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God and freedom

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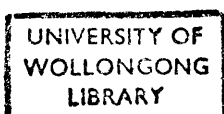
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ABSTRACT

There are some philosphers, such as John Mackie, who believe that the existence of God is logically incompatible with the existence of moral evil. Alvin Plantinga, in a series of books and articles, attempts to provide a Libertarian response to Mackie's arguments. Our paper is an examination of this response, and culminates in the claim that if the Libertarian notion of "inclining, without necessitating" is coherent, then it is logically possible both that God exist and that there be moral evil. In outline, our argument is as follows. If the Libertarian notion of "inclining, without necessitating" is coherent, then it is logically possible both that (F1) freewill and causal determination are incompatible, and that (F2) statements of the form "if p were to obtain, then x would freely do A" be true. But if it *is* logically possible that both (F1) and (F2) are true, then it follows that Mackie's argument is unsound, and Plantinga's response correct. In dealing with various objections to our argument, we show that they crucially depend on the (unargued and question-begging) assumption that the Libertarian notion of "inclining, without necessitating" is *not* coherent.

God and Freedom

J. Mintoff

There are several versions of the view that there is no God. In this paper we will examine, in part, the strongest claim to this effect - the claim that logical inconsistency is to be found in theistic belief. The most significant expression this has received in recent times issues from Mackie:

> I think, however, that a more telling criticism can be made by way of the traditional problem of evil. Here it can be shown, not that religious beliefs lack rational support, but that they are positively irrational, that the several parts of the essential theological doctrine are inconsistent with one another (Mackie[55], p200)

Amongst Mackie's contemporaries, Aiken and McCloskey are others who share this outlook[1].

Some narrowing of focus, however, will be required, as the scope of the "traditional problem of evil" is immense. There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, there are differences in the way that the existence of evil is taken to be a *problem* for the theist. For Mackie, the problem consists in evil's being logically incompatible with the existence of God; for some theists, such as Basinger (in Basinger[78]), it consists in evil's providing strong evidence against God's existence; whereas, at a more personal level, the problem may consist in the difficulty of maintaining faith in the face of personal tragedy. We will be concerned with Mackie's understanding of the problem: How is it *logically* possible that God exist and that there be evil ?

Furthermore, there are differences in what *types of evil* present the most difficulty for the theist. A broad distinction is often made between moral and physical evil, the former being (roughly) that evil which results from free human action and the latter the remaining evil. We will concentrate on the problem of *moral* evil.

We will adopt a Libertarian understanding of free human action, for our discussions will centre on Plantinga's version of the so-called "Freewill Defense", which has at its heart a view of free human action

that includes the following Libertarian components. First, the assumption that free will and causal determination are incompatible:

(F1)   for all persons x and actions A, if x freely does A then x's doing A was not causally determined.

It also includes the view that (with appropriate, minimal, restrictions)

(F2)   for all persons x, actions A and propositions p, it is logically possible that statements of the form "if p were to obtain, then x would freely do A" (which we shall call agent subjunctives) be true[2].

This second assumption maintains the possibility of agent subjunctives. Thus we will concentrate on the question: How is it logically possible that God exist and that there be evil *resulting from free human acts* [understood in terms of (F1) and (F2)] ?

Another reason for the size of the literature in this area is the great differences in what the notion of "God" is taken to involve. Plantinga claims that at the heart of the major religions - Christianity, Judaism and Islam, for example - is belief in God, which is, in part, the belief that there is "a personal being who, let's say, has existed from eternity, is almighty, perfectly wise, perfectly just, has created the world, and loves his creatures" (Plantinga[74a],pp1-2). Whether such a view *is* at the heart of the major religions is a dispute which we will sidestep, by stipulatively introducing our own notion of a divine being. We assume that

(G1)   there is a unique person (conscious and existing "in time") who is all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-good. And this being we call God.

An important intention of this assumption is that the term "person" be taken literally. A person is, amongst other things, an entity with the capacity for consciousness. More evocatively (and borrowing from Thomas Nagel), a person has a subjective point of view - there is something that it is like to *be* that person. A second important intention is that such a person be located "in time"[3].

The understanding of the remaining key terms in this definition are fairly standard and, pre-reflectively, quite appealing. We say that

(G2)   a being x is <u>all-powerful</u> (or <u>omnipotent</u>) if and only if x can bring about any logically possible state of affairs,

(G3)   x is <u>all-knowing</u> (or <u>omniscient</u>) if and only if x knows all true propositions, and

(G4)   x is <u>all-good</u> (or <u>omnibenevolent</u>) if and only if x does only what is permitted, and everything that x (morally) ought.

The first two will require modification, but are useful as a starting point for our focus on the question: How is it logically possible that God [understood in terms of (G1) to (G4)] exist and that there be evil resulting from free human acts [understood in terms of (F1) and (F2)] ?

In section I we will examine Mackie's argument to the claim that this is *not* logically possible. Plantinga's reply is detailed in section II, where this argument of Mackie's is shown to be unsound, and then a proof provided for the possibility of God's existing and there being moral evil. This will complete the exposition of the Freewill Defense.

In the subsequent sections of the paper the focus shifts from matters theological to those more metaphysical. We will see the importance that (F1) and (F2) play in the validity of the arguments in section II. This will be the catalyst for our shift of focus to the question: How is it logically possible that (F1) and (F2) be true together?

The nub of this issue lies in the analysis of agent subjunctives. In section III we will provide a number of conditions that any analysis of agent subjunctives must satisfy if it is to be sufficient to Plantinga's task, and suggest that the "incline, without necessitating" notion common amongst Libertarians satisfies these conditions. Of course, not everyone agrees that (F1) and (F2) *are* jointly possible, and in the last two sections, we will show that significant criticisms of Plantinga's position reduce to the claim that (F1) and (F2) are jointly incompatible with the observation that

(S)   subjunctive statements can be true only if there are other factors which, with the antecedent's being true, causally determine the consequent's being true.

According to (S), the only feasible analysis of agent subjunctives is one

in which x's freely doing A is causally determined. It is no surprise that Libertarians would deny (S), and do so by providing their "incline, without necessitating" notion as an alternative analysis. In section IV, we will examine the arguments of Hobart, who accepts (F2) and (S) and so denies (F1) - freewill involves determination and is inconceivable without it. Then in section V, we will look at the arguments of Adams, who accepts (F1) and (S) and so denies (F2) - there cannot be any truth or falsity in what any person *would* do if some state of affairs were to obtain. To conclude in section VI, we will claim that if there is a coherent notion of "inclining, without necessitating" then Plantinga's argument is vindicated - it *is* logically possible that God exist and that there be evil resulting from free human acts.

I

So, how *is* it logically possible that God exist and that there be evil resulting from free human acts? One answer is that it is *not* possible. In this section we will present Plantinga's discussion of the following argument of Mackie's for this view:

> If God has made men such that in their free choices they sometimes prefer what is good and sometimes what is evil, why could he not have made men such that they always freely choose the good? If there is no logical impossibility in a man's freely choosing the good on one, or on several occasions, there cannot be a logical impossibility in his freely choosing the good on every occasion. God was not, then, faced with a choice between making innocent automata and making beings who, in acting freely, would sometimes go wrong; there was open to him the obviously better possibility of making beings who would act freely but always go right. Clearly, his failure to avail himself of this possibility is inconsistent with his being both omnipotent and wholly good. (Mackie[55],p209)

This argument is interpreted in a number of different ways in Plantinga[65]. The first proceeds as follows:

(1)   God is omniscient, omnipotent, and all-good, and
(2)   If God is omnipotent, then God can bring about any logically possible state of affairs.

Thus

(3)   God can bring about any logically possible state of affairs.

However,

(4)   that all free persons do what is right on every occasion is a logically possible state of affairs,

and therefore

(5)   God can create persons such that they always do what is right.

But

(6)   If God can create free persons such that they always do what is right, and He is all-good and omniscient, then any free persons created by Him always do what is right.

Thus

(7)   Any free person created by God always does what is right.

As (2) is a definition, and (4) and (6) are necessarily true, then (1) entails (7). But, as well as belief in an omniscient, omnipotent and all-good God, the essential theological doctrine includes belief in the sinfulness of (free) human beings. It is therefore inconsistent.

The problem with this is that (2), an instance of (G2), is false. That there are beings not created by God is a logically possible state of affairs, but these are not beings that God can create, notwithstanding His omnipotence, as the statement "God can bring about a state of affairs not brought about by God" is inconsistent[4]. The argument is thus unsound.

The attempt to deal with this problem leads to Plantinga's second interpretation of Mackie's argument. It begins by adopting a weaker notion of omnipotence:

(G2') x is _omnipotent_ if and only if x can bring about any state of affairs p such that "x brings it about that p" is consistent[5].

The appropriate section of the argument is then modified to read:

(1)   God is omniscient, omnipotent, and all-good, and

(2')   If God is omnipotent, then God can bring about any logically possible state of affairs p such that "God brings it about that p" is consistent.

Thus

(3')   God can bring about any logically possible state of affairs p such

that "God brings it about that p" is consistent.
However

(4') "God creates free persons such that they always do what is right" is consistent.

And therefore

(5) God can create persons such that they always do what is right.

And so on.

Plantinga thinks that there are problems with this version of the argument also. (4') is ambiguous. It may mean

(4'a) "God brings it about that (there are free persons and they always do what is right)" is consistent

or it may mean

(4'b) "God brings it about that (there are free persons) and they always do what is right" is consistent.

But, given (F1), it follows that (4'a) is false. If the argument is to be sound, (4') must then be interpreted as (4'b). However, even if we do this, (5) does not seem to follow from (3') and (4'b), for what *does* immediately follow from this pair is only that God can bring it about that (there are free persons), which does not imply that God can create free persons such that they always do what is right. The argument again seems to be unsuccessful.

This latest of Plantinga's objections to Mackie's argument includes the assertion that (F1) implies the falsity of (4'a). This implication does not hold, and only appears to do so because of an ambiguity in the expression "brings it about that".

This disambiguation is one that first explicitly appears in Plantinga's own (later) writings (Plantinga[74a,b]) and can be motivated as follows. It seems as though there are two types of situation in which God brings it about that Anna, say, has cornflakes for breakfast as soon as she gets up. He may causally determine that she do so, by setting off the alarm and then subtly controlling her limbs, so that while having cornflakes for breakfast is something that Anna does, it is not something she does *freely*, for she had had no intention of so doing. Alternatively, if God knew that were He to set off the alarm, Anna would (freely) have cornflakes for breakfast anyway, He could again

bring it about that she did so, just by setting off the alarm. Anna would have had the cornflakes, God would have (in a weaker sense) brought this about, and no restriction of Anna's freedom would have been involved. The ambiguity in (4'a) can now be brought out in the following definitions. We say that

(8)   an agent x <u>can (strongly) bring about</u> (or, <u>strongly actualise</u>) a state of affairs p if and only if x can causally determine that p obtain, and

(9)   an agent x <u>can weakly bring about</u> (or, <u>weakly actualise</u>) a state of affairs p if and only if x can strongly actualise some state of affairs q such that if x were to strongly actualise q, then p would obtain.

The exercising of these abilities is defined similarly. (4'a) is thus ambiguous between

(4'a1) it is logically possible that God *strongly* brings it about that (there are free persons and that they always do what is right)

and

(4'a2) it is logically possible that God *weakly* brings it about that (there are free persons and that they always do what is right).

What is at issue is not whether God could have *strongly* brought about a morally perfect world (for it seems to follow from (F1) that this is not logically possible) but rather whether God could have *weakly* brought this about. That is, whether there was something that He could have done that, were He to do it, would have resulted in a morally perfect world.

It seems unproblematic that (F1) *should* imply the falsity of (4'a1). In order to strongly bring it about that there are free persons and that they always do what is right, it would have been necessary for God to first create some free beings and then strongly bring it about that *they* do what is right on all occasions. But the only way that God could have done this latter is if, on every occasion when one of these free beings was facing a moral decision, He strongly brought it about that they freely refrained from wrongdoing. But this is just what (F1) denies is possible, and so (4'a1) is false[6].

Also unproblematic is that (F1) *should not* imply the falsity of (4'a2). Suppose that for each person x and each morally right act B that x might do, there is some enticing state of affairs E_{xB} such that if God were to (strongly) bring it about that E_{xB} obtain, then x would freely do B. Suppose further that it is within God's power to jointly bring about all the E_{xB}'s, for such persons and acts. That this is a *possible* situation follows from (F2). But if it *actually* obtains, then God *can* weakly bring it about that (there are free persons and they always do what is right), for God could (strongly) bring about all the E_{xB}'s, and if He were to do this, then all the free persons would always do what is right. In other words, if everyone has a price, then God can weakly bring it about that they freely do any act at all.

Thus when the ambiguous statement, (4'a), is interpreted in terms of strong actualisation, Mackie's argument fails because it follows from (F1) that God cannot *strongly* actualise a morally perfect world, for this act of God's would involve restrictions on the free acts of humans. Interpreting Mackie, then, in terms of *weak* actualisation leads to a third version of his argument, as follows:

(1)   God is omniscient, omnipotent, and all-good, and
(2") If God is omnipotent, and "God weakly actualises p" is consistent, then God can weakly actualise p.

Thus
(3") God can weakly actualise any state of affairs p such that "God weakly actualises p" is consistent.

Now, as was shown in the previous paragraph,
(4")   it *is* logically possible that God weakly bring it about that (there are free persons and they always do what is right),

and so
(5") God *can* weakly bring it about that (there are free persons and they always do what is right)

But,
(6") if God can weakly bring this about, and He is all-good and omniscient, then there are free persons and they always do what is right.

It follows that
(7)   Any free person created by God always does what is right.

Hence it is not logically possible that God exist and that there be evil

resulting from free action.

There are various lines of attack that one may take with this argument. Plantinga opts for a denial of (2"), Adams for the denial of (4"), and certain "soul-making" theodicists for the denial of (6"). In the next section, we examine the path that Plantinga has taken[7].

II

Mackie's argument is unsound because one of its premises, (I.2"), is false - God's being ominpotent does *not* entail His being able to weakly actualise any state of affairs p for which "God weakly actualises p" is consistent. This will occupy us in the first part of this section. But not only is Mackie's argument unsound, it is actually possible to provide an argument to the opposite conclusion - it can be shown that it *is* logically possible that God exist and that there be evil resulting from free human action. This will occupy us in the second part. Both of these claims depend on (F1) and (F2) being true together.

However, before we can show why Mackie's argument is unsound, a few (technical) preliminaries must be got out of the way:

(a) The analyses of logical necessity and possibility are standard. A proposition p is logically <u>possible</u> (or $\Diamond p$) if and only if there is some possible world in which it is true, and is <u>necessary</u> (or $\Box p$) if and only if it is true in all possible worlds. Possible worlds themselves are to be understood as maximal consistent states of affairs. A state of affairs S <u>includes</u> another T if it is not possible that S obtain and T not, and <u>precludes</u> T if it is not possible that S and T obtain together.

(b) In any possible world W, there may be many states of affairs included in W that God strongly actualises. We can, so to speak, collect these together to form T_w, the *largest* state of affairs that God strongly actualises in W. God's strongly actualising T_w is included in W, and T_w includes every state of affairs God strongly actualises in W. If God does not exist in W, then T_w is the contradictory (empty) state of affairs.

(c) Following Plantinga, we abbreviate "God strongly actualises state of

affairs p" by "Gp". Thus "GT$_w$" represents "God strongly actualises T$_w$".

(d) The subjunctive "if p were true, then q would be true" plays a key role in the discussion. We distinguish the following:

(i)   Our *intuitive* understanding of this statement,

(ii)   Lewis's understanding, which holds that such a statement is true if and only if either p is impossible or some world W in which p and q hold is more similar (to the actual world) than any world in which p and not-q hold[8]. And,

(iii)   Another sense, which is *that understanding of the subjunctive that Plantinga's argument actually requires in order to succeed* This will be denoted by "p □-> q", which we have appropriated from Lewis.

These are distinguished so as to leave open not only the question of whether Lewis' analysis is adequate to our intuitons regarding subjunctives, but also to leave open the question of whether it is *Lewis'* analysis (or perhaps some other) which is the one appropriate to Plantinga's argument. Later in the paper we will see that the three come apart, although Plantinga seems to assume that Lewis' analysis *is* adequate and argues accordingly.

(e) On the assumption, however, that either our intuitive understanding or Lewis's understanding of the subjunctive locution *is* adequate, it follows that

(1)   if W is a possible world and p a logically possible state of affairs such that p □-> W, then W includes p.

Intuitively, this is obvious. On Lewis's analysis, if p □-> W and p is logically possible it follows that there is a world W* in which p and W obtain and which is more similar (to the actual world) than any world in which p and not-W obtain. But as W is included in W*, it is the same world as W*, and so p is included in W, as it is included in W*.

(f) The subjunctive "if p were true, then q might be true" also occurs in the argument, and similar comments to those in (d) apply. Note that the negation of "if p were true, then q *would* be true" is "if p were true, then q *might* be false". Thus the "might" subjunctive that Plantinga actually requires, to be denoted by "p ◇-> q", is equivalent to "not-(p

$\Box \to$ not-q)".

(g) Again assuming that either our intuitive understanding or Lewis's understanding of the subjunctive locution is adequate to Plantinga's task, we can show that

(2)   if a possible world W precludes state of affairs p and $GT_w \diamond\to$ p, then God cannot weakly actualise W.

For suppose God *can* weakly actualise W. In other words, suppose there is some state of affairs C that God can strongly actualise and such that GC $\Box \to$ W. Now as God *can* strongly actualise C, then GC is a logically possible state of affairs and so W includes GC (by (1)). According to the definition of T_w this implies that T_w includes C and so GT_w includes GC. That is, $\Box$(if GT_w, then GC). But from this and GC $\Box \to$ W it follows by transitivity that $GT_w \Box \to$ W^9. As W is a possible world which *precludes* p, it is one that *includes* not-p, and so $GT_w \Box \to$ not-p, or alternatively not-($GT_w \diamond\to$ p). Hence if W precludes p and $GT_w \diamond\to$ p then God cannot weakly actualise W. That is to say, if everything that God does in W still might not result in W's being actual, then God cannot even *weakly* actualise W, as there is nothing that God can do that *would* lead to W's being actual.

This completes our preliminary comments.

To now return to the point, we show that Mackie's argument is unsound because it relies on the false premise:

(1.2") If God is omnipotent, and "God weakly actualises p" is consistent, then God can weakly actualise p.

Consider Curly Smith, the mayor of Boston (and a regular in Plantinga's arguments), who is offered a bribe of $20,000 to drop his opposition to a proposed freeway route through the Old North Church along with some other antiquated and structually unsound buildings. Plantinga claims that

(3)   there are possible worlds W and W* such that (a) God exists in both W and W*, T_w is the same as T_{w*}, W includes Curley's freely accepting the bribe, and W* includes Curley's freely rejecting

the bribe, and (b) it is logically possible that God weakly actualise W; and similarly for W*.

He says:

> let W be a world where God exists, where Curley is free with respect to the action of taking a $20,000 bribe, and where he accepts it; and as before, let T [our T_w] be the largest state of affairs God strongly actualises in W. God's actualising T (GT) includes neither Curley's accepting the bribe (A) nor his rejecting it (not-A) [for these are free actions and so cannot be logically included in T, which is what God *strongly* actualises in W. This is a consequence of (F1)]; so there is a world W* where God strongly actualises T and in which Curley rejects the bribe. (Plantinga[74b],pp182-183)

Because Plantinga does not further argue, but just assumes, that God's weakly actualising W and W* is logically possible, we will fill in the gap in his argument as follows. Consider W* first. Suppose that: every state of affairs in W* of the form "x freely does B" is such that GT_{w*} $\Box\to$ x freely does B. Then God can *weakly* bring these states of affairs about (by strongly actualising T_{w*}, something He can strongly do). And so as God can, in any case, *strongly* actualise any states of affairs in W* *not* of this form (for they do not involve free human acts), then God can weakly actualise *all* of W*. That this supposition is logically possible is a consequence of (F2). Hence it is also logically possible that God weakly actualise W*, and similar comments apply for W. Thus (3) is true.

Consider then these two possible worlds, W and W*. Letting A be Curley's accepting the bribe, then either GT_w $\Box\to$ A or not-(GT_w $\Box\to$ A), and so as T_w is T_{w*} then either GT_{w*} $\Box\to$ A or GT_w $\Diamond\to$ not-A. But as W* precludes A (it *includes* not-A) it follows from (2) that

(4) GT_{w*} $\Diamond\to$ A implies that God cannot weakly actualise W*.

As GT_{w*} $\Box\to$ A implies that GT_{w*} $\Diamond\to$ A, then

(5) GT_{w*} $\Box\to$ A implies that God cannot weakly actualise W*,

As W precludes not-A (it *includes* A) then it follows from (2) that

(6) $GT_w \diamond\!\!\rightarrow$ not-A implies that God cannot weakly actualise W.

Either way

(7)   there are possible worlds that God cannot weakly actualise, even though it is *logically* possible that He actualise them.

But as (7) is entailed by necessary truths, it is itself a necessary truth. God's being omnipotent is logically possible. Thus God's being omnipotent does *not* entail that He can weakly actualise every state of affairs p for which "God weakly actualises p" is logically possible. Mackie's argument is unsound.

But not only is his argument unsound, we are actually able to provide an argument to the opposite conclusion - it is logically posible that God exist and that there be evil resulting from free human acts.

As our good friend Curley is a free human agent, it is presumably logically possible (though perhaps unlikely) that he always freely do what is right. There are possible worlds, let us call them Curley-ideal worlds, in which he is free with respect to some morally significant action, and in which he only does what is right. Suppose that W is one of these, and suppose also that there is some morally wrong action A such that if God were to strongly actualise T_w, then Curley would freely do A. (F2) assures us that such a supposition is coherent. Then it follows from (2) above that God cannot weakly actualise W, because W, being a world in which Curley does no wrong, precludes Curley's doing the morally wrong action A. Suppose, even further, that *all* Curley-ideal worlds are like this. Then there is *no* Curley-ideal world that God can weakly actualise. In this case Curley suffers from a rather unfortunate malady: transworld depravity. More generally,

(8)   a person x suffers from transworld depravity if and only if for every x-ideal world W there is some morally wrong action A such that $GT_w \square\!\!\rightarrow$ x freely does A.

As we have seen, from this it follows that if x is transworld depraved, then God cannot weakly actualise any x-ideal world. It is presumably

logically possible on the basis of (F2) that

(9)   God exists, He create free persons, and that they all suffer from transworld depravity.

But if everyone *did* suffer from this affliction, then (11) tells us that there would be no morally perfect world that God could weakly actualise. Hence, every actual free person would perform at least one morally wrong act, and so

(10)   there *would* be evil resulting from free human acts.

As (9), which is logically possible, entails (10) then it is logically possible that God exist and that there be evil resulting from free human action[10].

III

The above positive argument of Plantinga actually needs to be tightened up in a number of places. For example, while it may be true that it is logically possible that all *actual persons* be transworld depraved, might not there be *possible persons* (however this term is to be understood) who do not suffer from this dreaded afflication and who God could have created instead of those beings he did create, and so produce a morally perfect world? The answer, of course, is to suggest that it is logically possible that all possible persons be transworld depraved, and to run the rest of the argument as previously. In any case, we will not go into the details of this way, or other ways, that the argument might be strengthened.

Instead, we shift our focus from these theological issues to more metaphysical ones. We have seen in the above section the ways in which Plantinga's arguments depend on the Libertarian view embodied in (F1) and (F2). We now consider the question: How is it logically possible that (F1) and (F2) be true together?

The nub of this issue lies in our understanding of agency and the analysis of agent subjunctives. In this section we avoid questions dealing directly with agency, and instead provide a number of conditions that any analysis of agent subjunctives will have to satisfy if it is to be sufficient to Plantinga's task. To recollect, "p $\Box \rightarrow$ q"

denotes that understanding of the locution "If p were true, then q would be true" which Plantinga's argument *actually requires* in order to succeed. We will suggest that it is the Libertarian notion "p inclines, without necessitating that q" that satisfies these conditions.

Our first two conditions are motivated by the consideration that "p □-> q" is in part an attempt to provide a basis for the truth of ordinary agent subjunctives which does not imply that q is causally determined. Thus on the one hand it must be that

(C1)   p □-> q does *not* imply that q is causally determined.

For Plantinga wants to say that it is logically possible for God to weakly (though not strongly) actualise Anna's freely having cornflakes, and so logically possible that there be some state of affairs C such that: God strongly actualises C □-> Anna freely has cornflakes. If "p □-> q" implied that q was causally determined, then Anna's having cornflakes would have been causally determined, and so not free after all. In fact, the notion that Plantinga requires may satisy the obviously stronger condition that

(C1')   p □-> q implies that q is *not* causally determined.

On the other hand, for "p □-> q" to be able to provide a basis for ordinary agent subjunctives, we need the following connection between these two notions:

(C2)   p □-> q implies that if p were true, then q would be true.

These two conditions, (C1) and (C2), give us the room to explain the possibility of (F1) and (F2). If "God sets off the alarm □-> Anna wakes up and freely has cornflakes for breakfast" is true then it follows that were God to do this, Anna would have cornflakes for breakfast, but that her doing so would not be causally determined, for "God sets off the alarm □-> Anna wakes up and freely has cornflakes for breakfast" does not imply this. Thus if it is possible for statements of the form "p □-> q" to be true, then it is possible that (F1) and (F2) be true together.

Our next two conditions are motivated by the consideration that "p □-> q" is to be in part a *causal* notion. We can best see this by examining the account that Plantinga attempts to give of this idea,

which seems to include the adoption of either the Stalnaker or Lewis possible world analysis of subjunctives. Plantinga devotes a whole section of Chapter 9 of Plantinga[74b] to a discussion of these views, and employs them in one of his arguments (Plantinga[74b],p181).

However, there is a problem with adopting Lewis' account of subjunctive statements. (We will ignore Stalnakers' account altogether, as it entails, rather implausibly, that either if p were true, then q would be true or if p were true, then not-q would be true). For consider the question: In what sense does God actualise the *actual* world? Armed with our definition above, (I.9), of God's being able to actualise a possible state of affairs p we may provide the following analysis of God's weakly actualising, as opposed to God's *being able* to weakly actualise, a possible world W:

(1)   x <u>weakly actualises</u> W if and only if there is some state of affairs C that x strongly actualises such that : x strongly actualises C $\Box\rightarrow$ W obtains.

If Lewis's analysis is the understanding of subjunctives that Plantinga requires, then (1) unfortunately runs aground of the inference

(2)   p, q / therefore, p $\Box\rightarrow$ q

which is valid in Lewis's semantics. Following Plantinga, we will call the actual world "Kronos". Suppose that in Kronos Anna has cornflakes for breakfast. Then chose any statement p included in Kronos. As Kronos is actual, then p is true and so by (2) it follows that: Anna has cornflakes for breakfast $\Box\rightarrow$ p. As this is true for all states of affairs p in Kronos, then: Anna has cornflakes for breakfast $\Box\rightarrow$ Kronos obtains. Anna is weakly actualising the actual world! Hence Lewis' analysis is not the understanding of subjunctives that Plantinga requires[11]. The above also indicates that another condition needed is that

(C3)   p & q does *not* imply p $\Box\rightarrow$ q.

However, it still seems as though Plantinga's analysis has problems, even if we suppose that it is our intuitive understanding of subjunctives which is the understanding that Plantinga requires. For there seem to be quite plausible situations which, according to the above definition of "weakly actualise", imply that God, or anyone else, can weakly actualise a past event which did not occur. For example,

suppose that God banished Adam and Eve on Tuesday of the second week of creation. And suppose that He did this because they ate the apple on the day before, Monday. That is, if God hadn't banished Adam and Eve on Tuesday, then they would not have eaten the apple on the preceeding Monday. More to the point:

(3)   if it were the case that God did not banish Adam and Eve on Tuesday, then it would be the case that Adam and Eve did not eat the apple on Monday

or, still

(3')   God did not banish Adam and Eve on Tuesday $\Box \rightarrow$ Adam and Eve did not eat the apple on Monday.

So, as not banishing Adam and Eve on Tuesday is something that God could have strongly brought about, then God could have, on Tuesday, weakly brought it about that Adam and Eve did not eat the apple on Monday. This, however, is false. Ordinary subjunctives, in general, do not presuppose that the antecedent obtained no later than the consequent. Yet another condition is required:

(C4)   if (p is true at t_1 $\Box \rightarrow$ q is true at t_2), then t_1 is not later than t_2.

These two conditions, (C3) and (C4), indicate that the notion the argument needs is in some sense a causal notion. First, it does not follow from the fact that two states of affairs obtain that there is a causal connection between them. And second, causes occur no later than their effects.

Our last condition is motivated by the consideration that Plantinga's argument as stated is to remain valid, given that what he understands by subjunctives is neither what we ordinarily understand by them, nor what Lewis understands by them. It ought to be that

(C5)   "p $\Box \rightarrow$ q" behaves, for the most part, like what we usually understand by the locution "if p were true, then q would be true".

The notion that Plantinga's argument requires should be sufficiently similar to the locution "if p were true, then q would be true" so as to ensure the validity of the argument presented in section II, and need

differ only in satisfying conditions (C1) to (C4). Admittedly vague, this last condition is an application of the principle of charity.

It may be that there are other conditions that any notion sufficient to Plantinga's task must satisfy, but we tenatively suggest that if there is a notion satisfying (C1) to (C5), then Plantinga's argument is successful.

Indeed, it appears that there is such a notion. It is the Libertarian notion of "inclining, without necessitating":

(C1) If p inclines, without necessitating, that q then it obviously does not follow that q is causally determined. It may even be that it implies q is *not* causally determined, but this is problematic, because while p might not necessitate that q, there may be another state of affairs r that does.

(C2) If p inclines without necessitating that q, if p thus *influences* without necessitating that q, then, given a strong enough construal of this influence, it follows that if p were to obtain, then q would also. The intuitive idea behind "a strong enough construal" of this influence is as follows. Lewis has shown that the truth of "if p were true, then q would be true" does not depend on p's being causally sufficient for q (See Note 8). It depends instead on how much more likely it is that p and q be true than that p and not-q be true. A "strong enough" construal of p's influence on q, then, is one that makes it sufficiently more likely that p and q be true than that p and not-q be true (so that if p were true, then q would be true) without this influence being so strong that it makes p causally sufficient for q, and without its implying that there might be some other factors which, with p, are causally sufficient for q.

(C3) From the fact that two states of affairs obtain it does not follow that one influenced the other, and so does not follow that one inclined without necessitating the other. The fabric of influence is not so detailed as to connect any two states of affairs.

(C4) Influence cannot run backward in time. If p and q obtained and p influenced without necessitating that q, then p must have obtained at a time no later than q.

(C5) The question of whether "inclines, without necessitating" is sufficiently like what we usually understand by subjunctives depends on the explication that is given of "inclines, without necessitating". As it is not sharply enough defined to allow an answer either way on this question, this last condition is better thought of as providing a direction in which the notion *ought* to be sharpened, if it is to do some of the philosphical work allocated to it.

There are those, however, who doubt that the notion of "incline, without necessitating" makes any sense at all, and who would also doubt that there was any notion that satisfied (C1) to (C5). It does seem, nonetheless, that if "inclines, without necessitating" is coherent, then it satisfies these conditions, thus vindicating Plantinga's argument.

IV

There are significant objections to Plantinga's position which reduce to the claim that (F1) (free action is not causally determined) and (F2) (agent subjunctives are possible) are jointly incompatible with the observation, (S), that subjunctive statements can be true only if there are other factors which, with the antecedent's being true, causally determine the consequent's being true. In this section we consider responses to Plantinga which accept (S) and (F2), and so reject (F1).

Our starting point is Burch[79] who responds to Plantinga's argument to the conclusion, (II.3a), that there are possible worlds W and W* in which God exists, T_w is identical to T_{w*}, W includes Curley's freely accepting the bribe, and W* includes his freely rejecting it. Burch argues against this claim by showing that Plantinga's argument for it is invalid. He firstly shows, correctly and more generally than Plantinga, that

(1)   if God can weakly actualise both W and W*, then $T_w = T_{w*}$ if and only if W = W*[12].

According to Plantinga there are distinct possible worlds W and W* for which $T_w = T_{w*}$ and so it follows that there is some possible world that

God cannot weakly actualise (either W or W*). As the Leibnizian wants to deny this (God can weakly actualise *all* possible worlds), it must be denied that there could be two such possible worlds, and denied by pointing out that

> the argument begs the question by assuming a proposition that the Leibnizian should rush to deny: namely, that the largest state of affairs that God actualises in W* [our T_{W*}] is T, namely *the very same* state of affairs that is the largest state of affairs God actualises in W [our T_W] (Burch[79],p29:italics added)

If we look at Plantinga's argument we see that it depends on the inference from T_W's not including Curley's rejecting the bribe to the claim that there is thus another possible world W* which includes God's strongly actualising *exactly* T_W (and so $T_W = T_{W*}$) and Curley's rejecting the bribe. However, all that *strictly* follows is that there is a possible world W* which includes God's strongly actualising T_W (*but perhaps strongly actualising more*) and Curley's rejecting the bribe. Plantinga's argument is thus invalid.

However this seems to be the wrong place to apply pressure to the argument. For, it is possible to provide another argument to the conclusion that Plantinga requires, (II.3a), without making this doubtful inference. For consider a possible state of affairs S where (i) God exists and the only actions that He (strongly) performs are A_1 through A_n (so that T_S is the conjunctive state of affairs A_1 & ... & A_n), and (ii) Curly is offered the bribe and he freely accepts it or freely rejects it. Then S does *not* include Curley's freely accepting the bribe. For suppose that it did. This is to say that (i) and (ii) together imply that Curley freely accepts the bribe. But as (ii) does not imply this, then it must be (i) that does. That is, T_S includes Curley's freely accepting the bribe, or in other words, what God *strongly* does in S includes Curley's freely accepting it. But, according to (F1), this is not possible. Hence it is logically possible that: S and Curley does not freely accept the bribe. But in S Curley either freely does or freely refrains from this act, and so it is logically possible that: S and Curley freely rejects the bribe. Which is to say that there is a possible world W* in which God exists, T_{W*} is A_1 & ... & A_n, and which includes Curley's freely *rejecting* the bribe. Similarly, there is another possible world W in which God exists, T_W is A_1 & ... & A_n (and so T_W is T_{W*}), and which includes Curley's

freely *accepting* the bribe. This argument lacks the inference that Burch finds troublesome, and depends crucially instead on incompatibilism, (F1). It is at *this* point that Plantinga's argument is vulnerable, and at this point that he and the Leibnizian fundamentally disagree. That they should also disagree about the problematic inference is a consequence of this more fundamental dissagreement.

Thus to dispute (II.3a) one can argue against incompatibilism, (F1). Hobart presents two arguments against this view. He argues that, *pace* Plantinga, x's freely doing action A implies that x's doing A *is* causally determined. This would entail that Libertarianism denies the possibility of free action. His first argument claims that as an act not caused is one not proceeding from me, it is not *my act*:

> In proportion as an act of volition starts of itself without cause it is exactly, so far as the freedom of the individual is concerned, as if it had been thrown into his mind from without — "suggested" to him — by a freakish demon. It is exactly like it in this respect, that in neither case does the volition . . . come out of him. (Berofsky[66],p70)

Hobart speaks of "acts of volition", but the same could said about acts *simpliciter.* Cathy (freely) *does* A only if her doing A proceeds from Cathy herself, and

(2)   this could only be so if her desire to do A and/or her character causally contribute, in some way, to her doing A.

But if one event causally contributes to another, the second must be causally determined as, in general,

(3)   an event E_1 causally contributes to the occurence of an event E_2 only if there are other events which, with E_1, causally determine E_2.

What other understanding of causation, of causal contribution, could there be? (This is Hobart's version of (S).) Thus Cathy (freely) does A only if her doing A is causally determined. The very possibility of action requires that this be so.

It is easy to see what Plantinga's reply ought to be: (2) and (3) cannot be true together. He might argue as follows: (2) is true only on the condition that "causally contributes" be understood as "influences, without necessitating", for he has no desire to deny that desires and character *partially* influence human behaviour, but denies only that they *totally* do so. But, in this case, the argument is either unsound or invalid. If "causally contributes" is similarly understood in (3), then (3) is false, because contradictory. If not so understood, then it no longer follows from (2) and (3) that Cathy's doing A is causally determined.

The second argument that Hobart offers states that as an act not caused by me is one from which I could not refrain, it is not my *free* act:

> The freedom of anyone surely always implies his possession of a power, . . . A person has a power if it a fact that when he sets himself in the appropriate manner to produce a certain event that event will actually follow. . . . Thus power depends upon, or rather consists in, a law. The law in question takes the familar form that if something happens a certain something else will happen. (Berofsky[66],p72)

Hobart seems in this passage to be presupposing that subjunctives of the form "if p were true, then q would be true" imply that q is causally determined. Why might he believe this? Perhaps he believes it implies that p causally determines q. This is not a valid inference (See Note 8). On the other hand, perhaps he believes the weaker assumption, (S), that such subjunctives need only be *backed by* rather than *identical with* a statement refering to events (including p) which are causally sufficient for q. Thus, Cathy does A *freely* only if she has the power to refrain from so doing. But, in general, if x has the power to do A then it must be that if x were to desire (intend, . . .) to do B, then x would do A. But

(S)   such a subjunctive claim can only be true if there are other events which, with Cathy's desiring (intending, . . .) to do A, causally determine that she do A.

Thus Cathy can do A *freely* only if her performing this act is causally determined.

A weak point in this argument is the assumption that "cans" are constitutionally iffy. This is an area of much dispute, which we gladly

sidestep by pointing out that it is, in any case, (4) where the Libertarian can apply pressure, by insisting that "infuence, without necessitation" can ground subjunctive judgements (see condition (C2)), and so that such judgments need not be grounded in statements which imply that q is causally determined.

Hobart's arguments, then, are ineffective against a Libertarian armed with a coherent notion that satisfies (C1) to (C5). His arguments beg the question to the extent that they assume that there is no such notion.

V

Hobart accepts both, (S), the analysis of subjunctives in terms of causal determination, and (F2), the possibility of agent subjunctives, thus arguing that free action is possible only if it is causally determined. In this section we consider Adam's response to Plantinga, in which the possibility of agent subjunctives is denied, because of the acceptence of (S) and (F1). We will examine three such arguments.

Adams says that he has "rested an important part of [his] argument on the assumption that what a person's character and dispositions do not causally determine, they do not render absolutely certain" (Adams[77],p116). For his argument to be at all successful it seems that it must be construed in the following way. Either there are grounds for believing

(1)   if p were to obtain, then x would freely do A

which imply that p necessitates x's freely doing A, or there are no such grounds. Needless to say, if the grounds of this statement *do* imply this, then x does in fact *not* freely do A, for free acts are not causally determined - (F1). On the other hand, if there are no such grounds, then there are no grounds at all for believing this statement. For if p does not necessitate x's doing A then p does not causally determine it, and so does not render it absolutely certain. But, in general,

(2)   "if p were true, then q would be true" implies that p, if it occurs, renders q absolutely certain.

Hence if p does not necessitate x's doing A then "if p were true, then x

would freely do A" is false. And so either way there can be no grounds for believing statements of this form.

However, the crux of this argument, (2), is false. In making subjunctive statements we do *not* require that the antecedent make the conclusion *absolutely certain* (in the very strong sense that it seems Adams requires). My releasing a pen from my outstretched hand, and expecting that it will fall on the ground, is a case in point. If I were to release said pen, then it *would* fall on the ground, even though my releasing it does not make it absolutely certain that it will do so, for it is not absolutely certain that there will not be a sudden upward gust of wind that will blow the pen back into my hand. (2) demands a connection between p and q which is much too strong. And it seems that (2) would be accepted only by someone who held the view that the pertinant subjunctive connection between p and q could only obtain if p was causally sufficient for q, or perhaps if a weaker statement such as (S) were true. Another counter-example is provided by Adams himself. It seems uncontroversial that were I to ask my butcher to sell me a pound of ground beef, he would (freely) do so. But, because his freely doing so implies that his act was not causally determined, my asking him did not render his complying absolutely certain. (We examine later how Adams attempts to deal with this.)

Not all of Adams's arguments, however, depend crucially on the assumption that what a person's character and dispositions do not causally determine, they do not render absolutely certain. A better argument has as a starting point (F1), the view that free actions are not causally determined. There are those who believe that if this is so then it follows that x's freely doing A is uncaused; it is independent of, not related to, anything that came before; A is something that x *just did*; x's doing A was *random*. It follows that can be true no statement of the form (1). For suppose that such a statement were true. Then p's being the case would come (temporally) before x's freely doing A (see condition (C4)), and as this later event is *independent of all that would come before*, then

(3)   if p were true, then x might not freely do A (or then again, x might).

As (3) is inconsistent with (1), it follows that no statement of the form (1) could be true. Hence the construal of free acts as uncaused events implies that agent counterfactuals are necessarily false, and so

useless for the purposes of Plantinga's argument.

A first (perhaps desperate) response to this might be to claim that while any particular free act is uncaused (and so random), a statement such as (1) might be true on the basis of x's character. That is, while accepting that x's doing A is uncaused, it follows from

(4)   if it is in x's character to do A when p obtains, then if p were true, then x would freely do A

that (1) is possible, and so the above argument must be incorrect. This only follows, of course, if it is possible that it be in x's character to do A when p obtain. But if all free acts are construed as uncaused, as random, then there is no important sense in which a person can be said to have a character, for such an entity could play no role at all in that person's behaviour. Rather than establishing the possibility of agent subjunctives, (4) points out instead that there is no coherent notion of character if free acts are understood as all being uncaused.

There is another, similar, point to be made against this understanding - it leaves reasons no place at all in the picture of agency. If x's doing A is independent of all that came before, then it is independent of the reasons that x might have had for doing it. Perhaps reasons play a smaller role than is usually assumed, but it is just false that they (necessarily) play no role.

Thus reasons must make it into the picture. There seem to be a number of ways of doing this, depending on how one thinks that the having of reasons is causally related to actions, and how the having of reasons is itself causally related to that which preceeded it. On the one hand it may be that

(5a)   the reasons x had for doing A (say, the "strongest" reasons) causally determined x's doing A; and (in order to maintain incompatibilism) that the having of the reason was itself uncaused.

Or, perhaps,

(5b)   the reasons x had for doing A causally determined x's doing A; and that the having of the reason was itself causally influenced, without being necessitated.

Alternatively,

(5c)   the reasons x had for doing A influenced, but did not necessitate, x's doing A; and the having of the reasons was itself causally determined.

Examining these in turn, we see that the first suffers from the same problems as did our more simplistic view of free agency. For if x had reasons R for doing A then it follows by reasoning similar to above that

(6)   if p were true, then x might not have had reasons R for doing A.

(It is important to keep in mind here the distinction between, on the one hand, there *being* a reason R for x to do A, and, on the other, x's *having* a reason R for doing A. There might have still been a reason R for x to do A, without x being aware of it, without x having had the reason.) But as x's having reason R to do A causally determines x's doing A, then (following Hume)

(7)   if x had not had reasons R to do A, then x would not have freely done A.

But from (6) and (7) it follows that (1) is false. This method of allowing reasons into the picture is inadequate.

The first also shares with the second the defect of implying that free acts are causally determined, specifically by the reasons R that x had for doing A. Thus (9a) and (9b) are unacceptable.

We seem, then, to be left with (5c) as an explanation of the role of reasons in agency. This explanation will be coherent if we have a coherent notion of "influence, without necessitation". Given as much, this second argument of Adams's is not successful because by supposing that non-causally determined events are *ipso facto* uncaused (that is, random), it attributes to Libertarians a quite implausible view of free action. Again, it seems that this supposition would only be accepted by someone who had already decided that (S) offers the only plausible understanding of agent subjunctives.

A more elaborate and imposing argument is presented by Adams

towards the end of his paper (Adams[77],p113-114). He claims, correctly, that theists like Plantinga attempt to employ statements such as

(8)   If God created Adam and Eve, there would be more moral good than moral evil in the history of the world

to explain why God created Adam and Eve. They do this because of the truth of (8) and because He is all-good and so desires the best for his creatures. It is an important part of their case that (8) be prior in the order of explanation than God's creating Adam and Eve, as the former is intended, in part, to explain the latter. According to Lewis's analysis of subjunctives, (8) could only be true if there was a world in which God created Adam and Eve and there was more moral good than evil in its history which is closer to the actual world than any world in which God created Adam and Eve and there was not more moral good than evil in its history. But, Adams continues, which world is closest to the actual world depends, in part, on which world is actual, and this depends in turn on whether or not God created Adam and Eve. Thus God's created Adam and Eve cannot come *after* the truth of (8) in the order of explanation.

However, the truth of (8), namely the truth of: there was a world in which God created Adam and Eve and . . . , depends not on the fact that it is *this* particular world (Kronos, remember) which is actual, but rather that the actual world, whichever it is, is one in which (8) is true. There are many other worlds in which this may be so – following Adams, let us call K* the set of worlds in which (8) is true. The truth of (8) depends on the actual world's being a member of K* but not on *which* member of K* it is (including Kronos). The theist needs to claim that the actual world is a member of K* and that its membership in K* does not depend on which of the alternatives amongst which God is choosing. Adams attempts to make all this more perspicuous:

> Let us say that one of God's alternatives is *represented* in K* if and only if there is some world in K* in which he chooses that alternative. [(9):] If any of the alternatives amongst which God was choosing is not represented in K*, then the actual world's membership in K* depends on His rejecting that alternative, and therefore cannot be prior in the order of explanation to His decision. But I think that [(10):] at least one of God's alternative's is indeed unrepresented in K*. For one alternative

was to make no free creatures at all, and I do not see how a world in which there are no free creatures at all could be a member of K* (Adams[77],p114. Underlining added).

Before critically examining this argument, we will simplify it by employing the definitions that Adams has introduced. It turns out to be not as imposing as it appears. First, the actual world is an element of K* if and only if (8) is true, as p is true *simpliciter* if and only if it is true in the actual world - "the actual world's membership in K*" is thus equivalent to "(8)'s being true". Next, an alternative A is represented in K* if and only if there is a possible world W in which God brings it about that A, and which is a member of K*. That is, if and only if it is logically possible that God brings it about that A and that (8) be true. Thus Adams's argument comes to the following:

(9')   If A is one of the alternatives among which God was choosing, and it is not possible that God brings it about that A and (8) be true, then (8)'s truth depends on the truth of "God does not bring it about that A".

But

(10')   it is not possible that God refrain from creating free beings (one of the alternatives among which He was choosing) and that (8) be true.

Hence

(11)   (8)'s truth depends on the truth of "God does not refrain from creating free beings".

For the argument to be valid, "depends" must here be understood in such a way that

(12)   If p and q are true, and p's truth depends on q's truth, then p is not an explanation for q.

Therefore,

(13)   (8)'s truth is not an explanation of God's not refraining from creating free beings, and so not an explanation of God's creating Adam and Eve.

It is possible to deny (9')[13], but in any case the important point at which the Libertarian may apply pressure is at (10'). How could this be false? That is, how is it logically possible that God refrain from creating free beings and that (8) still be true? Adams provides the following argument for (10'):

But I think that [(10):] <u>at least one of God's alternative's is</u>

<u>indeed unrepresented in K*</u>. For one alternative was to make no free creatures at all, and I do not see how a world in which there are no free creatures at all could be a member of K*. Since it is free actions that are morally good and morally evil, no possible world, w, will be a member of K* unless there is some feature of w by virtue of which a difference of free actions of free creatures in some worlds u and v would be a reason for counting u as more similar than v to w (in relevant respects). And any such feature of w must surely involve the existence in w of free creatures. If there are no free creatures at all in w, what would make w more like a world in which most free creaturely decisions are good ones than like a world in which most free creaturely decisions are bad ones? (Adams[77],p114. Underlining added).

The attempt to answer Adams' rhetorical question might begin by noticing that there are in this world certain *natural* features which entice moral behaviour and discourage immoral behaviour (and even if there are not, the argument only requires that there could be). This is not to say that these features are causally sufficient for such moral behaviour, it is just that were such features present in a situation where a moral decision is being made, then the morally correct action would be (freely) taken. Now as the existence of these natural features of the world is independant of the existence of free beings, then it is presumably possible that these very features occur in a world with no free beings. The world that Adams' asks for, w, is such world. It *is* more similar (in the relevant, moral, respects) to a world, u, in which most free creaturely decisions are good ones than to any world, v, in which most are bad. Not because of the *actual* amount of moral good and bad which occurs in w as compared to that which occurs in u and v, for by hypothesis there is no moral good or bad in w, lacking as it is in moral agents. The difference, rather, between w, u, and v, is in the amount of *hypothetical* moral good and evil that each would contain, the amount of moral good and evil that *would* result were God to create Adam and Eve. World w is more similar to u than v because w, like u, is such that were God to create Adam and Eve, there would be more moral good than evil in the history of the world. While w contains no free beings, counterfactual statements refering to the actions of agents, *were there to be any*, can be true. As Plantinga points out when discussing the criteria for the similarity of worlds:

One measure of similarity between worlds involves the question

whether they share the same counterfactuals. (Plantinga[74b], p178).

It is (8)'s being true in w and u, and not in v, that explains why w and u are more similar to each other than w is to v. As can be seen, this reply to Adams depends on the possibility of agent subjunctives - the very possibility that Adams attempts to deny. In asking the rhetorical question he does, Adams' begs the question against Plantinga.

Adams seems, in fact, to hold a rather unexpected view in these matters. He seems to agree with Plantinga that free acts are causally undetermined:

> The Jesuits held, amonst other things, that many human actions are free in the sense that their agents are not logically or causally determined to do them. ("Free" will always be used in this sense in the present essay) (Adams[77],p109)

As we have seen, he also believes that subjunctives entail that their consequents are causally determined, and from this it follows that there can be no true agent subjunctives. He is frank, however, when he admits being perplexed by the fact that there *do* appear to be true subjunctives of this form:

> There does not normally seem to be any uncertainty at all about what a butcher, for example, would have done if I had asked him to sell me a pound of ground beef, although we suppose that he would have had free will in the matter. We would say he would certainly have sold me the meat, if he had it to sell. What makes us regard it as certain? Chiefly his character, habits, desires, and intentions, and the absense of countervailing dispositions. (Adams[77],p115-116)

There seem, according to Adams, to be three general ways out. First, one could say that true subjunctives putatively of the form "if p were true, then x would freely do A" are more correctly understood as "if p were true, then x would *probably* freely do A". It is character, habits, etc., which make this latter subjunctive true (though not the former). Second, one could say that such a statement is true because x's freely doing A was causally determined. By Adams' own admission, this is inconsistent. Third, one could claim, that x's doing A is not causally determined by p, although the latter does render the former "absolutely

certain". Because Adams thinks that subjunctives require such absolute certainty (a claim with which we disagreed above) and because such certainty is only to be got by causal determination, then nor is this path open to Adams. He seems left with the first suggestion.

Unfortunately for Adams, however, any success in his arguments against Plantinga would mitagate against his own diagnosis of the situation. If character and reasons provide no ground for agent subjunctives, then neither do they for probabilistic agent subjunctives. Either Adams accepts the "incline, without necessitating" role of character and reasons in action, or he doesn't. If he does, then (as we have argued in section III – condition (C2)) a basis for agent subjunctives can be provided. If not, then it seems as though the only account Adams has avaliable is that actions are uncaused, that is, random. (If this is not so, then the onus is on him to provide *yet another* account of the relation between reasons and action.) But if this is so, then not only could there be no true agent subjunctives, but there could be no true probabilistic agent subjunctives, either. For Adams says that the claim that

(14)   If David stayed in Keilah, Saul would *probably* beseige the city

is to be understood as the claim that

(15)   Saul will besiege the city

would be probable, given the facts that would (definitely, not just probably) obtain if David stayed in Keilah. But if Saul's (freely) besieging the city is uncaused, if it is thus unrelated to anything that came before, then there is nothing that would make it *probable* There is nothing that would make *it* more likely than his not besieging the city. Adams' diagnosis is unsuccessful.

Adams's arguments are, like Hobart's, ineffective against a Libertarian armed with a coherent notion that satisfies (C1) to (C5). His arguments beg the question to the extent that they assume that there is no such notion.

VI

There are many interpretations of the claim that evil is a problem for one who believes in God. In the introduction we narrowed our focus in a number of ways. We adopted an understanding of the term "God" that has changed as a consequence of our discussions (see Notes 5 and 7). It is now encapsulated in the statements:

(G1) there is a unique person (conscious and existing "in time") who is all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-good. And this being we call God.

(G2'b) A being x is all-powerful only if x can strongly actualise every possible state of affairs p such that "x strongly actualises p" is consistent;

(G3') x is all-knowing if and only if x knows all true propostions p such that "x knows p" is consistent; and

(G4) x is all-good if and only if x does only what is permitted, and everything that x (morally) ought.

We also restricted ourselves to consideration of *moral* evil (that evil which results from free human action) and understood "free human action" itself in Libertarian terms. Specifically, we assumed that

(F1) if x freely does A, then x's freely doing A is not causally determined, and

(F2) it is logically possible (with appropriate, minimal, restrictions) that statements of the form "if p were true, then x would freely do A" to be true.

And finally, we only considered the *logical* problem of moral evil: *How is it logically possible that God exist and that there be evil resulting from free human acts?*

We saw in section I that, according to Mackie, this is *not* logically possible. His argument claimed that as God can do anything that is possible, and as everyone's always doing what is right *is* possible, then God ought to have created a morally perfect world.

Plantinga's reply, in section II, proceeded as follows: it is possible (and, indeed, probable) that if God created free persons and left them to their own devices, all would sometimes freely do wrong. Notwithstanding His power, knowledge and goodness, there is nothing

that God would be able to do about this, for what free persons do is solely up to them. God's existing (and being all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-good) does not *entail* that there is no evil resulting from free human acts, for whether or not there will be depends on the free human agents. Thus it is logically possible that God exist and that there be evil resulting from free human acts.

As Plantinga would readily admit, this argument depends crucially on the Libertarianism embodied in (F1) and (F2). *How are (F1) and (F2) jointly possible, and what understanding of agent subjunctives does Plantinga require if his argument is to be valid?* These two questions briefly occupied us in section III, where the focus of the paper moved from theological to metaphysical issues. We saw that the subjunctive that Plantinga requires, denoted by "p $\square\rightarrow$ q", is to satisfy a number of conditions:

It is to provide a basis for ordinary subjunctives which does not imply that it is causally determined that the consequent obtain:

(C1)   p $\square\rightarrow$ q does not imply that q is causally determined,

(C2)   p $\square\rightarrow$ q implies that if p were true, then q would be true.

It is to be, in a certain minimal sense, a causal notion:

(C3)   p & q does not imply p $\square\rightarrow$ q,

(C4)   if (p is true at t_1 $\square\rightarrow$ q is true at t_2) then t_1 is no later than t_2.

Finally, it is to be understood in such a way as to make it most likely that Plantinga's argument is valid:

(C5)   "p $\square\rightarrow$ q" behaves, for the most part, like what we usually understand by the locution "if p were true, then q would be true".

If there were a notion which satisfied these conditions, then Plantinga's argument would be vindicated. Indeed, it appeared that the Libertarian "inclines, without necessitating" is just what is required. *If there is a (coherent) notion of "inclining, without necessitating", then it is logically possible that God exist and that there be evil which results from free human acts.*

We examined significant criticisms of Plantinga's position which reduced to the claim that (F1) and (F2) are jointly incompatible with the observation that

(S)   subjunctive statements in general can be true only if there are other factors which, with the antecedent's being true, causally determine the consequence's being true.

As we have seen in section IV, Hobart believes that both (F2) and (S) are true, and as a result holds that free action actually *requires* causal determination. On the other hand, Adams argued in section V that as (F1) and (S) are true, then (F2) cannot be true. In addition, he attemped to give an account (albeit unsuccessfully) of why (F2) appears to be true. In both these sections the arguments obtain whatever purchase they have by arguing from (S), which is at least to deny the coherence of the "inline, without necessitating" notion. But to employ this premise is to beg the question against Plantinga.

Thus it seems that *if there is a (coherent) notion of "inclining, without necessitating", then it is logically possible that God exist and that there be evil which results from free human acts.* But *is* there such a notion?

NOTES

1.   For the relevant passages, see McCloskey[60], p97 and Aiken[57], p79.

2.   Subjunctives will play a pivotal role in our discussions, so we take the opportunity at this point to introduce some terminology. In general, we understand such a statement to be of the form "if p were true, then q would be true". A probabilistic subjunctive is one of the form "if p were true, then it would *probably* be true that q". (We will not encounter these until section V). An agent subjunctive, as we have just seen, is a subjunctive of the form "if p were true, then x would freely do A".

3.   There are those think that this is already too anthropomorphic an understanding of God's nature to be correct. For example, Kroon comments that the type of account that Plantinga offers

> does not admit any 'in principle' difference between the case of God and the case of humans. God, like his creatures, acts against the background of the actual world. More of the actual world is directly attributable to him than to us, of course, but nonetheless the difference looks, in an important sense, quantitative only. This startlingly anthropomorphic conclusion is the price we pay for [such an account]. (Kroon[81],p91)

But this seems inadequate. Firstly, the notion of a seperate conscious being seems to be *required* if sense is to be made of the idea of God's relating at all to the world, via action and knowledge. If we say that God spoke with Moses, we mean, do we not?, that Moses was standing at the top of the mountain communicating with another, separate, conscious being. It is just very difficult to see how one could *communicate* with a being that was not conscious and that was not "in time". Secondly, just how anthropomorphic *is* this understanding of consciousness anyway, when it includes not only bats, but also any Martians that there might be? To say that there is something it is like to be an Martian is not to say that we know what it is (or that we even could know). To say that there is something it is like to be God is not to say that we know what it is, and this is what might be worrying some. The onus is on philosophers such as Kroon to provide an explanation of

why (G1) is incorrect, if it is. *Prima facie*, it seems acceptable.

4. But Bennett, in a reply to Plantinga, believes that this statement *is* consistent, and only has the appearance of being inconsistent because of the "logician's convention of expressing statements tenselessly" (Bennett[73],p44). When interpreted as "God *could* have brought about a state of affairs that *was* not (in fact) brought about by God" the temptation to think the original statement inconsistent, says Bennett, disappears. This is true, but why should it be interpreted in this way? If, on the contrary, it is interpreted as "God can *now* bring about a (past) state of affairs that *was* not (in fact) brought about by God" then it is again overwhelmingly tempting to say that the original statement is inconsistent, for it is not logically possible (even for God) to change the past.

But no matter which of these is the intended interpretation, it is easy to show that (G2), while a popular understanding of God's omnipotence, is still false. Of the modes in which God may be omnipotent, there are theistic doctrines which hold that God is omnipotent *necessarily* (in all possible worlds), and others which hold that He is so *essentially* (in all possible worlds in which He exists). We assume only that God is omnipotent *omnitemporally* (at all times, in the actual world). It follows then, with (G2), that

(1)   at all times t, if p is a logically possible state of affairs, then God can bring it about that p

and so, as whatever logical status a statement has it has at all times,

(2)   if p is a logically possible state of affairs, then at all times t, God can, at t, bring it about that p.

But (2) is false, for it is not logically possible to now influence (and *a fortiori* change) past events, even though it is logically possible that they were different. We present the following counterexample to (2). Suppose that, in spite of its being only just above freezing, it does not snow on Tuesday. Presumably, it is logically possible that it did. Hence it follows from (2) that God can, on Wednesday, bring it about that it snow on Tuesday. But this is false as there is nothing that God can do on Wednesday (the day after) that would result in its snowing on Tuesday.

Conversly, it is easy to see that God *can*, on Monday (the day

before), bring it about that it snow on Tuesday. For there is something that God can do on Monday, namely dropping the temperature even further, that would result in its snowing on Tuesday. We mention this last point to forestall the fatalistic argument that as statements such as "It snowed on Tuesday" are, if true, true at all times, then we are as powerless to influence the future as the above counterexample shows that we are to influence the past. Thus (G2) is false, and this first criticism of Mackie's argument stands.

5.   Thus our original definition of omnipotence, which was given by

(G2)   x is omnipotent if and only if x can bring about all logically possible states of affairs,

needs to be modified to

(G2')   x is omnipotent if and only if x can bring about all logically possible states of affairs p such that "x brings it about that p" is logically possible

because there are some states of affairs, those in the past, which it is not logically possible for God to now change (and so not something that He can now bring about), even though it is logically possible that they were different. This is a consequence of God's being "in time".

It turns out that the original definition of omniscience, that

(G3)   x is omniscient if and only if x knows all true propositions,

needs to be modified in just the same way, to obtain

(G3')   x is omniscient if and only if x knows all true propositions p such that "x knows that p" is logically possible.

This is a consequence of God's being a conscious entity. Kretzmann in Kretzmann[66] presents the following conterexample to (G3): Consider the two statements:

(1)   Cathy knows that she is in hospital.
(2)   Cathy knows that Cathy is in hospital.

The two are perfectly coherent and furthermore logically independent.

For if Cathy has amnesia but recognises that she is in a hospital, then (1) is true and (2) false, and if Cathy has amnesia and reads in the paper that someone called Cathy is in hospital, but does not recognise that she is in a hospital then, (2) is true, and (1) false. Thus what is known by Cathy in (1) (that *she* is in hospital) differs from what she knows in (2) (that *Cathy* is in hospital). But what Cathy knows in (1) can only be known by Cathy, and no other person, including God. Only Cathy knows (and could know) what it is to like her, what is it for *her* to be in hospital. Thus it is possible that there be a true proposition that God does not (and cannot) know. "The kind of knowledge [(1)] ascribes to [Cathy] is, moreover, the kind of knowledge characteristic of every self-conscious entity, of every person" (Kretzmann[66],p421). If God's omniscience is to be possible, then (G3) is false. That it is not *logically* possible that God knows what Cathy knows in (1) suggests that the modification we require is (G3') above. Thus God's inability to know something that it is logically impossible for Him to know is not to count against his omniscience.

6.   There is, however, some reason to doubt this. For as Bennett points out:

> There are different ways in which things can be such that people refrain from doing certain sorts of acts, and not just any way involves a loss of free-will. (Bennett[73],p48)

Suppose it actually turns out that all wrongdoers possess a certain chromosome - the dreaded R-chromosome - which partially explains their wrongdoing. That is to say that all wrong-doers necessarily have the chromosome, but there are possessors of the chromosome who, thanks to strong moral fibre, never sin. The R-chromosome, though being causally necessary for wrongdoing, is not causally sufficient for such behaviour. Next, suppose that the only behaviour that God engages in, after creating the world at year dot and letting evolution run its path, is to causally determine that fetuses with the R-chromosome are spontaneously aborted. (This does not entail miraculous intervention, for it might just be another type of spontaneous abortion which occurs due to abnormalities in the fetus. Possession of the R-chromosome could count as another type of "abnormality".) In such a world God has strongly brought it about that (there are free persons and they always do what is right) even though, due to the limited purview of His actions, there is no free person upon whose will God has infringed. All acts are thus free, and so this situation is one consistent with the truth of (F1),

but in which (4'a1) is true. It is planinly *not* true that the only way for God to strongly bring it about that there are free persons and that they always do what is right is to create some free beings and strongly bring it about that *they* do only what is right.

One might not be too impressed with this argument of Bennett's. For, one could say, if the possession of the R-chromosome is causally necessary for wrongdoing, then the absence of the R-chromosome is causally *sufficient* for good behaviour, and so the people who *did* manage to make it into the world are not, in fact, free, as their good behaviour is causally determined by this absence. There is, then, some doubt about (F1)'s implying the falsity of (4'a1).

7.   Needless to say, if Plantinga is correct in denying (2"), our modified account of God's omniscience

(G2')   x is omnipotent if and only if x can bring about all logically possible states of affairs p such that "x brings it about that p" is logically possible (see Note 5)

needs to be modified further. Plantinga himself makes no attempt to indicate what this further modification might be, but perhaps it would be along the following lines. The basic idea behind Plantinga's denial of (2") is that God's *weak* capabilities vary from world to world. Presumably, however, His strong capabilities do not (there seems to be no reason why they should). Thus

(G2")   x is omnipotent only if x can strongly bring about all logically possible state of affairs p such that "x strongly brings it about that p" is logically possible.

(G2") does not provide a *sufficient* condition for x's being omnipotent, for there could be beings which, essentially, could strongly do only one thing, A. If the above condition *were* sufficient, and there were such beings, and they could do A, then they would be omnipotent, for it would be logically impossible that they have any further (strong) powers. However, it is not plausible to suggest that beings with such a small repertoire of strong behaviour be omnipotent.

8.   The primary reference employed is Lewis[73]. There are a few comments that need to be made about Lewis's theory. First, there is much dispute as to the coherence and usefulness of the relation of

comparitive similarity between possible worlds. Lewis provides precise criteria that this relation must satisfy (see pp48-50). We mention the existence of these conditions in order to indicate that any notion satisfying these requirements would be adequate, and to leave open the question of whether there is any such relation.

The more important point, however, is Lewis's claim that subjunctives are not any strict conditional: Every strict conditional "Necessarily, if p then q" implies "Necessarily, if p and r then q" for any proposition r. But it is possible that the following be true together:

(1)   If Otto had come, it would have been a lively party; but
(2)   if both Otto and Anna had come, it would have been a dreary party.

Hence, the statement "if p were true, then q would be true" is not equivalent to any statement of the form "Necessarily, if p then q" and so not equivalent to the strict conditional "p is causally sufficient for q". We will examine arguments in sections IV and V which seem to be based on the conflation of these different locutions.

9.   While the move from $\Box(GT_W \rightarrow GC)$ and $GC \Box\rightarrow W$ to $GT_W \Box\rightarrow W$ is
        valid, the situation is a little more subtle than it appears, for in general, the inference

$$q \Box\rightarrow r$$
$$\Box(p \rightarrow q)$$
$$\text{--------}$$
$$p \Box\rightarrow r$$

is invalid for subjunctives. (Suppose, borrowing from Lewis, that Otto is Waldo's successful rival for Anna's affections. Waldo still tags around after Anna, but never runs the risk of meeting Otto. Otto, for his own part, intensely dislikes parties (he hates having to make small-talk) so that his having been to a recent party is not only false, but decidedly far-fetched. Anna, however, almost did go. It follows that *if Anna had gone, then Waldo would have also,* for Otto would still not have gone (his dislike of parties exceeds his love for Anna, the cad!), and Waldo, knowing this, would have felt secure that he would not meet Otto, and so would have gone. Also, *Otto's and Anna's going to the party implies Anna's going* But *if Otto had gone (an unlikely event, to be*

sure), then Waldo would not have The inference is thus invalid). What is valid, however, is the inference

$$\Box(r \to q)$$
$$q \Box\to r$$
$$\Box(p \to q)$$

$$p \Box\to r$$

Where r is a possible world W, which includes a possible state of affairs q, then $\Box(W \to q)$ is true, and so the inference

$$\Diamond q$$
$$q \Box\to W$$
$$\Box(p \to q)$$

$$p \Box\to W$$

is valid. More generally, while

$$p \Box\to q$$
$$q \Box\to r$$

$$p \Box\to r$$

is not valid (Lewis calls it the <u>fallacy of transitivity</u>), the following inference is:

$$q \Diamond\to p$$
$$p \Box\to q$$
$$q \Box\to r$$

$$p \Box\to r$$

10. But is (9) logically possible? Plantinga offers no argument but thinks that it is "clearly consistent". Perhaps we can offer the following. Suppose that

(1) (a) God exists, (b) that anyone that would be created would suffer from transworld depravity, (c) that every world with free

creatures who almost always do what is right is better than (c1) any world with no free agents, and (c2) any world with free agents who do not almost always do what is right, and (d) that there is a world W in which all free perons almost always do what is right.

Then God, if He is all-good, would create a world at least as good as W. Such a world, however, would have free creatures, so that it follows from (1) that

(2)   God creates a world with free creatures.

As (1) is logically possible and entails (2), then it *is* logically possible that God exist, He create free persons, and that they all suffer from transworld depravity. (1), above, seems more clearly consistent than (II.9).

11.   This is not the only criticism of Plantinga's notion of "weak actualisation". Chernoff, for example, claims that

> Plantinga's argument encounters . . . serious problems, due to the use of counterfactuals that emply the terms "actualization" and "world", like . . . If God had actualized C, world W would be actual. (Chernoff[80],p269)

The charge is made that

> [the possible world analysis] analyses "If God had actualized world W . . . " as "In the closest world to the actual world in which God actualizes W . . . ". This is either a flat contradiction or sheer nonsense. (Chernoff[80],p269)

The core of Chernoff's complaint seems to be that Plantinga's possible world analysis of "weak actualisation" is nonsense when applied to possible worlds themselves. In reply, we attempt to provide two understandings of the locution "God can weakly actualise a possible world W".

The first, from Burch[79], is based on the Lewis understanding of counterfactuals. God can weakly actualises W if andf only if there is some state of affairs C that God can strongly actualise such that GC $\Box \rightarrow$ W. But GC $\Box \rightarrow$ W if and only if either GC is impossible or there is a

possible world W* in which GC and W obtain which is closer (to the actual world) than any world in which GC and not-W obtain. But if possible world W obtains in W*, then the two are the same, and so GC □-> W if and only if GC is impossible or GC holds in W and W is closer (to the actual world) than any GC-world (that is, a world in which GC obtains). Thus GC □-> W if and only if GC is impossible or W is the closest GC-world (to the actual world). But for God's *strong* capabilities, what is *logically possible* for God to do coincides with what God *can* do (see (G2") in Note 7). That is, God can strongly actualise C if and only if GC is logically possible. Hence

(1)   God can weakly actualise W if and only if there is some state of affairs C for which W is the closest GC-world (to the actual world).

The relation of closeness (based on comparitive similarity) between possible worlds is the subject of much dispute and so we provide a second understanding of the locution "God can weakly actualise possible world W". Again, this last is true if and only if there is some state of affairs C that God can strongly actualise such that GC □-> W. But, to say that W obtains is to say that every state of affairs p in W obtains. Hence GC □-> W is equivalent to GC □-> (for all p in W, p is true) which in turn is equivalent(?) to (for all p in W, GC □-> p). Thus

(2)   God can weakly actualise W if and only if there is some state of affairs C that God can strongly actualise such that for all states of affairs p in W, GC □-> p.

This is equivalent to

(3)   God can weakly actualise W if and only if there is some set S of states of affairs, that God can strongly actualise together, such that for all states of affairs p in W there is a Cp in S such that GCp □-> p.

The state of affairs C in (2) is the conjunction of the states of affairs of S in (3). Chernoff's complaint was that a locution such as "God can weakly actualise W" is meaningless because it involves counterfactuals which refer to (whole) possible worlds. The analysis provided by (3) shows that this is not in fact a problem because such locutions are equivalent to statements involving counterfactuals as innocuous as "if God were to now set off the alarm (Cp), then Anna would awake and have

cornflakes for breakfast (p)". Chernoff's complaint is unfounded.

12. Burch gives a particularly succinct proof of this statement by employing (1) of Note 11. He firstly shows that

(1)   If God can actualise W, then $GT_w \square\rightarrow W$.

For suppose that there is some state of affairs C such that GC is possible and $GC \square\rightarrow W$. The W is the nearest possible world containing GC. Hence GT_w contains GC. (GC is possible by hypothesis. Hence by definition, T_w includes C, and so GT_w includes GC.) Hence W is the nearest possible world containing GT_w. (If not, then there is a closer possible world W^* containing GT_w and so also GC - which is not possible.) Hence $GT_w \square\rightarrow W$. It is then shown that

(2)   If GC is possible and $GC \square\rightarrow W$ and $GC \square\rightarrow W^*$ then $W = W^*$.

As GC is possible W is the closest possible world containing GC. As is W^*. Hence $W = W^*$. But from this it follows that

(3)   If God can actualise both W and W^*, then $T_w = T_{w^*}$ if and only if $W = W^*$.

For suppose that $T_w = T_{w^*}$, then as God can actualise W and W^*, we get $GT_w \square\rightarrow W$ and $GT_{w^*} \square\rightarrow W^*$, and so $GT_w \square\rightarrow W^*$. Hence $W = W^*$. The converse is trivial.

13. For if the "depends" in (9') is to be understood in such a way as to make (12) true, then it appears to be a more particular version of the claim that

(9")   if it is not possible that p be true and that x do A, and p is true (and so x doesn't do A), then p's truth depends on x's not doing A.

However, the conjunction of (9") and (12) entails that explanations of action do not imply the act in question. This view is at odds with various accounts of explanation, where to explain q is to produce some suitable p_1 to p_n which jointly entail q. Thus to explain why x murdered a dozen people one might say that x had the R chromosome, and that all people with this chromosome are (or will become) mass-murderers.

This issue of explanation is a complex one, but these considerations seem to cast some doubt upon a crucial premise, (9), of Adams's argument.

However, this is not the end of the matter. Theists claim that God didn't refrain from creating free beings because, in part, (8) was true. But what follows from

(10') (18) implies that God did not refrain from creating free beings

is in fact much stronger than this, namely that He didn't refrain from creating free beings *only because* (8) was true. This no theist wants to accept, for it would be inconsistent with their more detailed claim that He didn't refrain from creating free beings because (8) was true *and because* He is all-good and so desires the best for all his creatures. If (8)'s being true implies God's not refraining from creating free beings, then it would the total explanation of God's doing this. Thus, *pace* Adams, it *would* be an explanation, but one that no theist could accept, for it allows no room for God's goodness as part of the explanation. The argument is thus:

(10') (8) implies that God does not refrain from creating free beings.
(11) (8)'s truth partially explains why God did not refrain from creating free beings
(12) If p partially explains q ,and p implies q, then p totally explains q. Thus
(13) (8)'s truth totally explains why God did not refrain from creating free beings.

The theist has a problem, as (10') and (12) seem to be true, and (11) and the negation of (13) are part of the theist's doctrine.

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