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How We Could Have Libertarian Free Will Even if God Were a Total Know-It-All About the Future[1]

1. INTRODUCTION

In this paper, we'll argue that libertarianism (i.e., roughly, the thesis that human beings have an indeterministic, libertarian sort of free will) is compatible with God's foreknowledge (i.e., the thesis that God exists and has infallible knowledge of everything about the future).[2] We'll do this by arguing for an even more uncommon thesis: that libertarianism, God's foreknowledge, and eternalism (i.e., roughly, the thesis that reality is a 4-dimensional block and that past, present, and future objects all exist) are all compatible with each other.[3]

Our central idea is that eternalism provides an explanatory stepping stone between libertarianism and God's foreknowledge. Indeed, we'll argue that (a) eternalism *entails* that an omniscient God would have infallible knowledge of what we're going to do in the future even if

[1] We would like to thank Nina Emery, Ned Markosian, Michaela McSweeney, Mike Rea, Kate Ritchie, Jack Spencer, and Patrick Todd for comments on an earlier version of this paper.
[2] There's a famous cluster of arguments—the "Mind argument", the "luck objection", and so on—that aim to show that libertarianism is incoherent (these arguments go back at least to Hobbes; see, e.g., Hobart (1934) for a classic version of the argument). If arguments of this kind are sound, then of course, libertarianism isn't compatible with *anything*. But we think they're *not* sound (see, e.g., Ginet (1990), Kane (1996), O'Connor (2000), Balaguer (2010), and Franklin (2018) for responses). More to the point, we think that libertarianism is coherent. But we can't argue for this here, and so we'll just take it as a working assumption in this paper. If you like, you can think of us as arguing for the claim that *if* libertarianism is coherent, then it's compatible with God's foreknowledge.
[3] It's worth noting that while we're committed to the compatibility of libertarianism, eternalism, and God's foreknowledge, nothing we say in this paper commits us to the truth of any of these three theses. One of us believes all three of these theses and one of us believes none of them. So for the purposes of this paper, it doesn't matter what you believe about these three theses.

we have a libertarian sort of free will, and (b) eternalism comes close to *explaining how* an omniscient God would have this knowledge (it doesn't *fully* explain this, but as we'll see, it comes close). Finally, our arguments concerning eternalism will enable us to explain what's wrong with standard fatalist arguments for the incompatibility of free will and God's foreknowledge, e.g., Pike's (1965) argument.

It's important to note that we won't just be arguing *that* foreknowledge and libertarianism are compatible; we'll be providing a *metaphysical model* that explains *how* they're compatible. This, we believe, advances the literature on foreknowledge and freedom in a significant way. As we'll discuss later, responses to the arguments for theological fatalism have been essentially *defensive*. But we believe that the best defense is a good offense, and in keeping with that belief, our paper doesn't merely poke holes in fatalist arguments by locating questionable premises. Instead, we show that foreknowledge and libertarianism are compatible by constructing a metaphysical model in which they're both true. This will enable us to explain what's wrong with fatalistic arguments, but more importantly, our model provides a metaphysical picture that *eliminates the intuitive compellingness* of fatalistic arguments.

2. PRELIMINARIES

In this section, we'll define libertarianism and eternalism.

2.1 Libertarianism: One way to define libertarianism is to first define *libertarian free will*, and to then define *libertarianism* as the conjunction of the following two theses:

(L1) Free will is libertarian free will.

(L2) Human beings possess libertarian free will.

(L1) is a conceptual claim, so it's pretty obviously compatible with God's having foreknowledge,[4] and we won't concern ourselves with it here. What we want to argue is that (L2) is compatible with God's foreknowledge. So when we use the term 'libertarianism' in this paper, we'll be talking about (L2)—i.e., the thesis that *human beings possess libertarian free will*. But we need to say what libertarian free will *is*.

Broadly speaking, we can say that a person S has *libertarian free will*—or for short, *L-*

[4] To appreciate this, notice that (L1) is compatible with the claim that no one actually *has* free will.

freedom—iff S makes at least some decisions that are L-free in the following sense:

> A decision D is *L-free* iff (i) D is undetermined; and (ii) D is appropriately non-random; and (iii) the way in which D is undetermined is relevant to the fact that D is appropriately non-random in the sense that it *generates* the non-randomness, or *enhances* it, or some such thing; and (iv) D *plurally* satisfies conditions (ii) and (iii), so that S *could have done otherwise* in a robust sense of the term.[5,6]

This isn't very precise; in order to make it more precise, we need to say more about the four clauses of the definition. We'll have a lot to say about clause (i), but let us start by saying a few words about (ii)-(iv).

In connection with clause (ii), different libertarians can define appropriate non-randomness in different ways, but on any reasonable view, appropriate non-randomness will involve a sort of *agent-involvedness*—e.g., it will involve the agent *controlling* which option is chosen, or *authoring* the choice, or some such thing. But the exact definition of appropriate non-randomness won't matter in this paper, so we won't say any more about it.

Moving on to clause (iii), the reason we include this clause in our definition is that if we didn't, then the claim that we're L-free would be compatible with the claim that indeterminism is necessarily freedom-undermining—for it would be compatible with the view that there are *insignificant* indeterminacies in our decision-making processes and that, *despite* these indeterminacies, our decisions are sufficiently appropriately non-random to count as free.

To make clause (iv) more precise, let's suppose that a person S makes a decision D in which a specific option O is selected. Given this, we can say that D *plurally satisfied conditions (ii) and (iii)* iff there was at least one unchosen option O* such that (a) while S didn't end up choosing O*, S *could have* chosen O*, even holding fixed all of the laws and all of the facts about the past, and (b) if S *had* chosen O* (instead of O), then D still would have satisfied conditions (ii) and (iii).

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[5] This definition is derived from ideas from both Kane (1996) and Balaguer (2010).

[6] It doesn't follow from these definitions that all free decisions are L-free, or even that they're undetermined. Our definitions imply that for a person to be libertarian-free, they have to make at least some decisions that are L-free. But this is compatible with the claim that L-free people can make *other* kinds of decisions as well, including decisions that are both determined and free.

But for our purposes in this paper, the most important clause is clause (i)—i.e., the clause that says that L-free decisions are *undetermined*. In the remainder of this subsection, we'll define three different ways in which a decision can be undetermined, and this will give us three different kinds of L-freedom that, we think, differ with respect to whether they're compatible with God's foreknowledge.

First, let's say that an event E was *entailment-determined* iff the claim that E would occur when it did occur was already entailed by the conjunction of P and L, where P is a complete description of the universe at some time prior to E's occurrence, and L is a complete statement of the laws of nature. And let's say that E was *entailment-undetermined* iff it wasn't entailment-determined; and in the case where E is a decision in which a specific option O was chosen, when we say that E was *entailment-undetermined*, what we'll mean is this: *the event of O being chosen in E wasn't entailment-determined*.

This last definition gives us our first kind of L-freedom—a kind in which the decisions in question are entailment-undetermined. We can call this *entailment-L-freedom*. (To be clear, entailment-L-freedom is defined exactly as L-freedom was defined above, except that the two occurrences of 'undetermined' are replaced by 'entailment-undetermined'.) And given this, we can say that *entailment-libertarianism* is the view that human beings are entailment-L-free—i.e., that they make at least some decisions that are entailment-L-free.

Second, let's say that (a) an event E was *causally determined* iff E was causally necessitated by prior events together with the laws of nature (or iff prior events caused it to be the case that, at some time prior to E's occurrence, the objective probability that E would occur was 1); and (b) an event was *causally undetermined* iff it wasn't causally determined (and, again, if E is a decision in which option O was chosen, then in our lingo, 'E was causally undetermined' means that the event of O being chosen in E was causally undetermined). Given this, we can define a second kind of L-freedom—a kind in which the decisions in question are causally undetermined. We'll call this *weak-causal-L-freedom*. And given this, we can say that *weak-causal-libertarianism* is the view that human beings are weak-causal-L-free.

Notice that weak-causal-libertarianism and entailment-libertarianism are both compatible with the claim that for every human decision, there's a unique option O such that the prior

objective probability that O would be chosen was .999 or greater. Given this, it seems that weak-causal-L-freedom and entailment-L-freedom are both less robust than we might like.

To appreciate this point, consider *torn decisions*—i.e., decisions in which (a) the person in question (viz., S) feels completely torn between multiple *tied-for-best* options (i.e., it seems to S, in their conscious thought, that these options are all *tied-for-best*), and (b) S chooses while still feeling torn. To say that a torn decision was entailment-L-free and weak-causal-L-free is compatible with the claim that the prior objective probability that one of the tied-for-best options would be chosen was .999. This is surely not the result that libertarians want, and so it seems that we should try to define a more robust kind of L-freedom.

To get a more robust kind of L-freedom, we need a more robust kind of indeterminacy. To this end, consider the following definition:

> A decision D, made by a person S, was *strongly causally undetermined* iff (a) D was causally undetermined (in particular, which *option was chosen* in D was causally undetermined), and (b) there was a set of tied-for-most-likely options available to S—where a set M of options is a set of *tied-for-most-likely options* if and only if (i) there are at least two options in M; and (ii) for each option O in M, the objective moment-of-choice probability that O would be chosen (given all of the causally relevant facts about the world, and all of the laws of nature) was roughly equivalent to the corresponding probabilities for all of the other options in M; and (c) these probabilities were all higher than the corresponding probabilities for all options that weren't in M.

This is a bit of a mouthful, but the basic idea is very simple; we can bring this out by thinking of a case in which there are only two options available to S; in a case like this, to say that D was strongly causally undetermined is just to say that the objective moment-of-choice probabilities of the two options being chosen (given all of the causally relevant facts and all of the laws) were both roughly 0.5. And if there were only three options available to S (and if all three options were tied-for-most-likely), then the probabilities were all roughly 0.333. And so on.[7]

This definition gives us a third kind of L-freedom—a kind of L-freedom in which the

[7] If we wanted to, we could define moderate kinds of causal indeterminacy, kinds that are stronger than mere causal indeterminacy but not as strong as strong causal indeterminacy; but we needn't worry about this here.

decisions in question are strongly causally undetermined. We can call this *strong-causal-L-freedom*. And given this, we can say that *strong-causal-libertarianism* is the view that human beings are strong-causal-L-free.[8]

We'll argue in sections 3-5 that strong-causal-libertarianism is compatible with God's foreknowledge (and notice that it follows from this that weak-causal-libertarianism is compatible with God's foreknowledge as well).[9] Now, we admit that *entailment*-libertarianism is *not* compatible with God's foreknowledge; but we'll argue in section 6 that (a) strong-causal-libertarianism is the kind of libertarianism that we should be focusing on in connection with the problem of God's foreknowledge, and (b) we shouldn't care at all about entailment-libertarianism.

2.2 Eternalism: Eternalism is best understood in contrast with presentism. Presentism (see, e.g., Zimmerman 1998, Markosian 2004, Crisp 2005, and Merricks 2007) is the view that only present objects exist; and eternalism (see, e.g., Heller 1984, Lewis 1986, Sider 2001, and Hawley 2001) is the view that past, present, and future objects all exist. So, e.g., eternalists believe that there exist dinosaurs and 22nd-Century cockroaches, and presentists don't.

We can also think of eternalism as the view that physical reality is a 4-dimensional spatiotemporal block and temporally distant objects like dinosaurs are analogous to spatially distant objects like Saturn; so according to eternalism, just as Saturn exists in the outer solar system, dinosaurs exist in the Jurassic period, where the outer solar system and the Jurassic period are both just different regions of the 4-dimensional spatiotemporal manifold.[10]

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[8] Strong-causal-libertarianism is incompatible with determinism, and so it seems to imply that at least some of the laws of nature are probabilistic, or at least not deterministic; but it doesn't imply anything else about the laws, e.g., whether they're Humean or non-Humean.

[9] We're claiming only that strong-causal-libertarianism is compatible with *God's having foreknowledge*. We're not claiming that it's compatible with any other theories about how God relates to worldly events; e.g., we're not claiming that it's compatible with a strong version of occasionalism according to which God deterministically causes each and every event to occur. But we assume that God's foreknowledge is compatible with the rejection of this strong occasionalist view (and that libertarians could claim that God creates indeterministic causal relations).

[10] More precisely, eternalism is the view that however many non-temporal dimensions there are, physical reality has *another* dimension to it—viz., a temporal dimension. Or perhaps better, eternalism says that physical reality is *temporally extended*.

2.3 Libertarianism and Eternalism Together: We're going to argue in section 3 that strong-causal-libertarianism is compatible with eternalism. It's worth noting, however, that it's easy to define a kind of libertarianism that's *not* compatible with eternalism. We can do this by defining a fourth kind of indeterminism. In particular, let's say that (a) an event E was *settlement-determined* iff it was already settled in advance that E would occur, in an eternalistic sense of 'settled' (so if eternalism is true, then all of our decisions are settlement-determined); and (b) an event E was *settlement-undetermined* iff E wasn't settlement-determined. Given this, we can define a fourth kind of L-freedom—a kind in which the decisions in question are settlement-undetermined. We can call this kind of L-freedom *unsettled-L-freedom*, and given this, we can say that *unsettled-libertarianism* is the view that human beings are unsettled-L-free.

Unsettled-libertarianism is obviously not compatible with eternalism. But we'll argue in section 6 that (a) we shouldn't care at all about unsettled-libertarianism, and (b) the kind of libertarianism that we should care about—and that we should be focused on in connection with the problem of God's foreknowledge—is strong-causal-libertarianism. And, again, we're going to argue in section 3 that strong-causal-libertarianism is compatible with eternalism.

3. WHY STRONG-CAUSAL-LIBERTARIANISM IS COMPATIBLE WITH ETERNALISM

We have two arguments for the claim that strong-causal-libertarianism is compatible with eternalism. We'll develop these two arguments in sections 3.1 and 3.2.

3.1 The Argument from the Silence of Eternalism About Causation And Agent-Involvedness: Let *causal-determinism* be the view that all events are causally determined in the sense defined in section 2.1; and let *causal-indeterminism* be the view that causal-determinism is false. Given these definitions, we begin our first argument for the compatibility of eternalism and strong-causal-libertarianism by arguing for the following thesis:

> (A) Eternalism is compatible with causal-indeterminism and, in particular, with the claim that at least some of our decisions are causally undetermined—indeed, strongly causally undetermined.

While we believe that there's a straightforward and obvious argument for (A), this argument is curiously absent from the literature. Shanks (1994) comes the closest to arguing for something like (A). He argues that eternalism is compatible with indeterminism, but he seems to think that

eternalism entails an anti-realist or deflationist view of causation, and he seems to think of indeterminism as just a claim about the laws being probabilistic (and not about the causal structure of reality). So, when Shanks says that eternalism is compatible with indeterminism, he's saying something different from what (A) says. Also, while Hunt (2006) argued that eternalism is compatible with freedom, he wasn't talking about an indeterministic kind of freedom, so he didn't argue for (A) either.[11]

So, our straightforward and obvious argument for (A) is also novel. Here's our argument in a nutshell. If eternalism is true, then all future events already exist. To speak metaphorically, these events are all *sitting there*, lined up in a row. But eternalism doesn't tell us anything about the causal relations that obtain between the events that are, so to speak, standing next to each other in line. Indeed, eternalism is perfectly compatible with the view that *there are no substantive causal relations at all between these events.* Eternalism is also compatible with causal-determinism—i.e., with the claim that each event that's standing in line is causally necessitated by prior events. And, finally, eternalism is compatible with causal-*in*determinism and, in particular, with the view that while there are causal relations between some of the events that are "standing in line", there aren't always deterministic causal relationships between those events.

In short, eternalism—the thesis that all future events are, so to speak, *already there*, lined up in a 4th dimension—doesn't tell us *anything* about the causal relations that obtain between these events. And so it doesn't tell us that causal-determinism is true. And so eternalism is perfectly compatible with causal-indeterminism.[12]

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[11] It's more common to find arguments for the *incompatibility* of eternalism and indeterminism. For instance, Rietdijk (1966) argues that special relativity entails eternalism and that the conjunction of those two views entails determinism. The crux of his argument is that every time is potentially in the past relative to some observer who would be in a position to know the facts about that time, and so all times are fixed. What we say in sections 3.2 and 5.2 shows that arguments of this kind are not cogent.

[12] Of course, it may be that if eternalism is combined with some other view—e.g., the view that temporal ordering already requires a causal connection—then the conjunction of the two views will imply claims about the causal connections that between events that are "standing next to each other" in the eternalistic line. We're not denying that this is true. Our claim is merely that eternalism *by itself* doesn't tell us anything about the causal relations that obtain between these events.

More specifically, since eternalism doesn't say anything about the causal relations that obtain between *any* of the events that are, so to speak, "standing in line", it doesn't tell us anything about the causal histories of our *decisions*. So eternalism is perfectly compatible with the claim that at least some of our decisions are causally undetermined—and, indeed, strongly causally undetermined. And so claim (A) is true.

But claim (A) is weaker than what we need; we need to argue not just for (A) but for the following claim:

> (B) Eternalism is compatible with strong-causal-libertarianism—i.e., with the claim that at least some of our decisions are strong-causal-L-free, where a decision D is strong-causal-L-free iff (i) D is strongly causally undetermined; and (ii) D is appropriately non-random, and (iii) the fact that D is strongly causally undetermined generates (or enhances, or some such thing) the appropriate non-randomness; and (iv) D *plurally* satisfied conditions (ii) and (iii) in the sense defined in section 2.1.

We've already argued that eternalism is compatible with the existence of decisions that satisfy condition (i), so we just need to beef up the argument to show that eternalism is compatible with the existence of decisions that satisfy conditions (ii)-(iv) as well.

Showing that eternalism is compatible with (i)-(iii) is easy—we can argue for this in the same way that we argued for the compatibility of eternalism and condition (i). First, we need to show that the claim that a decision D satisfied conditions (i)-(iii) is a claim about the relations that obtain between D and things that exist prior to D. (Different libertarians will argue for this in different ways because they'll have different views of what appropriate non-randomness consists in. But on any reasonable view, the claim that a decision D was appropriately non-random will boil down to some version of the idea that D was made *by the agent*—or that it was *authored* and *controlled* by the agent, or some such thing—and so it will be a claim about the relations that obtain between D and other things that exist prior to D (or if eternalism is true, other things that are "standing before D in line"), most notably, the agent, or the agent's reasons, or events involving the agent's reasons, or some such thing.[13]) Second, we just need to point out that

[13] You might object that it's possible for a decision D to be caused by something that isn't "standing before D in line"—e.g., by a God that exists "outside" of spacetime. But in that case, D

eternalism doesn't say or imply anything at all about the relations that obtain between the things that exist at a time t and the things that exist at later times. It says that these things are all *there*—standing in line, so to speak—and that's *all* it says.

Finally, condition (iv) is a counterfactual; in essence, it says that if the agent had chosen differently, then conditions (ii) and (iii) would still have been satisfied. But that's just to say that if the agent had chosen differently, the relevant relations would still have held between D and the relevant things that existed prior to D. But, once again, eternalism doesn't say *anything* about these relations. And so it seems to us that eternalism is perfectly compatible with the existence of decisions that satisfy conditions (i)-(iv). And so it seems that claim (B) is true—i.e., that eternalism is compatible with strong-causal-libertarianism.

3.2 The Argument From the Parallel Between the Past and the Future: Our second argument for the compatibility of eternalism and strong-causal-libertarianism proceeds as follows:

> (I) The claim that a past decision (e.g., Hitler's decision to invade Poland in 1939) is already *settled* is compatible with the claim that that decision was strong-causal-L-free. But
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> (II) If eternalism is true, then if (I) is true, then the claim that a future decision (e.g., Trump's decision to order Bubble Gum Surprise at an ice cream parlor next Easter) is already *settled* is compatible with the claim that *that* decision will be strong-causal-L-free. Therefore,
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> (III) If eternalism is true, then the claim that a future decision (e.g., Trump's decision) is already *settled* is compatible with the claim that that decision will be strong-causal-L-free.

This argument is valid, so we just need to argue for premises (I) and (II). We take it that (I) is obvious, but we can argue for it as follows. The claim that Hitler's decision was strong-causal-L-free is a claim about the relationship between Hitler's decision and things that existed before it. And the claim that it's already settled that Hitler decided to invade Poland is simply irrelevant to

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wouldn't be appropriately non-random—i.e., it wouldn't be made *by the agent* in an appropriate libertarian way. Our claim is that if D *is* made by the agent in this way, then that's because of relations that obtain between D and things that exist prior to D, e.g., the agent's reasons—assuming that agents (or at least ordinary human agents) can't *backwards-control* their decisions.

this. In saying that Hitler's decision is *settled*, we just mean that the decision *did occur*. (Note that 'settled' *doesn't* mean *real* here; for then the claim that the past is settled would entail that presentism is false, and we don't mean to imply that by the claim that the past is settled.) In any event, the point here is that the claim that it's already settled that Hitler decided to invade Poland does not entail that Hitler's decision wasn't strong-causal-L-free. Indeed, the claim that it's already settled that Hitler decided to invade Poland *isn't relevant at all* to the claim that his decision was strong-causal-L-free. And so these two claims are compatible with one another, and so premise (I) is true.

The argument for premise (II), on the other hand, is based on the fact that if eternalism is true, then there's no relevant difference here between past decisions like Hitler's and future decisions like Trump's. All the things that motivate the idea that the claim that Hitler's decision could be both settled and strong-causal-L-free are, if eternalism is true, present in connection with Trump's decision as well as Hitler's. In particular, if eternalism is true, then the claim that it's already settled that Trump is going to order Bubble Gum Surprise isn't relevant to the claim that Trump's decision will be strong-causal-L-free because (a) the claim that Trump's decision will be strong-causal-L-free is a claim about the relations that obtain between Trump's decision and things that exist before it, and (b) the claim that it's already settled that Trump will order Bubble Gum Surprise is, if eternalism is true, *not relevant at all* to the claim that these relations obtain. So if eternalism is true, then there's an exact parallel here between Hitler's decision and Trump's decision. In short, if the claim that Hitler's decision is already settled doesn't undermine the claim that his decision was strong-causal-L-free—and it clearly *doesn't*—then (if eternalism is true) the claim that Trump's decision is already settled doesn't undermine the claim that *his* decision will be strong-causal-L-free. And so premise (II) is true.

The idea that the past and future are deeply similar can seem counterintuitive to us—because, *prima facie*, it seems that while the past is already settled, the future is not. But if eternalism is true, then this is just a fact about *our epistemic access* to the past and future. If eternalism is true, then even if it isn't *causally determined* what will happen in the future, it *is* already *settled* what will happen—in a way that's exactly analogous to the way that it's already

settled what happened in the past.[14]

4. WHY ETERNALISM IS COMPATIBLE WITH FOREKNOWLEDGE

It's pretty obvious that eternalism is compatible with God's foreknowledge—i.e., with the thesis that God exists and has infallible knowledge of everything about the future. Indeed, eternalism *entails* that that an omniscient God would have infallible knowledge of everything that's going to happen in the future; for if eternalism is true, then future events *exist*—i.e., future events are, so to speak, *right there*—and so an omniscient God would have infallible knowledge of everything about those events.

Eternalism doesn't just *entail* that an omniscient God would have infallible knowledge of the future. It comes close to *explaining how* an omniscient God would have this knowledge. Now, of course, it doesn't tell us the *mechanism* by which God knows about the future. But what it does tell us is that, for God, knowledge of the future is no harder to come by than knowledge of the present—and that God can presumably acquire knowledge of the future via the same mechanism via which God acquires knowledge of the present.

You might worry that there could be *some* views of how God acquires knowledge of the present that don't generalize to the future. For instance, you might think that (a) God's knowledge of the present is caused by present states of affairs, and so (b) if God acquires knowledge of the future in the same way, then it would be caused by future states of affairs, and so foreknowledge would require backward causation. But (i) this picture assumes that God is located at the present time and not at future times; and it seems to us that (ii) if eternalism is true, and if God is located at *any* times (as opposed to being outside of time, or outside of spacetime), then God is located at *all* times, including the future. So, even if future states of affairs cause God's knowledge of the future—and, as will become clear in a moment, we're not committed to the view that this is the mechanism by which God acquires knowledge—that causation needn't

[14] Merricks (2009) mounts a somewhat similar argument about there being a parallel between the past and the future. But he's a presentist, not an eternalist, and the claim that there's a parallel here is much more plausible if eternalism is true. This is because it's easier to see how there can be settled facts about future contingencies, if eternalism is true. And this is especially true given our current assumption that *indeterminism* is true; i.e., the assumption of indeterminism makes it even harder for presentists to maintain that there are settled facts about future contingencies.

be backward causation because God is *always already in the future*.[15]

In short, our view is that if eternalism is true, then the question

(Q1) How could God know what's going to happen in the future?

is analogous to the question

(Q2) How could God know what's happening inside the Sun?

Of course, (Q2) might be *puzzling* for the theist in the sense that answering it requires specifying a mechanism by which God knows what's happening in the sun. But we don't think that (Q2) is a *troubling* question for the theist—i.e., there's no reason to think that our inability to answer (Q2) *undermines* the view that God is omniscient. And our point here is that if eternalism is true, then the same thing can be said about (Q1).

You might object to this by saying something like the following:

> The *reason* that (Q2) isn't troubling for theists is that theists think that God is *omnipresent*—i.e., simultaneously located in all places. Thus, if you're claiming that (Q1) isn't troubling for theists, that must be because you think that God is located at all *times*, as well as all places, and this is a *cost* because it's an extra theoretical commitment.

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[15] You might think that if God knows at t1 that some event E occurs at a later time t2, then this requires backward causation because God's t1 knowledge would have to be caused by E's occurring at t2 (or by God's t2 knowledge that E occurs at t2). But we don't think backward causation is required here because God is special. We can see why by considering an analogous spatial case involving omnipresence. Suppose that (a) God is located at the North Pole and the South Pole via omnipresence, and (b) God knows that it's snowing at Santa's workshop. And to grant as much as possible to our interlocutor, let's suppose that this knowledge is *caused* by the fact that it's snowing at Santa's workshop in a way that requires God to be located there. Because God knows that it's snowing at Santa's workshop, we can say that God "knows this at the North Pole"—because God happens to be located there. But we can also say that God "knows this at the South Pole"—because God happens to be located there, too. But importantly, this doesn't require causation at a distance. We don't have to say that God's "knowing at the South Pole" that it's snowing at Santa's workshop is *caused-at-a-distance* by the fact that it's snowing at Santa's workshop (or by God's "knowing at the North Pole" that it's snowing at Santa's workshop). This is because we don't need to say that God's knowledge is *divided by location*. On the contrary, if we endorse a causal view of how God acquires knowledge, we can say that (i) God's being at the North Pole causes God to know (in a non-spatially-divided way) what's happening at the North Pole, and (ii) God knows this at *all* locations in virtue of simply (a) *knowing* it (in a non-spatially-divided way) and (b) being located at all locations. Similarly, God's knowing at t1 that E occurs at t2 doesn't require (backward) causation at a (temporal) distance; for we can say that God knows this at t1 in virtue of (a) knowing it (in a non-temporally-divided way) and (b) being located at t1.

We have two responses to this. First, eternalism entails that there's no important difference between (i) the thesis that God is located at all spatial locations and (ii) the thesis that God is located at all temporal locations (and eternalism plus the special theory of relativity entails that these two theses can't even be *coherently separated* because there's no objective simultaneity). So, if theists are really committed to thesis (i), then once they endorse eternalism, thesis (ii) comes more or less for free—and so it's not a substantive extra theoretical commitment.

Our second response to the above worry is that we don't need to commit to thesis (i) or thesis (ii). If we wanted to, we could endorse a Boethian-type view on which God exists "outside" of spacetime. The author of the above objection seems convinced that the only way that God could know what's happening inside the Sun is if God is located in the Sun (as well as everywhere else). But we don't share that view. To repeat what we said above, our view is that an omniscient God would have *some way*—some way that we may not be able to comprehend—of having knowledge of *all facts that exist in reality*. Thus, since eternalism entails that facts about the future just *are* facts that exist in reality, it also entails that an omniscient God would have some way of acquiring knowledge of facts about the future.

In short, eternalism entails that (Q1) is just a subquestion of

(Q3) How could God have knowledge of facts that exist in reality?

Like (Q2), (Q3) might be *puzzling* since we don't know the mechanism by which God knows things. But our inability to answer (Q3) isn't *troubling*—i.e., it doesn't undermine the commitment to God's omniscience. And our claim is that if eternalism is true, then we should have the exact same attitude about (Q1). For, again, if eternalism is true, then (Q1) is just a subquestion of (Q3).

By the way, we're not claiming here that if eternalism *isn't* true, then there can't be any foreknowledge; we're just claiming that if eternalism *is* true, then (Q1) is *non-troubling*. It's important to note, however, that if you reject eternalism, then (Q1) becomes much more troubling. For if you reject eternalism, then in order to account for foreknowledge, you'll presumably have to say that truths about the future are already grounded in truths about the present. Moreover, if you also reject causal-determinism—as you have to if you want to leave room for libertarianism—then it becomes even more difficult to account for foreknowledge.

Now, of course, Molinists and Ockhamists try to solve this problem, but it's far from obvious that their attempts succeed—indeed, we think that they *don't* succeed[16]—and the point we're making here is that if eternalism is true, then we don't have to jump through any hoops (in the way that Molinists and Ockhamists do) in order to account for God's foreknowledge. For (a) if eternalism is true, then future events *already exist*, and so we don't have to say that truths about the future are grounded in truths about the present; and (b) eternalism entails that an omniscient God *would* have infallible knowledge of future events—by *some mechanism or other*; and (c) if eternalism is true, then as we've seen, it *eliminates the troublingness* of (Q1).[17]

5. WHY STRONG-CAUSAL-LIBERTARIANISM IS COMPATIBLE WITH GOD'S FOREKNOWLEDGE

In this section, we'll argue that (a) the conjunction of eternalism and strong-causal-libertarianism is compatible with God's foreknowledge; and (b) eternalism entails that (and comes close to explaining how, in the sense brought out in section 4) an omniscient God would have infallible foreknowledge of all human decisions, including those that are strong-causal-L-free. We'll argue for these two claims in section 5.1. In section 5.2, we'll provide a second argument for the claim that strong-causal-libertarianism is compatible with God's foreknowledge.

5.1 The Argument from Omniscience About Existent Things: If strong-causal-libertarianism is true, then events of a certain kind—namely, strong-causal-L-free decisions—exist. And if eternalism is also true, then *future* strong-causal-L-free decisions could exist. But we just saw in section 4 that if future events exist, then an omniscient God would have infallible knowledge of them. So if eternalism and strong-causal-libertarianism are both true, then an omniscient God would have infallible knowledge of all future strong-causal-L-free decisions. So (a) strong-causal-libertarianism is compatible with God's foreknowledge, and (b) eternalism straightforwardly entails that an omniscient God would have infallible foreknowledge of all of our future strong-causal-L-free decisions.

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[16] See Adams (1991) for a criticism of Molinism and Finch and Rea (2008) for a criticism of Ockhamism.

[17] Another way to appreciate the explanatory power of eternalism is to notice that some theists who reject eternalism—e.g., open theists like Todd and Rabern (2021)—just reject foreknowledge.

Moreover, for all the reasons brought out in section 4, eternalism comes close to *explaining how* an omniscient God would have knowledge of our future strong-causal-L-free decisions. More precisely, eternalism *eliminates the troublingness* of the question 'How could God have knowledge of our future strong-causal-L-free decisions?'; for if eternalism is true, then this question becomes a special case of (Q3)—i.e., of 'How could God have knowledge of facts that exist in reality?'—which, again, is clearly not troubling.

It's worth noting that in this scenario, an omniscient God wouldn't just know which options we're going to choose in our future strong-causal-L-free decisions. Such a God would also know *that those decisions will be strong-causal-L-free*. For God would know that those decisions will satisfy the four conditions for strong-causal-L-freedom—e.g., that they will be strongly causally undetermined, and appropriately non-random, and so on.

5.2 The Argument from the Parallel Between Past-Knowledge and Foreknowledge: Our second argument for the compatibility of strong-causal-libertarianism and God's foreknowledge proceeds as follows:

> (I*) The claim that God has infallible knowledge of the outcome of a past decision (e.g., Hitler's decision to invade Poland in 1939) is compatible with the claim that that decision was strong-causal-L-free. But
>
> (II*) If eternalism is true, then if (I*) is true, then the claim that God has infallible knowledge of the outcome of a future decision (e.g., Trump's decision to order Bubble Gum Surprise next Easter) is compatible with the claim that *that* decision will be strong-causal-L-free. Therefore,
>
> (III*) If eternalism is true, then the claim that God has infallible knowledge of the outcome of a future decision (e.g., Trump's decision) is compatible with the claim that that decision will be strong-causal-L-free.

This argument is valid, so we just need to argue for premises (I*) and (II*). The argument for (I*) is exactly parallel to the argument for premise (I) from section 3.2. The claim that Hitler's decision was strong-causal-L-free is a claim about the relations that obtain between Hitler's decision and things (i.e., objects and events) that existed before it. And the claim that God has infallible knowledge of what Hitler did is not relevant at all to the claim that these relations

actually obtained. Therefore, the two claims are compatible with one another, and so premise (I*) is true.

Moving on to (II*), the argument for this is based on the fact that if eternalism is true, then there's no relevant difference here between past decisions like Hitler's and future decisions like Trump's. All the things that motivate the idea that God's foreknowledge is compatible with the claim that Hitler's decision was strong-causal-L-free are, if eternalism is true, present in connection with Trump's decision as well as Hitler's. In particular, if eternalism is true, then the claim that God has infallible knowledge of what Trump is going to do isn't relevant to the claim that Trump's decision will be strong-causal-L-free because (a) the claim that Trump's decision will be strong-causal-L-free is a claim about the relations that obtain between Trump's decision and things that existed before it, and (b) if eternalism is true, then the claim that God has infallible knowledge of what Trump is going to do is not relevant in any way at all to the claim that these relations actually obtain. So if eternalism is true, then there's an exact parallel here between Hitler's decision and Trump's decision. So if the claim that God has infallible knowledge of the outcome of Hitler's decision doesn't undermine the claim that that decision was strong-causal-L-free—and it surely doesn't—then (assuming eternalism) the claim that God has infallible knowledge of the outcome of Trump's decision doesn't undermine the claim that *that* decision will be strong-causal-L-free. And so premise (II*) is true.

6. FATALISM AND DIFFERENT VARIETIES OF L-FREEDOM

So far we've argued that strong-causal-libertarianism—i.e., the thesis that human beings are strong-causal-L-free—is compatible with eternalism and God's foreknowledge. In this section, we'll address two related worries about our argument. One worry is that we haven't said what's wrong with standard fatalist arguments for the incompatibility of free will and God's foreknowledge. We'll address that worry in section 6.3; but in order to properly diagnose the problem with fatalist arguments, we first need to address a different worry—namely, the worry that we've been focusing on the wrong kind of freedom because the problem of freedom and foreknowledge should be thought of as a problem not for strong-causal-L-freedom, but for entailment-L-freedom (or perhaps unsettled L-freedom). We turn to this now; we'll discuss entailment-L-freedom in section 6.1 and unsettled L-freedom in section 6.2.

6.1 Why We Shouldn't Care about Entailment-L-Freedom: Recall from section 2.1 that entailment-L-freedom is just like strong-causal-L-freedom except that it requires the decisions in question to be entailment-undetermined rather than strong-causal-undetermined.

It seems clear that if God has foreknowledge of our decisions, then we're not entailment-L-free—i.e., none of our decisions is entailment-L-free—because if God knows at t_1 that S will choose O at t_2, then (assuming that God is part of the universe at t_1) a complete description of the universe at t_1 entails that S will choose O at t_2.[18]

But we'll argue in this subsection that if eternalism is true and an omniscient God exists, then we shouldn't *care* about this. To make our argument here more precise, consider the following scenario (which, we've already argued, is at least *possible*):

> *The eternalistic-libertarian-foreknowledge scenario*: (a) Eternalism is true; and (b) an omniscient God exists (and note that, as we've seen, it follows from clauses (a) and (b) that God knows everything about the future); and (c) strong-causal-libertarianism is true, i.e., at least some of our decisions are strong-causal-L-free. (We'll also assume—to give ourselves a case to work with—that in the eternalistic-libertarian-foreknowledge scenario, Trump's 2025 decision to order Bubble Gum Surprise is strong-causal-L-free.)

We'll argue in this subsection that in this scenario, entailment-L-freedom isn't worth wanting, or worth caring about.

Let's start by thinking about what we want out of a libertarian kind of free will. It seems to us that what we want is for our decisions to be *up to us*; and we want it to be the case that we aren't *made* to choose in the ways that we do. If all of our decisions are causally determined by the Big Bang and the laws of physics, then there's a clear sense in which the Big Bang and the laws of physics *make* us choose in the ways that we do. And from a libertarian point of view, that's *bad*. We want it to be the case that (a) *we* make our decisions and (b) *nothing makes us*

[18] You might think that if God is timeless as Boethius proposes, then God is not part of the universe at any time. This depends on what 'the universe' means. We're happy to just stipulate that, in our lingo, 'the universe' denotes *everything*, including God—and note that we make this stipulation in the spirit of granting as much as possible to our opponents. In short, we're *granting for the sake of argument* that if God has foreknowledge of our decisions, then we're not entailment L-free. Now, it may be that on some ways of defining 'the universe' (e.g., perhaps definitions that imply that the universe does not include a timeless God), God's foreknowledge is compatible with entailment-L-freedom; but this won't matter here.

decide in the ways that we do.

The way that we defined strong-causal-L-freedom in section 2.1 reflects these ideas about what we want out of a libertarian kind of free will. The requirement for non-randomness (or agent-involvedness) corresponds to the idea that we want it to be the case that *we* make our decisions; and the requirement for strong-causal-indeterminacy corresponds to the idea that we want it to be the case that nothing *makes* us decide in the ways that we do.

Let's focus on the nothing-makes-us-do-it requirement—i.e., on the idea that in order for a choice to be free in a libertarian way, it needs to be the case that nothing *makes* the agent choose in the way that they do. Focusing on this requirement brings out what's wrong with the idea that we should care about entailment-L-freedom. If the eternalistic-libertarian-foreknowledge scenario is true, then, as we've seen, we are not entailment-L-free—despite the fact that we *are* strong-causal-L-free. For instance, Trump's decision to order Bubble Gum Surprise will be strong-causal-L-free in this scenario, but it *won't* be entailment-L-free because at an earlier time, God already knows that Trump will decide to order Bubble Gum Surprise, and this entails that Trump *will* make such a decision. But—and this is the really important point—the *reason* that Trump's decision won't be entailment-L-free is *not* that Trump will be *made* to choose Bubble Gum Surprise. Rather, in the eternalistic-libertarian-foreknowledge scenario, Trump's decision won't be entailment-L-free for the exact *opposite* reason; his decision won't be entailment-L-free because *Trump's choosing Bubble Gum Surprise in 2025 makes it the case that God already knew in 2010 that Trump will choose Bubble Gum Surprise in 2025*.[19]

We can bring this point out if we forget about free will and God's foreknowledge for a moment and just think about eternalism and truthmaking. If eternalism is true, then in 2010, the sentence 'Trump will win the 2016 U.S. presidential election' was already true. And it was made true by Trump's winning of the election in 2016. So if eternalism is true, then there's *backwards truthmaking*. And since truthmaking isn't a *causal* relation, there's nothing metaphysically weird about this.[20] It's just a straightforward consequence of eternalism. (If eternalism is true, then

[19] See Swenson (2016) for a similar point about the direction of dependence here.
[20] See Merricks (2009) for a similar point about how truthmaking is not a causal relation. Also, Swenson (2016) distinguishes between causal relationships and *explanatory dependence* relationships, though he doesn't say anything about truthmaking.

backwards truthmaking is no weirder than east-to-west truthmaking. If you say in Boston that Madrid exists, then the existence of Madrid makes your claim true in an east-to-west way. Likewise, if eternalism is true, then if you say in 2010 that Trump will win in 2016, then Trump's winning makes your claim true in a 2016-to-2010 way. If eternalism is true, then these two kinds of truthmaking are exactly analogous to one another.)

If we bring free will into the picture, nothing changes. If eternalism is true (and if Trump's decision to order Bubble Gum Surprise will be strong-causal-L-free), then the sentence 'Trump will make a strong-causal-L-free decision to order Bubble Gum Surprise in 2025' was already true in 2010; moreover, it was *made true* by Trump's making a strong-causal-L-free decision to order Bubble Gum Surprise in 2025. So, again, the truthmaking in this scenario is *backwards* truthmaking.

Finally, if we bring God's foreknowledge back in, we get the same result. If the eternalistic-libertarian-foreknowledge scenario is true—i.e., if eternalism is true, and an omniscient God exists, and Trump makes a strong-causal-L-free decision to order Bubble Gum Surprise in 2025—then the following claim is true:

> *Backwards-Because*: God knew in 2010 that Trump would make a strong-causal-L-free decision to order Bubble Gum Surprise in 2025 *because* Trump *does* make a strong-causal-L-free decision to order Bubble Gum Surprise in 2025.

And in this scenario, the following claim is *false*:

> *Forwards-Because*: Trump will choose Bubble Gum Surprise in 2025 *because* God knew in 2010—before the decision occurred—that Trump would choose Bubble Gum Surprise.

This seems entirely obvious to us. In the eternalistic-libertarian-foreknowledge scenario, God knows in advance that Trump is going to make a strong-causal-L-free decision to order Bubble Gum Surprise. But God doesn't *make* Trump choose in that way. Indeed, the claim that God doesn't make Trump choose in this way follows from the supposition that Trump's decision will be strong-causal-L-free—because it follows from this that Trump's decision will be strongly causally undetermined

So, again, in the eternalistic-libertarian-foreknowledge scenario, Backwards-Because is true and Forwards-Because is false. This seems crucial to us. If the eternalistic-libertarian-

foreknowledge scenario is true, then Trump's decision won't be entailment-L-free, despite the fact that it will be strong-causal-L-free. But libertarians shouldn't care about this, or see this as a lack of freedom of a kind that's worth wanting, or worth caring about. And the reason that libertarians shouldn't care about the lack of entailment-L-freedom here is precisely that, in this scenario, Backwards-Because is true and Forwards-Because is false.

We can put the point like this. What libertarians should care about is it *not* being the case that we're *made* to choose in the ways that we do. But they shouldn't be bothered by the fact that our decisions can make other facts obtain. Therefore, if the eternalistic-libertarian-foreknowledge scenario is true, then entailment-L-freedom is not something that libertarians (or anyone else) should care about. For in this scenario, we lack entailment-L-freedom not because we're made to choose in certain ways, but because *our decisions make other facts obtain*—in particular, because they make God know about our decisions at earlier times. In short, we shouldn't be bothered by our lack of entailment-L-freedom in this scenario because the direction of dependence here is *backwards*.

Finally, it's important to remember that we don't need entailment-L-freedom in order to have a robust libertarian kind of free will. For we could still have strong-causal-L-freedom.

6.2 Why We Shouldn't Care about Unsettled-L-Freedom: Recall from section 2.3 that unsettled-L-freedom is just like strong-causal-L-freedom except that it requires the decisions in question to be settlement-undetermined rather than strong-causal-undetermined.

It's obvious that if eternalism is true, then we're not unsettled-L-free—because if eternalism is true, then all of our decisions are settled in advance. But we think that libertarians shouldn't care at all about this. The argument for this claim is analogous to the argument that we just ran in section 6.1. In short, we think it can be argued that if the eternalistic-libertarian-foreknowledge scenario is true, then unsettled-L-freedom isn't worth wanting, or worth caring about. We won't argue for this point in full—because the argument is so similar to the argument of section 6.1—but it's worth saying a few words about this here.

If the eternalistic-libertarian-foreknowledge scenario is true, then Trump's decision to order Bubble Gum Surprise will be strong-causal-L-free, but it *won't* be unsettled-L-free. But the *reason* that Trump's decision won't be unsettled-L-free in this scenario is *not* that Trump will be

made to choose Bubble Gum Surprise. Rather, the reason that Trump's decision won't be unsettled-L-free in the eternalistic-libertarian-foreknowledge scenario is that, in that scenario, it was already the case in 2010 (and at every other moment in time) that Trump's making of the decision—i.e., the event in which (a) *Trump himself* chose Bubble Gum Surprise (in a strong-causal-L-free way), and (b) *nothing made him* choose in that way—was part of reality.

But it seems to us that libertarians shouldn't care about this at all. If *Trump himself* made the decision, and if nothing *made* him choose in the way that he did, then that gives us what we want—or what we *should* want—out of libertarian freedom. Why should we care whether our strong-causal-L-free decisions—the decisions that *we* make, without anything *making* us choose in the ways that we do—exist eternalistically? The eternalistic existence doesn't do anything to undermine what we care about—or what we *should* care about—vis-à-vis libertarian freedom. For the eternalistic existence doesn't do anything to undermine the extent to which these decisions are *up to us*.

In short, the point is as follows: It might seem that if all of our future decisions are already settled right now, then we don't have a genuinely libertarian sort of free will. But if eternalism is true, then that thought is simply mistaken. For if eternalism is true, then the already-settled-ness of our future decisions is perfectly compatible with the claim that all of our future decisions are such that (a) they're made *by us*, and (b) nothing *makes* us choose in the ways that we do in those decisions. Moreover, as we've seen, the claim that our future decisions are already settled in an eternalistic way is perfectly compatible with the claim that these decisions are free in a robust libertarian way because it's compatible with the claim that they're strong-causal-L-free.

6.3 Fatalism: Given the remarks of section 6.1, we can now say what's wrong with standard fatalist arguments for the incompatibility of free will and God's foreknowledge. There are various ways to articulate the fatalist argument, but they all rest on premises like the following:

> (F) For any human being S and any time t_1 and any later time t_2, S does not have the power at t_2 to make it the case that God had different beliefs at t_1 than God actually had at t_1.

For example, Pike's classic (1965) version of the argument contains the following premise:

(4) It is not within one's power at a given time to do something that would bring it about that someone who held a certain belief at a time prior to the time in question did not hold that belief at the time prior to that time in question.

And similar premises appear in versions of the argument presented by others, e.g., Hasker (1989), Zagzebski (1991), Hunt (1999), Finch and Rea (2008), Merricks (2009), and Todd (2013).

We admit that if 'power' is defined in terms of entailment-L-freedom, then (F) is true. But if 'power' is defined in terms of strong-causal-L-freedom, then if the eternalistic-libertarian-foreknowledge scenario is true—i.e., if eternalism is true, and if human beings are strong-causal-L-free, and if God has foreknowledge of our strong-causal-L-free decisions (and, remember, we argued in section 5 that these claims are all compatible)—then (F) is *false*. The key to appreciating this point is to recall from section 6.1 that if the eternalistic-libertarian-foreknowledge scenario is true, then whenever people make decisions that are strong-causal-L-free, they *make it the case* that God had certain beliefs in the past. Now, if a decision is strong-causal-L-free, then (by definition) the agent in question *could have chosen differently*—in a strong-causal sense of 'could have chosen differently'—and it follows from this that if we define 'power' in terms of strong-causal-L-freedom, then if a decision is strong-causal-L-free, then the agent in question had the *power* to choose differently. But if we combine this with the argument of section 6.1, we get the following result:

(*) If the eternalistic-libertarian-foreknowledge scenario is true, and if 'power' is defined in terms of strong-causal-L-freedom, then whenever a person S makes a decision that's strong-causal-L-free, S has the power to make it the case that God had different beliefs at earlier times (i.e., at times earlier than S's decision) than God actually had at those times.

But (F) just says that people *don't* have the power mentioned in (*). Thus, since (*) is true, it follows that if the eternalistic-libertarian-foreknowledge scenario is true—and, again, we've already argued that that scenario *could* be true—then if 'power' is defined in terms of strong-causal-L-freedom, then (F) is *false*.

It's important to note that we're not saying that people have the power to *change* the past. In other words, we're not endorsing claims of the following kind:

> God believed at t_1 that Jane would do A at t_2; but then at t_2, Jane had the power to make a decision that would change the past, so that back at t_1, God would suddenly stop believing that Jane would do A at t_2 and start believing that she would do B at t_2.

That's not our view. Our view is that if eternalism is true (and if an omniscient God exists, and if Jane's decision was strong-causal-L-free, and if 'power' is defined in terms of strong-causal-L-freedom), then God's t_1 belief was *always already* influenced by Jane's t_2 decision. Remember, if eternalism is true, then it's not the case that t_1 came into being and then, *later on*, t_2 came into being. No, if eternalism is true, then Jane's t_2 decision already existed when God was believing at t_1 that Jane would decide to do A at t_2; and the reason that God believed at t_1 that Jane would decide to do A at t_2 is that (a) her t_2 decision *already existed*, and (b) God was already aware of her decision. So the view here is that if eternalism is true (and if an omniscient God exists, and if human beings are strong-causal-L-free, and if 'power' is defined in terms of strong-causal-L-freedom), then (F) is false *not* because people have the power to change a pre-existing past—a past that existed before our decisions came into being—but because, when people make decisions that are strong-causal-L-free, they have the power to influence what God's beliefs were *all along*. So, e.g., if at t_2, Jane made a strong-causal-L-free decision to do A rather than B, then our claim is that, at t_2, Jane had the power to do A and she also had the power to do B—and so she had the power to make God believe at t_1 that she would decide to do A at t_2, and she *also* had the power to make God believe at t_1 that she would decide to do *B* at t_2.

So, again, if (a) eternalism is true, and (b) human beings are strong-causal-L-free, and (c) God has foreknowledge of our decisions, and (d) 'power' is defined in terms of strong-causal-L-freedom, then (F) is false. And exactly analogous remarks can be made about other (F)-style premises in the literature, e.g., Pike's premise (4)—they too come out false in the (a)-(d) scenario.

Now, some philosophers (e.g., Todd (2013)) have argued against the rejection of (F)-style premises. But their arguments have more or less assumed presentism—or at any rate, they haven't considered how the truth of eternalism would affect the situation. And as we've argued, if eternalism is true, then the rejection of (F)-style premises becomes non-problematic.

Now, you might object here that there's a powerful argument for (F) that's based on the idea that we humans can't change the so-called "hard" facts about the past. For instance, you might argue for (F) by appealing to the following two premises:

(i) No human being has the power to make it the case that the hard facts about the past are different than they actually are; and (ii) facts about God's past beliefs are hard facts.

Whether facts about God's past beliefs (about what was then the future) count as hard facts or soft facts depends on how we define 'hard fact' and 'soft fact'. But we don't think this matters. For if we define these terms in a way that makes premise (ii) come out true, then if eternalism is true (and if humans are strong-causal-L-free, and if 'power' is defined in terms of strong-causal-L-freedom), then premise (i) will be false. And in fact, we've already argued for this claim. For we've argued that if eternalism is true (and if an omniscient God exists, and people are strong-causal-L-free, and if 'power' is defined in terms of strong-causal-L-freedom), then when people make strong-causal-L-free choices, they have the power to make it the case that God has different beliefs in the past. And it follows from this that if 'hard fact' is defined in a way that makes the facts in question here (i.e., facts about God's past beliefs about what was then the future) count as hard facts, then human beings have the power to make it the case that at least *some* of the hard facts about the past are different than they actually are.

Our conclusion, then, is this: if we read fatalist arguments as arguments for the incompatibility of God's foreknowledge and strong-causal-libertarianism, then they're not good arguments because they rely on (F)-style premises, and we can reject those premises by endorsing the eternalistic-libertarian-foreknowledge scenario—i.e., by maintaining that eternalism is true, that human beings are strong-causal-L-free, and that God has foreknowledge of our strong-causal-L-free decisions. Or to put the point differently, (F)-style premises are question-begging because they assert that people don't have powers that we in fact *do* have, if the eternalistic-libertarian-foreknowledge scenario is true.

Now, our arguments here don't do anything to undermine fatalist arguments that target the compatibility of God's foreknowledge and *entailment*-L-freedom. But we argued in section 6.1 that if eternalism is true (and if an omniscient God exists), then entailment-L-freedom isn't worth wanting, or worth caring about.

6.4 Give Us a Metaphysical Model (of Liberty) or Give Us Death: We end by comparing our view to those of a few other philosophers. The first point we want to make here is that while others have responded to fatalist arguments by rejecting premises like (F)—see, e.g., Talbott (1986), Merricks (2009), and Westphal (2011)—none of them appeals to eternalism, and the claim that (F)-style premises are false is much less plausible if eternalism isn't true.[21] Or to put the point differently, the difference between us and these other writers is that, unlike them, we've provided a *metaphysical model* that explains *why* (F)-style premises are false.

We think this is crucial. Zagzebski (1991, p. 179) says that in order to solve the problem of freedom and foreknowledge,

> …we ultimately need to tell a metaphysical story…within which divine knowledge and human choice both have their place. The persuasiveness of the foreknowledge solution would be a by-product of the persuasiveness of the big [metaphysical] theory.

Zagzebski—who tries to solve the problem of foreknowledge without appealing to eternalism—admits that her own view falls short of providing such a metaphysical story. But we take ourselves to have provided precisely the sort of metaphysical story, or metaphysical *model*, that's needed here. It's a story or model on which strong-causal-libertarianism, eternalism, and God's foreknowledge are all true. And the point we're making here is that others who have rejected (F)-style premises—e.g., Talbot, Merricks, and Westphal—haven't provided such models.

Similar remarks can be made about philosophers who have responded to fatalist arguments in different ways. We'll just mention three cases here. First, Wasserman (2020) argues that as long as God's foreknowledge of our future actions isn't causally relevant to those actions, it's compatible with the claim that those actions are free. But Wasserman doesn't have a story to tell about *how* God could know what we're going to do in the future in a way that's compatible with our being free.

Second, Tooley (2010) responds to a certain fatalist argument by providing a linguistic analysis that enables him to say that one of the premises in the fatalist argument is false. But he doesn't give us a metaphysical model, and what's more, his analysis is extremely implausible—

[21] Also, without eternalism, the rejection of (F)-style premises is susceptible to worries about *truthmaking*—i.e., worries about what makes present sentences about future decisions true.

or so it seems to us. He argues that sentences of the form 'It is true at t_1 that person S will do A at t_2' are not true—even if eternalism is true, and even if S *does* do A at t_2. But this is hard to believe; if eternalism is true, and if S does A at t_2, then it just *is* true at earlier times that S will do A at t_2, and no convoluted linguistic analysis can change this. (It's also worth noting here that, unlike us, Tooley doesn't argue that libertarianism and eternalism are compatible; moreover, according to Tooley, these two views aren't jointly compatible with God's foreknowledge.)

Finally, similar remarks can be made about Oaklander (1998). He argues that what he calls "the new theory of time"—which *seems* to entail eternalism, although Oaklander isn't very clear about this—is compatible with the existence of human free will. But like Tooley, Oaklander's argument is based on a linguistic analysis of certain kinds of sentences; indeed, Oaklander is concerned with sentences of the same general kind that Tooley is concerned with, and he has a very similar view of those sentences. (It's also worth noting that, unlike us, Oaklander doesn't argue that eternalism is compatible with the existence of *libertarian* freedom.)

We end by pointing out that while we should all agree with Zagzebski that what we really need here is a metaphysical model—and that we shouldn't be satisfied with a mere linguistic analysis—libertarians in particular should agree with this. For they're already on record (or at any rate, they should be on record) as disliking linguistic solutions to problems about free will. For they should claim with Kant that compatibilist views of free will involve a kind of "petty word jugglery". So, if they think that compatibilist views are unacceptable for this reason, then they shouldn't engage in "petty word-jugglery" themselves; they shouldn't try to solve the problem of freedom and foreknowledge by merely coming up with a clever analysis of certain kinds of sentences. They should instead try to provide a metaphysical model that explains how libertarianism and God's foreknowledge could both be true.

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