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# ON A NEW LOGICAL PROBLEM OF EVIL

Jerome Gellman

J. L. Schellenberg has formulated two versions of a new logical argument from evil, an argument he claims to be immune to Alvin Plantinga's free will defense. The first version assumes that God created the world to model God's goodness, and the second to share with the world the good that already existed. In either case, the good of the world, like that of God, should not require or allow any evil. I argue that the new argument, if correct, would pay a heavy price to avoid the free will defense. I then go on to show that neither version of the argument is sound. So, there is no new problem of evil.

The logical argument from evil aims for the conclusion that there is a logical contradiction between the existence of God and either any evil, or horrendous evils, or the amount of evil there is in the world. Such an argument has as its premises assertions about the existence and nature of God, typically that God is omniscient, omnipotent, and perfectly good. When adjoined to selected necessary truths, these premises are supposed to deductively prove that there exists no evil, or no horrendous evils, or not the amount of evil there is in the world. For some time now, philosophers have debated over whether such an argument is sound, with much of the debate concerning whether Alvin Plantinga's Free Will Defense against the logical problem of evil is successful.<sup>1</sup> Now, J. L. Schellenberg has come up with what he calls a "new logical problem of evil," against the existence of *any* evil in a world created by God, an argument he claims works even if the old argument falls to Plantinga's rebuttal.<sup>2</sup> What is new about the new argument is the premises from which Schellenberg intends to show a logical contradiction between evil and God. Here I want to show that Schellenberg fails in his attempt to create a new problem of evil.

Schellenberg aims to demonstrate a logical inconsistency among three principles commonly held by theistic philosophers about God and the existence of evil—any evil. Schellenberg presents two different arguments,

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<sup>1</sup>The Free Will Defense appears in various forms in: Alvin Plantinga, *God and Other Minds* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967); Alvin Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974); and Alvin Plantinga, *God, Freedom, and Evil* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977).

<sup>2</sup>J. L. Schellenberg, "A New Logical Problem of Evil," in *The Blackwell Companion to the Problem of Evil*, ed. Justin P. McBrayer and Daniel Howard-Snyder (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2013). Hereafter "Schellenberg."



related by some common features. These are the “Modeling” Argument and the “Motivation” Argument. I take them up in turn.

### *The Modeling Argument*

The Modeling Argument “assumes that the goodness of any world created by God would model God’s goodness,”<sup>3</sup> where “Any good that purely resembles or images or mirrors or reflects a pure good in God we might think of as *modeling* that good.”<sup>4</sup> There are cases where we might not be able to say just what form the modeled goodness takes in God, but there will be such a goodness that appears in God in a pure or maximally valuable form.

Schellenberg’s Modeling Argument opens with what he formulates as three “commitments” of theism:<sup>5</sup>

*Unsurpassable Greatness (UG)*: God is the greatest possible being.

*Ontological Independence (OI)*: No world created by God (or any part thereof) is part of God.<sup>6</sup>

*Prior Purity (PP)*: Prior to creation (whether “prior” can be taken logically or temporally) there is no evil in God of any kind.

Schellenberg argues that these three are implicitly inconsistent with there being evil in the world. As a preliminary, Schellenberg argues that from UG and OI it follows that prior to all creation

(G) All goods are already contained in God.<sup>7</sup>

He gets to (G) by taking this quote from Anselm as an authoritative explanation of UG:

Now, this [God] is that single, necessary Being, in which is every good; nay, which is every good, and a single entire good, and the only good.<sup>8</sup>

He also argues that (G) should be explicated by

(G1) For every possible good, among the distinguishable good-types it tokens, or instances, at least one is instanced by God.

Here Schellenberg has in mind such an example as when a mother tokens kindness to her child by nursing her. While God does not exhibit a similar token of physically nursing God’s child, God does instantiate a good-type to which the mother’s token belongs, such as kindness or concern for the

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<sup>3</sup>Schellenberg, 36.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 38.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 35–36.

<sup>6</sup>This proposition is ambiguous as to what “part thereof” refers to: a part of God or a part of the world. I take it that Schellenberg intends the latter.

<sup>7</sup>“(G)” is my name for this proposition, not Schellenberg’s.

<sup>8</sup>This quotation is from *Anselm: Basic Writings*, ed. and trans. S. N. Deane (La Salle, IL: Open Court Publishing), *Proslogion*, Chapter 23, 339.

helpless. Similarly, if a mechanic has knowledge of how to fix a carburetor, her knowledge is an instance of a type of good that God also instances, such as using one's knowledge for the sake of others.

Schellenberg writes:

For suppose [(G1)] is not true. Then there is a possible good such that no matter how far one goes in sorting through various types of goodness to which it belongs, no matter how general and fundamental a form of goodness is reached, never will one find a type of goodness that is in God. And this seems absurd if God is unsurpassably great and if in some pertinent sense all goods are in God.<sup>9</sup>

Throughout, (G) is to be understood as (G1).

Here is Schellenberg's formulation of the continuation of his argument:<sup>10</sup>

- (1) Every possible non-Divine good is greatly exceeded by a good of the same type existing in God prior to creation. (From UG and OI)
- (2) Every good *in a world* is greatly exceeded by a good of the same type existing in God *prior* to creation. (From 1)
- (3) All goodness found in God prior to creation is pure goodness: goodness-without-evil. (From PP)
- (4) Every good in a world is greatly exceeded by a *pure* good of the same type existing in God prior to creation. (From 2 and 3)
- (5) Every worldly good *that permits or requires evil* is greatly exceeded by a pure good of the same type existing in God prior to creation. (From 4)
- (6) If every worldly good that permits or requires evil is greatly exceeded by a pure good of the same type, existing prior to creation in God, then any world with goods permitting or requiring evil is exceeded by a world modeling the corresponding pure goods in God. (Premise)
- (7) Any world with goods permitting or requiring evil is exceeded by a world modeling the corresponding pure goods in God (call the latter a "greater world"). (From 5 and 6)
- (8) God can ensure the existence of greater worlds, and can do so limitlessly. (From 7)
- (9) If any world with goods permitting or requiring evil is exceeded by a world modeling the corresponding pure goods in God and the existence of greater worlds can limitlessly be ensured by God, then for any world X that requires or permits evil, there is some world Y that models pure goodness in God such that God has no good reason to create X rather than Y. (Premise)
- (10) For any world X that requires or permits evil, there is some world Y that models pure goodness in God such that God has no good reason to create X rather than Y. (From 7, 8, and 9)

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<sup>9</sup>Schellenberg, 37.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 38–40.

- (11) If for any world X that requires or permits evil there is some world Y that models pure goodness in God such that God has no good reason to create X rather than Y, then God has no good reason to permit evil in the world. (Premise)
- (12) God has no good reason to permit evil in the world. (From 10 and 11)
- (13) If there is evil in the world, then God has a good reason to permit it. (Premise)
- (14) There is no evil in the world. (From 12 and 13)

All of the premises added to the theistic commitments are presented as necessary truths. Schellenberg's claim is that since the conjunction of those premises with necessary truths entails that there is no evil, and since there does exist evil, then at least one of the theistic commitments must be false. Since the goods of this world include ones that permit or require evil, on the Modeling Argument, Schellenberg concludes, theists must give up at least one of the three initial theistic commitments. This is the new logical argument from evil.

Schellenberg wants his new logical problem of evil to not be vulnerable to the Free Will Defense offered by Alvin Plantinga. However, it is not at all obvious that this is so. Please note that

- (8) God can ensure the existence of greater worlds, and can do so limitlessly

(where "greater worlds" contain only pure goods), is equivalent to

- (E) God can *ensure* the existence of any world in which there is no evil.

Here is Schellenberg's description of what such worlds would be like:

[W]e are talking about the creation of a God who intends to open up avenues, for finite persons, leading to the experience and embodiment of supreme value. Given Prior Purity together with Unsurpassable Greatness, there is no limit to the richness of value assimilable, without evil, by finite persons in pursuit of the infinite. The point is that to improve itself, a finite world must, as it were, seek to close the distance between itself and God—an incomplete task, to be sure, and one that could find limitlessly many forms, but this is nonetheless the direction such value-related endeavor must take, and in this direction there is no evil to be encountered. Finite created persons could grow infinitely, developing knowledge and experience of God and the world ever more comprehensive and fine-grained. The greatness of God could be reflected in them and in the content of their growing awareness.<sup>11</sup>

Such worlds include

the higher goodness that is in God being ever more fully embodied by creatures through what they do to become like God and to make their world reflect God's goodness.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 40.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 39.

In a Schellenberg world, people always advance in “pursuit” of modeling infinite goodness. The question to ask is: Are the denizens of Schellenberg’s modeling world to have morally significant freedom? If they do, then the New Problem of Evil is vulnerable to the Free Will Defense just as much as the old one. Schellenberg cannot just assume that God can create a “Schellenberg world,” a world in which people will freely choose only good, will never choose to do evil, and will always strive to improve morally. According to the Free Will Defense, if God creates persons with morally significant freedom, then whether they choose to do only good will be up to them and not up to God. And it is possible that in no world that God creates in which creatures have morally significant freedom will they choose exclusively the good. So, Schellenberg cannot think he avoids the Free Will Defense if Schellenberg worlds have morally significant freedom.

So, let us assume that in a Schellenberg world people do not have morally significant freedom. If they are to have free will at all, they might still have what I will call “closed libertarian freedom,” by which I mean libertarian freedom to choose between good options, without freedom to choose evil. Then, in a Schellenberg world, choosing evil will be impossible. People will choose only good. This too will not do, though, for a Schellenberg world has people striving to always improve their moral level. Even if people have closed libertarian freedom, being able to choose between good alternatives but never to choose evil, they might never choose, or not choose enough times, to *advance* in goodness, but merely choose horizontally, as it were, staying in a given moral level and never advancing, or at some point not advancing at all. If God gives them only closed libertarian freedom, it might be that nobody will freely choose to always become better morally, even if always choosing the good. Thus, again, on the Free Will Defense, God might not be able to create a Schellenberg world.

To have some form of free will and yet substantiate Schellenberg’s belief that the New Problem of Evil avoids the Free Will Defense, we must predicate *limited* closed libertarian freedom, by which I mean libertarian freedom to choose only among good alternatives, and *limited* to always striving to higher moral levels. Hence, when a person is faced with good choices that leave him at the same moral level as before, he will choose among them. When faced with choices where some, but not all, signify an advance to a higher moral level, the person will not be free to choose to stay at his present moral level, but will choose to advance. In choosing to advance, the person will be able to choose between good alternatives, each of which signifies moral advance. The person’s closed libertarian freedom will be limited in this way. If denizens of a Schellenberg world are to have freedom at all, it must be limited closed libertarian freedom.

Closed libertarian freedom fits very nicely with the modeling approach, if we follow the tradition articulated by Aquinas in *Summa Theologiae*, I, 19:9. Aquinas contends that God has free will with respect to what God

does not will necessarily. It is impossible for God to will evil, yet God does have free will to choose between alternatives involving no evil choices. So, we can think of God's free will as the divine analogue of human closed libertarian freedom. Since creation exists to model God's goodness, it is fitting and proper for that purpose for God to grant to creatures that kind of free will analogous to God's kind of free will. Creatures, like God, will choose only among alternatives that are not evil, and thereby model God's goodness. This would be a good reason for a modeling approach to choose closed libertarian freedom over no freedom at all.

Limited closed libertarian freedom, though, does not exist in God since God can never choose to advance morally. God is necessarily morally perfect. Yet, we can suppose that human closed libertarian freedom must be limited so that creatures can always be approaching God's goodness by their own choice. This limitation would be God's concession for the sake of implementing the grand divine modeling plan. Limiting closed libertarian freedom for an infinite moral improvement would make for the closest mirroring of God's infinite goodness.

A Modeling Argument defender would not be able to condition the value of creation on people having morally significant freedom and choosing enough good over evil. The modeling approach would place the value of the world entirely on the very *modeling* of God's goodness as closely as possible. It would be *intrinsically* good for God's goodness to be modeled in a Schellenberg world, and to be modeled as closely as possible by an analogue of God's freedom (or, perhaps, even with no freedom at all). God would wish to replicate God's goodness in the maximal way possible for a created world.

It seems that the Modeling Argument could avoid the Free Will Defense only by making such an assessment of the value of limited closed libertarian freedom. However, one might well reject this assessment, and think that the value of worldly good is at its most when chosen in open libertarian freedom. Then God would have had to allow significant moral freedom, and we would be back to the Modeling Argument's vulnerability to the Free Will Defense. If we reject Schellenberg's valuation, recognizing morally significant freedom, then we cannot accept (8) of the Modeling Argument. For on the Free Will Defense we cannot claim that God can ensure worlds without evil. In any case, (8) does not follow from (7). That is because even if, as (7) says, there are limitless worlds with only pure goods, it does not follow, on the Free Will Defense, that God can create them, as (8) asserts, if we posit morally significant freedom.

Schellenberg's argument depends on making a specific, controversial judgment about the nature of worldly good.

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But this is not the only problem with the Modeling Argument. Consider its very first premise: (1) *Every possible non-Divine good is greatly exceeded by a good of the same type existing in God prior to creation.* Unfortunately for

Schellenberg, despite his claims to the contrary, (1) does not follow from UG and OI. In (1), Schellenberg intends a *plurality* of types of good in the world and in God, with each type of worldly good matching the same distinct type in God (37). Recall now the Anselm quotation Schellenberg enlists to support (1). Contra Schellenberg, there is in the Anselm quote no plurality of types of good in God. In God there is but one good, “a single entire good.” Every good in a created world instances the one good in God. This means that every instance of good in the world, in its wide array of types, has the property of being good by participating in the one, uniform, goodness of God. God is the ontological ground of all worldly goodness. Every type of good in the world is good in virtue of the one, indivisible good in God. There is in God one good, in which many creaturely goods participate.

According to Anselm, then, (1), entailing a *multiplicity* of goods in God, is false. However, Anselm’s view is consistent with UG and OI. So, (1) does not follow from UG and OI.

If we adopt the Anselmian interpretation of the relationship between God and worldly goods, then

(G) All goods are already contained in God.

could be true *only in the sense of*

(G1\*) All worldly goods participate in the goodness of God as their ontological ground, while in God there is one good.

(G1\*), however, has no implications for the purity or non-purity, without or with evil, of the goodness in God. As far as (G1\*) goes, there can be goods in creation that do permit or require evil. All (G1\*) requires is that the very *goodness* of those instances of good that permit or require evil participates in God’s goodness and finds in God its ontological ground. That goodness in God is pure, therefore, has no implications for whether the good in creation must be pure as well. The goods of the world “model” God’s goodness at the highest level of generality, i.e., simply by being good. This property attaches equally to worldly goods that do not entail evil and those that do. There is nothing here to create a problem from evil.

Suppose one rejected Anselm’s pronouncement on the unity of Divine goodness. Then, we would do well to consider Schellenberg’s argument with his assumption of a plurality of types of good in God instanced by types of good in the world. And let us understand (G) as not saying that the goods of the world merely participate in God’s goodness, but saying that:

(G2) All types of good exist in God.

and understand (1), accordingly, as entailing a plurality of types of good in God. This raises a serious problem for Schellenberg’s reasoning. Recall that Schellenberg’s argument starts by asserting that:



(UG): God is the greatest possible being.

and,

(OI): No world created by God (or any part thereof) is part of God.

entail together

- (1) Every possible non-Divine good is greatly exceeded by a good of the same type existing in God prior to creation. (From UG and OI)

Unfortunately, if (1) is understood to imply a variety of types of good in God, it not only fails to follow from (UG) and (OI), it also is clearly false.<sup>13</sup> (1) could be true only if God possessing all possible types of good were a logical or metaphysical possibility. But, this is not the case.

Note first that, as classically understood, (G) implies that God is *necessarily* the greatest possible being. In this classical sense, going back to Plato, God's goodness cannot be diminished or augmented. If God's perfection could be diminished, God would not be the greatest possible being necessarily. If God's perfection could be augmented, God would not be the greatest possible being prior to such augmentation, and, so again not the greatest possible being necessarily. The same holds for God's goodness. If God's goodness could be diminished, God would not be the greatest possible being necessarily. If God's goodness could be augmented, God would not be the greatest possible being prior to augmentation.

What follows from all of this is that no being could possibly be greater than God. But it does not follow that no being could have a type of good *not possessed by God*. In fact, this claim is false, for there is a category of good that God cannot have, a category inconsistent with being the greatest possible being necessarily. This is the category of good that I will call "personal triumph." A *personal triumph* exists when (a) a person succeeds in intentionally producing a meaningfully good goal; (b) her success depended on her taking on the task with much effort, skill, determination, use of resources, focus, and the like; (c) the person could well have failed at the task of producing that good; and (d) her failure at producing that good could have come about either because she would have failed to take up the task or because once having taken it up she would not have employed sufficient effort, skill, determination, use of resources, focus, and the like, to succeed. The success of a personal triumph is distinct from and greater than corresponding successes that are not personal triumphs. Personal triumph has value of its own.

The success or failure in a personal triumph is then, within reason, fully up to the person herself. Personal triumphs are commendable for two reasons. One is the *state-good* produced by them, being the good produced at the end. The other is an additional good, the result of having come about

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<sup>13</sup>If the modeling relation is irreflexive, so that nothing has it to itself, and if modeling God is a category of good, then not only is (1) false, but inconsistent with modeling theology. Since God does not possess the category of good of modeling God, but the world does, it follows from modeling theology that God does not have all types of good.

in the way that it did, being produced by a person who would have failed had she not devoted herself the way she did to success. This goodness is supervenient upon the process itself, and additional to the good of the resultant state. For example, suppose that Sarah has by nature a sweet, benevolent disposition and would never hurt a fly, while Rebecca has a greedy, unloving disposition, and is hurtful to people. Suppose then that Rebecca, by determination, skill, and use of resources, succeeds in transforming herself into a sweet and giving person. Had she not dedicated herself with such force to the change, she would have failed. The resulting *state-goodness* of Rebecca will be identical to the *state-goodness* of Sarah. But Rebecca deserves special admiration not due to Sarah. There is added goodness in Rebecca for having undertaken and succeeded in overcoming evil to become a better person, when she could have failed to do so by her own fault.

It is instructive to apply the distinction between state-goods and personal-triumph goods to an example given by Schellenberg of a human good that Schellenberg thinks God too must possess. Schellenberg gives the example of "The pleasure I feel by riding a bicycle full tilt down a gravel road on the Manitoba prairie, with the wind whistling in my hair" (37). On this Schellenberg comments

Perhaps pleasurable bike riding is never experienced by God, but goodness in God still shares something with any instance of that good by virtue of the fact that goodness in God includes an instance of some general type of goodness to which the instance of pleasurable bike riding also belongs—perhaps this type is that of pleasure or excitement, or perhaps we need to speak here of some even broader type of positive state of mind which goods of *those* types exemplify. (37)

Schellenberg would have it that in some form or other, one perhaps beyond our ken, the pleasure of the bicycle riding must belong to a type of good which type exists in God and that God tokens that same type, without the bicycle, the wind, and the prairie.

This might be so, however, only if we reduce the good of Schellenberg's bike ride to a state-good, namely to the state of experiencing pleasure while riding the bike. Schellenberg's words suggest this reduction by his describing the pleasure of the bicycle ride as a "positive state of mind." However, it is a mistake to suppose that the good in the Schellenberg example must be only a state-good. We should naturally understand the example as exhibiting a personal triumph as well. The good of feeling the wind when on the bicycle implicates the facts that Schellenberg himself had learned to ride a bicycle, decided to take this bicycle ride, succeeded by his skill at riding far out into the desert, was succeeding in controlling the bike speeding down the road, bringing about the experience by his own efforts and skill. The good of the wind is permeated by the achievement, for having managed, by his own efforts, to succeed in going out far to the whistling desert wind, pleasure from knowing how to ride the bicycle fast enough to feel the wind and not lose balance, pleasure from

at the moment imagining returning home safely and telling his friends what he had accomplished. He could have failed to have the pleasure of the wind had he not been attentive enough to the bumpy road, had not corrected for the force of the wind against his balance, and so on.

The good of standing on a mountaintop, to give another example, is quite different depending on whether a team of climbers carried you up to the peak or you climbed there yourself, after a rigorous and tiring climb. In the first instance you might find the scene beautiful and invigorating, but in the second, your having reached that scene by a tough and determined climb against all odds would give additional goodness to the experience. You could have failed but did not—you have a personal-triumph good. Personal-triumph goodness is irreducible to state-goodness.

God cannot possess personal-triumph goods. That is because there are no cases where God fails to achieve God's purposes because of lack of trying or for not trying hard enough. There are no instances in which God fails to bring about a good due to God's not putting in enough effort or determination to succeed. To illustrate, suppose you believe that there is no universal salvation, and that despite God's best efforts to save them, some persons will freely and irrevocably reject God and thus separate themselves from God forever. Suppose that Bill is such a person and God tries to save Bill from a life of sin, yet God fails to save Bill and Bill goes to hell for eternity. God's failure will not be a failure to produce a personal divine triumph. God fails because no matter what God does, Bill freely and irrevocably rejects God. If God ever does fail in God's purpose, it will not be God's fault. There are no personal-triumph goods in God. It follows that there are goods exemplified by creatures that a necessarily perfect being couldn't possess. From God's being perfect and distinct from creation, it does not follow that God possesses all types of good. In fact, the latter is false.

Such a conclusion defeats Schellenberg's argument, which depends on every token of good in the world finding a match of the same type in God. There are types of goods in the world not possessed by God. Hence, Schellenberg's argument proceeds from a false premise (1).

Here is an imagined attempted rejoinder to my argument: For all we know, God tokens the *category* (or categories) of good, call it *C*, applying to personal triumph in creatures. It is just that God tokens *C* in a different way, not requiring personal triumph. *C* only has to be general enough to encompass both the human and the divine tokens. The fact that we might not be able to say quite what *C* is poses no real problem. After all, we have little grasp of the infinite nature of God and the way goods might inhere in God. In many respects, God is beyond our comprehension. So, from the fact that we might not be able to imagine a *C* common to both creatures and God, we ought not to conclude there is in God no such good, albeit in a form we cannot visualize. Schellenberg is not committed to God and creatures possessing the same good-tokens, only the same good-categories.

In reply, let us look again at

- (1) Every possible non-Divine good is greatly exceeded by a good of the same type existing in God prior to creation.

Remember that (1) is supposed to imply a plurality of types of good in God, not just one good. Now, in determining how to fix types of good, we run into a problem of generality, namely, how general or non-general are we to be when assigning types to a token of good. Consider the good of succeeding to climb a mountain and then enjoying the scenery. If we chose we could make a type out of *successful mountain climbing and enjoying the scenery*. We could become more general and make a type out of *succeeding at a difficult task and enjoying its fruits*. Still more general would be *enjoying an event in one's life*. Finally, even more general would be *enjoying pleasure*. All of these, and surely others in between, are types to which our mountain climbing token belongs.

If we do not impose a limit on generality, then we trivialize the assertion that for every type of good in the world the same type exists in God. For any given token of good we could posit a category of good so general as to secure the claim that God has that type of good. And even if we cannot think of a type general enough to include the worldly token, we can suppose that there must be some very high level of generality, short of simply "goodness," of the type in God that captures a token in the world. But then the point of (1) will not be so much about worldly goods modeling God's goods, but about the immense power of generalization to capture even intuitively disparate elements. Indeed, we could do as well by going back to the idea of just one good in God in which all worldly goods participate.

We need rules setting the upper limit of generality for a type to which a token belongs. At least one rule we should adopt is this:

Do not generalize beyond a point that preserves an explanation for why the token in question is good.

Consider again our mountain climbing example. *Successful mountain climbing and then enjoying the scenery* as well as *succeeding at a difficult task at which one could have failed and enjoying its fruits* retain an explanation for why the token in question was good. They do so by preserving *both* the good final state as well as the good of the personal triumph. Not so *enjoying an event in one's life* or *enjoying bliss*. These go beyond a level of generality that explains why the token is good. These might preserve the explanation for the token being a good state at the end, but the other aspect disappears. One can enjoy an event or enjoy bliss without having created that by one's success by a personal triumph. If the idea that a token of goodness in the world belongs to a goodness-type in God is to have teeth, we must not go up to the level of generality of the latter two types.

It follows that when we fix types of good for a token, we must rest at a level of generality that preserves the reasons for the token being good.

If we go to any higher level of generality, we will violate our rule on the upper-limit of generality. It is essential to accounting for the goodness in personal triumphs that they be described as personal triumphs or as what entails their being so. However, God cannot exemplify such a good. So, (1) is false. There are categories of good that God does not possess.

I conclude that the Modeling Argument fails to establish its conclusion. First, to avoid the Free Will Defense the argument must assume a contestable principle about the value of limited, closed libertarian freedom. Secondly, there are two ways to read

(G) All goods are already contained in God.

As:

(G1\*) All worldly goods participate in the goodness of God as their ontological ground, while in God there is one good.

Or as:

(G2) All the plurality of types of good exists already in a plurality of types of good in God.

As we have seen, reading (G) as (G1\*) creates no problem for the existence of evil in the world. As I have urged, reading (G) as (G2) is to read (G), and also (1), as false propositions. Either way, the Modeling Argument fails.

### *The Motivation Argument*

A second, related, form Schellenberg offers of the New Problem of Evil, the Motivation Argument, begins from the supposition that

(15) God's motive in creating the world is the motive to share the good with finite beings (and/or relevantly similar motives).<sup>14</sup>

The argument then proceeds as follows:

(16) The unsurpassable good God experiences pre-creation—the only good God might wish to share in creation—is good-without-evil. (From *Unsurpassable Greatness, Ontological Independence, and Prior Purity*)

Therefore:

(17) God's motive in creating the world is the motive to share with finite beings good-without-evil. (From 15 and 16)

(18) If God's motive in creating the world is the motive to share with finite beings good-without-evil, then there is no evil in the world. (From *Unsurpassable Greatness*)

So,

(19) There is no evil in the world. (From 17 and 18)

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<sup>14</sup>The numbering in this argument is mine and not Schellenberg's.

But there is evil in the world. Given (15), says Schellenberg, at least one of the original three theistic commitments, *Unsurpassable Greatness*, *Ontological Independence*, and *Prior Purity*, must be false.

As in the previous argument, this argument is vulnerable to the Free Will Defense, here at (18). According to that defense, God might want to create a world without evil but not be able to do so since God wishes to create creatures with significant moral freedom. Whether God can create a world without evil will depend on the free will of the creatures in the world that God creates. God cannot ensure that there be a world that has no evil. Here, too, for the argument to work, we must suppose a severe limitation on human free will, a limitation that we have noted above goes against the grain of the Free Will Defense and will be rejected by those who value libertarian freedom.

Furthermore, (16) is really a concatenation of three steps:

(16a) The unsurpassable good God experiences pre-creation is good-without-evil.

(16b) The only good God might wish to share in creation is good God experiences pre-creation.

Therefore:

(16c) The only good God might wish to share in creation is good-without-evil.

Premise (16b) is problematic. If we endorse (16b), then we can just as well endorse this string:

(16a\*) The unsurpassable good God experiences pre-creation is perfect goodness.

(16b) The only good God might wish to share in creation is good God experiences pre-creation.

Therefore,

(16c\*) The only good God might wish to share in creation is perfect goodness.

Then we would end up with the conclusion that there should be no imperfect goodness in the world. Yet, there is. So, one of the three original theistic commitments must be false. If the Motivation Argument is sound, so is this one.

However, far from this argument disproving theism, it shows instead that (16b) is not an acceptable premise. That is because it is a *necessary* truth that no finite creatures could have perfect goodness. Only the infinite God can. God, being omniscient, knows that. Further, we can easily assume that God could not wish to do what God knows to be a logical impossibility. So God could not possibly wish to create a world where finite creatures possess perfect goodness. Nonetheless, perfect goodness

is the goodness God experiences prior to creation. So, (16b), *that the only good God might wish to share in creation is good God experiences pre-creation*, must be false. Since (16b) is false, this argument fails, and with the falsity of (16b) the Motivation Argument fails as well.

Now there might exist an argument why God would not allow evil even if allowing imperfect goodness. But the Motivation Argument gives us no reason to think that. The Motivation Argument gives (16b) as the only reason for thinking so, and (16b) is false. So, we are free to contend that, roughly, when God created the world, God wished simply to bring about as much worldly good as God could. That wish might have God allowing good that involves evil, for the sake of increasing the good, in justified proportions, to be sure. The Motive Argument does not give a reason to think otherwise.

Neither the Modeling Argument nor the Motivation Argument is sound. These two are the only forms of the New Logical Problem of Evil that Schellenberg presents. I conclude that there is no problem with the New Logical Problem of Evil.<sup>15</sup>

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