

# Faith and Philosophy: Journal of the Society of Christian Philosophers

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Volume 37 | Issue 3

Article 8

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7-1-2020

## W. Matthews Grant, FREE WILL AND GOD'S UNIVERSAL CAUSALITY: THE DUAL SOURCES ACCOUNT

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### Recommended Citation

Kittle, Simon (2020) "W. Matthews Grant, FREE WILL AND GOD'S UNIVERSAL CAUSALITY: THE DUAL SOURCES ACCOUNT," *Faith and Philosophy: Journal of the Society of Christian Philosophers*: Vol. 37 : Iss. 3 , Article 8.

DOI: 10.37977/faithphil.2020.37.3.8

Available at: <https://place.asburyseminary.edu/faithandphilosophy/vol37/iss3/8>

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Furlong judges that there are a number of promising responses that do not incur serious costs.

Chapter 8 takes up four related challenges to divine determinism, all of which stem from the seeming implication of divine determinism that God wills our acts of sin or wrongdoing. First, doesn't God deceive us by issuing commands against acts of wrongdoing, implying that they are contrary to his will, when all the while he determines that we sometimes do them? Second, if God wills that we sometimes commit acts of sin, isn't that incompatible with a common theistic understanding that we should conform our actions to God's will? Third, if our past sins have been willed by God, won't we be opposing ourselves to God's will if we repent of them? Fourth, isn't it absurd for God to blame and punish us for sinful acts that he determines us to perform? Furlong explores a number of possible responses, judging, once again, that the objections can be answered, but that doing so involves certain costs.

Throughout most of the book, Furlong sets himself to "examine the logical space in which divine determinists might stake out their positions, rather than constructing, proposing, and defending a particular view" (220). In the brief conclusion, however, in addition to revealing his own agnosticism regarding divine determinism, he reveals a bit more regarding which lines of reply he finds most promising in response to each objection, and which objections would worry him most were he a divine determinist. He also offers some helpful remarks regarding the nature of philosophical disputes in which conflicts of intuition can have such a strong influence on what disputants are prepared to acknowledge as a reasonable position to hold.

*The Challenges of Divine Determinism* is a book that presents challenges mostly to divine determinists, but indeterminists may find themselves challenged as well. It is a rewarding read, and a significant contribution to contemporary philosophy of religion.

*Free Will and God's Universal Causality: The Dual Sources Account*, by W. Matthews Grant. Bloomsbury, 2019. Pp. viii + 248. \$114 (hardback).

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W. Matthews Grant's *Free Will and God's Universal Causality* is a systematic presentation and defence of what he calls the *Dual Sources* account of divine and creaturely agency. The Dual Sources account comprises two



key ideas: first, that God causes all entities other than himself (Divine Universal Causality, or DUC); second, that God's actions consist in nothing other than the causal relationship between God and the effect and the effect itself (which Grant dubs the *Extrinsic Model* of divine agency). Grant contends that the Extrinsic Model of divine agency shows how Divine Universal Causality is consistent with the following pair of claims: one, created causes are genuine, efficacious causes (i.e., the denial of occasionalism), and two, human free will (understood as requiring the ability to do otherwise, all antecedent conditions held constant) is incompatible with determinism. Grant locates his work squarely in the "neoscholastic" or "broadly Thomistic" tradition (11, 71). Within that tradition, Grant is allied to those who defend the claim that while God's causation of created events is logically sufficient for those events, God's causing created events does not amount to God's *determining* those events. Many incompatibilists will, I think, be unconvinced by Grant's arguments for that conclusion and thus see the work as a defence of a form of theological compatibilism combined with natural incompatibilism. But whether or not Grant has successfully shown that his view is not deterministic, his book is a clear, concise, and technical work which poses a significant challenge to those who maintain that God's universal sufficient causation is a threat to creaturely agency and/or creaturely free will. What will be refreshing to many readers—especially philosophers—is that Grant's book is a serious engagement with the relevant metaphysics. It is not uncommon to defend the compatibility of divine universal sufficient causation with creaturely agency and/or creaturely free will by making what is, in effect, a front-and-centre appeal to mystery. Often this move proceeds as follows: explain that God's transcendence means God's causing is *sui generis* (37), on a "different level," or similar, and that it must therefore be understood analogically; apply the terms "causes," "wills," "brings about" (or your verb of choice) to God analogically on the aforementioned grounds; reject any of the standard corollaries that would follow given univocal predication but which one finds theologically problematic (e.g., that no two independent causes can each cause the entirety of a given effect); accept those theologically desirable corollaries (e.g., that causing bestows control); or deflect away further objections as (at best) theologically naïve or (at worst) idolatrous (71) attempts to reduce God to a cause among causes. Though there are hints that Grant would like to reserve the right to fall back to such a position (37, 70–72), it does not feature prominently. Instead, Grant offers a sophisticated account of the metaphysics of divine agency (the Extrinsic Model) and an account of how this model purports to reconcile Divine Universal Causality with created causal efficacy and creaturely free will. Grant's work is bolstered by a tightly argued consideration of numerous objections. The clarity of the writing makes it a pleasure to engage with the work, and the scope of topics addressed render it a top-notch

addition to the literature. Anyone interested in the topic of divine and creaturely agency—even those who struggle to make sense of the work's foundational scholastic assumptions—will, I suspect, benefit from a detailed reading of the work.

The book consists of eight chapters. The first lays out the basic position which Grant labels the doctrine of *divine universal causality* (DUC):

Necessarily, for any entity distinct from God, God directly causes that entity to exist at any time it exists. (4)

"Entity" is read broadly to include items in ontological categories other than substances, e.g., events, processes, and so on. Grant affirms that creaturely causes are efficacious, or, put otherwise, explicitly denies occasionalism (35–39). He calls the resulting position *non-occasionalist divine universal causality*, or NODUC for short (35). Also important in the first chapter is Grant's understanding of determinism:

Determinism . . . requires that there be a certain sort of relationship between any determined event, or *determinatum*, and its *determinans*, or thing determining it; namely, the *determinans* must be *prior* to the *determinatum* and must be a *sufficient condition* for the *determinatum* (6).

Crucially, Grant allows a broad reading for "prior to" which encompasses both temporally prior *determinans* and *determinans* that are prior "in the order of dependence or explanation" but not temporally (6). "Sufficient condition" is understood as logically sufficient condition. These definitions preclude any attempt to escape the worry incompatibilists have by stressing the synchronous or atemporal nature of God's causation and as such they will likely be acceptable to Grant's main opponents.

The second chapter presents five reasons for endorsing DUC: Scripture, perfect being theology, a contingency-based cosmological argument, a divine conservation/concurrence-based argument, and an argument from a Thomist metaphysics of being. These arguments are, as Grant acknowledges, inconclusive; moreover, they are not all distinct (e.g., the fourth relies on perfect being theology) and some rely on substantial assumptions (e.g., a Thomist understanding of being). Nevertheless, as Grant notes, many theists will find "one or more compelling" (33) and for that reason alone it is useful to have these different routes to DUC spelled out.

Chapters 3 through 5 form the foundation of the book, with subsequent chapters applying the account laid out there. Chapter 3 sees Grant defend the claim that DUC does not rule out creaturely agency and so does not entail occasionalism. Grant maintains that, in addition to God's causing every created being, the whole of each creaturely *action* is caused directly by God (35, 39). Creatures also cause their effects, of course. But God and the creature do not cooperate in producing some effect by, for example, each producing some *part* or *aspect* of the effect (36). Rather, both the creature and God bring about the whole effect (39). This is not to say they do so equally. The creaturely action is "subordinate to God" in the sense of

being conditional on God's concurrence with the creature's action; moreover, God causes not just the creature and the creaturely effect, but also the creature's causing of that effect (38–39).

Given the centrality of this claim to Grant's project—arguably, if Grant's defence of this view of divine concurrence is successful, many of his other claims follow relatively straightforwardly—it is worth considering in more detail. Grant addresses three types of objection to the above position: metaphysical, epistemic, and those to do with the nature of agent-causation (41–51). I submit that the metaphysical objections are the most powerful and I will therefore focus on Grant's response to this class of objection. Using the example of a fire which heats up some water, Grant begins by characterising the metaphysical objection as holding that “it is literally impossible for the heat to be brought about by God and also by the fire” (41). But, Grant suggests, there does not seem to be anything contradictory in the following state of affairs:

(S) *The fire brings about the heat in the water, and God brings about whatever exists in the fire's bringing about the heat in the water.*

Moreover, Grant says he will assume that both conjuncts are independently possible, and only consider arguments for thinking the impossibility results from their conjunction. This is a puzzling move because the second conjunct entails the first and, arguably, itself includes the alleged contradiction. If God brings about *whatever exists in the fire's bringing about the heat in the water*, then God brings about at least three things: the fire, the heat in the water, and the causal relationship between the fire and the heat in the water (that is, the fire's own bringing about of the heat). From the second conjunct alone, then, we have God's bringing about the heat—which for Grant, recall, consists in God's *directly* (i.e., not using the fire) causing the heat—and the fire's own bringing about the heat. And this just is what the objector is alleging is impossible.

For those who feel that there is something to this objection, Grant's subsequent discussion, although detailed, will likely prove unsatisfactory. For example, one reason he considers for thinking the conjunction is impossible is that one might conceive of causation as the supplying of a finite quantity of something needed to bring about some effect (41). Given this, the objector's point is that if God directly causes the entirety of the state of the world at every instant, God has “saturated” the world with his causal power and thereby made all other causes otiose: there is simply nothing left for any other putative cause to do (41). Grant dismisses this thought on the grounds that we have little reason to think the model of causation it was based upon—the supplying of a finite quantity needed for an effect—is an accurate description of how all bringing about works (42). But in response the objector will likely push back as follows: that model of causation was explicitly

introduced as nothing more than a toy model of causation with the sole purpose of *making vivid* the alleged contradiction and—crucially—the objection goes through just fine without it. Ultimately, the metaphysical objection stems from what it is to cause the entirety of something, or what it is to bring something about: roughly, if agent A brings about E, then no other agent brings about E, unless (i) they do so indirectly/mediately by bringing it about that A brings about E, or (ii) the other agent is also one of the causes of E (alongside A), in which case it would strictly speaking be false that A brought about E (and true instead that *A together with some other agent* brought about E). Since (i) is ruled out because God causes everything directly and (ii) is ruled out because God and the creature supposedly each cause the entirety of the effect, the apparent contradiction remains. The objector who feels the force of the alleged contradiction, then, will likely remain unconvinced that the metaphysical objection has been adequately addressed—or even adequately stated. (For two further metaphysical arguments against concurrence that Grant does not address see the first and second of Peter Olivi's arguments listed by Gloria Frost ("*Peter Olivi's Rejection of God's Concurrence*," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 22 (2014): 655–679, 666–668)).

In Chapter 4, Grant contends that NODUC is consistent with holding that human free will is incompatible with determinism. In other words, Grant holds that although God's causing *E* is a logically sufficient condition for *E* (55), it is not also a determining condition for *E* (60–61). Grant presents the Extrinsic Model of divine agency—defended at length in Chapter 5—in support of these claims. The Extrinsic Model of divine agency is motivated by a desire to provide an account of divine agency that is compatible with divine simplicity and the idea that God is not really but only rationally related to creatures (56). Obviously, for those who doubt the coherence of divine simplicity or the rational-only view of relations, this won't be motivation to adopt the view. But for those who find themselves able to make head or tail of said doctrines, Chapter 5 will be a useful defence of a model of agency suited to these positions. Grant's Extrinsic Model of divine agency states that God's actions consist in nothing intrinsic to God but entirely in the causal relationship that holds between God and the effect and the effect itself (58–59). Each creaturely substance or event is, on this model, one of God's undetermined, basic actions (61). Grant thinks the last point warrants the assertion that God's action is not *prior to* the created substance or event, and therefore not a determining condition of the created substance/event (60, 62–63). Because the Extrinsic Model affirms that God has reasons for everything he causes (58), we can truthfully say, for any existing entity, that "God brings about *E* intentionally," "God wills *E*," and "God chooses *E*" (58). Thus, for example, God's decision to create and sustain (say) my bicycle, just is the causal relation which holds between God and my bike together

with the bike itself; the material object which is my bike, then, partly constitutes God's deciding or choosing to create the bike, according to the Extrinsic Model—either that or a non-realist stance must be taken towards God's willing and choosing. As space limitations preclude detailed comment, the following remark must suffice: if it is difficult to see how it is possible for one event to be caused in its entirety by a created cause and also caused in its entirety by God, then it is all the more difficult to see how an event such as a human decision could be a basic action of two agents: the human and God. Our ordinary concepts of decision and action seem to speak against this possibility and it appears that Grant's account, despite its sophistication, doesn't so much as explain how this is possible as it does merely assert that it is so.

The remaining three chapters consider how Grant's account of divine and human agency relates to the problems of God's potential causal involvement and thus responsibility for sin (Chapter 6), God's permission of sin and moral evil (Chapter 7), and several specific problems in the doctrine of providence (Chapter 8). Grant's treatment of each of these topics is careful and considered. In Chapter 6, Grant employs the privation defence to argue that while God causes the act of sin, he does not cause the sin itself, since the sin consists in a lack of conformity to the moral standard (101–102), which DUC does not require God cause. This is a solid defence of the privation view and does not depend on the finer details of Grant's Extrinsic Model of divine agency. In his treatment of the problem of moral evil, Grant argues that given his account of divine agency, the free will defence fails (120–122). This will not be surprising to those incompatibilists who will be inclined to view Grant's account, *pace* Grant himself, as a version of theological determinism. In its place, Grant suggests several possible reasons God may have for allowing evil (125–126) but cautions that these are offered "with a healthy dose of skeptical theism" (124). The bulk of Chapter 7 argues that the Dual Sources account is no worse off than Molinism or Open Theism with respect to God's permission of evil. In Chapter 8, the distinctive features of the Dual Sources account again come to the fore as Grant rounds off his book with a treatment of topics that typically fall under the heading of divine providence, namely, those of grace and free will, predestination, and divine-human dialogue. Throughout the work, Grant's argumentation is intricate and sustained and the result is a comprehensive treatment not only of Grant's central topic—the nature of divine agency and its relation to creaturely agency—but also of many related theological topics.