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Freedom And Foreknowledge

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FREEDOM AND FOREKNOWLEDGE

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In her book, *The Dilemma of Freedom and Foreknowledge*, Linda Zagzebski suggests that among the strongest ways of supporting the thesis that libertarian free will is incompatible with divine foreknowledge is what she refers to as the Accidental Necessity argument. Zagzebski contends, however, that at least three satisfactory responses to that argument are available.

I argue that two of the proposed solutions are open to strong objections, and that the third, although it may very well handle the specific versions of the Accidental Necessity argument that Zagzebski considers, fails when confronted with a stronger version of the Accidental Necessity line of argument.

In *The Dilemma of Freedom and Foreknowledge*, Linda Zagzebski examines a number of arguments in support of the claim that human freedom, when interpreted in a libertarian or incompatibilist fashion, is incompatible with divine foreknowledge. Zagzebski suggests that one of the strongest ways of arguing for that thesis is what she refers to as the Accidental Necessity version of the foreknowledge dilemma, and she argues that almost all of the familiar responses to that line of argument are inadequate. She contends, however, that there are at least three answers that are satisfactory — one being a position that she refers to as Thomistic Ockhamism, and the other two being novel solutions that Zagzebski herself advances.

In this paper, I shall argue that none of the proposed solutions is ultimately satisfactory. In the case of two of the responses, I shall offer reasons for thinking that they do not provide acceptable answers to the versions of the Accidental Necessity argument that Zagzebski sets out. In the case of the third response, on the other hand, what I shall maintain will be somewhat different - namely, that although that response may very well provide a satisfactory answer to the specific versions of the Accidental Necessity argument that Zagzebski considers, it does not resolve the basic issue, since there is another, and stronger version of the Accidental Necessity line of argument that remains untouched.

1. *Accidental Necessity Versions of the Foreknowledge Dilemma*

What does it mean to say that something is accidentally necessary? The idea is one that goes back to Aristotle's view that past events, or states of affairs, simply by virtue of being past, are necessary, whereas future events, or states of affairs - or, at least, those that are not causally deter-

mined - are merely possible. What events or states of affairs are accidentally necessary, accordingly, may very well be different at different times.

In similar fashion, one can speak of a proposition's being accidentally necessary at a time. Thus, if p is a proposition, p will be accidentally necessary at time t just in case there is some state of affairs, S, that is accidentally necessary at t, and that is a truth-maker for the proposition that p.

Suppose that p is accidentally necessary at t, and that p entails q. Does it follow that q is accidentally necessary at t? I shall argue later that it does. Zagzebski's thoughts on this matter, however, are as follows. First, she thinks that it may very well be the case that q is not accidentally necessary at t, even though p is accidentally necessary at t, and p entails q. Secondly, she suggests that, even if accidental necessity is not, accordingly, transmitted by entailment, it may be that if p is accidentally necessary at t, and p entails q, then there is some other relevant type of necessity that q must possess at time t. Accordingly, she introduces the modified expression "accidentally necessary*" to refer to any such necessity: "Let us say that accidental necessity* is the kind of necessity (if any) that some state of affairs ψ has when ψ is strictly implied by some accidentally necessary state of affairs ϕ."[1]

It is important to note the phrase "if any" in Zagzebski's characterization of accidental necessity*. Zagzebski is not assuming that there is any relevant type of necessity that is possessed by a state of affairs whose existence is entailed by a state of affairs which is accidentally necessary. At this point, she is simply treating it as an open question whether such a type of necessity does exist. (Later, when we consider one of the solutions that she proposes to the Accidental Necessity version of the foreknowledge dilemma, we shall see that she is inclined to hold that there is no such necessity.)

Given this terminology, the Accidental Necessity version of the foreknowledge dilemma can be formulated in either of two slightly different ways, depending upon whether one employs the assumption that God is infallible, or the assumption that God is omniscient. First, then, the infallibility version, which Zagzebski sets out as follows, and where t_1, t_2, and t_3 are times such that t_1 is earlier than t_2, which in turn is earlier than t_3:

(1) God's belief at t_1 that I will do S at t_3 is accidentally necessary at t_2.
(2) If A is accidentally necessary at t and A strictly implies B, then B is accidentally necessary* at t.
(3) God's belief at t_1 strictly implies my act at t_3.
(4) So my act at t_3 is accidentally necessary* at t_2.
(5) If my act at t_3 is accidentally necessary* at t_2, I cannot do otherwise than bring about that act at t_3.
(6) If when I bring about an act I cannot do otherwise, I do not bring it about freely.
(7) Therefore, I do not bring about my act at t_3 freely.[2]

In this version of the argument, statement (3) expresses a relevant consequence of the idea that God is infallible. In the second version of the Accidental Necessity argument, however, the appeal is to God's omniscience, rather than to God's infallibility. So one can arrive at the second

version of the argument by replacing statement (3) by a statement, such as the following, expressing a relevant consequence of the idea that God is omniscient:

(3′) God's belief at t_1 is strictly equivalent to my act at t_3.

When (3) is replaced by (3′), however, it is possible to replace statement (2) by a somewhat more modest assumption, without affecting the validity of the reasoning:

(2′) If A is accidentally necessary at t and A is strictly equivalent to B, then B is accidentally necessary* at t.[3]

So we have the following, omniscience version of the Accidental Necessity argument in support of the claim that divine foreknowledge is logically incompatible with human freedom:

(1) God's belief at t_1 that I will do S at t_3 is accidentally necessary at t_2.
(2′) If A is accidentally necessary at t and A is strictly equivalent to B, then B is accidentally necessary* at t.
(3′) God's belief at t_1 is strictly equivalent to my act at t_3.
(4) So my act at t_3 is accidentally necessary* at t_2.
(5) If my act at t_3 is accidentally necessary* at t_2, I cannot do otherwise than bring about that act at t_3.
(6) If when I bring about an act I cannot do otherwise, I do not bring it about freely.
(7) Therefore, I do not bring about my act at t_3 freely.

2. Zagzebski's Three Solutions to the Accidental Necessity Arguments

Zagzebski argues that there are at least three satisfactory answers to Accidental Necessity versions of the freedom and foreknowledge dilemma. The first, which she sets out in Chapter 3, is what she refers to as the Thomistic Ockhamist response. It turns upon the idea that belief states in the case of God may differ from belief states in the case of finite minds in a crucial way that undercuts premises (3) and (3′), respectively, in the two versions of the Accidental Necessity argument set out above. In particular, the proposal is that, in the case of God, belief is such that if one considers any two distinct possible worlds - W_1 and W_2 - in which God exists, God's beliefs about the created world could be different in W_1 from what they are in W_2 without there being any difference at all with respect to any purely intrinsic states of God in W_1 and in W_2. But if this is possible, then both (3) and (3′) are false. For suppose that W_1 and W_2 are possible worlds such that I do S at t_3 in W_1 but not in W_2. Then God believes in W_1 at time t_1 that I will do S at t_3. But that belief state, considered simply as an intrinsic state of God, cannot strictly imply that I will do S at t_3. For God is, by hypothesis, in precisely the same intrinsic mental states in W_2 at time t_1 as in W_1 at t_1, and in W_2 I do not do S at time t_3.

I think this solution is deeply problematic. To establish that this is so would not perhaps be easy, since one would need to grapple with some difficult questions in philosophy of mind concerning, first, the properties that a mental state must possess if it is to be a belief state, and secondly, what it is that makes it the case that a given, intrinsically characterized mental state is a belief state with a specific content. Nevertheless, I think that the basic difficulty becomes apparent if one asks what can make it the case that two people have different beliefs. One possibility is that the internal states that are the belief states of the one person not only differ from the internal states that are the belief states of the other person, but do so in such a way that it is impossible for there to be a mapping between them. But this cannot be the explanation of how it is that God has different beliefs in W_1 than in W_2 since, by hypothesis, the internal states of God in W_1 and in W_2 not only map into one another, they are qualitatively identical.

It is possible, however, for two people to be in belief states that, as regards their intrinsic properties, are identical, but for them to have different beliefs. This is shown by one of the Twin Earth cases, advanced by Hilary Putnam in Chapter 1 of his book *Reason, Truth, and Knowledge*.[4] Putnam imagines that there is a world that is very similar to the Earth, and where, in particular, there is a substance that is phenomenologically indistinguishable from water, but where that substance has a different molecular structure: rather than being H_2O, it is XYZ. Putnam argues that it is part of the content of the term "water," when we use that term, that the substance in question has a certain molecular structure - namely, that of H_2O - whereas when someone who has grown up on Twin Earth uses the term "water," it is part of the content of that term that it refers to a substance with a different molecular structure - namely, that of XYZ. So the belief that is expressed by "That's water" when uttered by someone who grew up on Earth is different from the belief that is expressed by "That's water" when this is uttered by someone who grew up on Twin Earth. Yet if one considers only what is inside the heads or minds of the two people, the relevant mental states do not differ with regard to their intrinsic properties.

The conclusion, accordingly, is that it is possible for mental states that do not differ with regard to their intrinsic properties to represent different beliefs, since the content of a mental state also depends, at least in some cases, upon things external to the believer. But if this is so, then it would seem that God could have different beliefs in different worlds because, even though there was no difference with regard to his internal states, the internal states in question were causally connected in different ways to the relevant external states in the two worlds.

This account, however, will not work. For consider the Twin Earth case, and suppose that Mary has grown up on earth, and John on Twin Earth, and that there is some internal, completely intrinsic state, I, that Mary is in when she believes that she is seeing water, and that John is in when he believes that he is seeing XYZ. Suppose now that Mary is transported to Twin Earth, and looks at substance XYZ, and goes into state I - that is, the state that John is in when he believes that he is seeing XYZ. In Mary's case, though she is now on Twin Earth, her belief will still be the belief that she is seeing water, and not the belief that she is seeing XYZ. The crucial point,

accordingly, is that while *different* individuals may, in Twin Earth cases, have different beliefs even though they are in exactly the same internal states, it is not possible for a *single* individual, in such cases, to have different beliefs, in different circumstances, while being in the same internal state. But it is precisely the latter that is needed if the present response to the Accidental Necessity version of the freedom and foreknowledge dilemma is to succeed: God would have to believe one thing if a person performed an act, and believe something different if the person did not perform the act, while being in the same internal state in both cases. So the Twin Earth cases do not enable us to make sense of the Thomistic Ockhamist solution.

There is a third possibility that deserves to be considered. Beliefs have been described by David Armstrong as "maps by which we steer."[5] On this conception, beliefs have two essential features. First, they are structured states that, by virtue of their structure, represent how things are. Secondly, one acts on the basis of beliefs: they, together with preferences, enter into decisions about what one is going to do. Now on the Thomistic Ockhamist view, beliefs, in the case of God, cannot have the first of these features. Moreover, if the first feature is absent, one might well ask how the second feature can possibly be present. But perhaps one can say the following: in the case of God, actions flow, not from purely internal states, but from the combination of internal states of God and external states of affairs in the world. More fully, the idea is this. In our case, various states of affairs of affairs give rise to beliefs, and those beliefs, together with our preferences, plus our decisions, result in action. In God's case, what happens is that external states of affairs, without giving rise to representational states in the mind of God, directly combine with God's preferences to play a role in God's determination of what actions he will perform.

This is, I think, an interesting account of what it is for God to have beliefs. But it is exposed to at least two, potentially serious objections. In the first place, if God's actions flow from the combination of the state of the external world with God's preferences, then it would seem that the world must always have existed, since if it did not, there would be no external circumstances that could combine with God's preferences to give rise to God's initial activity in bringing the world into existence. And this would be an unacceptable consequence, at least for most believers, since they are committed to the view that God created the world *ex nihilo*.

It may be possible, however, to answer this objection. Could one hold, for example, that if no world exists, that fact, in combination with God's preferences, gives rise to a world? One problem with this response is that many metaphysicians have argued that *absences* cannot be causally efficacious. But perhaps that problem can be avoided by holding, instead, that among God's preferences is a preference that there exist a world of a certain sort, provided that no other world already exists. The idea would then be, first, that that preference on its own, if not blocked, would be causally sufficient to bring about the existence of the relevant world, but, secondly, that the power of that preference to do so will be blocked if any world already exists. So it may be possible, in this way, to leave room for God's initial creative activity, without abandoning the present account of what it is for God to have beliefs.

The second objection to the above account is that it is not clear that it can it be combined with the idea - which many philosophers find very attractive - that, while all past events are accidentally necessary, future events - or, at least, future events that are not causally determined - are not. For the difficulty here is this. Suppose that John performs some act, A, at time t_4. If God knows at time t_1 that John will freely do A at time t_4, then it must be possible for God to perform some action at time t_2, based on the knowledge in question. But when God's knowledge is explained in the way just outlined, then it turns out that a causally necessary condition of God's action at time t_2 is the free action that John performs at the later time t_4. Therefore, if one considers any time t_3 that is later than t_2, but earlier than t_4, then, if all past events are accidentally necessary, there will be something which is accidentally necessary at time t_3 - namely, God's having performed a certain action at the earlier time t_2 - and which is causally dependent, in part, on something that is not accidentally necessary at that time - namely, John's performing action A at time t_4. But - though I cannot pursue the issue here - this idea that what is accidentally necessary at a time might be causally dependent upon what is not seems very problematic.[6]

The difficulties that confront the above attempts to explain how God's beliefs could differ from world to world, even though his mental states were the same with respect to all of their intrinsic properties, do not, of course, prove that no satisfactory account is possible. But those difficulties do show that there is a serious problem here, and thus that, until one is offered at least the outlines of a promising account, Thomistic Ockhamism must be viewed as an insufficiently developed response, and one which may very well turn out to be incoherent.

In Chapter 6, Zagzebski sets out two other, quite novel responses to the Accidental Necessity versions of the freedom and foreknowledge dilemma. The first is directed at statement (6), and it involves, among other things, the claim that statement (6) is false. Here Zagzebski appeals to a type of counterexample that has been advanced by Harry Frankfurt[7] to claims such as those made by statement (6):

> A person is in the process of deciding between A and *not-A*. She decides to perform A and does A. Unknown to her, however, there are conditions present at the time of the choice that would have prevented her from deciding *not-A* if she had been about to decide *not-A*. These conditions played no role in her actual choice, however, since she decided to do A anyway.[8]

With regard to this case, Frankfurt suggests - very plausibly - that the person acted freely in performing action A. Therefore, contrary to statement (6), an action may be freely performed even in circumstances where one does not have the power to refrain from performing the action.

The other response that Zagzebski sets out in Chapter 6 involves two main steps. First, she argues that (1), (2), and (3) cannot all be true. Then she attempts to show that it is premise (2), in particular, that should be rejected.

The reason that she offers for thinking that (1), (2), and (3) cannot all be

true is as follows. Suppose that, when a person decides to do *A*, and does everything that she can to do so, God intervenes to enable her to do *A*, and in doing so, makes it impossible for her not to do *A*. But equally, if the person decides instead to do *not-A*, and does everything in her power to bring it about that she does *not-A*, God intervenes to enable her to do *not-A*, and, in doing so, makes it impossible for her to do *A*. Here the situation differs from the Frankfurt case, in that the person does have the power to do different things in a given situation. But then, if God has complete foreknowledge, this means that "even though God foreknows infallibly everything I will do, and even simultaneously wills everything I will, I can still do otherwise."[9] It then follows that (1), (2), and (3) cannot all be true, since together they entail that all of one's actions are accidentally necessary*, and hence that one can never do otherwise than what one actually does.

This leads to the question of which premise is mistaken. Zagzebski argues that it is premise (2) that is to be rejected. She admits that this premise seems, initially, very plausible, but she thinks that it is possible to undermine its apparent plausibility. Her strategy is to consider the following, more general principle -

Transfer of Necessity Principle 1
$Nec_w\, p, Nec\, (p \rightarrow q) \supset Nec_w\, q$

- and then to argue, following Michael Slote,[10] that there are a number of types of necessity - such as epistemic necessity, and deontic necessity - for which the Transfer of Necessity Principle fails. Zagzebski then contends that, given that this principle fails for many types of necessity, an argument is needed before one can justifiably assume that it holds when the type of necessity in question is accidental necessity*, and she suggests that no such argument is to be found. She therefore concludes that one can reasonably reject premise (2) - and, similarly, premise (2') - in the Accidental Necessity versions of the freedom and foreknowledge dilemma.

Both stages in this argument seem suspect. As regards the first part, the objection is that the situation to which Zagzebski appeals, and which is supposed to show that not all of (1), (2), and (3) can be true, seems simply to ignore the freedom and foreknowledge dilemma. For while there is certainly no problem in the idea that when a person does everything in her power to perform a certain act, God will enable her to perform that act, regardless of whether it is a case of doing *A* or doing *not-A*, if one also assumes that God had foreknowledge of what the person would do, one is confronted once again with the dilemma: if God's belief that she would do *A* was accidentally necessary at the time that she was about to act, how could she possibly be able to do *not-A*?

The thrust of the second part of Zagzebski's argument is that there is no reason to think that there is any relevant sort of necessity that is transferred from a proposition *p* that is accidentally necessary at time *t* to a proposition *q* that is entailed by *p*. So there is no reason to think that accidental necessity* exists.

The problem with this part of the argument is that there *does* seem to be a good reason for holding that the Transfer of Necessity Principle 1 is true

in the case of accidental necessity, and thus that there is a relevant type of necessity - namely, accidental necessity itself - that is transferred from a proposition to any other proposition that is entailed by that proposition.

The argument that I have in mind appeals to the idea that there is a necessary connection between accidental necessity and preventability, namely:

(*) It is accidentally necessary that p at time t if and only if p is not preventable at time t.

Why might one think that this connection obtains? The basic reason is that, in the world as it is, we can perform actions that determine, at least in part, how the future is, but we cannot perform actions that determine how the past is, and it seems plausible that it is this fact about the world that leads many people to feel that there is a deep asymmetry between the past and the future, and, in particular, that the past is fixed, or accidentally necessary, while the future is not. For suppose, by contrast, that we *were* able to perform actions now that would determine how the past is. Surely we would no longer view past events as accidentally necessary.

But is it clear that (*) true? To answer that question, one needs to determine exactly how the notion of being preventable at a time is to be understood. One interpretation would be that a state of affairs is preventable at a time if and only if there is someone who exists at that time who has the power to causally bring it about that the state of affairs in question does not obtain. Given this interpretation, (*) would be equivalent to the following claim:

(A) It is accidentally necessary that p at time t if and only if no actual person exists at time t who could causally bring it about at time t that p is false.

Is (A) true? The entailment in the one direction is surely unproblematic: if some state of affairs is accidentally necessary at a time, then it cannot be case that there is an actual person who exists at that time, and who could causally bring it about that the state of affairs in question does not exist. The converse, on the other hand, seems clearly false, since even if no person who actually exists can causally bring it about that the state of affairs in question does not exist, this may be so simply because, as a matter of fact, the persons who exist at that time lack the requisite power, and if there *could* have been a person at that time who would have had the power to prevent the existence of the state of affairs in question, then that state of affairs is surely not accidentally necessary.

So (A) will not do. How, then, should (*) be interpreted? Given the objection to which (A) falls prey, one natural idea is to replace the reference to what can be prevented at a given time by some person who actually exists at that time by the idea of what could be prevented by an omnipotent being. We would then be interpreting (*) as follows:

(B) It is accidentally necessary that p at time t if and only if even if there were an omnipotent being that existed at time t, that being, act-

ing at time t, could not causally bring it about that p is false.

But although this reformulation is a natural one, it also fails. For suppose that p is the following proposition:

It is not the case that George freely enters the jungle at time t_2

- where free action is understood in a libertarian sense. If an omnipotent being had the power causally to bring it about at an earlier time t_1 that p was false, that omnipotent being could causally bring it about that George freely entered the jungle at time t_2. The latter, however, is impossible, since free actions, so understood, cannot be caused by anyone other than the agent. So an omnipotent being cannot causally bring it about that p is false, and therefore, it follows that (B) cannot be correct, since if it were, it would follow that p was accidentally necessary at the earlier time t_1 - which is not so.

This objection to formulation (B) immediately suggests, however, another interpretation of (*), since while an omnipotent being would not have had the power causally to bring it about that p is false, there is an actual person who did have that power - namely, George. The idea, therefore, is that preventability should be interpreted here as preventability either by an actual person, or by a possible person. Thus we have the following interpretation of (*):

(C) It is accidentally necessary that p at time t if and only if no being, either actual or possible, acting at time t, could causally bring it about that p is false.

Thus interpreted, (*) appears to be very plausible. Let us refer to (*), thus understood, as the Equivalence Principle. What can now be shown is that the Equivalence Principle entails that the Transfer of Necessity Principle 1 is true in the case of accidental necessity:

(1) It is accidentally necessary that p at time t if and only if no being, actual or possible, acting at time t, could causally bring it about that p is false.   (The Equivalence Principle)
(2) If p entails q, then causally to bring it about that q is false is also causally to bring it about that p is false.   (An analytic truth)
(3) If p entails q, and some actual or possible being, acting at time t could causally bring it about that q is false, then that being, acting at t, could also causally bring it about that p is false.   (From (2))
(4) If p entails q, and no actual or possible being, acting at time t, could causally bring it about that p is false, then no actual or possible being, acting at time t, could causally bring it about that q is false.
                              (From (3), by contraposition)
(5) If p entails q, and it is accidentally necessary that p at t, then it is accidentally necessary that q at t.   (From (1) and (4))

So Transfer of Necessity Principle 1 must hold in the case of accidental necessity. There is, accordingly, a relevant type of necessity that is transferred from a proposition to any proposition entailed by it - namely, acci-

dental necessity itself. This means that accidental necessity*, as defined by Zagzebski, does exist, and so proposition (2) is true. Consequently, one cannot answer the infallibility version of the freedom and foreknowledge dilemma by rejecting premise (2). Moreover, since premise (2) of the infallibility version of the argument entails premise (2′) of the omniscience version of the argument, rejection of (2′) is also ruled out.

The upshot is that neither the Thomistic Ockhamist solution that Zagzebski discusses in Chapter 3, nor the second of the two new solutions that she advances in Chapter 6, appears to be satisfactory.

3. *The Third Solution*

Of the three responses that Zagzebski suggests, therefore, to the Accidental Necessity version of the freedom and foreknowledge dilemma, the most promising appears to be the first of the two new solutions that she sets out in Chapter 6. That response, as I indicated earlier, involves an argument against the following premise -

> (6) If when I bring about an act I cannot do otherwise, I do not bring it about freely

- an argument that turns upon an appeal to the type of counterexample advanced by Harry Frankfurt, and the essential idea of which, as we have seen, is that it is possible that one has performed an action freely even though there was some mechanism that, had one decided not to perform the action, would have brought it about that one still performed the action in question.

This objection to statement (6) seems to me to be sound, and so I think that Zagzebski is right in maintaining that one has here a refutation of both of the versions of the Accidental Necessity formulation of the freedom and foreknowledge dilemma that she considers. This does not show, however, that there is a satisfactory answer to *all* formulations of the Accidental Necessity argument. For the arguments that Zagzebski considers can be modified in such a way as to generate arguments that are immune to the Frankfurt-style objection.

The idea behind the modification is quite a simple one - namely, that although it is logically possible for there to be a mechanism that causes one to perform some action, it is not logically possible, if freedom is interpreted in an incompatibilist or libertarian fashion, for there to be a mechanism that brings it about that one *freely* performs some action. As a consequence, if all references to performing an action are replaced by references to performing an action *freely*, the resulting argument will not be exposed to Frankfurt-style counterexamples.

The version of the Accidental Necessity argument that this line of thought suggests can be put as follows:

> (1) God is infallible at every time t.
>   (Premise)
> (2) For any x, if x is infallible at time t, then, by definition, it is neces-

sarily the case that if *x* believes at time *t* that *p* is true, then *p* is true.
    (Premise)
(3) If God believes at time *t* that *p* is true, then *p* is true.
    (From (1) and (2))
(4) I shall *freely* do *S* at time t_3, where t_3 is some time later than t_1.
    (Premise)
(5) God has beliefs, at every time *t*, concerning all future actions.
    (Premise)
(6) God believes at time t_1 that I shall *freely* do *S* at time t_3.
    (From (4) and (5))
(7) Past states of affairs are accidentally necessary.
    (Premise)
(8) God's belief at t_1 that I shall *freely* do *S* at t_3 is accidentally necessary at t_2, where t_2 is any time that is later than t_1 and earlier than t_3.
    (From (6) and (7))
(9) If *A* is accidentally necessary at *t* and *A* strictly implies *B*, then *B* is accidentally necessary at *t*.
    (Premise: the Transfer of Accidental Necessity Principle)
(10) God's belief at t_1 that I shall *freely* do *S* at t_3 strictly implies that I shall *freely* do *S* at t_3.
    (From (3))
(11) So my *freely* doing *S* at t_3 is accidentally necessary at t_2.
    (From (8), (9), and (10))
(12) If my *freely* doing *S* at t_3 is accidentally necessary at t_2, I cannot refrain from *freely* doing *S* at t_3.
    (Premise)
(13) I cannot refrain from *freely* doing *S* at t_3.
    (From (11) and (12))
(14) If a person *freely* performs any action, then that person could have refrained from *freely* performing that action.
    (Premise)
(15) I do not *freely* do *S* at time t_3.
    (From (13) and (14))

My statement of this new version of the Accidental Necessity argument is somewhat more expansive than Zagzebski's formulations of the two versions that she considers, but as regards the crucial differences, there are really only two. The first is that all references to performing an action have been replaced by references to freely performing an action. The second is that statement (6) in Zagzebski's formulations has been replaced by the following statement:

    (14) If a person *freely* performs any action, then that person could have refrained from *freely* performing that action.

The crucial point is then that while Zagzebski's (6) is open to Frankfurt's type of counterexample, (14) is not. For while if freedom is understood in an incompatibilist sense, it may be logically possible to prevent someone from refraining from performing an action, it is not logically possible to

prevent someone from refraining from *freely* performing an action. Moreover, not only is (14) not open to Frankfurt-style counterexamples: it is not open to any counterexamples at all, since given an incompatibilist interpretation of freedom, (14) is true.

4. Summing Up

Zagzebski has argued - quite convincingly, I believe - that one of the strongest ways of setting out the freedom and foreknowledge dilemma is in terms of Accidental Necessity formulations of the argument. But she has also attempted to show that, while such a line of argument is strong, at least three satisfactory responses are available. I have argued, however, that none of the three responses that she defends is satisfactory. One response leaves us, I have argued, with an apparently intractable problem concerning the problem of the content of God's belief states. A second involves an untenable rejection of the Transfer of Necessity Principle in the case of Accidental Necessity. A third response does succeed against the specific versions of the Accidental Necessity argument that Zagzebski considers, but fails when confronted with a somewhat different, and stronger version of the Accidental Necessity argument.

What, then, is the correct response to the freedom and foreknowledge dilemma? If, as I have argued in detail elsewhere,[11] the future is not real, then I think that it can be shown that it is logically impossible for anyone to have knowledge of future states of affairs unless those states of affairs are causally determined. If this is right, then it is logically impossible for anyone to have knowledge of actions that are free in an incompatibilist sense. So not even an omniscient being can have such knowledge. The correct reaction to the freedom and foreknowledge dilemma, accordingly, is simply to accept the conclusion that human freedom, understood in an incompatibilist or libertarian fashion, is logically incompatible with God's having foreknowledge of free human actions.

Religious thinkers have traditionally been reluctant to embrace this response - in large measure, perhaps, either because it has seemed that doing so would pose difficulties for the idea of prophecy, or because they have felt that this response would involve abandoning a robust belief in God's providence.

As regards the first of these concerns, some prophecies involve events that God himself will bring about if humans act, or fail to act, in certain ways. The fulfillment of such prophecies does not, of course, require any foreknowledge of free human actions, and so poses no problem. Other prophecies, however, may involve statements about what things humans will freely do, about how human history will go, and such prophecies are precluded by the view that I am advocating. When this is so in the case of a given person's religious faith, that person will have to consider whether the prophecies in question are an essential part of his or her faith, or whether they could be abandoned without serious loss. This, in turn, may well depend upon one's views on such matters as divine inspiration and revelation.

What about the second concern? If one accepts the idea that, if freedom

is understood in an incompatibilist sense, then not even an omniscient being can have foreknowledge of free human actions, does that rule out belief in God's providence? I think that it is not at all clear that this is so, since it seems to me that a plausible case can be made out for the view that nothing beyond complete knowledge of all *past* states of affairs is necessary in order for God to exercise a completely effective, providential oversight of human history. This is not, of course, something for which I can attempt to argue in a detailed way here. The basic idea, however, is that complete knowledge of the preferences, intentions, and deliberations of human agents at a given time makes it possible for God, either by inclining the will of a given agent in a certain direction, or, if necessary, by intervening in some of the causal processes that flow from a given action, to guide human history in such a direction that the divine plan is ultimately realized.[12]

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NOTES

1.   Linda Zagzebski, *The Dilemma of Freedom and Foreknowledge*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 30
2.   Ibid., p. 36
3.   Ibid., p. 36-7.
4.   Hilary Putnam, "Brains in a Vat," Chapter 1 of *Reason, Truth, and Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 1-21. See pp. 19-21.
5.   D. M. Armstrong, *Belief, Truth and Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), p. 4ff.
6.   Two relevant discussions are Graham Oddie, "Backwards Causation and the Permanence of the Past," *Synthese*, 85 (1990), 71-93, and Michael Tooley, *Time, Tense, and Causation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), ch. 4.
7.   Harry Frankfurt, "Alternative Possibilities and Moral Responsibility," *Journal of Philosophy*, 66 (1969), 828-39.
8.   Zagzebski, op. cit., p. 155.
9.   Ibid., p. 164.
10. Michael Slote, "Selective Necessity and the Free-Will Problem," *Journal of Philosophy*, 79 (1982), 5-24.
11. *Time, Tense, and Causation*, ch. 3 and 4.
12. I am indebted to my colleague, Wes Morriston, and to an anonymous referee for this journal, for very incisive and helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper.