

Against Theological Determinism

Timothy O'Connor

Introduction

Some philosophers are incompatibilists with respect to causal determinism and freedom and moral responsibility. They maintain that for a human person ever to act freely or to be morally responsible for any of her actions or their consequences, the proximal and at least partly psychological process leading up to at least some of her actions must include causally undetermined events. ‘Acting freely’ here signifies a metaphysical sense of freedom and ‘morally responsible’ signifies a desert or accountability sense of responsibility, on which the action may merit praise or blame, as the case may be, independent of consequentialist or contractualist considerations.¹ I will here assume the truth of both forms of incompatibilism. Some incompatibilists (‘libertarians’) believe that mature humans typically satisfy this and all other necessary conditions on freedom and responsibility, although they propose different accounts of the positive metaphysical condition on freedom that requires causal indeterminism.² Others (‘hard incompatibilists’) believe that we do not satisfy such conditions, either as a contingent matter of fact or as a necessary consequence of our finite nature.

Is there a logical or evidential relationship between *theism*—more specifically, Christian theism—and various views concerning freedom and moral responsibility? The vast majority of philosophical theists in the Christian tradition have been either libertarians or compatibilists at least with respect to moral responsibility (and in most

¹ On the ‘accountability’ or ‘desert’ sense of moral responsibility, see Watson 1996 and Pereboom 2001.

² Such theories divide into three broad camps. *Causal indeterminists* (e.g. Kane 1996 and Ekstrom 2000) think that (non-derivatively) free choices are caused but not determined by certain of the agent’s motivational reasons—her states of desire, intention, and belief. *Agent causalists* (such as Clarke 1993, 2003 and O’Connor 2000, 2011) think that freedom requires a distinct kind of control from the causal efficacy of internal states with which one identifies, one that resides in an ontologically basic, reasons-guided causation by the agent herself. A free decision might be the agent’s causing of a state of executive intention, which state normally triggers a wider action. A third account, *non-causalism* (defended by Hugh McCann 1998, Ginet 1990, Goetz 2002, and Pink 2004), eschews causal analyses of the control that grounds metaphysical freedom altogether. On this approach, control is taken to be an intrinsic, non-relational property of choices or willings. (McCann describe this property as an intrinsic ‘spontaneity’ or ‘activeness’; Ginet as an ‘active phenomenal quality’ and Goetz and Pink as a ‘non-causal power of freedom.’)

cases with respect to freedom). They hold that human persons are free and morally responsible with respect to a good many of their actions.

Derk Pereboom has recently mounted a sustained challenge to this near-consensus.³ Pereboom maintains that human freedom and moral responsibility would require humans to have ‘agent-causal’ control over some of their actions and to exercise this control without being subject to objective antecedent probabilities, and that there is good reason to believe that this is not the case.⁴ Hence, there is good reason to believe that we are not morally responsible for our actions. However, he takes our lacking both freedom and moral responsibility to be consistent with Christian theism. His strategy involves showing that much of our moral practice is separable from the assumption that humans are either free or morally responsible. He rightly points out that, even if humans are not morally responsible (in the desert sense), their *actions* can be assessed in moral terms (good or bad, noble or ignoble, reflecting virtue or reflecting vice). And we might rationally choose to continue engaging in practices in which we *hold* one another morally accountable and accept that others may hold us morally accountable, where *holding accountable* is a practice of moral criticism and affirmation, exhortation, and sanction with an eye to changing behavior and attitudes—without the implication that the person in question is morally responsible. There is reason to want our relationships with one another to be governed by such practices even if we are not morally responsible. And we could still reasonably have personal affections and value those we are close to for their distinctive character.

In this way, Pereboom makes a plausible case that the denial of human freedom and moral responsibility need not entail the incoherence or illegitimacy of *some* important facets of our human moral practice. We can go on a moral diet and partake of ‘morality lite.’ He has gone on to argue that this enables us similarly to recast the specifically Christian teaching concerning human relations to one another and to God into a form that is still recognizable as *Christian* theology.⁵ Let us say that ‘theological determinism’ is the position that God has created, intentionally, a world in which all events are causally determined by antecedent factors. According to it, God is not merely the creator and sustainer of all things, He is the fully sufficient cause of everything that happens. We may read Pereboom as contending that theological determinism, so construed, is consistent with the set of teachings and practices constituting the intersection of Christian traditions that embrace the ecumenical creeds.

I will argue, contrary to Pereboom, that embracing theological determinism and accepting its negative consequences for human moral accountability is not a viable Christian option. First, theological determinism entails, problematically, a rather more direct form of divine involvement in horrendously evil human actions. Second, the denial of human moral responsibility cannot be reconciled satisfactorily with the centrality to

³ Pereboom 2001, 2012, and 2014.

⁴ Pereboom 2001, ch. 3; 2014, ch. 3. For criticism of his argument on this point, see O’Connor 2008.

⁵ Pereboom 2012.

Christian theology of confessing and repenting of sin and seeking divine aid in the struggle against it. Third, theological determinism would undermine divine–human dialogue and loving engagement. Finally, theological determinism threatens the doctrine of the Incarnation, diminishing the moral standing of the Incarnate Son of God and forcing an implausible interpretation of the interaction between the Incarnate Son and God the Father. Taken cumulatively, these problems suggest that the reflective embrace of theological determinism would not merely induce change in Christian belief and practice, it would render it much less coherent.⁶

Human Freedom and the Atheistic Argument From Evil

I begin, however, on a conciliatory note. Probably the most often cited reason for thinking that Christians (and theists generally) are rationally *committed* to indeterministic human freedom is that, without it, there will be a compelling argument from suffering to atheism. Pereboom argues, and I am inclined to agree, that the denial of human freedom and moral responsibility does not render the problem of evil/suffering *much* more difficult.⁷ For, even if the great value of creaturely freedom gives an adequate reason for God to permit some forms of human suffering, so far as we can discern it cannot account for all of it. And neither does it appear to be a sufficient reason for permitting the worst forms of animal suffering before or after the appearance of humans on the earth. God's possible reasons for permitting certain horrendous and intense kinds of evil distributed in the way that we observe are, many of us will accept, not discernible to us—even on the assumption that humans have free will. Even so, many of us will deny that this gives us a powerful disconfirmation of God's existence, since it is not clearly likely that we would discern such reasons even if they existed.⁸ This last, 'skeptical theistic' premise seems to stand whether we have free will or not.⁹

⁶ Pereboom (2005, 77) points out that theological determinism is endorsed by a number of Christian thinkers, including Luther, Calvin, Descartes, Leibniz, and before them (possibly) Augustine. Even though these thinkers also supposed, unlike Pereboom, that human beings are morally responsible for their actions, much of the arguments that follow in the text applies to their positions no less than Pereboom's, as they turn on the implications of determinism itself. As I see it, although theological determinism certainly makes a respectable showing in the history of learned Christian theology, it is deeply at odds with the ordinary Christian understanding of the relationship between God and human beings. Sometimes theological determinism is motivated by very general philosophical-theological considerations, such as the implications of God's omnipotence and providence. And this strand of thinking often leads to a conception of God as *quite* radically other than human persons to a degree that the personhood of God on these views is seriously questionable. Without wishing to endorse a crude Biblicism regarding our understanding of God's nature, I believe that Christians do well to see some of these theological-philosophical constructions as failed attempts at squaring the circle. Generous, self-giving love directed in particular ways at His human creatures is at the heart of the Bible's teaching (rightly understood) concerning God. Theological constructs that implicitly or explicitly treat that depiction as mere anthropomorphism should be rejected out of hand as candidates for an elucidation or extension of Christian theology.

⁷ Pereboom 2012.

⁸ On issues associated with skeptical theism, see the essays in Dougherty and McBrayer 2014.

⁹ Furthermore, Trakakis 2006 convincingly argues that many theodicies are available to the hard determinist.

Appeal to the possibility of creaturely freedom and the limits this might impose even on an omnipotent being's actions to prevent all suffering provides a very straightforward way to rebut the 'logical' argument from evil, as Alvin Plantinga has famously shown.¹⁰ But it is also plausible to assert that, *for all we can determine with any reasonable degree of confidence*, there are highly valuable goods *not* involving or entailing creaturely freedom that a perfect Creator would rightly not wish to forego and that are not attainable without permitting the existence of suffering. So it is not obvious that appeal to the possibility or actuality of creaturely freedom is necessary for giving a *satisfactory* response to the logical argument from evil, even if, apart from it, we are unable to *demonstrate* its failure.

Theological Determinism and Divine Involvement in Moral Evil

Embracing theological determinism not only entails denying human responsibility for sin, it appears committed to attributing direct responsibility for wrong human actions, even heinous actions, to God. It entails that God purposely stitches the world together in such a way that the evildoer's heart is darkened in just the right way and to the right degree that he purposes (with relish) to commit some horrible act toward another. God would indeed be 'the author of sin.'¹¹

Of course, we theists are perhaps all stuck with accepting that God is the originator and cause of lots of other kinds of unmerited intense suffering prior to the emergence of human beings. Since we must suppose that God thereby accomplishes outweighing goods, though ones perhaps inscrutable to us, might we not accept with equanimity the same with respect to moral evils, even those of the worst sort?

In my judgment, the two cases are importantly different: originating the sustained entertaining of cruel desires and the remorseless choice and execution of horrendous deeds would seem to implicate God in evil more directly than would the causing of suffering involving no such nefarious desire, pleasure, or intention. Contemplate two scenarios in which one's child or other loved one suffers gravely, in different but roughly equal ways. In one, it is what we call 'natural evil'—the slow, painful degeneration from a disease, say. The other involves some brutality at the hands of another, with devastating, long-term physical and psychological effects. Further suppose that, in each case, God has directly purposed and caused to come about that very outcome and the process that led to it, in pursuit of some countervailing good purpose that you cannot see or understand. We instinctively recoil at the thought of the one more so than at the thought of the other. It might be thought that this is to be explained away as the distorting effect of certain emotions we have about suffering from cruelty. But, as

¹⁰ Plantinga 1974.

¹¹ This term appears in the *Westminster Confession* and in lots of writings pro and con the 'high' Calvinist-Reformed understanding of divine sovereignty.

I see it, this reaction reflects our grasp of a feature of moral goodness: that the morally good person resists any identification with gross wickedness in themselves or in others and instead sets herself against it.

Pereboom attempts to mitigate the negative implications of this conclusion for theological determinism by suggesting that on it, so-called human moral evil, being blameless, becomes a lot more like natural evil—and so it is less of a problem that God is its author.¹² The idea, I take it, is that theological determinism should lead us to take a somewhat depersonalized attitude toward the moral perpetrator. We are to see his monstrous attitudes and actions as deeply regrettable features of Him, but ineluctable occurrences in a larger picture, part and parcel of nature. For God, in turn, bringing about horrific effects on persons via such morally ugly states and actions of other persons is not fundamentally, or morally, different from his bringing calamity via animal predation or wholly impersonal destructive forces. The question is the same in each case, namely, might there be a moral purpose that makes the price worth paying?

But taking up this kind of tempering stance as a way of mitigating the significance of God's authorship of moral evil is in tension with Pereboom's project of reclaiming much of moral practice within a post-moral responsibility outlook. We will find ourselves pitying in equal measure (albeit for different reasons) the innocent and the guilty, victim and offender. The moral stance then simply turns to a hope that all alike will be morally transformed so as to have stable characters that reflect both deep flourishing and moral goodness. *How* one gets there is not especially important, since there is no moral accounting to be made. This stance seems contrary to the way we naturally assess our trajectories: the path matters. To be sure, grace, unmerited mercy from God, is central to the Christian moral vision of human destiny. But separating this, as Pereboom's picture does, from any notion of ongoing, freely chosen response, *cooperating* with such grace, changes that vision significantly.

But here I am beginning to spill over into my second consideration. Before taking that up directly, I note that there is another move available if one is willing to relax one's theological determinism while retaining the view that human beings are not free or morally responsible. Denying that human beings are free and morally responsible is consistent with supposing a pervasive indeterminism to how the world unfolds, including many or all human actions. Freedom requires indeterminism of the right *sort*, involving, on a regular basis, a nondeterministic connection between motivational reasons and choices, with a non-negligible probability of one's acting otherwise than one in fact does. It is possible for there to be an indeterministic but freedom-less world in which God could not anticipate any *particular* natural *or* moral evils. (I here pass over Molinism in deserved silence.) Purely theological motivations for embracing determinism aside, a person who is impressed in equal parts by the role of indeterminism in fundamental physics and the allegedly 'quasi-deterministic' implications of a

¹² Pereboom 2012.

naturalistic conception of human beings could easily be drawn to such a view of our world. In any such world, however, it would likely be that God could anticipate with certainty that some natural and moral evils *or other* would regularly occur. It seems easier to accept such a world as consistent with God's perfect goodness than a world where He directly wills acts of grave moral evil.¹³

Theological Determinism and the Confession of and Struggle against Sin

If we lack freedom and moral responsibility, certain influential Christian theological beliefs concerning (1) how God atoned for our sin in the redemptive activity of Jesus Christ, and (2) how wide the scope of ultimate salvation among humans is cannot be correct. Given Pereboom's view, Jesus Christ's atoning work cannot partly consist either in his taking upon himself the condemnation or penalty we are due or in his 'making satisfaction' or restitution on our behalf. Furthermore—stern varieties of Calvinism aside, on which God is morally free to damn or save whomever He pleases, independent of merit—salvation cannot be non-universal, or, at any rate, no one can be justly eternally damned. While these views have been popular in the Christian tradition, neither is expressed in the ecumenical creeds. (That Jesus was incarnated and died 'for us men and for our salvation,' as the Nicene Creed puts it, is partly constitutive of Christian faith, but no particular theory of how this 'rescue operation' was achieved is. That some are damned has been the majority report in the Western church, but it is not *de fide* for either Catholics or Eastern Orthodox. Protestants, of course, are all over the map.¹⁴) So let us grant that denial of these views is a theologically permissible implication of the no-freedom-or-moral-responsibility thesis.

However, the assumption of 'full-fat' morality is embedded deeply in quite basic, seemingly non-negotiable Christian teaching and practice. First, the ways that human sin and God's righteous judgment of it are portrayed in the Bible and in the many varieties of Christian tradition are closely tied to the thesis that adult humans are (for the most part) morally responsible for their actions. The quite central, regular Christian practice of confession of sin to God seems built on such an understanding—indeed is a direct response to it. We acknowledge our responsibility for our past failures and commit ourselves to cooperate with God's grace in turning from those wrongful practices, to struggle against 'the sin that so easily entangles.' This commitment that constitutes true repentance assumes that it is within our grace-enabled power to do so, and that responsibility for whether we succeed or fail on any particular occasion will fall squarely on us and not, even in part, on (an omnidetermining) God.

¹³ Though see my remarks at the end of the section entitled 'Theological Determinism and Divine-Human Relationships.'

¹⁴ I am not suggesting that Pereboom's position is consistent with the full range of authoritative confessional teaching that concerns atonement and heaven and hell. (It clearly is not.)

As with our practices of holding one another morally accountable for our actions, so too here: we could *retrench* our view of the nature of confession and repentance, so that it becomes merely an act whereby we agree with God's judgment that our offenses are wrong, express a desire that our attitudes and behavior change, and express a felt commitment to do what change requires. However, insofar as it includes disbelieving that we are morally responsible, it could not coherently involve a sincere pledge to do what is required of us and acceptance that we are accountable for our following through or not. It would be a mixture of retrospective and prospective attitudes shorn of any belief that what we did or will do was up to us. Such scaled-back moral attitudes diminish our sense of moral personhood when we encounter or seek to communicate with God. Our moral goodness and badness become features of our character akin to the beauty or ugliness of a work of art—in this case, God's work of art. When I 'confess' and repent of a defect of my character under this assumption, it seems that I would be saying to God:

Yes, God, I agree, that what you have made of me thus far is flawed in respects X, Y, and Z. I don't like that any more than you do (or, than you do in your 'revealed,' if not 'secret' will, or some such thing). I'm on board with changing those things straightaway. I'll do my part, if that is what you have foreordained me to do. If not, not. You're calling the shots. If I blow it again, then I'll confess it again and see what you have in mind the next go-round. Since I am confessing, I confess this all leaves me a bit confused. I'm not making excuses, exactly (although I *am* blameless). These features really do stink, and they ought to change. Here's hoping they do.

Theological Determinism and Divine–Human Relationships

My third source of misgiving about the viability of Pereboom's theological determinism is related to the one just discussed. It generalizes the point to the implications of theological determinism for how we think about our relationship—our friendship—with God.

Consider first how, in a deterministic world, this relationship would look from God's standpoint. He creates a world in which human beings appear in the fullness of time and condescends to enter into a covenantal relationship with them. But he decides 'in advance' how that interaction will unfold, including each of our responses to him, down to the last detail. How is this not a kind of sham, with the ostensible *dialogue* being in reality a very circuitous *monologue* that God was carrying on with Himself? In a genuine love relationship, one supposes, not all the power concerning how the relationship unfolds can be had by just one of the persons.

Note in this connection how God is regularly portrayed in the Christian Bible as appealing to human beings to follow His ways and cleave to Him, and thereby attain the truest, most lasting joy of which we are capable. For an especially vivid example, consider Jesus's poignant lament when he entered Jerusalem for the last time: 'O Jerusalem,

Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, *but you were not willing*.¹⁵ On the envisioned scenario, we would have to suppose that the text does not just contain a large element of anthropomorphism, as other biblical texts clearly do, but is deliberately misleading: Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, is representing himself as frustrated by the stubborn unbelief of his hearers, desperately wishing that they would respond differently, but all the while he is cognizant that their failure to do so has been divinely appointed.¹⁶ Presumably, he represents his attitude in this misleading way because it better encourages attitudes in later followers that he *wants* to obtain, though—given that God is omnipotent—only and precisely to the degree that they *do* obtain. Appeals of this sort are ubiquitous in the Jewish and Christian scriptures; reading them in the way Pereboom's proposal requires would dramatically alter how we believers understand God's attitudes toward us.

Now consider predetermined divine-human interaction from *our* standpoint. When, for example, I struggle to participate in my own sanctification and pray for God's grace, can I coherently think all the while that where I fail, I was unable to do otherwise and bear no responsibility, and furthermore that God's 'secret,' all-things-considered will was that I *should* fail in that very instance?

Again, I note that if one supposes a macroscopically highly indeterministic world where freedom is yet lacking, the problems raised for divine-human interaction from both sides diminishes or possibly disappears. God does not predetermine our responses to him, so the dialogue is genuinely interactive, albeit deflated by the fact that the creatures are not morally responsible beings. And we can think of God as helping us to strive against sin and evil in the world around us by influencing events in and outside of us in the right directions, even if all the independent impetus for such striving, so to speak, comes from Him. Not an especially attractive or plausible picture of how things go, I'd say, but it's an improvement. However, whether the improved picture is available will depend on empirical details: many suppose that human acts and other macroscopic phenomena are generally 'quasi-determined': such that microscopic indeterminacy largely 'cancels out' for statistical reasons in the context of macroscopic entities such as functioning and embodied human brains. (The exceptions would be

¹⁵ Matthew 23:37.

¹⁶ It is open to Pereboom to avoid this consequence at least when it comes to texts attributing words to Jesus by supposing that Jesus's human thoughts would not have included belief in the deterministic facts. (Thanks to Dan Speak for this suggestion.) Certainly the New Testament appears to attribute limited knowledge to Jesus, and belief in freedom and moral responsibility was ubiquitous in his Jewish milieu. However, extraordinary knowledge is often attributed to Jesus, including (possibly growing) knowledge concerning the purposes of God with respect to Jesus's earthly mission. Were he to have thought wrongly that he came to be God's agent of redemption of people for their sins, rooted in their morally culpable rebellion towards God, he would have had a seriously wrong understanding of God's attitudes towards human beings. This consequence is not one that a Christian can easily accept. And there are, of course, numerous other texts in both Old and New Testaments that represent God directly as having anguished attitudes towards human waywardness quite similar to the passage I quote in the text.

cases where devices are deliberately configured to amplify the effects of significant but small-scale indeterminacies, something that some presume not to occur naturally.)

Theological Determinism and the Doctrine of the Incarnation

The theological determinist faces a choice: either the incarnate Jesus Christ is like ordinary human persons in lacking freedom and moral responsibility in his human nature, or he is not. To say that he is not like us in this respect is to call into question Christian teaching that he fully shares our nature, and so is able to empathize with our plight. Making of Christ a special exception seems unmotivated. Suppose, then, that he lacks freedom and moral responsibility, as we do. Is that a bad consequence?

The issue is admittedly tricky. Since nearly all Christians accept that Jesus Christ was (and is) incapable of *sin*, a crucial limit on the scope of his freedom appears to be built into the doctrine. But one ordinarily supposes that he freely chose when and how he graciously dispensed mercy during his earthly ministry. And he is depicted as going to the cross freely, persevering through much anguish in prayer as he anticipates vividly his imminent arrest. Again, the relationship of divine and human natures in the Incarnate Son on orthodox understanding is shrouded in mystery. Even so, there seems to be a peculiar difficulty for the doctrine of theological determinism here. For it is difficult to render coherently Jesus's dialogue with God the Father on the assumption that each of his human thoughts, desires, and intentions were fully determined by God. We have the problem of divine–human dialogue here applied to a particular and particularly important case. Should we suppose that Jesus was aware of his every thought and 'response' as being divinely determined? If so, how would that awareness have impacted his conception of himself as a human (albeit not merely human) person?

Conclusion

I argued that theological determinism has four problematic consequences for Christian theism—concerning God's direct involvement with moral evil, human confession and struggle against sin, divine–human dialogue more generally, and the particular interaction of God the Father and the Incarnate Son—and that, taken cumulatively, assimilating them would profoundly alter Christian (and perhaps most other religious theistic) belief and practice. But note that the problems associated with the last three of these are, in part, practical problems that flow from *believing* in theological determinism. Drop the belief, and part of the problem goes away, even if it is true. Since I take myself to be fallible in philosophical matters, I assign some small credence to Pereboom's position being correct. And that leads me to wonder whether, if Pereboom *is* right, God, in his artful providence, may have seen to it that all of us find

it so very natural to believe falsely that we *are* free and morally responsible precisely in order to circumvent the problems associated with knowing the truth.¹⁷

References

- Clarke, Randolph. 1993. 'Toward a Credible Agent-Causal Account of Free Will.' *Noûs* 27: 191–203.
- Clarke, Randolph. 2003. *Libertarian Accounts of Free Will*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Dougherty, Trent and Justin P. McBrayer, eds. 2014. *Skeptical Theism: New Essays*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ekstrom, Laura. 2000. *Free Will: A Philosophical Study*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Ginet, Carl. 1990. *On Action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Goetz, Stewart. 2002. 'Review of O'Connor, *Persons and Causes*.' *Faith and Philosophy* 19: 116–20.
- Kane, Robert. 1996. *The Significance of Free Will*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- McCann, Hugh. 1998. *The Works of Agency*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- O'Connor, Timothy. 2000. *Persons and Causes: The Metaphysics of Free Will*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- O'Connor, Timothy. 2008. 'Agent-Causal Power.' In *Dispositions and Causes*, edited by Toby Handfield. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- O'Connor, Timothy. 2011. 'Agent Causal Theories.' In *Oxford Handbook of Free Will*, edited by Robert Kane. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Pereboom, Derk. 2001. *Living Without Free Will*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pereboom, Derk. 2005. 'Free Will, Evil, and Divine Providence.' In *God and the Ethics of Belief: New Essays in Philosophy of Religion*, edited by Andrew Dole and Andrew Chignell. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pereboom, Derk. 2012. 'Theological Determinism and Providence.' In *Molinism: The Contemporary Debate*, edited by Ken Perszyk. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pereboom, Derk. 2014. *Free Will, Agency, and Meaning in Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pink, Thomas. 2004. *Free Will: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Plantinga, Alvin. 1974. *God, Freedom, and Evil*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing.
- Trakakis, Nick. 2006. 'Does Hard Determinism Render the Problem of Evil even Harder?' *Ars Disputandi* 6: 239–64.
- Watson, Gary. 1996. 'The Two Faces of Responsibility.' *Philosophical Topics* 24: 227–48.

¹⁷ A version of this essay was delivered at a conference on free will and moral responsibility at Queen's College, Oxford. I thank the audience on that occasion for helpful feedback, and in particular Randy Clarke, Laura Ekstrom, Al Mele, and Derk Pereboom. Thanks also to this volume's editors for helpful suggestions on an earlier draft.