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Neo-Molinism: A Reappraisal and Defense

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by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the cogency of Gregory Boyd's so-called "neo-Molinist" account of the openness of the future. In particular, it is an investigation into whether Boyd's Square of Opposition for future contingents provides a model of reality for free-will theists that can preserve classical conceptions of (i) omniscience, (ii) logic, and (iii) morally significant freedom. In what follows, I argue that it can.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

To the patient ones, Amy and Olivia.

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I.

In recent years, a debate has been raging among theologians and philosophers of religion over the question of whether God could, in principle, know what a free agent would or would not do on any particular occasion. On one school of thought, what I shall hereafter refer to as "classical Molinism,"[1] the answer is yes. Specifically, the defining claim of classical Molinism is this: for any possible agent S and circumstance C that God might choose to instantiate, God knew, logically prior to his decision to create, that were S in C, S would freely do act A (or, as the case may be, would *not* do A). That God has "middle knowledge" of such counterfactuals of creaturely freedom—or, for brevity, CCFs—is the assumption upon which the entire Molinist enterprise depends.[2]

Others, however, don't share this assumption. One problem in particular with the classical Molinist conception of CCFs, they say, is that it is not altogether clear how God could know these subjective conditionals given the kind of freedom they presuppose. After all, conditionals of this sort are supposed to be about the libertarian, and therefore *indeterministic*,

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[1] Named after the sixteenth-century Spanish Jesuit philosopher and theologian, Luis de Molina (1535-1600).

[2] More specifically, Molina's theory was that, in addition to God's natural knowledge of everything that *could* be, and his free knowledge of all contingent truths that *will* be, God possesses "middle knowledge"—i.e., hypothetical knowledge of what, if he were to actualize a particular world, *would* be. On this picture, such knowledge is thought to be pre-volitional since, like God's natural knowledge, it occurs logically prior to his decision to create. But unlike his natural knowledge, which includes within its scope all *necessary* truths, the content of God's middle knowledge is *contingent*. Indeed, it was the great theological innovation of Molina to locate facts about what creatures would freely do in any circumstance—so-called *counterfactuals of creaturely freedom*—among the set of contingent truths that combine to comprise God's middle knowledge. Though he has no control over what counterfactual conditionals are true, the idea was that, by conceiving of God's hypothetical knowledge of creaturely free decisions as being explanatorily *prior* to his creative decree, God would be in a position to plan and thereby meticulously govern a world that is, nevertheless, populated by libertarian free agents. For an illustration of the basic idea sketched above, see **Figure 2** below.

free actions of persons. But if the circumstances *C* in which *S* chooses to, say, do *A* are non-determining—as they must be if *S*'s choice is to be considered free—then nothing about the laws of nature or the state of the world leading up to the moment of *S*'s decision will be sufficient to guarantee that *S* chooses *A* rather than not-*A*. Indeed, as Anthony Kenny notes, "for an indeterminist, points in any story where a free choice is made are precisely points where the story has two different and equally coherent continuations."[3] Thus a question naturally arises: What indication could God possibly have, prior to *S*'s actual decision, that *S* would choose *this* way rather than *that* way? While not absolutely decisive against the Molinist position, worries like this have proven serious enough that it has seemed to a growing number of philosophers that what is true (and, hence, knowable) prior to God's creative decree is not that *S* definitely *would* or *would not* do *A* in *C* but, rather, that *S might* or *might not* do *A* in *C*.[4]

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[3] Anthony Kenny, *The God of the Philosophers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 68.

[4] A related worry has always been the question of what could explain or *ground* the truth of these conditionals. Such truths cannot be accounted for by appealing to God's will, for instance, since to do so would amount to theological determinism, something Molinists want to avoid. Nor would it seem that they could be made true by the actual decisions of the agents themselves; for CCFs are about *non-actual* persons, persons who do not yet exist (and, in many cases, will *never* exist). In the absence of any other candidates, however, it looks as if we are left with an unappealing conclusion, namely that *nothing* grounds these truths. This is, of course, the (in)famous "grounding problem." For a detailed and more formal articulation of this particular objection, see Alexander Zambrano, "Truthmaker and the Grounding Objection to Middle Knowledge," *Aporia* 21, no. 2 (2011): 19-34, and William Hasker, "Counterfactuals and Evil: A Final Reply to R. Douglas Geivett," *Philosophia Christi* 5, no. 1 (2003): 237-40. For a sampling of Molinist responses to the grounding objection, see Thomas Flint, *Divine Providence: The Molinist Account* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), chap. 5; William Lane Craig, "Middle Knowledge, Truth-Makers, and the Grounding Objection," *Faith and Philosophy* 18, (2001): 337-52; and Edward Wierenga, "Providence, Middle Knowledge, and the Grounding Objection," *Philosophia Christi* 3, no. 2 (2001): 447-57.

One of the more interesting proposals to emerge along these lines has been a view called "neo-Molinism."[5] According to neo-Molinists, when it comes to the free actions of agents, God's middle knowledge cannot be assumed to pertain solely to what these agents "would" or "would not" do since such propositions—being *contraries* rather than contradictories—do not exhaust the range of possibilities. Logically speaking, the contradictory of "*S* would do *A* in *C*" is not "*S* would not do *A* in *C*" but "*S* might not do *A* in *C*." Similarly, "*S* would not do *A* in *C*" is contradicted by "*S* might do *A* in *C*." Because of this, there is a logically distinct class of *conjointly* true "might and might not" propositions among the content of God's middle knowledge. Supposing then that God decides to create a world with persons capable of free choice, the resultant indeterminacy from granting such a capacity would then extend *beyond* divine middle knowledge and come to form a part of the very structure of the world God chose to create and know. Among other things, this would mean that the future is, to some degree, "open" for us and God. God's foreknowledge, like his (logically) prior middle knowledge, would now correspond, not just to what "will" and "will not" occur, but, significantly, to what "might and might not" occur as well.

This thesis explores the cogency of the neo-Molinist account of the openness of the future. In particular, it is an investigation into whether the relation between future contingent statements asserting what "will," "will not," and what "might and might not" occur, as conceived by neo-Molinist Gregory Boyd, provides a model of reality for free-will theists that can preserve classical conceptions of (i) omniscience, (ii) logic, and (iii) morally significant freedom. In what follows, I argue that it can.

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[5] The primary architect of this view, and the one responsible for its title, is Gregory A. Boyd. See Boyd, "Neo-Molinism and the Infinite Intelligence of God," *Philosophia Christi* 5, no.1 (2003): 187-204.

Of course, not everyone has agreed that it can (let alone that it does). The task of this essay, therefore, is primarily one of defense. Specifically, I will be defending Boyd's open future Square of Opposition from one of neo-Molinism's more vocal rivals, the classical Molinist philosopher, William Lane Craig. Here's the overall structure of what's to come. I'll first introduce and locate neo-Molinism within the broader context of Christian theism. I'll then begin to articulate some senses in which the neo-Molinist conceives of the openness of the future, noting some similarities and, ultimately, one major difference between how they and classical Molinists think of the future as being "open." After locating this difference, I'll then illustrate the open future Square of Opposition, a logical-semantical model of the nature of the future from a neo-Molinist's perspective. From there, I switch to defense, offering five potential justifications for the logical relationships that obtain on the Square in the face of Craig's more recent criticisms. In the process, I show how the Square allows free-will theists a vision of reality that not only maintains classical conceptions of omniscience and logic, but one that provides a more perspicuous account of majority libertarian intuitions as well.

II.

Before taking a look at how the neo-Molinist understands the nature of the future, it would be beneficial to spend a moment getting clear on a few defining (theological) features of neo-Molinism more generally. First and foremost, a neo-Molinist is a *theist*. Unlike polytheists or, say, pantheists however, neo-Molinists are theists of a broadly classical sort. Alan Rhoda defines "broadly classical theism" as "the view that there is a unique personal being (God) who exists necessarily, who possesses a maximal set of compossible great-making properties, including omnipotence, omniscience, and perfect goodness, and who created the world *ex nihilo*

and can unilaterally intervene in it as he pleases."[6] Within the stream of this venerable tradition

is, moreover, a small but established strand of theistic belief to which neo-Molinism properly

belongs. That strand is the theological school of thought that has generally come to be known as

open theism.[7] As Rhoda puts it, the "open" in open theism refers to two general aspects of

openness—the openness *of God*, and the openness *of the future*.[8] The latter will be addressed in

the sections to follow. But, first, a quick word about the neo-Molinist conception of the

openness of God.

Like all open theists, what makes neo-Molinists unique among their classical brethren is

their belief that the future is, as of now and in some respects, *epistemically* open for God. Let S

stand for "God." Then, using brackets "< >" to denote propositions (e.g., <x> is to be read: "the

proposition x"), we can adopt the following formal analysis of divine epistemic openness:

> **Divine Epistemic Openness Thesis:** The future is *epistemically open* for some
> person(s)[9] S at time t if and only if for some state of affairs x and some future time t^*

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[6] Alan R. Rhoda, "The Fivefold Openness of the Future," in *God in an Open Universe: Science, Metaphysics, and Open Theism*, ed. William Hasker, Thomas Jay Oord, and Dean Zimmerman (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011), 69, n1.

[7] While the term "open theism" is of relatively recent vintage (see Clark Pinnock, et al., *The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994)), the theological view to which it refers is at least as old as Protestantism itself. For research which locates openness thinking at multiple points within and throughout Church history, see Tom Lukashow's "Open Theism Timeline" (April 2013) and extensive bibliography compiled at http://theopenview.org/historical-research/ (accessed June 25, 2014).

[8] Rhoda, "The Fivefold Openness of the Future," 69.

[9] This addition is mine. I allow for both a singular and plural reading of "person" to leave room for those monotheistic traditions which would conceive of God as one person (e.g., Islam, Judaism) as well as those monotheists who have, historically, understood the one God as a threefold manifestation consisting in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (e.g., the Christian doctrine of the Trinity). While open theism has primarily been a movement within Christian theology, the theme of divine epistemic openness has periodically been affirmed in other faith traditions as well. See, for instance, Michael Lodahl, "The (Brief) Openness Debate in Islamic Theology:

neither $<x$ will obtain at $t^*>$ nor $<x$ will not obtain at $t^*>$ (nor their tense-neutral counterparts) is infallibly known by S either (i) at t or (ii) timelessly.[10]

With respect to the above definition, Rhoda adds the following commentary:

> The adverb 'infallibly,' and clause (ii) at the end, are there to avoid trivialization. It is, after all, boringly obvious that the future is epistemically open to fallible beings like ourselves. Epistemic openness only becomes an interesting and controversial thesis when it concerns an essentially perfect and infallible knower, like God…As for (ii), a timeless God has no temporal properties and stands in no temporal relations and so cannot know anything *at a time*. Since…advocates of divine timelessness don't want to be committed to epistemic openness simply on that account, (ii) adds a necessary restriction.[11]

Hence given that neo-Molinism is a form of open theism, I shall, for the purposes of this essay, use the titles "neo-Molinism" and "open theism" interchangeably. Importantly, however, the neo-Molinist account of the future being explored here is what could plausibly be called a *conservative* version of open theism. By identifying the neo-Molinist position as "conservative," I mean to highlight a certain attraction this account of openness potentially affords for those free-will theists of a (generally) classical bent by drawing attention to the fact that, over against some other varieties of open theism, neo-Molinism aligns more closely with conservative or "classical" conceptions of omniscience and logic. For instance, as will become clear below, despite the fact that the future is epistemically open for God, God's knowledge (omniscience) is, according to the neo-Molinist, an attribute that nevertheless corresponds *perfectly* to reality. Significantly, there's no truth that the God of neo-Molinism fails to know. Nor is there any

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And Why that Debate Should be Different among Contemporary Christians," in *Creation Made Free: Open Theology Engaging Science*, ed. Thomas Jay Oord (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2009), 53-68. See, too, Jewish thinkers such as Joshua Hoffman and Gary S. Rosenkrantz, *The Divine Attributes* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), and the medieval philosopher, Gersonides (Tamar Rudavsky, "Gersonides," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2011), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2011/entries/gersonides/ (accessed October 11, 2014)).

[10] Rhoda, "The Fivefold Openness," 75.

[11] Ibid., 75-6.

falsehood that he doesn't know to be false. Additionally, over the course of defending this view of the future from critics, what I hope to demonstrate is that not only can the neo-Molinist argue their position from metaphysical theses widely held among classical theists, but, contrary to what is commonly supposed, they are able to do so without having to abandon standard systems of logic.

With these clarifications in place, I now turn to an explication of the neo-Molinist account of the openness of the future.

III.

Besides being epistemically open for God, the neo-Molinist holds that the future is, in some sense, itself open. But in what sense exactly? Initially, one natural answer the neo-Molinist will give here is a response that any free-will theist would endorse, namely that the future is *causally* open. To think that the future is causally open is just to suppose that the laws of nature, together with a complete specification of the world's history up to a certain point in time, do not "fix" (that is, do not *determine*) all future facts beyond that point. This thought is captured in the following thesis.

> **Causal Openness of the Future Thesis:** The future is *causally open* relative to time *t* if and only if there is more than one causally possible future relative to *t*.[12]

What makes the belief in a causally open future a natural one for neo-Molinists is that such openness follows straightaway from a core conviction that, as we've already seen, both they and classical Molinists share, i.e., the conviction that human agents have been endowed with

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[12] Ibid., 73.

libertarian freedom.[13] Indeed, echoing Kenny's earlier observation, Craig confirms that "Given

libertarian freedom, the course of events later than any time t is not determined by the causes

operative up until t. A free choice at t will result in different events after t depending on what is

chosen."[14] Thus, if the future is genuinely open in a causal sense, then the future is *not*

nomologically determined. Quite simply, such an account of openness means that there are

future contingents. On this much, classical and neo-Molinists are agreed.

Still, one might argue that just because the past and present, together with the laws, do

not fix all future facts, it does not strictly follow that there are no such facts. Oliver Pooley, for

instance, claims that "In tenseless terms, there can be a unique actual continuation of the world to

the future of some time t, but this continuation need not be the only one compatible with the

actual laws and the way the world is up to and including t."[15] Here Pooley is raising the point

that one could hold to causal indeterminism while, nevertheless, subscribing to an eternalist or B-

theoretic view of time. Now this point is not uncontentious, but arguing against it would take us

far beyond the scope of this paper.[16] Instead, what is important for our purposes here is to note

that open theists overwhelmingly embrace the notion of objective temporal becoming—that is,

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[13] Of course, causal openness could also result from other factors such as, say, quantum indeterminacy. Here and throughout, however, I will primarily be thinking of indeterminacy in relation to human libertarian freedom.

[14] Craig, "Response to Gregory A. Boyd," in *Four Views on Divine Providence*, ed. Dennis W. Jowers (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 227.

[15] Oliver Pooley, "Relativity, the Open Future, and the Passage of Time," in *Proceedings from the Aristotelian Society* 113, no. 3 (2013): 337.

[16] For starters, to successfully argue that causal indeterminism would absolutely rule out an eternalist view of time would, as Rhoda points out, "require defending a robust causal theory of time according to which time flow consists in the absolute becoming of new world states as a result of prior world states." Rhoda, "The Fivefold Openness," 88. Though such a project cannot be tackled here, I will, however, second Rhoda's bibliographic advice by referring the reader who is interested in seeing such a project developed to Michael Tooley's, *Time, Tense, and Causation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

they embrace a *tensed* theory of time. Unlike tenseless theories, such dynamic or A-theoretic

views of time reject the idea that there exists, at some time *t*, a "unique actual continuation of the

world to the future of…*t*."[17] In other words, in addition to being causally open, the neo-Molinist

maintains that the future is *ontically* open:

> **Ontic Openness of the Future Thesis:** The future is *ontically open* relative to time *t* if
> and only if the world state at *t* does not stand in an *earlier than* relation to a unique and
> complete series of subsequent world states.[18]

Now what is interesting is that, besides believing in a causally open future, many

classical Molinists agree with the neo-Molinist that the future is ontically open as well. In fact,

Craig is one of them. Here Craig elaborates on what he and everyone else who believes in an

ontically open future means to affirm.

> According to this theory, the future is not on an ontological par with the past and the
> present. Whereas things in the past and the present have been actualized, the future is
> pure potentiality. This is because temporal becoming is an objective feature of reality.
> Future events are not somehow 'waiting' up ahead for us; rather things come into being
> in the present.[19]

The fact that Craig agrees with the majority of open theists on this point, however,

actually serves to highlight a fundamental *disagreement* that he and other classical Molinists

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[17] Well, *almost* all A-theorists reject this. One version of the A-theory, the so-called "moving spotlight" view of time, actually attempts to combine eternalism with a form of objective, temporal flow. For more details see Bradford Skow, "Relativity and the Moving Spotlight," *The Journal of Philosophy* 106 (2009): 666-78, and idem, "Why Does Time Pass?" *Noûs* 46 (2012): 223-42.

[18] Rhoda, "The Fivefold Openness," 73. Depending on the theory in question, the condition that, as of a given time *t*, no single or *unique* future obtains may be met in more than one way. For instance, one could hold that there is no unique future because there is *no* future whatsoever (e.g., Tooley, *Time, Tense, and Causation*) or because, say, the future contains a branching topology in which multiple "branches" are thought to exist either concretely (e.g., Storrs McCall, *A Model of the Universe: Space-Time, Probability, and Decision* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) or as abstract possibilia (e.g., Craig Bourne, *A Future for Presentism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006)).

[19] Craig, "Response to Gregory A. Boyd," 227.

have with the neo-Molinist's understanding of what it ultimately means for the future to be open. For recall that, unlike the neo-Molinist, Craig and other classical Molinists are *not* open theists since they reject the idea that the future is epistemically open for God. What this means is that even though they believe in the reality of future contingents (that is, even though they believe in the reality of potential future events which, given a tensed view of time, do not yet exist and, so, are not, as Craig says, somehow "waiting" up ahead for us), still, like all non-open theists, they insist that God nevertheless knows everything that will eventually occur. In other words, despite agreeing with Kenny's sentiment that points in any story where a free choice is made are precisely points where the story has "two different and equally coherent continuations," the classical Molinist will argue that such indeterminism needn't preclude the possibility of God's knowing which continuation will, in fact, be the actual one. In short, neither the reality of future contingency nor the truth of an ontically open future rules out the presence of a unique actual future "story line."

It is the contention of the neo-Molinist, however, that the existence of such a story line *is* ruled out by the aforementioned theses. And this brings out a fundamental dispute between what I am here calling "neo" and "classical" (free-will) theisms. The dispute is over the question of whether, out of a myriad of causally possible futures that *could* come to pass, there's one that is, nevertheless, privileged as being *the* actual future. Could there be, as it were, a "thin red line" running through all of the causally open futures, highlighting the unique actual way things *will* be? The neo-Molinist says no. The classical Molinist says yes. And the difference in their answers is broadly the result of a disagreement over the metaphysical assumption that *truth supervenes on being* (TSB).

According to TSB, every (contingent) truth is true in virtue of what exists, such that any difference in what is (contingently) true would have to be accompanied by a difference in what exists. If one accepts this principle—as the neo-Molinist does—then, given the assumption that the future is both causally and ontically open, it would seem that there is not enough *being* for a complete, true story of the future to supervene upon. Or, as Rhoda clarifies,

> [I]f the future is ontically open, then a complete, true story of the future can't supervene on future events, for they don't exist. And if the future is causally open, then it can't supervene on past or present events plus causal laws and concurrent divine causal contributions, for all that together leaves underdetermined which causally possible future shall come to pass.[20]

On the other hand, when probed as to why they answered "yes" to the above question, Craig and other classical Molinists typically reveal some sort of deep dissatisfaction with TSB-like principles.[21] And so, when asked what *could* account for the existence of a unique actual future in the absence of any determining factors, the answer that the classical Molinist often ends up giving seems to look a lot like "nothing." Whether this answer is ultimately acceptable or not is what Patrick Todd identifies as *the* core metaphysical dispute between the two camps.[22]

Fortunately, it is not the purpose of this essay to settle the dispute over TSB. Initially, my task is simply a descriptive one. I'm trying to get the neo-Molinist's view of the future on the

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[20] Rhoda, "Open Theism and other Models of Divine Providence," in *Models of God and Alternative Ultimate Realities*, ed. Jeanine Diller and Asa Kasher (New York, NY: Springer, 2013), 294. Cf. Idem., "The Fivefold Openness," 82-3.

[21] Usually, the complaints seem to be directed against *truthmaker* theory, i.e., the idea that for every true proposition *p*, there is something in reality that "makes" *p* true. But TSB is a weaker thesis than truthmaker, one that Graham Oppy has called "a pretty secure piece of metaphysical doctrine" (see Oppy, "Arguments from Moral Evil," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 56 (2004): 69). Nevertheless, for a sustained attack on TSB and similar principles, see especially Trenton Merricks, *Truth and Ontology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[22] Patrick Todd, "Future Contingents are all False! On Behalf of a Russellian Open Future," *Mind* (forthcoming).

table. The agenda after that is to defend the view from recent criticism and, in the process,

demonstrate why such a view seems to accord better with basic libertarian intuitions. To get a

bit clearer on what the neo-Molinist thinks a genuinely open future looks like, then, I turn back

to Pooley who (helpfully) describes a view of the future that any neo-Molinist would recognize

and identify as theirs.

> Several advocates of the open future…claim that true openness requires, not just that the future not be (nomologically) *determined*, but that it also be not fully *determinate*. And one popular way of cashing out what lack of determinateness means focuses on the status of future possibilities. When one has mere nomological openness of the future, there are, as of a time, many possible futures compatible with the indeterministic laws, but they are not all created equal. One among them corresponds to the actual future. The others are therefore ways the actual world *might have been* (consistent with its past and laws), but not ways that it genuinely *might still be*.[23]

"For example," Pooley continues,

> it cannot both be true that there will not be a sea battle tomorrow but that there might be one (in the relevant, non-epistemic sense of 'might'). The open future view now under consideration, therefore, insists that, for them all to be genuine possibilities, none from amongst them is now singled out as what will take place. This leads naturally to 'branching time' models of reality: tree-like structures, the nodes of which correspond to spatially global instants. The branches are intended to represent the plurality of possibilities to the future of each of the nodes from which they branch.
>
> Given such a structure, there are many ways to construct semantics for tensed (and modal) sentences relative to the structure's instants…Suppose that, as of now, it is an open possibility whether there will be a sea battle tomorrow: in some possible futures such a battle occurs, in others it does not. In such circumstances, the semantics should secure the truth of both of the following:
>
> - There might be a sea battle tomorrow.
> - There might not be a sea battle tomorrow.
>
> One might also reason that, whichever open possibility comes to pass, either there will be a sea battle or there won't be. That is,
>
> - Either there will be a sea battle or there won't be

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[23] Pooley, "Relativity, the Open Future, and the Passage of Time," 337.

should also come out as true. However, since it is supposed to be genuinely unsettled, as of now, whether there will be a sea battle, neither of the following claims should count as true:

- There will be a sea battle tomorrow.
- There will not be a sea battle tomorrow.[24]

What Pooley accurately identifies here is a defining feature of the neo-Molinist's understanding of the nature of the future—the idea that a *truly* open future is one that is "not fully determinate" (a concept that will be further clarified below). We're also presented with a set of criteria that any adequate semantics for future contingents on such a model of the future ought to meet. So how does the neo-Molinist put all this together? As it turns out, Boyd's proposal provides an elegant solution, one that is made possible by an underappreciated insight.

IV.

One of the most distinctive features of Gregory Boyd's "neo-Molinist" approach to future contingent propositions in recent years has been his understanding of the logical relationship that obtains between statements asserting what "will" ("will not") and what "might" ("might not") occur. The foundation of Boyd's schema—indeed, *the* key insight of the neo-Molinist understanding of the nature of the future—is the supposition that propositions such as "*x* will occur" and "*x* will not occur" are not actually contradictories but *contraries*. "For the logical contradictory of '*x* will occur' is not '*x will not* occur,'" Boyd writes, "but rather 'not [*x* will occur],' which is equivalent to '*x might not* occur.' So too, the contradictory of '*x* will not occur' is not '*x* will occur' but rather 'not [*x* will not occur],' which is equivalent to '*x might* occur.'"[25] Represented on an Aristotelian Square of Opposition, these relations are laid out as follows:

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[24] Ibid., 337-8.

[25] Boyd, "God Limits His Control," *Four Views on Divine Providence*, 197; cf. Alan R. Rhoda, Gregory A. Boyd, and Thomas G. Belt, "Open Theism, Omniscience, and the Nature of the Future," *Faith and Philosophy* 23 (2006): 432-59, and Boyd, "Two Ancient (and Modern)

Figure 1
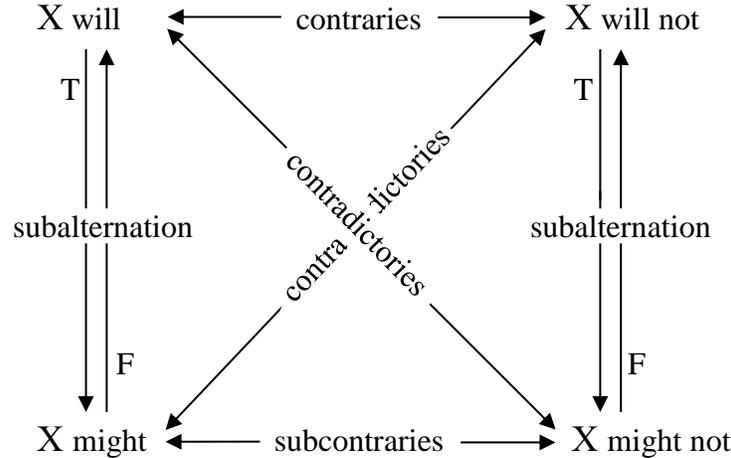
As previously noted, this diagram represents what is, perhaps, the most important

depiction of the nature of the future from the neo-Molinist's perspective. On this semantic

schema—and the rules governing the square on which it's modeled—we have the potential for

three, not just two, logically distinct categories of future-oriented statements: "will," "will not,"

and "might and might not."[26] Importantly, when describing a future contingent event in terms of

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Reasons for Ascribing Exhaustively Definite Foreknowledge to God: A Historic Overview and Critical Assessment," *Religious Studies* 46, no. 1 (2010): 41-59. For an early expositor of the specific logical relations being considered here, see Charles Hartshorne's, "The Meaning of 'Is Going to Be,'" *Mind* 74, no. 293 (1965): 46-58, and his *Insights and Oversights of Great Thinkers: An Evaluation of Western Philosophy* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1983), 45.

[26] Following the tense logic of Arthur Prior, let "**F**" stand for the future tense operator "It will be the case that." Let "**M**" be a propositional operator for "It might and might not be the case." And, finally, let "S" be some state of affairs. Boyd (using different symbolization) then illustrates, explicitly, what is implied by the logical rules of the square. Namely, that by standing in a contrary relation to one another, all three primitive categories—$\mathbf{F}(S)$, $\mathbf{F}(\neg S)$, and $\mathbf{M}(S)$—exhaust the field of potential future states. Thus, one must be true and the other two false $\{(S) [\mathbf{F}(S) \lor \mathbf{F}(\neg S) \lor \mathbf{M}(S)]\}$. From this, Boyd derives the following three theorems:

    I. $\mathbf{F}(S) \equiv \neg\mathbf{F}(\neg S)\ \&\ \neg\mathbf{M}(S)$
    II. $\mathbf{F}(\neg S) \equiv \neg\mathbf{F}(S)\ \&\ \neg\mathbf{M}(S)$
    III. $\mathbf{M}(S) \equiv \neg\mathbf{F}(S)\ \&\ \neg\mathbf{F}(\neg S)$

what "might and might not" occur, the above diagram is meant to model more than just the

epistemic state of a finite, limited knower. Rather, it is the neo-Molinist's conviction that these

are *ontological* possibilities, possibilities that, when expressed conjointly, correspond to the

"open" aspect of the future's actual metaphysical structure. As Boyd writes,

> According to this [openness] model, if an agent possesses the free will to choose between
> alternate possibilities, then what is real, prior to the agent's choice, are the alternate
> possibilities…In contrast to the classical [Molinist] view that assumed the future could be
> exhaustively described by propositions asserting what *will* or *will not* come to pass, the
> open view holds that, insofar as agents face ontological possibilities, the future must be
> described by propositions asserting what *might* and *might not* come to pass.[27]

In what follows, I'll defend the validity of this square of opposition (hereafter "the

Square") on both logical and semantical grounds against some recent critiques put forward by

Craig.

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

Craig has two general complaints concerning the above depiction of reality. His first

objection is directed at Boyd's notion that, unlike the God of open theism, the God of classical

theism knows the future exhaustively in terms of "will" propositions. According to Craig, such a

characterization "creates a false opposition" between openness and classical theisms since

> Classical theists typically embraced a tensed theory of time and causal indeterminism,
> so…they agreed that agents face ontological possibilities and that there are true
> propositions about what they might or might not do in a causal sense. But they also
> affirmed that future-tense statements about what will or will not happen are bivalent, that
> is to say, either true or false; for example, 'Tomorrow Claudius will go to the senate.'
> There is no contradiction whatever in making true, future-tense statements about the
> occurrence of causally indeterminate events…we may agree with Boyd that God knows

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Indeed, to see how there are actually *three* distinct squares of opposition (each oriented
around one of these logically possible primitive future states) that can be constructed to form a
hexagon of opposition, see Boyd, "Two Ancient (and Modern) Motivations," 52-5, and Boyd, et.
al "The Hexagon of Opposition: Thinking Outside the Aristotelian Box" (unpublished
manuscript) at http://reknew.org/2008/01/the-hexagon-essay/ (accessed 7/25/14).

[27] Boyd, "God Limits His Control," 194-5.

the future as partly comprised of ontological possibilities and, hence, knows the truth-values of 'might' as well as 'will' propositions.[28]

To unpack this, let's start with Craig's contention that, like the openness God, the God of classical theism (which, for our purposes, is the *Molinist* God) does indeed know "might" as well as "will" propositions. As we'll see in a moment, this is true when understood in a certain way. But Boyd has a specific difference between open and classical theisms in mind here. The difference is ultimately over the nature and extent of "determinateness" in reality, particularly as that notion applies to the future. In order to see this, first recall that, on the Molinist picture (allowing circles to represent possible worlds), the logical "moments" at which the various stages of God's knowledge occur fall in this order:

Figure 2

Moment 1: ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯
Natural Knowledge: God knows what *could* be the case.

Moment 2: ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯
Middle Knowledge: God knows what *would* be the case.

_____

God's creative decree
_____

Moment 3: ◯
Free Knowledge: God knows what *will* be the case.
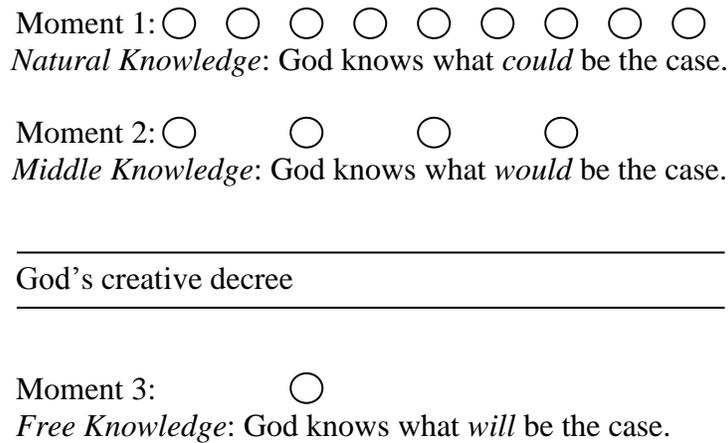
In order for God to exercise the kind of providential control over what "will" and "will not" come to pass that classical Molinists think he does, it is crucial that God's creative decree be based on his *positive* knowledge of what creatures would freely do in any circumstance they might be placed. That is, for any type of world that God might create, he would at least need to know all of the true CCFs that make up that world. But according to the classical Molinist, this

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[28] Craig, "Response to Gregory A. Boyd," 227-8.

alone isn't quite enough to get the job done. After all, just knowing which counterfactuals are true in a given world is not enough to guarantee that God have positive knowledge of what his creatures *would* do. For, as Thomas Flint points out, it is possible that certain world-types only contain negations of counterfactuals of creaturely freedom.[29] Thus in order to ensure that God knows what Molinists think he must know for his providential governance, Flint proposes that divine middle knowledge pertains to *creaturely world-types* (CWTs),[30] possible worlds with the following constitution:

> **CWT** =_{def.} *T* is a creaturely world-type if and only if for any counterfactual of creaturely freedom (C $\square\!\!\rightarrow$ A), either (C $\square\!\!\rightarrow$ A) or (C $\square\!\!\rightarrow$ ¬A) is a member of *T*.

Here we get an endorsement of the *law of conditional excluded middle* (CEM)—the claim that, for any counterfactual P $\square\!\!\rightarrow$ Q (read: "If P were the case, Q would be the case"), either (P $\square\!\!\rightarrow$ Q) or (P $\square\!\!\rightarrow$ ¬ Q) is true. The law is notoriously controversial,[31] but it would appear the classical Molinist is committed to something like it, at least when the species of

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[29] Flint, *Divine Providence*, 48. As we'll see below, this is exactly the sort of world-type the neo-Molinist thinks obtains.

[30] Ibid. According to Flint, a "creaturely world-type" is to be understood as a "complete set of [true] counterfactuals of creaturely freedom."

[31] One famous detractor was Willard Van Orman Quine. His much discussed "Bizet and Verdi" counterexample to CEM occurs in W. V. Quine, *Methods of Logic*, 4th ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 23. For some (both theologically and non-theologically motivated) defenses of CEM, see Charles B. Cross, "Conditional Excluded Middle," *Erkenntnis* 70, no. 2 (2009): 173-88; Richard Gaskin, "Conditionals of Freedom and Middle Knowledge," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 43, no. 173 (1993): 412-30; Robert C. Stalnaker, "A Defense of Conditional Excluded Middle," in *Ifs: Conditionals, Belief, Decision, Chance, and Time*, ed. William L. Harper, Robert Stalnaker, and Glenn Pearce (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1981), 87-104; and Dean A. Kowalski, "On Behalf of a Suarezian Middle Knowledge," *Philosophia Christi* 5, no. 1 (2003): 219-27.

counterfactual is a CCF.[32] For as Craig observes, "since the circumstances *C* in which the free

agent is placed are fully specified in the counterfactual's antecedent, it seems that if the agent

were placed in *C* and left free with respect to action *A*, then he must either do *A* or not do *A*. For

what other alternative is there?"[33]

[32] Actually Flint has argued that Molinists can get by with a less controversial principle, the principle of bivalence. Alfred Freddoso comments, "Thomas Flint has shown in effect that as long as we grant that conditional future events can in principle provide God with 'positive' information about the activity of indeterministic secondary causes in various hypothetical situations, the Molinist can get by…[with the] assumption that necessarily, any potential future contingent is such that either it or its compliment obtains" (Freddoso, "Introduction" to Luis de Molina, *On Divine Foreknowledge: Part IV of the Concordia*, trans. Alfred J. Freddoso (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), 51). As we will see below however, bivalence alone is not enough to secure the "settled future" view Flint and company are after. They also have to assume that the law of excluded middle holds for "will" and "will not" propositions which, in turn, requires such statements to be contradictories ("compliments"). This assumption will be challenged in what follows. At any rate, many Molinists (e.g., Craig) *do* explicitly affirm CEM and, in so doing, find themselves in the company of such CEM-affirming luminaries as Francisco Suarez and, even, Molina himself. See Kowalski, "On Behalf of a Suarezian Middle Knowledge," 219-27; and Freddoso, "Introduction," 50.

[33] Craig, "Middle Knowledge, Truth-Makers, and the Grounding Objection," 338. Craig makes a similar remark elsewhere in support of the idea that CEM holds for CCFs. The idea is plausible, he claims, "For we are talking in this case about a very special set of counterfactuals involving the choices of some agent in fully specified circumstances. Such restrictive parameters remove the sort of ambiguities that serve to support mere might-counterfactuals" (Craig, "Ducking Friendly Fire: Davison on the Grounding Objection," *Philosophia Christi* 8 no. 1 (2006): 163, n4). Craig's claim that CCFs can plausibly be thought to be true so long as the circumstances described in the antecedent are, in terms of accounting for all the relevant factors, "fully specified" is far from obvious however. On the contrary, given that these conditionals are supposed to be about the *indeterministic* actions of agents, sober philosophical reflection would seem to suggest that no amount of (additional) information would be of any help in discerning the outcome of what are, through and through, causally indeterminate events. Dean Zimmerman makes the point well: "Many (I would guess most) philosophers simply do not have [Craig's] reaction: when carefully attending to the genuine causal indeterminacy of a certain outcome in certain possible circumstances that may never obtain, most of us do not find much plausibility in the idea that there is a definite fact about what would happen in those circumstances—at least, not a fact that could be known infallibly ahead of time…Throwing in more and more details about the situation would strike most of us, I believe, as irrelevant if the details leave the situation precisely as indeterministic as ever." Zimmerman, "An Anti-Molinist Replies," in *Molinism: The Contemporary Debate*, ed. Ken Perszyk (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 182.

Let's call Craig's affirmation of CEM, "Craig's commitment number one" (**CC1**).

> **CC1:** *CEM*

> Up to this point then, we can see that, whereas the classical Molinist has always held that

> (1) for any x, if it is the case that x, then it has always been the case that it would be the

>   case that x,

and therefore

> (2) for any x, if it is the case that x, God has always known that it would be the case

>   that x,

open future views deny one or both of the above.

This also helps us to see the first of two important in-house distinctions between open theists themselves, distinctions which serve to separate (what I'm calling) the "conservative" and "non-conservative" schools within the movement.[34] The first distinction has to do with omniscience. For instance, although all open theists deny (2), some will still accept (1).[35] These open theists I place in the latter school since they have a difficult time rebutting a common accusation against the open view, namely that the God of open theism isn't truly omniscient.[36] Traditionally, to think that God was omniscient was to think (roughly) that God knew all truths and believed no falsehoods. But anyone who denies (2) while, at the same time, admitting to (1)

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[34] For helpful taxonomies which highlight relevant differences between distinct types of open theism, see especially Rhoda, "Open Theism and Some Varieties Thereof," *Religious Studies* 44 (2008): 225-34; Dale Tuggy, "Three Roads to Open Theism," *Faith and Philosophy* 24 (2007): 28-51; and Patrick Todd, "Geachianism," in *Oxford Studies in Philosophy of Religion*, ed. Jonathan L. Kvanvig (2011), 4:222-51.

[35] For example, Richard Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 180; and Hasker, *God, Time, and Knowledge* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), 187.

[36] For one token of this type of charge, see Bruce A. Ware, *God's Lesser Glory: The Diminished God of Open Theism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2000), 32.

would be calling this conception of God's knowledge into question. For on this revised understanding of omniscience, there would, at any given time, be truths that God *didn't* know.[37]

But although the complaint that God isn't omniscient may be applied to *these* open theists, there are many proponents of the open view to which this charge cannot be stuck. These are those open theists who deny (2) and, precisely *because* they believe God knows all truths, deny (1) as well. It is to this school that the neo-Molinist belongs, and the reason these open theists reject both (1) and (2) is because of their commitment to the idea that the future is, to once again use Rhoda's terminology, *alethically open*. Rhoda defines "alethic openness" in the following way.

> **Alethic Openness of the Future Thesis:** The future is *alethically open* at time *t* if and only if for some state of affairs *x* and some future time t^* (i) neither <*x* will obtain at t^*> nor <*x* will not obtain at t^*> is true at *t* and (ii) neither of their tense-neutral counterparts, <*x* does obtain at t^*> and <*x* does not obtain at t^*>, is true *simpliciter*.

"Simply put," Rhoda continues, "the future is alethically open just in case there is no 'complete true story' depicting a unique series of events as *the* actual future."[38]

Hence, the idea that the future is alethically open is what lies behind the neo-Molinist's conviction that the future is not only non-*determined*, but also that it is not fully *determinate*. We've already seen an argument for why, given TSB, one might plausibly think the future *is* open in this respect, particularly if one also thinks the future is causally and ontically open. What the above Square (**Figure 1**) is meant to show is that such an ontology is in fact *logically*

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[37] I leave aside here a number of complications, including, for instance, the issue of God's cognitive relationship to certain true indexical propositions (e.g., "My name is Eli"). For a nice survey and discussion of the issues and challenges involved in forming a satisfactory definition of omniscience, see John S. Feinberg, *No One Like Him: The Doctrine of God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001), 304-20.

[38] Rhoda, "The Fivefold Openness," 74.

coherent and, therefore, at least representative of a possible way God might have decreed the future to be.

With this last thesis articulated, the contrast between open and classical theisms that Boyd actually had in mind becomes evident. For since Craig and other traditional Molinists take the actual world to be fully determinate or, rather, alethically *closed*—i.e., to be such that, for all possible states of affairs x and all future times t^*, either <x will obtain at t^*> or <x will not obtain at t^*> *is* now true (or alternatively, either <x does obtain at t^*> or <x does not obtain at t^*> is true *simpliciter*)—Boyd's observation that the Molinist God knows the future exhaustively in terms of "what *will* or *will not* come to pass" seems entirely apropos.

Of course, in saying that the God of classical Molinism knows the actual future exhaustively as a realm of "will" and "will not" propositions, Boyd is not suggesting that there are no "might" or "might not" propositions known by God. For when Craig claims that he and other classical Molinists can "agree with Boyd that God knows the future as partly comprised of ontological possibilities and, hence, knows the truth-values of 'might' as well as 'will' propositions," in one sense he's affirming a rather obvious truth. For instance, to borrow Craig's example, if it is true that tomorrow Claudius will go to the senate, then it is also true that he *might* go to the senate. Similarly, if it is true that tomorrow Claudius won't go to the senate, then it is true that he *might not* go. In each case the former truth logically implies the latter (just as **Figure 1** indicates).

What Craig and other classical theists can't affirm, however, is the *full* range of logical truths allowed by the Square. Specifically, the traditional Molinist can't affirm that an inclusive disjunction such as "might *or* might not," when true in virtue of both disjuncts being true, actually *negates* both "will" and "will not" propositions. In other words, on the classical picture

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of reality, the conjoint truth of "might" and "might not" statements *do not* constitute a logically

distinct category apart from both "will" and "will not." But is this not at least logically possible?

Craig, as we'll see in a moment, seems to think not. And if not, then the openness of the future

represented by **Figure 1** couldn't rise to the status of a metaphysical possibility, an *actual way*

things might be. But, as Boyd notes,

> the most distinctive aspect of open theism is simply its willingness to question why the
> reality God created and perfectly knows must, by metaphysical necessity, be exhaustively
> and eternally settled. Why must there be a determinate fact of the matter about which
> causally possible future is 'the' actual future? By what metaphysical necessity does the
> perfect nature of God's knowledge dictate the content of the reality that God creates and
> perfectly knows?[39]

In effect, what Boyd is asking here is this: *Why* think that the future must be alethically closed

("settled") rather than open? Here's Craig's answer.

> He [Boyd] asks, 'Why must there be a determinate fact of the matter about which
> causally possible future is 'the' actual future?' Two reasons, I think. First, Scripture
> gives examples of such truths…Second, the logical principle of bivalence requires that
> any statement be either true or false.[40]

It is the second response that we are most interested in here.[41] Curiously, where Craig

anchors the (logical) case for an alethically closed future is in the idea that future contingent

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[39] Boyd, "God Limits His Control," 196.

[40] Craig, "Response to Gregory A. Boyd," 228.

[41] Though it is worth mentioning that, regarding the biblical data, Craig's claim seems
overdrawn. After all, one could not prove a universal thesis by appealing to particular cases.
Speaking as a non-open theist, evangelical theologian Millard Erickson writes, "A…problem for
the hermeneutic of traditional theism is that it must proceed by inference and extension in
arriving at its conclusion of God's exhaustive foreknowledge. Critics have pointed out that no
single text or combination of texts says that God's knowledge of the future covers everything
that will ever happen. Since the statements that God knows a specific fact about the future
would have to be exhaustive of every such event, the induction is only partial. The case for
exhaustive foreknowledge requires an extrapolation from what Scripture does address to what it
does not." Erickson, *What Does God Know and When Does He Know It? The Current
Controversy Over Divine Foreknowledge* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 244.

statements are *bivalent*. Indeed, Craig seems to see this as a real point of contrast between open

and classical theisms, going so far as to claim that "*on Boyd's view, the principle of bivalence*

must fail for future contingent statements, on pain of denying divine omniscience, resulting in the

logical dislocations entailed by such a denial."[42] Now, if Craig is right about this, I would take

it as a strike against the open view under consideration. After all, according to the way I'm

framing it, neo-Molinism is supposed to be a *conservative* version of open theism, one that does

justice not only to traditional notions of omniscience but to classical logic as well. But *is* Craig

right?

Initially at least, there doesn't appear to be any reason why someone who takes **Figure 1**

seriously would need to deny bivalence for future contingents in order to secure an orthodox

conception of omniscience. To see why, recall that, according to the above Square, there are

three categories a putatively future event like Claudius' outing might fall into:

(3) Claudius will go to the senate.

(4) Claudius will not go to the senate.

(5) Claudius might and might not go to the senate.

Note that on this view (5) is *not* equivalent to

(6) Claudius might or might not go to the senate.

Proposition (6) could be true if either (3) or (4) is true. But on the neo-Molinist proposal, (5) is

only true if both (3) and (4) are false.[43] Neither Boyd nor any other open theist who holds to this

framework, then, needs to reject the principle of bivalence since the mere fact that (3) and (4) are

bivalent does not imply that one or the other is *true*. "The reason open theists are accused of

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[42] Craig, "Response to Gregory A. Boyd," 229. (my emphasis)

[43] See note 26.

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denying divine omniscience," Craig writes, "is because they deny that God knows future contingent truths, such as truths about what agents will freely do."[44] By assuming that there *are* future contingent truths about what free agents will do, however, Craig's claim is that either (3) or (4) *is* true, which is to say, not just that they are bivalent but, moreover, that the *law of excluded middle*[45] holds between these two statements. This further assumption threatens to beg the question against adherents of the above Square since it requires that (3) and (4) be construed as *contradictory* rather than contrary propositions. In contrast to this, Boyd's claim is that the contradictory of (3) is not (4) but rather

> (4*) It is not the case that Claudius will go to the senate.

Now one might wonder what possible difference this could make. After all, (4) and (4*) *look* like synonymous propositions. And, in natural language contexts anyway (e.g., everyday speech), we do not generally distinguish between the inner negation of (3), which is (4), and its outer negation, (4*). But three separate lines of reasoning can be mentioned in support of the idea that (4) and (4*) are, in fact, logically distinct propositions.

The first argument is based on their distinct logical forms. To begin, let **F** (read: "It will be the case that") again be a future-tense operator on the present-tense proposition "Claudius goes to the senate." Given this notation, the obvious analysis of (3), as Craig would agree,[46] is:

> (3F) **F**(Claudius goes to the senate).

What this helps us to see is that the proper negation of (3)—and hence (3F)—is going to depend heavily on paying careful attention to the *scope* of the negation. For instance, if we

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[44] Craig, "Response to Gregory A. Boyd," 228.

[45] This logical law stipulates that for any proposition *p*, either *p* is true, or not-*p* is true.

[46] See Craig, *The Only Wise God: The Compatibility of Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1999), 61.

require (4) to be the negation of (3), that is to say, if we suppose with Craig that (3) and (4)

together constitute an instance of $p \lor \neg p$, then, when we go to analyze (4) in terms of the future-

tensed operator, what we'll find is that to accurately express (4)'s form, which contains an

internal or *embedded* negation, **F** will need to have wide scope over (i.e., will need to be *outside*

of) the present-tensed proposition:

> (4F) **F**¬(Claudius goes to the senate).

But now it is obvious that (4F) isn't the negation of (3F). The reason this can't be the

correct negation of (3F) (which is just (3) or, as we've been supposing, p) is because (4F) does

not have the proper form; it is not an instance of $\neg p$. To get the right form, the negation must

range over the whole proposition p and, so, it is the "¬" operator that needs to have wide scope.

So understood, the correct negation of (3) is not (4) but (4*), or

> (4*F) ¬**F**(Claudius goes to the senate)

which is of the form $\neg p$, as required. Hence, it is (3F) and (4*F)—and their respective

equivalents, (3) and (4*)—which, being the correct contradictory pair, are rightly construed as

$p \lor \neg p$.

Another way to see the difference between (4) and (4*) is to note that, besides their

distinct logical forms, these propositions can differ in their *meaning* as well. Consider, first, the

fact that the "will" in the phrase "it will be the case that" expressed by the **F** operator can

potentially be taken in two ways. On one reading, "will" is meant to be understood as having

causal force, i.e., "it is now *definitely* going to come about that x." This is what is sometimes

called the *posterior present tense* reading of "will."[47] As Dale Tuggy explains, "**F**[x]," so

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[47] J. R. Lucas, *The Future: An Essay on God, Temporality, and Truth* (Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 25.

defined, "makes an assertion about the future *and the present*. It asserts that [*x*] happens down

the line, and also, the present is such that this will definitely happen; the objective probability of

[*x*] happening at some future time or other is presently (and at all future times) 1."[48]

Now this was Prior's (and, before him, Charles Hartshorne's) preferred analysis of the

future-tense operator in question, and it is easy to see how (4F) and (4*F), when taken in this

(posterior present) sense, assert very different things. For example, on this reading, a proposition

like (3F) says that "As of now, Claudius will (definitely) go to the senate" or, in other words, *in

all causally possible futures* Claudius goes to the senate. To say that this is untrue, however, is

not to say that Claudius definitely *won't* go to the senate. That is, from the falsity of (3F) it

doesn't follow that there are *no* causally possible futures where Claudius goes to the senate. If

Claudius' outing is a *contingent* event, then there are some possible futures where he does and

some where he does not.[49] That there are some causally possible futures where Claudius does

not go to the senate, or that Claudius *might not* go to the senate, is what (4*F) asserts. (4F), on

the other hand, is claiming something stronger; it states that it is now *inevitable* that Claudius

will not go to the senate—or, that there are *no causally possible futures* where he does. So,

given the posterior present reading of **F**, (4F) and (4*F)—and, thus, (4) and (4*)—can be seen to

have different truth conditions, which means they aren't, strictly speaking, logically equivalent

statements.

Unfortunately, despite the ease with which the posterior present tense reading of **F** allows

us to demonstrate a distinction between propositions like (4) and (4*), it is not an interpretation

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[48] Tuggy, "Three Roads to Open Theism," 36.

[49] As Hartshorne explains, "'It is untrue that he wills or intends to do it' fails to imply 'he wills not to do it,' for he may be irresolute or neutral as to the deed. If we abstract from the volitional tinge, we have in this third case simply that he may or may not do it. The outcome has yet to be 'decided.'" Hartshorne, "The Meaning of 'Is Going to Be,'" 49.

that is likely to be met with wide acceptance. For this sort of causally-loaded or "now-inevitable" interpretation is not the only reading "will" admits of. There is also what we might call a merely predictive usage of "It will be the case that," one whereby we simply mean to make an assertion that is *purely* about the future. This is what J. R. Lucas (following Hans Reichenbach) calls the *simple future tense* interpretation of "will," and he contrasts it with the posterior present tense reading of the same in the following way. The simple future of "There will be a sea battle tomorrow," he would say, speaks *only* about tomorrow—that it is a sea-battle day—whereas the posterior present says something about today too, that it is a day-before-a-sea-battle-day.[50] Thus, given these distinctions, the assertion that Claudius will go to the senate can be understood as "At some future time or other, Claudius goes to the senate" (simple future tense) or as "As of now, Claudius will (definitely) go to the senate" (posterior present tense).[51] The distinction is an important one, says Tuggy, since

> We can and do make assertions purely about the future which are neutral as to whether or not the named event is presently inevitable. Suppose a pundit predicts: 'Hillary Clinton will be elected U.S. president in [2016],' and that this is something that at the time of the prediction may or may not happen. We must get beyond what the pundit *says* to discover what she means, what she's asserting. Is she asserting that Hillary's election is now inevitable, that is, definitely going-to-be? She may be. If so, what she asserts is false…But she may not be asserting that. She may be assuming that the current probability of Hillary's election is somewhat or very high. The one thing she can't be presupposing (if her thoughts are consistent) is that its probability is now 0. And quite possibly, she's never even considered the question of how probable Hillary's future election is. But whatever her stance on the objective probability of Hillary's election presently is, the pundit may simply be forecasting that eventually, Hillary's election will happen. In this case, her statement is about some future time, and is *not* also about the present. In this way she can consistently say both 'Hillary will be elected in [2016]' and 'As of now, Hillary's election in [2016] may or may not occur.'[52]

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[50] Lucas, *The Future*, 25.

[51] The wording here is Tuggy's ("Three Roads," 37); I've simply swapped his original example for the Claudius one.

[52] Ibid., 36-7.

From this, Tuggy concludes that

> The failure to distinguish between the simple and posterior present manifests in persistent confusion that ¬F[x] and F¬[x] make the same assertion. If we read "F" as simple future, these are logically equivalent. But reading the "F" as posterior present, it is clear that they mean different things.[53]

According to Tuggy, then, unlike its posterior present interpretation, if we read **F** as simple future, (4F) and (4*F) *are* logically equivalent (as are (4) and (4*)). And this means that, when taken in this (simple future) sense—a sense that we seem to use quite often—(3F) and (4F) would be contradictories. Moreover, this appears to be Craig's interpretation of them as well. "Here," Craig tells us, "there are no gaps in the facts, for the statements assert *merely that at some future time* [Claudius' going or not going] will be the case."[54] If this is right, then there would appear to be many occasions when the neo-Molinist Square *does* represent a false opposition. For on the non-causal, merely predictive usage of "will," future contingent statements like (3F) and (4F)—and therefore (3) and (4)—would, contrary to **Figure 1**, turn out to be the correct instance of $p \lor \neg p$ after all.

This helps us understand why Craig would think that, "on Boyd's view, the principle of bivalence must fail for future contingent statements, on pain of denying divine omniscience." Tuggy, who is an open theist himself, is a case in point. Like Boyd and other neo-Molinists, Tuggy holds that the future is alethically open. This allows him to say that, despite being epistemically open for God, the future is nevertheless perfectly known by God since there are no truths that God doesn't know. But he also agrees with Craig that (3) and (4) are, on many occasions, an instance of $p \lor \neg p$. Therefore, in order for Tuggy to generate an alethically open

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[53] Ibid., 37.

[54] Craig, *The Only Wise God*, 62.

future (and hence preserve an orthodox notion of omniscience), he has to deny bivalence (or the law of excluded middle). So, Tuggy ditches bivalence for (simple) future tense propositions, thereby succumbing to, as Craig puts it, all the "logical dislocations entailed by such a denial."[55] And he thinks Boyd must do the same.[56] Here we see Tuggy directing a little friendly fire at those open theists who, like Boyd, would like to hold on to both alethic openness *and* classical logic:

> The importance of this distinction is that when it comes to statements about future contingents in the posterior present tense, there is no need to deny bivalence, as all such claims are presently true or false, as Boyd and Prior argue. However…we know that as of now, when p is a future contingent, reality doesn't presently feature p happening or not happening in the future. Hence, both 'it will be that p' and 'it will be that ¬ p' (simple future tense) are presently neither true nor false.

So perhaps the neo-Molinist *is* caught in the dilemma Craig mentions. Given a plausible reading of "It will be the case that," future contingents like (3) and (4) end up looking like a contradictory pair. But neo-Molinists like Boyd deny that God knows these sorts of future-oriented statements. So, "on pain of denying divine omniscience," the neo-Molinist must forfeit classical logic. Have the hopes for a conservative open theism, then, been sunk?

Not quite. Here's what the neo-Molinist can do to evade the dilemma: show that (4F) and (4*F)—even on a simple future tense reading—*still* aren't logically equivalent statements.

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[55] You can find Craig rehearsing some of these logical dislocations with respect to Tuggy's denial in Craig and Hunt, "Perils of the Open Road," *Faith and Philosophy* 30 (2013): 51, n5. There does, however, seem to be a promising non-bivalent logic on the horizon, one that appears to avoid the more serious of these dislocations, by retaining the validity of both the law of non-contradiction and excluded middle with respect to future contingents. For details, see Craig Bourne, *A Future for Presentism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 82-95.

[56] There was a time when Boyd *did* deny bivalence for future contingents (see Boyd, *God of the Possible: A Biblical Introduction to the Open View of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 124-5). But, as we'll see below, the neo-Molinist position he defends now is in no need of such a denial.

In order to demonstrate this then, recall that, when analyzed in terms of the future tense operator, Craig agrees that (3) should be read as:

(3F) "It will be the case that Claudius goes to the senate."

Moreover, the proper negation of (3F), according to Craig, is simply

(4F) "It will not be the case that Claudius goes to the senate"

for again, as he points out, "Here there are no gaps in the facts, for the statements assert merely that at some future time [Claudius' going or not going] will be the case."

But Boyd's contention is that the proper negation of (3F) is actually

(4*F) [It is not the case that] "It will be the case that Claudius goes to the senate."

Craig, however, wonders whether such a reinterpretation makes any difference at all. "To say that it is not the case that [Claudius' going to the senate] will be the case," he observes, "seems to be the same as saying that [Claudius' going to the senate] will not be the case."[57] And, indeed, as we noted earlier, these statements do appear to be close. But appearances can be deceiving, and, as Todd has recently argued, "in this case…appearances have been deceiving us for quite some time."[58]

To see why (4F) and (4*F) are really distinct propositions even on the simple future tense interpretation of "will," recall that, on this reading, such propositions are supposed to be *solely* or *merely* about the future. Thus, for a future contingent statement like (3F) to be true, all that is required is that, in the actual future, Claudius goes to the senate. For as Craig observes, "what else does it mean for a future-tense statement to be true than for things to turn out as the

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[57] Craig, *The Only Wise God*, 62.

[58] See Todd, "Future Contingents are all False! On Behalf of a Russellian Open Future," *Mind* (forthcoming).

statement says they will?"[59] In other words, on a simple future tense reading of "It will/will not

be the case that," the truth conditions seem to be something like the following:

> **Simple Future "Will:"** It will be the case that x, if and only if the unique actual future
> features x,

or

> **Simple Future "Will Not:"** It will not be the case that x, if and only if the unique actual
> future features not-x.

The important phrase here is "the unique actual future features x (not-x)." How are we to

understand the structure of this statement? At this point, Todd draws our attention to a striking

parallel between the way we might read this and the way Bertrand Russell, in an old debate with

P. F. Strawson, understood the statement "The present King of France is bald." [60] Russell and

Strawson were, of course, embroiled over whether bivalence should apply to such a statement.

For Strawson, to assert such a thing was to make a sort of category mistake and, therefore, to say

something that was neither true nor false. Russell, on the other hand, thought that bivalence

(here as well as elsewhere) applied. The way he saw it, anyone who sincerely asserted this

sentence could only properly be understood as asserting something like the following:

> *There is a present King of France, and he's bald.*

And it must be admitted that this interpretation seems plausible. So a statement like "The

present King of France is bald" was, for Russell, a hidden conjunction, and since its first

conjunct is false (there is no present King of France), Russell reasoned that this statement should

be regarded as false. Similarly, the statement "The Present King of France is not bald" would

also be false.

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[59] Craig, *The Only Wise God*, 63.

[60] See (mainly) Bertrand Russell, "On Denoting," *Mind* 14, no. 56 (1905): 479-93; P. F.
Strawson, "On Referring," *Mind* 59, no. 235 (1950): 320-44; and Russell, "Mr. Strawson on
Referring," *Mind* 66, no. 263 (1957): 385-9.

In the same way, Todd suggests that the simple future tenser who claims that her statement is merely "about the future" is, in fact, *implicitly* quantifying over something that the (alethically) open future advocate says doesn't exist—namely, a unique actual future! In other words, the most natural interpretation of the phrase "the unique actual future features *x*" seems, like Russell's reading of the above, to be "there exists a unique actual future, and that future features *x*." So understood, the truth conditions for (3F) and (4F) would be

> (3F$_{true}$) "It will be the case that Claudius goes to the senate," if and only if there exists a unique actual future, and that future features Claudius going to the senate

and

> (4F$_{true}$) "It will not be the case that Claudius goes to the senate," if and only if there exists a unique actual future, and that future does not feature Claudius going to the senate.

As with the present King of France example, this, too, seems like a reasonable interpretation of "the unique actual future features *x*." Indeed, the idea that the simple future advocate is, in the back of their mind, really thinking that there *exists* a unique actual future "story line" to the world can be seen in the way they tend to view the phenomenon of retrospective prediction. Appeals to this phenomenon are often invoked against open futurists in an effort to show that our practice of retroactively assigning truth to predictions made in the past demonstrate an alethically closed future. For example, when it comes to our attitudes about future contingent propositions, Edwin Mares and Ken Perszyk point out that

> We argue about such conditionals and even sometimes bet on them. Suppose that two people at the sidelines of the [2016] presidential race—John and Cindy—are betting with each other about what a particular candidate will do. John might be that [Hillary] will refuse to invite [Lewinsky], and Cindy might bet that [Hillary will invite her]…if Hillary is elected, then if she bars [Lewinsky] from the White House we would count John as *having been right all along*; and if she does not we would count Cindy as *having been right*.[61]

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61 Edwin Mares and Ken Perzyk, "Molinist Conditionals," in *Molinism: The Contemporary Debate*, 106. I've here updated the original example.

Thus, the simple future tense uses of "will" and "will not" are, it would seem, quantifying over a unique actual future. And so, for the open futurist, propositions like (3F) and (4F)—and therefore (3) and (4)—simply come out false. And this shows why (4F) and (4*F) can, even on a simple future reading, be regarded as distinct propositions. In order for (4F) to be true, it would seem that there needs to *be* a unique actual future, i.e., a "complete true story" about the way things will go. But (4*F) could be true even if there isn't such a thing or, for that matter, even if there never were (and perhaps never will be) anyone named Claudius. Therefore, even on a simple future tense interpretation, (4F) and (4*F) can plausibly be seen to have different truth conditions, which means that it is (3F) and (4*F)—and thus, ultimately, (3) and (4*)—which are the correct contradictory pair. So, just as the Square shows, neo-Molinists can have their bivalence and omniscience too.

Craig, however, is not unaware of this sort of move. To those who would appeal to reference failure in order to establish the falsity (and, thus, the contrariety) of "will" and "will not" propositions, Craig, employing the statement "William Willis will be president in 2050" as an example, thinks one can respond in either of two ways:

> [A] Before creating the world, God knew all the logically possible worlds he could create, populated by all the logically possible individuals he could create. William Willis is a member of some of those possible worlds, and in some of them he is president in 2050. *Since God knows which world he has created, he knows whether or not the actual world is a world in which Willis will be president.* Hence, individuals who do not yet exist can be identified on the basis of God's knowing all logically possible worlds, all logically possible individuals, and the world and individuals he has chosen to create.

> [B] We can…conceive of the present as branching off into various directions, each representing a different possible future course of events. By providing complete and accurate descriptions in terms of genealogy, place, time, and so forth, we can pick out possible individuals on particular branches. *Of course, we do not know which branch represents the actual future*, but that does not stop us from referring to nonexistent

individuals and making statements about them. *Hence, a statement about William Willis…can be true and will be true if the branch we have in mind should turn out to be the actual future*.[62]

But here it is obvious that, in each case, Craig has simply begged the question against the neo-Molinist (the offending passages have been italicized). In response [A], Craig simply assumes that a possible world has to be alethically closed. But the whole point of **Figure 1** is to illustrate the logical possibility that a world could be alethically *open*. True, such a world wouldn't qualify as a "maximal possible state of affairs," and so, by Alvin Plantinga's definition at least, wouldn't enjoy the distinction of being called a "possible world."[63] But so what? Plantinga's definition is merely stipulative, and the fact that the Square represents a logically coherent scenario means that such a definition cannot be applicable to all possible world-types. Some worlds are not "fully complete" in terms of what "will" or "will not" come to pass. As Boyd puts it, from the neo-Molinist's perspective,

> if God chooses to create a world in which some conjoined might-counterfactuals are true, he is actually creating a delimited *set* of possible worlds, any one of which *might* be actualized, depending on the free choices free agents make. In such a world-set, God's knowledge of what will be and what would be would not exhaust what God knows: God would also know what might and might not be. In short, the future, in such a world, would be partly open. Of course, it would also be partly settled, which is why a creation including conjoined might-counterfactuals does not rule out God knowing factual and would-counterfactual truths about the future. The creation is a *delimited* set of possible worlds. But this delimitation (settled aspects) leaves open genuine possibilities.[64]

When we come to Craig's second response, we see a similar deficiency at work. For here, he directly appeals to the existence of a unique "actual future" branch among all the other

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[62] Craig, *The Only Wise God*, 62-3. (my emphasis)

[63] Alvin Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), 45.

[64] Boyd, "Neo-Molinism and the Infinite Intelligence of God," 194.

causally possible future branches. But, again, this would require the future to be alethically closed rather than open.

Here, then, is the situation so far. By conceiving of "will" and "will not" as contraries rather than contradictories, the neo-Molinist Square is a semantic model for the alethic openness of the future. When Boyd asked why such a picture couldn't be representative of the way things really are, Craig's answer was that, since the principle of bivalence holds for future contingent propositions, the future must be alethically closed. But, as we saw, bivalence would only entail a settled future if "will" and "will not" were a contradictory pair, which the Square explicitly rejects. Three arguments were then given in support of the idea that these are *not* a contradictory pair, the last of which Craig has tried to refute, twice, by appealing to the reality of an alethically closed future—but that is just what he's trying to prove.

Tentatively then, I conclude that the Square represents a genuine way the future might be. A way that, if true, would allow an open theist to maintain both a traditional sense of omniscience and a classical conception of logic. In the remainder of this essay, I'll defend the neo-Molinist Square from a different angle, arguing that the contradictory relations between "will" ("will not") and "might not" ("might") can actually be derived from Craig's own Molinist assumptions.

VI.

Besides the assumption that "will" and "will not" ought to be contradictories, Craig's second complaint against the Square is that such a picture illicitly mixes modal locutions ("might" statements) with non-modal locutions ("will" statements). According to Craig,

> He [Boyd] is speaking his own idiolect here…In normal English, the statement that something will occur, but might not occur, is perfectly coherent. That is just to affirm that it will occur contingently. Boyd must be assuming that 'will' statements are

disguised modal statements to the effect that something 'must' occur and so can be set in opposition to 'might' statements.[65]

Let's begin by breaking these claims down. Craig's first two sentences are just an affirmation that normal discourse allows us to say, without contradiction, that something both "will" and "might not" occur. Future contingent statements are supposedly a paradigmatic case of such discourse. Craig's third sentence is a claim about the assumptions he thinks must be operating behind **Figure 1**. Specifically, he appears to be claiming that, in order to successfully establish the contradictory relations exhibited on the Square, Boyd has to assume two things: (a) future-tense indicatives are actually modal, and (b) the relevant modality in question is that of *necessity*. With respect to (b), we've already seen in the previous section that "will" statements needn't be construed in a causally-loaded sense in order to establish that "will" and "will not" are not contradictories. In fact, I'll argue that all the neo-Molinist needs to arrive at the opposition between "will" and "might not" (and, *mutatis mutandis*, "will not" and "might") is to show that these indicatives are simply *related* to a certain class of conditional statement. In this section, I lay the groundwork for this relation. Then, in the following two sections, I'll offer two additional lines of argument for the contradictory relations exhibited on **Figure 1**. What I hope to show is that, in their attempts to evade the force of such arguments, traditional Molinists like Craig end up articulating what looks like an attenuated account of libertarian freedom.

To start, then, think back to the picture provided in **Figure 2**. This picture is the key to seeing how, on the Molinist picture of reality, future-tense indicatives are logically related to certain other conditional terms. In particular, given Molinism, future-tense indicatives stand in a definite relation to *counterfactual* terms. On the classical as well as the neo-Molinist model, for any true "will" proposition in the actual world there is a corresponding "would" counterfactual

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[65] Craig, "Response to Gregory A. Boyd," 229.

proposition that logically *preceded* it and was known by God via his middle knowledge.

However, just as the neo-Molinist will insist, over against other (classical) theists, that the future

is alethically open and thus ultimately apprehended by God via his free knowledge in terms of

what "will," "will not," and (in the case of future contingents) what "might and might not" occur,

here, too, neo and classical Molinists will ultimately divide over the content of God's middle

knowledge. For whereas the classical Molinist posits only two categories of counterfactual

pertaining to the hypothetical actions of creatures at this moment in the divine mind (i.e.,

"would" and "would not" conditionals), the neo-Molinist allows for three—namely, "would,"

"would not," and "might and might not." And it is the latter sort of proposition that the neo-

Molinist maintains is needed to properly express CCFs. Commenting on the neo-Molinist view

of counterfactuals, Craig correctly observes that

> A few openness theologians have attempted to accommodate the insights of Molinism by
> affirming that God does have middle knowledge of 'might' counterfactuals of creaturely
> freedom, even though he lacks middle knowledge of 'would' counterfactuals of
> creaturely freedom. Thus, he knows logically prior to his decree what any person he
> could create might or might not do in any set of circumstances in which God should place
> him.[66]

"But," Craig asks,

> if 'might' counterfactuals can be true logically prior to God's decree, then why not also
> 'would' counterfactuals [of freedom]? It is important to understand that in the customary
> semantics for counterfactual conditionals, 'would' counterfactuals logically imply
> 'might' counterfactuals, so that in the Molinist view, *both* are true and known to God via
> his middle knowledge.[67]

In order to answer Craig's question, and in order to further demonstrate the validity of the

contradictory relations on the Square, we'll need to uncover a bit more about what Craig takes

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[66] Craig, "God Directs All Things," 88.

[67] Ibid., 89.

these "customary semantics" to be. As it turns out, we can find the answer in a book called

Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview.[68] There, Craig and his colleague,

philosopher J. P. Moreland, reveal that "for want of a better alternative, most philosophers use

the Stalnaker-Lewis semantics."[69] Named after the pioneering work of philosophers Robert

Stalnaker and David Lewis, the Stalnaker-Lewis semantics for counterfactuals is a similarity-

based approach to determining the truth of these conditionals relative to possible worlds.

Lewis's preferred model, for example, has us think of similarity as a "closeness" relation

between worlds arranged into a system of spheres, *$*, where *$* is (conceptually) structured as a

series of concentric circles. As Lewis explains,

> The system of spheres used in interpreting counterfactuals is meant to carry information about the comparative overall similarity of worlds. Any particular sphere around a world *i* is to contain just those worlds that resemble *i* to at least a certain degree. This degree is different for different spheres around *i*. The smaller the sphere, the more similar to *i* must a world be to fall within it.[70]

As Craig and Moreland elaborate, if we want to determine the truth of P $\square\!\!\rightarrow$ Q from, say,

the perspective of the actual world *W*, we consider the worlds in the nearest sphere centered on

W in which the antecedent of our counterfactual is true. If in *all* the worlds in which the

antecedent is true, the consequent is also true, then a "would" counterfactual is true. If in *some*

of the worlds in which the antecedent is true, the consequent is also true, then a "might"

counterfactual P $\diamond\!\!\rightarrow$ Q (read: "If P were the case, Q might be the case") is true.[71]

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[68] J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006).

[69] Ibid., 53.

[70] David Lewis, *Counterfactuals* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 14.

[71] Moreland and Craig, *Philosophical Foundations*, 53.

Now, importantly, Craig seems to think that when the neo-Molinist uses the modal locutions "might" or "might not" in reference to future contingents, they are doing so in a way that is fundamentally at odds with the way those terms are understood in the counterfactual semantics mentioned above. "In counterfactual discourse," Craig avers,

> 'might' has a technical sense that is quite different from Boyd's usage. Boyd uses the word to affirm causal indeterminism. Counterfactual discourse pairs 'might' with 'would,' not 'will' as Boyd does.[72]

We've already seen that by "counterfactual discourse" Craig is referring to the Stalnaker-Lewis semantics. But if "might" is supposed to be some kind of *terminus technicus* within these counterfactual systems, then what does it mean? How does it function? According to Craig, "In counterfactual logic $P \diamondsuit\!\!\rightarrow Q$ is simply defined as the contradictory of $P \square\!\!\rightarrow \neg Q$, that is to say, as $\neg (P \square\!\!\rightarrow \neg Q)$."[73] Interestingly, by conceiving of the $\diamondsuit\!\!\rightarrow$ connective in this way, Craig is endorsing Lewis's "interdefinable" account of the counterfactual operators.[74] Here's what the definitions for these operators, given Lewis's approach, look like.

Lewisian interdefinability:

$P \diamondsuit\!\!\rightarrow Q =_{def.} \neg (P \square\!\!\rightarrow \neg Q)$,

$P \square\!\!\rightarrow Q =_{def.} \neg (P \diamondsuit\!\!\rightarrow \neg Q)$.

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[72] Craig, "Response to Gregory A. Boyd," 228, n94.

[73] Moreland and Craig, *Philosophical Foundations*, 53. Craig also affirms this definition at http://www.reasonablefaith.org/gregory-boyds-neo-molinism (accessed 3/24/2014).

[74] Lewis, *Counterfactuals*, 2.

Based on these definitions, which we'll note as Craig's second commitment (**CC2**), Moreland and Craig construct what they call a "square of opposition for counterfactual statements"[75] which is reproduced below.

Figure 3

$$P \,\square\!\!\rightarrow Q \quad \longleftarrow \text{contraries} \longrightarrow \quad P \,\square\!\!\rightarrow \neg Q$$

implies   *contradictories*   implies

$$P \,\diamondsuit\!\!\rightarrow Q \quad \longleftarrow \text{(sub)contraries} \longrightarrow \quad P \,\diamondsuit\!\!\rightarrow \neg Q$$
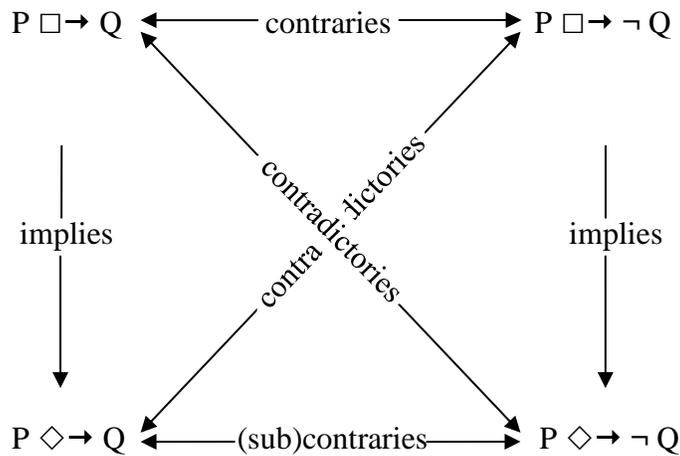
But this diagram, and the interdefinability of the counterfactual connectives on which it's modeled, is *precisely* the sort of square of opposition that the neo-Molinist would endorse for counterfactual conditionals.[76] After all, it is exactly because of the logical relations shown here that the neo-Molinist concludes that God's middle knowledge—like his free knowledge—must contain a threefold division between what "would," "would not," and what "might and might

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[75] See figure 2.3 in Moreland and Craig, *Philosophical Foundations*, 53.

[76] See especially Boyd, "An Open-Theism Response [to William Lane Craig]," in *Divine Foreknowledge: Four Views*, 146. Cf. idem "Neo-Molinism and the Infinite Intelligence of God," *Philosophia Christi* 5 no. 1 (2003): 192; and "Response to William Lane Craig," in *Four Views on Divine Providence*, 126-7. Surprisingly, after noting Boyd's affirmation of the above counterfactual relations, David Werther comments that "on Boyd's view, one who affirms the truth of might-counterfactuals is thereby committed to…the view that some future tensed propositions regarding the free actions of libertarian agents lack truth-value" (Werther, "Open Theism and Middle Knowledge," *Philosophia Christi* 5, no.1 (2003): 207). But this "bivalence-denying" accusation (like Craig's above) is plainly wrong. As Lewis himself clarifies below, the conjoint truth of the two might-counterfactuals renders the corresponding would-counterfactuals *false*.

not" occur. Since the latter (conjunctive) type of proposition can stand in distinction from both

"would" and "would not" counterfactuals, from a strictly logical point of view, God's middle

knowledge cannot be restricted merely to "would" CCFs.[77] Indeed, in support of the logical

relations outlined on **Figure 3**, Lewis tells us that

> If the 'would' counterfactual $P \,\square\!\!\rightarrow Q$ is non-vacuously true, then the might
> counterfactual $P \,\diamond\!\!\rightarrow Q$ also is true. If $P \,\square\!\!\rightarrow Q$ and its opposite $P \,\square\!\!\rightarrow \neg Q$ are both false,
> then $P \,\diamond\!\!\rightarrow Q$ and its opposite $P \,\diamond\!\!\rightarrow \neg Q$ are both true; for this is the case in which Q is
> true at some of the closest P-worlds and $\neg Q$ is true at others of them. But when $P \,\square\!\!\rightarrow Q$
> is false and its opposite $P \,\square\!\!\rightarrow \neg Q$ is true, Q holds at none of the closest P-worlds and P
> $\diamond\!\!\rightarrow Q$ is therefore false.[78]

Based on the above, we can now give an answer to Craig's question (i.e., "But if 'might'

counterfactuals can be true logically prior to God's decree, then why not also 'would'

counterfactuals [of freedom]?"). The reason we can't simply assume that the truth of "might"

CCFs allow for the truth of "would" CCFs is because, as **Figure 3** illustrates, while it's true that

would-counterfactuals imply might-counterfactuals, the relation is *asymmetric*. Like "will" and

"will not," Lewis's definition of "might" places "would" and "would not" in a *contrary* rather

than contradictory relation.

What this points up is an important fact—Craig's two commitments, **CC1** and **CC2,** are

formally incompatible.[79] CEM, while valid on Stalnaker's semantics, is invalidated on Lewis's

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[77] Though, as we have seen, the classical Molinist will (for theological reasons) think it *must* be so restricted. But this restriction is merely stipulated; it is not logically necessary. Moreover, given the nature of indeterministic freedom, it does not even seem likely.

[78] Lewis, *Counterfactuals*, 21. For sake of uniformity, I've here substituted Lewis's antecedent ("ϕ") and consequent ("ψ") symbolization for "P" and "Q" respectively.

[79] At this point, after having been confronted with this incompatibility (and the trouble it poses for their conception of middle knowledge), classical Molinists often simply reject the standard counterfactual semantics as being "inadequate" to the task of analyzing CCFs. Craig's response is typical: "[O]bjections to middle knowledge based on its alleged incompatibility with the possible worlds account of…counterfactuals strike me as very unimpressive. That account

definition of "◇→."[80] We can notice, in passing, how the following argument (borrowed from

Jonathan Bennett) demonstrates that, by accepting CEM *and* Lewisian interdefinability, like

Craig does, one actually *collapses* the distinction between "would" and "might."

      (7) (P □→ ¬ Q) ∨ (P □→ Q)   (CEM)

      (8) ¬ (P □→ ¬ Q) ⊃ (P □→ Q)   (from 7 by definition of "⊃")

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was drafted without any consideration of the peculiar situations engendered by theism…or
middle knowledge. The account may simply be inadequate for the concerns of the philosopher
of religion. In fact, I think it is evident that the possible worlds semantics for counterfactual
conditionals *is* defective, for that account cannot adequately handle counterfactuals with
impossible antecedents." Craig, "Hasker on Divine Knowledge," *Philosophical Studies* 67, no. 2
(1992): 103. Of course, the supposed difficulty of counterfactuals with impossible antecedents
(i.e., "counterpossibles") is, as Edward Wierenga has demonstrated, easily resolved.
Specifically, one can avoid such difficulties *and* continue to accept Lewis's interdefinable
account of the counterfactual operators by adopting the following modification to Lewis's
definition: (P ◇→ Q) ≡ ¬ (P □→ ¬ Q) ∨ (P □→ Q). See Wierenga, "Theism and
Counterpossibles," *Philosophical Studies* 89, no. 1 (1998): 94. At any rate, one wonders why, if
the customary semantics for counterfactual conditionals are, as Craig states, ultimately
inadequate, he would attempt to object to the neo-Molinist's understanding of "might" CCFs
based on an alleged misunderstanding of such semantics—as if a correct understanding would
support the classical Molinist's position! As will become evident, it doesn't. Indeed, unlike the
classical Molinist, it's the neo-Molinist who, in arriving at her position, is observing and
maintaining the proper distinctions between Stalnaker's and Lewis's (actual) formal semantics
for counterfactuals.

    [80] The reason is because Stalnaker assumes an *anti-symmetry* constraint for the similarity
relation between possible worlds. As Theodore Sider explains, "Anti-symmetry prohibits
'ties'—it says that two distinct worlds cannot be at least as close to a given world [*i*] as the
other." Sider, *Logic for Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 206. Lewis, on
the other hand, allows for ties in similarity to obtain between worlds (and between world
segments). Hence, a counterfactual describing an indeterministic event such as

        S: If I had tossed the coin, it might have landed heads

is, as Jonathan Bennett points out, "…true [on Lewis's interpretation] because it means that it is
not the case that if I had tossed the coin it *would* have come down tails; or, in the 'worlds'
dialect, Toss-worlds at which the coin comes down heads are as close to [*i*] as any at which it
comes down tails" (Bennett, *A Philosophical Guide to Conditionals* (Oxford: Oxford University
Press, 2003), 191). As such, Lewis's semantics seem much better suited to model the
metaphysical situation envisioned by libertarians, i.e., that there are, for any circumstances *C* in
which I freely do *x*, other worlds in which, in the same *C*, I do not-*x* instead.

(9) $(P \diamondsuit\!\!\to Q) \supset (P \square\!\!\to Q)$ (from 8 by Lewis's definition of "$\diamondsuit\!\!\to$")

(10) $(P \square\!\!\to Q) \supset (P \diamondsuit\!\!\to Q)$ (obvious; entailed by Lewis's def.)

(11) $(P \square\!\!\to Q) \equiv (P \diamondsuit\!\!\to Q)$ (from 9 & 10 by trivial logic)

As Bennett notes, "This conclusion is patently unacceptable, so something must yield: either CEM or Lewis's account of 'might.'"[81] From the neo-Molinist's point of view, the truth of some conjoined might counterfactuals is, given libertarian freedom, much more plausible than the validity of CEM (or some version thereof).[82] And, as we proceed to investigate the responses given to the next two arguments offered on behalf of the Square, it should become more apparent why.

VII.

Having laid the requisite groundwork in the previous section, we're now ready to state another argument for the neo-Molinist's Square. Letting "→" symbolize entailment,[83] we can arrive at the opposition between "will" and "might not" represented on **Figure 1** by way of the following syllogism:

(12) *x* will occur → *x* would occur   (from **Figure 2**)

(13) *x* would occur → not [*x* might not occur]   (from **Figure 3**)

(14) *x* will occur → not [*x* might not occur]   (from 12 & 13 by transitivity)

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[81] Bennett, *A Philosophical Guide to Conditionals*, 189.

[82] Though not an open theist herself, Linda Zagzebski expresses a similar sentiment regarding the relation between CEM and indeterminism. See Zagzebski, *The Dilemma of Freedom and Foreknowledge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 139-40. See, too, note 33 above.

[83] By entailment I mean strict implication. Thus, p → q is equivalent to $\square \, (p \supset q)$.

Hence, it looks as if from premises endorsed by Craig himself, we can arrive at a conclusion, (14), which is just an affirmation of the open future Square (the same argument can be run, *mutatis mutandis*, for "will not" and "might"). But surely no traditional Molinist would regard it as sound. So how might Craig and other Molinists block it? Perhaps the Molinist will concede that the argument is formally valid and *would* be sound if one accepted Lewis's account of "◇→", a definition that (13) depends on. But since such a definition is (as we've discovered) incompatible with CEM, the Molinist may be that much more inclined to give it up in order to deny the above conclusion.

Unfortunately, such a move won't work. Even if the Molinist ends up rejecting the counterfactual square of opposition (**Figure 3**)—which they must if they insist on the validity of CEM—premise (13) would *still* be true on the assumption that CEM is valid. This is because, given CEM, a "might" counterfactual would *always* imply the truth of a corresponding "would" counterfactual. Likewise, a "might not" counterfactual would always imply a "would not" counterfactual.[84] But if CEM holds, then, by definition, a true "would" counterfactual must mean that the corresponding "would not" counterfactual is false—which would in turn imply that the "might not" counterfactual is also false, just as (13) requires.

Of course, even if the above reasoning is sound, (13) is still potentially vulnerable. It contains a term ("might not") that appears in the conclusion as well. And, of course, whenever a term is variously distributed throughout an argument one must take care that it's being used in the same sense in each case. As it so happens, the above line of reasoning resembles a similar argument that has, on more than one occasion, been attacked on the basis of an (alleged) equivocation. In the next section, I look at this argument and the specific charges against it. My

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[84] See Stalnaker, "A Defense of Conditional Excluded Middle," 101.

contention will be that the criticisms raised against it actually serve to highlight a reason for libertarians to *prefer* the neo-Molinist account of the openness of the future over classical Molinist accounts that reject it.

VIII.

Recall how Craig's complaint at the beginning of §VI calls the very conclusion of the last argument into question. There, he claimed that "…the statement that something will occur, but might not occur, is perfectly coherent. That is just to affirm that it will occur contingently." This complaint helps bring into focus an important issue. Does the neo-Molinist Square, with its tripartite division of the future, give a *better* account of our libertarian intuitions than those classical theisms which suppose the future to be a realm of what ultimately "will or will not" be? On this score, Craig says no. "Classical theists who hold to libertarian freedom," he assures, "recognize that even though it may be true that someone will freely choose *x*, still, until the event actually happens, the possibility remains open that he might not choose *x*."[85]

The question I now want to explore, however, is this: What *sort* of possibility "remains open" for an agent to choose differently on such an occasion? Can such a conception of freedom be distinguished as distinctly libertarian? For as it turns out, Craig's sentiment can be called into question with a well-worn little argument—indeed, a (structurally) very similar argument to the one given above. Sometimes called the "Might Argument" (MA),[86] this simple *reductio*, which relies on **Figure 2** and **Figure 3**, can be put like this. Suppose that freedom is incompatible with

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[85] Craig, "Response to Gregory A. Boyd," 228.

[86] See, for instance, Hasker, "A Philosophical Perspective," in *The Openness of God*, 145, and Peter Van Inwagen, "Against Middle Knowledge," in *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* ed. Peter A. French, Theodore E. Uehling, and Howard K. Wettstein (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 21:232. For a critical discussion of MA, see Mares and Perszyk, "Molinist Conditionals," 102-7.

determinism. Suppose further that it is now the case that tomorrow I will freely accept a certain bribe *B*. Then it is true that

(15) I will freely accept *B*.

Now, if (15) is true, then, necessarily, the following CCF is true:

(16) If I were offered *B*, I would freely accept it.

Moreover if, as (16) stipulates, it is true that I would *freely* accept *B*, then it seems plausible to assume that I might (freely) refrain from accepting it; that is, I *might not* accept it.

But if (16) is true, then, necessarily, the following counterfactual will be false:

(17) If I were offered *B*, I might not accept it.

So, given (15)-(17), it follows that if I will freely accept *B*, then, contra Craig, it's false that I might not. Such a conclusion however seems difficult to square with the claim that my acceptance of *B* was a *genuinely* free act.

As with the previous argument (12-14), this conclusion follows by transitivity from (15) and (16). But as far as establishing a difficulty for Craig and other Molinists who wish to affirm the reality of libertarian free will, MA has failed to impress.[87] For it has seemed to critics of this type of argument that an improper sense of indeterminacy has been smuggled into the semantics of the phrase "might not." A kind of indeterminacy, perhaps, that is not required and therefore not actually necessary for my acceptance of *B* to be considered genuinely free. Craig, for

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[87] That's putting it mildly. As an argument against Molinism that has, in his view, been offered with "embarrassing frequency…by otherwise admirable philosophers," Flint mockingly declares that "the 'mighty' argument is mighty weak" (Flint, "Whence and Whither the Molinist Debate: A Reply to Hasker," in *Molinism: The Contemporary Debate*, 38-9). However, as I hope to show below, I believe the typical Molinist response to this argument reveals that they are (at least potentially) operating with a far more attenuated account of libertarian free will than many have realized.

example, points out that if one imagines "would" counterfactuals as being incompatible with

creaturely freedom, then that person

> has forgotten the difference between what one *could* do and what one *might* do in any set of circumstances. *Freedom requires only that in a given set of circumstances one be in some sense capable of refraining from doing what one would do; it is not required that one might not do what one would do.*[88]

Here, Craig makes it clear that the "might" (or, in this case, "might not") in the

requirement for freedom is *not* the same as the $\diamondsuit\!\!\rightarrow$ counterfactual connective. And this

assumption seems ubiquitous among critics of MA. Craig's current position on this matter

appears to derive from a response originally given by Edward Wierenga to Robert Adams's oft-

cited critique of Molinist counterfactuals.[89] In addressing Adams, Wierenga suggests that the

reason one might be tempted to infer that an agent *A* "might not" choose *x* from the affirmation

that *A* could "refrain from" choosing *x* may be a result of failing to properly distinguish between

relevantly similar claims:

> (i) In *C*, *A* retained the **power** to do other than *x*.
>
> (ii) It's **possible** that *A* be in *C* and not do *x*.
>
> (iii) If *A* were in *C*, *A* **might not** do *x*.[90]

Indeed, Flint thinks that this distinction constitutes "all that needs to be said" to defuse MA:

> Molinists will agree that, as libertarians, we do indeed want to affirm that our free agent *A* might have acted other than she did (i.e. might have done other than *X*) in circumstances *C*. But, as Wierenga notes, this intuition *by itself* is insufficient to

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[88] Craig, "God Directs All Things," 89.

[89] The Adams paper I'm referring to is Robert Merrihew Adams, "Middle Knowledge and the Problem of Evil," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 14, no. 2 (1977): 109-17. There, Adams advances a version of MA against the possibility of there being true Molinist CCFs. For Wierenga's discussion, see Edward Wierenga, *The Nature of God: An Inquiry into Divine Attributes* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), 140-3.

[90] Wierenga, *The Nature of God*, 143.

distinguish between the [above] claims…Only the third of these…is at odds with there being true 'would' counterfactuals. So a Molinist can reject (iii) as the proper interpretation of our libertarian intuition, accept either (i) or (ii) as an adequate reading thereof, and thereby completely evade the force of the argument.[91]

For this reason, Hasker has apparently reported that while he personally thinks MA is sound, he does not see any way to get a Molinist to agree that the term "might" in the phrase "might have done otherwise" is the same "might" of counterfactual logic.[92]

Contrary to what Craig, Wierenga, and Flint seem to think however, I contend that the proponent of MA—i.e., the one who imagines "would" counterfactuals to be incompatible with libertarian freedom—has not, in fact, "forgotten the difference between what one *could* do and what one *might* do in any set of circumstances." Indeed, far from eschewing their differences, such arguments (as I'm using them) *rely on* the distinction between these two notions. To see this, we simply need to look once again to Craig. In the very same paragraph in which he approvingly gives Lewis's definition for "◇→", Craig explains the relevant difference between the notion of "could" on the one hand, and the "might" of counterfactual logic on the other.

> 'Might' counterfactuals should not be confused with subjunctive conditionals involving the word 'could.' 'Could' is taken to express mere possibility and so is a constituent of a modal statement expressing a possible truth. The distinction is important because the fact that something could happen under certain circumstances does not imply that it might happen under those circumstances. 'Might' is more restrictive than 'could' and indicates *a genuine, live option under the circumstances,* not a bare logical possibility.[93]

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[91] Flint, "Whence and Whither the Molinist Debate," 38.

[92] Mares and Perszyk cite Hasker's claim as a personal correspondence. See Mares and Perszyk, "Molinist Conditionals," 103, n9.

[93] Moreland and Craig, *Philosophical Foundations*, 53. (my emphasis)

This account of the "might" counterfactual operator, of course, follows Lewis's usual usage.[94] And it is more than a bit baffling why Craig would suppose that the neo-Molinist description of causally indeterminate events in terms of what "might and might not" occur is at odds with it. On the contrary, as we've seen above, the open future Square represented by **Figure 1** is *derived* from (and thus supported by) it. What's even more baffling, however, is how the classical Molinist thinks they can maintain a plausible libertarian interpretation of the idea that an agent "might have acted other than she did" in some set of circumstances when, in rejecting Lewis's account of $\diamond\!\!\rightarrow$, they thereby *deny* that (freely) doing otherwise was a "genuine, live option" under those circumstances. Flint, for instance, has tried to suggest that all the libertarian intuition amounts to is merely the idea that, "If I do [*x*] freely, then I could have failed to do [*x*] freely."[95] But this can't possibly be a sufficient account of a *distinctly* libertarian view of free will. After all, the alternative option to "freely doing *x*" on such an account could be fulfilled by being causally *constrained* or *coerced* into doing *x* since, in such cases, the condition "failed to do *x* freely" would be satisfied. But this is an account of freedom that any Frankfurtian-compatibilist could affirm.

The open theist will contend that Flint has the wording backwards. What is required for my doing *x* freely in the libertarian sense is not merely that I could "fail to do *x* freely," but rather that I could *freely fail* to do *x* (i.e., freely refrain from doing *x*). In other words, having the ability to freely choose *x* on a particular occasion is an ability to choose between alternative courses of action and, so, requires that I both (a) have alternate courses of action, and (b) have

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[94] Lewis, *Counterfactuals*, 80-1. Confirming what Craig acknowledges here, others have also noted that Lewis refuted the view that "P $\diamond\!\!\rightarrow$ Q" means "P-Possibly-Q" where "possibly" expresses mere logical possibility (see, e.g., Bennett, *A Philosophical Guide*, 192-3).

[95] Flint, *Divine Providence*, 166-7.

the ability to determine which course I will take on that particular occasion. But what sense of "freedom" remains if I *cannot* genuinely refrain from doing something on a particular occasion? In rejecting the account of "might" that the neo-Molinist employs in the above arguments for arriving at the Square, this becomes the question the classical Molinist has to answer.

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IX.

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As I alluded in the previous section, despite their claims to the contrary, I do not believe that the opponents of MA have given a reply sufficient to rebut it. More specifically, by themselves, I do not believe that either (i) or (ii) can ground a distinctly libertarian conception of freedom since, without the relevant restrictions provided by the notion of "might" in (iii), any compatibilist could affirm them. However, since I cannot possibly survey all the interpretive options available to the classical Molinist here, I shall, in the interest of modesty, merely point out two potential areas of concern. Areas in which, unlike the neo-Molinist, the classical Molinist appears to be left with a truncated account of free will.

Here, again, are the relevant claims:

(i) In *C*, *A* retained the **power** to do other than *x*.

(ii) It's **possible** that *A* be in *C* and not do *x*.

Let's begin with (i). Here the relevant notion of "power" for the Molinist is *counterfactual power*, specifically counterfactual power over the *past*. Craig points out that the Molinist will insist that, in *C*, it lies within *A*'s power to do not-*x*, and if not-*x* were to occur, then the past would have been different than it in fact is. "Suppose," Craig writes,

> that God has always believed that in the year [2016] I would accept an invitation to speak at the University of Regensburg. Up until the time arrives I have the ability to accept or refuse the invitation. If I were to refuse the invitation, then God would have held a different belief than the one he in fact held. For if I were to refuse the invitation, then

different counterfactual propositions would have been true, and God would have known this via his middle knowledge.[96]

So understood, the Molinist's notion of counterfactual power seems to clearly require what Kevin Timpe calls an "alternative possibilities condition" (*AP*) for freedom:

AP: a person has free will only if he could have done otherwise.[97]

Belief in such a condition for free will has led many libertarians to endorse the following prominent argument for incompatibilism:

(18) Free will requires the ability to do otherwise.

(19) If determinism is true, then no agent has the ability to do otherwise.

(20) Therefore, free will requires the falsity of determinism.

Timpe calls this the "Core Argument for Incompatibilism."[98] And, as Mares and Perszyk argue, the Molinist seems obliged to accept the *AP* condition articulated in (18):

Molinism itself seems to entail AP (or something AP-like)…To say that I have counterfactual power over a true [CCF] about me just means or is equivalent to the claim that there is something I can do in circumstances C, e.g. $\neg A$, such that, if I were to do it, $C \,\square\!\!\rightarrow A$ would be false. So, if I could not do otherwise in C, I would lack counterfactual power over a true [CCF] about me. If we lacked counterfactual power over *any* true [CCFs] about us, a Consequence-type Argument for the incompatibility of Molinism with freedom would look pretty decisive. If I could have (freely) refrained from doing A, but the truth of $C \,\square\!\!\rightarrow A$ together with its antecedent entail that I do not refrain, then I must have or had counterfactual power over the counterfactual (or its antecedent). So, we have

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[96] Craig, "The Middle-Knowledge View," in *Divine Foreknowledge: Four Views*, ed. James K. Beilby and Paul R. Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 131. Cf. Ibid., "A Middle-Knowledge Response [to David Hunt]," 109-10.

[97] Kevin Timpe, *Free Will: Sourcehood and its Alternatives* 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 70.

[98] Ibid., 69. For other presentations of this argument, Timpe points to Roderick Chisholm, "Freedom of Action," in *Freedom and Determinism* ed. Keith Lehrer (New York, NY: Random House, 1966), 11-44; and Carl Ginet, "Freedom, Responsibility, and Agency," *The Journal of Ethics* 1 (1995): 85-98.

counterfactual power over true [CCFs] about us if and only if we can do other than what the consequents say we will do.[99]

Now, neo-Molinists like Boyd can (and do) readily endorse *AP*. But if Mares and Perszyk are right about *AP* being a necessary condition for the classical Molinist's conception of counterfactual power, then it looks like Flint and Craig are going to be in a potentially uncomfortable position. For as we saw above, it doesn't appear that Flint actually thinks *AP* is required for freedom. And Craig, in fact, explicitly rejects *AP*. Indeed, in response to Boyd's affirmation that libertarian free will involves "the capacity to choose to go *this* way or *that* way,"[100] Craig retorts:

> I find Boyd's analysis of libertarian freedom as involving the power of alternative possibilities to be defective…what is essential to libertarian freedom is *not* the possibility of choosing otherwise but rather the absence of causal constraints outside oneself that determine how one chooses. As Boyd puts it, libertarian freedom requires that we have genuine 'say-so' about our choices: that they be 'up to us.'[101]

We thus have a third commitment of Craig's:

CC3: *Non-AP freedom*

Any incompatibilist who accepts **CC3** as an adequate account of free will, however, is not only rejecting the Core Argument (18-20) for libertarian freedom, they're also flirting with the following line of reasoning:

(21) Genuine freedom is compatible with not being able to do otherwise.

(22) Not being able to do otherwise is compatible with determinism.

(23) Therefore, genuine freedom is compatible with determinism.

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[99] Mares and Perszyk, "Molinist Conditionals," 103, n10.

[100] Boyd, "God Limits His Control," 191-2.

[101] Craig, "Response to Gregory A. Boyd," 225. (emphasis is mine)

Of course, as self-professed *incompatibilists* with respect to freedom and determinism, Craig and

other Molinists will ultimately reject the notion that genuine freedom is compatible with

determinism. These considerations help to pinpoint Craig's brand of incompatibilism. For

insofar as one rejects the compatibility of determinism and freedom (as any libertarian must), but

offers **CC3** as an adequate analysis of that freedom, one is thereby endorsing a view that has

come to be termed "Source Incompatibilism."[102] Unlike so-called "Leeway Incompatibilists,"

i.e., libertarians who see *AP* as a central component of any adequate account of free will, Source

Incompatibilists maintain that *AP* is not the primary component of freedom. Moreover, Craig's

claim that alternative possibilities aren't even "essential" to free will seems to further pin him as

being what Timpe (following a suggestion made by Robert Kane) calls a "Narrow" rather than a

"Wide" Source Incompatibilist.[103] As Timpe explains,

> Narrow Source Incompatibilists will be those who think that an agent having free will
> with respect to some action *A* is a matter of the agent being the proper source of *A*, and
> that being the proper kind of source doesn't require alternative possibilities at all. The
> term 'narrow' here is intended to capture the idea that, on this view, alternative
> possibilities are outside the scope of what is required for moral responsibility. Those
> incompatibilists who reject all *AP* principles are thus Narrow Source Incompatibilists.
> Wide Source Incompatibilists, on the other hand, take a broader, more inclusive approach
> to free will. These incompatibilists insist that what is most fundamental to free will is
> ultimacy or sourcehood, but still maintain that there is some *AP*-like condition that is also
> true insofar as it is implied by the sourcehood condition, and that in virtue of this
> alternative possibilities of some sort are a necessary condition for having free will.[104]

Thus, as we saw in the last section, because they embrace both conditions (a) *and* (b) for

free will, neo-Molinists would be much closer to Wide Source Incompatibilists than Narrow

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[102] See Michael McKenna, "Source Incompatibilism, Ultimacy, and the Transfer of Non-Responsibility," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 38 (2001): 37-52. For an overview and defense of this view, see Timpe, *Free Will*, esp. chap. 9.

[103] Timpe, *Free Will*, 146-7.

[104] Ibid., 147.

Source Incompatibilists when it comes to freedom and responsibility. And here's why. The neo-Molinist recognizes what many other libertarians have also recognized, namely, that defining freedom as the *mere* "absence of external causal constraints," as Craig does, can't deliver a sufficient condition for what most free will advocates believe freedom is essential for—*moral responsibility*. Specifically, the reason why sourcehood, or "wholehearted identification," cannot *by itself* ground free will is because such a sparse account of libertarian freedom cannot rule out scenarios that would potentially devastate any notion of moral responsibility. These are, of course, scenarios involving *manipulation*. After all, as Robert Kane has suggested, manipulation scenarios can be cases of "nonconstraining control," whereby

> the controllers do not get their way by constraining or coercing others against their wills, but rather by manipulating the wills of others so that the others (willingly) do what the controllers desire. The controlled agents consequently do not feel frustrated or thwarted. They act in accordance with their own wants, desires or intentions. Yet they are controlled nevertheless by others who have manipulated their circumstances so that they want, desire, or intend only what the controllers have planned.[105]

Recently, Dean Zimmerman has argued that exactly this sort of control is possible for the God of classical Molinism.[106] And as one might expect, given such a minimal account of free will as Craig's, in his response to Zimmerman Craig has revealed that the Molinist ultimately would have no problem with such cases of control. Here's how Craig summarizes Zimmerman's objection:

> …given that the circumstances *C* in which an agent is placed are non-determining, it must be a brute, contingent fact how some person s would choose in *C*. But then it is plausible that there are an indefinite number of circumstances *C** that differ from *C* in imperceptible or causally irrelevant ways (for example, a different stellar event in Alpha

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[105] Robert Kane, *The Significance of Free Will* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 65.

[106] See Zimmerman, "Yet Another Anti-Molinist Argument," in *Metaphysics and the Good: Themes from the Philosophy of Robert Merrihew Adams*, ed. Samuel Newlands and Larry M. Jorgensen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 33-94.

Centauri at the time of *S*'s decision), in which *S* would choose differently than in *C*. So God by placing *S* in one of these circumstances *C** could bring it about that *S* choose freely whatever God wishes without any deleterious impact upon God's providential plan.[107]

To be sure, Craig objects to this argument in numerous places, but what's important to note is this—he contends that even if such control were possible and utilized by God, we would *still* be free in the relevant sense. As he puts it,

> What is the import of such an objection? It does nothing, I think, to undermine the Molinist account of providence as such. In particular it does not in any way undermine the freedom of the creatures in whatever circumstances they find themselves, for their choices are in every case causally undetermined. If a choice is freely made in *C*, then it would be freely made in *C** which includes some causally irrelevant event not included in *C*. If God places *S* in *C*, then *S*'s freedom is not compromised by the mere fact that had God placed *S* in *C** instead, *S* would have chosen differently.[108]

The fact that Craig thinks such a scenario would count as an instance of significant freedom though is astonishing. It is astonishing because, elsewhere, Craig has cited 1 Corinthians 10:13 as a *paradigmatic example* of libertarian freedom in the Bible. This passage promises that God "will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it." Craig claims that, based on this passage, "It follows that any Christian who does not in some circumstance endure but succumbs to temptation had it *within his power* to take the way of escape instead, i.e., had *the liberty of opposites* in those circumstances."[109]

But why should this be? If Craig sees no problem with the possibility of manipulation cases like the ones envisioned by Zimmerman for morally significant freedom, then, as we've

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[107] Craig, "Yet Another Failed Anti-Molinist Argument," in *Molinism: The Contemporary Debate*, 145. Cf. idem., "God Directs All Things," 91.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Craig, "Ducking Friendly Fire," 163, n4.

already seen Craig make clear, fulfilling the *AP* condition for free will—that is, having the "liberty of opposites"—is *not* an essential aspect of libertarian freedom. For as Craig said above, "If God places *S* in *C*, then *S*'s freedom is not compromised by the mere fact that had God placed *S* in *C** instead, *S* would have chosen differently." But suppose that, unlike *S*'s choice in *C**, *S*'s choice in *C* is one for which *S* will be held morally blameworthy. Then, by purposely placing *S* in *C* rather than *C**, God would be denying an avenue open to *S* in which *S* freely chose the good. But then God would be allowing *S* to be in a situation that Scripture promises God *wouldn't* allow—that is, *S* would be in a situation in which an alternative course of action she could freely take (i.e., *C** or, in this case, "the way of escape") has been withheld. By being deliberately put in such a situation, however, it is difficult to see how *S* could rightly be held morally responsible for her action.

For reasons such as these, Timpe has persuasively argued that an agent can only be free and responsible if she is the source of her choices in a way that requires the falsity of determinism *and* the lack of manipulation.[110] "But," Timpe says, "if these conditions are met, then the agent will also have alternative possibilities for action."[111] So (i), understood without a robust *AP* condition like that available with the "might" of (iii), leads to consequences that are at least highly counterintuitive to libertarianism.

What about (ii) then? What sense of possibility is in view here apart from (iii)? Craig has already told us. "'Could' is taken to express mere possibility…a bare logical possibility." The problem here, however, is that while logical possibility is certainly a *necessary* condition for a libertarian account of "could have done otherwise," it in no way constitutes a *sufficient*

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[110] See especially Timpe, *Free Will*, 147-61.

[111] Ibid., 160.

condition for such freedom. For, again, any compatibilist could affirm the relative strength of this modality. Libertarians overwhelmingly affirm a stronger, more restrictive sense of possible, one that allows for us to have done not-*x* in at least some of the *nearest* possible worlds to the actual one where we, in fact, freely do *x*. But as we've seen, it is Lewis's definition of "might" that provides such an account. And, so, to affirm this is just to affirm that (iii) is the correct interpretation of "might have done other than *x*" after all.

These considerations are, of course, far from exhaustive. They are also far from decisive. But what they reveal is something important. When Craig affirms that, for some person *S* who *will* freely choose *x,* still, until the event actually happens, the "possibility remains open" that *S* might not choose *x*, he's saying something that, without the aid of this present study, would be hard to decipher. For by rejecting the account of "might" that the neo-Molinist argues to **Figure 1** from, he's *not* saying something that a libertarian would automatically *think* is being said. He's not saying that *S* actually had alternative possibilities available to her. Nor is he saying that the possibility of *S*'s choosing otherwise was anything more than a mere, broadly logical possibility. And so, perhaps with a tinge of irony, while a good portion of this essay has been spent merely defending the Square, it may be that Craig has (indirectly) given a sort of argument here for why libertarians really *ought* to embrace it.

X.

In this thesis I have explored the cogency of the neo-Molinist account of the openness of the future. I've investigated whether the relation between future contingent statements asserting what "will," "will not," and what "might and might not" occur, as conceived on Gregory Boyd's Square of Opposition, can provide a model of reality for free-will theists that preserves classical conceptions of (i) omniscience, (ii) logic, and (iii) morally significant freedom, and concluded

that it can. I've also uncovered an interesting fact along the way. Craig and other Molinists who

reject the Lewisian interpretation of "might" as understood and used in MA-style arguments

reveal a potentially impoverished sense of what is supposed to be one of the "twin bases" of

Molinism.[112] But, of course, while not being exhaustive of potential Molinist responses to that

charge, it remains an open possibility that some might and might not agree.

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[112] Flint identifies *libertarian freedom* and *divine providence* as the "twin bases" the
Molinist edifice rests upon. See Flint, *Divine Providence*, ch. 1.

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