Are We Free to Break the Laws of Providence?*

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Abstract

Can I be free to perform an action if God has decided to ensure that I do not choose that action? I show that Molinists and simple foreknowledge theorists are committed to answering in the affirmative. This is problematic for their status as theological incompatibilists. I suggest that strategies for preserving their theological incompatibilism in light of this result should be based on sourcehood. However, the path is not easy here either, since Leibniz has shown how theological determinists can offer an extremely robust form of sourcehood. Proponents of these views must identify a valuable form of sourcehood their theories allow that Leibniz's theory doesn't.

Theological determinism is the view that God exercises total control over all contingent truths, including truths about the choices and actions of creatures. *Theological compatibilism* is the thesis that theological determinism is compatible with the existence of free creatures. Theological compatibilism implies, in particular, that creatures may be free even if God controls their choices.[1] In recent analytic philosophy of religion, theological compatibilism has not been a popular view: theistic philosophers have mostly held that the sort of freedom actually possessed by humans is incompatible with divine determination.[2] Some of these philosophers, known as *open theists*, have gone so far as to reject divine foreknowledge and affirm that divine providence is 'risky'—that is, that it is not absolutely certain (but only highly probable) that history will turn out as God intends.[3] For those theists who wish to reject the extremes of theological compatibilism and open theism, there are two well-known options: *Molinism* and *simple foreknowledge*. According to Molinism, God possesses and makes providential use of comprehensive knowledge of what creatures would freely choose in any possible situation, but God has no control over the facts about what free creatures would choose. According to the simple foreknowledge theory, God possesses simple (i.e., non-inferential) knowledge of the *actual* future, but not the kind of counterfactual knowledge supposed by the Molinist. Further,

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1. This use of the term 'theological compatibilism', in debates about divine providence, should be distinguished from the use of the term in the context of theories of divine omniscience, where it designates the view that creatures may be free although God has foreknowledge of all their choices and actions.

2. But for a dissenting view, see McCann, *Creation and the Sovereignty of God*.

3. Hasker, *Providence, Evil and the Openness of God*.

according to the simple foreknowledge theory, the use of such foreknowledge meaningfully augments God's providential control.[4] Although the simple foreknowledge theory is supposed to yield a stronger form of providential control than open theism, it denies that God can control the free actions of creatures.

In this paper, I argue that both Molinism and the simple foreknowledge theory are committed to the claim that creatures may be free to break the laws of providence—that is, that a creature may sometimes be free with respect to an action although God has decided to ensure that that creature will not choose that action. This amounts to an admission of what we might call *local theological compatibilism*, the view that a particular creaturely choice may be free although God exercises control over which option the creature chooses. If, however, a particular creaturely choice can be free although controlled by God, why think that (global) theological determinism is incompatible with creaturely freedom?[5] This question may have an answer, but it is not an obvious one. Providing such an answer is a matter of some urgency for philosophers seeking a middle ground between theological compatibilism and open theism.

In §1, I introduce the concept of a *prevented option*, which will be central to my argument. A prevented option is a course of action that is among a creature's options although God has decided to ensure that that creature does not choose it. In §2, I argue that if Molinism is true then prevented options are widespread and, indeed, it is epistemically possible that all unchosen options are prevented options. In §3, I argue that prevented options are also possible on the simple foreknowledge view. In §4, I argue that proponents of these theories of providence are committed to the claim that we are free to choose prevented options, and hence free to break the laws of providence. I conclude, in §5, with a brief discussion of the prospects for restoring the middle ground between theological compatibilism and open theism by endorsing an account of free will based on sourcehood, rather than alternative possibilities. I suggest that such a view, though promising, has significant obstacles to overcome, since Leibniz has shown how theological determinism can be rendered compatible with an extremely robust form of sourcehood.

1   Prevented Options

Debates about free will standardly employ the notions of power or ability to do otherwise. However, the analysis of the ordinary notion of power or ability has proven difficult.[6] My strategy here will be to avoid these notions as much as possible, and instead rely on a stipulative notion of *having an option*. I say that an action or a state of affairs is among an agent's options if and only if: (a) the agent takes reasons for and/or against that action or state of affairs into account

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4. Because I am here concerned with the simple foreknowledge theory *as a theory of providence*, I treat it as an account of what knowledge God uses providentially, rather than an account of what knowledge God possesses. Donald Smith ("On Zimmerman's 'Providential Usefulness'") has argued that there may be adequate reason to attribute simple knowledge of the future to God even if God cannot make providential use of such knowledge. This, however, does not amount to a simple foreknowledge theory of *providence*. For present purposes I count this kind of view as a version of open theism.

5. I thank an anonymous referee for emphasizing the importance of the distinction between (what I now call) local and global theological determinism here.

6. In other work, I have argued that this is because the ordinary notion has an unmanageable number of dimensions of vagueness. See Pearce, "Infinite Power."

in the course of making a choice, and (b) whether the action is performed or the state of affairs obtains depends on the agent's choice.

I assume that having an action among one's options is necessary, though perhaps insufficient, for being free with respect to that action. I speak of an agent being free with respect to an action, rather than free to perform an action, in order to remain neutral on the question of whether freedom of will should be distinguished from freedom of action. For those who draw such a distinction, being free to perform an action is clearly freedom of action and not freedom of will. They should interpret my locution 'free with respect to an action' to mean something like 'free in choosing whether to perform an action'.

It may be objected to condition (a) that there are many actions with respect to which we are free but which we never consider. Such actions can be divided into two sets of cases. Sometimes we don't consider performing an action because the action is unthinkable for us (e.g., murdering a stranger at random), or because the action is obviously bad (e.g., betting the entire contents of my bank account at the racetrack), or because it is simply silly (e.g., trying to stand on my head during a lecture). In these cases, we implicitly regard the reasons against the action as decisive, and hence the reasons against it can be said to be taken into account. In other cases, the reason I don't perform the action is that I never thought of performing it. Perhaps I have no opinion, even implicitly, about whether the action is good or bad, or perhaps I implicitly regard it as good but haven't thought of performing it on this particular occasion. In such cases, I maintain, I am not free with respect to the action (although I would be free with respect to it if I thought of it). Ignorance of (or inattentiveness to) the available alternatives and their consequences detracts from one's control over a situation and is for this reason an impairment of freedom.[7]

The notion of dependence in condition (b) is rather murky. Simple counterfactual dependence will not work here due to the possibility of redundancy[8] and finkishness (of which more later). I suggest we employ a notion of *explanatory dependence*, of which *causal dependence* is probably the relevant species for humans.[9] That is, supposing I do in fact raise my hand, the dependence condition is satisfied if my raising my hand is explained by my choice to raise my hand.[10] Supposing I don't raise my hand, condition (b) is satisfied if my not raising my hand is explained by my not choosing to raise my hand. Although counterfactual dependence fails as an analysis, it can be employed as a heuristic here, since these kinds of explanatory dependencies *normally* (in the absence of redundancy, finkishness, etc.) give rise to counterfactual dependence.

A *prevented option* is an action or state of affairs such that it is among a created agent's options although it is part of God's providential plan to ensure that the agent does not choose it. It might be regarded as obvious that only on theological compatibilism is God able to ensure that a created agent chooses in

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7. See Pearce, "Infinite Power."

8. See Paul and Hall, *Causation*, ch. 3.

9. In other work, I argue that God's act of will is a *ground*, rather than a cause, of its fulfilment (Pearce, "Counterpossible Dependence"; Pearce, "Foundational Grounding"). Formulating the definition in terms of explanation allows for the possibility of agents (such as God) whose choices might explain outcomes in non-causal ways.

10. Because of worries about deviant explanatory chains we should perhaps add, 'in the way human choices normally explain human actions'. This qualification can be harmlessly neglected for present purposes, since our discussion will always assume that the choice leads to the action in the normal way.

a particular way without taking away the agent's options. However, I will now show that both Molinism and the simple foreknowledge theory allow for this.

2   Molinism and Prevented Options

A counterfactual of creaturely freedom (CCF) is a subjunctive conditional about what a possible creature would choose if faced with a certain free choice. Molinism is the view that CCFs are contingent, but nevertheless independent of God's will, and that God employs comprehensive knowledge of CCFs in deciding what to create.

Molinism promises to combine a strong doctrine of providence, on which every detail of history goes according to God's plan, with a libertarian conception of free will, on which God cannot determine the free choices of creatures.[11] This is possible, on the Molinist view, because of the way the CCFs are employed in God's providential plan. Since God cannot determine the free choices of creatures, God has no choice about the truth values of the CCFs. However, God knows these truth values, and God has significant control over the circumstances in which free beings find themselves. The worlds consistent with the actual truth-values of the CCFs are known as *feasible worlds*. According to the Molinist, God determines exactly which one among the feasible worlds is actual.[12]

The presence of prevented options is thus central to the Molinist picture: God puts certain choices before us in the full knowledge of which option will be chosen. It is not clear whether this *always* amounts to God's ensuring that the other option is not chosen. Perhaps God would still have placed the creature in the relevant circumstances if the creature had been going to make a different choice.[13] However, God's providential employment of CCFs must generate at least some prevented options.

To see this, we begin with a concrete example. Thomas Flint has argued that Molinism allows for a compelling defense of the Catholic doctrine of Papal infallibility.[14] According to this doctrine, as Flint understands it, God is committed to ensuring that no Pope, speaking *ex cathedra*, says what is false, yet a Pope is just as free as anyone else to say whatever words he chooses whenever he chooses [15] This view is consistent, according to Molinism, because God is

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11. In his book *Divine Providence*, Thomas Flint treats this as the primary motivation for Molinism, and in a later work (Flint, "Divine Providence") he simply *defines* 'Molinism' as the conjunction of strong providence with libertarianism about free will. That Molinism's (purported) ability to combine theological libertarianism with strong providence is its chief selling point is widely accepted among both friends and foes. See, e.g, Perszyk, "Molinism and Compatibilism," §2; Zimmerman, "Yet Another Anti-Molinist Argument," 33–38.

12. Flint, *Divine Providence*, §2.5; Perszyk, "Molinism and Compatibilism," 13–14, 19; Perszyk, "Molinism and the Consequence Argument," 134–135.

13. Flint remarks in passing, "surely there are *some* divine decisions (the decision to create Alpha Centauri might be a good candidate) which *are* counterfactually independent of our decisions and actions" (Flint, *Divine Providence*, 167). Perhaps. But I will argue below that the Molinist has no right to be sure about this.

14. Flint, *Divine Providence*, ch. 8. Flint also offers a structurally similar defense of the Incarnation, but the issues there are far more complex. See Flint, "'A Death He Freely Accepted'"

15. Flint, *Divine Providence*, §§8.2–8.3. I employ this only as an illustrative example. The questions of whether Flint's interpretation of the Catholic doctrine is correct and whether the Catholic doctrine (correctly interpreted) is true are far beyond the scope of this paper.

able to ensure that only those who, in the relevant circumstances,[16] will freely refrain from speaking falsely will become Pope.

On such a view, does a Pope still have the option of speaking falsely? Condition (a) is clearly satisfied: Popes, just like anyone else, weigh the reasons for and against uttering certain words.

Condition (b), however, is much more complex. If God has really left the Pope free to speak as he sees fit, then the conditional *if the Pope chose to say that greed is a virtue, he would say that greed is a virtue* should be true, and this suggests that the dependency required by condition (b) also exists: the Pope does not say that greed is a virtue because he does not choose to say this. However, since it is part of God's providential plan to ensure that the Pope does not say what is false, it appears that the following backtracking conditional is also true: *if Francis had been going to say that greed is a virtue he would never have become Pope.*[17] ('Francis' is here used as a proper name of the current Pope, despite the fact that if he had not been Pope he would not have been called 'Francis'.) These two conditionals may appear inconsistent, or the second conditional might be thought to undermine the dependency relation, so that the outcome really depends not on Francis but on God.

However, properly interpreted, on the assumption that Molinism is correct, these two conditionals can both be true,[18] and condition (b) can be satisfied. The confusion is due to the fact that (on Flint's package of views) Popes are subject to a curious condition we will call *finkish backtracking.*

A *finkish* power, disposition, or ability is one that would be lost if the conditions for its exercise ever occurred.[19] If God exists, then cases are easy to construct. Just suppose that God has decided to preserve a certain vase from breakage by miraculous intervention if necessary: if ever the vase is about to break God will intervene to alter the vase so that it will be strong enough to remain intact. The intuition is supposed to be that, since this vase is intrinsically just like all the other fragile vases in the world, it too is fragile. Nevertheless, if it were dropped it would not break (because God would miraculously preserve it).

If Molinism is true, however, then God needn't miraculously intervene to preserve the vase. God can instead simply create the vase in circumstances where God knows it won't be struck or dropped. If Sally is such that, were she left unattended with the vase, she would hit it with a baseball bat, then God can make sure to create Sally in other circumstances or not create her at all.

If the preservation of the vase is sufficiently important to God, then (de-

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Jeremy Pierce pointed out to me that many Christians who reject Papal infallibility nevertheless face a precisely analogous problem concerning the writers of Scripture. If (as many Christians believe) the writers of Scripture were inspired in such a way as to be literally infallible—without the possibility of error—at the time they were writing, could they also be free to write whatever they chose? Flint makes a similar suggestion in passing (*Divine Providence*, 180).

16. For simplicity in what follows I will often neglect this qualification.

17. In fact, Flint (*Divine Providence*, ch. 11) argues at some length that Molinism does generate backtracking conditionals whereby we may have what Flint calls 'strong counterfactual power' over the past.

18. John Martin Fischer (*The Metaphysics of Free Will*, ch. 5) has argued, on somewhat different grounds, that 'can' claims and backtracking conditionals can come apart in a fashion similar to that under discussion here.

19. See Martin, "Dispositions and Conditionals"; Lewis, "Finkish Dispositions"; Vihvelin, *Causes, Laws, and Free Will*, §6.3.

pending on God's larger plan) it might be true that *if the vase had been going
to be dropped* (struck, etc.) *it would not have been fragile.* This is what I mean
by 'finkish backtracking': if the conditions for the exercise of the disposition
(power, ability, etc.) had been going to be actual, then the object would not
have had that disposition (etc.).

Intuitively, though, it seems that, standing inside the world where the vase
does exist and is constituted just like any other fragile vase, and God does
not intend to perform a miracle, it is true that *if Sally struck the vase with
a baseball bat it would break.*[20] In other words, finkish backtracking does not
generate ordinary (forward-looking) finkishness. This intuition is borne out by
existing theories of counterfactuals, which generally severely limit the conditions
in which backtracking is permitted.[21] If a speaker wants a conditional to be
interpreted in a backtracking way, he usually has to indicate this explicitly with
odd grammatical constructions like 'had been going to' in English.[22]

In fact, if this type of backtracking were allowed in the evaluation of or-
dinary conditionals, disaster would ensue for the Molinist. Consider, for in-
stance, the version of Molinism on which, necessarily, God actualizes the best
feasible world—that is, the best world consistent with the actual (contingent)
truth-values of the CCFs.[23] Presumably there are very many worlds that are
very similar in value, many of which differ in their populations. Further, small
differences in our actions can have ripple effects on the choices, actions, and
circumstances of others that could make surprising differences to the overall
value of a world. As Flint observes, "Molinists...are in no position to deny the
possibility of bizarre counterfactual connections."[24]

Consider, then, the collection of worlds at which Earth is populated by hu-
mans and the collection of worlds at which it is instead populated by hobbits.
(Suppose there is some good reason not to create both on earth together.) Hu-
mans and hobbits each have their distinctive charms, but each also (we may
suppose) have their distinctive tendencies to evil. Thus, assuming (as the view
under consideration does) that human worlds and hobbit worlds are commen-
surable,[25] it seems likely that the difference in value between the best human
world and the best hobbit world is not very large. Now consider the unlimited
variety of creatures God *could have* created, only a small fraction of which are
even conceivable by us. If (as the view under consideration supposes) the actual
world is the best feasible world, probably it is so only by a very small mar-
gin, and the close competitors probably include not only other human worlds

20. Linda Zagzebski (*Freedom and Foreknowledge*, 100–106, 137) argues that backtracking
conditionals can be true only when evaluated from a "detached, nondeliberative perspective"
(p. 106). I have something similar in mind when I say that 'standing inside the world' the dis-
position ascriptions and associated counterfactuals remain true: the backtracking conditional
is true only from the perspective of God's creative decision and not from the deliberative
perspective of any finite agent.

21. Lewis, "Counterfactual Dependence"; Bennett, *A Philosophical Guide to Conditionals*,
ch. 18.

22. Lewis, "Counterfactual Dependence," 457–458; Bennett, *A Philosophical Guide to Con-
ditionals*, §108.

23. I don't know of any Molinist who explicitly endorses this view, but Justin Mooney ("Best
Feasible Worlds") discusses some reasons why the view might be attractive to at least some
Molinists. Most discussions of Molinism are neutral on this question.

24. Flint, *Divine Providence*, 248.

25. For an argument that differences in population (among other things) generate widespread
incommensurability among worlds, see Pruss, "Divine Creative Freedom."

but also hobbit worlds and worlds so alien as to be inconceivable by us. But any change in the CCFs (whether regarding actual or merely possible creatures) would alter which worlds are feasible,[26] and this could easily result in a radically different world being best.

Which kind of world wins out thus seems likely to be highly sensitive to small changes in the CCFs. As a result, on this brand of Molinism, it might well be true that *if I had not been going to write this paper, I would not exist*, and perhaps even *if I had not been going to write this paper, there would not have been any humans*. To suggest that this is an epistemic possibility is not to overestimate the value of this paper. It is simply to note that we do not know precisely how my writing of this paper fits into the total structure of the world God has chosen, and we also don't know much about the close competitors to this world, hence we don't know whether small changes in the CCFs might push some completely different kind of world—perhaps a hobbit world—over the top. Indeed, even less momentous differences like what I was going to eat for breakfast today might make this kind of difference, according to this brand of Molinism.

Suppose, however, that the Molinist does not hold that there must be a unique best feasible world and God must choose it. (I suspect that most Molinists do not hold this.[27]) Then the results may be rather different, depending on the Molinist's understanding of divine choice. However, the Molinist *by definition* holds that God takes the CCFs into account in God's creative choice, and this would be pointless if God's choice were not in some way or to some degree sensitive to the CCFs. Thus the Molinist is certainly committed to holding that it is *sometimes* true that if a creature had been going to choose differently God would have made a different creative choice.[28] In the absence of some kind of model of divine decision-making, the Molinist cannot rule out the possibility that *any* difference in the CCFs, however trivial, would have led God to choose a radically different world with a non-overlapping population.[29] Furthermore,

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26. Flint (*Divine Providence*, 6), following Plantinga (*The Nature of Necessity*, §4.1), takes possible worlds to be maximal states of affairs. Since these include *counterfactual* states of affairs, any change in the CCFs actually generates a *non-overlapping* collection of feasible worlds (or 'world-type', as Flint says), even if the change involves only non-actual creatures. Presumably, however, worlds that differ only in CCFs about non-actual creatures do not differ in value.

27. Flint ("The Problem of Divine Freedom") in fact argues that necessarily there is *not* a unique best feasible world.

28. Plantinga ("On Ockham's Way Out," 254–258) argues that any view on which God can make providential use of foreknowledge will lead to unusual backtracking conditionals. For more on this, see the next section.

29. Cf. Perszyk, "Molinism and the Consequence Argument," 144–146. In fact, the Molinist's problem may be worse than this. Dean Zimmerman ("Yet Another Anti-Molinist Argument," 59–75) has argued that since Molinists take CCFs to be brute (ungrounded), they are committed to the claim that any combination of CCFs might be true, regardless of causal connections or the lack thereof between antecedent and consequent. If Zimmerman is right about this, then on the Molinist view my decision of what to eat for breakfast may be momentous indeed, for the Molinist would be committed to the claim that it is both metaphysically and epistemically possible that *if I had decided to eat oatmeal the American president would have freely decided to order a nuclear first strike and the relevant subordinates would have freely decided to carry out the order*. Note that this is a *forward-looking* conditional, not a backtracker, but this isn't just a 'butterfly effect' worry about hidden causal connections: the suggestion is that this counterfactual connection might obtain as a matter of brute fact despite the lack of any causal connection. Such conditionals appear to cause very serious problems for free will and moral responsibility, especially since God knows about and can exploit such connections.

in light of the enormous array of choices available to God and the diversity of reasons for and against these choices, it seems unlikely that God has any particularly strong (counterfactually stable) commitment to ensuring *my* existence in particular, so it seems likely that small differences in my choices (or yours!) might make worlds from which I am absent more choiceworthy than those in which I am present.

If this is right, then it might be true that *if I had chosen to eat oatmeal for breakfast today, I would have eaten oatmeal for breakfast today* and also that *if I had been going to choose to eat oatmeal, I would not have been able to eat oatmeal* (since I would not have existed). Given Molinism, not only are these conditionals consistent, it is epistemically possible that both are true. What the Molinist must keep in mind is that the first is a forward-looking conditional concerned with what would have followed from my choosing to eat oatmeal in those circumstances, while the latter is a backtracking conditional concerned with what would have followed from a certain CCF's having been (eternally) true.

It might be thought that, even if the forward-looking conditional is true, the backtracking conditional still prevents the outcome from depending on my choice in the way required by (b). Again, though, the Molinist had better figure out a way to avoid this consequence, because the result is far too general. Since any small change might have led God to choose a radically different world, these backtracking conditionals might be everywhere. If backtracking conditionals undermine dependence relations it will not in general be true that effects depend on their causes. Molinism implies that as long as we are unable to grasp the full basis of God's decision we can never really know how the world would have been if the cause had not been going to be present. Nevertheless, the Molinist must surely maintain, we often know that the effect depends on the cause, and this often includes knowing that if the cause had not existed the effect would not have existed.

One strategy for securing this result is to adopt the Leibnizian/Thomistic view that creaturely causation (whether deterministic or indeterministic) is part of the structure of explanation/dependence *within* a world, and God's decision of which world should be actual does not alter these internal structures.[30] One way or another, though, the Molinist needs to hold that these backtracking conditionals do not undermine ordinary dependence relations. The dependence of our actions on our choices is clearly among these ordinary cases.

On the Molinist view, prevented options are central to the mechanism of providential control, and it is likely that they are widespread. Probably, a great many of the choices I face are such that *if I had been going to choose differently, I would never have been faced with this choice*, and this is because God has chosen to prevent me from taking the other course of action. Note, further, that from the Molinist's perspective, this is not a bug, it's a feature. The entire point of Molinism is to allow God detailed providential control—including the ability to prevent outcomes God wants to prevent—while preserving libertarian free will.

(This is Zimmerman's point.) My aim in this section is to argue that *if* Molinism succeeds on its own terms *then* it permits prevented options. I will therefore assume that the Molinist can somehow answer Zimmerman's objections. For one Molinist attempt, see Craig, "Yet Another Failed Anti-Molinist Argument."

30. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Iq19a8, Iq22, Iq116; Leibniz, *Theodicy*, §52; Pearce, "Foundational Grounding."

Contingent but prevolitional CCFs, according to the Molinist, accomplish this.

3 Simple Foreknowledge and Prevented Options

According to Molinism, God has what is sometimes called 'simple knowledge' of CCFs, and makes providential use of this knowledge. By 'simple knowledge' I mean knowledge that is not based on or derived from other knowledge. The theological compatibilist, by contrast, might hold that God's knowledge of CCFs is derived from God's knowledge of creaturely natures or essences,[31] and so is part of God's natural knowledge.[32] The simple foreknowledge view, as I here understand it, agrees with the Molinist that CCFs are not part of God's natural knowledge, but disagrees with the Molinist by denying that God makes providential use of simple knowledge of CCFs. Instead the simple foreknowledge view holds, God's natural knowledge is supplemented by simple knowledge of the *actual* future. Further, the simple foreknowledge theory holds, such knowledge meaningfully augments God's providential control.

The simple foreknowledge view purports to offer more robust creaturely freedom than Molinism, while maintaining a more robust form of divine providence than open theism. However, like Molinism, the simple foreknowledge view permits prevented options.

The central difficulty for the simple foreknowledge view is what David Hunt has dubbed 'the Metaphysical Problem'.[33] The problem is that God's simple knowledge of the future is meant to depend on the future facts. If God makes providential use of foreknowledge, then God's choices will depend on this knowledge. However, these future facts in turn depend on God's choices. Hence there is a vicious circularity of metaphysical dependence.

According to Hunt, the problem is solved if God's decisions are not always based on all of God's knowledge. Each decision must be based on some portion of God's total knowledge, and this portion must not include the matter about which God is deciding or anything that logically entails it.[34]

To be more precise, let p and q be contingent propositions about the future. What the Metaphysical Problem shows, according to Hunt, is that *if p entails q* then it is incoherent to suppose that God takes p into account in deciding whether to intervene regarding q. This, however, is a far cry from rendering simple foreknowledge either incoherent or providentially useless. In the first

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31. Leibniz, *A Discourse on Metaphysics*, §§8–9, 13.

32. CCFs, for Leibniz, are not strictly speaking part of God's natural knowledge since Leibniz insists that they are contingent. However, Leibniz does say that they are part of God's "knowledge of simple intelligence," i.e., the knowledge which "embraces all that is possible" (*Theodicy*, §417). Leibniz thus holds, contrary to the Molinist, that God knows the (allegedly contingent) CCFs in precisely the same way God knows necessary truths. For discussion of the status of CCFs in Leibniz, and Leibniz's relation to Molinism, see Griffin, "Leibniz on God's Knowledge of Counterfactuals"; Garcia, "Leibniz, a Friend of Molinism." For Leibniz's own characterization of his relation to Molinism, see *Theodicy*, §§39–48.

33. Hunt, "Divine Providence and Simple Foreknowledge," 398. Hunt distinguishes the Metaphysical Problem from the Doxastic Problem, which alleges that it is not possible for God to make decisions if God already knows what God will decide. If the Doxastic Problem is interpreted in such a way as to make it different from the Metaphysical Problem, then it seems to me to rely on an overly anthropomorphic conception of divine choice. The real problem, at least for the classical theist, is the problem about circular metaphysical dependencies.

34. Hunt, "Divine Providence and Simple Foreknowledge," 405–412.

place, God need not take p into account in deciding whether to intervene regarding q: p could be 'bracketed' from God's decision-making. In the second place, even if p and q are logically independent, p may still be relevant to whether it is desirable that q, and in this case God can make use of p without generating any circularity.

Hunt illustrates the second case with the following example (among others):

> Sue is a contestant on a game show. God foresees that she will choose Door #3. [God] therefore manipulates events so that the Grand Prize is placed behind that door.[35]

Here we are to imagine God deciding *whether to ensure that the Grand Prize is behind Door #3* and basing this decision on knowledge of *which door Sue will choose.* Clearly these two propositions are logically independent. Of course, since on Hunt's view God has comprehensive knowledge of the actual future, God also knows that *Sue will choose the door with the Grand Prize.* It would be incoherent to suppose that God makes use of knowledge of *this* proposition in order to ensure that Sue wins the Grand Prize. Rather, according to Hunt, God's knowledge of which door will hold the Grand Prize is 'bracketed' and God only considers which door Sue will choose. This avoids circularity.

This story clearly generates backtracking conditionals. In order for this to be an example of providential use of foreknowledge, we need to assume that God would have acted differently, and the prize would have been behind a different door, if Sue had not been going to choose Door #3. Thus, it should be true that *if Sue had not been going to choose Door #3, the Grand Prize would not have been behind Door #3.* Note that generating these kinds of past-to-future dependencies is *the entire point* of the simple foreknowledge view, so again this is not a bug, it's a feature. If the simple foreknowledge view does not succeed in making some past facts depend on some future facts, then it is ultimately no different, with respect to providence, from open theism.[36]

This backtracking conditional, however, is not yet finkish and does not generate any prevented options. Suppose, then, that God wants, as on the Molinist model, to ensure that Sue does not face this choice unless she is going to choose Door #3. Does the simple foreknowledge theory make this possible?

In fact, the simple foreknowledge theory, as outlined so far, permits God to do this without overriding Sue's free will. To accomplish this, God intervenes regarding *whether Sue will be the contestant* on the basis of God's knowledge of *which door the contestant will choose.* If the contestant will not choose Door #3, then God prevents Sue from being the contestant; if the contestant will choose Door #3, God ensures that Sue is the contestant. Here, the proposition concerning which God intervenes is *Sue will be the contestant.* In deciding whether or how to intervene, God must 'bracket' God's knowledge of the contestant's identity. However, God can take into account another proposition, *the contestant will choose Door #3.* This proposition does not imply that Sue is the contestant so God can decide to ensure that Sue is the contestant on the basis of God's knowledge that the contestant (whoever that might be) will choose Door #3. This avoids circularity and involves knowledge only of the actual future.

Now, however, we are back in precisely the same case as the Molinist. Since Sue is in fact the contestant, the rules of the game ensure that *if Sue had chosen*

35. Hunt, "Prescience and Providence," 437.
36. Zimmerman, "The Providential Usefulness of 'Simple Foreknowledge,'" 192–196.

Door #2, she would have received the prize behind Door #2. Therefore, which prize Sue receives depends on Sue's choice. But God has decided to ensure that Sue is the contestant if, but only if, the contestant will choose Door #3. This divine resolution ensures that *if Sue had been going to choose Door #2, she would not have been able to choose a door* (since she would not have been a contestant). Although this is a counterfactual conditional, it is not an item of divine middle knowledge. It is a consequence of God's plan for how to make providential use of simple foreknowledge.

The simple foreknowledge theorist may be inclined to deny that my case is possible.[37] Suppose, then, that the simple foreknowledge theorist wants to preserve the possibility of Hunt's original case while rejecting my modified version. I can see three ways this might go.

In the first place, the simple foreknowledge theorist might argue that there is some hidden contradiction in my description of the case. This strategy is, however, not promising. If the notion of divine intervention makes sense *at all* (and the simple foreknowledge theorist is committed to saying that it does) then there is no special problem about God's intervening to determine whether or not Sue is the contestant. Perhaps, for instance, the hosts of the game show choose between Sue and Bill by flipping a coin. Then God could certainly manipulate the air currents in the room to ensure the toss went Sue's way. Further, the simple foreknowledge theorist cannot object to God's foreknowing the contestant's choice, since this is already part of Hunt's original case. Finally, the overall story is that, in the actual world, God ensures that Sue is the contestant and Sue chooses Door #3. There is no inconsistency here.[38]

Alternatively then, the simple foreknowledge theorist might argue that my modified story violates the non-circularity constraint. In particular, one might worry that what God needs to foreknow in this case is *the contestant's choice*, and this is a matter in which one particular, concrete contestant is involved. Thus, God's foreknowledge of the contestant's choice *does* depend on the contestant's identity, and God's intervention with respect to the contestant's identity therefore violates the circularity constraint.[39] This line of thought, however, is equivalent to a standard objection to the simple foreknowledge theory which Hunt's account is specifically designed to avoid.

William Hasker had argued that "if God has simple foreknowledge, he knows the *concrete events* of the future, and not merely propositions about the future".[40] This, however, would render simple foreknowledge useless because God would then know every detail of every aspect of the event, including "*the entirety of the causally relevant past history of the universe* leading up to" the event,[41] and God would therefore be unable, without circularity, to intervene

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37. I thank Dean Zimmerman and two anonymous referees for pressing me on this point.

38. An anonymous referee suggested that this might problematically involve God changing the actual future, but this is not so. In this story, God affects future events in just the way you and I do: by acting at a time prior to them. God ensures that Sue is the contestant and, since God does so, Sue is in fact the contestant. If the contestant had not been going to choose Door #3, God would have ensured that Sue was not the contestant and, for this reason, Sue would not have been the contestant. At least some of the future facts are true because God acts as God does, and would have been different if God had acted differently. It is only in this sense that God 'changes the future', and you and I 'change the future' in precisely the same way.

39. I thank an anonymous referee for this objection.

40. Hasker, *God, Time, and Knowledge*, 59.

41. Hasker, *God, Time, and Knowledge*, 61.

regarding any aspect of the event or its causal history.

Hunt's response is, essentially, to concede that the kind of foreknowledge Hasker describes would indeed be providentially useless if God's knowledge of the full detail of each concrete event were an indivisible whole such that God could not bracket any portion of it. Thus, Hunt suggests, "God intervenes. . . not because of a concrete event, but because of an abstraction from that event."[42] This is precisely what happens both in Hunt's original case of Sue the game show contestant and in my modification of that case: regardless of whether God *has* the kind of objectual knowledge of a concrete event Hasker describes, the knowledge God *acts on* is propositional knowledge that brackets some of this detail. In Hunt's original case, God acts on God's knowledge of the proposition that *Sue will choose Door #3* and in my case God acts on God's knowledge of the proposition that *the contestant will choose Door #3*. In both cases, the non-circularity constraint is satisfied because and only because other aspects of God's knowledge of the concrete event *the contestant's choosing* is bracketed. If Hunt's original case works, then so does my modified version.

Finally, the simple foreknowledge theorist might introduce some new constraint on providential use of foreknowledge, in addition to Hunt's non-circularity constraint. Hunt, after all, never says that the non-circularity constraint introduced to deal with the Metaphysical Problem is the *only* limitation on God's providential use of foreknowledge. Another constraint could be introduced.

Simple foreknowledge theorists are welcome to invent some well motivated restriction that rules out my case. To the best of my knowledge, no such constraint has been proposed in the existing literature. Until such a proposal comes to light, we must conclude that the simple foreknowledge theory *as so far developed* permits prevented options.

4 Prevented Options and Free Will

Both Molinism and the simple foreknowledge theory allow that we may sometimes have an action among our options although God has decided to ensure that we do not choose it. Having an action among one's options, I suggested above, is necessary but perhaps insufficient for freedom with respect to that action. It may be thought that the insufficiency is both glaring and highly relevant: I have been arguing, essentially, that options (in my stipulated sense) need not be robust alternative possibilities. Thus, it might be thought that theological libertarians should endorse some kind of alternative possibilities formulation which is stronger than my definition of having an option.

In order to pursue this strategy, the libertarian would need to identify some way, relevant to freedom, in which agents whose options are prevented differ from us. However, proponents of Molinism or the simple foreknowledge theory are in no position to do this.

This is most obvious with respect to Molinism. For the Molinist, prevented options are precisely the mechanism by which providence is reconciled with free will: God can work God's will in the world without taking away our freedom because God can act to ensure that we are faced with certain choices only if we will choose as God intends. Such choices, the Molinist insists, are free.

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42. Hunt, "Divine Providence and Simple Foreknowledge," 404.

The case of simple foreknowledge is more difficult. Since the simple foreknowledge theory is admitted to involve a less robust vision of the compatibility of providence and creaturely freedom than Molinism, the simple foreknowledge theorist may be inclined to deny that God can control choices in this way without taking away free will.[43] That is, the simple foreknowledge theorist might claim that although my modified version of the game show case is possible, in this scenario Sue would not be free.

The trouble with this move is that it essentially amounts to a 'bullet-biting' response to the very cleanest kind of Frankfurt case.[44] In the actual world, God does not interfere with Sue in any way at all. Sue's freedom, according to this response, is taken away merely by what God would have done if the contestant had not been going to choose Door #3. Further, the simple foreknowledge theorist is explicitly committed to the claim that God's decision can be based on direct knowledge of the future—there is no need for any kind of 'tell' in the past or present. As a result, there is no room for a 'flicker of freedom' here. A simple foreknowledge theorist who wanted to take this line would have to hold that Sue is unfree in the actual world *just* because of what would have happened in some counterfactual scenario. Most libertarian responses to Frankfurt cases, including Hunt's, have tried to avoid this conclusion. In fact, Hunt's own response to Frankfurt cases is to reject the Principle of Alternative Possibilities.[45] So Hunt, at least, is in no position to pursue this strategy.[46]

It seems, then, that both Molinists and simple foreknowledge theorists must admit that prevented options do not necessarily take away freedom or, in other words, that we may sometimes be free with respect to an action although God has resolved to ensure that we do not choose that action. We are, in this sense, free to break the laws of providence. How precisely should we understand this freedom?

In his classic defence of nomological compatibilism,[47] David Lewis distinguished three ways in which an agent's freedom might be thought to relate to violations of natural law.[48] First, it might be thought that there is some action the agent is free to perform such that if the agent did that action then there would be a law of nature that was broken. Second, it might be thought that the agent is free to perform some action such that the action itself would falsify some proposition that is in fact a law (though in the world at which this action took place that proposition would not be a law). Third, it might be thought

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43. I thank Dean Zimmerman and an anonymous referee for pressing this objection.

44. A Frankfurt case is a scenario in which the actual causal sequence looks exactly like a paradigm case of free and responsible choice, but the agent has no possibility of doing otherwise. Usually, such cases are constructed by the introduction of a 'counterfactual intervener' who would have interfered with the agent's choice, if necessary, to ensure the desired outcome, but does not actually intervene. See Frankfurt, "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility."

45. Hunt, "Moral Responsibility and Unavoidable Action."

46. In rejecting PAP, Hunt formulates PAP as a principle about moral responsibility, not a principle about free will. However, Hunt at one point summarizes his position in the Frankfurt debate as "reject[ing] alternate possibilities while insisting that *free and* morally responsible agency is incompatible with causal determinism" ("Moral Responsibility and Buffered Alternatives," 145n34, emphasis added).

47. By 'nomological compatibilism', I mean the view that our actions or choices may be free even if only one action or choice is logically consistent with the actual past and the actual laws of nature.

48. Lewis, "Are We Free to Break the Laws?"

that the agent is free to perform an action which is such that, if the agent performed that action there would be an exception *somewhere* to a generalization that is in fact a law of nature.

Lewis rejects both the first and second options, but endorses the third: he holds that the alternative possibilities necessary for freedom are secured by the existence of possible worlds at which a 'divergence miracle' occurs at some time *prior* to the choice, allowing the deterministic causal chain to take a different direction, resulting in a different action.[49]

Lewis's rejection of the first option is based on the claim that laws must be true universal generalizations and it is therefore a contradiction to suppose that any proposition is "both a law and broken."[50] This view about laws is controversial.[51] However, the corresponding claim about laws of providence is clearly correct: it is a conceptual truth that if an omnipotent being has decided to prevent an action from being chosen, then that action is not chosen. Fortunately, none of the views under discussion implies that we are free to do something such that if we did it God's will would be frustrated. The fact that, in the actual world, an option is prevented does not show that there is no possible world at which it is chosen. However, any world at which that action is chosen must be a world at which it is not prevented.

The existence of prevented options does imply freedom to break the laws in Lewis's second sense, and not only the third.[52] We have been assuming that God specifically plans for the agent to choose in a particular way, hence a contrary choice is itself a violation of the (actual) laws of providence. For instance, think of Flint's papal infallibility case: speaking falsely (under the relevant circumstances) is an action with respect to which the Pope is free, although it directly contravenes God's providential plan.

The conclusion, then, is that Molinists, simple foreknowledge theorists, and anyone else who thinks that God can sometimes ensure that an agent makes a particular choice without taking away that agent's freedom, are committed to the claim that a prevented option may be an action with respect to which an agent is free. However, the theological determinist can also allow for prevented options. Hence, neither the Molinist nor the simple foreknowledge theorist can require alternative possibilities in a sense that is incompatible with theological determinism.

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49. Lewis, "Are We Free to Break the Laws?," 114–118. For further discussion of Lewis's 'local miracle' compatibilism, see Fischer, *The Metaphysics of Free Will*, §4.2; Beebee, "Local Miracle Compatibilism"; Oakley, "Defending Lewis's Local Miracle Compatibilism."

50. Lewis, "Are We Free to Break the Laws?," 114.

51. Not only has this claim been disputed by philosophers of religion defending law-breaking miracles (e.g., Swinburne, *The Concept of a Miracle*), but it has also been disputed by philosophers of science who have argued that it does not accurately capture the role of laws in scientific practice (e.g., Cartwright, *How the Laws of Physics Lie*).

52. Perszyk ("Molinism and the Consequence Argument") argues that Molinists must be prepared to endorse a strategy similar to Lewis's, and he suggests that simple foreknowledge theorists might be in the same boat (pp. 146, 149n26), but he does not note that the position to which Molinists and simple foreknowledge theorists are committed is in fact more extreme than Lewis's. Also see Cohen, "Molinists (Still) Cannot Endorse the Consequence Argument"; Cunningham, "Hasker's Anti-Molinist Argument," 216–218.

5 Theism, Sourcehood, and Creaturely Freedom

Proponents of Molinism and the simple foreknowledge theory claim that theological determinism (that is, total divine control over all contingent facts) would be inconsistent with creaturely freedom.[53] However, they are committed to the possibility of prevented options, and if prevented options are possible then free will does not require alternative possibilities in a sense that is incompatible with theological determinism. In other words, proponents of these theories must hold that freedom with respect to a particular action is consistent with *local* theological determinism. That is, they must hold that particular creaturely actions may sometimes be free although God ensures that the creature makes this choice and no other. What sort of conception of free will might permit local theological determinism but not global theological determinism? For anyone familiar with the free will literature in recent analytic philosophy, there is an obvious candidate: sourcehood.[54]

The path for the incompatibilist is not so easy here either, however, because Leibniz has shown how a theological determinist can provide sourcehood (what he calls 'spontaneity'[55]) in an extremely strong sense—stronger than that held by most libertarians. According to Leibniz, the entire unfolding of a creature's life arises from its own internal spontaneity.[56] This internal law, for a given creature, constitutes its essence or nature, and makes it the creature that it is. Further, although Leibniz grounds the modal facts in God,[57] he does not hold that God *invents* these natures/essences, but rather that God sees that they are possible and chooses some to be actual.[58] Thus on Leibniz's view although God chooses every detail of the historical sequence, God is not really involved in making creatures do things. God is only involved in choosing which possible creatures are actual.[59] In fact, on Leibniz's metaphysics, nothing other than the creature's own nature or essence exercises any influence on the creature's actions at all.[60] Leibniz's well-known doctrine of 'pre-established harmony', which obviates the need for any real causal influence between substances (including agents), is made possible precisely by his theological determinism, since this is what enables God to ensure that the substances remain 'synchronized' without real causal influence.[61] Once we have turned our focus away from alternative possibilities and toward sourcehood, it is not difficult to see how Leibniz could boast that "[f]ar from its being prejudicial, nothing can be more favourable to freedom than that system [of pre-established harmony]."[62]

The theological source incompatibilist needs to find some reason for thinking

53. Perszyk ("Molinism and Compatibilism") argues that Molinism is consistent with *nomological* compatibilism, at least if laws are understood in a descriptive way, but he does not question the claim that Molinism, by definition, rejects theological compatibilism.

54. Perszyk ("Molinism and the Consequence Argument," 137–139) frames the disagreement between Molinists and anti-Molinist libertarians in terms of differing sourcehood intuitions.

55. See, e.g., Leibniz, *Theodicy*, §§65, 290–291.

56. Leibniz, *Theodicy*, §§62–65, 400; Leibniz, *Monadology*, §11.

57. Leibniz, *Monadology*, §43.

58. Leibniz, *Theodicy*, §§8–9, 52, 414–417.

59. Leibniz, *A Discourse on Metaphysics*, §30.

60. Leibniz, *Monadology*, §7.

61. Leibniz, "Comments on Note L."

62. Leibniz, *Theodicy*, §63. For a recent detailed analysis of Leibniz's understanding of freedom and spontaneity, see Jorati, *Leibniz on Causation and Agency*. For the theological context of Leibniz's account, see Backus, *Leibniz*, Part II.

that no theological determinist model of sourcehood could be adequate. A first strategy that might be tried is to say that Leibniz's 'internal laws' don't give rise to action in the right way. Insofar as Leibniz takes created beings to be "spiritual automata,"[63] he is viewing them as some kind of machines, rather than as reasons-responsive beings.

This, however, is a mistake. The Leibnizian approach could invoke any kind of psychological laws you like, and in fact Leibniz himself often refers to the weighing of (real and apparent) reasons and inclinations as among the things that go into the law.[64]

The theological source incompatibilist might next object that Leibniz takes each agent's internal law to be itself causally deterministic. Causal source incompatibilists have presented many arguments for the claim that a deterministic actual sequence won't do.[65]

Causal determinism is, however, not essential to the Leibnizian strategy. One might well introduce an indeterministic individual law of the series for each creature. If divine creation is non-causal (and I suggested above that Molinists might already have reasons for thinking this), then it is conceivable that God could choose the outcomes of causally indeterministic processes.[66]

This indeterministic model, however, puts God back in the business of directly choosing what creatures will freely choose (rather than just choosing which creatures will be actual while knowing what they will choose, as on the Leibnizian and Molinist models). One strategy, then, is for the theological source incompatibilist to require *both* that the causal sequence be indeterministic *and* that the creaturely choice not be directly chosen by God. (Note, however, that

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63. Leibniz, *Theodicy*, §52.

64. E.g., Leibniz, *Theodicy*, §§51, 367.

65. See, e.g., Timpe, *Free Will*, ch. 9. Cunningham ("Hasker's Anti-Molinist Argument," 218–220) argues that Molinism should be regarded as a 'libertarian' view provided that the free will it affirms is incompatible with causal determinism. He explicitly argues that the Molinist, though libertarian, can accept the entailment of our actions by past facts, provided that this entailment does not imply causal determination. Hasker ("Molinism's Freedom Problem," 104–106) replies that causal indeterminism may not secure alternative possibilities in any sufficiently robust sense. However, the deeper problem for Cunningham's defense of Molinism is this: on Cunningham's view, the Molinist would count as preserving libertarianism's "essential commitment" ("Hasker's Anti-Molinist Argument," 219) even if God controlled every detail of history, provided that this control was not causal. In other words, causal libertarianism does not imply theological libertarianism. As a result, unless Cunningham can argue that no non-causal mechanism of divine control is possible, he will lose the central Molinist claim that divine control over the truth values of CCFs would undermine freedom.

66. Aquinas has often been interpreted as endorsing this kind of veiw. For the basis in the primary text, see Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Iq22a4. For contemporary scholarly defenses of this interpretation, see Burrell, *Freedom and Creation*, ch. 7; Shanley, "Divine Causation"; Davies, *Thomas Aquinas's* Summa Contra Gentiles, ch. 14. For a notable dissent, see Stump, *Aquinas*, chs. 5, 9, and 13. For a recent defense of the combination of theological compatibilism with causal/nomological libertarianism, see McCann, *Creation and the Sovereignty of God*. For a recent critique of this view, see Vicens, "Divine Determinism." Note, however, that Vicens' argument is, essentially, that the theological determinist cannot secure alternative possibilities in any sense more robust than the causal/nomological determinist. I've been arguing that neither the Molinist nor the simple foreknowledge theorist can require alternative possibilities in any sense more robust than the theological determinist can provide. Hence, if Vicens is correct, then it will follow by transitivity that even the simple foreknowledge theorist cannot consistently claim that nomological determinism would take away the alternative possibilities needed for free will! We could endorse this argument right down the line and conclude that believers in divine providence might as well be nomological compatibilists. However, it seems to me that it would be premature to respond in this way prior to a more thorough investigation into how these views fare with respect to sourcehood.

considerable weight must be attached to the word 'directly' here in order for this view to be compatible with the presence of prevented options.)

An alternative strategy would be for the theological source incompatibilist to claim that having the source of one's actions within one's essence or nature is not the right kind of sourcehood for freedom. For instance, Kevin Timpe suggests that freedom requires the absence of an "externally sufficient" causal chain, and we are to understand this as meaning external to the person's "agential structure".[67] Perhaps one's essence or nature is external to one's agential structure in just this problematic way. Similarly, Robert Kane[68] argues that sourcehood adequate for freedom requires that the agent be "personally responsible" for every "sufficient ground or cause or explanation" in the chain of grounds/causes/explanations leading up to the action. Again, the incompatibilist might suggest that Leibnizian agents are not personally responsible for these facts rooted in their essences.

Note, however, that the Molinist, at least, is in no position to offer these objections.[69] The Molinist's CCFs must be external to the person's agential structure, since facts about the CCFs figure into the explanation of God's decision to actualize a being with that agential structure.[70] Furthermore, Leibniz would say that a free being's essence/nature/internal law *just is* that being's agential structure (something the Molinist might also be tempted to say about the CCFs).[71] Similarly, with respect to Kane's account, the CCFs figure (together with divine choice) into a sufficient explanation of the agent's action, and it is hard to see how the agent could be "personally responsible" (in Kane's incompatibilist sense) for the CCFs.

The simple foreknowledge theorist is committed to the claim that there are at least some free choices in which the situation is basically the same as the Molinist scenario. This applies to cases like the modified version of Sue the game show contestant, who would not have been the contestant if she had not been going to choose Door #3. Perhaps the simple foreknowledge theorist can get some mileage out of the thought that not all of our free choices are like this due to the restrictions placed on God's use of foreknowledge by the need to avoid circularity. However, it is far from clear precisely how this story would go, especially given that (we are now supposing) the simple foreknowledge theorist is a source incompatibilist: if Sue satisfies the sourcehood condition (however that might be spelled out), then why wouldn't that condition be satisfied in a world in which every 'actual sequence' leading up to a choice looks like Sue's in the relevant respects?

The bottom line is this: both the Molinist and the simple foreknowledge theorist are committed to the claim that we may sometimes be free to break the laws of providence. But if we may be free to break the laws of providence, then the alternative possibilities required for creaturely freedom are consistent with

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67. Timpe, *Free Will*, 138–139.

68. Kane, *The Significance of Free Will*, 72.

69. Timpe and Kane are not Molinists.

70. This is the central point of Hasker, "A New Anti-Molinist Argument."

71. Note also that the Leibniznian theory satisfies the (putatively libertarian) conditions for freedom given by Eleanor Stump ("Libertarian Freedom and the Principle of Alternative Possibilities"), even though it endorses causal, nomological, and theological determinism: on Leibniz's view the agent's actions originate in the agent's essence which is internal to the agent and the act is ultimately caused by the agent's cognitive and volitional faculties ('perception' and 'appetition', in Leibniz's terms).

theological determinism. Thus, if any hope remains for combining theological libertarianism with even a moderately strong doctrine of providence, that hope must be found in sourcehood considerations. Theological libertarians should begin by identifying a valuable kind of sourcehood they can provide that Leibniz can't.[72]

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