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SOME PUZZLES ABOUT MOLINIST CONDITIONALS

William Hasker has been one of the most trenchant and insightful critics of the revival of Molinism. He has focused on the "freedom problem", a set of challenges designed to show that Molinism does not secure a place for genuinely free human action (HASKER 1986, 1995, 1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2011). These challenges focus on a key element in the Molinist story: the counterfactual (or subjunctive) conditionals of creaturely freedom. According to Molinism, these conditionals have contingent truth-values that are knowable to God prior to His decision of what world to actualize. This divine "middle knowledge" is supposed to enable God to execute a detailed plan for world history without any loss of creaturely freedom. Hasker has argued that this middle knowledge nonetheless deprives us of the power to do otherwise than we do, a crucial element in human freedom and responsibility.

I generally agree with Hasker's criticism of Molinism, although I approach these questions of freedom and providence from a Thomist rather than an Open Theist standpoint. I hope to accomplish three things in this paper. First, I want to step back a bit and explore the nature of the conditionals of creaturely free decision-making (the CCFs), bringing out some of the difficulties in delimiting their scope and nature. Second, I will explore the implications of different answers to an important question that has not been addressed in the literature: whether we have counterfactual power over the conditionals of divine freedom. And, third, I would like to recommend to Molinists a revision that offers a solution to the freedom problem.

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WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONALS OF CREATURELY FREEDOM?

The conditionals of creaturely freedom (the CCFs) are a class of conditionals in the subjunctive mood with possible choices or actions by human beings represented in the consequent position. They predict infallibly exactly what free creatures would do under the specified "circumstances", and God is supposed to know the truth-values of all of these CCFs in a logical moment prior to any of His decisions about what possible world to actualize through His own actions.

But what class of conditionals comprises the CCFs? Molinists assume, as they should, that the subjunctive conditionals involved satisfy Robert Stalnaker's logic, including the Law of Conditional Excluded Middle. That is, if P is an arbitrary proposition and A is a proposition asserting that some human has freely taken some action, then it must, as a matter of logical necessity, be the case that $(P > A)$ or that $(P > {\sim}A)$. David Lewis's alternative semantics VC denies this necessity, but Lewis's semantics captures something like "if p were the case, then q would *have to be* the case", rather than the simpler "if p were the case, then q *would be* the case". If God's Middle Knowledge of the CCFs are to give Him the capacity to fashion a complete and utterly reliable plan for creation, the Conditional Law of Excluded Middle (CLEM) must hold. Otherwise, His Middle Knowledge would have gaps which would render some possible plans uncertain.

Not all subjunctive conditionals with human actions in the consequent can be among the CCFs, however. Some of these subjunctive conditionals take on truth-values only after God has decided upon a plan. For example, let T be a tautology or other necessarily true proposition, and let A represent the occurrence of some free human action by S. If God's Middle Knowledge included knowing either $(T > A)$ or $(T > {\sim}A)$, then God would already know, prior to deciding to create anything at all, whether S would actually perform action A or not in the future. Making the antecedent contingent won't solve the problem. Let C be the contingent proposition that God decides to create something. If God's Middle Knowledge included either $(C > A)$ or $(C > {\sim}A)$, then God would know, given He created anything at all, whether S would perform A or not. Such Middle Knowledge would deprive God of His freedom to choose whom to create and in what situations to put them (see RUBIO 2015).

These facts are well known to Molinists, but there have been relatively few attempts to delimit precisely the class of CCFs. Edward Wierenga and Thomas Flint are the most prominent exceptions. According to Wierenga

(2011), the antecedent of a CCF should include all of the facts that lie in the past (or the backward light cone) of the choice of performing or refraining from performing some action A. Flint has suggested that the antecedent of a CCF should include a "complete" characterization of the situation in which some creature makes a free choice (FLINT 1998, 47). This completeness seems to consist in listing all of the *causal factors* that are *relevant* to the creature's decision-making process. These are significantly different proposals, since much of the past might be causally irrelevant to a present decision, and it's conceivable that something in the future, contemporaneous with the choice, or outside of time altogether might be causally relevant. In either case, it is important that the antecedent be "complete", because subjunctive conditionals do not satisfy the logical rule of the Strengthening of the Antecedent. A conditional $(A > B)$ could be true, even though $((A \& C) > B)$ is false. For God to receive reliable guidance about the predictable consequences of one of His plans, He must consult subjunctive conditionals whose antecedents are complete, at least in the sense that the CLEM is validated in each case and no further strengthening of the antecedent could change the conditional's truth value.

This raises an immediate problem for Molinists. Why assume, then, that there are *any* antecedents that will do the job? Why couldn't it be the case that for every subjunctive conditional of the form $(A > B)$, if the truth of A does not necessitate the truth of B, there is another subjunctive conditional of the form $((A \& C) > {\sim}B)$ of the same type? Why assume that there *are* "complete" conditions of the kind required by the Molinist?

In addition, it is crucially important that the truth or falsity of the antecedent be settled prior to the settling of the truth-value of the consequent. The order of settling here reflects the process of God's deliberation. A conditional of the form $(A > B)$ will be helpful to God if and only if God can say to Himself, in the moment prior to reaching decision about what to create:

> If I suppose that I will make it the case (either directly or indirectly) that A, I can count on B's also being the case (even though A's truth does not necessitate B's).

God is supposed to know this by somehow anticipating what a possible creature would do "under certain conditions". But what are these conditions?

Before considering the proposals of Wierenga and Flint, let's take up the null hypothesis, that is, the thesis that there are no constraints on the facts that can appear in the antecedent and consequent of a CCF. This hypothesis

will undermine divine providence, resulting in a Molinistic version of Open Theism.

If this form of circularity were factual, God would never be able to strongly actualize any of the antecedents of the subjunctive conditionals of freedom, and so He would never be able to "weakly actualize" (in Plantinga's sense) any specific possible world. He could only weakly actualize some class of worlds, running the unforeseeable risk that results from the fact that the actualization of any particular world depends on the circular determination of the full antecedents of freedom by the free choices of those very creatures.

Suppose, for example, that two persons S1 and S2 have the power to perform and not to perform two distinct, mutually independent actions A and B at time t, and suppose that the relevant conditionals of freedom are these:

(1)   If S2 were in circumstances (C & A), then S2 would freely choose B at t.
(2)   If S2 were in circumstances (C & ~A), then S2 would not freely choose B at t.
(3)   If S1 were in circumstances (C & B), then S1 would freely choose ~A at t.
(4)   If S1 were in circumstances (C & ~B), then S1 would not freely choose A at t.

Suppose further God knows from eternity past the truth of all four conditionals, and He is able to create S1 and S2 and to strongly actualize C. However, God cannot strongly actualize either the world in which S1 and S2 freely do A and B (respectively), or the world in which neither S1 nor S2 performs them. Despite having complete Middle Knowledge, in such a world God lacks the power of meticulous Providence. We could label a world in which this holds an *Open Molinist world*. The question for Molinists is: How do they know that there are no Open Molinist worlds? How, in particular, do they know that ours is not one?

Consequently, the Molinist must adopt some proposal to explain why such circularities are excluded.

Let's first consider Wierenga's proposal (WIERENGA 2011). As long as time itself is not circular, Wierenga's proposal will exclude the kind of circularity that gives rise to Open Molinism. I will raise two difficulties for his account. First, as I mentioned above, what is crucial for CCFs is that the antecedent be something that God can settle in a logical moment prior to the creature's settling which free action shall be performed. However, there is no reason to think that this order of settling must respect the temporal order within creation. Nothing prevents God from settling that some particular event will occur before settling the chain of events that precede it temporally.

Take, for example, a case of divinely inspired prophecy of the future. God can settle that He will give Peter three opportunities to deny Jesus be–fore settling whether or not He will provide Peter with a prediction (in Jesus' mouth) of Peter's future denials. The relevant CCF would seem to be something like this:

(PD) If Peter were to deny Jesus three times, and Jesus were to inform Peter of these denials in advance, Peter would (at the time of Jesus' prediction) freely promise not to do so.

This seems to be one of the CCFs that God would have to consult in determining whether the actual world is a feasible one for Him, but the antecedent includes a fact (Peter's future denials) that is later than the free action mentioned in the consequent (Peter's promise). Even if we were to delete this fact from the statement of the antecedent, the remaining conjunct will still metaphysically entail those future facts, given the infallibility of Jesus' predictions.

Second, here's an even bigger problem for Wierenga's account. Since God knows all of the truth-values of the CCFs prior to creating the universe, it seems that facts about these truth-values lie in the past of any creaturely action B. So, if (A > B) is a CCF, it should be the case that the truth of the proposition A necessitates the actual truth-values of all CCFs, since the facts about those truth-values lie in the past of B. But this quickly leads to the result that all CCFs are necessarily true if they are true at all. This means that God's knowledge of the CCFs is part of His natural knowledge of necessary truths, and so there is no Middle Knowledge.

Here's the proof that any true CCF is necessarily true (with '>' for the subjunctive conditional, '$\rightarrow$' for the material conditional, and '$\Box$' for metaphysical necessity):

1. Suppose (A > B) is a true CCF
2. The fact that (A > B) is in the past of B
3. $\Box$ (A $\rightarrow$ (A > B)) (1, 2, by maximality of A with respect to the past of B)
4. Suppose A is true in world w1
5. (A $\rightarrow$ (A > B)) in w1 (3)
6. (A > B) in w1 (4, 5)
7. B in w1 (4, 6, MP for >)
8. $\Box$ (A $\rightarrow$ B) (4–7, generalization over worlds)
9. $\Box\Box$ (A $\rightarrow$ B) (8, axiom 4)
10. $\Box$ (A > B) (9, strict conditional implies >)

Let's now consider the alternative suggestion of Flint: the antecedent of a CCF should entail the existence of the causal factors that are relevant to the free action cited in the consequent. Like Wierenga's this rules out vicious circularities that would undermine divine providence.

If Molinists were to concede that either the truth of the CCF or God's middle knowledge of that truth are causal factors relevant to the free action, then the proof above would still apply and all CCFs will turn out to be necessarily true or necessarily false. Consequently, Molinists deny that there is any causal relevance between the truth of the conditional or God's middle knowledge and the relevant free action, so Flint's proposal seems to avoid this problem.

There are, however, three difficulties.

(1) Why should the antecedents of CCFs be supposed to satisfy this causal completeness condition?
(2) What does *causal relevancy* mean in relation to a free action?
(3) The account is subject to a dilemma, depending on whether the antecedents encode facts about *types* of free-choice situations or *token* decisions.

First, it is difficult to see how the Molinist can give a justification for the assumption that all CCFs have antecedents that entail all and only those facts that are casually relevant to the consequent (the free action). If we were compatibilists and soft determinists, we could look to a set of causal laws and define the CCFs as those whose antecedents were sufficient, in conjunction with the causal laws, to determine a unique "free" decision. However, Molinists are incompatibilists and libertarians, who deny the existence of such determining laws.

Flintian Molinists must suppose that if C is causally irrelevant to B, it cannot, by being added to the antecedent, affect the truth-value of a CCF with B as its consequent. But, why not? Why should *causal* relevancy be a necessary condition on relevancy to the truth-value of a *non-causal* CCF? Dean Zimmerman has argued (2009, 2011a, 2011b), plausibly, that if the truth-values of the CCFs are not derived from the application of causal laws to initial conditions (as they cannot be, for incompatibilists), then we cannot rule out any proposition as semantically irrelevant. This would lead to what Zimmerman labels *voodoo conditionals*, CCFs that which free action would occur depend on tiny events occurring in the remote past or far outside the backward light cone, events without any causal connection to the free action chosen. As Zimmerman argues, such voodoo conditionals are incompatible

with genuine human freedom, since they would mean that in many cases God could manipulate us effectively by actualizing tiny, causally disconnected facts in order to obtain the CCFs that He wants.

Second, what does "causally relevant" mean here? It cannot mean *indispensable part of a causally necessitating sufficient condition* (Mackie's INUS condition, see MACKIE 1965), because we are assuming that there are no such necessitating conditions where free actions are concerned. The only way to make sense of causal relevancy in the context of indeterminism would be to suppose that the causal laws of nature define objective probabilities of various free choices. Then we could define the causal relevancy of a proposition C to a possible free action event B relative to background conditions A in the following way:

$$C \text{ is } causally \ relevant \ to \text{ B relative to A}$$
$$\text{iff} (A \ \& \ B \ \& \ C) \ \& \ \text{Prob}(B/A) \neq \text{Prob}(B/(A \ \& \ C))$$

We can then define being causally relevant *tout court* as being causally relevant relative to some background proposition. This account requires our assuming that libertarian free will is compatible with causally-grounded objective probabilities attaching to our choices, which is a somewhat controversial assumption. And, in any case, it is still unclear why the antecedents of CCFs should be limited to causally relevant factors.

Third, Flint's proposal is subject to a dilemma. I can think of only two ways of ruling out such voodoo conditionals and vindicating Flint's proposal: one that focuses on types of creaturely free actions and one that relies instead on the identity conditions on token free actions. Let's call these the Type and Token accounts, respectively.

On the Type account, CCFs record how a given possible creature would respond to a particular type of choice situation. Instead of talking about causal relevancy, we should modify Flint's proposal to include all and only those factors that are phenomenally relevant, relevant to the free creature from a first-personal, agentive perspective. Consequently, the relevant type of situation should be defined entirely in terms of what is certainly true (introspectively, mnemonically, and perceptually) from the perspective of the creature at the moment of decision. This seems like a principled, if somewhat speculative, way of delimiting the contents of the antecedents of CCFs.

However, the Type account is subject to a devastating objection: Dean Zimmerman's repeatability argument (ZIMMERMAN 2009, 64). Let S be a pos-

sible free creature, T a complete choice-situation type, and B a type of free action available to S in T. Suppose that (T(S) > B(S)) is a true CCF about S, and suppose further that S encounters type T repeatedly in the actual world, say 1000 times. Under these assumptions, God could predict with certainty that S would freely choose B every single time, and this seems clearly to be incompatible with supposing that S is making a free and genuinely undetermined on each occasion.

Let's turn then to the Token account. On this view, both the antecedent and the consequent refer to token events or actions, each with its own individual essence or haecceity. We now have a principled way of defining the CCFs: a conditional (A > B) is a CCF just in case B states that some particular token-action b occurs, and A entails all and only those propositions that are both separate from B and are metaphysically necessitated by B. A proposition F is *separate from* proposition B if and only if F is an atomic proposition and there is no class C of atomic propositions containing F such that (i) the class C metaphysically entails B, and (ii) the class C − {F} does not entail B. Alternatively, we could define separateness in terms of grounding: proposition F is separate from B iff neither proposition is even partially grounded by the other.

Why can we suppose that there is, for each possible action b, some antecedent meeting this condition? This supposition would make sense if we adopted a version of origins essentialism about possible actions. For an action x in world w to be identical to action b, x must have in w exactly the same causal factors relevant to its occurrence that b has in the actual world. If God is considering whether or not action b would occur as a result of a possible divine action, He need only consider those worlds that are compatible with the essential origins of b, and so we have good reason to suppose that the existence of b should necessitate the CCF's antecedent, and it makes sense to suppose that the antecedent should include all of those causally prior conditions required for the identity of b. This increases the likelihood that the antecedent will be sufficient to distinguish b from similar but numerically distinct actions. The antecedent will then contain everything metaphysically necessary for the occurrence of the action, except for the free choice of the possible creature.

However, the Token account doesn't give us exactly Flint's condition on antecedents. Instead, it gives us something like the transitive closure of his condition. The causal factors necessary for the origin of action b will be events with their own necessary origins. The antecedent must include every-

thing causally relevant to the token action in the consequent, together with everything causally relevant to those conditions, and so on potentially *ad infinitum*. Consequently, the antecedent will almost certainly include remote causes that are not directly causally relevant to the consequent. And this leaves the Token account wide open to Zimmerman's voodoo conditionals. My free action on an occasion could very well depend counterfactually on some very remote causal antecedent of my action, a remote cause of which I am unaware and which has left no distinctive mark on my choice situation.

The existence of such voodoo conditionals seems plainly inconsistent with the creature's freedom. If God can manipulate remote conditions in such a way as to induce a creature to behave always in the ways desired by God, then the creature is no longer making a real difference. One consequence is that we can never know whether we are truly acting freely, since we are never in a position to rule out the existence of relevant voodoo conditionals.

In addition, as Zimmerman pointed out, the possibility of voodoo conditionals means that it is possible that God could find Himself in a Molinist galaxy (with its characteristic set of true CCFs) in which no feasible world contains any genuine freedom. This is much worse than His being in a situation in which no desirable or ultimately chooseable world contains such free creatures, since this involves a profound restriction on God's power as such.

Moreover, this Token account leads us back to the conditions needed for a proof of the metaphysical necessity of all CCFs. If God's Middle Knowledge is causally prior to creaturely free actions, then the state of God's Middle Knowledge in a world will be essential to all of the token actions in that world. Once again, the antecedent of any true CCF in the actual world will have to necessitate the actual state of God's Middle Knowledge, which will that it must necessitate the actual truth values of all CCFs. In response, Molinists will have to argue that the essential origin of a free action should not include facts about the divine, primary causation of that action, but only facts about creaturely, secondary causation. Although not entirely implausible, this stipulation seems somewhat ad hoc.

DO MOLINIST CONDITIONALS PERMIT THE POSSIBILITY OF ACTING OTHERWISE?

In one of his most recent articles against Molinism, William Hasker (2017) has couched the freedom problem in terms of what is possible or im-

possible for an agent in the circumstances of choice. The argument, which is a close analogue to van Inwagen's Consequence Argument (VAN INWAGEN, 1986), goes something like this (HASKER 2017, 102–3):

1. If S refrains from b, the counterfactual (A > ~B) is entailed by the world's past history.
2. If the counterfactual is entailed by the world's past history, it is impossible in the circumstances for S to do b.
3. If it is impossible in the circumstances for S to do b, then S lacks the power to do so.
4. Therefore, every creature lacks the power to do what it actually refrains from doing.

We could also replace "the world's past history" in premises 1 and 2 with "facts causally prior to b".

The standard Molinist reply to this sort of argument is to challenge premise 2, arguing that it is possible for a creature to act otherwise than is entailed by the relevant and true CCF. Thomas Flint puts the point in terms of the creature's "counterfactual power". The truth or falsity of the relevant CCF is within the free creature's *counterfactual power*, in the sense that there is something the creature can freely do (such as action b), which is such that, if the creature did it, the corresponding CCF, namely, (A > ~B), would be false.

This notion of counterfactual power is closely related to another of Flint's notions: resilience. A true proposition P is *resilient for* a creature S in circumstances C if it is not within S's counterfactual power in C to make P false.

Just as there are conditionals of creaturely freedom (CCFs), there are also subjunctive conditionals of divine freedom (CDFs), conditionals which record what God would do and not do under various possible situations. The relevant situation for God is the Molinist *galaxy* in which He finds Himself, that is, the actual, contingent truth-values of all of the CCFs.

We can now ask an important question, one which I do not find discussed in the recent literature: are the truth-values of the CDFs within the counterfactual power of free creatures, or are they always resilient for them? This question will set up another dilemma for the Molinist.

On the first horn of the dilemma, the conditionals of divine freedom are within the counterfactual power of creatures. This is the horn which, I believe, is tacitly accepted by all contemporary Molinists (except, notably, CUNNINGHAM 2016). Let's suppose that the CCF (A > ~B) is true, where B asserts that some free creature S performs action b. We can assume that it is

within S's power in circumstance A to perform action b. In that case, the falsity of the conditional $(A > {\sim}B)$ and the truth of $(A > B)$ are also within S's counterfactual power. We can further suppose that it is important to God's actual plan that S refrain from performing b. That is, we can assume that if God knew that $(A > B)$ were true, instead of knowing (as He did) that $(A > {\sim}B)$ was true, then God would have adopted an entirely different plan, one in which circumstances A would not have arrived. That is, we can assume the following CDF: $((A > B) > {\sim}A)$.

But, in order for S to freely perform b in circumstance A, both A and B must be true. This can happen only if a different CDF were true, one of the form $((A > B) > A)$, a conditional which is inconsistent with $((A > B) > {\sim}A)$, given the possible truth of $(A > B)$. So, which conditional of divine freedom is true is within S's counterfactual freedom. The CDFs are *not* resilient for creatures.

But, if that's so, then by symmetry of reasoning, the conditionals of creaturely freedom are not resilient for God, either. It is within God's counterfactual power to make the truth-values of CDFs other than they actually are. The result is what Jon Kvanvig (2002) calls "maverick Molinism". But this contradicts a fundamental assumption of Molinism, an assumption that is crucial to sustaining creaturely freedom.

Now, the maverick Molinism accepts that the CCFs are *pre-volitional* for God, in the sense that God does not *cause* them to have the values they do. Nonetheless, just as it is impossible for a creature to cause its own CCFs to have the values they do, and yet these CCFs are still within the creature's counterfactual power, so, too, are the values of the CCFs within God's counterfactual power, even though He cannot *cause* them to have the values they do.

Given maverick Molinism, it remains true that God's choice of a providential plan is constrained by contingent facts beyond His control. However, which galaxy of CCFs is actual is *not* one of the things beyond God's counterfactual control. By choosing one plan or another, God is able to exercise counterfactual power over the truth-values of all the CCFs, and this is clearly inconsistent with creaturely freedom. God's choice of a providential plan involves His consulting a decision matrix. For each possible divine action d, there is a Molinist galaxy g that would result if God were to perform d. That is, the subjunctive conditional $(D > G)$ is true. The combination of D and G fixes with certainty all of the contingent features of the resulting world. But it is clear that in deciding which action to perform,

God is also deciding which galaxy shall be actual, and in doing this He is in fact choosing (under constraint) which CCFs shall be true. And that is incompatible with the freedom of the agents God creates.[1]

This horn of the dilemma faces one more objection. We are supposing that human beings have counterfactual power over the truth-values of CDFs. If creature S had the unexercised power to perform action b in the circumstance of divine action A, then S has the counterfactual power to make true the CDF $((A > B) > A)$. However, what if there were no chooseable divine plan in which God actualizes A in a world in which $(A > B)$ was true? What if God would have no good reason so to actualize A, given $(A > B)$? This certainly seems possible, but this would mean that creature S has the counterfactual power to make God act irrationally, which seems absurd.

So, let's turn to the other horn of the dilemma. Let's suppose that the CCFs are resilient for God. God does not have counterfactual power over which galaxy is actual. Now we have to ask: Under this assumption, do creatures have the power to do otherwise than they do? And the answer is: generally speaking, no.

If the CCFs are resilient for God, then the CDFs are also resilient for creatures. It would surely be a bizarre result if we had more counterfactual power over God's conditionals than He has over ours. Suppose again that S actually refrains from doing b in circumstance A, and suppose (as seems generally true) that the corresponding CDF were true: $((A > B) > {\sim}A)$, that is, if God were to know that S would do b in circumstance A, He wouldn't have actualized circumstance A.

Given these facts, and given the resilience of the CDF, it is not within S's counterfactual power to do b in circumstance A. S faces something like a cosmic, God-based Frankfurt situation. If S were inclined to do b in A, she would be prevented from doing so by God's refusal to actualize the relevant circumstance A.

There is a further reason for thinking that free creatures do not have the possibility of doing otherwise. If the CDFs and the CCFs pertaining to other creatures are resilient for me, why shouldn't the CCFs pertaining to me also be resilient for me? It seems that symmetry should require that either I have

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[1] If we assume the validity of a principle of contraction, namely, that $(A > B)$ is metaphysically equivalent to $(A > (A > B))$, then God's counterfactual power will be constrained in such a way that He could not counterfactually change the truth-value of any CCF with antecedent A by actualizing A. However, He could, by actualizing A, counterfactually change the truth-value of any CCF with an antecedent not equivalent to A, and that suffices to undermine our creaturely autonomy.

counterfactual power over all CDFs and CCFs, or over none of them. But if agent S lacks counterfactual power over her own CCFs, then there is no world available for S in which S performs action B, since the resilient truth of the CCF (A > ~B) rules it out. And this is indeed a consequence that Cunningham accepts (CUNNINGHAM 2016, 219).

Could we nonetheless suppose that S was free in refraining from b, even though there is no alternative possibility available in the circumstances (which now include the A-preventing CDF)? Harry Frankfurt (1969) of course offered this sort of thought experiment in an attempt to pry apart significant freedom and the possibility of acting otherwise in the circumstances. This is the possibility broached by Cunningham.

But it is one thing to admit the possibility of an occasional and bizarre situation in which freedom and the possibility of acting otherwise come apart, and another thing to admit that significant freedom could exist in a world in which creatures rarely if ever enjoy the possibility of acting otherwise. The latter seems clearly unacceptable. In such a world, creatures could not be said to be making a real difference through their free choices. They couldn't be said to be genuinely responsible for the virtues and vices they acquire through those choices.

THE MOLINIST'S LEAST BAD OPTION

In this final section, I will generously offer to the Molinist a repair that will avoid most, if not all, of these difficulties. The repair involves an assumption about subjunctive conditionals that is generally accepted without question, namely, the validity of *modus ponens* for the conditional (an assumption that corresponds to weak centering in David Lewis's semantics). If we give up this assumption, it is easy to suppose that creatures have the power to act in ways contrary to the corresponding CCFs.

However, won't this proposal destroy God's providence? What good is God's middle knowledge of the subjunctive conditionals, if God cannot apply *modus ponens* to those same conditionals? It is crucial to distinguish between the assumption that *modus ponens* applies without exception and with objective certainty to all subjunctive conditionals in the actual world (and all other "normal" worlds), and the much stronger assumption that *modus ponens* holds universally in *every* possible world.

We have to distinguish between anticipating with objective certainty that there are no exceptions to subjunctive *modus ponens* in the actual world, and

supposing that subjunctive *modus ponens* is necessarily valid. The first is an epistemological claim, while the second is a claim about metaphysical necessity. There are many propositions that we can anticipate with certainty and even know to be true in the actual world even though the propositions are only contingently true. Here are a few examples:

> I exist.
> I am here now.
> I am being appeared to redly.
> The standard meter bar is one meter long.
> The actual world is actual.

I am not claiming that we can be certain that we can apply *modus ponens* to CCFs in the actual world in *the same way* that we know these facts. My point is only that we must distinguish objective certainty from metaphysical necessity.

One might ask: how can it be objectively certain the actual world is a normal one, given the real metaphysical possibility of errant worlds? This question doesn't seem any harder to answer than the question of how God has Middle Knowledge itself. The certain normality of the actual world may seem ungrounded, but so are the CCFs.

Suppose that God knows the CCF $(A > \sim B)$ through His Middle Knowledge, and suppose that He knows that He will actualize A. As a result, God knows that it is objectively certain that B will be false, i.e., that creature S will in fact refrain from action b. Nonetheless, S has the power to do b in circumstance A. There is a possible world w in which $(A > \sim B)$, A, and B are all true. In that world, S succeeds in frustrating God's plan. If we are to suppose that God's plan is both certain and contingently actualized by free creatures, we must assume that such a world is really possible.

Does this mean that S has the power to falsify God's beliefs? Isn't that incompatible with the impossibility of God's erring? In my proposed revision of Molinism, God does not believe in w that B is false. He believes the CCF $(A > \sim B)$, and that conditional is in fact *true* in w. He believes that it is objectively certain that w (as the actual world) is a normal world, and it is objectively certain that w is normal, even though in fact w is not normal. Unlike knowledge, objective certainty is not a factive operator; at least, *p* does not follow with metaphysical necessity from *it is certain that p*. God's plan in w includes the eventual falsity of B, and that plan is indeed frustrated by S's defection from the CCF. But the possible frustration of God's plan,

when that plan is predicated upon the contingent cooperation of free creatures, is fully compatible with both God's infallibility and His omnipotence.[2]

Reformed Molinism corresponds closely to the Ockhamist version of branching time (LUCAS 1989, ØHRSTRØM 1984). The world branches into alternative future, with one "thin red line" distinguished as the actual future. In addition, at each counterfactual event, an additional thin red line represents what would have been the actual future had that counterfactual event occurred.

Nuel Belnap and his collaborators (BELNAP 1992; BELNAP and GREEN 1994; BELNAP, PERLOFF, and XU 2001, 166–68; RESTALL 2010) noted a serious problem with the Thin Red Line theory: it violates an intuitive principle of temporal logic, namely, that if event is actually happening now, then it was always the case that it was going to happen. In Priorean temporal logic, this is expressed by the axiom schema ($p \rightarrow HGp$). On Thin Red Line theories, like reformed Molinism, this principle fails on all counterfactual branches. If creature S were to act contrary to the actual truth-value of the relevant CCF, by doing action b in circumstance A despite the truth of ($A >$ ~B), then action b happens even though at every point in the past it was *not going to happen* in the future.

Once again, I would emphasize the difference between the certainty of a principle's holding in the actual world and the necessity of its holding in every world. We can know with certainty that if action b happens (in the actual world), then it was always the case that it was going to happen, even though there are possible worlds in which b happens even though it was always the case that b was not going to happen. Both God and we can be certain that the actual world is not one of those errant worlds, without negating the real possibility of those worlds.

This repair clearly solves the freedom problems posed by Robert Adams and William Hasker. There are real possible world in which free creatures act contrary to the pre-determined CCFs. God's certainty about the actual future is predicated upon His certainty that the actual world is not one of those errant worlds. For similar reasons, my proof above that the CCFs are

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[2] Let me be more precise. If God is timeless, then He timelessly knows in w that A, ($A >$ ~B), and B are all true. He also knows, timelessly, that the plan He made in the logical moment of deciding to do A has been frustrated by S's choosing to do b. If God exists in time, then at all times in the past, He knew that b was not going to happen, and, at the time at which b does happen, God knows that, too. So, in the bizarro world w, God has true beliefs at all points in time. It's the facts that are unusual: the fact that in w b was never going to happen, and then b happened anyway.

necessarily true is averted, since the proof depended crucially on subjunctive *modus ponens*.

According to this theory, no one has counterfactual power over CCFs or CDFs. Maverick Molinism is thereby avoided, and so God cannot be responsible for any of the actual values of the CCFs.

However, reformed Molinism does not succeed in avoiding the problem of voodoo conditionals. The most plausible account, in my view, of the non-circularity of CCFs is the Token account given above, and that account clearly opens the door to voodoo conditionals. Molinists might hope, with some reason, that such voodoo conditionals are rare. Perhaps in most cases slight differences in causal history do not translate into a numerical distinction between possible actions. If God can control our actions only by making large changes in the causal history of those actions, His control would be so constrained by multiple considerations of the value of resulting states as to falsify the hypothesis that God can *freely manipulate* us. However, in order to avoid sorites paradoxes, we will have to concede that there are some sharp boundaries between the identity-conditions of distinct possible actions, and along these sharp boundaries slight differences in history would mean a different token decision. So, there seems to be room for at least some voodoo conditionals.

This means admitting that it is possible, although perhaps unlikely, that God could find Himself in a Molinist galaxy in which significant creaturely freedom is impossible. But that might be a price the Molinists would be willing to pay.

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SOME PUZZLES ABOUT MOLINIST CONDITIONALS

S u m m a r y

William Hasker has been one of the most trenchant and insightful critics of the revival of Molinism. He has focused on the "freedom problem", a set of challenges designed to show that Molinism does not secure a place for genuinely free human action (HASKER 1986, 1995, 1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2011). These challenges focus on a key element in the Molinist story: the counterfactual (or subjunctive) conditionals of creaturely freedom. According to Molinism, these conditionals have contingent truth-values that are knowable to God prior to His decision of what world to actualize. This divine "middle knowledge" is supposed to enable God to execute a detailed plan for world history without any loss of creaturely freedom. Hasker has argued that this middle knowledge nonetheless deprives us of the power to do otherwise than we do, a crucial element in human freedom and responsibility.

I hope to accomplish three things in this paper. First, I want to step back a bit and explore the nature of the conditionals of creaturely free decision-making (the CCFs), bringing out some of the difficulties in delimiting their scope and nature. Second, I will explore the implications of different answers to an important question that has not been addressed in the literature: whether we have counterfactual power over the conditionals of divine freedom. And, third, I would like to recommend to Molinists a revision that offers a solution to the freedom problem.

Keywords: Molinism; subjunctive conditionals; counterfactuals of freedom; divine freedom; freedom of the will; Middle Knowledge; incompatibilism; circularity; Harry Frankfurt; Ockham; temporal logic.

WYBRANE PROBLEMY
MOLINISTYCZNYCH OKRESÓW WARUNKOWYCH

Streszczenie

William Hasker był jednym z najbardziej stanowczych i wnikliwych krytyków odrodzenia molinizmu. Skupił się on na „problemie wolności", czyli na grupie wyzwań, które mają pokazać, że molinizm nie pozostawia miejsca na prawdziwie wolne działanie człowieka (HASKER 1986, 1995, 1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2011). Wyzwania te koncentrują się na kluczowym elemencie narracji tego jezuickiego ruchu: kontrfaktycznych okresach warunkowych wolności stworzeń. Według molinistów, te okresy warunkowe posiadają wartości logiczne, które były znane Bogu przed jego decyzją o tym, który możliwy świat chce urzeczywistnić. Ta Boska „wiedza pośrednia" ma umożliwić Bogu realizację szczegółowego planu dla historii świata bez naruszenia wolności stworzeń. Hasker twierdził jednak, że owa wiedza pośrednia pozbawia nas zdolności do czynienia inaczej (niż czynimy), co jest przecież kluczowym elementem ludzkiej wolności i odpowiedzialności.

Autor artykułu stawia sobie trzy cele. Po pierwsze, zamierza zbadać naturę okresów warunkowych wolnych decyzji stworzeń, ukazując niektóre trudności w określeniu ich zakresu i natury. Po drugie, chce rozpatrzyć konsekwencje różnych odpowiedzi na ważne pytanie, które jak dotąd nie zostało poruszone w literaturze przedmiotu: czy posiadamy kontrfaktyczną władzę nad okresami warunkowymi boskiej wolności? I po trzecie, autor chciałby zarekomendować molinistom pewną poprawkę, która pozwoli na rozwiązanie problemu wolności.

Słowa kluczowe: molinizm; okresy warunkowe; kontrfaktyczne okresy warunkowe wolności; Boska wolność; wolność woli; wiedza pośrednia; inkompatybilizm; cyrkularność; Harry Frankfurt; Ockham; logika temporalna.