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COMPATIBILIST FREEDOM AND
THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

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COMPATIBILIST FREEDOM AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

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INTRODUCTION

COMPATIBILISM AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

In philosophical debates surrounding free will, the classic distinction is between libertarians, who maintain that humans have free will, and hard determinists, who maintain that everything that happens is determined by causes which are outside of our control and which make human freedom impossible. Libertarians and hard determinists both regard freedom and determinism as incompatible, whereas compatibilists argue that freedom is possible even if determinism is true. Compatibilism has become an increasingly popular position amongst contemporary philosophers, many of whom think that the “best hope for free will lies in the project of trying to show that despite first appearances, free will is not in fact incompatible with determinism after all” (Steward, 2009a, p.155). However, despite this wider growth in the popularity of compatibilism, within the philosophy of religion the majority of philosophers continue to adopt an incompatibilist, and more specifically libertarian, view of free will. One reason for this would seem to be that there is traditionally a very close association between a libertarian view of free will and the main responses to the problem of evil, one of the most enduring problems in philosophy of religion. This thesis therefore seeks to explore the central research question of **whether it is possible to formulate a coherent compatibilist response to the problem of evil and, if so, whether such a response could help compatibilism to be seen as a viable, or even preferable, alternative to incompatibilism in philosophy of religion.**

As a philosophical analysis of an issue in philosophical theology, this work adopts an explicitly philosophical, as opposed to theological, methodology and approach. While the subject matter is theological, the methodology is rooted in what Steven Duncan identifies as the three key characteristics of analytic philosophy of religion: conceptual analysis, the clarification of claims, and the evaluation of reasons and arguments for and against specific philosophical positions (2008, pp.12–13). A range of examples, some drawn from Christian traditions, will be utilised as a way to highlight tensions and to explore the implications of accepting or rejecting particular conceptual options. However, the scope of this work does not extend to elements such as textual analysis of biblical passages

or of the writings of the Church Fathers, reflecting the philosophical rather than theological approach adopted throughout.

Within the debate over the role of conceptual analysis in philosophy, this work adopts a middle ground position where the analysis of central concepts is seen to be one very important, but not the only valid, focus of philosophical discussion. The scope of the discussions and the methods employed are therefore deliberately wider than would be the case in an example of pure conceptual analysis, and the focus goes beyond formal logical consistency to also include discussion of the wider coherence and appeal of particular positions. In this way, the main focus of this work is on exploring different conceptual options and on examining the implications of accepting or rejecting particular assumptions, claims, and arguments; on exploring the “conceptual price-tags” (Brümmer, 1993, p.25) attached to different options. It is therefore intended as an exploration of some of the conceptual costs and benefits of embracing compatibilism within philosophy of religion, to help reach a conclusion on whether it is worth adopting compatibilism despite the costs and whether there may actually be significant benefits to be gained by doing so.

Through analysis of concepts and evaluation of the implications of different arguments and positions, this work seeks to gain a deeper understanding of the key issues and debates relating to the concept of freedom and its relation to the problem of evil. This work is therefore focused on exploring the intellectual problem of evil, and on the question of whether it is possible to formulate a coherent and appealing compatibilist response. One of the challenges of this approach is that it can risk appearing uncaring and unsympathetic, an issue highlighted by C.S. Lewis’ reflection that “all arguments in justification of suffering provoke bitter resentment against the author. You would like to know how I behave when I am experiencing pain, not writing books about it” ([1940] 2012, p.105). Even if the argument in this piece is successful, it therefore cannot, and does not attempt to, minimise or take away the pain and despair people experience in the world in the face of evil and suffering. I began studying philosophy of religion as a teenager, a time which coincided with my late mother being extremely unwell. I began to appreciate that while nothing could take away the emotions of helplessness and despair of watching her suffer and being unable to do anything about it, studying philosophy could help me to question and reflect critically on my own beliefs and assumptions regarding fundamental concepts and questions relating to freedom, suffering, and life after death. In this way, while the approach adopted in this work is explicitly intellectual rather than pastoral, I believe

that grappling with these intellectual issues can not only help us to deepen our understanding of these abstract ideas but can also have significance within our own lives. The philosophical methodology adopted in this work can therefore be seen to have additional value in terms of facilitating rational and considered exploration of what are often personally complex existential issues.

This thesis also does not seek to make any claims about whether or not we should accept theism. Instead, it focuses on exploring whether it is possible to formulate a coherent response to the problem of evil that is based on both a compatibilist view of human freedom and a traditional Christian conception of God. As my own views on freedom became more committedly compatibilist throughout my later studies, I found it increasingly difficult to reconcile my view of freedom with any of the strongly incompatibilist responses to the problem of evil I encountered. This thesis therefore aims to formulate a response to the problem of evil that can be reconciled with a compatibilist understanding of freedom. But further than this, it aims to formulate a response to the problem of evil that is, I believe, actually strengthened and made more compelling by being built around a compatibilist conception of freedom. It seeks therefore to explore both the costs, but also importantly the benefits, of this approach. If successful, it is hoped that this could help compatibilism to be seen as not only a viable alternative, but actually a preferable alternative, to the libertarian incompatibilism that is still the dominant position within philosophy of religion.

Outline

The first chapter of this work will begin by exploring the debate between incompatibilism and compatibilism, and the assumptions that incompatibilists and compatibilists make about the nature of free will. There have been a number of influential compatibilists, from Thomas Hobbes in the 17th Century to more recently Daniel Dennett (1984). However, this chapter will focus on the work of Harry Frankfurt (1969, 1971, 1988) because of the significance of his work in questioning our assumptions about what we mean when we talk about the concept of free will. It will focus on exploring the question of **whether insights from Frankfurt's work on freedom can be used to articulate a stronger version of compatibilism than has otherwise been put forward.**

Frankfurt questioned the commonly held assumption that free will must necessarily require alternate possibilities (1969), arguing that

having alternate possibilities is not what really matters when it comes to freedom and moral responsibility. Accepting this proposal can be seen to strengthen the case for compatibilism by highlighting that the fact that even if determinism involves a lack of alternate possibilities this does not necessarily mean that it must therefore conflict with freedom. However, it is a contentious proposal, not least because if freedom does not consist of having alternate possibilities then this raises the question of what freedom does actually consist of instead. The first chapter of this work will therefore consider the debate around compatibilism by focusing particularly on the issue of whether freedom requires alternate possibilities, what the nature of freedom could potentially be if we do not assume it to consist of having alternate possibilities, and on exploring Frankfurt's suggestion that freedom should be seen in terms of whether our choices are authentically our own regardless of whether they are choices between alternatives.

The issue of whether or not free will can be understood in a way that is compatible with determinism, and the related issue of whether free will requires alternate possibilities, has important implications for a number of theological debates, particularly surrounding the problem of evil. The problem of evil is one of the most prominent problems in philosophy of religion and one of the clearest formulations of the problem of evil comes from William Rowe, who sets the argument out as follows:

1. There exist instances of intense suffering which an omnipotent, omniscient being could have prevented without thereby losing some greater good or permitting some evil equally bad or worse.
2. An omniscient, wholly good being would prevent the occurrence of any intense suffering it could, unless it could not do so without thereby losing some greater good or permitting some evil equally bad or worse.
3. There does not exist an omnipotent, omniscient, wholly good being.

(Rowe, 1979, p.336)

As this formulation of the problem highlights, the existence of evil and suffering in the world poses a major challenge to belief in the existence of the Christian concept of God as it can be seen to challenge a number of the attributes traditionally associated with such a God such as omnipotence and benevolence. Discussions of this problem, and responses to it, often give a central place to issues relating to free will as how the concept of free will is understood can have significant implications for these discussions. For example, how the concept of free will is understood can have significant implications for issues such as whether we can

conceptualise coherently of God being able to intervene to prevent evil acts without destroying free will, or of God being able to have created humans who only ever freely chose to do good.

While there are a wide range of philosophical responses to the problem of evil, three of the most well-known are the Free Will Defence, the Augustinian theodicy, and Hick's version of the soul making theodicy. These three approaches will be explored in turn in chapters two, three and four of this work. Despite the significant differences between them, all three of these approaches traditionally assume an incompatibilist view of free will. This can be seen to have contributed to the popularity of incompatibilism within philosophy of religion, as it has meant that rejecting incompatibilism would have the consequence that theists would no longer be able to avail themselves of any of the three most well-established responses to the problem of evil. These three chapters will therefore focus on exploring the question of **what role libertarian concepts of free will play in the three main traditional responses to the problem of evil**. To do so, they will explore the role played by freedom within each of these approaches, seeking to establish whether they do in fact require an incompatibilist libertarian stance. These three chapters will also discuss some of the key wider objections to each of these approaches in an effort to establish **whether, if they would have to be rejected in order to adopt a compatibilist view, this should be seen as a significant loss for the compatibilist** that would undermine the appeal of the compatibilist position, or whether the wider issues with these approaches mean that their potential loss to the compatibilist should not be regarded as a significant concern.

Having discussed these three approaches in turn in chapters in chapters two, three and four, the final section of chapter four will then present a proposal for a compatibilist version of the soul making approach. This section will propose and outline a compatibilist soul making approach that is heavily influenced by Frankfurt's view of freedom, in particular his shift of focus away from alternate possibilities to issues around authenticity and the structure of the will. Using this compatibilist soul making approach as a basis for discussion, it will then begin to explore **what the key benefits and challenges are of adopting an explicitly compatibilist response to the problem of evil**. This question will then be explored further in the final two chapters of this work, where the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed compatibilist version of the soul making approach to theodicy will be explored through a discussion of issues relating to life after death and universal salvation.

Whether or not there is believed to be some kind of existence that continues beyond death has significant implications for any response to the problem of evil, compatibilist or incompatibilist. If there is believed to be life after death, then to discuss possible responses to the problem of evil without reference to this seems incomplete and unsatisfactory, as it seems to be ignoring what would constitute a hugely significant aspect of human existence. Similarly, if it is believed that there is no life after death then again it seems important to consider this within any response to the problem of evil, not least because this seems to have the potential to bring into sharper focus issues relating to justice and fairness, particularly in relation to the clearly inequitable distribution of evil and suffering we see in the world around us. In the case of the soul making approach, whether or not there is believed to be life after death takes on particular significance because of the implications for whether the process of soul making could be seen to continue beyond death. In this way, in order to discuss the soul making approach effectively it is necessary to consider whether that soul making process should be seen as only taking place during our lives, or whether it should be seen as continuing into some kind of life after death. The fifth chapter of this work will therefore focus on exploring the relationship between soul making and life after death. In line with the methodology adopted throughout this work, the focus of this chapter will be on exploring issues relating to the philosophical coherence of the concept of life after death and the possible continuation of soul making beyond death, as opposed to, for example, exploring issues around the scriptural basis or empirical evidence for such an afterlife.

The sixth and final chapter of this work will then turn from the concept of life after death to the concept of universal salvation. In Hick's classic exposition of the soul making approach, traditionally one of the most contentious features of the approach is the emphasis that it places on the idea that the process of soul making must eventually come to a successful conclusion, entailing a commitment to not only life after death but also to universal salvation. For some, this commitment to a single positive outcome without the alternate possibility of ultimate failure makes the soul making approach incompatible with human free will. However, if freedom is not seen to require alternate possibilities then it seems there is a need to reconsider this objection and to see whether adopting a compatibilist approach has the potential to remove some of the apparent tensions. The final chapter of this work will therefore explore the relationship between freedom, soul making and universal salvation, focusing

particularly on whether adopting a compatibilist position has the potential to ease longstanding concerns around the incompatibility of universal salvation and human free will.

If a coherent compatibilist version of the soul making approach can be articulated then, in my view, this could potentially help to address some of the objections to the classic incompatibilist version of this approach. Significantly, it would also provide theists with the option of embracing compatibilism whilst also retaining one of the three mainstream responses to the problem of evil. Yet such an approach inevitably also comes not only with benefits but also costs. The conclusion of this work will therefore reflect on **whether such an approach has the potential to help compatibilism to be seen as a viable alternative to incompatibilism within philosophy of religion**, or even to be seen as a preferable alternative.

CHAPTER ONE

DOES FREEDOM REQUIRE ALTERNATE POSSIBILITIES?

It has traditionally been argued that an action is only free, and a person can only be held morally responsible for that action, if they could have done otherwise. However, in the philosophical literature on free will there is a great deal of disagreement over what exactly is meant by terms such as “could have done otherwise” and “alternate possibilities”, as well as disagreement over whether alternate possibilities really are a necessary feature of free will and moral responsibility as is often claimed. Whether or not freedom is seen to require alternate possibilities has significant implications for the debate between compatibilism and incompatibilism, as incompatibilists often claim that it is because determinism removes alternate possibilities that it should be seen as incompatible with free will. As will be discussed in the later chapters of this work, it also has significant implications for debates surrounding the problem of evil; for example, whether or not freedom is seen to require alternate possibilities has a significant impact on questions such as whether God could intervene to prevent evil acts without destroying free will, or whether God could have created humans who only ever freely chose to do good.

This chapter will explore the debate between compatibilism and incompatibilism, with a particular focus on exploring the assumptions that compatibilists and incompatibilists make about the nature of free will and alternate possibilities. The discussion will focus particularly on the work of Harry Frankfurt (1969, 1971, 1988) and on whether insights from Frankfurt’s work on freedom can be used to help articulate a stronger version of compatibilism than has otherwise been put forward. In line with the methodological approach outlined in the introduction, the chapter will begin by exploring what is meant by the terms freedom and alternate possibilities, highlighting particular areas of disagreement and controversy. The second section will then outline Frankfurt’s account of freedom, focusing particularly on his rejection of the claim that freedom requires alternate possibilities, as shown by his counter examples to the Principle of Alternate Possibilities, and his hierarchical model of the will. The third section will explore some of the key criticisms of Frankfurt’s rejection of the Principle of Alternate Possibilities and the responses to

those criticisms, and the fourth section will explore some of the key objections to Frankfurt's hierarchical model of the will and the responses to those objections. Through these discussions this chapter will examine whether alternate possibilities are a necessary feature of free will, or whether both free will and moral responsibility can be compatible with not having alternate possibilities. It will then consider whether insights from Frankfurt can be used to help articulate a stronger version of compatibilism than has otherwise been put forward.

1.1. Freedom and Alternate Possibilities

Determinism is the view that everything that happens is determined by causes which are outside of our control. Hard determinists such as Ted Honderich (1990) believe that this makes human free will impossible, as determinism suggests that we are "merely a confluence of causal processes" initiated long before we came into existence (Watson, 2003, p.2). Different versions of determinism propose different determining factors such as genetics, unconscious motives, social conditioning, or God, but all view determinism as being incompatible with human free will. In contrast, compatibilism is the view that determinism and free will are in fact compatible. Compatibilism is a popular position with many recent writers on freedom, such as Daniel Dennett (1984). It has also had, and continues to have, some outspoken critics; for example, in 'The Dilemma of Determinism' William James described it as a "quagmire of evasion" ([1897] 2007).

One of the key reasons why freedom and determinism are often seen to be incompatible is because freedom and moral responsibility are assumed to require alternate possibilities, and determinism is assumed to rule out alternate possibilities. John Martin Fischer for example argues that "it is a quite basic and pervasive assumption that in order to be morally responsible for one's behaviour, one must have had (at some relevant point along the path to the behaviour) alternative possibilities of a certain sort" (2002: 96). Freedom is also frequently associated with the concepts such as choice and deliberation (McIntyre, 1994, p.453), and this is often assumed to suggest choice or deliberation between alternate possibilities. However, despite this widespread association of freedom and moral responsibility with alternate possibilities, Frankfurt rejects the claim that freedom and moral responsibility necessarily require that we have alternate possibilities.

Frankfurt calls the principle that “an agent is morally responsible for what he has done only if he could have done otherwise” the Principle of Alternate Possibilities (Frankfurt, 1969, p.828). He acknowledges that the association of free will and moral responsibility with alternate possibilities is commonly accepted in philosophical discussions, but argues that this is a mistake and that the Principle of Alternate Possibilities should in fact be rejected. In rejecting this principle, Frankfurt argues that it is possible for an action to be free, and for a person to be morally responsible for that action, even if they could not have done otherwise. By rejecting the claim that free will necessarily requires alternate possibilities, it is then possible to challenge the related claim that determinism should be seen to be incompatible with free will because of that fact that it removes the alternate possibilities that free will requires. In this way, although Frankfurt does not claim to be explicitly proposing or defending a compatibilist position, his rejection of the Principle of Alternate Possibilities provides the compatibilist with a potential response to one of the most central claims of incompatibilism.

Although this chapter is focused primarily on the relationship between alternate possibilities and freedom, it is impossible to explore this topic without also including some discussion of moral responsibility. The majority of the literature on alternate possibilities focuses on both the relationship between moral responsibility and determinism and the relationship between freedom and determinism, as the two debates are seen as being extremely closely linked. Ted Warfield for example comments that although “moral responsibility and metaphysical freedom are not equivalent notions they are conceptual cousins” (2007, p.286), and Robert Kane highlights that the problem of free will is tied up in a cluster of philosophical issues relating to concepts such as agency and responsibility (2005a, p.4). Our actions and characters appear to be influenced by a variety of factors such as upbringing and genetics, but what matters for the issue of moral responsibility is whether these factors are entirely determining, and therefore it is unfair to hold us morally responsible for our actions, or whether we still have meaningful free will and moral responsibility despite these influences.

Many of the key issues in the debate over whether freedom necessarily requires alternate possibilities can be highlighted using the simple example of ordering a meal in a cafe. We can imagine a situation where, after considering a list of dishes on a menu, a person chooses and orders tomato soup, but, unknown to them, the cafe has actually sold out of everything else on the menu other than the tomato soup, so that was the

only thing that they could have successfully ordered. Was that a free choice? In fact, none of the other choices from the menu were genuine alternate possibilities, but it is questionable whether the freedom of the choice to have tomato soup would have been affected if they had been. This example can be seen to suggest that it is not the existence of alternate possibilities that is vital to freedom; alternate possibilities may often be a feature of freedom, but they are not a necessary and defining characteristic of freedom.

It could potentially be objected that in this example the person still has the possibility of not ordering anything at all, so in fact still has the two possibilities of ordering or not ordering – of acting or not acting. However, the example can be modified to address this potential criticism. In the modified example, the person is in the cafe, eating a main course, and after looking at the dessert menu decides not to order a dessert. However, unbeknown to them, the cafe has actually sold out of all of their desserts, so they could not have successfully ordered a dessert. Was this a free choice not to have a dessert? Again, none of the possible desserts on the menu were genuine alternate possibilities, but again it seems that the freedom of the choice not to have dessert would not have been significantly affected if they had been genuine possibilities. In this way, this seems once again to challenge the traditional assumption that freedom requires that we have alternate possibilities. However, it also raises the more fundamental question of what exactly we mean by the term alternate possibilities or that we “could have done otherwise”.

The Meaning of “Could Have Done Otherwise”

Alternate possibilities are often described using the phrase “could have done otherwise” (Watson, 2003, p.4) or “the ability to act otherwise than one in fact does” (Stump, 1999, p.299). That we could have done otherwise is often seen as central to freedom, but there are a wide variety of views on what this phrase “could have done otherwise” actually means.

There are those who would reject the need for such discussion of underlying terms as being trivial, even going as far as to argue that “conceptual analysis is essentially irrelevant to metaphysics” (Balaguer, 2009, p.3). Clearly it is possible to get entangled in unhelpfully lengthy discussions of definitions and terminology. However, without some initial clarification over what we mean by alternate possibilities it seems impossible to engage in meaningful discussion regarding their relationship to freedom and moral responsibility. How the term alternate possibilities is

interpreted has important implications for whether they are seen as a necessary feature of freedom, which in turn has important implications for the debate between compatibilism and incompatibilism. Antony Flew for example goes as far as to say that the content of what we mean by could have done otherwise “is, or should be, the crux of the dispute between Compatibilist and Incompatibilist” (1973, p.235).

One interpretation of alternate possibilities associates them with choice. Ishtiyaque Haji, for example, suggests that freedom requires that we have “genuinely open pathways branching into the future”, and that we determine which of these pathways become actual (2006, p.179). In contrast, some have suggested that alternate possibilities do not need to exist as choices in reality, but only in our minds; “the garden of forking paths we represent as we consciously consider what path to choose need not exist beyond the confines of our minds” (Nahmias, 2006, p.644). This distinction can be seen in relation to the example given earlier of choosing from a menu in a cafe. On Haji’s view the other items on the menu would not count as genuine alternate possibilities and so the choice would not be free. In contrast, for Nahmias it does not matter whether the alternate possibilities exist in reality or not.

One of the most contentious aspects of the phrase could have done otherwise is what we mean by the word “could”. In his article ‘I Could Not Have Done Otherwise – So What?’, Dennett gives the example of Martin Luther at the Diet of Worms, who was famously reported as saying “Here I stand, I can do no other” (in Dennett, 1984, p.555). For Luther, his character and faith meant that he felt that he had no alternative course of action, yet we would still want to say that he was acting freely and was morally responsible for his action. However, many would dispute whether Luther really could do no other. Clearly it would be physically and logically possible that he could do something else, but is this enough to say that he could and to call it an alternate possibility? For example, in his discussion of the concept of “moral incapacity”, Bernard Williams (1993) argues that incapacity, including moral incapacity, has only a limited relation to impossibility. He argues that a moral incapacity is deeper than an incapacity such as a person with vertigo being unable to walk across a narrow bridge, as moral incapacity is “expressive of, or grounded in, the agent’s character or personal dispositions” (1993: 60). It is therefore more a question of whether an action is a genuine possibility for a person with that character, rather than whether an action is physically possible. Nahmias for example argues that “if, in some particular situation, your deliberations lead to a manifestly clear decision, then there

seems to be no viable alternative for action in that situation” (2006, p.627). In this way, it can be argued that to be a genuine alternate possibility requires more than just the alternative action being physically and logically possible.

This highlights a problem with associating freedom with alternate possibilities, which is that there seem to be occasions where although there may theoretically be alternate possibilities these are not really viable alternatives. In fact, Peter Van Inwagen argues that this is the case in the vast majority of situations, as we are rarely in situations where “the need to make a choice confronts us and in which it isn’t absolutely clear what choice to make” (2017, p.74). On this view, it is not deliberation and choice between different alternatives that is important to freedom, as the majority of day to day situations do not involve such deliberation. Nahmias calls the few situations which do contain deliberation between genuine alternate possibilities “close call” situations (2006). As these types of situation are quite rare it would seem strange to say that we are only free in these close call situations. It seems that we could still have free-will even if we never faced close call situations, which seems to suggest that free-will cannot be defined in terms of having alternate possibilities. This would seem to reinforce Frankfurt’s view that having alternate possibilities is not what is important for freedom.

If alternate possibilities are not required for freedom then this has important implications for the debate between compatibilism and incompatibilism. One of the main arguments that incompatibilists often put forward in support of their position is that alternate possibilities are crucial for freedom, that determinism rules out alternate possibilities, and therefore determinism rules out freedom. One response to this argument is Frankfurt’s approach of saying that it does not matter whether determinism rules out alternate possibilities, because alternate possibilities are not required for freedom. An alternative is to argue that determinism doesn’t really rule out alternate possibilities in the way many incompatibilists claim. Beebe and Mele (2002) adopt this second approach, arguing that determinism does not rule out alternate possibilities. Their argument centres around the example of a man, Fred, who is trying to decide whether to have toast for breakfast. They argue that if in fact Fred will have toast for breakfast, then it is logically impossible that this is the case yet Fred doesn’t have toast in the morning. However, this logical impossibility “does not impose any limit on Fred’s ability to skip breakfast; and it does not entail that it is not up to Fred whether or not he skips breakfast, or that he cannot do otherwise than have toast for breakfast

tomorrow” (2002, p.207). In this way, just because it happens to be the case that Fred will not do otherwise doesn’t mean that he could not do otherwise if he had wanted to.

This example raises the difference between actions being determined and being inevitable; the distinction between determinism and fatalism. This is an important distinction, yet Dennett highlights that many discussions of compatibilism and determinism tend to make “an entirely illicit slide” from determined to “inevitable” (2015, p.134). Earman (1986) also differentiates between determinism, which he sees as an issue of ontology, and predictability, which he sees as an issue of epistemology, and highlights that even hard determinists do not go as far as embracing fatalism. Fatalism suggests that we are powerless to impact the future as it is simply down to fate, which is significantly different to the determinist stance that our choices are determined by previously existing causes. This issue is highlighted in an example from Christine Korsgaard, who asks: “having discovered that my conduct is predictable, will I now sit quietly in my chair, waiting to see what I will do? Then I will not do anything but sit quietly in my chair” (1996, p.95). Even if our actions are determined we still have to decide to do them, and this is where traditionally compatibilists see room for freedom and determinism to be compatible.

Compatibilists argue that even if our behaviour is determined we still have meaningful control over our decisions and actions. Dennett highlights this issue using the example of a wasp, commenting that the wasp is “not a free agent, but rather at the mercy of brute physical causation, driven inexorably into her states and activities by features of the environment outside her control” (2015, p.12). He argues that we are significantly different to the wasp because we have the ability to interact with our environment and control over our behaviours, whereas it is this kind of agency and control that the wasp lacks. Dennett argues that this type of agency and control based freedom is still meaningful and is still a type of freedom “worth wanting” (2015), but there is a great deal of disagreement as to whether this is the case. This has meant that much of the debate between compatibilists and incompatibilists has tended to focus on whether the type of freedom that is compatible with determinism and a lack of alternate possibilities is really a meaningful type of freedom. Critics of compatibilism have tended to argue that any type of freedom that is compatible with determinism and a lack of alternate possibilities is not true freedom. However, by rejecting the idea that freedom requires alternate possibilities at all Frankfurt is able to refocus the debate between

compatibilism and incompatibilism away from this issue. Therefore, if Frankfurt's account of freedom is adopted, it removes one of the major points of contention between compatibilists and incompatibilists.

1.2. Harry Frankfurt's Account of Freedom

The two central features of Frankfurt's account of freedom are his rejection of the claim that freedom requires alternate possibilities, as shown by his counter examples to the Principle of Alternate Possibilities, and his hierarchical model of the will.

Frankfurt's Rejection of the Principle of Alternate Possibilities

The Principle of Alternate Possibilities is well accepted; it is regarded by some as "so obvious and unimpeachable that it is hard to imagine how it could be challenged" (Widerker and McKenna, 2006, p.3). Frankfurt acknowledges the popularity and widespread acceptance of the Principle of Alternate Possibilities but argues that the principle is in fact false, and that it is possible for an action to be free, and for a person to be morally responsible for that action, even if they could not have done otherwise (1969, p.828).

To support his rejection of the Principle of Alternate Possibilities Frankfurt gives a number of examples which he believes are counter-examples to the Principle of Alternate Possibilities and which show that freedom does not require alternate possibilities (1969, pp.831-836). Examples of this type are now commonly known as Frankfurt-style examples, and usually involve some variation on a counterfactual intervener who would intervene if the person were to choose anything other than one particular option; so the person makes a choice to perform an action not knowing that they would not have been allowed to do otherwise. Frankfurt's original example involves two men, Black and Jones. Black wants Jones to perform a particular action and will force him to do so if Jones is going to choose not to perform it. However, Black "prefers to avoid showing his hand unnecessarily. So he waits until Jones is about to make up his mind what to do, and he does nothing unless it is clear to him (Black is an excellent judge of such things) that Jones is going to decide to do something other than what he wants him to do" (1969, p.835).

In this example Black wants Jones to perform a certain action and will intervene if Jones doesn't choose to do so. For Frankfurt, the method of

this intervention is unimportant. He suggests various forms that this intervention could take; for example, Black threatening Jones, drugging him, hypnotising him, manipulating his brain, etc. What is important is that if Black doesn't have to intervene because Jones decides to perform the action that Black wants him to perform, then it seems that we would see Jones' action as a free act, and one for which Jones is morally responsible, even though he could not have done otherwise. If Black does not intervene he plays no role in Jones action or decision to act, and so the act is "not affected by the fact that Black was lurking in the background with sinister intent, since this intent never comes into play" (Frankfurt, 1969, p.836). Frankfurt therefore believes that this example is a counter example to the Principle of Alternate Possibilities because it is an example of a situation where Jones performs a free action yet could not have done otherwise.

There are a huge number of different Frankfurt-style examples presented in the literature on alternate possibilities. Eleonore Stump for example outlines a Frankfurt-style case based on the story of *The Possessed* by Fyodor Dostoevsky ([1872] 1971). In Stump's example, Peter offers Fedya, a convict, money to carry out a murder for him (1990, p.238). Peter is worried that the money might not be enough to persuade Fedya to commit the murder, so comes up with a backup plan to force Fedya to commit the murder if he declines the money. However, Fedya accepts the money and commits the murder, so Peter never has to resort to his back-up plan of forcing him to carry it out. Stump argues that we would still say that Fedya freely commits the murder, despite the fact that Peter would have forced him to do so if he had refused. In this way Stump argues that Fedya chooses to freely commit the murder, despite not actually being able to do otherwise.

Frankfurt-style examples, however they are presented, are essentially all variations on the classic locked room example presented by John Locke in the 17th Century ([1690] 1997, p.224). Locke's original example is based on a sleeping man who wakes up in a locked room, but does not know that the room is locked. He thinks about whether to leave or not, and decides to stay in the room, not knowing that he could not have left even if he had wanted to. Locke asks "is not this stay voluntary? I think nobody will doubt it: and yet, being locked fast in, it is evident he is not at liberty not to stay, he has not freedom to be gone" ([1690] 1997, p.224). Interestingly Locke argued that the man stayed in the room "voluntarily" rather than freely because, unlike Frankfurt, he maintained that freedom demands that the person could have done otherwise.

Part of the reason why Locke maintained that the man in the locked room stays voluntarily but does not make a free decision to stay in the room is because he believes that freedom is something which applies to actions not to the will. He argued that liberty is not to do with volition or preferring, but instead is to do with the person having the power to do, or not do, as their mind chooses (Locke, [1690] 1997, p.219). In this way, for Locke the man in the locked room does not have freedom of action, and so despite staying in the room voluntarily cannot be said to stay freely. In contrast to Locke, Frankfurt sees freedom as a feature of the will rather than as a feature of actions, and this difference is central to both Frankfurt's rejection of the importance of alternate possibilities and his hierarchical model of the will (1971). Because freedom is not seen by Frankfurt to be a feature of actions, the issue of whether there are alternative courses of action becomes irrelevant. Instead what is important for freedom according to Frankfurt is the relationship between a person's desires, their will and their actions.

Some attempt to clarify this distinction between freedom of the will and freedom of action by distinguishing between autonomy and freedom, arguing that freedom of action is enough for an action to be considered autonomous, but freedom of the will is necessary if it is to be considered free. This distinction can be seen in the example of wild animals, which aren't usually regarded as having freedom of the will despite the fact that they seem to be autonomous/ seem to have freedom of action. As Frankfurt comments, "we do not suppose that animals enjoy freedom of the will, although we recognize that an animal may be free to run in whatever direction it wants. Thus, having the freedom to do what one wants to do is not a sufficient condition of having a free will" (1971, p.14). For Frankfurt, to judge whether an action is free we should therefore not look at the action and whether there are alternate possibilities to that action, but rather look at freedom as a feature of the will. This means that an important part of Frankfurt's account of freedom is his model of the will, which is outlined in the following section.

Frankfurt's Model of the Will

Frankfurt's view of freedom is based on his hierarchical model of the will (1971) which distinguishes between first and second order desires, and between desires and volitions. A first order desire is a simple desire, for example, to want to eat a chocolate, whereas a second order desire is a desire to have a particular desire, for example a desire to have a desire

to eat salad. While a desire just involves wanting something, a volition involves actually wanting to be moved to action by that desire. A second order volition therefore would involve not just wanting to eat salad rather than chocolate, but actually wanting to act on that desire to eat salad rather than chocolate. In this way, a second order volition is a desire for a certain desire to be your will.

Frankfurt defines persons and freedom in terms of this structure of the will; arguing that it is because persons have second order volitions that they are capable of having and lacking freedom. He defines free-will as being able to act on your second order volitions in making your first order desires your will. These distinctions allow him to distinguish between persons and “wantons” (1969), who may have second order desires but don’t have second order volitions. It is because a person has second order volitions that they are capable of having and lacking freedom of the will; someone has free-will if they are able to act on their second order volitions in making their first order desires their will.

The main characteristic of a wanton is that they have second order desires, but not second order volitions; essentially, they do not care which of their desires actually becomes their will. Frankfurt highlights this distinction between persons and wantons with his example of the unwilling addict (1971). His example is based on two drug addicts, one who doesn’t want to be an addict and struggles against it, and one who doesn’t care whether he is an addict or not. Frankfurt describes the willing addict as a wanton, because the willing addict does not care which of his desires wins out and becomes his will. In contrast, the unwilling addict is not a wanton, because he wants to act on his desire not to be an addict. This is important for the debate about freedom of the will because it allows Frankfurt to conclude that the unwilling addict is not acting freely if he continues to take the drug, because he does not have the will he wants to have.

A key aspect of Frankfurt’s account of the will is that in order to act freely we must actively identify with our desires. It is not enough just to have a desire, we must want to be moved by that particular desire; we must identify with the desire. Importantly, even if the person is not responsible for the desire occurring, they become responsible when they identify themselves with it. This is extremely important for compatibilism, because it allows Frankfurt to conclude that even if the desire is determined, the person is still free and morally responsible if they identify with and act upon that desire. Even if our desires are determined we don’t just experience them passively, like reflexes, but actively identify

with them, which is how we can be free and morally responsible even if our desires are determined. This aspect of Frankfurt's account therefore lends crucial support to those who want to argue that determinism is compatible with freedom and moral responsibility, allowing them to argue that a person is morally responsible for desires that they identify with, even if the desires themselves are determined.

In this way for Frankfurt having free-will is more demanding than just having freedom of action. Animals such as dogs and cats may have freedom of action, but they do not have the capacity to reflect on their desires and identify with them; they do not have freedom of the will. For Frankfurt acting freely consists of reflecting on and identifying with our desires. This idea of actively identifying with our desires enables Frankfurt to maintain that we are free and morally responsible, regardless of whether or not our desires are determined. Returning to the example of choosing tomato soup from a cafe menu, it is not enough for me just to have a first order desire to eat tomato soup. I must identify with that desire and make a decisive commitment to actually act on this desire for tomato soup. In this way whether there are alternative possibilities available to me becomes irrelevant, as does the question of what makes me want to eat the tomato soup. What matters is that I identify with my desire to eat tomato soup.

Frankfurt's account of freedom is therefore based on two key elements: his rejection of the claim that freedom requires that we have alternate possibilities, and his hierarchical model of the will. Through these two elements he aims to refocus discussions of freedom away from alternate possibilities; he characterises freedom in terms of "properties present in the actual sequence of events in which an agent acts, not in terms of possible ways in that an agent might have acted differently than she did" (Widerker and McKenna, 2006, p.202). The next two sections will explore the objections to these two key elements of Frankfurt's account of freedom, as well as possible responses to these objections.

1.3. Frankfurt's Rejection of the Principle of Alternate Possibilities: Criticisms and Rebuttals

Frankfurt's rejection of the Principle of Alternate Possibilities is seen by some as revolutionising the debate between compatibilism and incompatibilism. However, "there are many who remain unconvinced that Frankfurt's argument against PAP really does provide a secure platform

from which to argue for compatibilism” (Steward, 2009b, p.64). This chapter will explore some of the main objections to Frankfurt’s rejection of the importance of alternate possibilities for freedom, as well as the responses to those objections.

The Consequence Argument

The argument often considered to provide the strongest formulation of the claim that determinism rules out alternate possibilities, and is therefore incompatible with freedom, is the Consequence Argument. This argument is most closely associated with Ginet (1990) and Van Inwagen (1999). The Consequence Argument maintains that all of our actions are the consequences of things which happened before we were even born, and as we have no control over these things we have no control over the consequences of them (Van Inwagen 1999). The Consequence Argument therefore suggests that determinism is incompatible with freedom because determinism would mean that there is only a single possible future, determined by events in the past which we have no control over.

The Consequence Argument is seen by many as the strongest version of the incompatibilist position. However, it can be seen to rest on the assumption that freedom requires alternate possibilities, which is precisely the assumption that Frankfurt is attempting to challenge. Even if it is accepted that all of our actions are the consequences of things which we have no control over, and accepted that there is only one future with no alternate possibilities, this doesn’t mean that this rules out our actions being free. It may rule out alternate possibilities, but this only undermines freedom if freedom is associated with having alternate possibilities, something which I, like Frankfurt, would reject.

Part of the reason why alternate possibilities have traditionally been seen to be so vital to free-will, as they are seen to be in the Consequence Argument, can be argued to be based on people confusing a lack of alternate possibilities with coercion. There often seems to be an assumption that a lack of alternate possibilities is synonymous with coercion, in that if we only have one option open to us then it seems that we are compelled to do it and it is not a free act. Fischer for example argues that “it is quite natural to suppose that if we only have one option that is genuinely available to us, then we have to do what we actually do, and that if we have to do what we actually do, we are compelled so to behave” (in Watson 2003, p.190). However, while it is clear that coercion involves a lack of alternate possibilities and is generally seen to mean that an action is not

free, this does not mean that a lack of alternate possibilities necessarily means that actions cannot be free. There is an important distinction between performing an action to which there happen to be no alternate possibilities and performing an action **because** there are no alternate possibilities (Frankfurt, 1969). Although performing an action because there are no alternate possibilities would seem to undermine freedom, it is not the fact that there are no alternate possibilities which makes this the case – it is the fact that the lack of alternate possibilities played a role in the decision to act that is important. In this way, coercion does exclude freedom, but coercion is not the same thing as simply a lack of alternate possibilities.

This distinction can be seen in a variety of examples of situations where lacking alternate possibilities has no effect on the person's decision-making process. If a lack of alternate possibilities does not affect either the person's reasoning or his behaviour, it is difficult to see how it can be claimed to affect either their free-will or their moral responsibility. Returning to the cafe example, the fact that the cafe had sold out of everything on the menu except for the tomato soup played no role in the decision to order tomato soup. Similarly, in Locke's example of the sleeping man who wakes up in a locked room the fact that the door is locked plays no role in his decision to stay in the room. In this way, in both of these examples the lack of alternate possibilities played no role in the decision or the action, so it is difficult to see how it can be said to affect the freedom of the action.

An Inferior Type of Freedom?

Another criticism of Frankfurt's account of freedom, and of compatibilist accounts of freedom in general, is the criticism that any type of freedom which is compatible with determinism is not really genuine freedom at all.

Compatibilists argue that we can still be regarded as having freedom even if determinism is true. They argue that we can still act freely even if we are physically and psychologically determined by things like our genes and our upbringing. Compatibilists therefore often define freedom as freedom from constraints and compulsion. However, this interpretation of freedom is controversial, with critics arguing that this is not what we really mean by freedom. Kant for example described this kind of compatibilist conception of freedom as a "wretched subterfuge" ([1788] 1997, p.189), and others argue that it does not sit comfortably with our image and experience of ourselves as beings which have meaningful

choices. In this way critics argue that the type of freedom compatibilism is based on is not really freedom at all and is unsatisfactory because it “cannot give an adequate account of our ordinary, strong notion of freedom” (Strawson, 1986, p.17).

This debate over whether some types of freedom are more genuine and valuable than others is important for Frankfurt’s account of freedom because some critics argue that even if Frankfurt is right and there is a type of freedom which does not require alternate possibilities, this freedom would be an inferior and unsatisfactory type of freedom. They argue that a type of freedom which was based on having alternate possibilities would be a somehow deeper and more valuable type of freedom than a type of freedom which is not based on having alternate possibilities. In this way, these critics would argue that freedom which does not involve having alternate possibilities would be an inferior type of freedom that is somehow less valuable than “genuine” freedom.

However, although we may intuitively feel that compatibilist freedom or freedom without alternate possibilities are a different kind of freedom to libertarian freedom it is not clear that this is actually the case. The fact that our intuitions about what counts as genuine freedom can be misleading is highlighted by Dennett’s example of two lotteries (2015). In the first lottery people buy their tickets, the draw takes place, and a winning ticket is chosen. In the second lottery, the draw takes place before the tickets are sold. Many people would intuitively feel that the second lottery is unfair because the winning ticket has been chosen and determined before they even buy their ticket. So, they would be buying a losing ticket which had no chance of being chosen. However, in reality the two lotteries are equally fair because when the draw takes place is, as Dennett calls it, an “utterly inessential feature” (2015, p.131). Our intuitions about freedom requiring choice between alternate possibilities seem similarly misplaced, with the existence of alternate possibilities being a similarly inessential feature.

Simply relying on our intuitions about freedom as evidence to support the libertarian approach is therefore not enough. It is also not at all clear that libertarians can provide a coherent account of what this deeper libertarian freedom would actually consist of. Libertarians reject compatibilist freedom as not being true freedom but, as Strawson comments, “libertarians are notoriously bad at giving any positive account of freedom at all” (1986, p.32). If the will is completely undetermined then it would seem to risk being purely random, which would actually seem to undermine freedom rather than support it. Schopenhauer, for example, thought that

an entirely free will which was completely independent of any causes and not dependent on anything, what he called “*liberum arbitrium indifferentiae*” or liberty of indifference, was “inconceivable” and “absolutely impossible” ([1839] 1995, p.64).

In this way, many critics of libertarianism argue that trying to view freedom as completely detached from determinism leads to an incoherent indeterminist view, where chance and indeterminism actually undermine freedom rather than allowing for a stronger version of it. J.J.C.Smart for example argued that indeterminism actually reduces freedom, commenting that “I would feel that my freedom was impaired if I thought that a quantum mechanical trigger in my brain might cause me to leap into the garden and eat a slug” (Smart and Haldane, 2003, p.63). Libertarians have attempted to counter criticisms such as these by arguing that indeterminism is not the same as pure chance, and that it does not have to involve a complete absence of causation. There is however a great deal of dispute as to whether any of these libertarian accounts can satisfactorily explain what freedom in an indeterministic universe would actually look like.

One attempt to provide a more coherent account of libertarian freedom has been to focus on the idea of agent causation. Agent causation theories centre on the idea that a free decision must be caused by the agent, free from causal determinism. The advantage of agent causal theories is that they provide a potential way to see free actions as being not deterministically caused without having to see them as uncaused or random. This would initially seem a significant advantage as it seems to provide a response to a common criticism of libertarian accounts of freedom, namely that regarding actions as entirely uncaused seems incoherent and regarding them as random would seem to actually undermine freedom. However, agent causal theories are not popular, in part because they seem to fail to provide a satisfactory explanation of the idea of acting freely, but for a reason. According to classic views of agent causation a person’s reasons cannot cause a free action. But if a person’s decisions are not connected to their reasons or motives for acting it seems problematic to see how they are not just chance, and therefore seems difficult to see how the person can be regarded as morally responsible for those decisions.

Another reason why agent causal theories are not popular is that some critics argue that they rely on a dualist account of mind and body; “it has often been supposed that the only way the requirement that agents not be mere composites can be satisfied is for agents to be wholly distinct substances from their bodies” (Kane, 2005a, p.342). Agent causal theories

have often been associated with substance dualism because it seems that on this type of account the agent's causal power cannot be reducible to natural causes, which would seem to suggest that agents must be distinct from their bodies and the natural world. This association with substance dualism is seen by many to be one of the major weaknesses of agent causal approaches, as substance dualism is widely regarded as being problematic and outdated approach, not least because of the questions it raises about how the material and immaterial could interact.

Timothy O'Connor (2000) suggested a more sophisticated agent causation based theory, which he believes solves many of these problems. He argued that whether a particular event occurs can depend on a number of different series of causes, but these series must have starting points somewhere. Although some of these series have their starting points before we were born, some are series which we ourselves start. Agent causation for O'Connor is the idea that we as agents can start new causal chains, and that freedom consists in the fact that "whether, when, and how such a capacity will be exercised is freely determined by the agent" (2000, p.xv). However, O'Connor's version of agent causation seems to me to be equally problematic to earlier versions. Although he concedes that some chains of causes are not started by the agent, he still maintains that some are. In these chains that are agent caused he still faces the same problem of being unable to provide a satisfactory explanation of how a person's reasons and motives connect to free action. On his account, it still seems that there are chains which have to be entirely caused by the agent, and in these particular chains he argues that a person's reasons and motives cannot cause a free action. It is therefore still unclear what would cause that chain if it is not chance and is not the person's motives or reasons. O'Connor's response is that it is the agent themselves that causes the chain, independent of their motives or reasons. But this seems problematic because it is still far from clear whether and how a person can cause something if it is not simply causation by events which involve the person. In this way, it is unclear as to whether causation by a person rather than an event is even possible.

A libertarian who has rejected the agent causation based approach is Robert Kane. He is one of the most well-known supporters of libertarianism and believes that freedom requires what he calls "ultimate responsibility" (2002). Kane argues that ultimate responsibility is a "criterion fuelling incompatibilist intuitions" that is even more important than the Principle of Alternate Possibilities, 'though comparatively neglected' and argues that to have free-will agents have to have the power to be "the

ultimate creators and sustainers of their own ends or purposes” (2002, p.224). In this way, even if an action is the result of someone’s character, Kane argues it can still be a free and responsible action, just as long as the person is at least partly responsible for the formation of their character. The choices and actions that the person freely performs in the past are partly responsible for forming their character now, which is how it is possible for them to be regarded as being responsible for an action which is the result of their character.

Interestingly Kane’s approach would actually mean that a person could perform a free and morally responsible act, even if they don’t have alternate possibilities on that particular occasion. As Kane states, ultimate responsibility “does not require that we could have done otherwise (AP) for every act done of our own free wills”, but it “does require that we could have done otherwise for some acts in our pasts life histories by which we formed our present characters” (2002, pp.224-225). This provides Kane with a response to the example of Martin Luther raised by Dennett; although on the one particular occasion at the Diet of Worms Luther could “do no other” there were lots of other situations earlier in his life where he did have alternate possibilities. As these choices shaped his character which in turn led to his decision to act, Luther still has ultimate responsibility for his action, despite the fact that on this particular occasion he does not have alternate possibilities. In this way even Kane, one of the best-known libertarians, concedes that it is not always necessary to have alternate possibilities at a particular moment in order to have freedom and moral responsibility.

The Unrealistic Nature of Frankfurt-Style Examples

Another criticism often levelled at Frankfurt is that his account of freedom relies on examples which are so unrealistic and implausible that they are not useful. Some versions of Frankfurt-style counter-examples to the Principle of Alternate Possibilities undeniably have extraordinary elements; Fischer for example concedes that they are often “somewhat unusual and, frankly, weird” (1997, p.154), something which can be seen in Fischer’s own version of Frankfurt’s classic Black and Jones example. In Fischer’s version of the example Jones is in a voting booth trying to decide whether to vote for Bush or Gore, and Black is a neurosurgeon working for the Democrat party who has planted a device in Jones’s brain which Black will trigger if Jones decides to vote for Bush (1997, p.136). Clearly a neurosurgeon implanting devices into people’s brains is an extraordinary and unrealistic element of the example. This has led some

critics to argue that these examples are too extraordinary to be useful, for example insisting that to be helpful to discussions on free-will the examples used must be “relevantly similar to ordinary human beings” (Black and Tweedale, 2002, p.281).

However, the criticism that the extraordinariness of these examples undermines their usefulness seems to me to be an unfair criticism. Frankfurt style examples do not have to feature devices planted in people’s brains or other extremely extraordinary interventions, as for Frankfurt the method of the intervention is unimportant. He suggests various forms that this intervention could take such as Black threatening Jones or hypnotising him, as well as the original example of manipulating his brain. Indeed, in Locke’s classic example of the man locked in a locked room, on which Frankfurt-style examples are based, the intervention just takes the form of someone locking a door while the man is asleep in a room, something which is not extraordinary or unrealistic at all.

Even if Frankfurt’s argument did rest on the more unrealistic elements of his examples there are many reasons why this criticism still seems unfounded. Equally extraordinary cases are used successfully in other areas of Philosophy; for example, Gettier cases in epistemology (Gettier, 1963, pp.121-123). Like Frankfurt, Gettier used unusual examples to challenge a previously widely accepted philosophical principle, in Gettier’s case the definition of knowledge as justified true belief. Also, and more importantly, even when the Frankfurt-style examples used are fantastical they still effectively highlight important issues. Frankfurt’s examples challenge our intuitions about freedom, challenging the widely held view that determinism threatens freedom and moral responsibility by precluding alternate possibilities. By showing that there are cases where the removal of alternate possibilities does not remove freedom or moral responsibility Frankfurt’s examples, however unusual, successfully make us question whether alternate possibilities really are the defining feature of freedom.

The Flicker of Freedom

Another objection to Frankfurt-style examples is the objection that they are not genuine counter-examples to the Principle of Alternate Possibilities because there is actually still a ‘flicker of freedom’ and the person still actually has alternate possibilities. This objection was outlined by Fischer (1994), who went on to reject the objection, and Speak (2002). The flicker of freedom objection is based on the idea that in Frankfurt-style examples just prior to the intervention the person still has alternate

possibilities. So, in the example of Black and Jones this objection would say that Jones still has alternate possibilities in the moments just before he makes his decision. If this is the case then this is not a genuine counter example to the Principle of Alternate Possibilities, as it contains a “residuum of choice between alternatives” (Black and Tweedale, 2002, p.302).

There is a great deal of discussion in the literature over what would constitute this flicker of freedom, as well of course over whether Frankfurt-style examples actually contain such a flicker. In the example of Black and Jones the flicker is most often seen to occur at the moment just before Jones makes his decision. If Jones is about to decide to do what Black wants him to do, then there is no need for Black to intervene. However, if Jones is about to decide not to do what Black wants him to do, then this triggers Black to intervene and make him do it. In this way, there is a moment where Jones is about to decide to perform the action or about to decide not to perform the action, and critics of Frankfurt maintain that this moment qualifies as a flicker of freedom, or a more reduced kind of alternate possibility. As Michael Della Rocca comments, “such an alternative possibility is present in Frankfurt-style cases even if the full-blown alternative of doing otherwise is not present” (1998, p.99).

If the flicker of freedom criticism is accepted, and Frankfurt-style examples do still contain alternate possibilities, then Frankfurt-style examples are not genuine counter examples to the Principle of Alternate Possibilities. This would severely undermine Frankfurt’s argument, as it is crucial to his rejection of the Principle of Alternate Possibilities that there are examples of cases where lacking alternate possibilities does not affect the person’s freedom or moral responsibility. However, the flicker of freedom objection seems unconvincing. One way in which this objection seems unconvincing is that even if such a flicker does exist, it does not seem that it is enough to count as really having alternate possibilities. This is a point raised by Fischer (1994) who concedes that “it is hard to see how a Frankfurt-type example could be constructed which would have absolutely no such flicker”, but argues that this flicker is not robust enough to be seen as a basis to describe the action as containing alternate possibilities (1994, p.136).

In this way Fischer argues that although there are flickers in Frankfurt-style examples, these are a minor and irrelevant feature, and it does not seem that this flicker is enough to describe the person as having alternate possibilities or to provide a grounding for moral responsibility. However, I think Fischer is conceding too much even by agreeing that there is a flicker of freedom. It misses the point that in Frankfurt style examples

there is no flicker preceding an intervention, because there is no intervention. Returning to the example of Black and Jones, Jones can either freely choose to vote for Gore, or he can choose to vote for Bush and be forced into voting for Gore. Either way he will end up voting for Gore, whether it be as a free action or as a coerced action. There is only one possible outcome; there are no alternate possibilities. Whether there is a flicker of freedom where Jones is about to choose to vote for Bush but is then overruled and votes for Gore is irrelevant, because in Frankfurt's example this doesn't happen. In Frankfurt's examples there is no intervention, so whether there would be a flicker of freedom which is quickly overruled by an intervention is entirely irrelevant. Because of this I would agree with defenders of Frankfurt such as Stump (1999) that the flicker of freedom objection is unconvincing.

The Epistemic Objection

Another criticism often levelled at Frankfurt is the epistemic objection that there is no way for Frankfurt's intervener to know in advance what the other person is going to do. Returning to the example of Black and Jones, the epistemic objection is that if Jones's choice is undetermined right up to the moment he makes it, then Black cannot know what Jones is going to choose until Jones actually chooses it. "Black may wait until Jones actually chooses in order to see what Jones is going to do. But then it will be too late for Black to intervene" (Kane, 2005b, p.87) or alternatively he would have to act in advance of Jones making the decision. If Black intervenes before Jones makes the decision then the objection is that Black takes away Jones' freedom. According to this objection therefore there would be no way for the intervener to know what choice the person is about to make, so the intervener would have to act in advance of the choice which would eliminate the person's freedom and responsibility.

This epistemic objection is based on the claim that if the world is not determined then there would be no reliable way for the intervener to know what the person is going to choose, and so the intervener would have to act before the person actually made their choice, thereby eliminating their freedom. However, a problem with this criticism is that it assumes an incompatibilist view of the world. If the world is seen as being determined then it would seem perfectly possible for the intervener to know in advance how the person is going to act. For those who believe that it is possible to have freedom in a determined world then it would

be possible to have a world where all our free actions are determined and where the intervener could always be certain in advance how the person is going to act; a world where Black can know in advance what Jones will do. It is only for incompatibilists who deny that this kind of world could exist that the epistemic objection applies. In this way, the epistemic problem is only really a problem for incompatibilists, not compatibilists.

However, I do not think the epistemic objection should be seen as convincing by either compatibilists or incompatibilists, for the simple reason that in Frankfurt style examples Black is purposely irrelevant. The objection states that if Black cannot know in advance what Jones will choose he can only intervene after the decision has been made, so he becomes irrelevant. However, this is exactly what happens in Frankfurt-style examples. Jones makes his own decision and Black does not have to intervene, so Jones' decision is free and he is morally responsible for it. Black is entirely irrelevant to Jones' action, just as whether or not Jones had alternate possibilities to his action is irrelevant. In this way, it doesn't matter whether Black knows what Jones will do in advance or only knows once the decision has been made, because the point of the example is that Jones chooses what Black wants him to choose and so Black does not have to intervene.

The discussion of whether Frankfurt's intervener could know in advance how someone is going to act without it eliminating their freedom highlights an interesting potential implication of Frankfurt's rejection of the importance of alternate possibilities, which is its implication for theological debate over the relationship between freedom and divine foreknowledge. In the Judeo-Christian tradition God is commonly seen as being omniscient, and this omniscience is often seen as including infallible foreknowledge. Yet humans are also seen as having free-will, which has led some to question whether divine omniscience and human free-will are in fact compatible. If God knows what we will do before we do it, this has been seen to rule out our ability to do otherwise and therefore seen to rule out our having free-will. However, if Frankfurt's view of freedom is adopted it could suggest that divine foreknowledge could rule out a person being able to do otherwise, yet not rule out their having free-will. As rejecting the claim that omniscience requires foreknowledge is controversial, some have looked to instead defend the claim that God can know how humans will exercise their freedom without this affecting their freedom. Adopting Frankfurt's account of freedom would seem to help defend this claim, as it would allow divine foreknowledge to

eliminate alternate possibilities without it also undermining human free-will. An interesting implication of Frankfurt's account of freedom can therefore be seen to be its potential to provide a way for theologians to argue that divine foreknowledge and human freedom could be compatible, something which will be explored in more depth in chapter three.

Alternate Possibilities and "Ought Implies Can"

One reason why many critics have been reluctant to accept Frankfurt's rejection of the Principle of Alternate Possibilities is because it is often held that the Principle of Alternate Possibilities is closely linked to the Kantian principle of "Ought Implies Can". One proponent of this objection was David Widerker (1991), who believed that the two principles are so inextricably linked that it is impossible to reject one without also rejecting the other, something which Widerker believes is a reason not to reject the Principle of Alternate Possibilities.

The principle of "Ought Implies Can" states that if someone is morally obliged to perform a certain action, it must be possible that he can do so. The principle is closely associated with Kant, who argued that "the action to which the "ought" applies must indeed be possible under natural conditions" ([1781] 2007, p.473). The connection to the Principle of Alternate Possibilities is argued to be that if ought implies can, if someone does something wrong they ought not to have done it. If they ought not to have done it, then it must be that they could have not done it. This was expressed by Schnall (2001) in the following way. If S is an agent, and A is an action that S performed, then "S is blameworthy for performing A only if S ought not to have performed A" (2001, p.336). However, what Frankfurt is claiming is that there are examples where S is blameworthy for performing A even though, due to the presence of a counterfactual intervener, S could not have not performed A.

There is however a great deal of disagreement over the precise relationship between the principle of "Ought Implies Can" and the Principle of Alternate Possibilities. Widerker for example argues that the two principles cannot be separated (1991), which he believes means that we should therefore not reject the Principle of Alternate Possibilities. Fischer agrees that there is a close association between the principles, but in contrast to Widerker argues that this means that we should reject the principle that "Ought Implies Can" along with the Principle of Alternate Possibilities (2003). Fischer's approach seems unsatisfactory because the principle of "Ought Implies Can" has a great deal of appeal, and

requiring those who adopt Frankfurt's account of freedom to reject the principle that "Ought Implies Can" could therefore considerably reduce the appeal of Frankfurt's account of freedom. However, Frankfurt makes it clear that he does not think the two principles are as closely linked as Fischer assumes. In *The Importance of What We Care About* (1988) he argues that the rejection of the Principle of Alternate Possibilities does not require the rejection of the principle that Ought Implies Can", as "the relationship between Kant's doctrine and PAP is not as close as it seems to be" (1988, p.95). For Frankfurt, his examples are counterexamples to the Principle of Alternate Possibilities but are not counterexamples to the principle that "Ought Implies Can".

One issue with Widerker's linking of the two principles is that he bases his argument on a modified version of the principle that "Ought Implies Can", a version based on the idea that we only blame someone for performing an act if they could have not performed that act. There is disagreement over whether it is legitimate to interpret the principle that "Ought Implies Can" as referring to obligations not to act as well as obligations to act. Frankfurt's critics tend to interpret the principle as allowing for blame only if a person could have avoided performing the wrong action in question. In this way, they tend to interpret the principle as applying to what we ought not to do as well as to what we ought to do; they interpret it as applying to not acting as well as acting. However, the idea of being morally responsible for not acting is problematic. Yaffe (1999) for example comments that it is possible to meet an obligation not to do a certain action without deliberately refraining from doing the action. For example, if we were dead or asleep we could meet an obligation not to steal something, but this seems very different to actually refraining from stealing something. Yaffe therefore argues that "ought not to X" is not the same thing as "ought to refrain from doing X" (1999). In this way, he argues that not acting does not require that the person is able to do something else instead. For Yaffe, the reason that the principle of "Ought Implies Can" and the Principle of Alternate Possibilities are mistakenly seen as so closely linked is because of confusion over what we mean by an obligation not to perform a particular action. Particularly there is a lack of clarity over whether we can hold people morally responsible for actions they do not perform, or only those that they do perform.

The connection between moral responsibility and not acting is a complex and controversial one. McIntyre for example argues that the conditions of moral responsibility for actions and for omissions are very

different (1994, p.457). She highlights this with her example of a forest fire, arguing that “if you believe that you could have stopped the forest fire by doing a rain dance that (you believe) would have brought on torrential rains, and if you had deliberately refrained from doing your rain dance, then we would not normally say that you are responsible for the effects of the fire” (1994, p.460).

Much of the disagreement therefore rests on how the principle that “Ought Implies Can” is interpreted, specifically whether it is interpreted as stating that if someone ought not to have done a particular action then they ought to have done something else instead. If stating that someone ought not to perform a certain action does not require that they ought to have done a different action instead, then it does not seem to require that they need to have alternate possibilities to that action. Whether or not the two principles are seen as inextricably linked therefore depends a great deal on how the two are interpreted, as they can be interpreted in ways that bring the two closer together as well as interpreted in ways that make the two more distinct. Whatever interpretations are adopted there does seem to be a significant difference between the two principles in that the principle of “Ought Implies Can” refers to particular action, whereas the Principle of Alternate Possibilities seems to refer to other possible actions. As such it seems that Frankfurt is justified in claiming that the link between the two principles seems much less close than it may initially seem.

Redefining the Principle of Alternate Possibilities

Some critics have attempted to redefine the Principle of Alternate Possibilities, in order to make it more resistant to Frankfurt-style examples. This strategy seems initially promising for the incompatibilists, but is ultimately unsuccessful. One attempt to redefine the Principle of Alternate Possibilities in this way comes from Glatz (2008) who proposed a revised version of the Principle of Alternate Possibilities, which he called PAP*, which states that “if an agent acts in the absence of counterfactual, causally overriding conditions, then the agent is morally responsible for what he has done only if he could have done otherwise” (Glatz, 2008, p.259). This amendment would seem to suggest that the principle is no longer vulnerable to Frankfurt-style examples. However, it seems an unacceptable addition to the principle, as it seems to suggest that moral responsibility depends on the presence or absence of conditions that are entirely irrelevant to the action.

Van Inwagen also attempts to redefine the Principle of Alternate Possibilities to make it immune to Frankfurt-style counter examples, suggesting three variations which he thinks are closely related but stronger versions of the original principle. His three principles are PPA (the Principle of Possible Action), PPP₁ (the Principle of Possible Prevention₁) and PPP₂ (the Principle of Possible Prevention₂), and he summarises these three principles as follows:

PPA (the Principle of Possible Action) – a person is morally responsible for failing to perform a given act only if he could have performed that act.

PPP₁ (the Principle of Possible Prevention₁) – A person is morally responsible for a certain event only if he could have prevented it.

PPP₂ (the Principle of Possible Prevention₂) – A person is morally responsible for a state of affairs only if he could have prevented it from coming about.

(Van Inwagen, 1999, p.342)

Van Inwagen believes that these strengthened versions of the principle make it much more resistant to Frankfurt-style examples.

However, none of these amended principles seem to really help the incompatibilist; they are so different to the original Principle of Alternate Possibilities that they seem to be focusing on different issues to the ones that Frankfurt was originally focusing on. Indeed, Frankfurt is himself dismissive of these amended principles, arguing that they are irrelevant to the relation between free-will and determinism, so whether or not they are immune to his counter-examples is entirely irrelevant. As well as changing the emphasis of the principle quite dramatically, to the point where they can be seen as unhelpful to the original debate, the revised principles also raise new problems of their own. For example, part of the reason that Frankfurt was so dismissive of Van Inwagen's Principle of Possible Action is because of its clear link to the Kantian principle that "Ought Implies Can", a connection which the debate in the previous section of this essay highlighted is not as strong as is frequently thought.

In this way, it seems that trying to amend the Principle of Alternate Possibilities to make it resistant to Frankfurt's argument is not a successful strategy for his critics. The amended principles seem either so different to the original principle as not to be relevant to the discussions, or to raise issues of their own that make them unconvincing. The lack of success of this strategy, and indeed the other criticisms of Frankfurt's rejection of the Principle of Alternate Possibilities explored in this chapter,

mean that some have seen the more convincing criticisms of Frankfurt's account of freedom as being those focused on the other major feature of his account, which is his model of the will. These criticisms, and possible responses to these criticisms, will be explored in the following chapter.

1.4. Frankfurt's Hierarchical Model of the Will: Criticisms and Rebuttals

Frankfurt's views on what defines freedom are based on his understanding of the will, which means that many of the objections to his account of freedom are based on objections to his model of the will. This chapter will explore some of the key objections to Frankfurt's hierarchical model of the will, as well as the responses to those objections.

Infinitely Escalating Desires

One major criticism of Frankfurt's hierarchical model of the will and its resultant implications for freedom of the will is that it can be seen to be unclear how it avoids escalating into an infinite chain of higher-and-higher order desires. Some critics, such as Watson (2003), have suggested that it seems unclear how we avoid this escalation to higher and higher desires, questioning why we should stop at second order desires and not continue to third or fourth order desires. Watson argues that second order desires are just like any other desires; there is nothing special about them and no reason to see them as any different to any other desires. He also points out that second order desires can still be trivial or superficial, such as a desire to desire to wear pink nail varnish, and so questions why they should be given so much importance and be so closely associated with freedom.

One response to this criticism is to argue that it is unconvincing because it seems very difficult to think of any situation where someone would actually have any desire higher than a second order desire. It is very difficult to conceive of a situation where someone would have a third order desire, whereas it is relatively easy to imagine numerous situations where someone would have first and second order desires, and so the criticism does not have as much force as Watson suggests. However, Frankfurt's reply to such objections is to introduce the ideas of "decisive commitment" and "wholeheartedness" (1971). These concepts provide a

way for Frankfurt to explain how we choose between conflicting desires, and also a way to address Watson's criticism that there is nothing special about second order desires.

Frankfurt argues that when someone is wholehearted they want, without reservation, to be moved by a particular desire. In this way, the person identifies with the desire. This is important because for Frankfurt freedom and moral responsibility require this conformity between a person's will and desires; a conformity which comes about by the person identifying with their will and making it their own. This provides Frankfurt with an answer to the related criticism of how we choose between conflicting desires, particularly when the desires seem trivial. For example, Raz gives the example of wanting to buy a dishwasher and wanting to buy a refrigerator but only being able to afford to buy one of them (1999, p.18). For Frankfurt, the answer is that while we may have a desire to buy each of them we only have an effective desire to buy the one we eventually decide to buy. If we decide to buy the refrigerator then we have not only a desire to buy it, but we identify with that desire and make it our will.

Importantly, even if the person is not responsible for having a particular desire, they become responsible for it when they identify themselves with it. This is extremely important for compatibilism, because it allows Frankfurt to conclude that even if the desire is determined the person is still free and responsible because they have identified with the desire. In this way, this is a key aspect of Frankfurt's claim that causal determinism is compatible with moral responsibility, because a person is only morally responsible for acts that they identify with. This means that the history of the person's motives becomes unimportant; it is the state of the person's will at the time of the act that matters. On this view, even if our desires are determined we don't just experience them passively, like reflexes. Because we actively identify with our desires this enables Frankfurt to say that we have moral responsibility for them, regardless of whether or not they are determined.

This conclusion strengthens the compatibilist position enormously, but also supports the claim that freedom and moral responsibility do not require alternate possibilities. If being truly autonomous does not depend on there being alternate possibilities then it must depend on something else, and Frankfurt suggests that this should be the person being wholehearted (1988, p.166). When we are truly autonomous it is not because there is more than one possible way of acting, it is because certain possibilities are closed off by what we truly care about. In this way, "being

truly autonomous is one and the same thing as being truly wholehearted” (Buss and Overton, 2002, p.13).

Frankfurt himself admits that in his early works his explanation of these terms is a little vague, commenting that “the notions I invoked – namely, “identification”, “decisive commitment”, “resounding” are terribly obscure” (1988, p.166). However, in chapter twelve of *The Importance of What We Care About* (1988) he explains these concepts in more detail, and by doing so he resolves many of the issues associated with them.

Valuing

Frankfurt doesn’t make any connection between higher order desires and valuing; on his account, higher order desires do not need to be rooted in a person’s moral outlook (1971). This leads critics such as Watson (2003) to object that we cannot identify with desires in the way that Frankfurt claims because actions are associated with what people value, not just what they desire. According to Watson freedom shouldn’t be seen as being associated with desires, but with values; he argues that freedom is about bringing what we desire in line with what we value. In this way Watson argues that having second-order volitions “is not the fundamental feature for either free agency or personhood” (2003, p.348), and instead proposes that the key feature of both freedom and personhood is valuing. However, there is a great deal of debate over what we really mean by valuing and over its relation to freedom.

One of the classic discussions of the relationship between values, the will and freedom comes from Kant. Like Frankfurt, Kant saw freedom as belonging to the will rather than as consisting of freedom of action, and like Frankfurt he identified our ability to reflect on and question our desires as key to freedom. However, the major difference between Frankfurt and Kant is the strong emphasis that Kant puts on reason and value. Kant argued that whenever we have a desire to act we should reflect on that desire and see whether it really is a reason to act; “the reflective mind must endorse the desire before it can act on it, it must say to itself that the desire is a reason. As Kant puts it, we must make it our maxim to act on the desire” (Korsgaard, 1996, p.94). We have to test our desires to see if they are really reasons to act, and according to the first formulation of the categorical imperative we do this by seeing whether it is a maxim which we could will to be a law, as “I ought never to act except in such a way that I could also will that my maxim should become a universal law” (Kant, [1785] 1998, p.15).

In this way, for Kant freedom is the “keystone” of his whole system of practical reason ([1788] 1997, p.3). To do something freely it is not enough just to do what we desire to do; we need to have a reason to act. We must make it our maxim to act on the desire. This is important for Kant because it means that even if our desires are determined, we still act on them freely when we reflect on them and decide to act. This allows Kant to place freedom and determinism in different realms; it allows him to talk of “transcendental freedom” (1997, p.3) even in a determined physical world.

Kant clearly makes a connection between normativity, freedom, and our ability to reflect on our desires. On this view, it is our ability to reflect that gives us the problem of normativity. Because we can reflect on our desires this means that we have a distance from them which means that we have to decide which desires we will act on; “it forces us to act for reasons” (Korsgaard, 2006, p.113). While Frankfurt also emphasises the importance of our ability to reflect on our desires for him there is not the same link to morality. Frankfurt does not link freedom with valuing, because for him normativity is an entirely separate issue. On his view being moral and being free are not the same thing and there is no reason to try to link them. It seems that we can freely do something that is morally wrong, just as long as we identify with our desire to do the wrong action. This is an aspect of Frankfurt’s account which Watson finds unsatisfactory, as he believes that free actions are motivated by values.

In his essay ‘Free Agency’ (1987) Watson distinguishes between desiring and valuing, arguing that Frankfurt’s account is flawed because it only talks about desiring, not about valuing. Watson argues that second order volitions are in fact just desires, and because of this they cannot be used as a basis for freedom of the will. One possible response to Watson is to simply identify second order desires as values. Frankfurt’s view can be largely reconciled with Watson’s if valuing is identified with second-order desires, as was suggested by David Lewis (1989). Lewis argues that valuing something is just desiring to desire it, so he sees values and second order desires as being equivalent. If this interpretation of valuing is adopted then it would provide a response to Watson’s objection. However, I do not think it is necessary to make this concession to Watson. Watson’s criticism is based on an assumption that without reference to values Frankfurt cannot adequately explain what gives higher order desires their authority. He believes that it is impossible for us to identify with desires in the way Frankfurt’s account demands, as we need to be motivated not only by desires but also by evaluations. However, Frankfurt would agree that we have to be motivated by evaluations, he would

just reject the claim that these have to be moral evaluations. There seems to be nothing in Watson's account that explains why it is only moral evaluations which we can identify with in the way Frankfurt requires.

Issues with Frankfurt's Definition of Persons

Another criticism of Frankfurt's hierarchical model of the will is that he defines both freedom and personhood in terms of this structure, arguing that it is because persons have second-order volitions that they are capable of having/lacking freedom. Yet many dispute Frankfurt's definition of persons, taking issue for example with his controversial conclusion of it being "conceptually possible" to have humans who aren't persons (Frankfurt, 1971). The controversial aspect of this is that it leads Frankfurt to conclude that being a person shouldn't necessarily be understood in terms of 'attributes that are necessarily species-specific. It is conceptually possible that members of novel or even of familiar nonhuman species should be person; and it is also conceptually possible that some members of the human species are not persons (Frankfurt, 1971, p.6). In particular, Frankfurt concludes that small children may not meet the criteria for personhood, as they seem to only have first order desires. For Frankfurt persons are capable of a different type of freedom to other creatures; other creatures "are moved by their specific impulses and appetites, but they neither have nor lack freedom of the will because they lack the capacity to form preferences about what their will should be" (Watson, 2003, p.17).

However, I do not believe that Frankfurt's account of personhood is as objectionable as some critics claim. Frankfurt only claims that it is "conceptually possible" that there be non-human persons, not that there actually are non-human persons. He is very clear that it appears that actually humans are the only creatures "to have the capacity for reflective self-evaluation that is manifested in the formation of second-order desires" (Frankfurt, 1971, p.7). Also, although Frankfurt claims that some humans, such as small children, may not meet the criteria for being persons, he does not in any way imply that this should be a value judgment or impact on how they should be regarded.

The question of how personhood should be defined is controversial and any performance based criteria for judging personhood will be open to criticisms by those such as Taylor (1985) who argue for a "significance-based" view of personhood. Other philosophers have suggested criteria for personhood which would rule out very small children. Any criteria of personhood will be controversial. Higher order cognition and

self-awareness are two commonly suggested criteria, as is normativity. Normativity is often regarded as an issue specific to humans; Korsgaard for example comments that “it is the most striking fact about human life that we have values” (1996, p.1). An issue with any account which associates morality and desires is that non-human animals have desires, but we do not generally see them as moral agents. A dog might desire to chase a cat, but we wouldn’t say that is an action which is morally wrong. Frankfurt’s account escapes this problem by regarding the defining feature of being a person as being able to identify with our desires.

Frankfurt’s account of personhood is one of the more contentious elements of his philosophy. However, I do not think this has a significant impact on his account of freedom. One of the most interesting features of Frankfurt’s account of freedom and personhood is his concept of a wanton (1969). Wantons differ from an animal which acts purely on its first order desires, because wantons are capable of second order desires. However, wantons are not capable of free-will, because they do not have second order volitions. In Frankfurt’s example of the unwilling addict and the willing wanton addict, what is important to the argument is whether or not each of them is acting freely, rather than whether or not they meet the criteria for personhood. Frankfurt argues that the unwilling addict is not acting freely, because he does not have the will he wants to have. In my view, this distinction is more crucial to Frankfurt’s account of freedom than the debate over his criteria for personhood.

Manipulated Persons

Rather than criticising Frankfurt’s concept of personhood, several of Frankfurt’s critics have focused on the issue of manipulated persons. Frankfurt argues that it doesn’t matter how a person comes to have the desires that they have, or even whether those desires are determined. What matters is that we do have the wills we want to have and the power to realise them in action. However, some critics of Frankfurt have argued that how we come to have our desires is more important than Frankfurt acknowledges, as shown by the example of manipulated persons.

Manipulation cases seem problematic for compatibilists as there seem to be examples of people who meet compatibilist criteria of freedom but only meet them by being manipulated, which intuitively would seem to suggest they aren’t free. A fictional example frequently used to highlight this issue is Skinner’s *Walden Two*. In the fictional society Skinner describes people would be regarded as free on Frankfurt’s account,

because they can do what they will. However, they have been conditioned and manipulated to will what they will, which makes some people uncomfortable in describing them as free. People in Walden Two can do whatever they want, but only because they have been behaviourally conditioned since childhood to want only what they can do. Some argue that “genuine” freedom that does not exist in Walden Two, but in the book Frazier (the fictional founder of the society) describes Walden Two as “the freest place on earth” (2005, p.257) because it is a place where no-one has to be forced to do anything against their will, and where there is no need for force or punishment.

This clash in intuitions is also highlighted in Pereboom’s frequently referred to “Four-Cases” (2001, pp.112-126). Pereboom suggests four cases of a man who performs a murder, the first three involving varying degrees of manipulation. In the first case scientists directly manipulate a person’s brain, and then the person murders someone. Pereboom argues that in this case we would not say that the murder was a free act, and we would not hold the person morally responsible for it. In the second case the scientists psychologically programme the person such that will live a normal life, but then later commit the murder. Again, Pereboom argues that we would not say that the murder was a free act, and we would not hold the person morally responsible for it. In the third case the person is indoctrinated as a young child, and later performs the murder. Again, Pereboom maintains that we would not hold them morally responsible for carrying out the murder. In the fourth case the person is not manipulated, but he performs the murder in an entirely determined world. Pereboom believes that if we accept that the murder is not a free act in the first three cases, then we must also conclude that the murder in this fourth case was not free and therefore that the person was not morally responsible for it.

Pereboom argues that in the first three cases the manipulation determined that the person committed the murder, and so the act is not freely performed. However, this is where Frankfurt would disagree. In case two, three and four Frankfurt would argue that the action is freely performed, despite the manipulation. In all of the cases except the first one the person identifies with the desire to commit the person and it moves them to act. For Frankfurt, this is enough to call the action free and to hold the person morally responsible for performing it. The reason that Frankfurt is able to be so dismissive of many cases of manipulation is because his view of the will is hierarchical rather than historical. To determine whether an action is freely performed he argues that we do not need to look at the history of the person’s action; “we do not need to look at events in her life

antecedent to her act but only at the state of her will at the time at which she acts” (Stump, 2002, p.33). In this way, the history of a person’s action is not relevant to assessing whether the act is freely performed.

For Frankfurt, manipulation is therefore not necessarily a threat to freedom or responsibility; it may undermine freedom, but it does not necessarily do so. Even if a person is so manipulated that they develop a whole new character they are still responsible for their actions, because although they are not responsible for having the desires they have, they are responsible for identifying with them. By identifying with their desires, the person becomes responsible for them, so “questions of how the actions and his identifications with their springs are caused are irrelevant to the questions of whether he performs them freely or is morally responsible for performing them” (Frankfurt, 1988, p.54). In this way, Frankfurt would say that the inhabitants of Walden Two are not automatically unfree just because their desires are determined. If our desires have been conditioned and manipulated that does not mean that our actions cannot be free, because freedom consists in being able to identify with our desires, not in being able to control what it is we desire.

Walden Two is an extreme example as it involves deliberate manipulation of people’s desires. However, it highlights an important point for Frankfurt which is that even if our desires are determined, in whatever form that takes, we can still be free and responsible agents. This claim, that we can be free even if our desires are determined, is why many have taken Frankfurt’s account of freedom to lend considerable support to the compatibilist position. Determinists suggest a number of different factors which could influence and indeed ultimately determine our desires, including “fate or God, the laws of physics, heredity and environment, unconscious motives, psychological or social conditioning, behavioural engineers, hidden controllers, and others” (Kane, 2002, p.5). However, Frankfurt is able to say that even if factors such as these determine our desires, they do not necessarily rule out our being free and morally responsible. For Frankfurt, it doesn’t matter how we come to have the desires we have, what matters is that we actively and wholeheartedly identify with them.

1.5. Conclusion

Frankfurt’s account of freedom constitutes a significant shift in the debate concerning the compatibility of freedom and determinism as it challenges

the traditional view that an action can only be described as free if the person could have done otherwise. There has been a huge amount of discussion over what the phrase could have done otherwise actually means; “a flood of ink has been spilled, especially in the modern era, on how to understand the concept of being able to do otherwise” (O’Connor, 2010, p.1). However, Frankfurt’s account enables us to shift the focus away from this aspect of the debate, by rejecting its importance for freedom altogether. This allows compatibilists to argue that determinism removes alternate possibilities but does not remove freedom, which I believe gives a much more coherent expression of the type of freedom compatibilism allows for.

Frankfurt’s account of freedom is controversial, but if accepted it offers a way to considerably strengthen the compatibilist position. Accepting features of Frankfurt’s account such as his rejection of the Principle of Alternate Possibilities doesn’t necessarily lead to compatibilism, but it does undermine arguments for incompatibilism such as the Consequence Argument. It therefore offers “considerable hope that the impasse at which the debate between compatibilists and incompatibilists often finds itself could be broken” (Della Rocca, 1998, p.99). Frankfurt-style examples, as the main way that Frankfurt tries to show that freedom does not require alternate possibilities, are particularly contentious. However, the philosophical significance of these examples “is undeniable” (Haji, 2006, p.180). They have inspired a huge amount of discussion over the last forty years, and there is still major disagreement concerning whether they are genuine counter-examples to the Principle of Alternate Possibilities. I believe that while there may be issues in the finer details of some Frankfurt-style examples they are still successful in challenging our intuitions about freedom. There are those who are critical of the entire approach of using examples in this way, arguing “that our reactions to examples, either real or imaginary, should play no part in the resolution of philosophical problems” (Black and Tweedale, 2002, p.281). However, this seems to be overly dismissive of the use of examples in philosophical discussions, where they are a useful and well-established tool.

Frankfurt’s examples, despite their problems, seem to me to be hugely successful in achieving their goal of making us question whether alternate possibilities really are what matters for freedom and moral responsibility. As Fischer comments, “an unusual case can point us to something very mundane – but also very important. It can cause us to focus with increased clarity on what makes us morally responsible in quite ordinary cases” (Fischer, 1997, p.132). It should also be remembered that the more

unusual aspects of Frankfurt-style examples tend to apply to the possible manner of the intervention by his counter-factual intervener. Seeing as the whole point of Frankfurt style examples is that the intervener does not actually intervene, much of the discussion therefore focuses on a detail which is irrelevant.

Some defenders of Frankfurt have accepted his rejection of the Principle of Alternate Possibilities but have argued that his approach does not have to lead to full compatibilism. They do this by attempting to separate moral responsibility and freedom in a way that Frankfurt himself does not. For example, Fischer (1999) argues that moral responsibility does not require alternate possibilities, as shown by Frankfurt-style examples, but freedom does require alternate possibilities, because of the Consequence Argument. This semi-compatibilist position, where determinism is compatible with moral responsibility but incompatible with freedom seems unsatisfactory because it fails to take account of the damage done to the Consequence Argument by a rejection of Principle of Alternate Possibilities. It also seems to cling to a definition of freedom as requiring alternate possibilities when Frankfurt-style examples seem to show that this is not the crucial defining feature of what it means to have free will. The separation of freedom and moral responsibility found in semi-compatibilism seems to me artificial and unconvincing, and I would therefore agree with Vargas that semicompatibilism “obscures matters more than it clarifies them” (2009, p.57). Fischer’s work actually reinforces and supports several elements of Frankfurt’s account, despite his eventual departure into semicompatibilism; for example, Fischer provides a useful defence of Frankfurt style examples. John Perry goes as far as to say that Fischer’s work provides “all the nails needed to hammer down the lid of the coffin of incompatibilism – as well as the hole to bury the coffin in and the spade to cover it with dirt” (2008: 166), suggesting a missed opportunity to lend support to full compatibilism.

Critics of compatibilism argue that the type of free will that is compatible with determinism is not really free will at all. However, I believe that the account of freedom suggested by Frankfurt is more coherent and more convincing than any accounts of libertarian freedom that have been suggested. It is not clear what libertarian freedom would actually consist of, or indeed whether it really would be in some way a more valuable type of freedom than that suggested by Frankfurt. Also, if our freedom and moral responsibility is seen to depend on whether we could do otherwise we would be faced with what Dennett calls a “peculiar problem of ignorance” (2015, p.131) in that we could arguably never

know whether someone had alternate possibilities, so we could never know whether someone was ever free or morally responsible for anything at all.

Frankfurt's counter examples to the Principle of Alternate Possibilities provide a way to challenge the widely held view that freedom requires alternate possibilities. Yet providing a basis for the rejection of the importance of alternate possibilities is not the only way in which Frankfurt's account of freedom can be seen to considerably strengthen the compatibilist position. Frankfurt also provides an account of freedom of the will, which is significant because one of the main problems with compatibilism is that it traditionally only focuses on freedom of action and not on freedom of the will (Frankfurt, 1971). By offering an account which focuses on freedom of the will Frankfurt can therefore be seen to be addressing an area of weakness in earlier versions of compatibilism. In this way, Frankfurt-style compatibilism "does represent a genuine advance" as it helps to "shift the debate from a context in which incompatibilism has an advantage to one in which incompatibilism has no such advantage" (Fischer, 2003, p.211). Although Frankfurt never states explicitly that he is defending compatibilism, his account of freedom provides a way to address many of the traditional weaknesses critics have identified in the compatibilist approach. He "inspired many compatibilists to adopt a bolder approach" (McIntyre, 1994, pp.454-455), and to question what it is that is really essential to freedom. By providing an explanation of how freedom can exist without alternate possibilities, in my view, Frankfurt helps to provide a more coherent account of compatibilist freedom than has otherwise been put forward.

CHAPTER TWO

ALTERNATE POSSIBILITIES AND THE FREE WILL DEFENCE

The previous chapter examined the claim that freedom does not necessarily require alternate possibilities and explored whether insights from Frankfurt's work on this topic can be used to strengthen the compatibilist position. The rest of this thesis will turn its attention to the theological implications of this strengthened form of compatibilism by exploring its potential impact on arguably the biggest challenge to theistic belief – the problem of evil. The following three chapters will explore the role libertarian concepts of free will play in the three main traditional responses to the problem of evil, seeking to establish whether they do in fact require an incompatibilist libertarian stance. They will also discuss key objections to each of these approaches in an effort to establish whether, if they do have to be rejected in order to adopt a compatibilist view, this should be seen as a significant loss for the compatibilist that would undermine the appeal of the compatibilist position, or whether the wider issues with these approaches mean that their potential loss to the compatibilist should not be regarded as a significant concern. The discussion of these three responses to the problem of evil will begin in this chapter with the Free Will Defence as perhaps the most well-known and widely discussed response to the problem of evil.

The Free Will Defence attempts to show that there is no logical contradiction in an omnipotent and benevolent God creating a world which contains evil and suffering. To do this it attempts to remove responsibility for the existence of evil from God, and instead sees evil as a consequence of human free will. More specifically, it claims that God, even if omnipotent, could not have created a universe which contains moral good without it also containing moral evil because the possibility of choosing evil is necessary if humans are to have genuine free will. Yet if a compatibilist view of freedom is adopted, based on Frankfurt's claim that freedom does not necessarily require alternate possibilities, then it seems that it would be possible to still have freedom without having the possibility of choosing evil. In this way, there seems to be an irresolvable tension between the claim that evil is necessary if humans are to have genuine free will

and the claim that freedom does not require alternate possibilities; an irresolvable tension between the Free Will Defence and compatibilism. For supporters of the Free Will Defence, this tension lends significant weight to the case for abandoning compatibilism, whereas for supporters of compatibilism this tension lends significant weight to the case for abandoning the Free Will Defence.

The first section of this chapter will discuss the key features of the Free Will Defence based on the most well-known version from recent times, that of Alvin Plantinga (1974a, 1974b). The second section will then focus on exploring the role of freedom in the Free Will Defence, including a discussion of whether the Free Will Defence makes mistaken assumptions about the nature of freedom. The following sections will then discuss three of the key objections to the Free Will Defence and the responses to those criticisms. More specifically, these sections will explore firstly the debate surrounding Plantinga's account of transworld depravity, secondly tensions around the concept of omnipotence, and thirdly whether the Free Will Defence is able to give a satisfactory account of natural evil. The chapter will end with a conclusion as to whether, in light of these discussions, compatibilism does fundamentally conflict with the Free Will Defence, and if so, whether this lends weight to the case for philosophers of religion to reject compatibilism or in fact lends weight to the case that the Free Will Defence should itself be abandoned.

2.1. Alvin Plantinga's Free Will Defence

The most well-known version of the Free Will Defence from recent times comes from Alvin Plantinga (1974a, 1974b). Plantinga makes it clear that the Free Will Defence does not claim to know why God permits evil. Instead, the Free Will Defence attempts to show what one possible explanation for God's permitting evil might be, and therefore attempts to show that belief in God is not irrational despite the existence of evil in the world.

Plantinga's version of the Free Will Defence is based around the central claim that God could not actualise a possible world that contains freedom but does not contain moral evil. For Plantinga, a possible world is just "a way things could have been" (1974a, p.34). To say that something exists in a possible world is therefore not to say that it actually exists, but just to say that it would exist were that possible world

to be actual. What is important for the Free Will Defence is the claim that God “could not have actualized just any possible world He pleased” (Plantinga, 1974a, p.34). This is in contrast to Leibniz’s claim that an omnipotent God could actualise any possible world he wanted and therefore that this world, even if it doesn’t appear to be, must be the best of all possible worlds ([1710] 2006). It is also in contrast to J.L. Mackie’s argument that an omnipotent God could actualise any possible world he wanted and as this world clearly isn’t the best possible world it must follow that an omnipotent God does not exist (1955). It is pivotal to the Free Will Defence that not only are there possible worlds that God, even if omnipotent, cannot actualise, but also that an example of such a world is one that contains freedom but does not contain moral evil.

The claim that God could not actualise a possible world that contained freedom but no moral evil is at the heart of the Free Will Defence. In support of this claim, Plantinga provides an example of a man, Maurice, who is about to make a decision about whether or not to have oatmeal for his breakfast (1974a, p.42). Plantinga argues that if God knows that, given a certain set of circumstances, Maurice will freely choose to eat the oatmeal for his breakfast, then God cannot create a world where the same set of circumstances obtains but where Maurice does not freely choose to eat the oatmeal for his breakfast (1974a, p.42). Plantinga maintains that this example of Maurice and the oatmeal successfully demonstrates that there are possible worlds which even an omnipotent God cannot actualise; God cannot actualise a situation where he knows that given a certain state of affairs Maurice will freely choose to eat the oatmeal, where that particular state of affairs exists, but where Maurice chooses not to eat the oatmeal.

This example is presented in more general terms by Manis: “suppose that if a person is left free to choose A or $\sim$ A in situation S, she will in fact choose A. If this is the case, then God cannot actualize the state of affairs that includes both (1) P’s being free in S, and (2) P’s choosing $\sim$ A in S, even though the state of affairs described by the combination of (1) and (2) obtains in a possible world” (Manis, 2006, p.154). If this is a genuine example of a possible world that God cannot actualise, then Plantinga has shown that even an omnipotent God cannot actualise any possible world. However, this example is contentious and is based on a number of assumptions about freedom which, if rejected, call into question the usefulness of the example. These difficulties will be discussed in more detail in the following section of this chapter.

Once Plantinga has, in his view, shown that there are possible worlds which even an omnipotent God cannot actualise, he turns to the question of whether God could actualise a possible world containing freedom but no moral evil. Plantinga does not claim that there are no possible worlds that contain freedom but do not contain moral evil. Instead, he claims that it is could be the case that all of the possible worlds that contain freedom but no moral evil are worlds that God could not have actualised. To support this claim Plantinga introduces the concept of “transworld depravity” (1974a, pp.48-53). He argues that if a person suffers from transworld depravity then in every possible world that God could actualise they would commit moral evil, which means it would be impossible for God to actualise a world in which that person was free but performed no moral evil. More formally, he argues that:

A person *P* suffers from transworld depravity if and only if the following holds: for every world *W* such that *P* is significantly free in *W* and *P* does only what is right in *W*, there is an action *A* and a maximal world segment *S'*, such that

1. *S'* includes *A*'s being morally significant for *P*
2. *S'* includes *P*'s being free with respect to *A*
3. *S'* is included in *W* and includes neither *P*'s performing *A* nor *P*'s refraining from performing *A*

and

4. If *S'* were actual, *P* would go wrong with respect to *A*.

(Plantinga, 1974a, p.48)

This concept of transworld depravity is central to Plantinga's version of the Free Will Defence because it aims to provide an example of a case where God could not actualise a world in which a particular person is free but does no moral evil. To explain this concept of transworld depravity further, Plantinga gives an example of a politician called Curley (1974a, pp.45- 52). The example centres on whether Curley would have taken a bribe of \$20,000 if it had been offered to him. Plantinga argues that if we assume that Curley would have freely taken the bribe then, although there are possible worlds where Curley does not take the bribe, God could not actualise any possible world where Curley does not take the bribe without interfering with Curley's freedom. To highlight this point Plantinga sets up an example of a possible world (*W'*) where Curley is free and where he always does the right thing. He argues that if we assume that Curley would take a bribe of \$20,000 if he was offered one, then a world where Curley is offered a bribe but does not take it,

world W' , becomes an example of a possible world that God is not able to actualise. According to Plantinga, if Curley took the bribe then it would not be a world where he always does the right thing, so it could not be W' . But if God somehow brings it about that Curley does not take the bribe then it would not be a world where Curley is free to take the bribe, so also could not be W' (1974a, pp.46-48).

Once Plantinga has established his case for the possibility that one person, Curley suffers from transworld depravity, he then attempts to establish that it is possible that everybody could suffer from transworld depravity (1974a, p.48). He begins by expanding from it being possible that one person suffers from it, to it being possible that some people suffer from it, to it being possible that all people who exist suffer from it. However, Plantinga realises that even if it were the case that all people who exist suffer from transworld depravity, this still leaves him with the problem that God could have just created other people instead who do not suffer from transworld depravity. To overcome this difficulty, he moves the discussion of transworld depravity from applying it to persons to applying it to essences (1974a, p.53), claiming that it is not only possible that every person who exists suffers from transworld depravity but in fact possible that every essence suffers from transworld depravity. If every person is the instantiation of an essence, and if every essence suffers from transworld depravity, then “it was beyond the power of God Himself to create a world containing moral good but no moral evil” (1974a, p.53). The logical possibility of not just individual transworld depravity but universal transworld depravity is central to Plantinga’s Free Will Defence although, importantly, Plantinga is not claiming that there actually is universal transworld depravity, just that it is possible that this could be the case. Even despite this reduced claim, the concept of transworld depravity is still one of the most controversial aspects of Plantinga’s Free Will Defence, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

2.2. Assumptions About the Nature of Freedom

For Plantinga, God being unable to actualise a possible world that contains freedom but no moral evil is not a limitation on God’s omnipotence. Rather than interpreting omnipotence as the ability to do anything, even things that are logically impossible, Plantinga interprets omnipotence as the ability to do anything that is logically possible. Although there is

disagreement over the nature of omnipotence, this is not an unusual stance; Aquinas [1265-1274] (2000) for example held that even an omnipotent being cannot do what is logically impossible, as did C.S. Lewis, who argued that “You may attribute miracles to him, but not nonsense ... nonsense remains nonsense even when we talk it about God” ([1940] 2012, p.18). What is far more contentious is Plantinga’s assumption that creating humans who only ever freely choose to do good is logically impossible. Even if the assumption that God can only do what is logically possible is accepted, it is far from clear that the existence of free humans who only choose to do good is a logical impossibility. This claim seems to rest on several contentious assumptions about the nature of freedom.

The Free Will Defence is built around an assumption of an incompatibilist view of freedom. Plantinga dismisses compatibilism as “utterly implausible” (1974a, p.32). However, if compatibilism is accepted then it has major implications for the Free Will Defence as it seems to severely undermine the claim that God could not create a world containing freedom but no evil. The compatibilist objection to the Free Will Defence has most notably been raised by Anthony Flew (1955) and John Mackie (1955). Both argue that freedom and responsibility are compatible with determinism, and so God could have created a world inhabited by free and responsible agents who nevertheless were causally determined to always choose good. This compatibilist objection maintains that God could have given humans free will yet also determined exactly how their will would be exercised. In this way, all God would have to do is “choose the right laws and initial state for a deterministic world in which agents always freely do right” (Bishop, 1993, pp.104), and by doing so he could have created a world inhabited by free humans who were causally determined to always choose to do good.

The Free Will Defence assumes that the only significant sort of freedom is libertarian freedom which involves having alternate possibilities. More specifically, it seems to assume that freedom requires both the possibility of doing good and the possibility of doing evil. If the association of freedom with having alternate possibilities is rejected, as suggested in the previous chapter, then it seems that God could eliminate moral evil while still maintaining freedom. On a compatibilist view, it is possible that God could have created a universe where every person was determined to freely choose good. It is the case that in such a world the person would not have the alternate possibility of choosing evil but this only means that they would lack alternate possibilities, not that they would

lack freedom. In this way, compatibilist objections to the Free Will Defence are significantly strengthened by a rejection of the principle of alternate possibilities. One of the key reasons that Plantinga and others reject compatibilism is that they argue that determinism is not compatible with a type of freedom that consists of having alternate possibilities. However, even if it is accepted that determinism is incompatible with having alternate possibilities, this does not mean that determinism is incompatible with freedom and moral responsibility. If freedom does not require alternate possibilities then determinism being incompatible with having alternate possibilities cannot be a reason for rejecting the compatibilism of freedom and determinism.

There also seems to be an underlying tension in the Free Will Defence between the claim that God cannot give humans “the freedom to perform evil and at the same time prevent them from doing so” (1974a, p.30) and the admission by Plantinga that “significant freedom, obviously, does not *entail* wrongdoing” (1974b, p.185). In places, the Free Will Defence seems to suggest that there is something about the nature of freedom itself that requires it to include the possibility of doing evil and indeed inevitably leads to evil in the world. This sense of inevitability in the association between freedom and the possibility of evil recurs throughout the literature on the Free Will Defence; Cain for example comments that “a simple version of the defence holds that the mere existence of free will in creatures brings with it the possibility of its sinful misuse” (2004, p.440). It also seems to underlie the claim that eliminating moral evil would also eliminate any significant form of freedom. However, it is not a straightforward association. The assumption that freedom requires the possibility of evil was rejected by Mackie, who argued that “if there is no logical impossibility in a man’s choosing the good on one, or on several occasions, there cannot be a logical impossibility in his freely choosing the good on every occasion” (1955, p.209). For many theists, the assumption that freedom requires the possibility of evil also raises important questions about the nature of divine freedom, and indeed freedom in heaven. The Free Will Defence seems to be underpinned by the claimed connection between freedom and the possibility of evil, but the example of divine freedom would seem to be an example of a type of freedom that does not involve the possibility of evil. If God is able to have freedom yet only ever choose to do good then this seems to support Mackie’s argument that humans could have freedom yet only ever choose to do good. Similarly, the idea of life after death would also seem to lend support to Mackie’s argument, as the concept of heaven would seem to

be an example of an environment where people have freedom but where evil does not exist. Throughout the Free Will Defence it is not clear that this underlying assumption, that freedom necessarily brings with it the possibility of evil, is ever satisfactorily addressed.

Some of the problems with the view of freedom assumed by the Free Will Defence can be seen by returning to look more closely at Plantinga's example of Maurice and his oatmeal. Plantinga sets up this example by saying that there are two possible outcomes: (1) that given a particular state of affairs (*S'*) Maurice will freely choose the oatmeal, or (2) that given the same particular state of affairs (*S'*) Maurice will freely reject the oatmeal. Plantinga maintains that God knows whether Maurice will choose to eat the oatmeal for breakfast (1974a, p.43); God knows whether (1) or (2) is the case. Plantinga's argument rests on the idea that if God knows that (1) is the case, he cannot actualise a world where the same set of circumstances (*S'*) obtains but where Maurice freely chooses not to eat the oatmeal for breakfast (1974a, p.42). In this way, one possible world is where if *S'* obtains Maurice will choose to eat the oatmeal, *S'* obtains, and Maurice chooses the oatmeal. A second possible world is where if *S'* obtains then Maurice will choose not to eat the oatmeal, *S'* obtains, and Maurice chooses not to eat the oatmeal. Each of these two worlds is logically possible, but Plantinga argues that whether God can actualise them depends on the choice that Maurice makes, as "there are any number of possible worlds such that it is partly up to Maurice whether or not God can actualize them" (Plantinga, 1974a, p.44). If Maurice chooses not to eat the oatmeal then God can actualise the second possible world, whereas if Maurice chooses to eat the oatmeal then God cannot actualise the second possible world. So, whether God can actualise the second possible world depends on what Maurice chooses; it is partly dependent on Maurice whether God can actualise that world. But if a compatibilist view of freedom is adopted then this example loses its force. God could simply determine whether, given a certain set of circumstances, Maurice will freely choose to eat or not eat the oatmeal. More significantly, if eating the oatmeal was an evil act and God wanted to create a world where Maurice does not eat the oatmeal, it appears he could easily have done so. If God knows that given a certain set of circumstances Maurice will freely choose to eat the oatmeal, then God could just have created a world where that particular set of circumstances never comes about. This would not affect Maurice's freedom, as God would just only ever actualise states of affairs which he knew would mean that Maurice would freely choose not to eat the

oatmeal. If this was applied to evil acts, God would know which sets of circumstances would lead to Maurice choosing evil and which would lead to him not choosing evil, and he could therefore just only actualise those sets of circumstances which would lead to Maurice freely not choosing evil.

The reliance of the Free Will Defence on an incompatibilist view of freedom is also highlighted by the distinction Plantinga makes between strongly actualising and weakly actualising a state of affairs (1974b, p.173). According to this distinction, if God strongly actualises a state of affairs then God directly causes that state of affairs to be actual, whereas if God weakly actualises a state of affairs then he just brings about a state of affairs where humans can then make free choices. Plantinga claims that God cannot strongly actualise a world that contains freedom but no moral evil, but this claim is clearly based on his incompatibilist view of freedom. The claim is based on the argument that if God cannot cause free acts, then it would be impossible for God to strongly actualise a world which contains freedom but no moral evil because “there would be no free acts in that world” (Geirsson and Losonsky, 2005, p.373). But if Plantinga’s view of freedom is rejected then God could strongly actualise a world in which there was freedom but no moral evil. In this way, rejecting an incompatibilist understanding of freedom has significant consequences for the Free Will Defence, not least because it means that the classic objection from Flew and Mackie, that God had the option to create free humans who only ever choose to do good, can be ‘resurrected’ (Eshleman, 1997, p.268). A compatibilist understanding of freedom would allow God to create a world where there was freedom and moral responsibility, but where everyone was determined to only choose to do good. Plantinga admits that such worlds are possible, but maintains that God could not actualise them without compromising human freedom. However, if a compatibilist view of freedom is adopted then this opens up the possibility that “God could have actualized just any one of those myriad possible worlds that are populated only by compatibilist free creatures” (Howsepian, 2007, p.218). So even if Plantinga’s Free Will Defence is successful, it does not show that there are possible worlds which God cannot actualise, it only shows that there are possible worlds which God cannot actualise without compromising human freedom according to Plantinga’s particular incompatibilist definition of freedom. If this particular definition of freedom is rejected, then the Defence loses much of its force.

2.3. The Debate Surrounding Transworld Depravity

The concept of transworld depravity (1974a, p.48) is at the core of Plantinga's version of the Free Will Defence. By seeking to establish that if a person suffered from transworld depravity it would be impossible for God to actualise a world in which that person was free but performed no moral evil, Plantinga is taking a crucial step towards his wider claim that it is logically possible that all persons suffer from transworld depravity and therefore logically possible that God cannot actualise a world in which any persons were free but performed no moral evil. However, there seem to be a number of issues with the concept of transworld depravity which, if they cannot be satisfactorily addressed, have significant implications for the success of the Free Will Defence. Plantinga does not argue that transworld depravity actually exists, only that it is logically possible that it exists. This helps him to avoid objections around the fact that he gives no justification at all for why we should be convinced by the concept. However, it is questionable whether we should be willing to accept even the logical possibility of transworld depravity, as there seem to be deeper problems with the concept than it just being improbable.

Plantinga states that "obviously it is possible that there be persons who suffer from transworld depravity" (1974a, p.48). However, this seems to me much less obvious than Plantinga assumes. If a person suffers from transworld depravity, then in every possible world that God could actualise they would commit moral evil. In this way, if a person suffers from transworld depravity it would be impossible for God to actualise a world in which that person was free but performed no moral evil. The concept of transworld depravity is therefore central to the claim that there are worlds which God cannot actualise, and that a world where humans only ever freely choose to do good would be one of the worlds that it would be impossible for God to actualise. Discussing his example of Curley the politician (1974a), Plantinga comments that "of course, there are possible worlds in which he is significantly free (i.e., free with respect to a morally significant action) and never does what is wrong" (1974a, p.47), but then goes on to argue that it would be impossible for God to actualise these worlds. In this way, Plantinga concedes that there are possible worlds where humans could freely choose to only ever do good, but rejects the claim that God is able to actualise these worlds.

Plantinga outlines an example of a possible world (W') where Curley is free, but where he only does what is right. He also suggests that there

is a particular action (A) where Curley, given a free choice, will always choose the wrong action. Plantinga sets out the example as follows:

There is a maximal world segment S' that obtains in W' and is such that (1) S' includes Curley's being free re A but neither his performing A nor his refraining from A; (2) S' is otherwise as much as possible like W' ; and (3) if S' had been actual, Curley would have gone wrong with respect to A. (1974a, p.47)

Plantinga argues that this example shows that it would be impossible for God to actualise W' , and that this example therefore demonstrates that there are some possible worlds which it would be impossible for God to actualise. In this case, Plantinga argues that God cannot actualise W' because "to do so He'd have been obliged to bring it about that S' is actual; but then Curley would go wrong with respect to A. Since in W' he always does what is right, the world thus actualized would not be W' " (1974a, p.47). Plantinga goes on to argue that if God were in some way to cause Curley not to go wrong with respect to A, then Curley would not be free, and so again W' could not be actualised. To me, the setup of this example seems problematic and highlights Plantinga's assumption of an incompatibilist view of freedom. If a compatibilist view of freedom is adopted, then God determining that Curley does not go wrong in respect to action A does not mean that Curley cannot be free in regard to action A. More fundamentally, Plantinga seems essentially to be claiming that it would be impossible for God to create a world where Curley will always choose to do good (world W'), because there is a particular action (A) where, given S' , Curley will always choose the wrong action. I agree with Plantinga that God cannot actualise world W' . But I do not agree that this makes W' an example of a logically possible world which God cannot actualise. Instead, in my view W' is simply an example of a logically impossible world, because it is a world which would contain the logical contradiction of being a world where Curley always freely chooses to do what is right yet also chooses to do wrong in relation to action A.

This concern can also be highlighted by the example of Maurice deciding whether or not to have oatmeal for breakfast (Plantinga, 1974a, p.42), which Plantinga believes shows that there are logically possible worlds which God cannot actualise. This example of Maurice and the oatmeal is claimed to successfully demonstrate that there are possible worlds which an omnipotent God cannot actualise. If this is a genuine example of a possible world that God cannot actualise then Plantinga has shown that even an omnipotent God cannot actualise any possible world he wants to, and many agree that he does indeed show this; for example, Kraay

argues that “while it is tempting to assume that every possible world is capable of actualization by God, Plantinga has persuasively argued that this is false” (2010, p.356). However, as with the example of Curley, it seems questionable as to whether this actually is an example of a logically possible world which God cannot actualise, or is in fact just an example of a world that is not logically possible. Plantinga argues that God must know whether Maurice will freely choose to eat oatmeal for breakfast or not. If God knows that, if a certain set of circumstances obtains, Maurice will freely choose to eat oatmeal for breakfast, then God cannot create a world where the same set of circumstances obtains but where Maurice does not freely choose to eat oatmeal for breakfast. Initially this example seems to be an example of a possible world which God cannot actualise, as God cannot actualise a possible world where the same particular set of circumstances obtains but where Maurice does not choose to eat oatmeal for breakfast. However, I would argue that this is because the set-up of the examples means that Plantinga is suggesting a logically impossible world, not a logically possible world which God cannot actualise.

Another key issue with the concept of transworld depravity is that even if it is accepted that a particular person could suffer from transworld depravity, it seems that there is always the option that God could just not actualise that particular person. To take this criticism further, even if transworld depravity were expanded from just one person to everyone who exists, this does not explain why God could not just create different people who do not suffer from transworld depravity. As George Botterill argues, “instead of creating poor wretches like us, who may, for all we know, suffer from transworld depravity, God could have created a totally different population of persons who would not have suffered from transworld depravity” (1977, p.124). In this way, it seems that there could be possible worlds with other potential people in them who do not suffer from transworld depravity, and God could have just actualised one of these possible worlds instead of ours. Given an infinite number of possible worlds it would seem that there would be some possible worlds where people do not suffer from transworld depravity, which leaves the question as to why an omnipotent benevolent God would not just actualise one of those worlds instead. Plantinga therefore has to argue not only that it is possible that one particular person suffers from transworld depravity, but also argue for the much stronger claim that it is logically possible that every person, actual and potential, suffers from it. In this way, it is not just the possibility of transworld depravity but the

possibility of universal transworld depravity for all possible persons that is central to Plantinga's argument.

In order to address the criticism that even if all people do suffer from transworld depravity God could just have created other people who do not suffer from transworld depravity, Plantinga changing the discussion from persons to essences (1974a, pp.49-53). The essence of a person is made up of the essential qualities/ properties which are so integral to a person that they would have them in any possible world. Plantinga argues that a person is a particular instantiation of an essence, so if an essence suffers from transworld depravity in every possible world, then the person who is a particular instantiation of that essence in a particular world will suffer from transworld depravity. He then goes on to make the even more controversial statement that "it is possible that every creaturely essence – every essence including the property of being created by God – suffers from transworld depravity" (1974a, p.53). In this way, Plantinga moves from arguing that it is logically possible that one person suffers from transworld depravity, to it being logically possible that all people who exist suffer from transworld depravity, to it being logically possible that all possible people in all possible worlds suffer from transworld depravity. It is the third of these arguments, that not just every actual person but every possible person could suffer from transworld depravity, that is particularly problematic. It is problematic because it means that rather than claiming that it could be the case that transworld depravity is a possible characteristic of humans, Plantinga seems to be making the much stronger claim that it could be the case that transworld depravity is a necessary characteristic of humans, as "any assertion about the possibility of some proposition *x* being true in all possible worlds is, by definition, an assertion that it is logically possible that it is necessarily true that *x*" (LaFollette, 1980, p.130). In this way, Plantinga's Free Will Defence seems to rest on him showing that it is possible that transworld depravity could be not just a possible characteristic of human beings, but in fact possibly a necessary characteristic of human beings.

Plantinga gives very little justification for this move to it being possible that all possible people suffer from transworld depravity, simply stating that "clearly it is possible that everybody suffers from transworld depravity" (1974b, p.186). Yet to me it seems far from clear that this is the case. For example, Plantinga's concept of transworld depravity rests on controversial assumptions, not least about the nature of necessity (1974b). Plantinga strongly defends *de re* modal claims (1974b,

pp.27-36) whereas others, such as Quine (1966), find the concept of de re modal claims problematic. The distinction between de re and de dicto is shown in the difference between the claim that “every A is necessarily B”, and the claim that “it is necessarily true that every A is B.” Quine argues that the claim that “every A is necessarily B” doesn’t make any sense unless it is interpreted as “it is necessarily true that every A is B”. This is because he believes that ‘necessity resides in the way we talk about things, not in the things we talk about’ (Quine, 1966, p.174). In contrast, Plantinga argues that it makes sense to talk about necessity de re, as referring to an object having a property necessarily.

Plantinga does not claim that every person does suffer from transworld depravity, he just claims that it is possible that this is the case. However, he maintains that “the mere possibility of such a circumstance allows theists to consistently and rationally believe that evil can exist in a world created by an omnipotent, omniscient and morally perfect God” (Gan, 1982, p.169). In this way, he believes that just the possibility that transworld depravity could exist is enough to provide a possible reason why God cannot create a world containing freedom and moral good but no moral evil. However, even if the internal logical validity of his argument is accepted, it is questionable whether it really is enough to be convincing, useful or appealing. Even if it is accepted as possible that every person suffers from transworld depravity, it seems equally possible that every person doesn’t suffer from transworld depravity, and if every person does not suffer from transworld depravity then it was not beyond the power of God to create a world containing moral good but no moral evil. If these two options are equally possible, then it would seem far more consistent with the nature of a benevolent God that He would opt for the option with no moral evil.

This issue was highlighted by Daniel Howard-Snyder and John O’Leary-Hawthorne (1998). They acknowledge the centrality of transworld depravity to Plantinga’s version of the Free Will Defence, describing it as the “bedrock” (1998, p.5) of Plantinga’s account. However, they then construct an argument aimed at showing that it is “reasonable to refrain from believing” (1998, p.5) that transworld depravity is possible. To do this they employ a concept they call “transworld sanctity”. The definition of transworld sanctity they provide is intentionally based very closely on Plantinga’s definition of transworld depravity, and states that:

An essence *E* is blessed with transworld sanctity if and only if for every world *W* such that *E* contains the properties *is significantly free in W* and *always does what is right in W*, for **no** action *A* and for **no** maximal world segment *S* such that

1. *S* includes *E*'s being instantiated and *E*'s instantiation being free with respect to *A* and *A*'s being morally significant for *E*'s instantiation, and
2. *S* is included in *W* but includes neither *E*'s instantiation's performing *A* nor *E*'s instantiation's refraining from *A*,

is it the case that

3. if *S* were actual, then the instantiation of *E* would have gone wrong with respect to *A*.

(Howard-Snyder and O'Leary-Hawthorne, 1998, pp.5-6)

They argue that if an essence suffered from transworld depravity and yet also was blessed with transworld sanctity this would inevitably set up a contradiction, and would mean that if transworld depravity is possible then transworld sanctity is impossible. From this basis they argue that if there is a world where every essence suffers from transworld depravity then this cannot be a world where any essence is blessed with transworld sanctity. They then bring in the principle that "for any proposition *p* and *q*, if we know that *p* entails *q* and it is reasonable to refrain from believing *q*, then it is reasonable to refrain from believing *p*" (1998, p.8). Based on this principle, they go on to argue that if it is reasonable to refrain from believing that there is no world where an essence has transworld sanctity, it must also be reasonable to refrain from believing that there is a world where every essence suffers from transworld depravity.

A final criticism of the concept of transworld depravity comes from Richard Otte (2009). Otte attempts to show that universal transworld depravity is not possible by suggesting an example of a possible world where it is not possible for the person concerned to suffer from transworld depravity. In his example, Adam is trying to decide whether or not to commit suicide. He decides not to do so, which Otte identifies as the morally good choice, and then God rewards Adam by making him ruler of Eden (2009, pp.167-168). In this example, the total state of affairs that God actualises includes both Adam's decision not to kill himself and God making him ruler of Eden. Otte argues that it is not possible for someone to suffer from transworld depravity "if it is necessary that the person would not choose badly if God were to do all the thing he does when the person only chooses the good" (2009, p.168). Going back to his example of Adam, the total state of affairs that God would be actualising would be impossible if Adam had chosen to do evil, which means actualising them would be impossible and therefore means that Adam cannot suffer from transworld depravity. In his 2009 article 'Transworld Depravity,

Transworld Sanctity, and Uncooperative Essences' Plantinga responds directly to this criticism from Otte. He admits that Otte's criticism shows that the definition of transworld depravity utilised in his earlier work (1974a, 1974b) "won't do the trick" (2009, p.178). Given the pivotal role that the possibility of universal transworld depravity plays in Plantinga's Free Will Defence, this admission has potentially major implications.

In his response to this criticism (2009), Plantinga argues that one way to escape Otte's criticism is simply for the Free Will Defence to utilise the weaker claim that in every possible world at least one essence suffers from transworld depravity, rather than trying to argue that it is possible that every essence suffers from transworld depravity. Plantinga suggests that a weaker proposition such as this "will do just as well" (2009, p.182) as the original. However, this is a major concession from Plantinga and, as highlighted earlier in this section, exposes the Free Will Defence to substantial criticism over why God could not simply choose not to actualise those essences that suffered from transworld depravity. Plantinga does not seem to satisfactorily address this concern. He argues that the claim that it is possible that all essences suffer from transworld depravity "has intuitive support" (2009, p.188), yet it seems to me highly unclear that this is the case. The idea that an omnipotent omniscient benevolent God would create a world where every essence suffered from transworld depravity seems to me in fact highly counter-intuitive. Ultimately, Plantinga seems to accept some of the damage that has been done to the Free Will Defence through the problems with the concept of transworld depravity. He concedes that "perhaps one can't properly claim that the Free Will Defense shows or proves" that the existence of an omnipotent benevolent God is consistent with the existence of evil, and that "perhaps all the free will defense shows is that it is likely, in fact, very likely" (2009, p.191) that they are consistent. These significant concessions made by Plantinga in his later works seem to recognise the significant controversies around the concept of transworld depravity, controversies which arguably undermine the overall success and appeal of the Free Will Defence.

2.4. Issues Around Omnipotence

The claim "that God, though omnipotent, could not have actualized just any possible world He pleased" (Plantinga, 1974a, p.34) is key to the Free Will Defence. Yet this is a contentious and controversial claim. For some, if God is truly omnipotent then he should be able to actualise any

logically possible world he wants to and to say that he cannot do so appears to unacceptably restrict his omnipotence. A contributing factor to the disagreement over whether God could create a world containing freedom but no moral evil is therefore differences in interpretation of the term omnipotence – differences in interpretation of what God is able to do.

If omnipotence is seen as the ability to do anything then arguably an omnipotent God would have the ability to abolish the evil and suffering in the world without this compromising human freedom, and theodicy becomes about justifying why God allows evil and suffering even though he has the ability to remove it if he desired. However, there is a great deal of disagreement over how omnipotence, being able to do anything, should be interpreted. Some argue that true omnipotence is power which is unlimited even by the laws of logic. For example, Descartes and Ockham both held that God's power is not limited by what is logically possible. This view maintains that any limit on God's power would be a limitation and mean that he is not perfect, which is unacceptable. If God is to be regarded as perfect and as truly omnipotent then he must have the ability to do anything, even things that are logically impossible, and if omnipotence is limited in any way then it is not really omnipotence at all. However, this view of omnipotence is problematic, as highlighted by the classic paradox relating to omnipotence, the paradox of the stone. This paradox focuses on the question of whether an omnipotent being could create a stone which is so heavy that he couldn't lift it. If God can create the stone, he then cannot lift the stone, which is a limit on his power, and so he is not truly omnipotent. Alternatively, if God cannot create the stone, then his power is still limited because he cannot create the stone, and so he is not truly omnipotent. This has led some to argue that omnipotence should be interpreted as being able to do anything, but that the word anything should be limited to only refer to anything that is logically possible. Proponents of this view argue that although God's omnipotence is restricted to what is logically possible, this should not be seen as a limitation. On this view, omnipotence only consists of being able to do anything that is logically possible, and being unable to do what is logically impossible should not be seen as a limitation on the power of an omnipotent being.

Restricting omnipotence only to that which is logically possible provides a more coherent conception of omnipotence. But for the Free Will Defence it is unclear whether this restriction really helps to address the fundamental objection of why an omnipotent God could not create a world where humans have freedom yet only ever choose to do good.

There seems no reason why a world with freedom but not moral evil could not be a logically possible world, so it is difficult to see why an omnipotent God should not be able to actualise such a world if he wanted to. Yet the Free Will Defence seems to depend on exactly this claim. One possible solution to this problem is to amend the definition of God's omnipotence so that God can do anything except something which it is against his nature to do. Anthony Kenny for example suggests this approach, defining God's omnipotence as "the possession of all logically possible powers which it is possible for a being with the attributes of God to possess" (1986, p.98). On this view God could not, for example, commit suicide, as this would mean going out of existence which would be against his nature. This amendment would offer a response to the paradox of the stone (Mavrodes, 1963), where God could not create a stone that he cannot lift as this would be an action which would contradict his nature. This interpretation of omnipotence also offers an answer to the question of whether God can perform an evil act. God is commonly held to be both morally perfect and omnipotent, which some see as contradictory. On an unlimited view of omnipotence God could do anything, even evil acts, yet some would question whether a morally perfect being can do evil. If God is morally perfect and being morally perfect means that he cannot do evil, then this would seem to be a limit on his omnipotence. However, if God's omnipotence is defined in terms of being able to do anything which is in accordance with his nature then he could not perform evil acts as these would go against his moral perfection, and so would be against his nature.

Amending the definition of God's omnipotence to specify that it does not include the ability to perform logically impossible acts, or acts which contradict his nature helps to provide a more coherent account of omnipotence. However, the Free Will Defence seems to be based on two assumptions; first the assumption that God can only do what is logically possible, and second the assumption that creating humans who only ever freely choose to do good is logically impossible. Even if the first is accepted, the second assumption seems far more problematic, as it is far from clear that the existence of free humans who only ever choose good is a logical impossibility.

2.5. The Free Will Defence and Natural Evil

A distinction is often made between moral evil and natural evil, with examples such as murder and child abuse being seen as instances of moral evil, and "earthquake and disease as paradigmatic instances of

natural evil” (Mawson, 2004, p.23). Natural evil is particularly problematic for the Free Will Defence, and indeed for all free will based responses to the problem of evil, because it is difficult to see how natural evil could be explained through the human misuse of free will in the same way that moral evil is claimed to be. The Free Will Defence assumes that evil is a necessary consequence of humans having free will, which is itself a problematic assumption. Yet even if this assumption were accepted it would seem to only address the question of why there is moral evil in the world, not the question of why there is natural evil in the world. This is particularly problematic in light of insights from modern evolutionary biology which make it clear that death and suffering existed in the natural world long before humans existed. If natural evil existed before humans existed then it seems that any justification for natural evil cannot be rooted in the concept of human free will.

It is questionable whether it is coherent to describe a natural process as “evil”, or whether doing so represents a mistaken projection of human morality onto the natural world. For example, Quentin Smith (1991) describes an experience where he was staying in a cabin in the woods and was woken by the noise of one animal being violently killed and eaten by another. He comments that “a clearer case of a horrible event in nature, a natural evil, has never been presented to me. It seemed to me self-evident that the natural law that animals must savagely kill and devour each other in order to survive was an evil natural law” (1991, p.159). Although this example highlights that there is a great deal of suffering in the natural world, it is much less clear that this event should be regarded as an example of evil, as Smith’s description of an “evil natural law” can be seen to be mistakenly imposing human characteristics and morality onto natural laws. On this view, events such as these are not evils, they just appear evil to us because we see them from our own particular and anthropocentric perspective. Similarly, “the rabbit that is eaten by the fox might wish this could be otherwise, but this is because the rabbit adopts a lapidocentric view of the world” (Vardy, 1992, p.28). This highlights the wider issue of whether the pain and suffering that is apparent in the natural world should be given the name “natural evil”. Whether pain and suffering in the natural world should be described as natural evil is disputable, but the existence of pain and suffering in the natural world is not, and this still presents a major challenge to the Free Will Defence because it is difficult to see any reason why a world containing human freedom would need to contain this pain and suffering. An example which seems to successfully highlight this problem is the “fawn in the forest” example suggested by William Rowe (1979, p.337). Rowe

outlines a scenario where “in some distant forest lightning strikes a dead tree, resulting in a forest fire. In the fire a fawn is trapped, horribly burned, and lies in terrible agony for several days before death relieves its suffering. So far as we can see, the fawn’s intense suffering is pointless” (1979, p.337). This example is problematic for the Free Will Defence because it seems to be an example of pointless suffering entirely unrelated to human freedom. This example, and others like it, does not fit comfortably with responses to the problem of evil that align the explanation for evil and suffering exclusively with the fact of human free will.

Plantinga seems to regard natural evil as a minor issue rather than an issue that is potentially damaging to his Free Will Defence. He dedicates just a few pages in each of *The Nature of Necessity* (1974b, pp.191-193) and *God, Freedom and Evil* (1974a, pp.57-59) to a discussion of natural evil. The main response Plantinga does provide is to suggest that natural evil could be the result of the free actions of nonhuman persons (1974a, p.58). By doing so he is drawing on the traditional Augustinian explanation for natural evil that will be explored in more depth in the following chapter. Unlike Augustine, Plantinga does not claim that natural evil is actually due to the free actions of nonhuman persons, he just claims that it is possible that it could be. He argues that it is possible that moral evil is the result of free actions by humans and natural evil is the result of free actions by nonhuman persons, meaning that “in fact moral and natural evil would then be special cases of what we might call broadly moral evil – evil resulting from the free actions of personal beings, whether human or not” (1974a, p.59). Plantinga then draws on the arguments utilised when discussing moral evil to claim that it could be the case that it was not within God’s power to create a world with a better overall balance of broadly moral good and evil.

One criticism of this approach is that Plantinga seems to have tried to sidestep the issue of natural evil by reimagining it as simply a different type of moral evil, this time due to the free actions of nonhuman persons. This creates a number of problems. Firstly, it seems questionable whether Plantinga is actually addressing the problem of natural evil. Secondly, this approach raises the issue that if the actions of non-human persons such as fallen angels are responsible for natural evil, then it seems unjust that the persons who suffer as a result of this are humans who are not responsible for those actions. However, in my view the most damaging criticism of Plantinga’s explanation of natural evil is that it fails to address why natural evil and suffering seem to be so intrinsically built into the design and nature of the universe. David Johnson (2012)

highlights that the problem of natural evil is not really the problem of why God allows a specific instance of natural evil or suffering, but the problem of why he created a universe where evil and suffering seem built into the design of the universe through laws of nature. To support this criticism, he gives the example of earthquakes being the result of the movement of tectonic plates (2012). However, a wide number of other examples could be utilised, such as evolution. The amount of suffering and pain involved in natural processes such as evolution raises the question of why a world created by a loving God would contain such processes built into its design; where “the evolutionary picture of biological history identifies a process that entails pain, suffering, death and extinction over an immense period of time, thereby exacerbating the problem of natural evil” (O’Brien, 2009, p.408). Plantinga’s appeal to the actions of nonhuman persons as the origin of natural evil seems poorly equipped to address this concern.

Despite the difficulties that Plantinga encounters in attempting to provide a satisfactory explanation for natural evil, Swinburne believes that the Free Will Defence is able to provide such an explanation, arguing that “contrary to what might appear at first sight, if the free-will defense works with respect to moral evil, it also has the force to defeat an argument from natural evil” (1978, p.296). Like Plantinga, Swinburne suggests that moral evil is the result of humans having free will (1978, 1996), and he argues that natural evil plays a key role in helping to ensure that humans have freedom, moral responsibility and choice. More specifically, he argues that the role of natural evil is to “make it possible for humans to have the kind of choice which the free-will defence extols, and to make available to humans specially worthwhile kinds of choice” (1996, p.111). One way in which Swinburne links natural evil to freedom and choice is through his claim that the existence of natural evil actually helps to increase the choices that are available as part of the human experience. For example, he argues that a natural evil such as physical pain “gives to the sufferer a choice – whether to endure it with patience, or to bemoan his lot. His friend can choose whether to show compassion towards the sufferer, or to be callous” (1996, p.106). In this way, Swinburne argues that pain and suffering provide humans with choices that they otherwise would not have, and they therefore provide opportunities for humans to make good choices that they would not otherwise have the opportunity to make. Natural evil is also seen to help add to the ambiguity of the universe – it helps to ensure that the existence of God is not immediately apparent, and this lack of certainty over God’s existence helps to protect human freedom as

they are free to act in ways that they would not feel free to act in if they knew for certain that an omnipotent and omniscient God was watching them. A final way in which Swinburne links natural evil to freedom and choice is by arguing that exposure to natural evil gives humans knowledge of how to bring about evil themselves.

Swinburne's account of how the Free Will Defence could potentially explain the existence of natural evil seems to provide a more appealing account than Plantinga provides. However, Swinburne's arguments seem to move him closer to a soul making approach, where evil plays an important role in moral growth and development. For example, Swinburne argues that natural evil makes available "specially worthwhile" kinds of choices, which seems to align closely with the idea of moral growth and development found in the soul making approach. From Swinburne the value comes not only from a quantitative increase in the number of choices available to us, but from the fact that natural evil allows for good choices, such as choosing to be compassionate, that would otherwise not be available to us. While Swinburne presents this in the context of the Free Will Defence, it seems that what is valuable is not the increase in the quantity of choices, but instead the increase in the opportunities for making choices associated with moral growth and development. In this way, Swinburne avoids the highly contentious focus on nonhuman actions found in Plantinga's account, which many would count as a strength of his account. However, his approach fails to provide a satisfactory explanation for why the increase in choices that natural evil presents is a valuable increase unless it is linked to some wider framework such as soul making.

The problem of natural evil is not just a concern for the Free Will Defence, and the particular challenges that it poses for the Augustinian and soul making theodicies will be discussed within the following chapters. However, the issues surrounding the explanations for natural evil offered by both Plantinga and Swinburne highlight that although the Free Will Defence does offer some possible explanation for the existence of natural evil, it is questionable whether this explanation can be regarded as satisfactory.

2.6. Conclusion

Much of the recent discussion on the problem of evil accepts that the Free Will Defence provides an adequate response to the logical problem

of evil. Eleonore Stump for example comments that “the Free Will Defense successfully rebuts the claim that the presence of evil in the world is logically incompatible with God’s existence” (1983, p.49). If the Free Will Defence really does provide such a strong response to the logical problem of evil then the tension between compatibilism and the Free Will Defence is problematic for compatibilists, as it would suggest that abandoning the Free Will Defence in favour of compatibilism would be a significant loss for many theists. However, this acceptance of the Free Will Defence and dismissal of the logical problem of evil seems premature. Several of the assumptions underlying the Free Will Defence are contentious, and if these underlying assumptions are rejected then the appeal of the Free Will Defence is significantly undermined.

A central claim of the Free Will Defence is that God could not create human beings who he determined would only choose good, as this would unacceptably compromise human freedom. This is reflected in Plantinga’s central argument that whether God can actualise certain possible worlds depends on human free choices, something which God cannot control without compromising their freedom. However, this claim can be seen to be based on an assumption of an incompatibilist view of freedom, and on an assumption of the truth of the principle of alternate possibilities. Even if Plantinga’s argument is regarded as being successful, then it doesn’t show that there are possible worlds which God cannot actualise without compromising human freedom. It only shows that there are possible worlds which God cannot actualise without compromising human freedom according to Plantinga’s particular understanding of freedom, an understanding which is clearly based on an incompatibilist view of freedom and determinism. In this way, the Free Will Defence assumes that the only significant sort of freedom is libertarian freedom which involves having alternate possibilities. One of the key reasons that Plantinga and others reject compatibilism is because they claim that determinism removes alternate possibilities and by doing so undermines freedom. A rejection of the principle of alternate possibilities therefore strengthens compatibilist objections to the Free Will Defence by highlighting that even if it is accepted that determinism is incompatible with having alternate possibilities, this does not mean that determinism is incompatible with having freedom and moral responsibility. If freedom does not require alternate possibilities then determinism being incompatible with alternate possibilities cannot be a satisfactory reason for rejecting the compatibilism of freedom and determinism.

The Free Will Defence requires that it is impossible for God to ensure that free humans always choose good. If a compatibilist approach is adopted then it seems that it could be possible for God to create humans who are free yet always freely chose to do good. Human choices could be free even if the desires and circumstances which bring about those choices determined by God. So the choice of good could be a free choice, even if the desires and circumstances which bring about that choice have been determined by God in a way that allows Him to determine that humans only ever freely choose to do good. In essence, the Free Will Defence maintains that the existence of freedom inevitably brings with it the possibility of evil. If freedom does not require alternate possibilities then it does not require us to be able to choose to do good or to choose to do evil. On a compatibilist view, even if a person lacks the possibility of choosing evil this means that they lack alternate possibilities, not that they necessarily lack freedom. Just as Plantinga's God is free yet always freely chooses good, so too it is possible that humans could also be free and yet always freely choose good.

Aside from the objections from compatibilism, this chapter has highlighted that there are a number of other concerns around the Free Will Defence. Most significantly, there are concerns over Plantinga's concept of transworld depravity which, if accepted, severely undermine his entire account. When these areas of concern are taken together, they highlight that the Free Will Defence does have significant internal weaknesses. If the Free Will Defence is weaker than it is often perceived to be, as this chapter has argued, then the tension between compatibilism and the Free Will Defence becomes much less problematic for the compatibilist. If the Free Will Defence has significant weaknesses, then abandoning the Free Will Defence in favour of compatibilism becomes much less of a loss for philosophy of religion, meaning that a potential obstacle to accepting compatibilism is removed.

CHAPTER THREE

FREEDOM AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIL: THE AUGUSTINIAN THEODICY

Both the Free Will Defence and the Augustinian theodicy propose an explanation for evil grounded in the misuse of free will. Many of the issues that cause tension between compatibilism and the Free Will Defence therefore also, unsurprisingly, cause tension between compatibilism and the Augustinian theodicy. This is significant as it suggests that adopting compatibilism leads to the rejection of not only the Free Will Defence as a response to the logical problem of evil but also the rejection of wider free will based approaches such as the Augustinian theodicy as responses to the evidential problem of evil.

This chapter will explore the main features of the Augustinian theodicy found, for example, in Augustine's *City of God* ([426] 2003), including discussion of the role that libertarian free will plays in this approach and of the tensions between compatibilism and this approach. It will then explore four wider objections to the Augustinian theodicy: that it fails to give a satisfactory account of the origins of evil, that it relies on a problematic definition of evil as a privation of good, that it is rooted in the problematic concept of original sin, and that it fails to give a satisfactory account of natural evil. The chapter will then go on to explore a modern interpretation of the Augustinian theodicy by Reinhold Niebuhr [1941] (1996) that rejects a literal interpretation of the account of the Fall in Genesis and of the doctrine of original sin, before considering criticisms of this updated account. Through an exploration of these aspects, this chapter will examine whether adopting a compatibilist position would require a rejection of the Augustinian theodicy, and, if so, whether this should be seen as a significant loss for the compatibilist, or whether the weaknesses of the theodicy mean that its potential rejection should not be regarded as a major concern.

3.1. Central features of the Augustinian Theodicy

The Augustinian theodicy is centred on the idea that God created a world that was initially perfect, containing no evil and suffering, and that evil

came about as the result of the misuse of free will by angels and humans (Augustine, [426] 2003). The association of evil with the misuse of free will is crucial to the theodicy because it is seen as a way to remove responsibility for the existence of evil and suffering in the world from God. The claim that the world was initially perfect is based on the biblical account of creation found in Genesis 1-3, and in particular on Genesis 1: 31 where it states that 'God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.' That the world was originally perfect is important to the Augustinian approach because it allows him to maintain that evil was not something created by God. This is a key feature of the Augustinian approach, as it suggests that if God did not create evil he is therefore not responsible for its existence.

The idea that the creation was originally perfect is also closely related to another central feature of the Augustinian theodicy – the view of evil as a privation of good. According to Augustine, evils "have their source in the good, and unless they are parasitic on something good, they are not anything at all" ([420] 1955, pp.344-345). This claim, that evil is a privation of good rather than a thing in itself, is sometimes explained using examples such as disease being a lack of health, or blindness being a lack of sight. A more recent example comes from Swenson (2009), who explains the idea using the example of a hole in a donut, commenting that "the hole in a donut is certainly real; it just doesn't exist apart from the dough" (2009, p.139). In this example, the hole in a donut exists only in relation to the donut, just as in Augustine's account evil exists only in relation to good.

Swenson's example highlights the idea that evil only exists in relation to good, just as the hole only exists in relation to the donut. However, his example also raises an interesting difference when compared with Augustine's view of evil being a privation of good, which is that in the example of the donut the baker has intentionally created the donut with a hole in it. In this example, the hole is therefore intentional and an intended element of the donut on the part of its maker. In contrast, for Augustine viewing evil as a privation of good is intended to help him remove responsibility for evil from God. If God is understood to have created the world *ex nihilo* then he created everything in it, meaning that if evil was a thing that existed in its own right God must have created evil. For Augustine this conclusion, that God intentionally created evil, is unacceptable because it would compromise his benevolence. Regarding evil as originating in the corruption of good rather than as something created in its own right enables Augustine to maintain that "evil has not been created

by God and that its status within His universe is secondary and parasitic rather than primary and essential” (Hick, 2010, p.55). If evil is a privation of good it exists only as a corruption of something else, rather than as something which is itself created, which allows Augustine to maintain that evil is not something which is created by God.

The idea of evil being a privation of good is therefore crucial to Augustine’s approach because it is the way that he tries to clear God of any responsibility for the existence of evil. It allows him to maintain that evil exists only as a by-product of the good of creating humans with free will, as “from what is good, then, evils arose, and except in what is good they do not exist” (Augustine, [420] 1955). This view of evil as a privation is therefore crucial to the Augustinian theodicy as it reinforces the idea that evil is not something created by God. Regarding evil as a privation of good was also important to Augustine because he saw it as a way to address Manichaean dualism (Vardy, 1992, p.22). After Augustine converted to Christianity from Manichaeism he rejected their dualism of good and evil, and regarding evil as a privation of good helps him to reject “any doctrine of materialist dualism that posits the existence of a form of reality that is independent of God and stands in opposition to Him” (Vorster, 2011, p.27). In this way, rather than seeing good and evil as two opposing forces, the privation view argues that evil exists only as a privation of good.

In addition to focusing on the idea that evil is an unintentional by-product of the creation of humans with free will, the Augustinian approach also views evil and suffering as having a strong punitive element. Augustine argues that all evil is either sin or punishment for sin ([426] 2003), and in particular he argues that humans deserve the punishment of the existence of evil because all humans were seminally present in Adam; “For we were all in that one man ... We did not yet possess forms individually created and assigned to us for us to live in them as individuals; but there already existed the seminal nature from which we were to be begotten” (Augustine, [426] 2003, p.523). For Augustine, this idea of original sin is key because it suggests that evil and suffering are a justified punishment for the guilt that all humans share. The idea of evil being punishment for sin is also an important element of Augustine’s explanation of natural evil, which he associates with a loss of order in the natural world following the Fall. On this approach, the world was originally perfect, but the moral disorder brought about by the moral rebellion of the Fall is now reflected in the disorder found in the natural world. These two ideas, of original sin and of suffering being a punishment for sin, are central to the Augustinian theodicy. However, both ideas are controversial, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

3.2. Compatibilism and the Augustinian Theodicy

There is disagreement regarding Augustine's stance on the relationship between free will and determinism. He is traditionally interpreted as a libertarian but some, such as Jesse Couenhoven (2007), argue that in his earlier work Augustine is a libertarian but then in his later work his writing on freedom he is much more of a compatibilist. Despite this debate, some key aspects of the traditional Augustinian theodicy do seem to assume a libertarian view of freedom; for example, it assumes that Adam and Eve had libertarian freedom (Couenhoven, 2007, p.280). Adopting a compatibilist view of the relationship between freedom and determinism does seem to cause significant difficulties for some of the key aspects of the approach.

There is often seen to be a difference in Augustine's writings between the kind of freedom he attributes to Adam and Eve, and the kind of freedom he attributes to subsequent humans after the Fall. This distinction is seen, for example, in Rogers, who highlights the difference between "pre-lapsarian freedom, in which the human being could choose rightly or wrongly, and post-lapsarian 'freedom', in which fallen man can choose only wrongly, unless turned towards the good by God's grace" (2004, p.415). This distinction can be viewed in terms of pre-lapsarian freedom being a libertarian conception of freedom, and post-lapsarian freedom moving towards a more compatibilist conception of freedom. If a libertarian conception of freedom is adopted consistently throughout Augustine's account, then the question arises of how humans after the Fall can sin freely if they have no possibility of not sinning (Berthold, 1981). This is an issue if a libertarian interpretation of freedom is adopted, based on the idea that freedom requires alternate possibilities, as it seems that humans must have the possibility of not sinning if they are to freely choose to sin. It is not an issue if a compatibilist interpretation of freedom is adopted, based on the idea that freedom does not necessarily require alternate possibilities, as this would allow humans to freely choose to sin even if it were not possible for them not to sin. However, if humans after the Fall can have freedom without the possibility of not sinning then it seems that Adam and Eve should also be able to have freedom without the possibility of sinning. This intensifies the problem of evil because it refocuses attention back on the question of why there could not be humans who have freedom yet do not ever choose evil.

This issue highlights a fundamental issue with the Augustinian theodicy, which is that there seems to be a contradiction in maintaining

that Adam and Eve had freedom despite initially being in a perfect world with no knowledge of good and evil, but at the same time refusing to allow that humans could live in a perfect world with no knowledge of good and evil yet also have freedom. If the Garden of Eden was a perfect world where there was free will despite there being no knowledge of good and evil then there seems no reason why it should be impossible for us now to have free will in a perfect world, unless the theodicy rests on the problematic assumption that the existence of evil is somehow a necessary feature of humans having free will. In discussions of the problem of evil there is often either an explicit or implicit assumption that the existence of evil is a necessary part of humans having free will, an assumption that evil is somehow an inevitable consequence of humans having free will. However, as Mackie (1955) highlighted, there seems to be no logical reason why the existence of evil really must be an inevitable consequence of human free will, or why God could not have created free human beings who only ever choose good. The Augustinian theodicy seems to struggle to give a satisfactory answer to the question of why the existence of free will is seen to somehow necessitate the existence of evil.

Issues around Omniscience

In Book 5 of *The City of God* ([426] 2003), Augustine discusses the relationship between human free will and divine omniscience. More specifically, he discusses the question of whether omniscience should be seen to include foreknowledge and, if it does, whether this conflicts with free will (2003, p.194). Augustine maintains that God has foreknowledge of our will but, because our wills are still our own, this does not mean that this knowledge undermines free will. In addition to questions around the knowledge possessed by Adam and Eve, and more specifically the question of whether they had knowledge of good and evil before they chose to disobey God, the Augustinian theodicy therefore also raises issues around the type of knowledge that God possesses and whether divine omniscience is compatible with the type of freedom assumed in other elements of the theodicy. David Ray Griffin for example was critical of the heavy emphasis on free will in Augustine's approach, arguing that this type of freedom is incompatible with divine omniscience and omnipotence (Griffin, 1976). For Griffin, if God is omniscient then he knows infallibly what people will do, which means that they are not free to do otherwise and therefore cannot be seen to have libertarian freedom. In this way, "if God already knows exactly how we shall act, what else can we possibly do? We must act in that way.

We cannot diverge from the path that He sees we shall take. We cannot prove God wrong” (Morris, 1991, p.89). If God’s omniscience is seen to include knowledge of what people will freely choose to do, then this seems to be in conflict with the kind of libertarian freedom that seems so central to other aspects of Augustine’s theodicy. It also raises a number of wider problems for the Augustinian approach, not least because it suggests that God creates people knowing that they will eventually go to Hell. However, there is disagreement as to whether omniscience should be seen to include this type of knowledge.

Much of the disagreement about whether divine omniscience should be seen to include knowledge of free future actions focuses on the question of whether omniscience includes foreknowledge. If God knows what we will do before we do it, then it seems that we have no alternative but to do what he knows that we will do. In this way, divine foreknowledge can be seen to rule out any other course of action other than the one that God knows we will take. If omniscience is seen to include this kind of foreknowledge, then this would seem to lend additional weight to Mackie’s view (1955) that God could have created a world containing only free creatures who he knew would only ever choose to do good. If God knows what people will freely choose to do, then it seems that he could simply withhold freedom when he knew they would choose evil and grant it when he knew they would choose good or could create a world with no moral evil by only creating those humans who he knew would only ever freely choose to do good.

The view of divine omniscience as including foreknowledge – as including God knowing what a person will do before they do it – assumes a view of God as being within time. However, if God is instead regarded as being timeless then this tension seems to be lessened as God would not know what a person will do before they do it. This issue therefore highlights a wider division between those who regard God as being eternal and those who regard God as being everlasting. The position that God is not within time was proposed by figures such as Boethius and Aquinas, and in recent times defended by Stump and Kretzmann (1981, 1992). On this view God is atemporal, which helps to avoid the issue of foreknowledge. However, the view of God as eternal has decreased significantly in popularity in recent times. Natalja Deng (2018), for example, highlights that there has been a “notable shift” away from eternal or timelessness-based positions, despite their traditional dominance in both philosophy and theology, and Robert Cook goes as far as to say that there “seems to be a growing consensus amongst both theologians and philosophers that the

classical doctrine of God as a simple, eternal (atemporal) being is untenable" (1987, p.81). One of the key reasons for this is that there are significant concerns over whether atemporality is actually consistent with other properties or abilities that God is commonly regarded as having, such as personhood or the ability to act within time.

Recent discussions over omniscience and freedom have led to renewed interest in the concept of middle knowledge, a concept most closely associated with Luis de Molina in the sixteenth century. Middle knowledge is a term that is essentially used to refer to the view that God knows what every person would freely do in every situation in which they could possibly find themselves. Middle knowledge is therefore a type of knowledge which lies between knowledge of the actual and knowledge of the possible. A more recent defender of middle knowledge is William Lane Craig (1990), who suggests that divine foreknowledge should be analysed in terms of God's middle knowledge. However, middle knowledge is a controversial concept. Middle knowledge assumes that it is possible for God to have knowledge of possible hypothetical worlds, not just actual worlds, and some reject the idea that middle knowledge is possible, even for God, "because conditional propositions of the sort that are supposed to be known by middle knowledge cannot be true" (Adams, 1977, p.109). The idea of middle knowledge has a great deal of relevance to the question of whether God could have created humans who he knew would only ever freely choose to do good, as "if God knows what every possible person would freely do in every possible circumstance, then surely God could have chosen to actualize only those persons and those circumstances in which every person would always do right" (Rasmussen, 2004, p.457). Molina avoids this criticism by viewing God as eternal and atemporal, meaning that he does not have foreknowledge. However, as highlighted above, adopting a view of God as eternal then itself creates a number of other issues.

If a compatibilist, rather than libertarian, view of freedom is adopted, then this could potentially avoid the need to resort to adopting a controversial view of God as eternal in order to ease tensions between omniscience and freedom. The claim that omniscience and free will are incompatible is often based on the claim that if God is omniscient then when he creates the world "he knowingly thereby determines all that happens within it, including the free choices made by finite agents in forming and maintaining personal relationships" (Bishop, 1993, p.118). However, if a compatibilist, rather than libertarian, view of freedom is adopted, then it is possible for this to be the case yet also for humans to have free will. One of the main objections to the compatibility of

foreknowledge and freedom is that divine foreknowledge can be seen to rule out alternate possibilities, and therefore rule out freedom. This view assumes that omniscience contains foreknowledge, but it also assumes that alternate possibilities are necessary for freedom, which for reasons outlined in the previous chapters I maintain is not the case. If a compatibilist view of free will is adopted then even if God did have foreknowledge, and even if this foreknowledge did exclude there being any alternate possibilities, then it still does not mean that God's foreknowledge is incompatible with freedom. The person is still able to act for their own reasons, and therefore to act freely. This comes back to the fundamental issue of whether freedom consists in having choice between alternatives or consists in being able to choose to act for your own reasons without coercion, and I maintain that it consists of the latter.

In places, Augustine seems to come close to embracing this view of freedom as not requiring alternate possibilities. His view is that "even though a man necessarily wills to sin, we cannot say that this sinful act of will is not in the man's power. For clearly the act of will would not occur if the man did not will. To say that the man's willing to sin is not in his power is to say that the man wills to sin even though he does not will to sin – and this is impossible" (Rowe, 1964, p.356). In this way, Augustine maintains that we sin necessarily while also maintaining that this does not undermine free will, explicitly commenting that "I know not why we should have any dread of that necessity taking away the freedom of our will" ([426] 2003, p.194). Some aspects of the Augustinian theodicy would therefore seem to lend themselves to being developed to embrace a more compatibilist approach. However, there are key elements of the theodicy that are committed to a libertarian view of freedom and would be significantly undermined by a move towards a compatibilist conception of freedom; for example, moving away from a libertarian conception of freedom would sharpen the focus on the fundamental question of why God could not create only humans that he knew would only ever choose to do good.

3.3. Objections to the Augustinian Theodicy

Aside from the challenge from compatibilism, there are a number of wider objections to the Augustinian theodicy. This section will explore four of these objections: that it fails to give a satisfactory account of the origin of evil, that it relies on a problematic definition of evil as a

privation of good, that it is rooted in the problematic concept of original sin, and that it fails to give a satisfactory account of natural evil.

The Origin of Evil

The claim that the world was initially created perfect is problematic because the world around us “provides overwhelming testimony against a pre-Fall creation without death or pain” (Miller, 2011, p.86). Specifically, the claim that the world was initially perfect can be seen to be incompatible with the theory of evolution where evil and suffering are seen as an intrinsic part of the struggle for survival, which some critics claim make it unappealing in modern times (e.g. Ellis and Murphy, 1996). According to the theory of evolution the world is constantly developing and evolving, and evil and suffering existed long before man existed; “suffering, predation, death and pain were there before the arrival of the human” (Vorster, 2011, p.31). This is problematic for Augustine because if the world contained evil before the existence of humans this severely undermines the claim that responsibility for evil lies with humans rather than with God.

The claim that the world was initially perfect also raises the logical problem of how a perfect world could go wrong. A key feature of the Augustinian theodicy is that the world was initially perfect and did not contain evil, but the theodicy arguably does not offer a clear explanation of how this perfect world could then go wrong. Schleiermacher (2011) for example argued that there is an inherent logical contradiction in claiming that a perfect world goes wrong, which must mean that either the world was not perfect to begin with or that God is responsible for causing it to go wrong. He argued that if a perfect world went wrong then this would require that evil created itself *ex nihilo*, which is impossible, or that God caused it to go wrong. If God caused the world to go wrong then this seems to make God, rather than humans, responsible for evil.

One of the major weaknesses of Augustine’s theodicy is therefore the question of why some angels rebelled against God whereas others didn’t. Augustine does attempt to offer an explanation for this, which is that “these angels, therefore, either received less of the grace of the divine love than those who persevered in the same; or if both were created equally good, then, while the one fell by their evil will, the others were more abundantly assisted, and attained to the pitch of blessedness at which they have become certain that they should never fall from it”

([426] 2003, p.426). This explanation seems unsatisfactory because it does not explain why it would be that some angels were not created equally good or why some were assisted more than others. It also fails to provide an adequate explanation for the motivation the angels would have for choosing evil. As Schleiermacher comments, “the more perfect these good angels are supposed to have been, the less possible it is to find any motive but those presupposing a fall already, e.g. arrogance and envy” (Schleiermacher, 2011, p.161). A major problem for the Augustinian theodicy is therefore that it does not satisfactorily address the question of why the angels could not be free to sin yet never choose to do so, and the related question of why flawless beings would choose to rebel. If the angels were completely good then the idea of them sinning seems self-contradictory and incoherent; “if the first being that willed evil had a created nature that was good, its willing evil is an inexplicable fact which cannot be accounted for by its nature” (Brown, 1978, p.319). In this way, if the first beings were flawless it is very difficult to see how they could have gone wrong, yet if they contained flaws from the beginning then God must be responsible for those flaws. Either of these options causes significant problems for the Augustinian theodicy.

In this way, the Augustinian theodicy seems to struggle to satisfactorily resolve the logical question of how a good will could go wrong, but also the wider question of why a good will would go wrong. Augustine claims that the first sin is coherent, but that we just cannot understand it because we are fallen; something Brown dismisses as “an obfuscation masquerading as an explanation” (Brown, 1978, p.315). However, the alternative option, that the first beings contained flaws from the being which caused them to sin, is equally problematic. If they sin then it seems that they cannot be flawless, “in which case their Maker must share the responsibility for their fall, and the intended theodicy fails” (Hick, 2010, p.63). In my view, the fact that the Augustinian approach struggles to give a coherent explanation for why a perfect creation would go wrong is the most significant and damaging issue facing this approach.

Evil as a Privation of Good

Another controversial aspect of the Augustinian theodicy is the claim that evil is a privation of good. Augustine argues that if evil is a privation of good then it is not a thing in itself, and therefore does not have a creator. This is a key step in his attempt to remove responsibility for evil from God.

One reason why the idea of evil being a privation of good is often seen to be contentious is that it can be argued that describing evil only as a privation of good does not match with our actual experience of evil in the world, where “most victims do not experience evil as mere absence, but as a brutal, direct and malevolent force” (Vorster, 2011, p.31). Augustine emphasises that evil being a privation of good does not mean that it is not real, just that it does not exist as a thing in itself. However, it can be argued that despite this, regarding evil as only an absence of good still fails to do justice to the true impact of evil. For example, it can be argued that describing an evil such as “the dynamic malevolence behind the Nazi attempt to exterminate the European Jews as merely the absence of some good is utterly insufficient” (Hick, 2010, p.56). In this way, it is questionable whether defining evil as just an absence of good satisfactorily reflects the way that people actually experience evil and suffering in the world.

However, in my view this is not the key problem with this concept. Even if the view that evil is a privation of good rather than as a thing in itself is accepted, it is not at all clear that this removes the responsibility for evil from God as Augustine maintains. Leibniz for example was very critical of the idea that regarding evil as a privation of good allows responsibility for the existence of evil to be removed from God. He gave the example of an artist who paints two paintings that are identical except that one is a much smaller version of the other. Leibniz argues that it would be absurd to “say that the painter is the author of all that is real in the two paintings, without however being the author of what is lacking or the disproportion between the larger and the smaller painting” (in Murray and Greenberg, 2013, n.p.). In this example, it is the painter who is responsible for one painting being smaller than the other. In this way, even if evil is regarded as a privation then this only removes responsibility for evil from God if it is also accepted that God is only responsible for what is positive, not for privations. Even if it is accepted that evil is a privation of good, which is itself debatable, it is difficult to see how this enables responsibility for the existence of evil to be removed from God if he still has ultimate responsibility for the way things are, and indeed are not.

This objection, that God is ultimately responsible for privations, is also strengthened by reflecting on the difference between what would count as a privation and what would simply be an absence. A privation is often regarded as referring only to an absence of something that is fundamental to the nature of that thing. This means that, for example, the fact that humans do not have wings is not a privation as it does not affect the

nature of what it is to be human, whereas if a bird does not have wings “then an essential part of what it is to be a bird, an essential part of its nature, will be missing” (Vardy, 1992, p.24). This distinction is significant because if the fundamental nature of humans is good, with evil just being a privation of that good, then it reinforces the question of why humans with a fundamentally good nature would inevitably go wrong just because they are given freedom. It also would suggest that God as the creator would have ultimate responsibility for privations given they are so essential to the nature of the things he is creating. In this way, the idea of evil being a privation of good sharpens the focus on related issues regarding the origins of, and ultimate responsibility for, evil.

Original Sin

Another controversial element of the Augustinian theodicy is the concept of original sin. This concept is central to Augustine’s account but is a contentious concept – scripturally, biologically and morally. The doctrine of original sin is closely associated with key figures such as Martin Luther, who claimed that “since the fall of Adam all men who are born according to the course of nature are conceived and born in sin” (in Tappert, 1959, p.29) and John Calvin, who described original sin as “a hereditary depravity and corruption of our nature, diffused into all parts of the soul” ([1536] 1960, p.251). Original sin is contentious in terms of the scriptural basis for the concept, but also, and more relevantly for this discussion, it is contentious in terms of the coherence of the concept itself. In particular, the concept of original sin raises issues around justice, and around whether a benevolent God would punish people for sins that they did not directly commit.

The doctrine of original sin is at the centre of the Augustinian theodicy, but it has had a number of vocal critics. Kant for example was particularly damning of the doctrine, commenting that “however the origin of moral evil in man is constituted, surely of all the explanations of the spread and propagation of this evil through all the members and generations of our race, the most inept is that which describes it as descending to us as an inheritance from our first parents” ([1793]1960, p.35). Drawing on Augustine, the term original sin is usually used to refer to two related ideas: the event of Adam and Eve’s initial sin itself, and then the transmission of this sin to all of mankind (Wiley, 2002, p.5). The idea of the original sin of Adam and Eve being transmitted to all mankind clearly raises a number of substantial biological issues. These issues are

significant because if the idea of all humans inheriting sin from Adam is rejected as being biologically impossible, then it would seem that God is punishing people for a sin they had no involvement in.

Moral responsibility is most commonly seen as applying to individuals and their actions, whereas the concept of original sin seems to suggest some kind of collective, as opposed to individual, responsibility. The idea of collective responsibility is controversial; for example, Stephen Sverdluk argues that “it would be unfair, whether we are considering a result produced by more than one person’s action or by a single person, to blame a person for a result that he or she did not intend to produce” (1987, p.68). In this way, the concept of original sin seems to conflict with many ideas about fairness and individual moral responsibility, and raises the fundamental issue of whether God would be justified in punishing one human being for the sin of another.

The Challenge of Natural Evil

The close relationship between evil and human freedom in the Augustinian theodicy means that, like the Free Will Defence, it faces difficulties in offering a convincing explanation for natural evil. Natural evil is not only a problem for the Augustinian theodicy; Trakakis goes as far as to claim that theism in its entirety is “wholly incapable of accounting for any instance, kind, amount, or distribution of natural evil” (2005, p.35). However, providing a satisfactory explanation for natural evil is particularly problematic for any approach which bases the origin of evil on free will, as there does not seem to be as strong a claim for a connection between natural evil and free will as there is between moral evil and free will. This means that the existence of natural evil is particularly problematic for the Augustinian theodicy. Both the Free Will Defence and Augustinian theodicy assume that evil is a necessary consequence of humans having free will, which I argue is an unjustified assumption. However even if this assumption were accepted it would seem to only address the question of why there is moral evil in the world, not the question of why there is natural evil in the world. It is difficult to see how natural evil could possibly be the result of the human misuse of free will in the same way that moral evil is claimed to be.

The existence of evil and suffering in the natural world presents a particular challenge to the Augustinian claim that the world was originally created in a state of perfection, as modern evolutionary biology tells us that death was part of the natural world long before humans existed;

“buried in the ground and hidden in caves lie silent witnesses to a bloody prehistory stretching back hundreds of thousands of years” (Pinker, 2003, p.306). If natural evil existed before humans existed, then it seems that the human misuse of free will cannot be responsible for its introduction. Natural evil also challenges the Augustinian claim that the world was created perfect because of the way that natural processes that lead to suffering, such as evolution, are so deeply built into the design of the world, raising the question of why a world created by a loving God would be designed to contain such processes. Evolution for example is particularly challenging for the Augustinian theodicy because of the way it presents pain and suffering as an integral and deeply embedded aspect of the natural world; “from the publication of *The Origin of Species*, the Darwinian account of nature has figured violence, predation and victimage as structurally integral to the way in which the biosphere regenerates” (Bennett et al, 2008, p.8). It is challenging to reconcile this view of suffering s being so embedded in the natural world with the claim that the world and everything in it was created by a loving God.

In *Of God and Pelicans* (1989) Jay McDaniel discusses this issue through the example of pelicans who often have two chicks, one of which he argues are simply an “insurance” or backup chick (1989, p.19). As the pelicans are highly unlikely to be able to support two chicks successfully, ninety per cent of these backup chicks are driven out of the nest and die. This type of suffering in the natural world raises the question of whether each of these chicks matters to God in their own right, or whether they, and their suffering, are just examples of expendable waste produced by the natural process of evolution. Examples such as this highlight that suffering does not seem to be accidental or unanticipated, but instead seems to be “a necessary element in the structure of the system ... written into the basic laws of nature and the history of cosmic and biological evolution” (Pendergast, 2009, p.835). McDaniel’s response to the question of why a loving God would allow this type of suffering in the natural world is to adopt a position of pantheism. On this view “God does not control everything that happens to animals in the evolution of the world but God is all-powerful in the sense that God is the primordial source of all life” (Wade, 2004, p.7). McDaniel’s position is heavily influenced by process theology, but this suggests a God who has no control over certain things and who regrets the ways that certain things are. This seems to seriously undermine divine omnipotence and sovereignty, and Augustine rejected Manichaean dualism for similar reasons. In this way, although adopting an alternative approach such as process thought or dualism may

provide a solution to some aspects of the problem of natural evil, it seems to do so at a high price by compromising God's omnipotence and sovereignty.

3.4. Reinhold Niebuhr's Interpretation of the Augustinian Theodicy

In *The Nature and Destiny of Man* [1941] (1996), Reinhold Niebuhr offers an account of evil that is heavily influenced by Augustine but that attempts to revise some of the more problematic aspects of the traditional Augustinian theodicy. In particular, Niebuhr rejects a literal historical interpretation of the account of the Fall in Genesis and rejects a literal interpretation of the doctrine of original sin. These are two of the most contentious elements of Augustine's theodicy, particularly in light of insights from evolutionary biology, so Niebuhr's approach has the potential to make the theodicy considerably more attractive. If the theodicy is significantly more attractive then this makes the tensions between compatibilism and the theodicy more problematic for the compatibilist; it would mean that by opting for compatibilism at the expense of this updated version of the Augustinian theodicy, compatibilists would lose a significantly more attractive response to the evidential problem of evil. This repercussion would therefore have the potential to make compatibilism itself a less appealing prospect. But if Niebuhr's interpretation does not resolve the issues with the Augustinian theodicy then opting for compatibilism would mean losing a theodicy that is flawed and unsatisfactory in other ways anyway, which seems much less of a loss.

A key feature that differentiates Niebuhr's account is the fact that he tries to move away from the view of original sin that underpins the traditional Augustinian theodicy. He also explicitly rejects what he later termed "Augustine's horrendous conception that sin was transmitted from generation to generation through lust in the act of procreation" (2012, p.24). One of the key reasons that original sin is a problematic concept is because it seems to conflict with the idea of individual moral responsibility, as it seems to be unjustly holding people morally responsible for something which is entirely outside of their control. Because of this it "offends both rationalists and moralists by maintaining the seemingly absurd position that man sins inevitably and by a fateful necessity but that he is nevertheless to be held responsible for actions which are prompted by an ineluctable fate" (Niebuhr [1941] 1996, p.241). Niebuhr offers an account which draws heavily on Augustine's view of sin, but

attempts to avoid some of these issues by rejecting a literal interpretation of original sin.

Niebuhr explicitly rejects the historicity of what he later refers to as the “primitive myth” (2012, p.23) of the Fall of Adam in the Garden of Eden. He argues that it is crucial to “eliminate the literalistic illusions in the doctrine of original sin if the paradox of inevitability and responsibility is to be fully understood” ([1941] 1996, p.262). To do this, he tries to move away from an understanding of sin as being inherited and a past event and instead focuses on it being an inevitable future event. This suggests that sin is inevitable but not necessary. In this way, although it is inevitable that every human will sin, this sin is “not to be regarded as belonging to his essential nature and therefore is not outside the realm of his responsibility” (Niebuhr [1941] 1996, p.242). We all sin inevitably, but still by choice. Moving away from an understanding of original sin as inherited sin towards an understanding of sin as inevitable helps to address the criticism that blaming people for sin which is inherited is unjust because it involves holding people morally responsible for something which is outside of their control. “As a matter of moral accountability, the difference between these two possible definitions of original sin is huge. Inevitability is essentially forward looking, and therefore doesn’t complicate the conventional identification of voluntariness with responsibility” (Rees, 2003, p.81). By rejecting the idea that sin is inherited Niebuhr therefore attempts to address the criticism that original sin is incompatible with justice, a key criticism of the Augustinian theodicy.

Niebuhr’s approach attempts to sever the “the untenable historical and metaphysical assumptions from the meaning of original sin’ and replace them with ‘verifiable psychological and social experience’” (Wiley, 2002, p.148). He does though retain Augustine’s emphasis on sin being an inevitable consequence of freedom, as “the juxtaposition of finitude and freedom creates tension, and this tension is the essential matrix in which sin arises” (McFarland, 2010, p.43). In this way, Niebuhr’s view draws heavily on the existentialist writings of Søren Kierkegaard [1844] (1981), and in particular Kierkegaard’s concept of anxiety. According to Kierkegaard anxiety is not sin, but is an expression of anxiety and is the natural reaction to freedom. We sin not because we are already sinners but because we have freedom, and freedom causes anxiety which inevitably, but not necessarily, leads to sin. In this way, Niebuhr attempts to shift the focus of the Augustinian theodicy away from the idea of original sin and away from a literal historical interpretation of the Fall.

Criticisms of Niebuhr's Account

Niebuhr's version of the Augustinian theodicy has faced criticism for presenting an approach that moves away from the Augustinian approach on several fundamental aspects of the theodicy. Roger Badham (1998) for example argues that Niebuhr's theodicy actually draws heavily on Kierkegaard, and in particular on Kierkegaard's concept of anxiety [1844] (1981), arguing that there is "both an Augustinian and a Kierkegaardian Niebuhr with some unresolved theological tensions between the two positions" (1998, p.548). However, Kierkegaard himself develops many ideas which are strongly Augustinian. Like Augustine, Kierkegaard focuses on the idea of evil as negativity, of evil being a consequence of freedom, and on the idea that "through the first sin, sin came into the world" (Kierkegaard, [1844]1981, p.31). A close association with Kierkegaard as well as Augustine does not therefore seem to itself undermine the potential Niebuhr's approach has to strengthen the Augustinian theodicy. Similarly, even if Niebuhr's theodicy does depart significantly from Augustine, this does not itself seem problematic, but rather simply suggests that his approach should perhaps be seen as a more significant reformulation of Augustine's approach than it is conventionally regarded as being.

A far more problematic issue with Niebuhr's approach seems to relate to an element of the Augustinian theodicy that the approach retains, rather than one that it rejects. Niebuhr retains the Augustinian assumption that evil and freedom are inextricably linked, and the emphasis on sin being an inevitable consequence of freedom and sin. This assumption can be clearly seen in Badham's summary of Niebuhr's approach, where he states that sin "is not ordained by God but is simply concomitant with freedom. Insofar as humankind has evolved to its present point, there can be no humankind either without the possibility of real and extensive freedom or, therefore, without the omnipresent possibility of real and extensive evil" (Badham, 1998, p.569). This quotation highlights the assumption that evil is 'concomitant' with freedom, something for which neither Augustine nor Niebuhr seem to give a satisfactory explanation. It also highlights the issue raised by Mackie (1955) that just because freedom requires the possibility of evil doesn't mean that it requires actual evil. As Mackie's highlights, "if God has made men such that in their free choices they sometimes prefer what is good and sometimes what is evil, why could he not have made men such that they always freely choose the good?" (1955, p.209). In this way, even if Niebuhr's interpretation strengthens some aspects of the Augustinian theodicy, it

still does not provide a satisfactory response to this fundamental issue of why evil is seen as an inevitable consequence of freedom.

Some have questioned whether Niebuhr's rejection of a literalistic understanding of original sin goes far enough, or whether he should have distanced himself more completely from the idea of original sin. In his later work *Man's Nature and His Communities* (2012), Niebuhr reflected that his earlier use of the term original sin to refer to "the persistence and universality of man's self-regard" had been a "pedagogical error" (2012, p.23). He commented that the use of this language and imagery meant that even people who agreed with much of his argument perceived him as a "regressive religious authoritarian caught in the toils of an ancient legend" (2012, p.24). However, despite disagreements about terminology, Niebuhr is undisputedly clear in his rejection of a literal historical interpretation of both the Fall of original sin. What Niebuhr retains from Augustine's account, and what I believe is a far more difficult issue to resolve, is the idea that the creation was originally perfect. This is one of the most problematic aspects of the Augustinian theodicy as it raises difficult questions around how, and indeed why, such a perfect world would go wrong; issues that Niebuhr's account does not resolve.

3.5. Conclusion

It is highly questionable whether the Augustinian theodicy succeeds in its ambition of removing the responsibility for evil from God. The claim that evil is not created by God, but instead is a by-product of God's creativity, is intended to remove responsibility for the existence of evil from God. However, this argument seems unconvincing because if God gave humans the free will that then leads to evil it seems that God must still be, at least indirectly, responsible for evil. Even if he isn't directly responsible it seems that "God has 'omni-responsibility' for creating such free beings and for placing them in a situation that God could foresee would evoke sin and suffering" (Mesle, 1986, p.413). Similarly, the existence of evil in the world suggests that either the world was not perfect to begin with or that God allowed it to go wrong, and in either case it would seem that the ultimate responsibility for there being evil in the world must lie with God. This is the "danger that lurks just below the surface of any view that makes God the creator of the agents of evil. If God is the author of souls and souls are the authors of evil, then only a narrow interval, a tiny space, separates God from responsibility for evil" (Babcock, 1988,

p.34). The failure of the Augustinian theodicy to provide a satisfactory account of the origin of evil, means that it is very difficult to see how the theodicy can avoid the conclusion that evil originates with God, either directly or indirectly, which is exactly what Augustine is trying to avoid.

Compatibilism brings into sharper focus a number of problems of internal consistency within the Augustinian theodicy. In particular, it highlights the extreme difficulties that the theodicy has in providing a satisfactory answer to the question of why God could not have created humans who were free yet never chose to sin, and also highlights inconsistencies between Augustine's views of freedom before and after the Fall. In his *Enchiridion* Augustine claims that we are then truly free when God gives order to our lives ([420] 1955). This claim seems to be rooted in a far more compatibilist than libertarian conception of freedom. However, if this compatibilist understanding of freedom is applied to Adam and Eve before the Fall, then it is very difficult to see why God could not create them so that they had free will yet just only ever chose to do good. There are clear tensions between compatibilism and the Augustinian theodicy. These could be seen to reduce the appeal of compatibilism, as they suggest that adopting a compatibilist position requires the rejection of the traditional Augustinian theodicy as a response to the evidential problem of evil. However, in my view, there are substantial wider issues with the Augustinian theodicy, most significantly related to the origins of, and ultimate responsibility for, evil. These issues mean that adopting compatibilism and rejecting this approach in my view only represents the rejection of what is a problematic and flawed theodicy, rather than representing the rejection of a compelling response to the evidential problem of evil. In this way, being unable to reconcile compatibilism and the Augustinian theodicy should not be seen as a significant concern for the compatibilist.

CHAPTER FOUR

FREEDOM AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIL: THE “SOUL-MAKING” APPROACH

The previous chapters have highlighted significant tensions between compatibilism and the Free Will Defence and Augustinian theodicy, both of which assume an incompatibilist view of freedom and regard evil as being a necessary by-product of humans having free will. The tensions between compatibilism and these two responses to the problem of evil seem irreconcilable, suggesting that the theist is faced with either abandoning compatibilism in order to retain one of these traditional responses to the problem of evil, abandoning these traditional responses to the problem of evil in favour of embracing compatibilism, or abandoning both compatibilism and these two responses. I have suggested that wider problems with these two approaches, such as difficulties with the concept of transworld depravity in Plantinga’s Free Will Defence, mean that given this irreconcilable tension it is these two responses to the problem of evil that should be rejected in favour of embracing compatibilism, rather than compatibilism being rejected in order to retain these two traditional responses to the problem of evil. However, if these two responses to the problem of evil are rejected, then there is a need to find an alternative response to the problem of evil.

There are many possible alternative responses to the problem of evil that could be explored, but the most well-known alternative to the two traditional responses already discussed is the soul making approach to theodicy. The soul making approach is most prominently advocated by John Hick (1963, 1966, 2004, [1966] 2010). The approach rests on the central claim that evil and suffering are necessary for humans to experience moral and spiritual development. In *Evil and the God of Love* (2010), Hick argued that although traditionally the soul making approach has been less popular than the Augustinian free will based approach, this style of theodicy can in fact provide a more coherent and convincing response to the problem of evil. Hick’s dissatisfaction with the Augustinian theodicy is actually not based on an objection to the role that is given to free will. Instead, Hick’s dissatisfaction with the Augustinian theodicy is based mainly on two concerns; firstly, his rejection of the claim that

the world was initially created perfect and has gone wrong in some way, and secondly his criticism that this approach relies too heavily on a literal interpretation of the biblical account of the Fall.

The key features of Hick's approach will be discussed in the first section of this chapter. The second section will then focus explicitly on exploring the place and role of freedom within Hick's account, highlighting particularly the way that Hick draws on elements from the incompatibilist Free Will Defence within his overall account. The third section of this chapter will then discuss some of the key criticisms of Hick's approach, most notably the issue that Hick himself raises in the final sentences of *Evil and the God of Love* of whether all suffering and evil can be rendered acceptable by a future good ([1966] 2010, p.386). This fourth and final section of this chapter will then discuss whether Hick's approach actually requires a libertarian conception of freedom, or whether it would be possible to adopt a compatibilist interpretation or adaptation of his account. It will explore this possibility by proposing a compatibilist soul making approach that is heavily influenced by Frankfurt's views on freedom and the will. It will then begin to explore what the key benefits and challenges are of adopting an explicitly compatibilist response to the problem of evil, a discussion which will then continue throughout the final two chapters.

4.1. The Central Features of the Soul Making Approach

The soul-making approach to theodicy is based on the idea that evil and suffering are necessary for human development. On this view, evil and suffering are seen to be needed because development "requires the presence of obstacles to overcome and incentives to grow" and because "without danger, difficulty, and temptation we would never achieve moral victories or strive for excellence" (Scott, 2010, p.318). Evil and suffering are therefore not regarded as unforeseen by-products of humans being given freedom, but instead are seen as an intentional part of creation. Rather than being created perfect and then for some reason going wrong, according to this account humans were intentionally created immature and imperfect. Evil is therefore seen as part of a divine plan, rather than being the result of a catastrophic fall that disrupts God's plan. This approach is challenging because it places the ultimate responsibility for evil on God, but arguably seems more in line with his sovereignty, omnipotence and omniscience.

Hick associates this soul-making approach with Irenaeus, although it is questionable whether the soul-making approach is as closely associated with Irenaeus as Hick claims. Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki suggests that the approach is associated with a number of influential figures, not just Irenaeus, commenting that “Irenaeus, Lactantius and Clement of Rome are amongst those who suggested that evil may be necessary as the opportunity for growth and goodness, and, therefore, not incompatible with God’s creative goodness” (1988, p.15). Scott goes further and suggests that the association with Irenaeus is misplaced, suggesting that actually “it has more affinity with Origen than with Irenaeus” (Scott, 2010, p.314). However, whether or not the soul-making theodicy is strictly Irenaean, and indeed whether or not Irenaeus explicitly developed a formal theodicy, is beyond the scope of this work which is instead focused on exploring our understanding of, and tensions and relationships between, the key concepts that underpin this discussion. Irenaeus does clearly claim that mankind was formed “for growth and increase” ([180] 2012, p.405) and it is this focus on moral development that is at the heart of the soul making approach. Drawing again on Irenaeus, Hick bases his emphasis on development and moral growth on the distinction between the image and likeness of God found in Genesis 1:26. There is disagreement over whether these two words are actually intended to have different meanings or whether the Hebrew words are synonymous and simply repeated for emphasis or effect, but such a discussion is outside of the scope of this work. What is important for Hick’s account is that he interprets this distinction as suggesting a two-stage process of creation where humans are initially created in the image of God and then develops towards his likeness. This highlights a key difference between the Augustinian and soul-making approaches to theodicy – whereas on the Augustinian approach the world was originally created in a state of perfection, on the soul making approach humans were intentionally created imperfect. On this view, humans were not created in a state of perfection but instead as “imperfect and immature” creatures (Hick, 1968, p.540) who are at the beginning of a long process of development. One advantage of this developmentally-focused approach is that it avoids the difficulty of trying to explain why beings who were initially perfect would, or indeed how they logically could, go wrong. In this way, the soul making approach avoids one of the main criticisms of the Augustinian theodicy, which is that it fails to provide a satisfactory explanation for this issue of how and why a perfect world could go wrong.

One might think that a world without evil and suffering would be preferable to a world which contains evil and suffering. However, Hick disagrees with this claim, arguing that if the world did not contain evil and suffering it would be impossible to develop attributes such as compassion or courage; that “such a world, however well it might promote pleasure, would be very ill adapted for the development of the moral qualities of human personality” and therefore that, rather than being the best of all possible worlds, “in relation to this purpose it might well be the worst of all possible worlds!” (1963, p.45). For Hick, it is important that rather than the world being perfect, the world is a “vale of soul making” (2010, p.253) where humans can grow and develop. The phrase vale of soul making is taken from a letter written by the poet John Keats, in which Keats asks, “Do you not see how necessary a world of pains and troubles is to school an intelligence and make it a Soul?” ([1819] 2012, p.102). In this way, rather than looking backwards towards a perfection that existed before the Fall but then was lost, Hick’s approach looks forwards towards a future perfection. This is arguably one of the appealing aspects of the approach as it makes it more positive and optimistic, and also seemingly less in conflict with evolutionary science, than approaches such as the Augustinian theodicy.

Hick’s argument for why God is justified in creating a world containing evil and suffering is based on his view that the relationship between God and humans should not be thought of in terms of God trying to make human lives as agreeable as possible, but “rather on the analogy of human children, who are to grow to adulthood in an environment whose primary and overriding purpose is not immediate pleasure but the realizing of the most valuable potentialities of human personality” (2010, p.258). In this way, Hick maintains that the process of development is a valuable process for humans to undertake, even if it involves experiencing evil and suffering. This “resonates with the universal human experience of growing through painful experiences” and also fits well with the fact that “the people we most admire tend to be those who have overcome the most challenging circumstances in life” (Meister and Dew Jr, 2013, p.86). One of the advantages of this approach is that it offers a possible explanation for natural as well as moral evil. The Free Will Defence and Augustinian Theodicy both struggle to provide a satisfactory response to the problem of natural evil, as there seems a much less obvious pathway to argue for a connection between the misuse of free will and natural evil as there is to argue for the connection between the misuse of free will and moral evil. The issue of natural evil is still challenging for Hick, but

it is less problematic in the soul making approach than in free will focused approaches because both moral and natural evil could have the potential to contribute to the process of soul making.

Hick also argues that natural evil helps to ensure that the world remains “religiously ambiguous” and to ensure that humans remain at an “epistemic distance” from God (1968, p.540). This concept of epistemic distance is a central feature of Hick’s account, and is closely related to his view on the role of freedom. Hick maintains that a key part of the value of the soul making process “lies in the creatures’ uncoerced recognition of and response to the good” (1968, p.540). In order to protect this freedom and avoid coercion he argues that there needs to be an epistemic distance between humans and God. This means that humans cannot be created in ‘the immediate presence’ of God, as otherwise his presence would be overwhelming; instead, the world has to be such that “God is not involuntarily evident” (1968, p.540). In Hick’s approach both natural evil and moral evil play a role in ensuring this epistemic distance, as well as in providing opportunities for soul making.

A final important feature of Hick’s soul making approach is that the process of soul making is not limited to human lives on earth, but continues after death. He argues that “if there is any eventual resolution of the interplay between good and evil, any decisive bringing of good out of evil, it must lie beyond this world and beyond the enigma of death” (2010, p.339). The issue of whether a soul making approach has to rely on the concept of life after death is a contentious one, and will be discussed in more depth in the next chapters. However, for Hick’s particular formulation of the approach the concept of an afterlife is integral. Whereas the Free Will Defence and Augustinian theodicy look back towards the origins of evil, Hick’s whole approach looks forward towards an “infinite future good” beyond death (2010, p.339) that will make the evil and suffering endured on the way towards that good worthwhile.

4.2. The Role of Freedom in John Hick’s Approach

Freedom plays a central role within Hick’s version of the soul making theodicy. He argues that soul making requires people to respond freely to challenges and obstacles they face in order to enter into a loving relationship with God. He sees freedom as an inherent part of personhood and argues that in order for man to be “capable of entering into a personal relationship with his Maker, and not a mere puppet” (2010, p.266) then

he must have freedom. However, there are a number of tensions surrounding the role and nature of freedom within Hick's account. For example, Hick is critical of the Free Will Defence and Augustinian theodicy, yet his own approach is sometimes referred to as a "hybrid" free will defence (Griffin, 1981, p.53). He also explicitly rejects compatibilism yet accepts the compatibilist criticism of the Free Will Defence proposed by Flew (1955) and Mackie (1955). This section will discuss Hick's view of freedom and the tensions it creates for his approach, and then explore whether this type of freedom is integral to his account or whether it would be possible to formulate a coherent compatibilist version of Hick's soul making approach.

Hick's View of Freedom

Although Hick is critical of the Free Will Defence and Augustinian theodicy, he does accept two key assumptions of the Free Will Defence – he accepts that omnipotence is limited to what is logically possible, and he accepts that freedom requires humans to be able to choose wrongly as well as being able to choose rightly. Based on these two assumptions, he claims that "the creation of personal beings who are not free to choose wrongly as well as to choose rightly is self-contradictory and therefore does not fall within the scope of the divine omnipotence" (2010, p.266). Hick's acceptance of these two assumptions means that his approach seems vulnerable to the same criticism that Flew (1955) and Mackie (1955) raise against the Free Will Defence, namely that if a compatibilist view of freedom is adopted then it would be logically possible for God to create humans who only ever freely chose to do good. In his article 'An Irenaean Theodicy', Hick concedes that this criticism of the Free Will Defence is successful, conceding that "a perfectly good being, although formally free to sin, would in fact never do so" (1981, p.44). However, he then goes on to argue that although perfectly good beings would always freely choose good, God could not create humans as perfectly good beings without undermining their ability to enter into an authentic relationship with God. If God were to create humans as perfectly good beings they would, Hick argues, only have "readymade" virtues that are intrinsically less valuable than virtues that were developed through a process of soul making (1981, p.48), and it would undermine their ability to have an authentic relationship with God.

In the revised edition of *Evil and the God of Love* (2010), Hick outlines a more detailed response to the criticism from Flew and Mackie

which he believes is successful in showing why their criticism does not undermine his approach. To do this he makes a distinction between the relationship that humans have with each other and the relationship that humans have with God. He accepts that God could have created humans who only ever freely chose to do good in relation to each other. However, he argues that this is not the case in relation to God, maintaining that it would be impossible to create humans who were guaranteed to freely respond to God in an authentic loving way. To support this claim, Hick gives the example of a hypnotist (2010, pp.272-274). He argues that if a hypnotist suggested to a hypnotised patient that they should trust or love him, this resulting trust or love would be inauthentic. For Hick, it is “of the essential nature of ‘fiduciary’ personal attitudes such as trust, respect, and affection to arise in a free being as an uncompelled response to the personal qualities of others” (2010, p.273). In this way, if God were to determine that humans would freely trust or love him, these feelings would be as inauthentic as the feelings invoked by the hypnotist. However, this raises the question of whether it would really matter if the feelings were inauthentic. Griffin for example argues that the only person that it would matter to would be God because, as in the case with the hypnotist, he would be the only one who would know the difference (1981, p.54). Hick rejects this criticism, commenting that he finds it “hard to take seriously” the suggestion that “God’s purpose in creation might be satisfied by giving us the mere illusion rather than the reality of freedom” (1981, p.65). However, by placing so much importance on the freedom to choose between alternative possibilities, Hick seems to leave himself vulnerable to the criticism that the evil in the world is simply too high a price to pay for this freedom. The kind of freedom that Hick really seems to be interested in is freedom associated with moral growth and development, and it is not clear that this needs to focus on having alternative possibilities in the way that Hick assumes.

Hick’s response to the criticism from Flew and Mackie is intended to defend his approach against a high-profile criticism. However, the distinction he makes between human relationships with each other and human relationships with God is contentious and has itself been subject to a number of criticisms. For example, in *The Many Faces of Evil* (2004) John Feinberg argues that it leads to inconsistency with regard to the type of freedom Hick is proposing. More specifically, he argues that Hick adopts a far more compatibilist view where he argues that God could determine our free choices in regard to other people, yet adopts a far more incompatibilist view of the relationship between humans and God.

Hick recognises that his responses to the criticism of Flew and Mackie highlight the need for a clearer conception of what is meant by freedom in his account, something which he attempts to provide in chapter 13 of the revised edition of *Evil and the God of Love* (2010). Here, Hick recognises that free actions cannot be seen as completely undetermined, as this would suggest that they are random. He also agrees with the claim that free actions arise from people's characters and personalities. However, he maintains that although free actions arise from a person's character they are not determined by that character, and this is where he reinforces his commitment to an incompatibilist rather than compatibilist view of free will.

Hick proposes that freedom should be seen as "limited creativity" (2010, p.275). On this view, there is a close relationship between people's characters and their actions, but if an action is to be described as free then it cannot be fully determined by the person's character because "the character is itself partially formed and partially re-formed in the very moment of free decision" (2010, p.276). In this way, Hick attempts to formulate a conception of libertarian freedom that retains a certain level of unpredictability by maintaining that character and personality may influence, but do not determine, free actions. Hick also presents an additional limitation on human freedom through his claim that ultimately all will turn to God because all are "endowed with a basic Godward bias" (1981, p.52). This claim that all humans will all ultimately turn to God reflects Hick's commitment to universal salvation and leads Hick to conclude that humans have a "real though limited freedom" (1981, p.52). Because Hick commits himself to an incompatibilist libertarian conception of free will, this creates tensions with other aspects of his approach, such as universal salvation, that arguably would be eased if he did not assume a libertarian conception of free will.

4.3. Criticisms of John Hick's Account

Is the World Really Suited to Soul Making?

The soul making approach is based on the claim that if the world was a suffering-free paradise then it would not be well suited to soul making as it would not allow for the development of virtues such as courage or forgiveness. However, some question whether the world in its current format is actually as well suited to soul making as Hick and other

proponents of this approach claim. Robert Mesle for example asks, “is this really the best combination of human nature and natural environment in which to produce persons with the qualities Hick says God created the world to produce?” (1986, p.426). If God created the world specifically and intentionally for the purpose of soul making, then the objection is that he could have made it better suited to, and more effective at, achieving this goal.

One way in which the world could be seen to not be particularly well suited to soul making is if it is seen to be more “soul destroying” than soul making (see for example Roth, in Davis (Ed.) 1981, p.55). Hick himself acknowledges this challenge, noting that it seems that evil and suffering “which sometimes help to create stronger and more compassionate men and women, at other times overwhelm and crush, leaving only despair, tragedy and disintegration” (2004, p.360). However, different people respond very differently to similar situations. A person who has been severely bullied at school may themselves become a bully, or may have an entirely more positive reaction and feel that they never want to inflict that kind of suffering or torment on another person, or even become an advocate for an anti-bullying campaign. Taking away that situation completely could therefore reduce the opportunities for soul making for some, even if it would not develop those character traits in all cases. It can also be argued that even if a particular instance of suffering does not seem to directly contribute to soul making in that individual, it seems that it could potentially still contribute to the wider process of soul making by, for example, developing compassion and empathy in others. This kind of argument is highly controversial because it can be seen as offensively utilitarian and as treating humans as means rather than as ends. However, if this approach is combined with the view that the process of soul making continues after death, as discussed later in this work, then arguably this objection is eased slightly.

The issue of whether instances of extreme and overwhelming suffering mean that the world is not really suited to soul making is closely linked to the related issues of whether the suffering and evil in the world is excessive and of whether the aim of soul making could still be achieved, or indeed actually achieved more effectively, if the world contained significantly less evil and suffering. However, it can be argued that it is impossible to make a judgment on what would potentially be an “acceptable” level of evil and suffering. This also highlights that the question of whether the world is really suited to soul making is something that it may be impossible for us to judge from our limited perspective. This is

particularly the case if the process of soul making is seen to continue after death. If this overall scheme is adopted, then it seems that even if a particular event seems excessive or overwhelming or does not contribute to soul making in the short term, it could still potentially contribute to a longer-term process of soul making that continues after death.

The Unequal Distribution of Suffering

In addition to issues around the amount of evil and suffering in the world, criticisms of the soul making approach often focus on the issue of the inequitable distribution of evil and suffering in the world. It seems clear that there is not a fair distribution of evil and suffering in the world, with some people suffering far more than others. Hick acknowledges that this is a significant challenge but argues that the unequal and unfair distribution of suffering in the world actually increases the scope for soul making because it increases the scope for the development of traits such as compassion. He argues that “in a world that is to be the scene of compassionate love and self-giving for others, suffering must fall upon mankind with something of the haphazardness and inequity that we now experience” ([1966] 2010, p.334). On this view, there needs to be a certain level of randomness to the distribution of evil and suffering in the world. For example, if there was a clear connection between the level of suffering someone experiences and their own negative actions and decisions then it seems likely that we would have less compassion and sympathy for the person concerned because we would see them as being more responsible for that suffering. Similarly, having a clear connection between positive behaviour and reduced suffering could encourage people to pursue goodness for the rewards that accompany it rather than for its own sake.

For Hick, the unequal distribution of suffering in the world also helps to ensure that humans remain at an “epistemic distance” ([1966] 2010, p.281) from God. In his account, epistemic distance is crucial to ensuring that there is meaningful struggle and overcoming of obstacles, as well as playing an important role in protecting freedom. Without epistemic distance humans would be in the immediate presence of God, which would essentially amount to coercion and would mean that “personal freedom regarding moral choices would be absolutely precluded, for such persons could not help but adjust their wills to that of God” (Geivett, 1993, p.56). However, the concept of epistemic distance is contentious. Kane for example argues that being at an epistemic distance from God would mean that it would be impossible for humans to know what is right, and “it is

impossible for anyone rationally and responsibly to do what is required of him when he does not know what that is" (1975, p.7). In this way, he argues that it is unfair to create humans at an epistemic distance and then blame them when they sin. However, this criticism seems much less damaging to Hick's account than Kane claims. In Hick's approach evil is not presented as punishment for sin, and ultimately the process of soul making is seen as being successful for all in the form of universal salvation (see chapter 6). It would indeed seem unfair for God to set up an epistemic distance and then punish sin through evil and suffering, particularly if this punishment extended to eternal torment in hell. But this is not what Hick claims the purpose of evil and suffering is, so the criticism seems to lose its force when viewed in light of the rest of Hick's approach.

Why is the Process of Soul Making Valuable?

One of the key tenets of the soul making approach is that achieving growth through a process of struggle and development is somehow more valuable than being made already in a state of perfection and not having to go through this painful process. Some critics have questioned this assumption, for example asking "why would virtues earned through a process of soul making be better than virtues bestowed by God as an innate element of personhood?" (Vorster, 2011, p.44). If humans were created with all virtues already developed, then this would seem to remove the need for evil and suffering to develop them. However, this possibility is explicitly rejected by Hick, who maintains that "ready-made" virtues would be intrinsically less valuable than virtues that are developed freely and through the efforts of people themselves. It is also difficult to see how some virtues, such as courage, could exist without the existence of evil and suffering. This criticism can be countered in two ways, either by arguing that it is not possible to create humans "ready-made" in this way, or by arguing that although it would be possible to do so, the virtues and character would be in some way less valuable or meaningful than if they had been developed through a process of soul making.

In terms of the first argument, although it seems difficult to see how virtues such as courage could exist without the existence of evil and suffering, some critics, such as Stanley Kane (1975), argue that it is possible to imagine situations where dispositions such as courage and compassion could be developed even if there is no evil. He suggests that "courage and fortitude, for instance, could manifest themselves as the persistence,

steadfastness, and perseverance it takes to accomplish well any difficult or demanding long-range task" (1975, p.2), giving examples of demanding tasks/ situations such as training to be an Olympic athlete. Kane maintains that these kinds of tasks require the same sorts of strengths of character that are required to endure evil and suffering. However, there seems to me to be a huge difference in the degree and nature of the strengths of character required by the "demanding situations" he suggests compared to situations of genuine suffering and evil. Kane argues that "it is hard to see why a man or a woman cannot develop just as much patience, fortitude and strength of character in helping his or her spouse complete a doctoral dissertation as in caring for a sick child through a long and serious illness" (1975, p.3). But it seems unjustifiable to regard these two situations as in any way comparable. Firstly, his comment seems to be trivialising the extreme emotional pressures that caring for a sick relative places on people. Secondly, in cases such as completing a dissertation the person involved has freely chosen to put themselves in that situation, so there is not the same issue of coping with the lack of control and feelings of helplessness that instances of genuine suffering would involve.

The second argument, that creating humans already in a state of perfection would be qualitatively different to having them develop themselves through a process of soul making, is the position argued for by Hick. He argues that ready-made virtues would be intrinsically less valuable than virtues that are developed freely and through the efforts of people themselves, commenting that "one who has attained to goodness by meeting and eventually mastering temptations ... is good in a richer and more valuable sense than would be one created *ab initio* in a state of either innocence or virtue" ([1966] 2010, p.255). On this view, there is something valuable about the process of development itself that would be lost if humans were simply created already in a final perfected state. For Hick, this value lies in the fact that the process of development allows human life to be "essentially free and self-directing" ([1966] 2010, p.255), and because it means that people have experiences such as overcoming temptation or making difficult choices that they would not experience if they were not engaged in this process of soul making.

Does the Outcome Justify the Process?

One of the most significant challenges for the soul making approach would seem to be the question of whether the positive outcome of soul making justifies the evil and suffering needed to achieve it; the issue of

whether the end justifies the means. It is a key aspect of the soul-making approach that the development and growth that occurs as a result of evil and suffering justify the cost of enduring that evil and suffering. However, some would reject the claim that any possible good could be worth the evil and suffering in the world, or may argue that by framing evil and suffering in this way it actually denies that evil is actually genuine evil or instrumentalises evil in a way that is morally problematic. Hick is actually very critical of the view found in the Augustinian theodicy that evil is a privation of good, arguing that this view does not reflect the true horror of evil. Yet some of his critics accuse him of being guilty of making a similar error. Mesle (1986) for example argues that seeing evil acts as part of a positive process amounts to a denial of genuine evil, because regarding evil and suffering as part of an overall process of soul making means that they become part of an overall process that is positive. However, just because evil is regarded as playing a role within an overarching scheme that is positive, it does not seem to follow that this means that Hick has to deny the existence or genuineness of evil itself, so this criticism seems able to be relatively easily dismissed. The much more powerful criticism seems to be the underlying question of whether the apparent instrumentalisation of evil is morally justifiable, and whether the ultimate end justifies the use of evil and suffering as a means. D.Z. Phillips (2004) for example strongly rejects any view that sees suffering as instrumental. The idea that God allows suffering for his own ends is controversial, both in terms of the morality of the idea God allowing suffering for his own ends, and also in terms of whether those ends are really worth the cost.

One of the most famous formulations of this concern comes from Dostoevsky in *The Brothers Karamazov*. This text highlights a key argument against attempts to justify the existence of evil and suffering, arguing that evil and suffering are “too high a price” (Dostoevsky, [1879] 1996, p.272) to pay regardless of any ultimate good that may follow from them. This highlights a key issue not just for Hick but for all responses to the problem of evil, of whether any possible good is worth the cost of the evil and suffering in the world. Hick recognises the severity of this issue and appeals to “the positive value of mystery” ([1966] 2010, p.335) as a possible way to address this challenge. Hick does not see mystery simply in a negative sense of something that is not knowable, but instead highlights the positive role that mystery could play in contributing to epistemic distance and in contributing to soul making. This appeal to mystery allows Hick to end *Evil and the God of Love* on a tentative but hopeful note: “can there be a future good so great as to render acceptable, in

retrospect, the whole human experience, with all its wickedness and suffering as well as its sanctity and happiness? I think that perhaps there can, and indeed that perhaps there is" ([1966] 2010, p.386). Hick's appeal to mystery is contentious, but it seems to provide a possible response to what is arguably the criticism that all of the traditional responses to the problem of evil find most difficult to address. His explicit appeal to a "future good" also highlights the crucial role played by the afterlife in his particular approach, something which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Soul Making and Natural Evil

Even if it is accepted that the process of soul making is necessary and justifiable, some critics have questioned whether this approach can satisfactorily address the existence of natural evil or nonhuman suffering in the world, or whether the soul making process could be just as satisfactorily completed if there was only moral evil.

In some ways, the issue of natural evil seems less problematic for soul making approaches than it is for approaches such as the Free Will Defence or the Augustinian theodicy because it removes the direct connection between natural evil and the misuse of free will by either human or non-human beings. Within the soul-making scheme, it seems that natural evil can provide just as many opportunities for moral development as moral evil, whereas it is difficult to see a similar connection to free will. The point of the soul-making approach is that God designs the world "not to shield us from hardships, but to facilitate our progress toward perfection through our constant encounters with dangers, difficulties, and misfortunes" (Scott, 2010, p.313), and there seems no reason why these encounters cannot or should not come about as the result of natural as well as moral evil. In Hick's account, natural evil also plays a secondary role in terms of contributing to epistemic distance, as the existence of natural evil helps to contribute to the "religiously ambiguous nature of the world" (Trakakis, 2005, p.39).

In this way, if there is seen to be such a thing as natural evil, then it seems that the soul making approach is better placed than purely free will based approaches to incorporate this within its overall scheme. However, whether or not it is seen as natural evil, the underlying issue of animal suffering does present a significant challenge for all of the traditional responses to the problem of evil, including the soul making approach. The argument that natural evil can provide opportunities for soul making

can potentially help to justify the existence of some natural evils, but where this argument seems inadequate is in reference to the millions of years of animal suffering that took place before humans were around. This means that Hick's approach to natural evil before humans is reduced to arguments such as the fact that this unfairness could help to contribute to epistemic distance. This may provide a logically possible explanation for natural evil, but it cannot be said to provide a particularly convincing response.

That said, the issue of nonhuman suffering before human existence is a challenge to all of the mainstream traditional responses to the problem of evil, and it is no more or less of a challenge to a compatibilist soul making approach than it is to an incompatibilist version. In this way, while the issue of nonhuman suffering may influence a person's decision over whether to accept any of the mainstream responses to the problem of evil, in my view it does not provide a good reason to reject the soul making approach in favour of any of the other mainstream approaches to the problem of evil, as the issue is equally problematic, if not arguably more problematic, for the more purely free will based approaches.

4.4. Proposing a Compatibilist Soul Making Approach

This section will explore the possibility of proposing an explicitly compatibilist soul making approach. It will first explore whether Hick's soul making approach necessarily requires libertarian freedom, or whether it could be reformulated into a compatibilist version of this account. It will then propose an explicitly compatibilist soul making approach that draws on the broad conception of soul making and also drawing on some elements of the view of freedom and the will proposed by Frankfurt.

Does Hick's Approach Require Libertarian Freedom?

Hick's particular formulation of the soul making approach to theodicy is explicitly incompatibilist; as Barnwell highlights, it is "clear (and universally conceded) that Hick has in mind a particular sort of incompatibilist freedom" (2017, p.30). However, while incompatibilist freedom is central to Hick's account, there does seem to be potential to reinterpret and repurpose the main features of his account to adapt them to work with a compatibilist conception of freedom. At its heart, Hick's soul making approach is focused on the idea that evil and suffering play a valuable

role in moral development. Hick combines this focus on moral and character development with a focus on libertarian freedom and on choosing between alternatives, but it seems plausible that this concept of development could be combined with a compatibilist understanding of freedom. As Pereboom highlights, it seems that “while our wills arguably must have a role in the soul-building process Hick describes, free will in the libertarian sense need not” (In McCann (Ed) 2017, p.213).

To create a compatibilist version of the soul making approach to theodicy, one possible way forward could therefore be to take key elements of Hick’s approach and reinterpret them so that they align with a compatibilist interpretation of freedom. An example of how this shift from a libertarian to a compatibilist conception of freedom could be achieved can be seen in the example of epistemic distance. Hick argues that epistemic distance is necessary to protect human freedom. He argues that if humans were directly in the presence of God then “the disproportion between Creator and creatures would be so great that the latter would have no freedom in relation to God” (1981, p.42). Without epistemic distance the level of influence that God would have on human decisions would seem to go beyond influencing to coercion, and coercion undermines compatibilist freedom just as much as it undermines libertarian freedom. In this way, although Hick sees epistemic distance as necessary for protecting libertarian freedom, if it is seen as providing protection against coercion then it seems that this could apply equally to protecting compatibilist freedom.

This issue can be seen by exploring a criticism of epistemic distance, which is that by controlling what knowledge humans have access to, God could be argued to be denying them the opportunity to make a genuinely free, informed and non-manipulated choice. If this is the case then rather than ensuring freedom, epistemic distance actually undermines freedom because it represents manipulation of humans by God. However, whenever we make choices we are not in possession of all of the possible knowledge that it would be useful to have in order to make that choice. For example, it is impossible to know whether there will be unforeseen and unintended consequences of a particular choice. It also seems that the influence that God has over human choices by limiting their knowledge and denying them clear and immediate knowledge of his existence is much less than the influence on their choices would be if there was no epistemic distance at all. Without epistemic distance then there would not just be a limitation on the knowledge that the person has, there would be a much stronger unavoidable and active influence on their decisions

because God would be “overwhelmingly evident” (Hick, 1981, p.43). It seems problematic to argue that there could be no epistemic distance and the existence of God would strike “every intellectually capable person as self-evidently true” (Trakakis, 2007b, p.222) yet still maintain that this would not fundamentally alter the nature of the relationship between humans and God. This would not undermine freedom on the basis of the world being determined, but instead would undermine freedom on the basis that it would amount to coercion, something which would be seen to undermine freedom by both the libertarian and the compatibilist alike. If there were no epistemic distance then this would seem to necessarily fundamentally change how humans would think and act, and therefore be coercive. In this way, what seems to be most important about the concept of epistemic distance is that it ensures a lack of coercion, something which does not require a supporter of this approach to adopt an incompatibilist position.

Another example of how Hick’s approach could be seen to lend itself to a compatibilist reinterpretation relates to the concept of universal salvation, which will be discussed in more detail in chapter 6 of this work. One criticism sometimes levelled at Hick is that his approach places a great deal of emphasis on the importance of libertarian freedom and having alternate possibilities, but then ultimately his process of soul making ends in the single inevitable outcome of universal salvation which removes the possibility of anyone ultimately rejecting God. Critics argue that this highlights a tension in Hick’s account because he first claims that it would be impossible for God to determine that humans respond to him in a loving and trusting way without this compromising their freedom, yet later claims that “human beings will some day, all of them, freely respond to God with these fiduciary attitudes” (Geivett, 1993, p.195). Hick attempts to address this criticism by arguing that in his view all will be saved, but contingently rather than necessarily. But if his libertarian view of freedom is replaced with a compatibilist view of freedom then this would seem to have the potential to ease this tension between freedom and universal salvation. In this way, reinterpreting Hick’s approach to soul making so that it allows for a compatibilist rather than libertarian conception of free could actually have the potential to strengthen his approach against some key criticisms. It could also avoid the issue that in the original formulation of his account, Hick is forced into an “awkward ambiguity” (Geivett, 1993, p.192) regarding what is meant by human freedom because of the different senses in which he uses freedom depending on whether he is referring to moral freedom or religious freedom.

For Hick, libertarian freedom is central to his account. He explicitly presents soul making as the process of developing moral goodness “which has been built up through the agents own responsible choices through time in the face of alternative possibilities” (1981, p.44). Presenting a compatibilist interpretation of Hick’s account therefore requires a significant redefinition of his account. However, although it is clear that for Hick the process of soul making must involve libertarian free will, it is far less clear that the process of soul making more broadly conceived necessarily has to involve this particular conception of freedom. Rather than adapting Hick’s approach to show that it can work with a compatibilist view of freedom, another way forward is therefore to propose an alternative soul making approach that is explicitly compatibilist throughout.

Proposing a Compatibilist Soul Making Approach

The starting point for this explicitly compatibilist soul making approach is that the existence of evil and suffering in the world cannot satisfactorily be explained solely in terms of their association with free will. If evil and suffering have no purpose beyond being an unwanted by-product of libertarian free will, then this does not seem to provide a convincing enough justification for why God would have created a world containing evil and suffering. Instead, a soul making approach allows evil and suffering to more clearly be seen as also having a more positive role in allowing humans to experience moral and spiritual development and responsibility. For example, evil and suffering allow us to develop qualities such as patience, forgiveness, courage, and compassion. In this way, a central claim of this approach is that although God, being omnipotent, logically could create a world with no evil and suffering, if he were to do so then this would lose the opportunity for humans to engage in the process of soul making. This process is seen as being of such value that it provides a justification for why God allows evil and suffering to exist. In this way, rather than seeing libertarian free will, as having choice between alternatives, as being valuable in itself, what is valued is the process of growth and development in which compatibilist free will plays a key role, and the perfect future state that marks the completion of this process of soul making.

This approach is based on a view of freedom that is compatible with determinism, as it draws on a view of freedom where what matters is that we authentically identify with our desires. This active and authentic identification with our desires means that they can be free and we can have

moral responsibility for them, even though they may be determined. This focus on authenticity draws heavily on the view of freedom found in Frankfurt. Frankfurt argues that having alternate possibilities is not the defining feature of freedom, and instead focuses on the importance of identifying with our desires and taking ownership of our actions. On this view, the key question becomes “not whether I could have chosen differently, but whether my choice is genuine, reflects my true commitments, and is authentically my own” (Waller, 2011, p.59). This focus on authenticity as opposed to alternate possibilities seems to have great potential to provide a foundation for a compatibilist soul making approach to theodicy. On this view, how a person’s actions and “his identifications with their springs is caused is irrelevant to the questions of whether he performs the actions freely or is morally responsible for them” (Frankfurt, 1975, p.122). In this way, even if an action is determined, or the desire to perform an action is determined, it can still be done freely as long as the person identifies with the desire to perform that act. For Frankfurt, it is crucial for freedom that a person identifies with the desire that motivates them to perform a certain act, “otherwise the desire is just a motivational force he suffers passively, like a reflex bodily movement that occurs in spite of himself” (Buss and Overton, 2002, p.xiv). Adopting this view of freedom as a departure point, the process of soul making could then be seen in terms of developing our wills and our characters in such a way that we identify authentically with our desire to perform a good action. It is authenticity, as opposed to libertarian free will, that becomes the key focus and the source of the intrinsic value of the soul making process.

The focus on growth and development through the soul making process means that the soul making approach is inherently forward looking. It looks forward to the ultimate successful completion of this process of soul making for all, yet it is clear from our everyday experience that this process is not successfully concluded for everyone by the time of their death. A key element of this compatibilist soul making approach is therefore that the soul making process can continue beyond death, and that it ultimately comes to a successful conclusion for all people in the form of universal salvation. This commitment to life after death and universal salvation is important because without it the soul making approach is more vulnerable to the objection that the distribution of suffering is extremely unequal. Without life after death the soul making approach is also more vulnerable to the objection that different people have very different opportunities for soul making, not least because of the dramatic

differences in the lengths of people's lives and the dramatic differences in the circumstances to which they are exposed. Without life after death it is difficult to see how these inequalities could potentially be addressed, which means that the supporter of a soul making approach that does not make reference to life after death and universal salvation is left with significant issues of fairness and justice to try to reconcile. The details of how the soul making process could potentially continue after death will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter, as will the importance of universal salvation for this approach.

This proposed compatibilist soul making approach therefore represents a significant departure from the approaches discussed earlier in this work. It rejects the idea that the existence of evil and suffering in the world can be satisfactorily explained solely in terms of their association with free will, rejects the claim that the world was created in an initial state of perfection, and rejects the claim that responsibility for evil and suffering should be placed entirely on humans. This final point is particularly significant, as it means that on the soul making approach God must bear at least some partial responsibility for the existence of evil found within the world. If a compatibilist, rather than libertarian, view of freedom is adopted, then this has the consequence that God, being omnipotent, logically could have created a world with no evil and suffering. However, if he were to have done so then this would lose the opportunity for humans to engage in this process of soul making. On this approach, rather than freedom itself being seen as intrinsically valuable, what is valued is therefore the process of growth and development, or soul making, in which compatibilist free will plays a key role. It is growth and authenticity, as opposed to libertarian free will, that become the key focus and the source of the intrinsic value of the soul making process. This preliminary sketch of a compatibilist soul making approach will be unpacked and explored in more detail throughout the discussions in the rest of this work, beginning with a discussion of the key advantages of, and challenges for, this approach.

Advantages of this Approach

The main focus of this compatibilist soul making approach is on the purpose, as opposed to the origin, of evil. Unlike in the Augustinian theodicy, this means that the world is not seen as having been created perfect and then having gone wrong. In my opinion, this is a significant strength of this approach, as it avoids the difficulties of trying to explain

how a perfect world logically could then go wrong. This focus on the purpose of evil and suffering also means that the approach can be seen to be more optimistic than other approaches, potentially providing a source of hope. Without this ultimate purpose, the world could seem fundamentally purposeless and chaotic, whereas this approach provides a positive and purposeful overall framework that all facets of the human experience, both positive and negative, can then be seen to sit within. In this way, it adds an element of philosophical anthropology to the soul making approach, providing opportunities for reflection on the essence of human nature and the human condition, and positioning our human experiences within an optimistic and forward looking overall framework. It gives a framework for discussion of our relationships, environment, and values, through a focus on exploring what it means to authentically identify with our desires.

This shift towards a view of freedom that does not depend on a person having alternate possibilities, but instead focuses on issues around authenticity, seems to have the potential to help the soul making approach address some of its major criticisms. In this way, it is not only possible to reformulate the soul making approach to make it fit with compatibilism, doing so actually strengthens the approach considerably by providing a response to some of the major criticisms of Hick's account. For example, this compatibilist approach can be seen to provide a clearer sense of what freedom is and why it should be valued than the incompatibilist formulation is able to provide. Libertarian freedom is very difficult to define, and while libertarians often criticise compatibilist freedom as not being genuine freedom, as highlighted in the first chapter of this work they are "notoriously bad" (Strawson, 1986, p.32) at providing a positive account of what libertarian freedom actually consists of. In this compatibilist approach, the focus shifts away from choice and alternate possibilities being the defining feature of freedom; freedom is associated with whether we actively identify with our desires, and become responsible for them, rather than whether we could have done otherwise or whether we are able to control what it is we desire in the first place.

This compatibilist soul making approach can also be seen to provide a clearer sense of what is actually happening in the process of soul making and why that process should be valued. One of the most challenging criticisms for any soul making approach to defend itself against is the criticism that there is nothing intrinsically valuable about the process of soul making, and that God could have simply created humans already in a state of perfection. However, if God created humans in a readymade

state of perfection then we would lose the opportunity for development of our wills and our characters in such a way that we identify authentically with our desires to perform good actions. In this way, encountering evil and suffering in the world facilitates soul making because it provides more opportunities to develop moral virtues, not simply because it provides more opportunities to make choices. Clearly there is a close connection between these two, but the compatibilist soul making approach seems to helpfully shift the focus more explicitly onto the increased opportunities for growth and development connected to how we see the world and what we value.

The final key advantage of the compatibilist soul making approach is that I believe that it makes the commitment to universalism that underpin this approach more coherent and plausible. The commitment to both libertarian freedom and universal salvation found in Hick causes tension within his approach, as it stresses the importance of alternate possibilities yet is then committed to the single inevitable outcome of universal salvation. In the compatibilist soul making approach this tension is avoided. If free will and determinism are seen as compatible, and if alternate possibilities are not seen to be what matters for free will, then there ultimately being a single determined outcome becomes far less problematic than it is for approaches that adopt a libertarian conception of freedom. The compatibilist soul making approach can therefore be seen as an improvement on its incompatibilist counterpart as it reduces the tensions between the concepts of evil, universal salvation and free will.

Challenges for this approach

Although the compatibilist soul making approach helps to address some of the tensions within, and criticisms of, the traditional soul making approach, there are three major challenges facing this particular soul making approach that still remain.

The first challenge is that this compatibilist soul making approach seems to put the ultimate responsibility for evil on God. On the compatibilist view there is no logical contradiction in God creating a world where humans only ever chose to do good. However, it is argued that God is justified in not doing so because such a world would not contain the opportunities for moral growth and development needed for soul making. If this approach is adopted there therefore needs to be a strong justification for God intentionally allowing the world to contain evil, and there needs to be a purpose for evil. This is challenging because it suggests that

the ultimate responsibility for evil must rest at least in part with God rather than being able to be blamed entirely on humans and their misuse of free will. In this way, because this approach seems to increase God's responsibility for allowing evil, it means that the justification for his allowing evil arguably needs to be that much stronger than in approaches where the responsibility for evil is seen to rest solely with humans. While this increased divine responsibility for allowing evil can be viewed as an objection to this approach, in my view it can actually be seen as a strength. It means that the soul making approach seems able to protect divine sovereignty and omnipotence in a way that approaches such as the Augustinian theodicy struggle to achieve.

The second challenge is that this approach raises the question of whether the process of soul making is ultimately worth the cost. This is a key problem facing any justification of evil and suffering based on its connection to a greater good, be that freedom or soul making, as there are those who will understandably maintain that this good is not worth the cost and that it would have been better for God to not create the world at all than to create a world containing the evil and suffering we see and experience in this world. One way in which this challenge can potentially be addressed is if there is seen to be the opportunity for the continuation of the soul making process beyond death. In this case, our lives become just one part of our overall human experience, which means that our current perspective is extremely limited and suggests that we are not in a position to make an effective judgement as to whether the good of soul making really is worth the cost. If the process of soul making is ultimately successful for all this can also be seen to ease this concern as it again places our experience of evil and suffering on earth within a wider and ultimately positive overall framework and human experience. However, this raises the third challenge, that this approach is reliant on the contentious concepts of life after death and universal salvation. Just as in the incompatibilist formulation, a compatibilist soul making approach still relies heavily on the concepts of life after death and universal salvation, two concepts which will be explored further in the next two chapters of this work.

4.5. Conclusion

The soul making approach has a number of benefits when compared to the Augustinian theodicy and Free Will Defence. Its developmental focus provides a more optimistic and forward looking overall framework, and

the move away from the Augustinian view of the world as being initially perfect means that the soul making approach does not face the same struggle of trying to explain how a perfect world could go wrong. However, in Hick's formulation it still remains focused on libertarian freedom, and this commitment to libertarian free will seems to create a number of issues and internal inconsistencies in Hick's account.

Formulating a compatibilist version of the soul making approach builds on the strengths of the soul making approach to also offer a response to the problem of evil that is not based on an incompatibilist understanding of freedom. This is significant because it offers the compatibilist a possible response to the problem of evil and, by doing so, increases the appeal of compatibilism. In this way, a soul making approach that embraces a compatibilist conception of freedom has the potential to provide an alternative to traditional incompatibilist approaches, increasing the appeal of compatibilism by helping to counter the concern that a "compatibilist account of freedom renders the problem of evil intractable for theism" (Trakakis, 2007a, p.270). But beyond this, a compatibilist version of the soul making approach not only offers a possible response to the problem of evil for the compatibilist, it actually offers a response that is arguably in many ways stronger than these original incompatibilist responses that it is replacing. However, the soul making approach, in both its compatibilist and incompatibilist forms, relies heavily on the concept of life after death and in fact beyond that on the concept of universal salvation, both of which are controversial concepts. The philosophical coherence of these two concepts will therefore be explored in more depth in the following chapters.

CHAPTER FIVE

SOUL MAKING AND LIFE AFTER DEATH

Soul-making approaches to theodicy root the justification for the existence of evil in the capacity of evil and suffering to lead to moral growth and development. Yet our experience suggests that this process of soul making is not successfully completed for many, if indeed any, people during their lives. For Hick, this incompleteness at death highlights that there must be an afterlife where we finish this process of development (2010, p.336). On this view, rooting an explanation for evil in growth and development is only a viable approach if there is an afterlife where this process of development can be completed. However, life after death is an extremely controversial concept, and the apparent reliance on this concept is often seen as one of the most problematic and contentious elements of the soul making approach. Part of the controversy stems from questions concerning the empirical evidence, or lack of such evidence, for life after death. Another aspect of the controversy stems from questions about whether the concept of life after death is a coherent concept, and, in line with the methodological approach outline at the start of this work, it is this issue of philosophical coherence that will be the focus of this discussion.

In this chapter I will therefore focus on exploring the controversies surrounding the concept of life after death, focusing not on the question of whether there is empirical evidence for life after death but on whether the concept of life after death is philosophically coherent. One of the biggest challenges to the coherence of the life after death, and therefore the coherence of idea of the soul making process continuing after death, relates to personal identity and to whether a person existing after death would in any meaningful sense be the same person as the person before death. This assumption of the possibility of a person being the same person before and after death raises a number of metaphysical issues relating to the persistence of personal identity beyond death, and therefore more widely about the persistence of personal identity over time. It is particularly pertinent for soul making theodicies because these generally seem to rely on the same person who dies being able to continue with the process of growth and development that they began before their

death. This chapter will therefore explore the question of whether it is logically possible that personal identity continues beyond death, beginning with a discussion of possible criteria for establishing the persistence of personal identity over time and then looking more specifically at the issues relating to the continuity of personal identity beyond death as opposed to simply over time. This discussion will explore first bodily continuity based approaches and then psychological continuity based approaches. It will then propose a view of continuity of personal identity based on continuity of desires and volitions, which will draw on the psychological continuity approach, and which is rooted in the view of personhood proposed by Frankfurt (1971) and discussed in chapter one of this work.

These discussions have important implications for any soul making approach, as the centrality of the afterlife in this approach is often regarded as one of its most contentious aspects. If concerns such as those surrounding the possibility of personal identity continuing beyond death can be addressed then this would help to address one of the major criticisms of the soul making approach, potentially increasing the appeal of this type of theodicy as a response to the problem of evil.

5.1. The Role of Life After Death in Soul Making Approaches

Soul-making approaches to theodicy such as Hick's rely heavily on the concept of life after death, yet this concept is highly controversial. One of the biggest philosophical challenges to the coherence of the concept of life after death comes from issues relating to the continuity of personal identity, as the concept of life after death assumes that the person before death and the person after death are in some important sense the same person. This issue is particularly pertinent for Hick's soul making approach, which seems to rely on the same person who dies then being able to continue with their process of soul making after their death.

The possibility of a person being the same person before and after death raises a number of metaphysical issues relating to the persistence of personal identity beyond death, and therefore more fundamentally about the persistence of personal identity over time. It also raises epistemological questions about how we could know whether someone is the same person over time or indeed beyond death. In our everyday lives, we often assume continuation of our personal identity over time; for example, everyday activities such as paying into pension plans assume an

underlying belief in the continuation of our personal identity over time as there is an assumption that it is the same person who will experience the retirement as who pays into the pension. Similarly, discussions of life after death seem to assume that the person after death is, in some meaningful sense, the same person as the person before death. However, it is not clear whether there are coherent criteria for establishing continuity of personal identity which would justify these types of assumptions. Suggested criteria for establishing continuity of personal identity over time tend to focus on bodily continuity, psychological continuity, or a combination of the two.

Personal Identity and Bodily Continuity

The bodily continuity approach argues that when we think of objects we instinctively think that the criterion for persistence of identity over time is physical continuity, and that we should apply the same view to persons. The assumption that persistence of personal identity consists in bodily continuity is one which we commonly make in our everyday lives; for example, “we make it when we identify others on the basis of appearance, or observed movements, or fingerprints” (Perry, 1975, p.5). In this way, the bodily continuity approach has practical appeal in that it seems to be the criterion that we do in fact use, apparently successfully, every day. Associating continuity of personal identity with bodily continuity may seem intuitive, but one problem with this approach is that there are examples of living things which continue to exist even though their physical bodies undergo massive physical changes. Parfit for example observes that “a Camberwell Beauty is first an egg, then a caterpillar, then a chrysalis, then a butterfly” (1987, p.203), yet despite the dramatic physical changes experienced by this organism many would argue it still retains continuity of identity. This raises the question of just how much physical change a body could undergo before there would be considered to be no bodily continuity.

Any bodily continuity based account therefore needs to take into account the fact that the body can undergo significant changes yet remain the same body. As Schlossberger suggests, there seems a sense in which we say that “a chunky middle-aged accountant in 1986 is the same person as a bald, squealing infant in 1936” (1992, p.21) despite the obvious physical differences between the two. The discussion amongst bodily continuity theorists therefore centres on what makes a person numerically rather than qualitatively identical to a later person. It is generally accepted that our bodies

can undergo major changes, such as organ transplants, losing limbs, or even simply growing by several feet, yet still remain the same body. If a person can survive some change without losing identity, then this raises the question of how much change a person could undergo yet still remain the same person. A classic example often used to discuss the relationship between identity and change is that of the Ship of Theseus (see for example Noonan, 2003). In this example, Theseus gradually replaces all of the planks of wood that make up his ship as they need repairing, until eventually none of the original parts of the ship remain. The question that this example raises is whether the ship has just changed a great deal but remained the same ship, or whether it is no longer the same ship. Many people argue that the fact that the parts of the ship are replaced so gradually means that identity can be preserved. However, if it is claimed that despite the replacement parts the ship is still the same ship, just a refurbished version, then this raises a number of issues, particularly if the example is extended. Noonan (2003) for example extends the example so that a rival of Theseus has kept the original planks of wood as they are replaced, and then puts them together in the same order to create a second ship, and “the two ships are now floating side by side on the water and an argument is raging (via megaphone) between Theseus and the plank hoarder about which ship is the original ship of Theseus” (2003, p.129).

The original ship of Theseus example raises the question of whether identity can survive the gradual replacement of all parts. The extended example, where the original planks of wood from Theseus’ ship are stored and eventually put together to form a new ship, complicates this further, as it questions whether the fact that the second ship is constituted by the physical material and structure of the original ship is enough to say that takes on the identity of the original ship. If the first ship is regarded as the original ship, despite the replacement of all parts, then it suggests that identity can survive the replacement of all physical parts. And if the second ship is not regarded as being the original ship despite being made of the original physical materials, then it suggests that identity consists of more than just having the same physical parts. Both of these conclusions have important consequences for the bodily continuity theory of personal identity. If identity can survive complete replacement of all physical parts, then it is difficult to see how continuity of personal identity can be seen to consist solely of bodily continuity. Similarly, if identity consists of more than just having the same physical parts then it is difficult to see how continuity of personal identity can be seen to consist solely of bodily continuity.

It can be argued that Theseus' ship is able to survive the replacement of all of its parts without losing its identity because this process happens gradually. However, a more dramatic fictional example from Kafka's *Metamorphosis* (2007) can be used to question whether identity can survive a more radical and rapid physical transformation. In this example the main character, Gregor, wakes up one morning as a giant beetle. Despite this physical transformation, in the story Gregor continues to be the same person. If it is accepted that Gregor is the same person despite no longer having his human body, then this undermines the bodily continuity approach; if it is accepted that Gregor can be the same person despite having a beetle body, then it seems that personal identity cannot be identified, or at least solely identified, with bodily continuity.

This difficulty was also highlighted by Locke in his example of the prince and the cobbler. In this example the soul and consciousness of a prince enters the body of a cobbler, with Locke arguing that "should the soul of a prince, carrying with it the consciousness of the prince's past life, enter and inform the body of a cobbler, as soon as deserted by his own soul, every one sees he would be the same person with the prince, accountable only for the prince's actions: but who would say it was the same man?" (Locke, [1690] 1997, p.306). For Locke, this example shows that bodily continuity cannot be the criterion for continuity of personal identity. It also highlights an important distinction between being the same man and being the same person, with Locke accepting that bodily continuity can be used as the criterion for what it means for someone to be the same man as they were previously, but rejecting the use of bodily continuity as the criterion for what it means to be the same person. This distinction between man and person is based on Locke's underlying view of a person as a "thinking, intelligent being that has reason and reflection and can consider itself as itself" ([1690] 1997, p.302). For Locke this reflective self-awareness, or consciousness, is key to personhood, and it therefore follows unsurprisingly that continuity of consciousness, rather than continuity of physical body, is what Locke views as important in the persistence of a person over time. This psychological continuity based approach will be the subject of the next part of this discussion.

Personal Identity and Psychological Continuity

Given the difficulties raised by bodily continuity approaches, an alternative option is to associate continuity of personal identity with psychological rather than bodily continuity. As previously highlighted, the

psychological continuity approach has been heavily influenced by Locke, who argued that the criterion of personal identity over time is sameness of consciousness. He went as far as to comment that if someone had just their little finger cut off, “upon separation of this little finger, should this consciousness go along with the little finger, and leave the rest of the body, ‘tis evident the little finger would be the person, the same person; and self then would have nothing to do with the rest of the body” (1997, p.307).

An advantage of the psychological continuity approach is that it seems better able than the bodily continuity approach to deal with imaginary cases such as teletransportation. Teletransportation cases seem to involve creating a replica of a certain body in a different physical location, rather than movement of the same body from one physical location to another. In this way, teletransportation cases do not seem to allow for bodily continuity. However, in science fiction shows such as *Star Trek* where such transportation technology is frequently employed, it is clear that the intention is that it is the same character, the same person, before and after the teletransportation. If continuity of personal identity is based on psychological continuity rather than bodily continuity, then it would be logically possible for a person to undergo teletransportation yet still preserve their identity and remain the same person.

Basing continuity of personal identity on psychological continuity in this way avoids many of the problems associated with bodily continuity based accounts. However, basing personal identity over time on psychological criteria such as consciousness has itself faced major criticism; notably from Ayer (1963) and Reid. Reid’s brave officer paradox ([1785] 2006) presents the example of a retired General who, while he remembers his actions as a brave officer, doesn’t remember being flogged as a schoolboy. On Locke’s approach, the retired General would be the same person as the brave officer because he remembers performing the brave acts. Similarly, the brave officer would be the same person as the schoolboy, as he remembers being flogged. However, because he doesn’t remember being flogged the retired General is not the same person as the schoolboy, so Locke’s approach leads to the illogical consequence that “the General is, and at the same time is not, the same person with him who was flogged at school” (Reid, 2006, p.249).

Reid’s criticism seems to make a mistaken assumption that Locke’s account is based on the narrower criterion of continuity of memory, rather than on the wider criterion of continuity of consciousness. While memory could be regarded as part of psychological continuity, it seems that

psychological continuity can be interpreted much more broadly. There are a number of broader ways in which psychological continuity could be defined. Parfit, for example, suggests that it is made up of overlapping chains of psychological connectedness which consist of a number of psychological connections including memories, intentions, beliefs, goals, desires, etc. (1987, p.207). If psychological continuity is regarded as consisting of more than just continuity of memory then it seems that the main objection raised by Reid is overcome.

5.2. Life After Death: Continuity of Personal Identity Beyond Death

The soul making theodicy is often seen to require not only that personal identity continue over time, but also that personal identity continue beyond death. If the process of soul making needs to be able to continue after death then it is crucial that the same person who begins the soul making process before death continues that process after death. In addition to the challenges relating to the continuity of personal identity over time that have already been highlighted, this idea of personal identity continuing beyond death raises a number of additional challenges, particularly if personal identity is associated with bodily continuity.

If continuity of personal identity is seen as consisting in bodily continuity then this seems to require bodily rather than solely spiritual resurrection. This is problematic because if the body was resurrected in the same form as it was at death then bodies are often frail, injured or old when they die. However, if the body was resurrected in a dramatically different form then it questions in what sense it is the same body. This issue was particularly discussed in the Patristic period, not least because “in Rome during this period, martyred Christians were being eaten by lions” (Martin and Barresi, 2003, p.12) which complicated the idea of how the same body that dies could be resurrected in a way that retained personal identity. Even if some kind of bodily resurrection were accepted, it is still not clear that this would be sufficient to establish bodily continuity between a pre-death and post-death body. There are many occasions where human bodies undergo dramatic changes, or indeed lose parts yet seem to retain continuity of identity; as Quinn comments, “surely in this world the same person remains after a limb is amputated or a tooth pulled and his body is no longer intact but is still a human body” (1978, p.110). However, the physical transformation required by the concept of resurrection seems much more radical than these types of changes. It therefore seems

difficult to see how a physical body on earth could be seen to be continuous with a post-resurrection body.

Another challenge raised by the idea of personal identity continuing beyond death, as opposed to simply over time, is the questions it raises relating to the possibility of “intermittent existence” (Merricks, 1998, p.106). Again, this is particularly problematic if continuity of personal identity is associated with bodily continuity, as biological death seems to constitute “an interruption of bodily continuity, whether or not the interruption is temporary in theories of bodily resurrection, or permanent in theories of disembodied existence” (Johnson, 1997, p.13). This idea, of there being a gap between the death and the resurrection of the body, raises the question of whether it is possible for personal identity to continue despite temporal gaps. For example, if we extend the story of Kafka’s *Metamorphosis* (2007) so that rather than dying Gregor changed back from a beetle into being a human again, then this raises the question of whether he would return to being the same person he was initially, of whether intermittent existence is possible. There are some, such as Reid, who reject the possibility of interrupted identity, arguing that “continued uninterrupted existence is necessarily implied in identity” (in Perry, 1975, p.109). However, it is not clear that this is necessarily the case. One response to this issue is to accept that there is a temporal gap in identity before and after death, but to deny the claim that this means that continuity of that identity is impossible. Davis (1986) for example highlights instances such as rivers which run dry and then begin again, or wars where there are long periods when no-one is fighting, as well as highlighting that we have no problem with the concept that “two different episodes of Sesame Street are episodes of one and the same television program, despite being separated by a gap of, say, a whole day” (1986, p.336). If it is possible for identity to continue despite temporal gaps, then it seems that the issue of life after death involving intermittent existence is not as problematic as it may seem.

An alternative response to the issue of interrupted identity is to deny that resurrection involves a gap between death and resurrection at all, and by doing so avoid the difficulty of identity continuing despite a temporal gap. Some views of life after death maintain that when the body dies the person continues as a disembodied soul until eventually the body is reunited with the soul. On this view death is not an interruption to existence, so it avoids the problems associated with intermittent existence. Some find this view problematic because of the metaphysical dualism inherent within it, but for those who accept dualism then this position provides a

possible conceptualisation of how personal identity could continue after death without any form of temporal gap in that identity. This view of life after death also assumes that identity can continue despite temporary disembodiment, which requires that continuity of personal identity consist in psychological continuity rather than bodily continuity.

In *Death and Eternal life* (1985) Hick does attempt to demonstrate the logical possibility of bodily resurrection by proposing the “replica theory”. It should be noted that Hick does not claim that the replica theory is actually what happens after death, just that it is a potential explanation that supports the logical possibility of bodily resurrection. According to this view, after death there is “divine creation in another space of an exact psycho-physical ‘replica’ of the deceased person” (1985, p.279). The replica would have exactly the same body, memories and personality as the deceased person, which Hick argues is sufficient to constitute continuity of identity. To support this argument, Hick provides the example of a person who vanishes during a meeting in London, and “at the next moment an exact ‘replica’ of him suddenly and inexplicably appears at a similar meeting in New York” (1985, p.280). Hick acknowledges that this is “factually impossible” (1985, p.280), but argues that there is nothing that stops it from being a logically possible series of events. One issue with the replica theory is that it does not provide a clear explanation of how a psycho-physical replica actually meets the demand for bodily continuity if this is regarded as a criterion for continuity of personal identity. The issues around psychological continuity existence raised by this example seem resolvable, but it seems more problematic to claim that the replica body could be held to have bodily continuity with the original body. To illustrate this difficulty, Van Inwagen gives the example of a manuscript written by St. Augustine which is destroyed by fire and then recreated by God. He comments that “God certainly might have created a perfect duplicate of the original manuscript, but it would not be that one ... it would never have known the impress of his hand; it would not have been a part of the furniture of the world when he was alive; and so on” (1978, p.117). In this way, although the replica theory aims to support the logical coherence of bodily resurrection, it is far from clear that it is successful in achieving this aim.

Because of these difficulties, Van Inwagen suggests an alternative approach called the “Simulacra Model”, where “at the moment of each man’s death God removes his corpse and replaces it with a simulacrum, which is what is burned or rots” (1978, p.121). Through this model, Van Inwagen attempts to provide a view of life after death that is compatible

with bodily resurrection while also escaping some of the practical concerns of such an approach such as decomposition of physical bodies after death. However, his suggestion seems to me to create far more issues than it resolves. For example, one key problem with this approach is that it implicates God in carrying out mass deception, which seems incompatible with the idea of a benevolent God. Van Inwagen himself recognises this issue, but maintains that despite these kind of objections his approach is successful in achieving its limited aim of simply establishing the logical possibility of continued identity after death. While this account may be logically possible, it still faces a fundamental problem. It tries to escape practical difficulties such as those around decomposition, but by doing so it simply shifts attention to a slightly different set of practical difficulties such as those around what happens to bodies between death and the ultimate resurrection when they will be restored.

Hick and Van Inwagen focus on attempting to show that it is logically possible that there be a post-resurrection body which continues in some way from the pre-death body. However, if life after death is seen as consisting of psychological continuity in the form of disembodied survival of some kind, rather than consisting of bodily resurrection, then it seems that there is no need to resort to these highly controversial and implausible possible explanations. If life after death is seen as consisting of disembodied survival, then this avoids many of the issues raised by theories of bodily resurrection; it avoids difficulties such as whether the resurrected body is genuinely continuous with the pre-death body. In this way, a view of life after death based on disembodied survival, with continuity of identity being maintained through psychological continuity, has a number of advantages over a view based on bodily resurrection. However, it does raise an important issue about what kind of existence disembodied existence after death could possibly consist of, and whether such a concept is logically coherent. To many, the idea of disembodied existence seems unintelligible, as it would be impossible, for example, to have sense experiences without there being a physical body to have those experiences. However, one possible interpretation of what kind of existence disembodied survival could consist of comes from H.H. Price (1953). Price suggests that after death the person goes on to an "image world" or dream like world, where the disembodied person can continue to have experiences. This kind of world would be based on memories and mental states; in Price's words "a world of mental images" based on memories of previous physical existence. This view sees life after death as a similar kind of existence to being asleep and dreaming and is based around our

memories and desires. This kind of world would allow for continuity of personal identity, as the person's experiences after death are linked to the same person's experiences before death in a way which preserves personal identity.

In *Death and Eternal Life* (1985), Hick also discusses what kind of existence the afterlife might consist of. In response to Price's view, he argues that it would seem impossible for an afterlife to reflect all of the desires of all people, as these would be likely to conflict. However, he argues that it is possible to imagine an afterlife where the memories and desires of all people are somehow "pooled" to create a common environment, and where each "would contribute to the world in which they all live, though this would not be exclusively based upon any one individual's memories or express exclusively as any one individuals' wishes" (1985, p.271). Hick's own view of the nature of the afterlife appears influenced by his increasingly pluralistic philosophical position, most particularly in terms of the influence of concepts such as reincarnation. He suggests that our life on earth might simply be the first of a "series of limited phases of existence" (1985, p.408), before suggesting that each of these phases of existence could potentially be lived in a new world, providing new opportunities for soul making. Ideas such as disembodied survival in a world based on memories and desires, or a series of phases of existence in different worlds, may seem too different from our existence in this world to be counted as continued existence. However, it is not clear that these are really so dramatically different that they could not count as continued existence. Our existence in this world is based around our being persons with beliefs and desires, having the capacity for self-awareness, and having things which matter to us. None of these elements seems to necessarily require embodiment. There is also an interesting connection between these views and the process of soul making, as, for example, the kind of world that Price suggests is a world where desires that have been unsatisfied in a person's life could play an important role in their life after death. While accounts such as Price's and Hick's each raise their own issues, they do at least suggest ways in which life could continue after death in a way which is compatible with the soul making process being able to continue after death.

5.3. Soul Making Beyond Death

The most convincing approaches to continuity of personal identity over time, and particularly beyond death, seem to come from psychological continuity rather than bodily continuity based accounts. A particularly

strong variation of the psychological continuity based approach can be created by rooting the criteria for persistence of personal identity over time in Frankfurt's ideas on what it means to be a person. Frankfurt's writings on personhood (e.g. 1971, 1988) are focused on the issue of what it is to be a person, rather than on issues relating to the persistence of personal identity over time. However, the criteria for personhood suggested by Frankfurt arguably provide an excellent basis for developing a psychological continuity based approach to the issues relating to persistence of personal identity over time, and to the issues relating to persistence of personal identity beyond death.

Frankfurt defines personhood in terms of the structure of the will. His hierarchical model of the will (1971) is based on a distinction between first and second order desires, and between desires and volitions. For Frankfurt, persons have not only first and second order desires but also have second order volitions, which are a desire for a certain desire to be your will. For Frankfurt, another important element of his view is that we must actively identify with our desires. This is important to Frankfurt because in order to act freely it is not enough to simply experience a desire; instead we must identify with that desire, and it is that identification with our desires which makes us responsible for them.

From this starting point, it is possible to construct a view of the persistence of personal identity over time which is rooted in some kind of continuity, or connectedness, of these desires, volitions, and what we identify with, over time. This view shares a number of similarities with the view of David Lewis (1983) that what matters in survival is that "my present experiences, thoughts, beliefs, desires, and traits of character should have appropriate future successors" (1983, p.55). On both of these views it is mental connectedness which forms the basis for continuity of personal identity over time. The advantage of the Frankfurt inspired approach is that it focuses on continuity of higher order desires and of what we identify with. In this way, it is continuity of not simply first order desires, but of deeper elements of what we really care about.

In some ways, this approach could be seen to draw on elements of other existing approaches to the issue of personal identity, despite there also being areas of significant difference with these accounts. For example, Lynne Rudder Baker (2000, 2002, 2007) proposes a "constitution view" of personal identity where the key element in continuity of identity is continuity of first person perspective. According to Baker

persons are constituted by bodies but are not identical to the bodies which constitute them. Rather, the relationship between persons and their bodies is regarded as similar to the relationship between a statue and the metal it is made from, persons are constituted by their bodies without their identity consisting of their bodies, just as “statues are constituted by pieces of bronze, say, without being identical to the pieces of bronze that constitute them” (2002, p.592). Instead of focusing on bodily continuity as the key criterion for continuity of personal identity, Baker instead focuses on continuity of first person perspective. This emphasis means that a person “could survive a complete change of body, including the brain” (Baker, 2000, p.133), just as long as there was continuity of first person perspective. This type of approach seems far more promising in terms of formulating a coherent account of how personal identity, and by extension soul making, could potentially continue beyond death.

A key advantage of basing continuity of personal identity on connectedness of desires and volitions, and our identification with those desires, is that it allows for change without loss of personal identity. Our desires and volitions are not static; instead they are constantly evolving and changing. Yet there are still connections between them. In many ways they are like the overlapping strands of fibre which make up a rope, or the links which make up a chain; although each strand or link is connected to those around it, there is no constant continuous part which runs throughout the entire rope or chain. In the same way, we can regard our psychological states as being connected to some others, but not all others, which allows our psychological states to change and evolve over time without this damaging continuity of personal identity. This allows for significant and radical changes in our character over time, as long as the connection is not completely broken. This capacity for change without loss of personal identity is particularly important for soul-making approaches to theodicy, where the whole emphasis is on the dynamic process of change and development which persons go through both before and after death. For Hick, it is crucial that the same person exist before and after death, but it is just as crucial that the afterlife is a personal afterlife where the same person who lived and died is able to continue with their process of moral growth and development. By basing continuity of personal identity on connectedness in what we care about it allows for this evolution and growth, both during life and during the afterlife, as the person after death is able to continue developing, changing, and continuing with the process of soul making.

5.4. Soul Making Without Life After Death?

For Hick, the concept of life after death is central to his soul making approach to theodicy. He argues explicitly that “if there is any eventual resolution of the interplay between good and evil, any decisive bringing of good out of evil, it must lie beyond this world and beyond the enigma of death” (Hick, 2010, p.339). However, the fact that the concept of life after death is central to Hick’s account of soul making does not automatically mean that they are a necessary feature of any account of soul making. If it is possible to formulate a coherent version of the soul making approach which does not require the existence of life after death, then this could make it a viable option even for those who reject the existence of life after death.

According to Hick, the successful completion of soul making after death is central because it helps to set the suffering endured on earth “in a larger and therefore different context in which there is hope of good beyond the tragedy” (1968, p.542). There is widespread acceptance of this assumption that life after death is a necessary feature of the soul making approach; for example, Geivett argues that “an afterlife for all human individuals is a non-negotiable postulate of the soul-making theodicy” (1993, p.205). This assertion is clearly applicable to Hick’s particular formulation of the soul making approach with its crucial role given to life after death, and also fits with Hick’s wider view that there is “no theodicy without eschatology” (2007, p.437). However, it is not at all clear that just because life after death is a “non-negotiable” aspect of Hick’s approach that it must necessarily be a non-negotiable aspect of any soul making approach in the way that Geivett suggests.

The claim that soul making requires an afterlife often rests on the assumption that the process of soul making must be successfully completed in order for the approach to be coherent, and that the afterlife is therefore necessary to provide the opportunity for this process to be completed. However, this suggests that soul making is only valuable if the process is completed entirely successfully by everyone involved, and this seems unlike other processes of growth and development such as, for example, education. Soul making is sometimes presented as a process analogous to education, yet education is a process that many people would regard as having value for the growth and development that occurs during the process itself, not solely because of any final end it may be working towards. We do not judge the value of education purely on performance in final academic examinations – education is seen as having

other benefits such as the development of skills and dispositions. In education, there is also no expectation of ultimate perfection at the end of the process; we would not argue that education has failed if a student only achieved a mark of 60% in their final examination. If the process of soul making is regarded as similar to a process of education, then growth and improvement, rather than attaining ultimate perfection, become the aspiration. This means that there is much more of a focus on the intrinsic value of the process of growth and development, even if that process of soul making never has the opportunity to be wholly completed in an afterlife. In this way, without reference to an afterlife then the focus turns more sharply to the underlying idea that without evil and suffering in the world it would be impossible to develop qualities such as courage, resilience and empathy.

There have been very few attempts to defend an approach to theodicy that does not rely on the existence of life after death. One of the few attempts to do so can be found in Swinburne's *The Existence of God* (1979) and *Is there a God?* (1996). Even though Swinburne acknowledges that he himself believes that there is in fact life after death, he attempts to put forward a theodicy which does not rely on this element. In his own words, "while believing that God does provide at any rate for many humans such life after death, I have expounded a theodicy without relying on this assumption" (1996, p.113). The arguments proposed by Swinburne are considered by some to be "the only serious attempt in the recent literature to resist the predominant view about the necessity of the afterlife in theodicy" (Simpson, 2008, p.219).

Swinburne's approach is based on the idea that there are some goods, such as compassion, that can only exist if evil and suffering also exist. He argues that "a world with some pain and some compassion is at least as good as a world with no pain and so no compassion. For it is good to have a deep concern for others; and the concern can be a deep and serious one only if things are bad with the sufferer" (1979, p.240). His afterlife-free approach to theodicy also focuses on the concepts of responsibility and of "being of use" (1996, p.106). The focus on responsibility centres on the claim that if God continually intervened to prevent bad decisions and actions from having negative effects, then this would significantly undermine the idea of taking responsibility for the consequences of our decisions and actions. In this way, the existence of evil and suffering is a necessary feature of a world that enables true responsibility. The second key element of Swinburne's account is the concept of being of use, and on the idea that evil and suffering are justified because of the contribution

they make to making our “lives valuable, of great use to ourselves and each other” (1996, p.106). On this view, where the existence of evil makes it possible that there be greater goods, then the person suffering the evil has played an important role by being useful in helping to bring about those greater goods.

Swinburne shows that it is possible to develop an approach to theodicy that does not rely on the concept of life after death. However, his approach has been the subject of substantial criticism, in particular around the issue of whether God is morally justified in allowing some people to suffer in order to benefit others. There seem to be strongly “utilitarian undertones” (Simpson, 2008, p.227) to Swinburne’s approach which some find unsettling. For example, D.Z. Phillips (2004) is highly critical of the idea of God allowing some people to suffer in order to benefit others, arguing that it suggests that people have instrumental rather than intrinsic value, and that attempting “to rescue sufferings from degradation by employing cost-benefit analysis, is like rescuing a prostitute from degradation by telling her to charge higher fees” (2004, p.71). Swinburne’s response to this criticism is based on his view of the particular relationship between God and humans, and in particular the ideas that “God as the author of our being would have rights over use that we do not have over our fellow humans” (1979, p.257). He employs the analogy of the relationship between parents and their children, arguing that a parent has different rights and responsibilities regarding their own child than they do regarding a stranger, and arguing that “to allow someone to suffer for our own good or the good of someone else, one has to stand in some kind of parental relationship towards him” (1979, p.257). On this view, while people do not generally have the right to allow people to suffer in order to benefit others, the special nature of the relationship between God and humans is such that it does allow for this. He also argues that evil and suffering do not only benefit other people, but actually in some way benefit the person who is themselves suffering, because it enables the person suffering to experience the good of being of use.

The suggested good of “being of use” is a controversial concept, but it is an important element of Swinburne’s argument that his approach to theodicy does not need to make reference to life after death. If people need to themselves benefit directly from the suffering they endure in order for it to be justified then there seem to be examples where this is not the case. This has encouraged a reliance on life after death as a possible explanation for why these cases are justified, as the afterlife offers some kind of compensation for the person experiencing suffering from

which only others, rather than them themselves, benefit. However, Swinburne's focus on the idea of being of use means that there are no examples of cases where a person suffering does not himself benefit, because he will always have experienced the good of being of use. In this way, the emphasis on being of use is one way in which Swinburne tries to reduce the need to incorporate life after death into theodicy.

Shifting the focus to the more immediate value of evil and suffering rather than a long-term final positive outcome of the process of soul making could actually help to avoid some of the traditional criticisms of soul making approaches. For example, one difficulty with soul making approaches that include reference to life after death is that they risk making the concept of life after death appear as if it is some kind of compensation for the sufferings endured during our lives. Jantzen (1984) for example is very critical of the idea of using life after death as any form of compensation for suffering. She argues that it "is shocking theodicy: it is like saying that I may beat my dog at will provided that I later give him a dish of his favourite liver chowder. What happens after death – no matter how welcome – does not make present evil good" (1984, p.40). This is also the concern expressed by the character Ivan in *The Brothers Karamazov* where he asks:

Imagine that you are creating a fabric of human destiny with the goal of making men happy at the end, giving them peace and rest at last, but that it was essential and inevitable to torture to death only one tiny creature – that baby beating its breast with its fist, for instance – and to found that edifice on its unavenged tears, would you consent to be the architect on those conditions?

(Dostoevsky, [1879] 1996, p.262)

This view expresses a major concern with soul making approaches to theodicy, which is the question of whether the outcome is worth the cost of the pain and suffering involved to achieve it. Hick does attempt to address this criticism, explicitly rejecting the view that life after death should be seen as direct compensation for suffering. However, a version of the soul making approach that does not include reference to life after death is potentially better able to avoid this criticism. In Hick's version of the soul making theodicy the suffering endured on earth is just a stage of a bigger journey towards a final destination, which raises the question of whether that final destination is worth the pain and cost of the journey to get there. But if an approach is adopted which rejects life after death then there is no "final destination", reducing the tension over whether the price paid to reach that destination is too high. In this way, removing

reference to the afterlife means that the approach does not rely on a later good to justify or counterbalance the existence of evil and suffering, but instead maintains that evil and suffering actually play a useful role in this life in terms of their contribution to moral development.

However, the downside of the shift away from an eventual positive outcome is that it sharpens the focus on our immediate situation, and on the question of whether the amount of evil and suffering in the world is justified. This concern applies just as much whether a theodicy includes reference to the afterlife or not; in fact Swinburne identifies this as “the crux” of the problem of evil, arguing that “it is not the fact of evil or the kinds of evil that are the real threat to theism: it is the quantity of evil – both the number of people (and animals) who suffer and the amount that they suffer” (1979, p.219). Yet this is a fundamental challenge for all approaches to the problem of evil, regardless of whether they make reference to soul making or not and regardless of whether they make reference to an afterlife or not. In this way, removing the reference to life after death from the soul making approach may not remove this concern, but it also does not make the approach any more susceptible to this criticism than it would be if the reference to life after death is retained.

Without life after death, the unequal and unfair distribution of evil and suffering that we see in the world around us also becomes significantly more problematic. Life after death provides the possibility of there being some kind of ultimate justice and greater fairness than seems to be the case in the world around us. However, without life after death, it is significantly more difficult for the soul making approach to address the objection that the unequal distribution of evil and suffering suggests a lack of fairness and justice in the world at an individual level that is difficult to reconcile with the existence of a benevolent God. While issues of justice and fairness are undoubtedly a significant challenge, it is questionable whether they are more of a challenge for the soul making approach than they are, for example, for either the Free Will Defence or the Augustinian theodicy. In these two approaches evil and suffering are the result of the human misuse of free will, which suggests that, where the suffering of one person is the result of the evil done by another, the suffering of the individual is justified by the appeal to the greater good of ensuring human free will. In this way, it seems that issues around justice and fairness at the individual level are problematic for all three of the mainstream responses to the problem of evil. Removing the concept of life after death from the soul making approach does not create this difficulty, but it does undeniably bring it into sharper focus.

5.5. Conclusion

The concept of life after death is central to soul making approaches to theodicy, yet is a controversial concept. One of the most contentious aspects of this concept is that it requires the possibility that personal identity could continue beyond death. This chapter has provided a response to some of the major objections to the continuity of personal identity beyond death, and by doing so aims to help give soul making approaches to theodicy greater credibility. This is significant because demonstrating the philosophical incoherence of the concept of life after death would deal a major blow to soul making approaches to theodicy, as the existence of an afterlife where the soul making process can be completed is usually regarded as an integral part of this type of approach. The question of whether there are satisfactory criteria of personal identity over time raises a large number of philosophical issues, so much so that Hume concluded that we should just accept that “questions concerning personal-identity can never possibly be decided” (in Perry, 1975, p.171). However, this discussion has sought to show that although the concept of personal identity continuing beyond death is extremely problematic, it is philosophically coherent. The close association between soul making and life after death should therefore not be seen as making it impossible to formulate a coherent compatibilist soul making based response to the problem of evil.

CHAPTER SIX

FREEDOM, HELL AND UNIVERSAL SALVATION

One significant difference between soul making approaches to theodicy and other approaches such as the Augustinian theodicy is that soul making approaches focus on the future rather than looking back towards the origins of evil. For example, Hick argues that “theodicy cannot be content to look to the past, seeking an explanation of evil in its origins, but must look towards the future, expecting a triumphant resolution in the eventual perfect fulfilment of God’s good purpose” (2010, p.340). This forward-looking focus found in soul making approaches means that the question of what happens after death becomes particularly significant. If the successful completion of the soul making process in the afterlife is regarded as a crucial part of the explanation for the suffering endured on earth, then this suggests that soul making theodicies would seem to require not only that there be life after death but also require the stronger claim that there is universal salvation.

However, universal salvation is an extremely controversial position. Some of the main objections to the association of the soul making theodicy with universal salvation are rooted in disagreement as to whether there is a biblical basis for universal salvation. For some, the link between the soul making approach to theodicy and universal salvation undermines the appeal of the soul making approach because it ties soul making to a belief in universal salvation when “it would probably be true to say that for most of Christian history the majority of Christians have thought that such a belief was outside the bounds of orthodoxy” (MacDonald, 2011, p.1). Consistent with the methodological approach outlined in the introduction to this work, detailed discussion of the biblical tensions surrounding universal salvation is outside of the scope of this chapter, which will instead focus on discussing the philosophical coherence of the concept of universal salvation. For the purposes of this chapter it will be assumed that although there is conflicting biblical evidence on the issue of universal salvation, the concept of hell is arguably equally problematic in this respect. It will therefore be assumed with MacDonald that, despite the controversy and disagreement, the central claims of Christianity are compatible with universalism and that it is

“plausible to suppose that theologically orthodox versions of universalism can exist” (2011, p.9).

This chapter will therefore focus on exploring two key philosophical objections to the concept of universal salvation and offering a response to each objection. Firstly, it will discuss the rejection of hell in universalist approaches, focusing on issues such as whether it is possible to see the rejection of hell as consistent with concepts such as justice, or whether the rejection of the existence of hell raises significant philosophical difficulties relating to punishment for sins and divine justice. Secondly, and most significantly for the discussion in this work, it will explore the objection that there is an irresolvable tension between universal salvation and free will. If it is determined that ultimately everyone will be reconciled to God, then this raises the question of whether people are free to reject God and, if not, whether people can truly be said to have free will. The centrality of universal salvation to the soul making approach, in both Hick’s approach and the proposed compatibilist version, means that arguably the success of the entire approach rests on there being a way to provide a coherent response to these challenges to universal salvation. This chapter will therefore explore whether adopting a compatibilist view of freedom, based on a rejection of the need for alternate possibilities for freedom, can help to diminish some of the issues surrounding the compatibility of universal salvation and free will. In this way, it will aim to explore whether there is, or needs to be, as much tension between the concepts of freedom, hell and universal salvation as is often claimed. If the tensions surrounding freedom, hell and universal salvation could be eased then this would help to address one of the major criticisms of the soul making approach to theodicy, helping to give soul making approaches greater philosophical credibility and increasing the appeal of this type of theodicy as a response to the problem of evil.

6.1. The Role of Universal Salvation in Soul Making Approaches to Theodicy

Soul making approaches attempt to give a sense of purpose to evil and suffering by positioning them within a positive wider process of growth and development. This does not mean that soul making approaches have to deny evil; it just means that “from the point of view of future completion it will not have been merely evil, for it will have been used in the creation of infinite good” (Hick, 2010, p.364). In this way, seeing evil and suffering as playing a positive role within the wider process of soul

making does not entail rejecting the existence of evil, but instead helps to give a different perspective on evil. However, if the purpose of evil is tied closely to the process of soul making then it seems important that the process of soul making be ultimately successful.

For Hick, the ultimate successful completion of the process of soul making is one of the main things that helps to justify the suffering and evil that people will endure during the process itself. For example, he comments that if an ultimate good is eventually attained then “nothing will finally have been sheerly and irredeemably evil” (2010, p.363). In this way, it seems that soul making approaches require that the process of soul making be successfully completed to help ensure that ultimately there will be “no personal life that is unperfected and no suffering that has not eventually become a phase in the fulfilment of God’s good purpose” (Hick, 2010, p.340). In Hick’s particular formulation of the soul making theodicy the successful completion of the process is achieved through universal salvation. Scott, for example, goes as far as to state that the “plausibility of Hick’s soul-making theodicy depends on the viability of the doctrine of universal salvation”, describing universal salvation as the “linchpin” of Hick’s entire approach (Scott, 2010, p.331). It is therefore important for Hick’s account that he is able to defend the coherence of the concept of universal salvation.

However, the issue of universal salvation has significance beyond simply the explicit role that it plays in Hick’s version of the soul making approach, as its acceptance or rejection has significance for any discussion of the problem of evil, particularly in relation to issues around free will and determinism. If determinism of any kind (including both hard determinism and compatibilism) is accepted, then any conceptual option other than either rejecting life after death or accepting universal salvation seems extremely problematic. In particular, any option involving punishment in hell or involving exclusivism in relation to salvation seem to become highly problematic; Pereboom for example argues that theological determinists “cannot accept, for moral reasons, the doctrine of eternal damnation and, more generally, punishment justified on the ground of basic desert” (in McCann (Ed) 2017, p.208). In this context, discussion of universal salvation therefore takes on particular importance.

6.2. Universal Salvation and the Rejection of Hell

Universal salvation emphasises the compassionate and merciful nature of God and rejects the idea of eternal punishment of sinners in hell. Critics

argue that this creates tension with the concept of justice, and in particular with the claim that divine justice necessarily requires that there is punishment for sins. On this view, God has to demonstrate his wrath and justice by punishing the wicked, “in order that he is seen to be just as well as merciful” (Crisp, 2003, p.131). However, while the rejection of hell involved in universal salvation is undoubtedly controversial, the idea that a benevolent God would create people who will then ultimately spend eternity suffering in hell is also itself extremely problematic. It is problematic because it is difficult to reconcile the idea of a benevolent God with the idea of a God who would inflict eternal torment on some of his creation. It is also problematic because it suggests that this eternal suffering is an intentional built-in part of the design of the universe. In this way, although universal salvation’s rejection of hell raises a number of issues, it also solves a number of problems relating to the difficulty of reconciling the existence of hell with the existence of a benevolent God.

One of the main arguments used to argue against universal salvation is that punishment in hell is a necessary feature of God’s justice. This is a well-established view; Anselm for example argues “for when thou punishest the wicked, it is just, because it is consistent with their deserts” (Anselm, [1077] 1962, chapter X). Augustine also presents hell as a punishment for sin, even though physical punishment in hell is presented as being secondary to the punishment of separation from God. However, the assumption that punishment in hell is a feature of divine justice seems to me extremely problematic. The extreme nature of punishment in hell seems impossible to reconcile with the idea of justice, as it seems a disproportionate punishment for any possible offence. For example, Geivett argues that “it is morally repugnant to imagine that the accounts are not balanced by proper punishment in the afterlife” (1993, p.224), but it is difficult to see what eternal punishment in hell could be considered “proper punishment” for. A punishment of eternal suffering seems too extreme for any sin and it is difficult to see what the purpose of eternal suffering in hell could be other than purely satisfying a desire for punishment or revenge, or a balancing of accounts, something which does not seem to sit comfortably alongside the concept of a loving and benevolent God. Divine benevolence is usually assumed to be one of the key attributes of God, and this attribute would seem to sit far more comfortably with an emphasis on, for example, people developing empathy and feeling genuine guilt and remorse for their evil actions, rather than with an emphasis on retributive punishment.

Rather than the appeal to justice providing a justification for the existence of hell, it therefore seems to me impossible to reconcile the concepts of justice and hell. As Marilyn McCord Adams highlights:

there are no sound principles of justice according to which a man can, by his actions in this world, deserve eternal damnation ... For if God is perfectly just in the sense that his actions perfectly measure up to our ordinary moral standards about what people deserve, and by those principles no man can deserve eternal damnation, then God will not condemn any man to hell on the day of judgment. If he did, he would be treating them worse than they deserve to be treated.

(McCord Adams, 1975, p.447)

In this way, rather than being a necessary feature of divine justice, the existence of hell seems to provide a significant challenge to this concept.

Rather than focusing on the concept of justice, another possible approach would be to consider possible alternative justifications and potential purposes for the existence of hell. For example, it could be argued that the existence of hell could serve as a deterrent, something that is often identified as an aim of punishment in our everyday lives (see for example Duff and Garland, 1994). Deterrence is usually seen as aiming to deter the person from committing the offence again in the future and to deter other people from committing similar offences. In the case of hell, it seems that eternal punishment would not fit with the first of these aims, but that it could potentially fit with the aim of deterring other people from committing similar sins. However, in my view the extreme nature of hell means that it cannot be seen as an effective deterrent, as its implausible extremeness actually undermines its effectiveness as a deterrent. In contrast, a more limited, reasonable and proportionate punishment would actually seem more plausible to people and therefore potentially be more effective as a deterrent.

A more promising response could therefore be to adopt a more limited view of hell. Lindsey Hall for example differentiates between a strong and weak view of hell (2003), with the strong view being that hell involves being subjected to a permanent state of punishment by God, and the weak view being that, because humans have free will, ultimately some people will choose to reject God and endure eternal separation from him. In the weak view of hell, the focus is less on punishment and there is more emphasis on the separation being chosen by the person who rejects God. In this way, the separation is seen to be self-inflicted rather than inflicted by God, which could potentially ease some of the tension between the

existence of hell and the benevolent and merciful nature of God. This view avoids some of the challenges associated with seeing hell as a place of torment and pointless suffering. However, it seems to face many of the same issues as the Augustinian theodicy in terms of struggling in its aim of removing responsibility from God. In the case of the Augustinian theodicy, Mesle suggests that God has “omni-responsibility” (1986, p.413) for evil. Similarly, here, even if hell is seen to be separation due to the free choice to reject God, it still seems that God is ultimately responsible for allowing this situation to come about and for the eternal nature of that separation.

Another approach could therefore be to adopt a significantly more limited view of hell than even Hall’s weak view; for example, a view of hell as being temporary rather than permanent and as being remedial rather than retributive. This limited view of hell could have a number of advantages given that it is the eternal nature of the punishment in traditional views of hell that makes the concept particularly problematic. As Hick comments, “the sufferings of the damned in hell, since they are interminable, can never lead to any constructive end beyond themselves and are thus the very type of ultimately wasted and pointless anguish” (2010, p.341). By rejecting the claim that hell is permanent, and that the accompanying suffering is therefore interminable, it seems that some of the most significant problems relating to hell could be addressed. For example, this approach avoids the concern of how a merciful God could inflict eternal punishment, and it would also allow for punishment to have some form of rehabilitative or redemptive purpose. If hell is eternal, then it is difficult to see how the suffering involved could have any redemptive purpose. Universal salvation could therefore provide a way to counter this criticism, as hell could be regarded as a temporary punishment on the way to the ultimate destination of universal salvation.

In this way, the rejection of the traditional conception of hell in favour of temporary punishment on the way to the ultimate destination of universal salvation in my view should be considered a strength, rather than a weakness, of a compatibilist soul making approach. Eternal punishment in hell seems incompatible with divine justice and benevolence, as the eternal nature of the punishment seems too extreme to ever be a proportional punishment for any offence, and the fact that it is so extreme seems to undermine its effectiveness as a deterrent. Rejecting the traditional conception of hell would also have the benefit of ensuring that any punishment in the afterlife is not purposeless suffering, but instead is able to

be regarded as a temporary stage of human development – as part of the process of soul making.

The view of hell as temporary could also help to address another major issue with the concept of hell, which is that traditional views of hell portray it as being an intentional part of God's design for the universe. If hell is seen as a built-in part of the design of the universe then this suggests that God must have known that the world would go wrong when he created it, which raises the question of why God would have created a world knowing it would go wrong and that hell would be required. This objection is significant for approaches that give a prominent position to hell, including the Augustinian theodicy, which I do not believe are able to offer a satisfactory response to this concern. Indeed, one of Hick's central objections to the Augustinian theodicy is that on this approach it seems that God not only knows in advance that some people will end up in hell, it is actually his intention that this should be the case. He argues that "Augustine is on the verge of, or even sometimes over the verge into, teaching that God creates some with the express intention of damning them" (Hick, 2010, p.67). However, if the suffering in hell is seen as a temporary part of a process of soul making, then this offers a much stronger justification for why God may have chosen to build it into the overall design of the universe. Hell could be temporary punishment on the way to the ultimate destination of universal salvation.

Adopting a revised and non-eternal view of hell gives a compatibilist soul making approach the opportunity to identify a possible soul making role for hell, avoiding the criticism that hell is necessarily "an infinite unredeemed evil, an eternal blot on God's creation" (Mesle, 1986, p.413). While it does involve a significant revision to the traditional concept of hell, the view of hell as a temporary stage in our moral and spiritual development provides a way for soul making approaches to embrace ultimate universal salvation, and to see the soul making process as eventually being successful for all, without having to reject the concept of hell completely. However, Hick argues for the stronger position of rejecting the concept of hell entirely. Hick rejects the idea of hell for two main reasons (2010, pp.341-342). His first concern is that the traditional view of eternal punishment in hell would seem to involve pointless suffering not aimed at any positive end. The second reason for his rejection of hell is his concern that either God does not want everyone to be saved, which seems to undermine his benevolence, or that he wants them to be saved but "His purpose has finally failed in the case of some – and indeed, according to the theological tradition, most – of them" (2010, p.342), which seems to undermine his sovereignty.

In the context of a soul making theodicy it therefore seems that the two most coherent options are either to reject the concept of hell completely, as Hick does, or to adopt a revised view of hell where the suffering endured becomes a temporary part of a wider process of soul making. Which of these is seen as preferable will depend largely on whether it is seen as desirable to retain some element of divine punishment. However, the two options, of either rejecting the concept of hell completely or adopting a revised view of hell as a temporary part of a wider process of soul making, do present coherent possible accounts of how the concept of hell could be rejected in favour of universal salvation. This means that the fact that soul making approaches tend to rest so strongly on the concept of universal salvation should not be regarded as a major challenge to their coherence.

6.3. Universal Salvation and Freedom

One of the appealing features of universal salvation is the strong emphasis which it places on divine love and mercy, particularly when contrasted with views which present God as inflicting eternal punishment on some of his creation. However, a major objection to universal salvation is the claim that by focusing on divine love for the whole of humanity it marginalises the importance of individual human freedom. Barrett, for example, observes that “one undermines the extent of God’s love by completely denying universal salvation and restricts the importance of human free will by affirming it” (2006, p.56). If freedom requires the freedom to ultimately reject God, and if universal salvation denies this possibility, then it seems that there is a significant tension between freedom and universal salvation. On this view, if humans have free will then they must be able to choose to reject God if they wish to do so, as without this possibility there cannot be “real human freedom, a freedom to hate and reject God’s sovereignty, in full knowledge of what one is doing” (Ward, 1969, p.254). However, it is questionable whether there is actually as much conflict between universal salvation and human free will as Ward and others maintain. By adopting a compatibilist view, and particularly a form of Frankfurtian compatibilism which rejects the claim that alternate possibilities are necessary for free will, it can be argued that the tensions between free will and universal salvation are significantly eased.

The apparent tension between the concepts of universal salvation and free will tends to centre on the argument that if humans have free will

then they must be able to choose to reject God if they wish to do so. Part of the reason why there is often seen to be a tension between universal salvation and freedom is therefore that universal salvation is often presented as involving some kind of ultimate coercion or overriding of freedom. This can be seen for example in Scott (2010), where he asks: “does not genuine freedom entail the possibility of finally standing in defiance against God? If God coerces us into submission – even out of love – it erases the reality of freedom” (2010, p.323). This emphasis on coercion and submission suggests that universal salvation is something which is imposed on people against their will, and so is incompatible with freedom. But it does not seem the case that universal salvation has to involve this kind of coercion. Even if freedom requires the freedom to reject God, it does not follow that someone who does not reject God has been coerced into doing so – they may choose not to reject God entirely of their own free will.

For Hick, the reason that ultimately everyone will freely choose to turn to God lies in his claim that human nature is such that humans are created with a natural bias towards God. This means that God “is not, then, trying to force or entice His creatures against the grain of their nature, but to render them free to follow their own deepest desire, which can lead them only to Himself” (2010, pp.344-345). In this way, he argues that humans have some kind of inherent orientation or “gravitation” towards God (1985, p.251) which means that human nature has been created in such a way that there is no need for God to coerce people to ultimately accept him, as their natures will lead them freely to this conclusion. This natural orientation towards God offers an explanation as to why there is an inevitability that all people will ultimately turn to God despite having them having free will and allows Hick to maintain that while it is logically possible that some people may freely choose to reject God, in actuality no-one will ultimately choose to do so.

In his discussion of the apparent tensions between free will and universal salvation Hick refers to the analogy presented by William James in ‘The Dilemma of Determinism’ [1897] (2007) of two players, one a novice and one an expert, playing a game of chess. In this example, the expert cannot foresee what move the novice will make, but “knows, however, all the possible moves of the latter; and he knows in advance how to meet each of them by a move of his own which leads in the direction of victory. And the victory infallibly arrives” (James, 2007, p.181). In this way, the expert player can guarantee victory, even if he does not know in advance exactly what moves will occur to bring the victory about.

When the analogy is applied to universal salvation, with God as the “expert” player and humans with free will as the “novice” player, it suggests that God can be guaranteed the “victory” that ultimately every person will turn to God, even if there are a diverse range of ways in which that ultimate outcome may be brought about. There are obviously limitations to the chess expert analogy, which has led to a wide variety of alternative versions being suggested, ranging from God as a theatre director, an expedition leader or even a Persian rug-maker (Sanders, 2007). However, despite its limitations, the chess analogy is useful in highlighting Hick’s view of how the tension between universal salvation and freedom could potentially be resolved.

Although Hick does not explicitly make the connection between his discussion and the compatibilist view of freedom, adopting a compatibilist position provides a possible solution to the criticism that universal salvation involves coercion and an overruling of freedom. On a compatibilist view the final outcome of universal salvation could be determined without this undermining the freedom of the choices made on the way to this outcome, just as the outcome of the chess game can be determined without losing the freedom to decide which moves they will make on the way to that outcome. This view was rejected by Jantzen (1984) who argued that “if it is true that whether I choose *p* or not-*p*, in the end I will get *p*, the idea of choice has been robbed of all significance” (1984, p.40). However, if a Frankfurtian type of compatibilism is adopted, where alternate possibilities are not seen to be primarily what matters in freedom, then these concerns about the relationship between choice, freedom and universal salvation seem to be eased. Adopting a compatibilist view of freedom also helps to address another related objection to the concept of universal salvation, which is that universal salvation not only presents a challenge to human freedom, but also to divine freedom. On this view, the claim that God must save everyone is seen to undermine his freedom, as he has no choice about whether to save someone or not. However, once again this assumes that freedom must consist in having alternate possibilities – in this case that God must have the alternate possibility of not saving the person – and once again this is an assumption which Frankfurtian compatibilism rejects.

In this way, adopting a compatibilist position helps to address the criticism that universal salvation involves coercion and an overruling of freedom. On a compatibilist view the final outcome, universal salvation, could be determined without this undermining the freedom of the choices made on the way to this outcome. This is particularly the case if

a Frankfurtian type of compatibilism is adopted where the existence of alternate possibilities is not seen as a necessary requirement of freedom. On this view, the fact that there are ultimately no alternate possibilities other than salvation is unimportant, as freedom is a feature of the will rather than the result of having alternate possibilities.

6.4. Conclusion

Traditionally it has been argued that there must be the possibility of ultimately rejecting God if people are to have true free will. However, by adopting a form of Frankfurtian compatibilism which rejects the claim that alternate possibilities are necessary for free will, it can be argued that free will and universal salvation are compatible. If the existence of alternate possibilities is not seen as a necessary requirement of freedom, then there being no alternate possibilities other than salvation becomes unimportant as freedom is a feature of the will rather than the result of having alternate possibilities. Adopting this kind of compatibilist interpretation of freedom therefore strengthens the soul-making approach to theodicy by reducing the tension between the concepts of evil, universal salvation and free will.

If free will does not require alternate possibilities then the issues surrounding the compatibility of universal salvation and free will would seem to be greatly diminished, and the soul making approach to theodicy made considerably more appealing. So, whereas compatibilism based on a rejection of the principle of alternate possibilities fundamentally undermines the Free Will Defence and the Augustinian theodicy, adopting this form of compatibilism can actually be seen to increase the appeal of soul-making based approaches. This has important implications; Walls argues that “the most damaging strike against compatibilism is its utter inability to explain why God has not predestined everyone to freely choose him if freedom really is compatible with determinism”, calling this “the mortal blow to the compatibilist” (Walls and Burson, 1998, p.266). However, if a soul making approach is adopted which is based on both universal salvation and a compatibilist view of freedom, it seems that God could indeed be regarded as having determined that everyone will ultimately freely choose salvation in the end, and this “mortal blow” loses its force.

CONCLUSION

A COMPATIBILIST RESPONSE TO THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

While Frankfurt's rejection of the Principle of Alternate Possibilities doesn't necessarily lead to compatibilism, it does constitute a significant shift in the debate concerning the compatibility of freedom and determinism and it helps to cement compatibilism's place as a coherent and plausible contemporary philosophical position on free will. By rejecting the necessity of having alternate possibilities to have freedom, Frankfurt enables compatibilists to argue that determinism removes alternate possibilities but does not remove freedom, which I believe gives a much more coherent expression of compatibilism than has been put forward elsewhere. Frankfurt also provides an account of freedom of the will, which is significant because one of the main problems with compatibilism is that it traditionally only focuses on freedom of action and not on freedom of the will (Frankfurt, 1971). By offering an account which focuses on freedom of the will, Frankfurt can therefore be seen to be addressing an important area of weakness in earlier versions of compatibilism. In this way, I believe that insights from Frankfurt's work on freedom can indeed be used to articulate a stronger version of compatibilism than has otherwise been put forward.

However, as this work has highlighted, adopting a compatibilist interpretation of freedom has significant implications for theological debates surrounding the problem of evil. Adopting a compatibilist view of freedom significantly undermines the Free Will Defence and the Augustinian Theodicy as it challenges a central assumption of these approaches – the assumption that it would be impossible for God to create humans who were free yet always freely chose to do the right thing. Both the Free Will Defence and the Augustinian Theodicy rest on the assumption that evil is a necessary by-product of freedom and that it would be impossible for God to eliminate evil without also eliminating freedom. This assumption is based on an incompatibilist interpretation of freedom, and more specifically on an assumption that freedom necessarily involves having alternate possibilities. If a compatibilist view of freedom is adopted where free will is possible even without alternate possibilities, then it seems that it would be logically possible for God to create humans who only

ever freely choose to do good. The key role played by libertarian freedom in both the Free Will Defence and Augustinian theodicy therefore means that embracing compatibilism also means accepting that this cannot be reconciled with either of these two traditional responses to the problem of evil.

Hick's formulation of the soul making approach avoids several of the key weaknesses of the Free Will Defence and Augustinian theodicy. Most notably, in the case of the Free Will Defence it avoids the difficulties around the concept of transworld depravity, and in the case of the Augustinian theodicy it avoids the difficulties around the origins of evil and the question of how a perfect world could go wrong. However, the tensions around freedom within Hick's account are a significant weakness of his particular formulation of the soul making approach. Hick remains committed to a libertarian conception of freedom despite the tensions that this creates within his account, and this in part seems due to his commitment to universal salvation and desire to present universal salvation as still allowing for libertarian freedom. In this way, even though libertarian freedom does not play as fundamental a role in Hick's account as it does in, for example, the Free Will Defence, it is still a sufficiently significant aspect of Hick's soul making approach to mean that embracing compatibilism would also mean accepting that this cannot be satisfactorily reconciled with any of the three mainstream responses to the problem of evil. If compatibilism is going to be a viable option for the theist it is therefore necessary to find an alternative, and more convincing, response to the problem of evil that does not rely on a libertarian conception of freedom, and I have argued that the most promising alternative comes from an explicitly compatibilist reformulation of the soul making approach to theodicy.

Shifting from Hick's formulation of the soul-making approach to an explicitly compatibilist formulation I believe helps to strengthen the approach significantly by reducing the tension between the concepts of evil, universal salvation and free will. This not only provides a potential compatibilist response to the problem of evil, which has the potential to help to make compatibilism a more attractive position for the theist, but also in my view makes the soul making approach to theodicy more coherent in its own right. By reformulating the soul making approach so that it adopts an explicitly compatibilist conception of freedom the theodicy aligns much more coherently with what in contemporary philosophy is now largely regarded as a stronger and more compelling position on freedom than the libertarian position traditionally assumed. For me, this shift significantly increases the appeal of the soul making approach as a

response to the problem of evil. However, whether the compatibilist soul making approach is seen as a plausible or indeed as appealing will inevitably depend on the reader's view of other related issues, such as their views on life after death.

The final chapter of this work has attempted to defend the soul making approach against the claim that its reliance on the concepts of life after death and universal salvation undermines the coherence of this approach. It focused on establishing the logical coherence of the concepts of life after death and universal salvation, and by doing so, tried to address one of the key objections to soul making approaches to theodicy. However, it is clear that for many people establishing the strict logical coherence of the concepts of life after death and universal salvation will not be sufficient to make the concepts convincing or appealing. For some people, the objections to these concepts are so deep that simply establishing their logical coherence is not enough to convince them to accept these concepts, or in turn to accept a soul making approach to theodicy. One possible way forward, introduced in the fifth chapter of this work, is therefore the option of formulating a version of the soul making theodicy that does not rely on the concept of life after death. Formulating such a version of the approach could be explored in more depth in a future work, as it would have a number of additional benefits and challenges and would require a radical redevelopment of the approach so that it is less future focused. This would potentially offer a response to the problem of evil for the compatibilist who struggles with the empirical objections to life after death, but it would also change the focus and emphasis of the approach significantly. For me, the benefits of this radical refocusing would not outweigh the costs, as it would leave the soul making approach significantly more vulnerable to the criticism that the distribution of suffering, and indeed the distribution of the opportunities for soul making, are so extremely unequal. This is not just a problem for compatibilists, but for any response to the problem of evil. If the concept of life after death is rejected, then this fundamental challenge of unfairness seems to be hugely problematic for all three of the traditional responses to the problem of evil. If the concept of life after death is rejected, it therefore seems that there are only two possible ways forward. The first is to concede that it is impossible to formulate a satisfactory response to the problem of evil, or the second is to reframe the problem quite radically by focusing on seeing the problem of evil not at an individual level but at a collective level or at the level of the overall system. In this kind of approach, the focus on individual rights and fairness would be lost but it

would have the advantage of focusing the discussion away from individual instances of evil and suffering; for example, away from the idea of individual soul making to the progress of humanity as a whole.

The discussion around life after death highlights that while I have argued that it is possible to formulate a coherent compatibilist response to the problem of evil, whether this approach helps to increase the appeal of compatibilism in philosophy of religion depends heavily on the views of each individual about a number of related concepts. For example, an important consequence of this approach is that it suggests that the ultimate responsibility for evil must rest at least in part with God rather than being able to be blamed entirely on humans and their misuse of free will. For me this makes the approach more appealing than alternatives such as the Free Will Defence as it suggests a more intentional role for evil and suffering compared to it being solely associated with an unforeseen misuse of free will, and it means that the soul making approach seems better aligned with the concept of divine sovereignty. However, for others this shift of accountability from humans to a combination of humans and God would be seen as an unacceptable consequence of this approach that would significantly reduce its appeal. This highlights that the concept of divine sovereignty in many ways fits more comfortably with a compatibilist or deterministic view of the world. The concept of divine sovereignty also fits comfortably with the concept of universal salvation, as universal salvation provides a sense of ultimate resolution to the process of soul making that seems to reflect and align well with the idea of the ultimate authority and benevolence of God. In this way, our view on concepts such as sovereignty and universal salvation are likely to have a significant impact on whether we feel that the compatibilist soul making approach is a plausible and indeed appealing option. However, in my view, adopting a compatibilist position can also make us significantly re-evaluate our view of these related concepts. For example, in the case of universal salvation, adopting a compatibilist view of freedom that is not based on the necessity of having alternate possibilities can fundamentally change our view on whether universal salvation can be seen as compatible with human freedom. In this way, while our view on the appeal of the compatibilist soul making approach will be influenced by our views on a number of related concepts, adopting a compatibilist soul making approach could also provoke us to re-examine those views and to perhaps shift our understanding of these concepts themselves.

This work aimed to explore whether it is possible to formulate a coherent compatibilist response to the problem of evil, and, if so, whether such

a response could help compatibilism be seen as a viable alternative to incompatibilism in philosophy of religion. It has highlighted that adopting a compatibilist soul making approach has a number of key advantages compared to other responses to the problem of evil, but itself also requires the acceptance of a number of contentious claims. It requires acceptance of not only a compatibilist interpretation of freedom, but also an acceptance of a model where God bears significant responsibility for the existence of evil, and where there is either life after death, with all the complex philosophical and empirical issues that raises, or where there is no life after death and we have to accept that individual suffering is simply part of a wider picture where issues of justice and fairness for individuals are not the ultimate concern. In this way, this work proposes a compatibilist soul making approach that I believe has significantly greater advantages than disadvantages, but that clearly leaves the reader with a choice “between accepting the model at the calculated price, or deciding that the price is too high and hence rejecting the model” (Brümmer, 1993, p.25).

In my view, by drawing on insights from Frankfurt’s work on freedom and the will it is possible to formulate a coherent compatibilist response to the problem of evil in the form of a compatibilist version of the soul making approach. By reformulating the soul making approach in this way it not only provides theists with the possibility of embracing compatibilism while still retaining one of the three mainstream responses to the problem of evil, but also actually helps to address some of the weaknesses of Hick’s original version of the soul making approach. I believe that compatibilism can therefore be not only be a viable, but actually a preferable, alternative to incompatibilism in philosophy of religion.

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