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The Prospects For The Free Will Defence

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The main conclusion of the paper is that the prospects for a successful Free Will Defence employing Alvin Plantinga's basic strategy are poor.

1. Introduction to the Free Will Defence

The motivation for the Defence emerges from reflection on the general question, *If p is compatible with q, then how can we become entitled to believe that it is?*[1]

Is *x is a human* compatible with *x runs a marathon in 20 minutes*? Obviously, *x is a human and x runs a marathon in 20 minutes* is not analytically false. But initial inclinations to a swift *Yes* answer might be weakened by pondering whether biological truths might generate a synthetic, a posteriori incompatibility, like the incompatibility that many philosophers would say obtains between *x is a human* and *x is composed entirely of hydrogen*. Suppose that we were to start from the best biological information that is currently available and try to construct a direct and rigorous argument for incompatibility. Would the failure of all such attempts justify our presuming that the two sentences are compatible? A lot would depend both on how confident we could properly be that if currently available biological information did provide all the evidence required as the empirical basis for a good argument for incompatibility, we would have devised the argument by now, and also on how confident we could properly be that it is unlikely that future biological evidence would supplement current evidence in such a way as to provide the empirical basis for such an argument.

Suppose that all attempts to show that (G) *There exists an omnipotent, all-knowing and wholly good being* is incompatible with (E) *There is evil* were so far to have failed. (I think that this is in fact the case.) How confident could we be that if there were a direct and rigorous argument for the

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[1]From now on, "A is possible" will be short for "A is possibly true," unless A contains an unbound variable, in which case "A is possible" will be short for "A is possibly satisfied by something." "A is compatible with B" will always be equivalent to "A&B is possible" (in the foregoing sense). "World" will be short for "possible world," whether or not the world in question is the actual world. The relevant kind of possibility will always be broadly logical possibility (and so it will never be epistemic possibility), except in expressions of the form *God could have done X.* In such contexts "could," according to proponents of the Defence, involves contingent possession of some relevant capacity.

incompatibility of G with E, we would have recognized it by now? Surely not highly confident. How confident could we properly be that future philosophical developments will not yield such an argument? People who take themselves to possess strong arguments in favour of the truth of G will be inclined, on the basis of those arguments, to say "Fairly confident," while most other philosophers are likely to say "Not very confident." It is plain, then, that few people will agree that the failure of all previous attempts to argue that G is incompatible with E provides, or would provide, a strong prima facie case for the compatibility of G with E, a case which should prevail unless defeated by further considerations.

Alvin Plantinga rejects appeal to some kind of presumption that G is compatible with E, whether or not the presumption is said to be generated by the failure of attempts to argue for incompatibility. He aims, by way of his Free Will Defence, to *prove*, relative to the assumption that free choice and action is possible yet is incompatible with being determined, that G is compatible with E.[2] The Defence is not a theodicy: it does not purport to identify considerations which, if God exists, suffice to justify his allowing the existence of evil. This paper is mainly devoted to various technical issues that arise in the detailed formulation and evaluation of the Defence. I will argue that Plantinga's core strategy is unlikely to succeed.

The assertions *God is all-knowing* and *God is omniscient* are both to be understood as including the proposition that God lacks false beliefs, and the assertion *God is all-knowing* is to be understood as including the proposition that God has knowledge of all future undetermined events. (The latter point is not trivial, because some philosophers have denied that contingent propositions about future contingent events are now neither determinately true nor determinately false, and so God's ignorance of such events before their occurrence is compatible with his knowing all that there is to know before their occurrence.) My formulation of G uses the expression "all-knowing" rather than "omniscient" because I think that "omniscient" should be defined in such a way as to not entail "all-knowing," while the Defence is understood both by its defenders and its opponents as an attempt to establish that the existence of evil is compatible with the existence of an omnipotent, all-knowing and perfectly good God.[3]

The Defence rests on the uncontroversial logical principle that if there is some proposition R such that R is possible, and R is compatible with G, and G&R entails E, then it follows that G is compatible with E. Plantinga's candidate for R is the following proposition:

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[2]This paper will rely on the presentation of the Free Will Defence contained in Alvin Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974). All subsequent page references to Plantinga will be to this book. The main conclusion, that G is compatible with E, is supplemented on pp. 190ff with some others concerning logical compatibility.

[3]Section 1.9 of my book *God, the Best, and Evil* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2008) argues that "omniscient" should not be defined in such as way as to entail "all-knowing."

(R1)   God weakly actualizes a world containing moral good, and every essence suffers from transworld depravity.[4]

Plantinga's version of the Defence does not assert or imply that R1 is true, or that it is epistemically permissible for his readers to believe that it is true. What Plantinga claims is that R1 is possible, compatible with G, and such that G&R1 entails E.

Some explanation of the content of R1 is required at this point. Firstly, what is it to weakly actualize a world? Plantinga in effect introduces the expressions "weakly actualize a free creaturely action" and "weakly actualize a world" in the following "rough" way: God weakly actualizes a free creaturely action A if and only if God himself performs some action such that, if he were to perform it, the relevant creature would freely perform A. God weakly actualizes a world W if and only if he does not strongly actualize it—that is, causally determine that it is actual—but he takes some series of steps such that, if he were to take them, W would be actual.[5]

This account needs to be corrected and supplemented. One reason why arises from the truth that the relevant definitions should not have built into them the controversial assumption that it is *necessary* that if God exists and brings free human beings into existence then he weakly actualizes all free human actions. The Defence certainly does not require this assumption, but only that it is possible that God exists and weakly actualizes all free human actions. Even if some proponents of the Defence believe that the stronger assumption is true, why would they want to build it into their formulation of the Defence and thereby further restrict the range of readers for whom the Defence might be persuasive? (As will emerge below, the range is already quite restricted.) So suppose that the stronger assumption is not to be reflected in the definition of "weakly actualize." In that case, the Defence is consistent with its being possible that God exists and agent A freely performed action X without any divine causal contribution relevant to whether A performed X instead of some contrary free action Y. Suppose, then, that there are worlds in which A freely performs X without any divine causal contribution relevant to whether A performed X instead of Y, and in which God afterwards asserts that A performed X. Plantinga's "rough" definition implies that in such worlds God weakly actualizes A's performing X. Plainly, the definition is too broad to capture the target idea.

Although this paper will not contain a modified definition of "weakly actualize a world," it is plain that any satisfactory account will need to involve the truth of counterfactual conditionals of the form *If God were to strongly actualize all and only S1 . . . Sn then he would thereby weakly actualize free, undetermined creaturely action A.* If so, then since Plantinga's formula-

[4]Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity*, p. 189. My formulation of R1 contains the expression "weakly actualizes a world" where the original text says simply "actualizes a world," but Plantinga says that in contexts such as R1 he is using "actualize" to mean "weakly actualize" (p. 173).

[5]Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity*, p. 173.

tion of the Defence requires that R1 be possible, it requires that conditionals of the foregoing form be possible. Thomas P. Flint argues, in effect, that necessarily, such counterfactuals, understood as apt for helping to underwrite talk of God's weakly actualizing a world, do not causally or counterfactually depend for their truth-value on any of God's providential choices and actions.[6] I will assume that Flint's arguments are sound. If so, counterfactuals of the foregoing kind correspond closely to the Molinist term of art "counterfactual of creaturely freedom." Accordingly, we can properly proceed on the assumption that the Defence requires the possibility of true counterfactuals of creaturely freedom (CCFs).

An *essence*, according to Plantinga, is a property P such that there is a world in which there exists an object x that has P essentially and is such that in no world is there an object that has P and is distinct from x.[7] Plantinga argues that there are essences.[8] He is concerned only with essences whose instantiations are or could be free persons, though in most places he omits this qualification, for brevity's sake. The reason for expressing R1 in terms of essences rather than persons is that Plantinga does not believe that there are non-actual persons, yet the Defence requires consideration of both whether actual persons could suffer from transworld depravity and also whether God could have created other people instead, who did not suffer from transworld depravity. Talk of essences provides a way of discussing both questions.

Plantinga calls an action *morally significant* for a given person at a time if and only if it would be wrong for the person to perform the action then and right to refrain, or vice versa. A person is *significantly free* at a time if and only if the person is free at that time with respect to an action which is morally significant for him or her.[9]

The precise definition of "transworld depravity" turns out to be a quite difficult topic; the matter receives close attention in the next section. In the meantime, we can make do with a first approximation: an essence E suffers from transworld depravity if and only if, as a matter of contingent fact, if God were to instantiate E and leave E's instantiation significantly free, then, whatever God were to do in addition, E's instantiation would go wrong with respect to some morally significant action.[10]

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[6]Thomas P. Flint, *Divine Providence: The Molinist Account* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1998) and "The Multiple Muddles of Maverick Molinism," *Faith and Philosophy* 20 (2003), pp. 91–100. Notice that although the Defence is often described as a Molinist argument, it does not require the truth of Molinism, since it does not require the truth either of G or of *There are true CCFs*.

[7]Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity*, p. 187. Plantinga uses the word "property" in a very broad sense, in which any predicate that is true of an object corresponds to a property possessed by the object.

[8]Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity*, p. 172.

[9]Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity*, p. 166.

[10]Although in this paper "E" denotes in some places the proposition *There is evil*, and in other places an essence, the context will always clearly disambiguate "E." Accordingly, the practice is convenient.

2. Plantinga and Otte on Transworld Depravity

As I pointed out at the end of Section 1, the core of the Defence, as Plant-inga presents it, is that R1 is possible, compatible with G, and such that its conjunction with G entails E. R1 employs the expression "transworld depravity." We are now in a position to consider Plantinga's formal defini-tion of the expression:

> (TWD-AP) An essence E *suffers from transworld depravity* if and only if for every world W such that E entails the properties *is sig-nificantly free in W* and *always does what is right in W*, there is a state of affairs T and an action A such that (1) T is the largest state of affairs God strongly actualizes in W, (2) A is morally significant for E's instantiation in W, and (3) if God had strongly actualized T, E's instantiation would have gone wrong with respect to A.[11]

As Richard Otte has pointed out, TWD-AP is unsatisfactory: it fails to capture the underlying idea.[12] Suppose that there is some world W1 in which God praises some E+, at the time of her death, for having always freely acted rightly. Then T1, the largest state of affairs God strongly ac-tualizes in W1, includes God's praising E+ for having always freely acted rightly. Now consider the conditional *If God had strongly actualized T1 then E+ would have gone wrong with respect to some morally significant action*. This conditional is necessarily false, since it is necessarily true both that T1 in-cludes God's praising E+ for having always freely acted rightly and also that if God praises E+ for having always freely acted rightly then E+ always freely acts rightly.[13] Hence E does not suffer from transworld depravity. Since the foregoing argument has no contingent premises, it follows that it is impossible that E suffers from transworld depravity.

This result is unacceptable. The target concept is such that whether or not an essence suffers from transworld depravity is a contingent matter, depending on what CCFs are true. Furthermore, if it is impossible that E suffers from transworld depravity, then it is impossible that all essences suffer from transworld depravity, and so R1 is impossible.

Otte offers his own definition of "transworld depravity." Let the *t-initial segment* of a world be that part of its history that occurs up to (but not at) time t. It includes only states of affairs that are "strictly about" what has

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[11]Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity*, p. 188. In what follows, if essence E is instantiated in the actual world then "E+" denotes the individual who instantiates E (in all worlds in which that individual exists). I will not discuss the semantic role of the expressions "E's instantia-tion in world W" and "E+" in cases in which E is uninstantiated in the actual world.

[12]Richard Otte, "Transworld Depravity and Unobtainable Worlds," *Philosophy and Phe-nomenological Research* 78 (2009), pp. 165–177.

[13]Why should we accept Otte's premise that it is necessarily true that if God praises E+ for having always freely acted rightly then E+ always freely acts rightly? Perhaps Otte is assum-ing, and thinks that Plantinga would agree, that it is a de dicto necessary truth that if God exists then God is omnipotent, all-knowing and perfectly good. Furthermore, in the context of the Defence, if there are worlds in which E exists while God lacks omnipotence or perfect goodness, or is not all-knowing, they are scarcely worth taking into account.

happened before t. Otte regards this stipulation as excluding from t-initial segments divine beliefs about times at and after t. Let us assume also that the t-initial segment of a world does not include God's intentions concerning times at and after t. After all, if divine intentions were included, and God in fact intends before t to weakly actualize your keeping a promise after t, then the propositions correctly describing the t-initial segment of the actual world would jointly *entail* your keeping your promise—a result that would badly interfere with Otte's line of thought. Otte says:

> (TWD-RO) An essence E *suffers from transworld depravity* if and only if for every world W such that E entails the properties *is significantly free in W* and *always does what is right in W*, there is a time t and an action A such that (1) A is morally significant for E's instantiation in W at t, and (2) if God had weakly actualized the t-initial segment of W, then E's instantiation would have gone wrong with respect to A.

Otte's definition succeeds in avoiding the problem he identified with TWD-AP. Nevertheless TWD-RO is unsuitable for its intended role in the Defence, because it is doubtful that it is possible that every essence suffers from transworld depravity, so defined.

As I pointed out in Section 1, the key terms in the Defence should be defined in ways consistent with its being possible that God brings free agents into existence without weakly actualizing their causally undetermined choices and actions. Admittedly, there are philosophers who believe both that freedom is incompatible with being determined and also that it is *necessary* that if God exists and he brings anything into existence then everything that occurs either is intended by God or is an unintended foreseen consequence of what he intends, accommodated within God's comprehensive plan. It is plausible to hold that these two beliefs jointly entail that it is necessary that if God brings anything into existence then he strongly or weakly actualizes a world. Proponents of the second belief typically rely on the Principle of Sufficient Reason or some similar premise. Given that the Defence requires that it be possible that there are true CCFs, it would be difficult for a proponent of the Defence to affirm the Principle of Sufficient Reason. For consider the possible worlds in which there are true CCFs: it is hard to see how, in any of those worlds, the CCFs can have sufficient reasons.

In the course of advancing the Defence, it would be dialectically illegitimate to appeal to any premise which says or entails that God exists, either as a direct reason for supposing that it is necessary that if God brings anything into existence then he strongly or weakly actualizes a world, or even as a reason for supposing that it is possible that a CCF has a sufficient reason.

Given that loose providential control is possible—that is, given that it is possible that, even if God exists and brings things into existence and to a significant extent continues to supervise the universe, there occur events that are neither intended by him nor unintended consequences of what he

intends—it is plausible that there is at least one essence E such that there is at least one world V in which (i) E+ always freely acts rightly, and (ii) God does not weakly actualize any free actions by anyone, and (iii) E+ comes into existence after many other people have performed free actions. Let t be the time at which E+ freely performs an action A. It is impossible for God to weakly actualize the t-initial segment of V because this segment includes the state of affairs *The t-initial segment's being not weakly actualized by God*.

If so, then what is the truth value of the counterfactual *If God had weakly actualized the t-initial segment of V, E+ would have freely gone wrong with respect to A*? There seem to be two options. The first is to count it as "vacuously" true, in virtue of the impossibility of its antecedent. If so, then we would thereby be committed to counting the counterfactual *if God had weakly actualized the t-initial segment of V, then E+ would have avoided going wrong with respect to A* as also "vacuously" true, on the same grounds. The latter conditional would be a necessary truth which any sensible interpretation of TWD-RO should treat as ruling out its being the case that E+'s essence suffers from transworld depravity; so it follows that according to TWD-RO it is impossible that E+'s essence suffers from transworld depravity. In that case, R1 is impossible.

There is a second and less convoluted option: to say that the counterfactual *If God had weakly actualized the t-initial segment of V, E+ would have freely gone wrong with respect to A* is necessarily not true. It follows straightforwardly that according to TWD-RO it is necessarily not true that E suffers from transworld depravity. In that case, once again, R1 is impossible.

Hence, when interpreted according to TWD-RO, R1 cannot fill the slot R in the Defence.

Someone might try to reinterpret and rescue TWD-RO by re-defining the expression "t-initial segment" as excluding negative states of affairs like *God's not weakly actualizing such-and-such.* But this is not an attractive line to take. For firstly, a viable distinction between "negative" and "positive" states of affairs is hard to draw. Secondly, any t-initial segment which includes positive states of affairs entails negative states of affairs—after all, *There is a hippopotamus whose body now contains this region* entails *There is not an elephant whose body now contains this region*. Thirdly, taking this line will not make FWD-RO suitable for Plantinga's purposes.

Let me develop this third consideration in a way which will also dispose of the proposal that TWD-RO be saved by instead re-defining "t-initial segment" so as to exclude all states of affairs involving God. Assume that in the actual world it is true that for every essence E and world W such that E entails the properties *is significantly free in W* and *always does what is right in W*, there is a time t and an action A such that both A is morally significant for E+ in W at t, and also if God had weakly actualized the t-initial segment of W then E+ would have gone wrong with respect to A. Nevertheless even if God had weakly actualized the t-initial segment of W, additional states of affairs could have obtained before t, such that if

God had weakly actualized the t-initial segment of W and these additional states of affairs had obtained, then E+ would not have gone wrong with respect to any morally significant matter. Hence the right hand side of the biconditional in FWD-RO could be true even though essence E did not suffer from transworld depravity in the target sense.

3. Alternative Occupants of the Slot R

Let us say that a world is *perfect* if and only if it contains free creatures all of whose morally significant actions are right. While Otte thinks that R1, interpreted in accordance with TWD-RO, is eligible to fill the role R in the Defence, he declares that the following, weaker proposition is also eligible:

(R2) God weakly actualizes a world containing moral good and, for every perfect world W, there is an essence E and an action A at a time t such that E is instantiated in W, and if God were to actualize the t-initial segment of W then E's instantiation would go wrong with respect to A.

R2, however, is no more fit than R1 to fill the role R. The reason should be apparent from my foregoing objection to TWD-RO. Proponents of the Defence should agree that there is at least one perfect world U in which God exists and there are many free morally significant actions all of which are right and none of which is weakly actualized by God. Given Otte's definition of "t-initial segment," if t is a time after the first such action then it is impossible for God to weakly actualize the t-initial segment of U because this segment includes the state of affairs *The t-initial segment's being not weakly actualized by God*. In that case, given that the "vacuous truth" proposal has been dismissed, the counterfactual *If God had weakly actualized the t-initial segment of U, then there is an essence E whose instantiation would have gone wrong with respect to at least one morally significant action at or after t* is necessarily not true. It follows that R2 is necessarily not true—i.e., is impossible. Furthermore, relative to some new definition of "t-initial segment" crafted to avoid the foregoing problem, it would still be true that even if God had weakly actualized the t-initial segment of U, additional states of affairs could have obtained before t, such that if God had weakly actualized the t-initial segment of U and these additional states of affairs had obtained, then E+ would not have gone wrong with respect to any morally significant action. So, once again, the right hand side of the biconditional in FWD-RO could be true even though essence E did not suffer from transworld depravity in the intended sense.

Is there some better nominee for the role R, making use of ideas closely connected to *transworld depravity*? Here is an attempt to state one in terms familiar from introductory presentations of the Defence:

(R3) God weakly actualizes a world containing moral good, and God cannot weakly actualize a world containing moral good but no moral evil.

Plainly, G&R3 entails E. Given that each of R3 and G is possible, then, since R3 entails G, R3&G is possible. Let us assume, for the moment, that the first conjunct of R3 is possible, and assess the assumption later.

It is plausible that the second conjunct of R3 is possible. After all, many philosophers hold that it is necessary that there is no world which God can weakly actualize, while philosophers who hold that it is possible that God can weakly actualize a world will have difficulty maintaining that it is necessary that if he exists he can weakly actualize a world containing moral good but no moral evil. For why, given that there are worlds in which there are true CCFs, shouldn't there be some world in which God exists and in which the true CCFs are suitable for God's weakly actualizing some world containing moral good but unsuitable for his weakly actualizing any world containing moral evil?

Given that each of the two conjuncts of R3 is possible, are they compatible with each other? Perhaps proponents of the Defence should try to *prove* that they are. Can we identify a proposition R such that R is possible, and R is compatible with *God cannot weakly actualize a world containing moral good but no moral evil*, and the conjunction of R with *God cannot weakly actualize a world containing moral good but no moral evil* entails *God weakly actualizes a world containing moral good*? Here is a candidate:

($R_{\#}$)   God weakly actualizes a world in which (i) no-one's moral rights are violated, (ii) there is moral evil, and (iii) for each moral evil x there exists some much greater moral good y such that x (or the occurrence of some other evil at least as bad as x) is a logically necessary condition of y.

Although I have no proof that $R_{\#}$ fulfils the stated conditions on R, the view that it does is prima facie plausible (given our temporary assumption that the first conjunct of R3 is possible), and moreover it has a degree of prima facie plausibility that is considerably higher than the initial degree of plausibility, before we took $R_{\#}$ into consideration, of the view that *God cannot weakly actualize a world containing moral good but no moral evil* is compatible with *God weakly actualizes a world containing moral good*. Hence the argument involving $R_{\#}$ amounts to a good case, but one falling far short of proof, for the mutual compatibility of the two conjuncts of R3.

It might be objected that anyone who believes that free choice and action is possible yet is incompatible with being determined, and who initially has serious doubts about whether G is compatible with E, will have a serious inclination to deny that $R_{\#}$ is possible, on the grounds that necessarily, if God exists and cannot weakly actualize a world containing moral good but no moral evil, then either God does not bring free agents into existence or else he does not weakly actualize a world but instead strongly or weakly actualizes the complete absence of moral evil while in other respects loosely supervising what free agents do. But are there strong arguments, likely to be attractive to a wide audience including agnostics, for the necessary truth of the foregoing conditional? Appeal might be made

to the premise *Necessarily, perfect goodness would lead an omnipotent, all-knowing being to shun tradeoffs between creaturely moral good and creaturely moral evil*. This premise, however, is no more attractive than the conclusion intended to be drawn from it. In the absence of better supporting arguments, the objection fails to defeat the prima facie case set forth in the preceding paragraph.

For obvious reasons, one cannot in general demand of a proof that all its premises be proven. Furthermore one might believe that one possesses a proof, while being considerably less than certain that its conclusion is true. (For example, you might have read and understood a certain mathematical argument but not checked its validity. In that case, you might justifiably accept that the argument is a proof on the grounds that a colleague has examined it carefully and says that it is a proof; yet you realize that your colleague occasionally makes mistakes.) Nevertheless, unless proponents of the Defence can devise some stronger case for the mutual compatibility of the two conjuncts of R3 than the foregoing one involving $R_\#$, the Defence will fail to achieve an important aim which most of its proponents have had, viz., not merely to increase the credibility of the view that G is compatible with E, but to achieve a decisive resolution, at least for philosophers who hold that free will is possible yet incompatible with being determined, of the debate about whether G is compatible with E.

Let us now consider whether the first conjunct of R3 is possible. *God weakly actualizes a world containing moral good* is possible only if it is possible that there be true CCFs. Plainly any argument appealing to *theistic* premises for the possibility of CCFs will in the context of the Defence be unavailable: in contexts in which whether G is compatible with E is under serious investigation but the truth of E taken for granted, it is unreasonable to rely on the assumption that G is true.

Might appeal to the Law of Conditional Excluded Middle (LCEM) establish the possibility of true CCFs? LCEM says that:

> Necessarily, for all contingent states of affairs x and y, either if x were to obtain (or had obtained) then y would obtain (or would have obtained), or else if x were to obtain (or had obtained) then y would not obtain (or would have not obtained).

It follows from LCEM that either it is the case that if God were to strongly actualize all and only the states of affairs S1 . . . Sn then he would thereby weakly actualize free creaturely action A, or else it is the case that if God were to strongly actualize all and only S1 . . . Sn then he would not thereby weakly actualize free action A. The second disjunct, however, is not a CCF. So LCEM does not entail the truth of any CCF (unless, of course, LCEM is impossible, in which case it vacuously entails every proposition). Once one has noticed this point, it is hard to see how if LCEM is true then it guarantees the possibility of true CCFs.

Of course it also follows from LCEM that either it is the case that if God were to strongly actualize all and only the states of affairs S1 . . . Sn

then free action A would occur, or else it is the case that if God were to strongly actualize all and only S1 . . . Sn then free action A would not occur. The truth of the second disjunct, however, would not guarantee that by actualizing all and only S1 . . . Sn God would weakly actualize non-A. For example, some highly improbable, uncaused event might occur, either preventing A or completely pre-empting the causal chain leading from S1 . . . Sn to the agent's performing A. These scenarios can be ruled out by employing additional assumptions, but since such assumptions are likely to be controversial, proponents of the Defence should avoid them wherever they can. This is why I have defined "CCF" in such a way that the consequent of a CCF has the form *God would weakly actualize free action A*, and thus *If God were to strongly actualize all and only S1 . . . Sn then he would not thereby weakly actualize free action A* does not count as a CCF.

Furthermore, LCEM is highly suspect. It is even less secure than the possibility of true CCFs. After all, even adherents of the possibility of true CCFs might well reject the view that either it is true that if Julius Caesar had been in command of the French forces at the Battle of Waterloo then the French would have won or else it is true that if Julius Caesar had been in command of the French forces then the French would not have won.

Proponents of the Defence have no strong and dialectically admissible argument for the possibility of true CCFs. Yet we are not justified in believing that true CCFs are possible unless we have some such argument for the truth of the belief. Hence the use of R3 does not provide the basis for a proof that G is compatible with E.

In the absence of better nominees for the occupancy of the slot R, we should conclude that, even granted both that free will is possible and that it is incompatible with being determined, the prospects for a successful Free Will Defence employing Plantinga's core strategy are poor.

The best way of converting people to the view that G is compatible with E (without converting them to the view that G and E are both true) may well involve advancing a successful theodicy for E; and it may turn out that appeal to free will is central to some such theodicies.[14]

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