisted. Conversely, I would be rightfully offended if someone were to pull me into danger when I had no desire to be endangered. Because of this asymmetry of praise and blame, Augustine worries about a person's ability to sin freely. He is not so vexed about a person freely performing righteous acts.[44]

At the very least, an Augustinian should be prepared to admit that the threshold of authorship is quite different between the saint and sinner. For someone about to be judged guilty, the threshold of authorship is very high, such that absolutely no external coercion, causal determinism, or other factor interferes with the agent condemning themselves by their own actions. For someone to be a conduit for Christ's ongoing

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[44] "… these books contain no reference to God's grace, by which He has predestined His elect in such a way that He Himself makes ready the wills of those among them who are now making use of free choice. When there was any occasion for mentioning this grace, it was mentioned in passing, not defended by careful reasoning as if it was the main subject. It is one thing to inquire into the cause of evil, another to inquire how we can return to our former good, or reach one that is greater." From *Retractations* Book I, Chapter 9.2. Translated by Dom M. Pontifex. The Newman Press, 1955; London:Longmans, Green & Co.

redemption of the world and humanity, the threshold is much lower, and, in fact, encouraged to be ever more minimal by typical prayers entreating God to assist in purging or re-aligning the affections. Eleonore Stump illustrates this different kind of authorship with a character she calls Smith the Smoker. Smith has an irresistible first-order desire to smoke, but can employ a device that will circumvent that desire and give him an irresistible first-order desire to refrain from smoking. While it is true that Smith could not have quit smoking without the device and the device does interfere with his first-order desires, it is up to Smith to activate the device. The new first-order desire to refrain from smoking is jointly authored by Smith and the device, even though the second-order desire to use the device is authored by Smith. In like manner, God can make our second-order desires effectual to change our first-order desires and thereby we share authorship in those new first-order desires that result in good works. Our willingness to ask for and receive such assistance does not violate the authorship criteria. On Augustine's account, we do not need to act without any interference at all, but only that the interference is welcomed and that welcoming act has its source in the agent.[45]

Source incompatibilist agent causation has the advantages of being a positive description of freedom, introspectively attractive, and incompatible with determinism. It does not clash with Augustinian views of sanctification, nor does it render traditional freedom-relative language unintelligible. We can now apply it toward Augustine's most

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[45] Eleonore Stump, "Free Will in Augustine" *Cambridge Companion to Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 135. Stump interprets Augustine's conception of sinfulness along these lines, though that is somewhat at odds with the whole of *DLA*. Augustine uses the dialogue form to create ever more minute descriptions of sinfulness. We are sinful by act, and also by ignorance, yet also by the omission to seek out the One who would give us knowledge. It is this last sinfulness (not seeking/asking for assistance in overcoming evil) that Stump highlights for Augustine's description of guilt before God. Though this is not the most felicitous reading of *DLA*, her illustration fits Augustine's description of sanctification in *On Spirit and Letter* perfectly.

puzzling description of foreknowledge. If source incompatibilism encapsulates what is true freedom of the will, it should lend clarity to Augustine's final argument in *DLA* III*: the reverse memory analogy.

Clarification of the Memory Analogy

At the end of the discussion about God's foreknowledge, Augustine suggests to Evodius that God's knowledge of the future has a near analogue in our own knowledge of the past. Though the analogy initially might seem irrelevant and perhaps damaging to Augustine's case, it serves to reveal Augustine's psychological reactions to his solution. That is, Augustine, by insisting that accidental/temporal necessity attaches to all events, implies that the future is no more changeable than the past.

Clearly, the primary purpose of the memory analogy is to remove God from the direct causal sequence of His creatures and their sin. Augustine concludes that even though he can look into the past and remember many things he certainly did not cause everything he remembers. Likewise, for God to look into the future and be aware of many things does not entail that He causes everything He foreknows – certainly not. However, what remains is a feeling of helplessness about the future. If the future is out there, and known by God, and cannot be changed – even perhaps temporally necessary, then why not despair? If the "up to me" condition is satisfied, but the future is inviolable, then there seems to be little gained by having it up to me since there I cannot act differently.

Even with the feeling of helplessness, we seem to lose little by believing the future to be inviolable. If Augustine is correct, then some of God's beliefs about the future, being true, are dependent on the future rather than determine the future. God's

decisions and actions can determine the truth-value of future-tense propositions, but that much is not controversial for a theist. The reverse memory analogy asks us to make the same distinction we make regarding human action: I can be the cause of various events I remember, though clearly I am not the cause of everything I remember. My memory of them, if accurate, reflects those actions; but they were not done *because* I remember them. Likewise, the actions of a human agent can determine the truth-value of a future-tense proposition, which God then believes, since He believes all true propositions. Yet God's beliefs do not add to the causal or explanatory history for my free actions.

Augustine's solution to theological fatalism does not solve all the mysteries of the temporal effects of God's actions. Since God's actions and knowledge of their outcomes are simultaneous, He has to have some way to deliberate over His actions so that He can rationally prefer one to another. Since there is no way for God to wait and see what reaction His actions will evoke, He needs to have a non-probabilistic method to determine His single will. It seems to me that Augustine's reverse memory analogy does little to explain the method of God's providence. However, if a modern Christian finds Augustine's solution to theological fatalism compelling, there is nothing preventing her from supplementing Augustine's position in order to ground divine providence. Augustine's defeat of theological fatalism by embracing agent causation and the temporal necessity of the future stands or falls apart from its usefulness for understanding providence.

Conclusion

It may seem strange to use agent causation to deny a form of PAP, yet Augustine's conception of free will does so in a way that offers new insight into moral

responsibility, sin, and coercion. It is not enough to ask whether an agent could have acted differently, since, depending on the frame of reference, there may be more than one correct answer. If free, an agent could have acted differently in reference to causation. When understood in reference to divine foreknowledge, the same agent at the same time could not have acted differently. The two frames of reference are not reducible to the other. However, the ability to avoid a particular future is, for Augustine, the wrong way to imagine freedom. Augustine argues that what is most valuable in the ability to do otherwise is the ability of an agent to stand outside the inexorable procession of cause and effect. The essence of freedom of the will is the ability to initiate entirely new sequences of causes. Augustine's solution is elegant: it avoids equating freedom with random indeterminism, rejects causal and theological determinism, and is not threatened by compatibilists' paradigmatic exemplars.

The task of re-evaluating the primacy of PAP would have been easier had Frankfurt arguments been successful. Frankfurt counterexamples, ingenious though they are, do not *independently* falsify the principle of alternative possibilities. Thus, rejecting some form of PAP, even if it is PAP-F and not PAP-C, comes with a cost. Admitting that I cannot refrain from some future action due to the contents of the actual past is a price the Ockhamist or Boethian does not have to pay. They must pay in other ways, as they must conceptually "protect" the future from the past or from eternity. Because he denies PAP-F, Augustine need place no restrictions on God's activities. God, knowing the future, can act on what He knows will occur. Since His beliefs and their objects are already temporally necessary, His actions do not increase the temporal necessity of what He foreknows.

For those of us who find God's unrestricted use of foreknowledge attractive, we must decide whether or not authorship and origination adequately capture freedom of the will. For Augustine, authorship of one's own actions is the essential characteristic of free will. He does not use authorship as just another way of grounding PAP-C, as though PAP-C were the prize. Rather, PAP-C is true where agents can originate new causal sequences – it is a corollary of freedom, not a definition. To be free is to be an originator, an initiator. I submit that what we seek when we affirm free will is for the agent to look nowhere else to discover the ultimate reason *why* they acted as they did – for the agent to stand outside the push and pull of the laws of nature. Augustine's conception of free will gives the agent's role a degree of grandeur far beyond what PAP alone offers. We initiate wholly new sequences of events, and thereby add to God's knowledge. We are free, and fully foreknown.

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