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CAN A LIBERTARIAN HOLD THAT OUR FREE ACTS ARE CAUSED BY GOD?

W. Matthews Grant

According to prevailing opinion, if a creaturely act is caused by God, then it cannot be free in the libertarian sense. I argue to the contrary. I distinguish intrinsic and extrinsic models of divine causal agency. I then show that, given the extrinsic model, there is no reason one holding that our free acts are caused by God could not also hold a libertarian account of human freedom. It follows that a libertarian account of human freedom is consistent with God's being the source and cause of all being apart from himself, including the being of free human actions.

Introduction

According to the doctrine of divine universal causality, God is the source and cause of all being other than himself. The doctrine does not hold that God is the only cause. Still, it maintains that whatever is going on, including the genuine causal activities of things besides God, is an effect of God, the First Cause. Since human actions are beings and goings-on distinct from God, it follows according to this doctrine that they too are caused by God.

The doctrine of divine universal causality has strong support within the Christian tradition. Augustine tells us that God's "hidden power . . . causes all that exists in any way to have whatever degree of being it has; for without Him, it would not exist in this way or that, nor would it have any being at all."¹ Anselm maintains that, "With the exception of the Supreme Essence itself, nothing exists that is not made by the Supreme Essence."² Aquinas holds that, "Everything other than God . . . must be referred to Him as the cause of its being."³ Nor do such representatives of the tradition hesitate to draw out the implications of the doctrine for the relationship between God and human action. Anselm's "student" no doubt expresses Anselm's own conclusion on the matter: "I cannot in fact

¹Augustine, *The City of God Against the Pagans*, trans. and ed. R. W. Dyson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 12.26.

²Anselm, *Monologion* 7, in *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, ed. Brian Davies and G. R. Evans (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 20. All references to Anselm are from this volume.

³Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles*, Bk. II, Ch. 15 (6), trans. James F. Anderson (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1975). All references to the *Summa contra gentiles* are from this volume.

deny that every action is a reality nor that whatever is has its being from God."⁴ Aquinas is explicit: "the very act of [human] free will is traced to God as to a cause."⁵

Could one who maintains that our actions are caused by God at the same time hold a libertarian account of human freedom? At least one contemporary philosopher argues explicitly that our acts' being caused by God is consistent with libertarianism.⁶ A few others, though not as explicit, have nevertheless denied that God's causing our actions entails that they are determined.⁷ Such philosophers as these, I believe, are the exception. The prevailing view, it seems, is that to say our actions are caused by God commits one to a form of determinism. One who affirmed human freedom in the face of this determinism would be a compatibilist, not a libertarian.⁸

In what follows I challenge the prevailing view.⁹ I argue that, given the standard definition of "libertarianism" and a certain account of divine causal agency, there is no reason one holding that God causes our actions could not also be a libertarian. In the first three sections of the paper, I recall the standard definition of "libertarianism" (section one), offer the requisite account of divine causal action (section two), and show why, given this account, God's causing our actions does not preclude libertarianism (section three). If one rejects the conclusion of section three, it should be

⁴Anselm, *On the Fall of the Devil* 20, p. 223.

⁵Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I, Q. 22, A. 2 ad. 4. All references to the *Summa theologiae* are from the translation of the English Dominican Fathers. Their commitment to divine universal causality leads both Anselm and Aquinas to conclude, despite the difficulties, that even sinful acts are caused by God. For Anselm, see *On the Fall of the Devil* 20, pp. 222–223 and *De Concordia* 1.7, p. 447. For Aquinas, see *Summa theologiae* I–II, Q. 79, A. 2. For Aquinas's account of how God causes sinful acts, but not sin, see my "Aquinas on How God Causes the Act of Sin without Causing Sin Itself," *The Thomist*, 73 (2009), pp. 455–496.

⁶See Hugh J. McCann, "Divine Sovereignty and the Freedom of the Will," *Faith and Philosophy* 12 (1995), pp. 582–598.

⁷See Joseph M. Boyle, Jr., Germain Grisez, and Olaf Tollefsen, *Free Choice: A Self-Referential Argument* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1976), pp. 97–103. See also Brian Davies O.P., "The Problem of Evil," in *Philosophy of Religion: A Guide to the Subject*, ed. Brian Davies O.P. (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1998), pp. 190–192.

⁸I take all of the following to be examples of the prevailing view since, with varying degrees of explicitness, they state or suggest that God's causing our actions commits us to determinism: Anthony Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 77; Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 161; Lynne Rudder Baker, "Why Christians should not be Libertarians: An Augustinian Challenge," *Faith and Philosophy* 20 (2003), pp. 460–478; Richard Swinburne, *Providence and the Problem of Evil* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 33–35; Alvin Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), pp. 166–167, 171; Edwin Curley, "The Incoherence of Christian Theism," *The Harvard Review of Philosophy* XI (2003), p. 84; Roderick M. Chisholm, *On Metaphysics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), pp. 6–7.

⁹For a different approach to reconciling libertarian freedom with divine universal causality, see Katherin Rogers, *Anselm on Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). In "Anselm on Freedom: A Defense of Rogers's Project, A Critique of Her Reconciliation of Libertarian Freedom with God the *Creator Omnium*," I argue that, despite her intention, Rogers's approach preserves libertarian freedom only by abandoning God's universal causality. For my critique together with a response from Rogers, see *The Saint Anselm Journal*, forthcoming.

for at least one of the following reasons: Either (1) I am wrong that the requisite account of divine causal action makes God's causing our actions compatible with libertarianism as "libertarianism" is normally defined; or (2) even if God's causing our actions is consistent with libertarianism as normally defined, it is not consistent with the characteristics of free action most cherished by libertarians, such as the ability to do otherwise or an act's being ultimately up to its agent; or (3) the requisite account of divine causal agency is flawed. In sections four through six, I consider criticisms of sorts (1) and (2). I make no attempt in this paper to respond to criticisms of sort (3), which target the account of divine causal agency employed here; nor do I offer a positive argument for accepting the account. Although not the majority view among today's Christian philosophers, the requisite account of divine agency does enjoy a number of contemporary defenders. The reader can look to these authors for a defense of the account.¹⁰ It will be enough for this paper to show how the account can be employed to render God's causing our actions consistent with libertarian freedom.

Finally, before proceeding, I should note one assumption I make throughout the paper. I will assume that an act's being caused by God is consistent with its being performed by its creaturely agent, where "performed" indicates that the act is voluntary, intentional, and rational (motivated by reasons). Were it not so consistent, then God's causing creaturely actions would arguably rule out creaturely free agency of any sort, much less agency of a libertarian variety. Just as the doctrine of God's universal causality allows that God's effects include the genuine causal activities of things in the world, so also it allows that among God's effects are acts that are performed by the creaturely agents whose actions they are. Thus, to say that God causes some act of a creature is not to deny that the creature performs the act. Starting from this assumption, I focus on whether God's causing our acts is consistent with our enjoying agency of a libertarian sort.¹¹

¹⁰See my "Must a Cause Be Really Related to Its Effect? The Analogy between Divine and Libertarian Agent Causality," *Religious Studies* 43 (2007), pp. 1–23. See also Jeffrey E. Brower, "Simplicity and Aseity," in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology*, ed. Thomas P. Flint and Michael Rea (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 105–128; Barry Miller, *A Most Unlikely God* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996); Timothy O'Connor, "Simplicity and Creation," *Faith and Philosophy* 16 (1999), pp. 405–412; Alexander R. Pruss, "On Two Problems of Divine Simplicity," in *Oxford Studies in the Philosophy of Religion*, vol. 1, ed. Jonathan Kvanvig (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 150–167.

¹¹The assumption is controversial, since some have argued, completely independently of concerns that it would render the act determined, that the performance of a free act is not the sort of thing that has a cause. For an example, see Timothy O'Connor, *Persons and Causes: The Metaphysics of Free Will* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 52–55, 58–59, 61. I make no attempt to answer objections that it is impossible for an action performed by a rational creature to be caused, and, therefore, to have God as cause. For the purposes of this paper, I will simply assume that the picture endorsed by authors like Anselm and Aquinas is possible, and focus instead on the question whether, if our acts are caused by God, they can be free in the libertarian sense. In what follows, human "acts" or "actions," terms which I use interchangeably, can stand for choices, volitions, bodily movements, or whatever the reader takes to be the fundamental exercise of free human agency.

Section One: "Libertarianism"

There is widespread agreement among those involved in contemporary free will debates about what sort of view counts as "libertarian." A "libertarian" view is one that affirms free will and that sees freedom as requiring that there be indeterminism at some relevant point in the process that produces a free act.¹² To be sure, indeterminism is not the only thing that libertarians believe is required for an act to be free. Almost all libertarians will say that a free act has to be voluntary, intentional, connected to the agent's reasons, and so forth. But these additional requirements for free action do not distinguish libertarian accounts from non-libertarian accounts of free will.¹³

Since libertarian accounts are distinguished in terms of their rejection of determinism, an appreciation of what libertarianism involves requires that we understand what "determinism" means. Fortunately, here too, there is widespread agreement among participants on all sides of contemporary free will debates. Robert Kane's definition of determinism is representative:

An event . . . is *determined* when there are conditions obtaining earlier (such as the decrees of fate or the foreordaining acts of God or antecedent causes plus laws of nature) whose occurrence is a sufficient condition for the occurrence of the event. In other words, it *must* be the case that, if these earlier determining conditions obtain, then the determined event will occur.¹⁴

Determinism, then, requires that there be a certain sort of relationship between a cause and any effect it is said to determine; namely, the occurrence of the cause must be *prior* to the effect, and must be a *sufficient condition* for the effect's occurrence. Were this relationship not to obtain, then it would be improper to say that the cause "determined" the effect, at least in the sense of "determined" that figures in the definition of "libertarianism."

A further word is in order concerning the definition of "determinism." First, since the word "sufficient" has been used in multiple ways,¹⁵ it is important to emphasize that the sense of "sufficient" employed in the stan-

¹²See Galen Strawson, "Free Will," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. E. Craig (London: Routledge, 1998–2007); Robert Kane, *A Contemporary Introduction to Free Will* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 32–33; Randolph Clarke, *Libertarian Accounts of Free Will* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. xiii; Richard Double, *The Non-Reality of Free Will* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 18; Derk Pereboom, *Living Without Free Will* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. xiv; Laura Waddell Ekstrom, *Free Will: A Philosophical Study* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2000), p. 83–84.

¹³Nor should what has been said be taken to imply that libertarians agree on all points. For an excellent survey of some differences among libertarian accounts, see Part VI of *The Oxford Handbook of Free Will*, ed. Robert Kane (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 337–437.

¹⁴Kane, *A Contemporary Introduction*, pp. 5–6.

¹⁵Anscombe, for example, seems prepared to endorse a meaning of "sufficient condition" other than the one employed in our definition of determinism, a meaning on which A could obtain, be a sufficient condition for B, and yet B not obtain. See Elizabeth Anscombe, "Causality and Determination," in *Causation*, ed. Ernest Sosa and Michael Tooley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 90–91. On certain traditional accounts of grace, "sufficient" grace denotes grace the granting of which makes meritorious action possible without rendering it inevitable. On such accounts, then, "sufficient" signals something quite contrary to what

dard definition of “determinism” is *logically sufficient*.¹⁶ Second, in defining determinism, writers like Kane frequently characterize the conditions that are sufficient for the determined event as being “earlier” than that event. I prefer “prior” to “earlier” as a word to characterize the conditions that are sufficient for the determined event. “Prior” can mean “temporally prior,” but it can also mean “causally prior,” thus allowing us to say that an event is determined if it has causes that are logically sufficient for it, even if those causes do not happen to precede the determined event in time.

Given the standard definition of determinism in terms of prior and sufficient conditions, and given the relationship between libertarianism and indeterminism, I propose the following as a standard definition of what it is for an act to be free in the libertarian sense:

An act is free in the libertarian sense if and only if the act is performed by its agent without there being any logically sufficient condition or cause of the action prior to the action itself.¹⁷

What, then, are we asking when we ask whether a libertarian can hold that our free acts are caused by God? We are asking whether an act's being caused by God is consistent with its being free in the libertarian sense.

Section Two: The Extrinsic Model of Divine Causal Agency

Let us turn, now, to consider the account of divine causal agency that I think has implications for our question.¹⁸ The starting point for understanding the account is the scholastic doctrine, connected with the doctrine of divine simplicity, that, while creatures are really related to God, God is not really, but only rationally, related to creatures. The claim that God is not really related to creatures is not what it sounds like at first. It is not the claim that statements predicating of God a relationship to

it signals in our definition of determinism. See Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *Predestination* (Rockford, IL: TAN Books and Publishers, 1998), pp. 233–239.

¹⁶Kane explicitly includes the adverb “logically” to modify “sufficient” in his definition of “determinism” at Robert Kane, *The Significance of Free Will* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 8. Timothy O'Connor characterizes “determinism” as meaning that “the past (including my character and basic beliefs and desires) and the laws of nature logically entail that I do what I actually do.” See Timothy O'Connor, “Free Will,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (April 14, 2005), ed. Edward N. Zalta, URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/freewill/#3.2>. According to Tom Flint, “determinism” is the thesis that the universe at one time is a “logical consequence” of the universe at an earlier time together with the laws of nature. See Thomas P. Flint, “Compatibilism and the Argument from Unavoidability,” *Journal of Philosophy* 84 (1987), p. 424. Such references could be multiplied.

¹⁷The foregoing is a variation on Hasker's definition of “libertarianism” at William Hasker, *Metaphysics: Constructing a World View* (Downer's Grove: InterVarsity Press, IL, 1983), p. 32. As noted above, “performed” here indicates that the act is voluntary, intentional, and motivated by reasons. Note also that this definition will not accommodate certain libertarian accounts that allow that a free act's proximate causes might be sufficient for it, locating the indeterminism earlier in the chain of causes leading up to the act. The definition will suffice for our purposes, however, since where the indeterminism is located would make no difference to the argument of this paper.

¹⁸Arguably, the account is at least anticipated in the writings of Aquinas. For contemporary defenders of the account, see note 10.

creatures are not really true, or that they are perhaps just metaphorical. Rather, the teaching concerns the ontology of the relations between God and creatures. Put somewhat differently, the teaching concerns the ontological implications of statements that predicate of God relationships to creatures. As we shall see, the teaching concerns primarily what the ontology of such relations does *not* include.

The substance of the denial that God is really related to creatures together with its implications for an account of divine agency can be appreciated once we get clear on the scholastic distinction between "real" and "rational" relations. Mark Henninger takes Aquinas's account of the distinction to be representative of the tradition as a whole:

[Aquinas] held that a relation *R* of *a* to *b* is real only if *a* and *b* are really distinct extra-mental things, and there is a real extra-mental foundation in *a* for *R*. Aquinas also held that a relation *R* of *a* to *b* is of reason only if either (i) *a* and/or *b* is not real, or (ii) *a* and *b* are not really distinct, or (iii) there is no real foundation in *a* for *R*.¹⁹

Clearly, since both God and his creatures are real and really distinct from one another, God's relations to creatures cannot satisfy condition (i) or (ii). The claim that God is only rationally (and not really) related to creatures must therefore be understood according to condition (iii): For any relation God has to creatures, there is no real foundation in God for that relation. Whence it follows that for any relation God has to his creatures, were that relation not to obtain, there would be no real, intrinsic difference in God, no change in God's real, intrinsic features or properties.

Now, the critical point to note is that the claim that God is only rationally related to creatures applies to every case in which a relationship to creatures is predicated of God—including cases in which God is said to be related to his creatures as cause to effect.²⁰ The consequences for an account of divine causal agency are clear enough. God's causing or bringing about some effect within creation will not involve any real or intrinsic state or property of God that would not be there were he not causing that effect. What, then, does divine causal action involve? According to O'Connor,

His activity *entirely* consists in a causal relation between Himself . . . and the dependent, contingent reality. . . . There's just (i) an agent with reasons for various possible creations, and (ii) a relation of dependency between that agent and the actual creation, such that the product might have been utterly different, and the agent utterly the same.²¹

The distinctiveness of the account under consideration is, perhaps, best appreciated by asking how it differs from a popular view of what's implied by the truth of a proposition of the form:

¹⁹Mark G. Henniger, SJ, *Relations: Medieval Theories 1250–1325* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 7.

²⁰See, for instance, Aquinas at *Summa contra gentiles*, Book II, Chapters 11 and 12.

²¹O'Connor, "Simplicity and Creation," pp. 408–409.

"God causes E."

Letting 'E' stand for any effect of God, it might be thought that the truth of this proposition requires the following:

- (a) God.
- (b) E.
- (c) Some real, intrinsic property, feature, or state of God in virtue of which God causes E, and which state would be different were God not causing E.
- (d) The cause-effect relation between God and E.

Candidates for the entity invoked at (c) might include God's intention to cause or bring about E, God's choice to cause E, God's willing to cause E, God's volition with respect to E, God's act of causing E, etc. Some versions of this popular view would conceive of the entity invoked at (c) as an accident in God; others would think of it as identical with God's very substance. Either way, this popular view requires that there be something intrinsic to God in virtue of which God causes E, which thing would be different were God not causing E. For this reason, I will refer to the view just described as the "intrinsic model" of divine causal agency.

On the account I am recommending, by contrast, although God's causal power is certainly intrinsic to God, the actual exercise of this power in producing an effect does not occur in virtue of something intrinsic to God that would be otherwise were God not bringing about the effect.²² As the passage quoted from O'Connor indicates, all that is required for the truth of "God causes E" is

- (a) God.
- (b) E.
- (d) The cause-effect relation between God and E.

Of course, were God not causing E, there would be neither E nor the relationship between God and E. God, however, would be intrinsically the same. There are various theories of relations and causal relations, and a variety of analyses of (d) might be compatible with the account of divine causal agency I am recommending. At a minimum, though, such analyses could not involve an intrinsic state of God of the sort invoked at (c). I will, therefore, refer to this alternative account as the "extrinsic model" of divine causal agency.

On the extrinsic model, God's nature encompasses reasons to bring about E, but these reasons leave God free to refrain from bringing about E, and refraining is consistent with God's wisdom and goodness. In actually bringing about E, God does so for a reason, and therefore his act of bring-

²²See O'Connor, "Simplicity and Creation," p. 409. See also Brower, "Simplicity and Aseity," pp. 118–120.

ing about E is purposeful and intentional. Because it is purposeful and intentional, we speak truly if we say that "God brings about E intentionally" or "God wills E." We might even say "God chooses E." Such truths, however, should not be taken to imply that God's intending E, willing E, or choosing E pick out or involve counterfactually variant intrinsic states of God, as on the intrinsic model. On the extrinsic model, it is true that "God wills E" or "God chooses E," but God's willing E and choosing E are not real, intrinsic properties of God. Nor, on the extrinsic model, is God's being the creator or sustainer a real property of God. On the contrary, these are all merely extrinsic, Cambridge, or relational properties, like the properties my children have of being thought about by me this afternoon.²³

Thus far, I have introduced the extrinsic model of divine causal agency by asking what is required for the truth of the proposition, "God causes E." But we can also ask in what does God's causing or causal act consist?²⁴ Clearly, on the extrinsic model, it does not consist in some intrinsic state of God that would not be there were God not causing E. It appears, then, that there are two possibilities. God's act of causing E might consist simply in the causal relation between God and E, the option that O'Connor would seem to favor in the passage quoted above. Alternatively, God's causal act might consist in a composite with two constituents, the causal relation and E, together. For the purposes of this paper, we need not choose between these options. Nor will it be necessary to determine the number of divine causal acts. In what follows I will assume that for each distinct entity caused by God there is a distinct divine causal act, a distinct divine causing of that entity. Yet, the argument of the paper could be reformulated on the assumption that there is just one divine causal act, God's causing the universe as a whole.

To reiterate, it is beyond the scope of this paper to defend the extrinsic model of divine causal agency. Some will be less than enthusiastic about the claim that God is not really related to creatures (and about the doctrine of divine simplicity) with which the extrinsic model is associated and in terms of which I introduced the model. It is important to note, then, that although embracing these scholastic doctrines would appear to commit one to the extrinsic model, it is not obvious that adopting the extrinsic model commits one to these doctrines. The reason for introducing the extrinsic model in terms of these doctrines is to show that the model is not *ad hoc*. On the contrary, the extrinsic model is a component of a long and respectable, even if currently controversial, tradition of thinking about God. It is also worth noting that the causality exercised by God on the extrinsic model is not *sui generis*. As defenders of the model have pointed out, the

²³For most of the foregoing, see O'Connor, "Simplicity and Creation," pp. 409–410; Miller, *A Most Unlikely God*, pp. 106–112; Brower, "Simplicity and Aseity," pp. 118–120; and Pruss, "Two Problems," pp. 160–163." For further discussion of the difference between real, or intrinsic, and merely Cambridge, or relational, properties, see Peter van Inwagen, *Metaphysics* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), pp. 33–34; Harold Noonan, *Personal Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1989), pp. 162–163; E. J. Lowe, *The Possibility of Metaphysics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 93.

²⁴I take "God's causing" and "God's causal act" to refer to the same thing.

theory of agent-causality, endorsed by some libertarians, also holds that an agent directly causes an effect—a volition or executive state of intention—without doing so in virtue of any intrinsic property of the agent that would be otherwise were the agent not causing that effect.²⁵

Section Three: Libertarianism Compatible with God's Causing Our Actions

With the requisite account of divine causal action in place, we are now in a position to return to the question whether an act's being caused by God is consistent with its being free in the libertarian sense. Taking God out of the picture for a moment, suppose that we have an act that is free in the libertarian sense, that is, an act performed by its agent where there is no factor prior to the act whose occurrence is logically sufficient for the act's occurrence. Now, let us add that this act is caused by God. Assuming as we are in this paper that the action is still performed by its agent, under what conditions ought we to deny that this act remains free in the libertarian sense? The answer seems clear. We ought to deny that this act remains free in the libertarian sense only if God's causing the act introduces some factor prior to the act whose occurrence is logically sufficient for the act's occurrence.

Does God's causing the act introduce such a factor? In order to answer this question, we need first to get clear on two others: "What would it mean for a factor to be prior to the act?" and "What would be implied by the occurrence of this factor's being logically sufficient for the act's occurrence?" Taking the second of these questions first, we can note that if the occurrence of *a* is logically sufficient for the occurrence of *b*, then the occurrence of *b* is logically necessary for the occurrence of *a*, such that from the non-occurrence of *b* we could infer the non-occurrence of *a*, or at least some difference in *a*.²⁶ Thus, a factor the occurrence of which is logically sufficient for a given act will not exist, or will at least be different, in any world in which the act does not exist. Turning to the question of "priority," we have already seen that "prior" can refer to temporal priority or causal priority.²⁷ Despite philosophical controversies surrounding the natures of time and causality, both sorts of priority are fairly straightforward. *a* is temporally prior to *b* just in case *a* comes before *b* on the timeline. *a* is causally prior to *b* just in case either *a* is the proximate cause of *b*, or *a* is a member in a chain of causes that has *b* as an effect.

²⁵See my "Must a Cause Be really Related to Its Effect?" pp. 12–15; Brower, "Simplicity and Aseity," pp. 118–120; O'Connor, "Simplicity and Creation," p. 409; and Pruss, "Two Problems," pp. 160–163. Of course, the volition or intention caused by a creaturely agent-cause is something intrinsic to that agent, whereas the effects caused by God on the extrinsic model are not intrinsic to God. Nevertheless, in both cases you have an agent bringing about an effect, but not in virtue of some intrinsic property of the agent that would differ were the agent not causing that effect.

²⁶Here and in what follows I assume a possible worlds interpretation of logical sufficiency on which *a* is logically sufficient for *b* if and only if in every world in which *a* occurs *b* occurs. If *a* is logically sufficient for *b*, then *b* is logically necessary for *a*, meaning *a* occurs in no world in which *b* does not.

²⁷I will postpone a discussion of explanatory priority until Section Five.

Certainly, on the intrinsic model of divine causal agency, God's causing an act does indeed introduce a factor both prior to the act and such that it would be different had the act not occurred. Letting 'A' stand for an act caused by God and substituting 'A' for the generic 'E' used in the earlier presentation of the intrinsic model, we can recall that on this model the following items are involved in God's causing A:

- (a) God.
- (b) A.
- (c) Some real, intrinsic property, feature, or state of God in virtue of which God causes A, and which state would be different were God not causing A.
- (d) The cause-effect relation between God and A.

Assuming that God does not cause A unless A gets caused, and that A gets caused only if A occurs, we can see that on this model God's causing A clearly involves a factor that is prior to A and that would necessarily differ in any world in which A does not exist. This factor, of course, is God. God is causally prior to A since God causes A. And since God's causing A involves an intrinsic state of God that would be different were God not causing A, and since God does not cause A in any world in which A does not exist, it follows that God would be different in any world in which A does not exist.²⁸

The situation is otherwise given our alternative account of divine causal agency. On the extrinsic model, recall that God's causing A involves only

- (a) God.
- (b) A.
- (d) The cause-effect relation between God and A.

There is no entity of the sort invoked at (c), no real or intrinsic state or property of God that would not be there were God not causing A. As O'Connor puts it,

There might have been any number of different contingent orders, and in each such case, the contingent reality would have causally depended on God. Yet God Himself would have been intrinsically the same.²⁹

Thus, even though A is caused by God, on the extrinsic model, God would be no different were he not causing A. Consequently, unlike on the intrinsic model, God's causing A does not involve a factor that is both prior to A

²⁸A version of the intrinsic model might hold that the entity invoked at (c) belongs to God's essence, that God causes A by his very nature. Assuming God is a necessary being, it would follow that there is, in fact, no world in which A does not exist. Still, it is clear that in this case God would be both logically sufficient for and prior to A, logically sufficient since A would exist in every world in which God exists, and prior since God would be the cause of A.

²⁹O'Connor, "Simplicity and Creation," p. 408.

and such that its occurrence is logically sufficient for A's occurrence. But in that case, given the extrinsic model, if A is otherwise free in the libertarian sense, it does not cease to be free in the libertarian sense on account of its being caused by God. And, for this reason, there is no incompatibility between libertarianism and our free acts' being caused by God.

Section Four: An Initial Challenge to the Foregoing Argument

In the introduction, I identified three reasons why one might reject the conclusion of the foregoing argument. I turn first to consider an objection to the effect that my argument fails even if one assumes both the standard definition of libertarian freedom and the extrinsic model of divine causal agency. The obvious form this sort of challenge will take is to identify some factor that even on the extrinsic model is both prior to and logically sufficient for an act caused by God.

Again, we can assume that if God causes some act, A, then A is caused by God, and that A is caused by God only if A occurs. Consider, then, the following scenarios. In the actual world W, A is a creaturely act otherwise free in the libertarian sense, and God causes A. Now take any world, W*, in which A does not occur. Won't it be true that in W*, unlike in W, it is not the case that God causes A? And, won't this mean that God's causing A introduces a prior and logically sufficient condition of A, since, besides the occurrence of A, there will be just this difference between W and W*: In W God causes A, whereas in W* God doesn't?

In short: no. Granted, from A's occurrence in W and non-occurrence in W*, we can infer the following additional differences between these two worlds: In W, but not in W*, the proposition, "God causes A," is true. Further, included within W, but not within W*, is God's act of causing A. That we can infer these differences shows that the truth of the proposition, "God causes A," and the occurrence of God's act of causing A, are each logically sufficient for the occurrence of A. Yet, the objection to my argument succeeds only if either the truth of the proposition, "God causes A," or God's act of causing A, commits us to some factor or condition *both* logically sufficient for *and* prior to A. On reflection we can see that, given the extrinsic model, neither so commits us.

As a preparation for this reflection, I need to say a brief word about the understanding of "cause" that I will assume in this argument, along with an implication of that understanding. I take it that a cause produces its effect, brings about the existence of its effect, or makes it to be that its effect exists. An implication of this understanding is that if *a* is a cause and *b* its effect, then *a* can't depend for its existence on *b* at or prior to the instant at which *a* causes *b*; for, were *a* to depend for its existence on *b*, then *b* would already have to exist in order for *a* to depend on it. But if *b* already exists, *a* could not rightly be said to have produced *b*, brought *b* about, or made it to be that *b* exists at that instant. We might put this implication by saying that a cause cannot depend *ontologically* on its effect at or prior to the instant it causes its effect, where *ontological dependence* is understood as follows:

a depends ontologically on *b* just in case *a* exists in dependence on *b*.

The foregoing, of course, does not purport to constitute an analysis of ontological dependence in terms of more basic concepts; such an analysis may not be possible. Still, relations of ontological dependence seem familiar enough. For instance, entities that exist only by inhering in their subjects depend ontologically on those subjects. Likewise, composite entities depend ontologically on their constituents, or do so at least in cases where a constituent is essential to the identity of a composite entity.

Ontological dependence should not be confused with *counterfactual dependence*:

a depends *counterfactually* on *b* just in case *a* exists in no world in which *b* does not exist such that from the non-occurrence of *b* we could infer the non-occurrence of *a*.

The need to distinguish ontological and counterfactual dependence becomes clear when we notice that a cause might depend counterfactually on its effect, but could not depend on its effect ontologically. Given the standard definition of determinism, for instance, a cause that determines its effect is logically sufficient for the occurrence of that effect, making it counterfactually dependent on that effect. But no cause could depend ontologically on its effect (at or prior to the instant it causes its effect) for the reason indicated in the previous paragraph.

Let us add that *b* is an *ontologically necessary condition* for *a* just in case *a* cannot exist except in dependence on *b*, so that *a* is ontologically dependent on *b* in every world in which *a* exists. Let us say that *b* is a *logically necessary condition* of *a* just in case *a* depends counterfactually on *b*. Notice that if *b* is ontologically necessary for *a*, then *b* will also be logically necessary for *a*. But, as we have seen is the case with effects of determining causes, from *b*'s being logically necessary for *a*, it will not follow that *b* is ontologically necessary for *a*.

With the foregoing considerations behind us, we are now in a position to see why, given the extrinsic model of divine agency, neither the truth of the proposition, "God causes A," nor God's act of causing A, introduces some factor the occurrence of which is both prior to and logically sufficient for A. Consider first the truth of the proposition, "God causes A." Although the truth of this proposition is logically sufficient for A, whether it commits us to some factor that is both logically sufficient for and prior to A depends on whether among the items required for or implied by the proposition's being true there is some item that is both prior to and logically sufficient for A. Recall that those items are

- (a) God.
- (b) A.
- (d) The cause-effect relation between God and A.

We have already seen that God, though causally prior to A, is not logically sufficient for A: God would be intrinsically the same whether or not A exists. A, by contrast, is logically sufficient for itself. But, surely, A is not prior to itself whether temporally or causally. What, then, of the cause-effect relation between God and A? There will clearly be this difference between the actual world W, in which God causes A, and W*, any world in which A does not occur: W, but not W*, will include the cause-effect relation between God and A. This difference shows that the cause-effect relation between God and A is logically sufficient for A. This relation, however, is not prior to A, either temporally or causally. The relation is not prior causally to A; for, A's relation to God exists only by inhering in A as its subject. The relation thus depends ontologically on A, and as seen above, if it depends ontologically on A, then it cannot be causally prior to A.³⁰ And, since as ontologically dependent on A, the relation cannot exist before A exists, neither can the relation be prior to A temporally.³¹

Consider, now, why on the extrinsic model God's very act of causing A does not introduce a factor both logically sufficient for and prior to A. We have already seen that God's act of causing A is logically sufficient for A. But as we know from Section Two, God's act on the extrinsic model either consists in just the causal relation between God and his effect, or it consists in both the relation and the effect, together. If God's act consists in just the relation, then since, as we have just seen, that relation is neither causally nor temporally prior to A, neither will God's act be causally or temporally prior. If, on the other hand, God's act consists in the causal relation together with the effect, then the result is equally clear. Since among the constituents of God's act will be the relation which is neither causally nor temporally prior to A, neither will God's act be causally or temporally prior. What's more, since God's act of causing A will have A as a constituent, God's act will depend ontologically on A, which means that God's act can neither cause A, nor exist at a time prior to the instant at which A exists.

I conclude, then, that neither the truth of the proposition, "God causes A," nor God's very act of causing A, introduces a factor that is both logically sufficient for and prior to A. It appears, then, that the argument of the previous section stands. Given the extrinsic model of divine causal agency and the standard definition of libertarianism, there is no reason that an act caused by God cannot be free in the libertarian sense.

³⁰If one has a Platonic view of relations, then the relation itself might not depend ontologically on A, but the particular instantiation of the relation does so depend, and clearly it is only the particular instantiation that is logically sufficient for A.

³¹One might counter that God together with the cause-effect relation between God and A might jointly be taken as a factor or condition that is both prior to and logically sufficient for A. But, since God plus the cause-effect relation between God and A would have the cause-effect relation as an essential constituent, it would depend ontologically on that relation, which means that it would in turn depend ontologically on A, since the relation depends ontologically on A. (The relation of ontological dependence, I take it, is transitive.) Consequently, God plus the cause-effect relation between God and A would not be prior to A.

Before moving on to a different challenge to my argument, now is an opportune time to take stock of the multifaceted relationships that hold between God, A, and God's act of causing A on the extrinsic model of divine causal agency. Recall that A stands for any creaturely free act caused by God.

God causes or brings about A. In doing so, he simultaneously brings about his act of causing A, since, on either account of what God's causal act consists in, that act is nothing more than God's causing A.

God is not logically sufficient for A, since there are worlds in which God exists and A does not. God is, however, logically necessary for A. For, A cannot exist unless caused by God, and A cannot be caused by God in any world where God does not exist.

God's act of causing A is both logically necessary and logically sufficient for A. Conversely, A is both logically necessary and logically sufficient for God's act. God's act is logically necessary for A, since there is no world in which A exists without being caused by God. From the fact that God's act is logically necessary for A, it follows that A is logically sufficient for God's act. God's act is logically sufficient for A for two reasons. First, as a matter of conceptual analysis, God causes A only if A gets caused, and A gets caused only if A exists. There is, therefore, no world that includes God's act without including A. Second, on either account of what God's act of causing A consists in, God's act cannot exist except in dependence on A. A, therefore, is an ontologically necessary condition for God's act, from which it follows that A is logically necessary for God's act, from which it follows that God's act is logically sufficient for A.

We need not concern ourselves with whether, in addition to being logically necessary for A, God's act is also ontologically necessary. However one answers that question, it should be clear that God's act of causing A cannot exist without A, nor can A exist without God's act of causing A. Thus, the co-operation of God and the creaturely agent whose act A is, is necessary in order for either God or the creaturely agent to operate. The co-operation between God and the creaturely agent is one on which neither God's act nor the creature's act can be causally or temporally prior to the other. God's act cannot be causally or temporally prior to A for reasons already discussed. A cannot be causally or temporally prior to God's act of causing A, since God must already be causing A in order for A to exist. Since both God's act and the creature's act are necessary for the existence of the other's, yet neither act is prior to the other, we can for lack of better terminology say that God's act and the creature's act are *necessary concurrent conditions* for each other.³²

³²Suppose a different account on which God's act is a determining cause of A, that is, God's act is both the cause of A and logically sufficient for A. On such an account, God's act will depend counterfactually on A, and thus it will be true in a sense that God's act cannot exist without the co-operation of the creaturely agent. Yet, in contrast with the way things stand on the extrinsic model, God's act and the creature's act will not be necessary concurrent conditions for each other. For, unlike on the extrinsic model, God's act will be prior to the creature's act, and it will depend on the creature's act only counterfactually, and not also

The idea of two entities being necessary concurrent conditions for each other might be thought problematic at first. Some might suppose that if *a* is a necessary condition for the existence of *b*, then *a* must be prior to, and not just concurrent with, *b*. Others might worry that if *a* and *b* are necessary for the existence of each other, then, since the existence of each would presuppose the existence of the other, the conditions for neither's existence could ever be satisfied. These concerns, however, do not appear fatal to the idea of two entities serving as necessary concurrent conditions for each other. With respect to the first concern, *a* need not be prior to *b* in order to serve as a necessary condition for *b*'s existence. All that is required is that *b* not exist in any world before or until *a* exists. But that *b* not exist in any world before or until *a* exists is consistent with *a*'s existing concurrently with *b*, not just prior to *b*. Thus, the fact that neither A nor God's act of causing A is prior to the other does not rule out their serving as necessary conditions for each other's existence. With respect to the second concern, all that is precluded by *a* and *b*'s presupposing the existence of each other is that either be the cause of the other. For, since a cause brings it about that its effect exists in the first place, it can't presuppose the existence of its effect at or prior to the instant it causes the effect. But there is no impossibility in *a*'s or *b*'s existing or coming to exist even though neither can exist without the other. All that is required is their existing or coming to exist simultaneously, which is precisely what happens in the case of A and God's act of causing A.

Section Five: Are God's Acts Prior in the Order of Explanation?

Thus far, I have argued that God's causal acts are neither temporally nor causally prior to his effects. But could God's causal acts, even if not temporally or causally prior, be prior to his effects in the order of explanation? And, if so, won't this mean that God's act of causing creaturely act A constitutes a factor both logically sufficient for and prior to A, after all?

It would be difficult to demonstrate that God's causal acts on the extrinsic model are in no sense explanatorily prior to his effects. To rule out any sense in which they explain his effects would require first giving a comprehensive account of the ways in which one thing might explain another, an account that is beyond my powers to supply. Still, I think enough can be said to cast doubt on the contention that God's causal acts explain his effects on the extrinsic model. Clearly, if what I have argued above is correct, God's acts do not explain his effects in the paradigmatic way, by causing them. Why, then, might one still be tempted to think that God's causal acts explain his effects?

Perhaps, it will be thought almost a truism that agents cause effects *by means of* their actions, which suggests that those actions play a role in explaining the effects caused. Yet, while it is true that agents sometimes

ontologically. Thus, what it means to say that God can't operate without the creature's co-operation will differ significantly in the two cases.

bring about effects by means of actions, it is not clear that all of the agent's effects are so brought about. I may cause the ball to fly through the air by means of swinging the bat. Yet, philosophers have often recognized a class of actions, so-called "basic actions," that consist in an agent's causing or bringing about an effect, but not by means of anything at all.³³ Consider, for instance, a proponent of agent-causation who thinks that there are acts of the agent that consist in the agent's directly causing a bodily movement or, alternatively, an executive state of intention.³⁴ Should we say that such effects are caused by means of the agent's acts? But, since these acts just are the causing of these effects, answering this question in the affirmative would be tantamount to saying that the agent causes these effects by means of causing them, a suggestion that, far from giving us a genuine means by which the agent causes the effects, merely reiterates the fact of his causing them. When it comes to basic actions, then, an agent causes an effect, but not by means of anything, including the agent's causal act. The point, of course, is that on the extrinsic model God's causal acts are basic actions. Consequently, if we assume this model, we should think of God's causal acts as consisting in his causing effects, not of God as causing effects by means of his causal acts.

Another reason why some might think that God's causal acts explain his effects is that, "Because God caused it," seems at least a partially satisfying answer to the question, "Why does it exist?" Yet, a proponent of the extrinsic model who wishes to deny that God's causal acts explain his effects can give an accounting for why this answer satisfies. "God caused it," after all, identifies a cause of the *explanandum*, and to refer something to a cause is the paradigmatic way of explaining it. To be sure, a proponent of the extrinsic model will insist that the cause in question here is not God's causal act, but rather God himself. Still, by referring the *explanandum* to a cause, the answer, "Because God caused it," provides an explanation. Consequently, we can do justice to the intuition that an explanation has been given without being committed to the claim that God's causal act is what does the explaining.³⁵

Indeed, on the extrinsic model, it seems that a divine causal act cannot, for one of God's effects, explain *why it exists*—and this for the same reason that God's acts cannot cause his effects. God's causal acts depend onto-

³³E. J. Lowe, for instance, defines a basic action as follows: "An action in which the agent causes an effect of a certain kind, but *not* 'by' any means whatever." See E. J. Lowe, *A Survey of Metaphysics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 199–201.

³⁴Lowe (*Survey of Metaphysics*, pp. 198–200) uses the example of an act that consists simply in an agent's directly moving his hand. Timothy O'Connor maintains that an agent's activity "par excellence" consists in his directly causing an intention to do something. See *Persons and Causes*, 72, note 11.

³⁵One might argue that if God, and not God's causal act, does the explaining, then the answer "Because God" should be just as satisfying as "Because God caused it." But, clearly, the former, unlike the latter, does not refer the *explanandum* to a cause. Only the latter identifies God as the cause of the *explanandum*. Thus, only the latter constitutes an explanation of the *explanandum*.

logically on his effects. Since God's acts presuppose the existence of his effects, the acts can't explain or account for the effects' existing. Reflecting again on the theory of agent-causation, it should be clear that neither does an agent's basic action explain the existence, say, of the executive state of intention the causing of which constitutes the agent's action. For, whether we want to say that the agent's action consists in just the causal relation between the agent and the intention, or whether we say that it consists in the intention together with the causal relation, the agent's action will depend ontologically on the intention. If the agent's action consists in just the relation, then the action will depend ontologically on the intention, since the relation exists only by inhering in the intention.³⁶ If the action consists in the intention together with the relation, then the action will depend ontologically on the intention, since it will have the intention as a constituent. Either way, the agent's action will not explain the existence of the intention, since the action will presuppose the intention's existence. Once again, God's agency as characterized by the extrinsic model is not in all respects *sui generis*.

In what follows, then, I will assume that a proponent of the extrinsic model can deny that God's causal acts are explanatorily, as well as causally and temporally, prior to God's effects.³⁷

Section Six: "Ability to Do Otherwise" and "Ultimately Up To"

I have argued that, given the right account of divine causal agency, there is no reason that a libertarian cannot hold that our free actions are caused by God. My argument has made use of the standard definition of "libertarianism," on which "libertarianism" is the view that affirms free action while requiring a lack of determinism at some relevant point in the process leading up to free choice. Arguably, however, it is not the absence of determinism *per se* that matters most to libertarians, but rather certain characteristics they take to be essential to free action, and which they believe determinism rules out.³⁸ Two characteristics surface most often:

- (a) An action's being such that its agent has the ability to do otherwise.
- (b) An action's being ultimately up to its agent.

Since libertarians typically reject determinism precisely in order to safeguard such characteristics, it will not be enough to show that God's causing our actions is consistent with their being undetermined, unless it can

³⁶If one is a Platonist, the particular instantiation of the relation will depend on the intention.

³⁷Even were proponents of the extrinsic model forced to concede that God's acts in some way explain his effects, the results would not necessarily be disastrous for the libertarian who wished to affirm that our free acts are caused by God. For, although God's act of causing some creaturely free act, A, would now constitute a factor both logically sufficient for and explanatorily prior to A, God's act would arguably not thereby take away the characteristics of free action most cherished by libertarians. See notes 42 and 50.

³⁸See, for instance, Kane, *A Contemporary Introduction*, p. 120.

also be shown that God's causing our actions is consistent with those actions' enjoying the critical features picked out by libertarians. In what follows, I attempt to do just that, arguing that on the extrinsic model God's causing our actions does not rule out our "ability to do otherwise" nor our actions' being "ultimately up to" us, at least as these characteristics have been understood by representative libertarians.

We can begin by noting that not only libertarians, but also many compatibilists, have maintained that free action requires the ability to do otherwise.³⁹ Yet, the compatibilist understanding of this ability is consistent with our free acts' being determined. In order to distinguish the libertarian from the compatibilist understanding, it is necessary to emphasize that on the libertarian but not the compatibilist view, the free agent has the ability to do otherwise *all antecedent conditions remaining the same*.⁴⁰ On this understanding of ability to do otherwise, an agent S who performs action A has the ability to do otherwise only if there is a possible world the same as the actual world in all factors or conditions prior to A, but in which S does other than A.⁴¹

That the extrinsic model renders God's causing our actions consistent with the libertarian understanding of ability to do otherwise can be seen by adopting a similar procedure as before. Leaving God out of the picture for a moment, assume that we have an act such that its agent could have done otherwise all antecedent conditions remaining the same. In the actual world, W, agent S performs action A, and there is a possible world, W*, the same as W in all factors prior to A, but in which S does other than A. Now add that in W, A is caused by God. Will it cease to be the case that there is a possible world like W* the same in all factors prior to A, but where S does other than A? The answer, of course, is that there will cease to be a possible world like W* only if God's causing A introduces some factor that is both prior to and logically sufficient for A. But, as we have already seen from the previous sections, on the extrinsic model, God's causing A does not introduce such a factor. Consequently, God's causing A is consistent with S's having the ability to do otherwise in the libertarian sense.

It goes without saying, perhaps, that the mere fact that God's act is a necessary condition, without which S cannot perform A, does not rule out S's having the ability to do otherwise in the libertarian sense; nor does the mere fact that God's act constitutes something logically sufficient for A. Libertarians generally acknowledge an agent's ability to have done

³⁹See Clarke, *Libertarian Accounts*, 3, note 2. It should also be noted that some libertarians hold that not every act free in the libertarian sense need be such that its agent could have done otherwise. See, for instance, Eleonore Stump, "Libertarian Freedom and the Principle of Alternative Possibilities," in *Faith, Freedom, and Rationality: Philosophy of Religion Today*, ed. Jeff Jordan and Daniel Howard-Snyder (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996).

⁴⁰Timothy O'Connor emphasizes this point in "Free Will", section 3.2. See, also, Kane, *A Contemporary Introduction*, p. 38.

⁴¹I take "doing other than A" to be consistent with performing some act other than A, or simply refraining from A. Here and in what follows, all doing and doing otherwise is voluntary, intentional, and rational.

otherwise than he did, even while acknowledging also that the agent could not have done what he did unless certain necessary conditions for the act were fulfilled, the continuing existence of the universe, for instance. And though my knowing my daughter is reading her Clifford book is logically sufficient for her so reading, libertarians will not typically conclude that my daughter could not have done otherwise than so read.

Still, it might be argued that the libertarian should insist on the ability to do otherwise, not merely *all antecedent conditions* remaining the same, but simply *all conditions* remaining the same. An agent S who performs action A has the ability to do otherwise *all conditions* remaining the same only if there is a possible world having in common with the actual world all conditions necessary for S's performance of A, but in which S does other than A. While on the extrinsic model God's causing A is consistent with S's having the ability to do otherwise all antecedent conditions remaining the same, it is not consistent with S's having the ability to do otherwise all conditions remaining the same. For, since S cannot perform A unless God causes A, a condition of S's performing A is God's act of causing A. Add that God's act of causing A is logically sufficient for A and does not occur in any world in which S does otherwise, and it follows that there is no possible world in which S does otherwise sharing with the actual world all conditions necessary for S's performance of A. Thus, if libertarian freedom requires the ability to do otherwise all conditions, as opposed to antecedent conditions, remaining the same, then S won't have the ability to do otherwise in the libertarian sense, after all.

Yet, it would be a mistake to think that free action, libertarian or not, requires the ability to do otherwise all conditions, as opposed to antecedent conditions, remaining the same. For, given any agent S who performs act A, a factor or condition not prior to the performance of A exists too late to make S perform A, or to place a limit or restriction on S's power with respect to A, such that S had to perform A and could not have done otherwise. To take our current example, God's act is certainly a condition on which S's performance of A depends. But, on the extrinsic model, God's act likewise depends for its existence on A and therefore cannot exist prior to S's performing A. Since God's act is not prior to, but rather concurrent with, the exercise of S's power, God's act exists too late to make it such that S had to perform A and could not have done otherwise.⁴² By parity of reasoning, neither does S's performance of A make it such that God could not have done otherwise than cause A. Since neither God nor S exercises his power prior to the other's exercise, the abilities of both to do otherwise remain intact.

Even if the extrinsic model of divine agency renders God's causing our actions consistent with our ability to do otherwise, we need still to ask whether it renders consistent God's causing our acts with those acts' being

⁴²Note that even were God's act in some sense explanatorily prior to A, since it would depend on A for its existence, it would exist too late to take away S's ability to do otherwise.

ultimately up to us. Perhaps the most prominent detailed account of what is required for an act to be ultimately up to its agent is Robert Kane's UR condition. According to Kane, "a willed action is 'up to the agent' in the sense required by free will only if the agent is ultimately responsible for it in the following sense."⁴³

(UR) An agent is *ultimately responsible* for some (event or state) E's occurring only if (R) the agent is personally responsible for E's occurring in a sense which entails that something the agent voluntarily (or willingly) did or omitted, and for which the agent could have voluntarily done otherwise, either was, or causally contributed to, E's occurrence and made a difference to whether or not E occurred; and (U) for every X and Y (where X and Y represent occurrences of events and/or states) if the agent is personally responsible for X, and if Y is an *arche* (or sufficient ground or cause or explanation) for X, then the agent must also be personally responsible for Y.⁴⁴

UR gives necessary and not sufficient conditions for an agent's being ultimately responsible for something.⁴⁵ That on the extrinsic model an agent whose act is caused by God can satisfy these conditions can be seen as follows. Condition R is satisfied, because the agent's act is something he voluntarily does and, as we have just seen, something for which he could have voluntarily done otherwise.⁴⁶ Given that R is satisfied, U will fail to be satisfied only if there is some *arche* for the agent's action, for which the agent is not personally responsible in the sense indicated by R. What does Kane mean by an *arche*?

Two characteristics appear essential for something to count as an *arche* as Kane understands it. First, an *arche* is a sufficient reason of one of the following three sorts: (i) a sufficient condition, (ii) a sufficient cause, or (iii) a sufficient motive. Kane tells us that *archai* of sorts (i) and (ii) entail, and are thus logically sufficient for, the existence of that for which they are sufficient reasons. *Archai* of type (iii), sufficient motives, do not strictly entail that for which they are sufficient reasons. But, having a sufficient motive for some act at a time means that, given the motive, performing the act at that time would be voluntary and omitting the act not voluntary.⁴⁷ The second characteristic of *archai* is that they are origins, sources or causes of that for which they are sufficient reasons.⁴⁸ What precludes ultimate responsibility according to condition U of UR is that there be

⁴³Kane, *Significance*, pp. 34–35.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁴⁵Though on 78, Kane appears to hold that satisfying UR is not just necessary, but also sufficient, for an act's being up to its agent in the sense required for free will.

⁴⁶Though himself a libertarian, Kane states (*Significance*, p. 36) that the "ability to do otherwise" component of condition R is open to interpretation along compatibilist as well as incompatibilist lines. In showing that God's causing our actions is consistent with our having the ability to do otherwise *all antecedent conditions remaining the same*, I have therefore shown that God's causing our actions is consistent with a stronger sense of "ability to do otherwise" than that required by R.

⁴⁷Kane, *Significance*, p. 73.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, p. 34.

sources sufficient for our actions, for which sources we are not personally responsible in the sense indicated by R: "If the action did have such a sufficient reason for which the agent was not responsible, then the action, or the agent's will to perform it, would have its source in something that the agent played no role in producing."⁴⁹

With the meaning of *arche* made clear, we can now see that condition U is satisfied given the extrinsic model of divine agency. Given that condition R is satisfied, God's causing an agent's action will preclude U's being satisfied only if it introduces an *arche* for the action for which the agent is not personally responsible in the sense indicated by R. We have already seen that on the extrinsic model God's causing some act does not introduce an origin, source, or cause of the act the obtaining of which entails or is logically sufficient for the act. Thus, God's causing the act does not introduce any *arche* of sorts (i) or (ii), and hence does not introduce any *arche* of sorts (i) or (ii) for which the agent is not personally responsible. Nor if the agent's act has an *arche* of sort (iii) does God's causing the act preclude the agent from being personally responsible for that *arche*. For suppose that the act has a sufficient motive. God's causing the act is perfectly consistent with its being the case that something the agent voluntarily did or omitted, and for which the agent could have done otherwise, causally contributed to the agent's having that motive, and made a difference to whether the agent had it. For instance, decisions which the agent made in the past, and for which he could have done otherwise, may have causally contributed to the agent's having the sufficient motive he now has.⁵⁰

It seems, then, that given the extrinsic model of divine agency, an act caused by God can satisfy Kane's famous conditions for ultimate responsibility. Yet, I want to suggest further that on the extrinsic model we have independent reason to think that an act caused by God can be ultimately up to its creaturely agent. For, it is sufficient for an act's being ultimately up to its agent, I suggest, that it be within the agent's power or control whether or not the act occurs. And it is sufficient for its being within the agent's power or control whether or not the act occurs that, assuming the fulfillment of all necessary conditions for the act, the agent can perform the act, yet no conditions make it such that the agent has to perform the act and cannot do otherwise. On the extrinsic model, God's causing the creature's act does not preclude the creature's being able to perform the act given necessary conditions. Nor does it make it such that the creature had to perform the act and could not do otherwise. As we saw above, God's causing the creature's act is consistent with the creature's having the ability to do otherwise all antecedent conditions remaining the same. And, although God's causing the act is a necessary concurrent condition of the

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 73.

⁵⁰Notice that none of the foregoing argument would be affected were we forced to admit that God's causal act is in some sense explanatorily prior to his effect. For, since God's act would still not be a cause or source of A, God's act would not constitute an *arche* of the sort recognized by Kane.

creature's act, since it is not prior to the creature's act, God's act exists too late to make it such that the creature had to perform the act and could not do otherwise. Since, on the extrinsic model, God's causing a creaturely act does not remove that which suffices for its being within the creature's power whether or not the act occurs, neither should we think it removes the act's being ultimately up to its creaturely agent.⁵¹

Some may worry that, if God causes my act, whether or not my act occurs will be ultimately up to God, and not me. This consequence might follow were it the case that both God's causing my act is logically sufficient for my act's occurring, and I have no say regarding whether or not God's causing my act occurs. Yet, on the extrinsic model, while God's causing my act is certainly logically sufficient for my act, it is not the case that I have absolutely no say regarding the occurrence of God's causing my act. On the extrinsic model, my act is an ontologically necessary condition for God's causing my act. Without my concurrent co-operation in performing my act, God's act of causing my act does not occur. What's more, none of the conditions on which my act depends, not even God's causing my act, makes it such that I had to perform my act and could not do otherwise. Because God can cause my act only with my co-operating when I could have done otherwise, I have a say as to whether God's causing my act occurs. On the extrinsic model, I exercise counterfactual power over God's causing my act:

Agent S has counterfactual power over event E if S performs some act with respect to which S could have done otherwise all antecedent conditions remaining the same, and without which act E could not have occurred.

Given the extrinsic model, I exercise counterfactual power over God's causing my act, since, all antecedent conditions remaining the same, I have the ability to do otherwise, and were I to do otherwise, God's act of causing my act could not occur. Since whether God's causing my act occurs is not outside my power, there is no reason on the extrinsic model to think that whether or not my act occurs is ultimately up to God and not, at least also, ultimately up to me.

Conclusion

I have argued that, given the extrinsic model of divine causal agency and the standard definition of "libertarianism," there is no reason that a creaturely act caused by God could not be free in the libertarian sense. I have also argued that the extrinsic model makes God's causing a creaturely

⁵¹Note that an act performed voluntarily, intentionally, and rationally where the agent had the ability, all antecedent conditions remaining the same, voluntarily, intentionally, and rationally to have done otherwise, would appear to count as what Kane calls a "self-forming action," a kind of action for which, on Kane's view, we are ultimately responsible, and from which ultimate responsibility for non-self-forming actions can derive. See *A Contemporary Introduction*, pp. 120–131.

act compatible with libertarian understandings of the “ability to do otherwise” and “ultimate responsibility.” The extrinsic model could be applied further, one would think, to provide robust, yet libertarian friendly, accounts of divine providence, grace, and perhaps even predestination. For example, if, as proponents of divine universal causality maintain, God purposefully causes all that exists apart from himself, then that arguably suffices for holding that all that exists apart from God, including creaturely actions, falls under God’s sovereignty and providence.⁵² Because the extrinsic model allows actions caused by God to be free in the libertarian sense, the extrinsic model provides a promising avenue by which a proponent of divine universal causality might render God’s comprehensive providence compatible with libertarian freedom. Of course, more would need to be said to develop and defend an account of providence, much less of grace or predestination, based on the extrinsic model.⁵³ In closing it is enough to note that these are possibilities worth exploring.⁵⁴

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⁵²Aquinas, at any rate, reasons from God’s all-encompassing causality to his all-encompassing providence. See *ST I*, Q. 22, A. 2 and *ST I*, Q. 103, A. 5.

⁵³An objection to the account of providence might be that on the extrinsic model it is difficult to see how God has control of his effects. Since God would be intrinsically the same no matter what his effects, how, or in virtue of what, does he see to it that the particular effects he wants, and not some others, come about? A provisional response to this objection is that God has control of his effects in the same way that agent-causalists, such as O’Connor, say that creaturely agent-causes have control over their intentions—that is, by freely causing them. See *Persons and Causes*, p. 59. In both cases there is an agent-cause (God or the creature) that brings about an effect, but not in virtue of any intrinsic feature of the agent that would be different were the agent not bringing about the effect. If, by causing them, the creaturely agent-cause can be said to have its intentions under its control, so too can God be said to have control of his effects on the extrinsic model. (To avoid confusion, it is necessary to note that, in speaking of the agent-cause’s control, O’Connor sometimes says that the agent-cause “determines” its intentions or volitions [*Persons and Causes*, pp. 25, 40, 43, 59]. In this context, however, the meaning of “determine” is obviously different than the meaning of “determine” employed in contemporary discussions of the compatibility of free will and determinism, and in contemporary definitions of libertarianism. In those discussions and definitions, *a* “determines” *b* only if *a* is both prior to and logically sufficient for *b*. But, clearly, O’Connor’s agent-cause is not logically sufficient for the intention it brings about. In short, the sense of “determine” in which O’Connor says the agent-cause determines its intention is not the sense of “determine” that would preclude an act’s being free in the libertarian sense. Thus, if God controls or determines his effects merely in the sense in which O’Connor says agent-causes “determine” their intentions, then creaturely acts so “determined” by God could remain free in the libertarian sense).

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