

Liberty University
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EXISTENTIAL TEMPORALITY AS FORE-IGNORANCE:
IMPLICATIONS FOR DIVINE FOREKNOWLEDGE

Answering the Topic Question:

“Currently, does the Philosophy of Time present sufficient options to philosophers of religion as they seek to assemble meaningful and coherent formulations of those divine attributes that relate to temporality?”

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION TO THE THESIS.....	i
I. CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND.....	1
1. Previous Analyses and Theories about Time and the Divine Temporal Status	1
2. Comparison of Methodologies	7
II. PRESENTATION OF A NEW ARGUMENT	13
1. Lack of Knowledge Describes Temporality	18
III. A THOUGHT EXPERIMENT: ACHIEVING THE TEMPORAL OBJECTIVE	25
1. Defining the Terms of the Experiment and Preliminary Discussion	26
2. Conclusions of the Experiment: The Fore-Ignorance Account of Temporality.....	33
3. Context for the Fore-Ignorance Account of Existential Temporality	35
4. Informal Logical Formulations as a Summary	36
5. Conclusion to Thought Experiment.....	39
IV. DIVINE TEMPORALITY	41
1. Testing for the Exemption of Divine Subjects.....	42
2. The Pyrrhic Victory	52
V. RIGOROUS ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL DISTINCTIONS INVOLVING FORE-IGNORANCE.....	55
VI. ANTICIPATION AND ANALYSIS OF POTENTIAL DEFEATERS: MOLINISM AND NEO-MOLINISM.....	69
1. Molinism.....	70
2. Neo-Molinism.....	90
VII. ANTICIPATION AND ANALYSIS OF POTENTIAL DEFEATERS: PHILOSOPHICAL, PHYSICAL, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES.....	94
1. Branched time.....	94
2. The Space-Time Analogy	96
3. Past and Future as Analogs.....	98
4. Time and Thought	99
5. Is God Free?	101
6. Alternative Temporalities	102
VIII. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS	107
BIBLIOGRAPHY	112

INTRODUCTION TO THE THESIS

Statement of the Problem

Those who examine the nature of time fall into two general categories. While seeking the most fundamental, ontological status of temporal becoming, some decide that time is real, others conclude that it is unreal. Accordingly, the central work within the Philosophy of Time has been the formulation of theories of the ontological status of temporal becoming. This work has seen, generally, an alignment of philosophers into these two distinct perspectives: those who consider time to be primarily a physical phenomenon with the subjective perspective being inconsequential, and those who consider time to be a logical-linguistic problem with the hope that the experience of time is matched by real temporal becoming. The former group deals primarily with physics and neuropsychology while the latter group deals primarily with deductive arguments based upon the Aristotelian view of the problem.¹

Within this larger issue of the nature of time, philosophers of religion have been researching whether or not and in what manner God may be temporal. The arguments for an atemporal divinity have been catalogued and discussed, most notably by Brian Leftow, Eleonore Stump, Norman Kretzmann, and William Lane Craig. The first three have defended atemporality

with some success whereas Craig has ably defended temporalism. Craig has also called into question most defenses of atemporality² while, ironically, affirming the possibility of coherently doing so.³ Currently, divine temporality, in various forms, is gaining adherents among academics in relevant fields.

With the above given as the current academic context for studies involving possible divine temporal statuses, it has become the opinion of this researcher that a major category of temporal analysis has been almost completely overlooked. While this analysis may offer significant implications in other areas of study including the Philosophy of Time, it is likely to have its strongest impact within the Philosophy of Religion and with speculations concerning God's relationship to time.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this project will be to reveal an important and overlooked option within the fields of Temporal Studies and the Philosophy of Time, and to show how this new perspective affects divine temporality. The intended result is anticipated to preclude certain combinations between two types of divine attributes. This will take the form of a categorical prohibition, that is, it may be shown conclusively that certain categories of omniscience are incompatible with certain statuses with regard to time.

¹ Palle Yourgrau, *Gödel Meets Einstein: Time Travel in the Gödel Universe* (Chicago: Open Court, 1999), 136.

² William Lane Craig, *God, Time and Eternity: The Coherence of Theism II: Eternity* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), ch. 1.

Statement of Importance of the Problem

The attributes of God are central to the doctrines of all monotheistic religions. Because the divine attributes are commonly viewed as necessarily interrelated, alternatives to the classical formulations are likely to have significant effects upon the theology (proper) of all such religions. Speculations concerning God's relationship to time have been pursued at an increasing rate in the last century. Since the 1970s, many philosophers of religion have begun to abandon the view that God is, or can be, timelessly (atemporally) eternal. Many theologians have begun to think along similar lines. If it is recognized that divine attributes affect one another, then it seems inescapable that a shift in the consensus from atemporality to temporality will have significant effects upon how other divine attributes are conceived, most notably divine omniscience and foreknowledge. Therefore, it is imperative that all options with regard to the divine temporal status be exposed as soon as possible in the debate. This thesis will attempt to reveal a perspective that has not yet been adequately explored. Moreover, it will be argued that this new proposal will have preeminence over those factors that have been previously considered to be most fundamental to the debate.

Statement of Position on the Problem

It is the position of this researcher that ignorance of the future, involving knowledge of a subject's inner thought life in particular, is identical with existential temporality. The

³ Ibid., 137.

consequences of this must be considered in any theory of time that involves subjects.⁴ As a direct result, this aspect, which will be termed *fore-ignorance*, is more fundamental to the debate than physical or logical/linguistic considerations where subjects are concerned. Not only are these other areas of discussion secondary, they must not have any proper influence upon this discussion until the new element being proposed here is properly considered.

To avoid a primary area of confusion, note carefully that it is the existential quality of *temporality* that distinguishes it from *time*. The former is under the jurisdiction of idealistic and phenomenological philosophy while the latter resides in the realm of physical science and metaphysical philosophy. In the former arena, temporality is best described as a form of ignorance. The implications of this, together with the preeminence of the methodology used in obtaining it, create a powerful prohibition that philosophers of religion, at minimum, should weigh seriously as they consider time, temporality, and related topics.

Limitations of the Research

This project touches upon topics that are difficult to grasp. Craig notes in the first sentence of a monograph on this topic that, “Those who think about time are thinking deeply. Those who think about God are thinking even more deeply still. Those who try to think about God and time are pressing the very limits of human understanding.”⁵ Nonetheless, it seems that philosophers, theologians, and many non-academics tread confidently into these waters. It is the

⁴ One may question whether these implications will hold for divine subjects. This will be addressed at length in chapter 5. At this point, however, it may be said that exempting divine subjects from this analysis will prove exceptionally difficult and would involve new speculations into the nature of divine life and thought that, in the opinion of this researcher, would be unable to avoid contradiction.

⁵ *Ibid.*, ix.

intention of this researcher to proceed soberly. In order to do this, the reader and author alike ought to be concerned with the following issues, and here, I acknowledge them.

While establishing context alone, the research ranges across multiple fields, each of which contain difficult concepts. And, as with God and time separately, the synthesis of all these elements is itself a difficult task. Additionally, as this project straddles multiple discussions within multiple fields, it also attempts to successfully create a new area of discussion and show why the other topics of discussion are subsequent to it. Because of these multiple and compounding factors of difficulty, the potential for error is great.

Conversely, and ironically, the core proposals that this paper makes are inherently simple. Once properly understood, it is anticipated that the argument will approach incorrigibility despite its difficult implications. This simplicity will work strongly to counteract the difficulties listed above. Therefore, because the key argument is simple and because its main manner of functioning will be to *bypass* the current state of the discussion, the analysis will not need to be as exhaustive (nor as exhausting) as might be supposed at the outset.

Nevertheless, it is also probable that this research will not be accepted readily by philosophers of time or religion. If it is difficult to satisfy one person, then the odds of pleasing many academics in multiple fields of study will multiply the challenge. The project is thus limited in its potential for success. However, this area of study is ripe for this line of argumentation and so this researcher sees a great opportunity. Additionally, because the effects are possibly far-reaching, there is also a deep passion and concern on the author's part. There is some cause for optimism that a small, sympathetic audience will be found.

CHAPTER 1

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Previous Analyses and Theories about Time and the Divine Temporal Status

At the heart of the majority of philosophical questions lies the status of time. Accordingly, philosophers from Parmenides to McTaggart have attempted to make sense of the time-related paradoxes that continuously arise in philosophical discourse. Views about what time is, in its metaphysical essence, have ranged between two extremes: full, ontological becoming and complete illusion. In the middle of these two extremes lie purely physical theories as well as purely (or mostly) mental and ideal theories. Current physical theories involve either Einsteinian Geometrodynamics or Quantum Mechanics. An older, though influential, alternative is found in Kantian philosophy and its descendants that idealize subjective or phenomenal time. Both of these quasi-middle-ground options allow for a future that exists “already” and a future that exists eternally along with every other moment in the space-time continuum and the *Ding an sich* (thing-in-itself or *noumena*) respectively.

Compatible with these eternalist views is another tradition begun a century ago by philosopher J. M. E. McTaggart who proposed in a 1908 paper that the three major tenses of time were part of an “A-series” and that the simple before-and-after relations of time, when

apprehended as chronological within the mind, were part of a “B-series.”⁶ Without the mind’s involvement, states of affairs are not temporal and can involve only the “C-series.”⁷ He argued that the A-series was essential to the reality of temporal becoming but that it was logically incompatible with the B-series. He concluded that the A-series was not ontologically real. While he did not, with respect to time, distinguish between subjective idealism and illusion, he did attempt to discard notions of the ontological and mind-independent reality of temporal becoming and, along with it, the opinion of C. D. Broad, his contemporary. Broad, followed after the Aristotelian tradition wherein the future is taken to be unreal. The present and past, according to Broad, are co-equally real.

The argument that McTaggart put forward is still being debated a century later with various different approaches working to make the case either for or against mind-independent temporal becoming. Due to subsequent research being done in the area of linguistics, defenders have modified McTaggart’s argument against temporal becoming. The result has been *the new tenseless theory of time* based upon the token reflexive account of tensed statements.⁸ Today, philosophers of time appear to fall into one of two crudely defined camps, *tensers* and *detensers*, which are divided primarily along the lines defined by McTaggart who is the father of the modern debate about time within the Analytic Tradition of philosophy.⁹

Coming from a completely different perspective, phenomenological and many Eastern philosophical accounts of time are poorly represented within the Philosophy of Time because

⁶ J. Ellis McTaggart, “The Unreality of Time,” *Mind*, New Series, 17:68. (Oct. 1908): 457-474.

⁷ J. M. E. McTaggart, “Time,” in *The Nature of Existence*, vol. II, ed. C. D. Broad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927), 30.

⁸ D. H. Mellor, *Real Time*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981. See also, *Real Time II*. New York: Routledge, 1998, and L. Nathan Oaklander and Quentin Smith, eds., *The New Theory of Time* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994).

⁹ Jeremy Butterfield, “Seeing the Present,” *Mind* 93 (1984): 161.

they do not seek to solve the metaphysical questions. Instead, phenomenologists ignore as irrelevant or non-existent the essences behind reality.

Therefore, with respect to time, the primary options that are being seriously considered to date fit within the following five categories:

1. Time is a physical phenomenon (mind-independent) with real cause-and-effect relationships determining a closed future.
 - a. The General Theory of Relativity posits time as a fourth dimension in a static or “block” universe. This view is similar to the B-series of McTaggart(5). Theorists have difficulty including the principles of Quantum Mechanics.¹⁰
 - b. Time is bound up with space as another, though unique, dimension of physical reality.
2. Time is a physical phenomenon with statistical (Quantum Mechanical) cause-and-effect relationships allowing for an open future.
 - a. Copenhagen Interpretation: allows for multiple branches of the future that are partially real and ephemeral resulting in a future that is open.
 - b. Everett Interpretation: allows for multiple branches of the future that are fully real and persistent resulting in a future that is taken to be open.
3. Time is a metaphysically real phenomenon allowing for an open future.
 - a. Linguistic arguments are made in attempts to logically entail the real existence of the A-series.
 - b. The A-series is thought to be ontologically real resulting in a fully-open future.¹¹
4. Time is ideal yet real. It is real, but internal to the mind and therefore closed in some sense and open in some sense.
 - a. The future of the real (noumenal) world may be closed while subjective (phenomenal) futures remain open. (cf., Immanuel Kant)
 - b. The intuition of time is real like pain is real, but only *as* what it is, an intuition.
 - c. Due to real antinomies arising from both Einsteinian physics and the coherence of statements about the future, various thinkers have thought the metaphysical problem to be irresolvable, causing them to fall back to the ideal nature of time.¹²

¹⁰ This is the perspective of many physicists that work either with Einsteinian Relativity and Geometrodynamics or with Quantum Mechanics. For an excellent summary of issues, see Karel Kuchar, “The Problem of Time in Quantum Geometrodynamics,” in *The Arguments of Time*, ed. Jeremy Butterfield (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 169-196.

¹¹ The tenses of language are thought to require real counterparts in time as a realist, not an idealist, conceives of time. See, Robin Le Poidevin, “Why Tenses Need Real Times,” in *Time, Tense, and Reference*, ed. Aleksander Jokic and Quentin Smith (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), 305-324.

¹² Yourgrau, 139. Note also, Kurt Gödel and his use of “intuitive time,” which he calls ideal and that is similar to the A-series, and Immanuel Kant who calls time an intuition, an inner, *a priori* perception.

5. Time is ideal but not metaphysically real; it is completely illusory. The future is closed.
 - a. The A-series is unreal metaphysically.
 - b. Modern, Western analyses here are based around the idealistic arguments of McTaggart.¹³

Philosophers of Religion, for the most part, make claims to the effect that “scientific accounts describe our *measures* of time, but not time *itself*,”¹⁴ and rightly reject physical theories of time as complete descriptions of the basis for any divine temporal status. Such philosophers have, for the past several decades, looked to philosophers of time for metaphysical insights about the ontology of time in order to formulate their own theories. Of course, this is not a new practice; philosophical theories about time had influenced the thinking of such theologians as Augustine, Boethius, Anselm, Aquinas, and many others. Their thinking revolved around two different philosophical topics. First, Greek philosophy, from the early Pythagoreans and Atomists to the Stoics with strong emphasis on Aristotle, strongly influenced philosophers and theologians to consider time as a container.¹⁵ This influence was felt not only by medieval philosophers and theologians, but also directly and indirectly by early modern philosophers and physicists.¹⁶ Second, human freedom was a major consideration within metaphysics and, for various reasons, many philosophers of religion sought to protect this feature as they prepared formulae for the divine attributes.

¹³ McTaggart was an idealist despite the fact that his arguments are influential among realists, like the Positivists, within the Analytic tradition.

¹⁴ Craig, *Time and Eternity*, 66. See also Craig’s monograph explaining why the physical theories of Einstein do not deal with *real* time. *Time and the Metaphysics of Relativity*, Philosophical Studies Series 84 (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001).

¹⁵ Thomas F. Torrance, *Space, Time and Incarnation* (Edinburgh, Scotland: T&T Clark, 1997), 4-8. In addition to Torrance’s excellent analysis, it should be mentioned that this is a spatializing of time that, ultimately, proves incoherent. To imagine two distinct, neighboring spatial zones (areas) such that one zone experiences real temporal becoming and one not, the only plausible solution is to view the atemporal zone as simply static, or unchanged from t1 to t2. Since the alternative is to imagine the temporal becoming of the other zone to be, metaphysically, unreal, the container notion cannot be anything other than a misleading analogy.

¹⁶ Wolfhart Pannenberg, “Eternity, Time, and Space,” *Zygon* 40:1 (2005): 105.

More recently, the temporal status of God is thought to lie within one of four major options:

1. A Temporal God: God experiences temporal becoming in a manner identical with or similar to human beings and the rest of the physical universe. This God is considered omnitemporal because of the limitless “before” and “after” that he possesses/experiences.
2. A Relatively-Timeless God: God is “in” the same temporal container but does not change in any way and so retains immutability omnitemporally.¹⁷
3. A Timelessly Eternal God: This God is “outside” of time completely. God is not only eternal, but is “in eternity.” From this vantage point, God sees all moments in time, as it were, all at once.¹⁸
4. A God Who Changes Temporal Status: This proposal sees God existing in the relatively timeless mode (2) before creation and then posits a transformation to the omnitemporal mode (1) after creation.¹⁹

This multiplication of options has occurred not merely because of an increase in the number of options within the Philosophy of Time, but because of problems that have been found in the classical formulation. In fact, criticism of divine timeless eternity (the classical view: Augustine, Boethius, Anselm, Aquinas) has become widespread to the effect that most of the arguments put forward in defense of divine timeless eternity have lost favor or become marginalized in the past two decades.

Since that time, Brian Leftow has cataloged sixteen arguments in favor of divine timeless eternity that have served as the standard for subsequent critics.²⁰ This list has been thoroughly

¹⁷ Alan G. Padgett, “God the Lord of Time: A Third Model of Eternity as Relative Timelessness,” *Philosophia Christi* 2 (Summer 2000): 11-20.

¹⁸ Following strong Platonic themes and a rich history of timelessness in the Ultimate Principle, Augustine, et al., first conceived of the Christian God as timelessly eternal. This view was championed by Boethius, expanding on the thought of Augustine, and was later endorsed by Anselm and Aquinas. The recent presentation and defense of divine timeless eternity has been initiated in the 1980s by Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann in “Eternity,” *Journal of Philosophy* 78 (1981), 429-458.

¹⁹ Craig, *God, Time and Eternity*, 267-280.

²⁰ Brian Leftow, *Time and Eternity*, Cornell Studies in the Philosophy of Religion (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), ch. 12.

vitiating by several opponents, most notably William Lane Craig. In his critique, Craig left only one option with anything but a modicum of validity. Specifically, the twelfth argument given by Leftow, the problem of *Timelessness and Time's Tooth*, presented Craig with enough difficulty to prevent him from offering a sufficient rebuttal. Or, if one is inclined to accept his rebuttal, it must be noted that the counterargument against Leftow's twelfth is significantly weaker than the rebuttals offered for Leftow's other fifteen arguments.²¹

The *Time's Tooth* argument in favor of divine timeless eternity is based upon Boethius' definition of timeless eternity as a full and complete possession of endless life that is not divided into moments of time.²² In contrast, for the remaining lot of creatures who are temporal, past moments are removed from present consciousness except for memory. The classic example of *Time's Tooth* involves the loss of a loved one who is taken away forever except for the sweet memories of past moments spent together. Leftow's argument proposes that, if God were temporal, he too would be separated from his past moments, and so, would not possess his life all-at-once. Worse, such a God would not be capable of accessing past moments except by memory, and would therefore be somewhat less omnipotent than a timelessly eternal God.

Clearly, such an argument rests upon what time is to the subject. In other words, it deals with questions like, "What does it feel like to be temporal?" and "To what is a temporal subject allowed access?" The existential, internal, and subjective nature of this argument in favor of divine timelessness, that even Craig calls "really promising,"²³ has been received as a significant clue by the current researcher and has led to the present project.

²¹ Craig, *God, Time and Eternity*, 32-39.

²² Boethius *Consolation of Philosophy* V.6.4. "Aeternitas igitur est interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio," eternity is the complete possession, all at once, of life without end.

²³ Craig, *God, Time and Eternity*, 32.

Comparison of Methodologies

The remainder of this project will involve an attempt to formulate a new argument that stems from existential considerations similar to Leftow's twelfth. This new proposal will not only attempt to carve a new category into the Philosophy of Time, but will also seek to apply the insight where it is anticipated to be most relevant, as a strong prescription upon formulations of the divine temporal status.

More specifically, the forthcoming proposal will specifically and thoroughly answer the question, "To what does a temporal subject have access?" The extent or degree of this access will also be considered as relevant, but not essential to temporal experience. This proposal will be followed by an investigation of the various repercussions within the Philosophy of Religion regarding the divine temporal status.

The first implication of such an approach deals specifically with its nature, or methodology. It is recognized, preliminarily, that such a course, being existential or phenomenological, divorces theories concerning the ontology of time from the effects of temporality upon subjects. As a result, rather than focusing upon the logical structures and "features of our experience of time that seem to require that time be tensed," which lie at the heart of the current linguistics-based debate,²⁴ the current project will show that phenomenologically valid evidence may be successfully used in an argument that does not rely upon logic within a linguistic context, that does not lead to metaphysical conclusions, and that is not dependent upon the features of metaphysical essences. This necessitates a hard distinction between *time* and *temporality*. The former would relate to the metaphysical essence of time itself

²⁴ L. Nathan Oaklander, "Introduction: The Problem of Our Experience of Time," in *The New Theory of Time*, ed. L. Nathan Oaklander and Quentin Smith (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 289.

and involve physical and metaphysical reality. The latter would involve taking the internal perspective from within subjects, the exploration of what this experience is, and what implications this description can have in subsequent studies.

This approach is similar to the Husserlian suspension of objective time that begins by isolating and working only with that evidence which is given in present consciousness. As such, the analysis is not only pre-scientific, but also pre-metaphysical.²⁵ This similarity is not complete, for the project goes beyond the phenomenological description of temporality as it considers the implications of the phenomenologically obtained description. While there is much dependence upon Husserl for the primary direction of this research, it proceeds beyond his version of phenomenological methodology by means of analytic argumentation in order to reach its conclusions within the Philosophy of Religion. Thus, a two-stage methodology will be employed.

The initial methodology proceeds via exploration of the “noetic-noemic” structures of consciousness. This is the attempt to characterize and analyze the relations between the contents of consciousness (ideas) before one proceeds to consider whether the referents of any idea has an ontological correlate. This is the “eidetic reduction.” It is the full exploration of what is available directly to consciousness in the very form that they are grasped by consciousness.²⁶ This was Husserl’s area of exploration, “The domain of the meaning-correlates of conscious acts and their interconnections and binding laws.”²⁷ Unlike the project that begins with Cartesian doubt, the phenomenological project begins by temporarily suspending judgment about the metaphysical

²⁵ Edmund Husserl, *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1893-1917)*, trans. John Barnett Brough (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1992), 4-6. Husserl’s relationship to the traditional metaphysical project is debatable. While he did not reject the possibility of ultimately reaching metaphysical conclusions in the modernist sense, he did attempt to work within a preliminary methodology.

²⁶ Robert Sokolowski, “Edmund Husserl,” *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, 2nd edit., ed. Robert Audi (New York, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999), 405. See also, Fernando Molina, *Existentialism as Philosophy* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1962), 47, 50. See also Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*.

reality of the outside world, obtaining a thorough understanding of ideas *as* ideas, and *only then* moving on to ontological speculation.

At this point Phenomenology must be defended from two different directions. Analytic philosophers have accused Husserl's philosophy of being introspectionism, mysticism, irrational intuition, and unregulated complaining; these amount to unfair mischaracterizations that simply misunderstand or do not take into account the details mentioned above.²⁸ From the other direction, surprisingly, Phenomenology has also been misinterpreted by its own descendents.

Indeed, as much as one has to defend phenomenology from various misinterpretations current among analytic philosophers, there is equally a growing need to distinguish the more disciplined practice of phenomenology from some of the more baroque elements present in current Continental theorising, which seem to regard unregulated assertion as the fundamental mode of philosophising. Even some of the best practitioners of phenomenology have been guilty of sloppy talk in relation to the phenomenological approach. For instance... Merleau-Ponty.²⁹

Paul Ricoeur has even said that "the history of phenomenology is the history of Husserlian heresies."³⁰ Ironically, Ricoeur, who admired and followed Merleau-Ponty, is guilty of deviating from the master as well.³¹

Returning to the methodology of the current project. The second phase involves a return to real-world implications in some sense. However, due to the nature of the subject of study, the move is not a large one. In some sense, one foot must stay within Phenomenology as the other takes a step just outside of its bounds.

In seeking to examine the evidence found only in *present* experience, the phenomenologist is already asking questions that relate and depend upon existential temporality

²⁷ Dermot Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 16.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Paul Ricoeur, *A l'école de la phénoménologie* (Paris: Vrin, 1987), 9. "Si bien que la phénoménologie au sens large est la somme de l'oeuvre husserlienne et des hérésies issues de Husserl." Translated in Moran, 3.

³¹ Moran, 432.

in *clear distinction* from possibilities for the essence of time itself. In other words, because valid evidence in this project excludes things found in memory, except *as* memorial, it is already grappling with subjective time issues and making distinctions along the lines of the tenses. However, the extension of these observations into the essence of the outside world is not thereby established. For this reason, this paper will not attempt to support any particular metaphysical view of time, but only the way in which temporality is created and the epistemological limits it places upon temporal subjects. In this way, real-world *limits* may be deduced from phenomenological realizations.

At this point linguistics ought to be addressed. Moving from linguistics to metaphysics is unlikely to be unwarranted. *A priori* conclusions, being based upon the truth of statements about the future, are restricted epistemologically and are, as a result, dependent upon empirical data for verification. Thus, the *a priori* conclusions rest upon certain states of affairs in the future that are only revealed at a later time (*a posteriori*). This style of argumentation masquerades as analytic when it is, in actuality, synthetic. In this form, such arguments do not possess the capability to provide information about the status of metaphysical time. Despite the fact that this methodology dominates Philosophy of Time currently, it appears to this researcher to be inherently incapable of revealing real insights into the essence of time.

Instead, the methodology of the current project, by presenting a significant feature of existential temporality, has the potential to be more relevant to questions concerning the implications of time upon subjects. Having the most applicability within the Philosophy of

Religion, this approach may also be relevant in areas of metaphysics that also deal with subjects such as the Philosophy of Action.³²

It is anticipated that this radical departure in methodology, both from the linguistic and physical arms of the Philosophy of Time, as well as the study of the divine temporal status within the Philosophy of Religion, will be vindicated by the success of the argument being presented. Despite the commonly-held belief that abstractions leading into metaphysics thereby lead to important features of reality with the ultimate power of causation for how human beings experience that reality, there is precedent for redirecting attention to, or back to, the immediate world of experience.³³ Relating specifically to temporal issues, despite the previous insistence by tenseless theorists that the *experience* of the A-series is not at issue in itself, and that the object of the study of time is legitimate only if it leads to conclusions about time ontologically,³⁴ it is presumed that the conclusions of this current project will be adequately supported by coherent argument and that the implications of the conclusions will be significant and difficult to avoid.

However, the result of this line of argumentation will *not* be a new argument working in favor of a particular ontological status for time or a particular divine temporal status. Instead, if the argument with regard to existential temporality is accepted, the result will primarily be in the form of a categorical prohibition. Most notably, for divine subjects, a disallowance of certain combinations of positions with regard to the divine temporal status and the existence and nature of divine foreknowledge will be given. However, while not the main direction of this project,

³² Briefly, because action theory deals with free will and agency, the current phenomenological theory of temporality is relevant because it affects how philosophers might view freedom. As will be argued later, the experience of freedom, like temporality, is most fundamentally described in terms of fore-ignorance.

³³ James W. Felt, "Epochal Time and the Continuity of Experience," *The Review of Metaphysics* 56:1 (2002), 36.

³⁴ Clifford Williams, "The Phenomenology of B-Time," in *The New Theory of Time*, ed. L. Nathan Oaklander and Quentin Smith (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 360-372.

implications for the Philosophy of Time will necessarily be great and will be commented upon as is necessary throughout the progression of the argument.

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Now that reference to relevant topics within the field have been adequately given, it is time to begin the presentation of the new argument. The next chapter will present this argument and provide a conceptual basis for it. After this, the following chapter will make use of a thought experiment to further establish the new argument and will conclude with a series of progressive, informal logical arguments. The chapter after that will present the most rigorous defense of the argument that can be mustered by this researcher at this time. Next, a thorough discussion of possible problems and counterarguments, with special attention to Molinism, will be undertaken. Finally, conclusions will be discussed to draw the entire project back into perspective.

CHAPTER 2

PRESENTATION OF A NEW ARGUMENT

We do not rest satisfied with the present. We anticipate the future as too slow in coming, as if in order to hasten its course; or we recall the past, to stop its too rapid flight ... if [the present] be delightful to us, we regret to see it pass away. We try to sustain it by the future and think of arranging matters which are not in our power, for a time which we have no certainty of reaching. – Blaise Pascal³⁵

Let each one examine his thoughts, and he will find them all occupied with the past and the future. We scarcely ever think of the present; and if we think of it, it is only to take light from it to arrange the future. The present is never our end. The past and the present are our means; the future alone is our end. So we never live, but we hope to live; and, as we are always preparing to be happy, it is inevitable we should never be so. – Blaise Pascal³⁶

Pascal, arguably the first existentialist, here begins a tradition that pays special heed to the effect time has upon the subject. He recognizes that human beings are unique in their ability to contemplate their futures, but focuses upon the lack of control and inherent risk that this involves without first addressing what time or temporality are. He also notices that there is a juxtaposition of the subject's anticipation of the future with a concurrent lack of the future. That is, the subject has a lack of actual future experience or first-person knowledge in the present, but is simultaneously seeking it. Most existentialists have hinted that time is, in fact, *the* most significant feature of human experience. Of course, this realization is not exclusive to

³⁵ Pascal, Blaise, *Pensees*, section II: "The Misery of Man Without God," no. 172, trans. W. F. Trotter.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

existentialists, for even Kant gave time a special co-status, together with space, as preeminent above the rest of his categories of experience. Yet, particularly with later existentialists, it constituted a special ingredient to the very core of what the subject is. Thus, rather than positing the influence of time upon subjects, the existentialists have gone further and connected time with being.

Time has figured prominently in the writings of Pascal, Kierkegaard, Husserl, Heidegger, and Sartre, who were the most notable thinkers in this tradition. These men subjugated ontology, as a metaphysical concern, beneath the features of experience; unlike their contemporaries and the philosophical systems they inherited, they focused upon subjectivity. The addition of this new perspective was highly beneficial because, especially with regard to temporality and related issues, the metaphysical essence of anything is less important to subjects than its effects upon subjects.

Accordingly, the metaphysical features of time, when they have no influence upon the subject, matter little. In cases where phenomena are the same within multiple metaphysical systems, one wonders what the purpose of referencing such systems could be. Wittgenstein once asked why anyone would believe the sun went around the earth. The response, of course, was that this is how it looks. In response, he asked how it would look if the earth went round the sun.³⁷ Of course, with regard to the sun and earth, the real answer does have implications, but there are many situations that are not affected and it should be recognized which questions these are. This has been the base presupposition of Husserlian philosophers for the past century. This disposition in philosophy does not necessarily lead to the denial of the benefits of technologies that come out of a scientific realism based in Greek metaphysics, but it can be useful to question

³⁷ Gregory Currie, "Can There be a Literary Philosophy of Time?" in *The Arguments of Time*, ed. Jeremy Butterfield (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 49-50.

the certainty with which some system builders were making pronouncements and ruling out world views.

Despite the generally correct attitude of its founder, the work of continental thinkers, beginning with the transformation of Husserl's vision by Heidegger, rapidly diverged into myriad courses that proved unrelated to the original plan of Husserl and even began to alter his methodology into something that eventually became almost unrecognizable.³⁸ Today, phenomenologists are attempting to re-form around the original intent of Phenomenology. As an example of this movement, the call for papers for the 2008 international conference of the society for the study of Existential and Phenomenological Theory and Culture (EPTC) includes this exact aim as its very theme:

Back to the Things Themselves! is an attempt to temporarily liberate ourselves from textual exegesis, and return to the lived world to divine the essential structures of experience through rigorous phenomenological description. Husserl's call to return *zu der Sachen selbst* has only been intermittently heeded by subsequent generations of phenomenologists, the majority of which have generally focused on contributing to and elaborating on the enormous critical apparatus issuing from the founding texts of the movement. What *Back to the Things Themselves!* proposes is to build on the important contributions of such scholarship by using them to guide our reflections on phenomena in the lifeworld.³⁹

Before this divergence, the last continental philosopher to have done serious phenomenological work in describing temporality was Jean-Paul Sartre.⁴⁰ Though he diverged from Husserl at many points, his approach at least begins with a truly phenomenological method, and proceeds via a strategy of non-disassembly. He states, "The only possible method by which to study temporality is to approach it as a totality which dominates its secondary structures and

³⁸ Moran, 3, 5, 194.

³⁹ "Call For Papers: EPTC Vancouver, 2008," EPTC website < http://eptc-tcep.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=12&Itemid=26> (19 November 2007)

⁴⁰ Heidegger, in some ways, rebelled against Husserl. According to Moran, Heidegger influenced both Levinas and Sartre causing them to see being as objectivity, a thing that negates or resists consciousness (Moran, 17). However, Sartre, as will be shown, did legitimate phenomenological work in establishing those foundational parts of his system that will be discussed at some length below.

which confers on them their meaning.”⁴¹ This strategy involves the pursuit of an intuition about the being of temporality, as distinct from time, by means of a phenomenological and “pre-ontological” description that is provisional and that allows for the pursuit of an intuition of time as a whole. While Sartre goes on to describe the three tenses “ontologically,”⁴² he does so by means of the subject, anthropologically, never addressing the fundamental (metaphysical) essence of time except as it pertains, tangentially, to subjects.⁴³

Thus, we see in Sartre a positive turn in temporal studies within Existentialism and Phenomenology, as distinct from the Philosophy of Time. Before this point, the work of the Existentialists was misdirected and had been from its inception. Temporality can be dealt with in many ways, yet the most existentially relevant aspect of temporality is not, against Pascal et al., a lack of *control* over the future, but a lack of *knowledge* of the future. Not until Sartre does this realization begin to take on a prominent role. He argues at length that the future, in any real form, does not exist within the subject at the present. Sartre is most emphatic when he states that the subject cannot possess the future, except as a guess, without ceasing to *be* a subject, without becoming an object:

The For-itself [the subject] can not be ‘pregnant with the future’ nor ‘expectant of the future,’ nor can it be ‘a knowledge of the future’ except on the basis of an original and prejudicative relation of itself to itself. We can not conceive for the For-itself the slightest possibility of a thematic foresight, not even that of determined states in a scientific universe, unless it is the being which comes to itself in terms of the future, the being which makes itself exist as having its being outside itself in the future... The For-itself is a lack. The possible [future] is that which the For-itself lacks in order to be itself.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay in Phenomenological Ontology*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), 107.

⁴² Sartre uses the term “ontology” in a phenomenological sense. Thus, temporality and the tenses are explored as existing within consciousness, but not necessarily mind-independently. The move to the mind-independence of temporal becoming is a subsequent one that need not color these concepts, nor preclude their use in the current project.

⁴³ Sartre, 107.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 125.

Thus, *presence of future knowledge* is antithetical to the For-itself that constitutes the human subject. The only form of future knowledge allowed to the subject, as Sartre argues above, is that of third-person testimony. The future must remain future, as the unknown, if the For-itself is to remain “in flight.”

Because the topic has turned to the question of access to knowledge of future states of affairs, the mind of the analytic philosopher may, at this point, be drawn to the issue of backward causation as a possible means of the future’s effect upon the present. A view known as *temporal externalism* suggests that the future can have causal power over the subject in the present by determining the truth value of the content of present thoughts and statements. This view seems to have survived multiple counter arguments and has been relatively successful despite the fact that backward causation is rather counter-intuitive.⁴⁵ Yet, this view does not deal directly with subjective experience. Instead, the causal relationship in question involves the truth value of so-called “soft facts.” Such effects are not effects in the normal sense because they do not have the power to make physical or metaphysical changes. Instead, epistemological changes, after-the-fact revelations, are in mind. To the matter at hand, backward causation of this sort does not have the power to alter how the subject experiences soft facts in the present. Therefore, this appears to be a dead end as a defeater to Sartre’s argument.

Sartre has taken the description of temporality only so far, however. He has provided a phenomenological methodology and has pursued it to a conclusion that must be seen as partial or incomplete. It is possible to take a similar path and proceed further to a description of temporality that is less of a simile and more of a synonym, and perhaps even a definition.

Lack of Knowledge Describes Temporality

As will be argued in this paper, the fact that temporal subjects do not know their own future thoughts, deeds, and experiences, except as anticipations and resolutions, is the most fundamental aspect of existential temporality.⁴⁶ This is its defining element. Therefore, after it is concluded preliminarily that the subjective effects of temporality are more significant to subjects than is its underlying metaphysical essence, the first foundational thesis of this project can be presented: with regard to the phenomenological essence of temporality, lack of *control* is secondary to lack of *knowledge* of the future. Within the methodology of Phenomenology, the latter is a better description because it has more thoroughly unfolded the phenomenon called temporality. Lack of control speaks more to the implications of temporality than to its identity.

Life, in the temporal mode, has a “dark side.” In the healthy and normal condition of a human being, as a temporal subject, there exist moments that are entirely hidden from view even while they are presumed to exist. It is by and through this epistemologically and inductively impenetrable “zone,” which is actually the set of unknown moments, that subjects know time at all. This is the second foundational thesis of this project, which will be discussed at length and from several different perspectives. At each moment, “normal” temporal subjects believe that it is “now,” and they also possess memories of it being “now” before that time. Yet, they do not possess knowledge of it being “now” after that time. The future “begins” at the edge of the unknown after this fashion. Those experiences that are currently known are part of the subject’s

⁴⁵ T. Stoneham, “Temporal Externalism,” *Philosophical Papers* 1 (2003): 97-107.

⁴⁶ Knowledge of the future must here be distinguished from guesses about the future. For example, one may resolve to perform an action or presently know facts that are anticipated to be known in the future, but both of these presuppose, at least, consciousness in the future. In the first case, however, new information could always arise that would change one’s resolutions. Thus, one could be convinced that a greater good would be served by breaking the resolution. Or, one could know $2+2=4$ at present, and believe he will also know this fact tomorrow, but then lapse into a coma lasting 24 hours.

present and past. Those that are not are part of the subject's future. In this way, subjects have direct, phenomenological access to the tenses of experience, which shall hereafter be termed the existential A-series. Such a series must be viewed as distinct from the A-series (proper) that is discussed within the Philosophy of Time and is meant as a metaphysically and physically basic feature of reality that obtains even in the absence of subjects. While it may be caused by a metaphysically real A-series, the existential A-series is not dependent upon it. This interesting feature of the existential series will be established as the argument is fleshed out below. Preliminarily, however, it can be anticipated that this has the potential to provide independence from metaphysical questions and answers.

At this point it should be mentioned that a corollary existential B-series may also be put forward. However, the proper B-series already possesses an inherently subjective character. As contrasted with the C-series, which one might view as bare positional matters of fact in the real world without cause-and-effect relationships, the B-series could be defined as awareness of temporal order in the minds of subjects. At this point, the question of causation between objects and events within space-time becomes a possibility. Nevertheless, issues going beyond the three major tense relationships are a tangential consideration at this point. The important element of the two B-series is how they may *enhance* the experience of temporality, once they are in place, by allowing depth to temporality and by allowing for recognition of patterns that are subsequently recognized as temporal causation.

Internal to the mind of the subject, the B-series is constituted by knowledge of before-and-after relationships for all memories of "now" moments that are only as a result of this relationship believed to lead up to and include the subject's present "now." In this way, the chronological order of memories may be known by the subject. By virtue of the embedded meta-

data of chronological order for each memory, the subject is able to construct a personal, linear world line, or timeline. Only by virtue of this ordering is one able to detect cause-and-effect relationships among events possessed as memorial, occurrent knowledge. This is overlooked by Craig when he states that,

No B-theorist has successfully defended that theory against the incoherence that if external becoming is mind-dependent, still the subjective experience of becoming is objective, that is, there is an objective succession of contents of consciousness, so that becoming in the mental realm is real.⁴⁷

By limiting his analysis to the physical and metaphysical, he has overlooked a dominant feature of the phenomenological situation and failed to see that the proper A-series is allowed to be either real or not real without altering the result. Copleston paraphrases Aristotle to similar effect, “Even a change in one’s own state of mind may enable us to recognise a lapse of time.”⁴⁸ As Craig’s remark suggests, the perspective he takes seems to be the general mindset of the philosophical descendants of Aristotle and is likely to be the greatest obstacle to philosophers as they consider the claim that fore-ignorance sufficiently describes the experience and that it may create this effect regardless of the status of A-time.

Nevertheless, the above analysis is offered as an introductory establishment of the core definition of temporality. It is a mode of existence characterized by knowledge of the past and present without knowledge of the future at each moment of life.⁴⁹ This is significantly enhanced by knowledge of chronological ordering of memorial knowledge, but is not dependent upon it. Of the three types of moments, named by the major tenses, there is a perpetual state of “yes, yes, no” with regard to the presence of knowledge about the past, present, and future respectively.

⁴⁷ William Lane Craig, “What Place, Then, for a Creator?: Hawking on God and Creation,” *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 41 (1990): 485.

⁴⁸ Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 1: Greece and Rome (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 322. He is paraphrasing the remarks of Aristotle in *Physics* Δ II, 219 b 1-2ff; 220 a 24-25ff.

⁴⁹ The presence of any past moment is, of course, excluded in the case of the first moment of awareness.

This, fundamentally, defines temporality existentially. Regardless of what time is, in itself, this is what time is to the subject.

Temporal subjects have access to beliefs about past moments in the present. These past selves are no longer identical with the present self. They are gone, presumably never to be revisited. Subjects only have third-person access to their own past, first-person moments. “Only the *living present* of transcendental subjectivity is given in apodictic evidence; beyond the lived present, there extends a *presumptive horizon*... which includes the Ego’s past.”⁵⁰ This is the effect of *Time’s Tooth*. It is a robbery from ourselves of our own selves by the temporal manner of existence. Or, it is the cutting off of our present self, from all past selves.

In the language of Hermann Minkowski and most subsequent physicists, human beings are actually four-dimensional space-time worms that exist in three spatial dimensions and one temporal dimension, which, from a higher or *hypertemporal* perspective appears to be an eternal and unchanging status. From this perspective, temporality serves to segment the worm and renders human beings as quasi-annelids by means of systematically arranged presence or absence of knowledge.

Obviously, segmentation is a bad thing. While we intuitively understand that spatial segmentation is undesirable, it takes some reflection to appreciate what temporal segmentation does and why it is so unappealing. Thus, we have arrived again at the problem of *Time’s Tooth*. This is, in part, the “thrownness” and “ex-istence” with which existentialists since Heidegger have grappled. We’re not just cut off from “the other,” we are cut off from ourselves. Even our own present existence is specious. Thus, the *Time’s Tooth* effect is considered to be a serious

⁵⁰ Fernando Molina, *Existentialism as Philosophy* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1962), 47-48.

“problem,” and it is often appreciated as unsuitable for a divine subject. This concept is at the core of Leftow’s twelfth argument for divine timeless eternity.⁵¹

In spite of this dire situation, ironically, this is the very aspect of temporality that animates the subject. In a sense, the subject is evicted from the “now” and forced into the new “now” as the old “now” becomes “then.” Sartre uses the analogy of being in flight to characterize the life of the For-itself as presence.⁵² Without such a movement, it is commonly assumed and often argued that the subject could not be said to be alive. Any being that does not change also does not live. In abbreviated form, this is the rebuttal with which Craig meets the problem of *Time’s Tooth* in God. And, for human subjects, even if physical space-time is four-dimensional and even if metaphysical time is restricted to the B-series, the perceived movement of the subject through time is a real and necessary precondition for perceived life. When attempting to solve the riddle of time’s real nature and while attempting to preserve real animation and life, this becomes a serious conundrum that either devolves into an infinite regress of hyper times or finally settles into the concrete of eternity.⁵³

Nonetheless, from the existentialist perspective, the outcome of this debate is less important to the subject than what it means to be a subject that finds himself “restricted” to the “here” and “now.” Whether or not the movement of time is occurring at the most basic level of reality, whether or not temporal becoming is an ontologically basic feature, the sensation of movement would not exist without a key epistemological ingredient. Ignorance of the subject’s own future along with knowledge of the subject’s past is a *sufficient condition* for the known

⁵¹ Leftow, 278.

⁵² Sartre, 125.

⁵³ L. Nathan Oaklander, “Introduction: McTaggart’s Paradox and the Tensed Theory of Time,” in *The New Theory of Time*, ed. L. Nathan Oaklander and Quentin Smith (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 161. See also, Donald C. Williams, “The Myth of Passage,” *The Journal of Philosophy* 48:15 (1951): 457-472.

effect, which is the sensation of animation. And, this condition may obtain whether or not temporal movement is ontologically real.

The perception of temporal order and patterns taken to be cause-and-effect order within the subject's environment may enhance this effect, but they are not necessary for it. Subjects without long-term memory, amnesia, do exist and function reasonably well in the present, but only while their short-term memories function. Subjects without short term memory in addition to long term memory probably could not be called conscious. While it is debatable whether or not the barest form of perception can exist entirely without the function of memory,⁵⁴ it is concluded that meaningful awareness is impossible.

If the appearance of cause-and-effect that is embedded within memories of past events is added to the analysis, then temporal phenomena are seen to possess all of the features that philosophers and scientists have come to recognize in temporality, namely, the experiences of anisotropy and temporal becoming. Therefore, regardless of ontological status of becoming, whether or not the A-series is real, this existential aspect of temporality is of far more importance because it "cuts to the chase" and focuses on that aspect of time that is of the highest *consequence*. This is the third foundational thesis of this project. The ontological status of time may be set aside for the purposes of this analysis because it does not alter the effect of temporality upon beings that are temporal. In other words, the effect is already known, the ontology is not known. Husserl said, "the time we assume is the immanent time of the flow of consciousness, not the time of the experienced world."⁵⁵ Thus, while the ontology may or may not have influence over "the time we assume," the implications of temporal experience will always be more securely justified than those implications that are subsequent to speculations into

⁵⁴ Arthur Falk, "Time Plus the Whoosh and Whiz," in *Time, Tense, and Reference*, ed. Aleksander Jokic and Quentin Smith (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), 234.

ontology. Whether or not temporal becoming is real or mind-dependent, the existential character of temporality is more germane to many of the discussions about time including the main issue to be considered later in this paper, God's relationship to time. Moreover, as will be shown, both the description and the implications of temporality appear to obtain in multiple metaphysical situations just as is the case with the state of the physical world.⁵⁶ Thus, the conclusions of this paper will hold regardless of the success of the various theories about metaphysical time. The next step is to work out the implications of this realization in a thought experiment.

⁵⁵ Husserl, *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time*, 5.

⁵⁶ Molina, 38.

CHAPTER 3

A THOUGHT EXPERIMENT: ACHIEVING THE TEMPORAL OBJECTIVE

The claims made in the previous chapter require support. This will be obtained, in this chapter, by means of a thought experiment that will be presented in both a general and a rigorous form. Presentation of the experiment itself will be very brief, but consideration of its implications will require some discussion. In chapter four, the conclusions will be bolstered by a more thorough look into the epistemological features that allow for tense recognition.

Temporal subjects are tempted to think about time as being necessary for thought and life. Yet, when ignorance of the future is eliminated, if it is the fundamental cause of existential temporality, it is doubtful whether anything like temporality can be retained. If one were to remove from the temporal mode of experiencing life *all* barriers to knowledge of the subject's own future, including inner thought life, how would experience of life be different? As a thought experiment, consider this situation carefully. What would the subject experience if he knew the future that will, ultimately, come to pass with regard to his own actions, experiences, and thoughts? If all of the first-person data that was ever to stream into the subject's consciousness and all of the thoughts that the subject would ever have were known in advance, how would the subject's experience of time change?

It is here put forward that the subject would not have a sense of time because knowledge would not change with time, nor would he have a sense of freedom because all decisions would be known in advance.⁵⁷ Furthermore, he would have no basis for knowing, verifying, or distinguishing indexical knowledge with regard to time. That is, he would be unable to distinguish one “now” from another because the basis for such a distinction would be removed. Knowledge of the future and the past, when it is first-person and complete, dissolves the concept of the present; such knowledge must destroy the existential A-series.

Defining the Terms of the Experiment and Preliminary Discussion

Immediately, the ingredients in this thought experiment must be clarified if the conclusions are to be seen as unavoidable. First, this experiment does not deal with modal states of affairs. Potential futures are not considered. Regardless of what is possible (ontologically or epistemologically), or what is known or stated, the future under consideration is the one that *will* obtain, or will be possessed by that subject.⁵⁸ This future is the one that will later be thought of as the unalterable past by that subject. It is knowledge of *this* future that would destroy temporality as a mode of experience. Thus, this strategy detours around Aristotelian-style linguistic analyses that depend upon modal features. Logical investigations into whether or not a statement about the future is now true are attempting to ontologize ignorance. No logical deduction can reveal the truth value of a statement about the future before it becomes present in cases where the subject is fore-ignorant. That is because an *a priori* deduction contains the

⁵⁷ The issue here is the sensation of freedom and not the metaphysical status of the will, the agent, the action, the choice, or the deliberation.

⁵⁸ The presence of false memories and foreknowledge (forebelief) will have the same effect if and only if the subject does not later learn that they have been false.

information of the conclusion within the premises. If the future is not contained in the present, then it cannot be deduced from it. However, epistemologically closed “zones” are not necessarily closed ontologically. Fore-ignorance is capable of bypassing this issue through a capacity to be established and have its implications regardless of one’s decision as to the openness of the future.

Second, the manner in which this knowledge is obtained, it must be noted, is irrelevant to the conclusion. The only aspects of this future knowledge that matter are its extent and quality. The subject under consideration must know his own future. This must include thoughts, deeds, and experience. The subject must also know enough of this future so that his knowledge *does not change with time*. This is an essential factor in the experiment. The subject does not learn anything new with each passing moment because all of his knowledge is possessed in advance when all fore-ignorance is removed.

This conclusion may be rejected by means of a psychological event that is and must be unique to a time. In this case, one is proposing a distinction between two types of first-person knowledge. This is a distinction between what is experienced “now” (what will here be termed “class 1” first-person knowledge)⁵⁹ and what is remembered as being an experience of “now” that has occurred in the past (“class 2” first-person knowledge). In the current project, foreknowledge, like memories, would also possess the characteristics of class 2. The conclusions of the thought experiment entail that class 1 is created by the absence of future knowledge and that it is *not* possible to possess class 1 knowledge if this absence is removed.

For the distinction between class 1 and 2 to be legitimate, it would first have to overcome the phenomenological analysis of Sartre that was mentioned previously. In brief review, Sartre realized that the presence of a specific form of future knowledge within the subject is capable of

⁵⁹ Class 1 first-person knowledge may also be thought of as indexical knowledge. For the sake of contrast and clarity of presentation, however, the terminology used here must differ.

destroying the subject. This specific form of future knowledge is of the class 2 type. Sartre's conclusion was amended in this present work so that the presence of future knowledge of this sort (class 2) results, not in destruction, but in a change in mode of experience from temporal to something other than temporal. If this effect is to be produced, whether considered as destruction or as modification of existential mode, the specific form of future knowledge involved must *include* the psychological events that are thought, by some, to be unique to a time.

Thus, the anticipated argument is correct that the creation of class 1 knowledge, which by definition cannot be known in advance, would get around the present argument. However, this potential defeater also has a fatal internal flaw; it begs the question. Class 1 knowledge, it is being argued in this anticipated counterargument, must be excluded from foreknowledge because it is unique to a time. But it is only necessarily unique to a time if it *cannot* be included in any form of foreknowledge. And, to reach this conclusion one must already have presumed that temporal becoming is real and that there is a metaphysical and/or logical prohibition in place that prevents such knowledge from being known in advance by logical necessity. Thus, this argument can only exclude class 1 knowledge by presuming its own conclusion.

In any event, it is being argued in this paper that complete inclusion of this intimate, first-person knowledge erases the present. For the purposes of this argument, fore-ignorance can only be removed by the presence of *all*, every last scrap of, future knowledge and states of mind that will ever obtain. The removal of fore-ignorance must, as a result, entail the removal of change in states of mind. Thus, the removal of change also removes the sensation of presence because the experience of presence must change with time if it is to be meaningful.

Without the present, the subject is not experiencing time temporally; and this is independent of the actual, metaphysical status of time. Whether or not the future is open, whether

or not it exists “already,” knowledge of it destroys any meaningful distinction between the tenses in subjective experience. What remains, in the mind of the subject, is earlier-than and later-than relationships (B-series awareness).

Another counterargument that must be immediately addressed ahead of chapter six involves distinctions of person (namely first and third), or internal vs. external knowledge. This distinction leads to two categories of foreknowledge: foreknowledge of the first-person sort (memories and thoughts within the mind of the subject) and foreknowledge of the third-person sort (memories and thoughts within the mind of another subject as object). These will be seen most clearly in the next chapter in the subsection titled “The Pyrrhic Victory.” In order to address this issue in the immediate context, however, a unique discussion of this specific issue will be given here.

It may be put forward as a potential defeater to the present argument that foreknowledge in the mind of one person of a second person’s future does not cause either person to lose a sense of temporal movement. This would amount to simple, non-causal prescience (knowing before) of a distant subject-as-object. Since one can view the actions of another in space without influencing them, barring the possible quantum mechanical effects, it seems easy to take this as an analogy into the temporal “dimension.”

Though Paul Ricoeur investigated problems that remain subsequent to the barest possible description of temporality being explored here, his analysis does intersect in a relevant way in consideration of this question. Especially in *Time and Narrative*, he deals with the question of appropriating (viewing and reviewing) another person’s life in part or in whole, even in cases where the other person is fictional. This applies to how subjects understand (anything) in terms of reliving it as a narrative in their minds. With respect to narrative, one may presume that an

author's thorough description of a character's life and thoughts, even from birth to death, does not create in the character an absence of indexical (class 1) knowledge nor does it do so in the author's mind. This relates closely to both hypertemporality and Ricoeur's concept of appropriation.

Regarding hypertemporality, it becomes apparent that, with respect to the timelines of both fictional narratives and actual histories, the objectifying subject is "hyper" to the subjects and events within the objectified timeline. The foremost consequence of this relationship is that the timelines being contemplated appear static to the objectifier. One might suppose that this is not the case as the story is first encountered by a reader, as it is being "revived" in the mind of the reader because the reader is not yet aware of the ending of the narrative. However, in this circumstance, even though the reader is not aware of the future within the timeline that is "hypo" to him, it already exists completely and is known to exist in static form. And, once the timeline is known, once the book is read, the future is not merely known to exist, but all of its data are appropriated. Even before the book is completed, the book may be set down and picked up with large or small time intervals between readings. It may be read in reverse or read in such a way that whole pages or chapters are skipped. Thus there is a clear distinction between the "world of the text and the world of the reader."⁶⁰ This disconnection is characteristic of the meeting of distinct times. One is clearly superior, of a higher level, or "hyper" to the other.

When we read fiction or consider a history, then, we *appropriate* or *apply* the temporally indexed data by reliving the stories in our minds. By reading or rereading we thereby animate in a secondary fashion.⁶¹ In human subjects, being tokens of this type ourselves, we might be surprised to think that even our own memories, being historical and unalterable, have all the

⁶⁰ Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 3:157.

⁶¹ Ricoeur, 158. "Appropriation" is Ricoeur's term for Hans-Georg Gadamer's "application."

qualities of a static timeline to which our present minds are hyper. Just like texts, our memories, at least when accurate, constitute unchanging narratives.

The literary text transcends itself in the direction of a world ... removed the literary text from the closure imposed upon it ... considered apart from reading, the world of the text remains a transcendence in immanence ... Its ontological status remains in suspension—an excess in relation to structure, an anticipation in relation to reading. It is only in reading that the dynamism of configuration completes its course.⁶²

The mind of the reader/rememberer performs an objectifying function when reading/remembering. The subject appropriated in this way, as object, is not identical with the subject. Alterity is not achieved, not even in the case of reviewing one's *own* memories. Instead, the disjunction between the two means that the animation, motion, and life of appropriated subjects resides neither in narratives nor their characters, but in the mind of the reader functioning as animator. Thus, the life and freedom of the characters within a narrative are on this side of the looking glass, so to speak. Memorial data is static in itself, but is revived in the process of review. Yet, this revitalization is not “in” the past; it is “in” the present. And, it is not in the objectified subject or self, but in the reviewing subject. This means that, for the past subject, whether he be identical with the remembering/reading subject or not, no amount of remembering-after-the-fact can have an effect upon him. Thus, yet again, the *Problem of Time's Tooth* makes an appearance.

The inclusion of fore-ignorance within the analysis reveals even more clearly the distinction between the mind of the reader and the mind of the character. The individual who knows the complete future, including all first-person-omniscient knowledge, of another person must see that person as non-temporal. Even if the fore-knowing individual is “within” the same worldline/timeline that is foreknown, the possession of the foreknowledge sets the foreknowing individual off into a distinct mode or state from that mind-world. This is one side of the

distinction mentioned above involving a subject who knows *the future of others* completely. The other side involves the subject fore-knowing his *own future* completely.

Within the first side of the distinction, the subject who knows another's future, there is little to distinguish the situation from the reader or author of a narrative and the world of the narrative. Indeed, the author of a narrative does not view his characters as temporal, but as static even as he imagines them to be alive. He may bring them to life, so to speak, in his imagination, but not in fact. This strategy may be viewed as a way out of the argument being presented here, but it is, at best, a pyrrhic victory because it does not actually remove the teeth of the present argument. It does not allow the philosopher to retain foreknowledge and temporality within the *same* subject, nor does it allow the retention of libertarian freedom in cases where complete foreknowledge exists *of* the subject whose freedom is being questioned.

Finally, because the only thing that has been altered in this experiment is knowledge, it can be readily seen that, *regardless of time's ontological status* or the possibility of temporal becoming, these conclusions remain *unaltered*. Because the means of acquisition of foreknowledge, or even the possibility of its acquisition, is irrelevant to the conclusions within this thought experiment, and because the only alteration involved pertains to knowledge, *real* time is not at issue. The results would remain unchanged in cases where the A-series is metaphysically real as compared with cases where it is not. These implications are also prior to, and in many instances independent of, all questions of metaphysical freedom, responsibility, and the determining capacity of physical reality.

This is not merely a phenomenon that *causes* the experience of time; the phenomenon *is* (existential) temporality, and is distinct from the status of (mind independent) time itself. Because the removal of fore-ignorance destroys the effect of existential temporality, its presence

⁶² Ricoeur, 158-159.

either causes/logically entails the effect *or* it is the effect. As will be shown below (Argument 5), fore-ignorance fulfills all of the necessary elements required of the identity relation with regard to temporality. In brief, because the most basic description (unfolding) of an idea relates to the idea itself in a way that is transitive, symmetric, reflexive, necessary, and unique, and because fore-ignorance fulfills these requirements as the most basic description of temporality, fore-ignorance is identical with temporality, a relation that supersedes the causal/entailment relation. Thus, fore-ignorance is a description of what temporality is, fully unpacked.

Conclusions of the Experiment: The Fore-Ignorance Account of Temporality

As a result of this thought experiment, it is concluded that the temporal mode of experience is dependent only upon fore-ignorance, which is presented by this researcher as a new term for ignorance of this specific type of future knowledge. Regardless of whether or not temporal becoming is ontologically basic, temporal life and the sensation of animation in thought and action would all seem the same to subjects who were fore-ignorant in this specific manner. Whether or not the A-series is compatible with the B-series and real, the experience of temporality, in its simplest form, depends only upon fore-ignorance.

The case may also be extended to include freedom as an experience, that is, existential freedom. In other words, the experience of freedom, existential liberty, is primarily the effect of the subject being ignorant of what he will choose regardless of whether or not it is learned, after the fact, that the subject “could have done otherwise.” Thus, the necessary precondition for the *experience* of freedom, is fore-ignorance.

Thus, in cases where the future is metaphysically open (not yet determined), fore-ignorance is sufficient to explain the experience of freedom. Metaphysical libertarianism, in this case, is superfluous as a cause of the felt effect. And, in cases where the future is metaphysically closed (determined), fore-ignorance is sufficient to explain the experience of freedom, whether it be illusory or “softly” determined. This addresses the concerns of hard and soft determinists (Compatibilists of all kinds) respectively. Thus, in both cases, the metaphysical status of temporal becoming has *no influence* upon the effect.

There are, undoubtedly, many more implications that come from this conclusion than can be discussed in this paper. Nonetheless, even though ignorance of what will ultimately become real characterizes the essential temporal feature for the subject, the most significant existential implication of this conclusion is that it constitutes a hardship for the subject. The mind’s ability to anticipate the future, while being ignorant of its eventual content, creates the subjective or existential future tense. Yourgrau states that, “We do, after all, have the future tense, and this device seems to be able to lift us, in thought, out of our existential confinement to the present.”⁶³ However, the *difference* between what the subject expects and what actually comes to pass is significant and is a cause for alarm. The temporal person is in a state of anxiety due to an ever-present and inherent risk or threat to existence. Yet, contrary to the thinking of Pascal and other existentialists, the most pressing question presented by temporality is not anxiety over the future, because, prior to this anxiety concerning the future is the fact of uncertainty. Uncertainty is founded upon ignorance, fore-ignorance.

Context for the Fore-Ignorance Account of Existential Temporality

At this point it becomes necessary to point out that these concepts are simple, approaching obvious; one might even consider them incorrigible. Yet, this most important aspect of temporality has not been adequately explored in any previous philosophical literature.⁶⁴ And, while it has been explored to some extent in popular and fictional writing, it has not been adequately addressed even there.⁶⁵

Perhaps instinctively, human notions about time physicalize, or ontologize, it. However, a smaller portion of thinkers have viewed the problem epistemologically. This is the category within which this project works. This is an attempt to focus conceptions about temporality onto the epistemological effects that temporal subjects experience. What is causing this effect becomes less important than what the implications of the effect are as an experience. By recognizing that temporality *is* fore-ignorance, the most relevant feature of temporality is revealed. Despite the utter simplicity of the concept, this researcher has found no previous work in literature or in philosophy that deals specifically with it. The nearest analyses have come from Existentialist Philosophy. Yet, despite focusing upon anxiety over the future, they have all stopped short of penetrating to the cause of this anxiety and analyzing its effects especially with regard to the Philosophy of Time and Religion. This means that fore-ignorance works within a new frontier within the Philosophy of Time, Phenomenology, and, as in this paper, the Philosophy of Religion.

⁶³ Yourgrau, 139.

⁶⁴ Many seem to get close to the implications of fore-ignorance without actually realizing its import and/or without seeing its preeminent status in questions about time. For instance, Peter van Inwagen does seem to touch on the issue very briefly during his discussion of strong vs. weak inevitability without any further exploration. See, Peter van Inwagen, *An Essay on Free Will* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1983), 24-29.

Informal Logical Formulations as a Summary

At this point, before proceeding, it will be beneficial to reduce the fore-ignorance account of existential temporality to a series of informal logical arguments in a progressive and nested presentation:

Preliminary Argument with Regard to Method:

- Husserlian Phenomenology is preeminent over metaphysics by definition.
- In cases where the phenomenological conclusion obtains in all metaphysical categories, the two domains and their conclusions are independent of one another.
- The fore-ignorance account of temporality is phenomenological.
- The fore-ignorance account of temporality reaches the same conclusions within all metaphysical categories. (See Argument 6.)
Therefore,
- The fore-ignorance account of temporality is both preeminent over and independent of all metaphysical conclusions.

Definition of Relevant Terms Being Used in the Arguments Below:

- Time: Either the bare sequence of events within a temporal dimension alone (alternatively, the B-Series), or the former together with the underlying reality of mind-independent temporal becoming (alternatively, the A-Series).
- Temporality (alternatively, “existential temporality”): As distinct from physical and metaphysical (absolute) time, temporality is a mode of experience created by changes in mental states, including learning, sensing, and indexical awareness.
- Fore-Ignorance: The lack of possession by a subject of any knowledge of any type that will be possessed at a later time by that subject.
- Full/complete Foreknowledge: Possession by a subject of all knowledge that will be known at any time during the subject’s life including all memories, thoughts, perceptions, and states of awareness.

⁶⁵ Currie, 61. Perhaps the closest approach to a literary analysis of this concept is Samuel Butler’s *Erewhon*, alternately titled *Over the Range*, 1872, that describes posthumously a people who knew their future and, as a result, died of misery. Obviously, Butler misunderstood the implications of first-person knowledge of the future.

Argument 1:

Concluding that full/complete foreknowledge is incompatible with temporality

- Temporality requires/entails a change of mental states (by definition).
- Full/complete foreknowledge is not compatible with a change of mental states.
 - Full/complete foreknowledge includes all knowledge that the subject will ever possess (by definition).
 - Temporality entails the addition of previously unpossessed knowledge, which is a change in mental states.
 - Because full/complete foreknowledge is defined as the presence of the whole, the later addition of a part is an incoherent concept.
Therefore, full/complete foreknowledge is not compatible with a change of mental states. Therefore,
- Full/complete foreknowledge is not compatible with (existential) temporality.

Argument 2:

Concluding that complete absence of fore-ignorance precludes temporality

- Full/complete foreknowledge is not compatible with a change of mental states (from Argument 1 above).
- Full/complete foreknowledge is not compatible with (existential) temporality (from Argument 1 above).
- Complete absence of fore-ignorance is equal to the presence of full/complete foreknowledge (by definition).
Therefore, both:
- Complete absence of fore-ignorance is not compatible with a change of mental states.
And,
- Complete absence of fore-ignorance precludes temporality.

Argument 3:

Concluding that presence of fore-ignorance is *sufficient* for temporality

- Systematic presence of some knowledge concomitant with absence of other knowledge is the means by which the three tenses are distinguished. This offers a complete phenomenological description (unfolding) of temporality (this is the awareness of the three tensed states; see chapter five for a thorough and rigorous discussion of this premise).
- If the most basic description (unfolding) of an idea is provided, all other descriptions are superfluous (Ockham's Razor; Principle of Parsimony).
- Sufficiency is a condition that exists in cases where no additional elements are required for the conclusion.
Therefore,
- Fore-ignorance is sufficient for (bare) temporality and all other descriptions are superfluous.
(note: as mentioned above, fore-ignorance alone is not sufficient for distinctions of later-than and earlier-than within past and future memory-like knowledge. Thus, additional description would be needed to describe these additional features of the temporal experience.)

Argument 4:

Concluding that presence of fore-ignorance is *necessary* for temporality

- Necessity is a condition that exists in cases where the absence of one element precludes the presence of another, or the falsehood of one proposition precludes the truth of another.
- Complete absence of fore-ignorance precludes temporality (from Argument 2 above).
Therefore,
- Presence of fore-ignorance is *necessary* for temporality.

Argument 5:

Concluding that fore-ignorance *is* temporality

Because it is concluded above that:

- Absence of fore-ignorance precludes existential temporality.

It is a corollary that the presence of fore-ignorance is necessary for the inclusion of existential temporality (also argued for by definition of necessity). However, it remains to be seen what the positive relation of fore-ignorance is to existential temporality. It seems that there are only two options for the relation, causal or identical. Thus, in the form of a disjunctive syllogism:

- Presence of fore-ignorance relates to existential temporality either causally or identically.
- Fore-ignorance fulfills the definition of identity in its relation with temporality.
 - Fore-ignorance is the most basic (unfolded) description of temporality possible (see chapter six).
 - Identity, as a relation, is identical with the most basic description (unfolding) of an idea.
 - Identity is the relation had uniquely between a thing and itself.
 - Identity is transitive, symmetric, reflexive, and necessary.
 - The most basic description (unfolding) of an idea relates to the idea itself in a way that is transitive, symmetric, reflexive, necessary, and unique.
Therefore,
 - Identity, as a relation, is identical with the most basic description (unfolding) of an idea.
 - Therefore, fore-ignorance fulfills the definition of identity in its relation with temporality.
- Therefore, presence of fore-ignorance relates to existential temporality identically.

Argument 6:

Concluding that existential temporality is independent of the status of metaphysical time

- Fore-ignorance is independent of the status of metaphysical time.
 - Recognition of the three basic tenses by means of selective ignorance has no causal or logical connection with the various theories about metaphysical time.
 - Thus, fore-ignorance allows for the recognition of the three basic tenses in cases where A-Series is real and in cases where the A-series is ideal or illusory.
- Fore-ignorance is existential temporality.
Therefore,
- Existential temporality is independent of the status of metaphysical time.

Conclusion to Thought Experiment

In conclusion to the thought experiment, temporality, when viewed existentially, *is* a form of ignorance. Without this ignorance, the existential A-series does not exist for the subject. Additionally, the ontological status of time is completely separated from a subject's experience. Whether or not the present is the only moment in which reality abides, that is, whether or not the A-series is real, the experience of a temporal subject includes the existential A-series. Alternatively, the experience of a subject with full, subjective fore-knowledge, as a direct result, cannot include the existential A-series. Thus, the existential A-series is not dependent upon the ontological A- or B-series.

The most important feature of temporality is not the ontological status of what is thought to create it, but to what extent a subject's thoughts and actions are affected by a specific species of ignorance that characterizes the temporal mode of existence. Ignorance could be caused by any number of metaphysical features, but because the various theories concerning this cause do not change the nature of the effect, implications that follow from the effect are not influenced by the nature of that which caused it. Because it has the power to influence human thoughts and actions, temporality is fundamental to human life. The same cannot be said for time.

Without change, apparently, it is not possible to imagine life. Indeed, human beings that are now deceased are appraised as if consisting entirely of a collection of moments that are now static. Thus, our battle with time, similar to the problem of *Time's Tooth*, is a battle for more and more first-person knowledge. Progress toward this goal constitutes life as we know it. Yet, achievement of this goal seems to entail death, or at best, "objective immortality." A subject who fully obtains all first-person knowledge must, precisely at that moment, possess a new temporal

mode of existence that is not recognizable as life. With these thoughts in mind, we face a serious problem when the divine subject is contemplated. The horns of a dilemma appear when we consider a subject who is thought to both know the future and be alive.

CHAPTER 4

DIVINE TEMPORALITY

The above analysis of existential temporality presents a difficulty for divine subjects many descriptions of which include extensive foreknowledge. By calling attention to the preeminence of existential temporality over metaphysical temporality, and by defining it in terms of fore-ignorance, the inherent incompatibility of foreknowledge with fore-ignorance is encountered. Thus, the presence of fore-ignorance excludes foreknowledge and vice versa. Because subjective temporality is identical to fore-ignorance, the presence of subjective temporality for subjects excludes foreknowledge and vice versa.

Additionally, temporally indexical knowledge, knowledge of what time it is “now,” is also tied with fore-ignorance. Foreknowledge erases the distinctions that allow for indexical knowledge. And so, this type of indexical knowledge, in close association with existential temporality, is created by fore-ignorance. If a subject possesses all future thoughts in the present, then that subject’s knowledge does not change with time. If indexical knowledge must change with time, then, along with the elimination of the existential A-series, foreknowledge must also eliminate indexical knowledge.

In divine subjects, ignorance is seen as an antithetical imperfection. Thus, it seems that there is a second problem in addition to the one mentioned above. There appears to be a tension

between two kinds of ignorance that are mutually exclusive. Either God is fore-ignorant or God is temporally indexically ignorant. Either God possesses indexical knowledge, or God possesses foreknowledge. The discussion about indexical knowledge in God has recently been part of the argument about the divine temporal status. In fact, some cite arguments within this sub-topic as a significant reason for their conclusion.⁶⁶

Without embarking upon a rigorous discussion, due to the addition of this new insight, it can be concluded that there is a very intuitive appeal leading toward one particular perspective. The superiority of foreknowledge to indexical knowledge is intuitively clear. Congruently, the inferiority of fore-ignorance to ignorance of temporally indexical knowledge is clear. Yet, this is not the main area of discussion here so it must be couched at this time.

More to the point, it must be asked whether there is any reason to believe that divine subjects are excluded from the implications of this analysis. If they are not, then arguments about the relevance of indexical knowledge may be pursued efficaciously in another study. In addition, discussions about the meaningfulness of divine freedom, thought, animation, and life may also be pursued with greater import. However, it is necessary, before these discussions, to pursue the question of divine exemption from the fundamental theses of this project.

Testing for the Exemption of Divine Subjects

Means of Acquisition

Exemption will be tested in two ways. One way to exclude divine subjects from the implications of fore-ignorance would be to distinguish between the means of *obtaining*

⁶⁶ John Feinberg, *No One Like Him: The Doctrine of God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001), 427-433, and Craig, *God, Time and Eternity*, 132-139.

foreknowledge. This is one way to distinguish between *types* of foreknowledge. If it can be shown that any means of obtaining foreknowledge for divine subjects circumvents the requirement of fore-ignorance for temporality, then formulations of the divine subject might have temporality and foreknowledge together. Otherwise, this combination would remain incoherent.

Categories of foreknowledge are the key elements of the current question. There appear to be at least six different kinds of foreknowledge distinguished by their means of acquisition:

1. Means of Acquisition⁶⁷: **None** (Foreknowledge is not acquired.)
Type of Foreknowledge: **None/?**
 - a. No Access To Knowledge of the Future: resulting in complete ignorance of the actual future, or
 - b. (To be given in discussion below)
2. Means of Acquisition: **Inductive**
Type of Foreknowledge: **Objective**
 Access via induction can include only guesses about the future that come from analyses of patterns of past trends.⁶⁸
3. Means of Acquisition: **Testimony**
Type of Foreknowledge: **Objective**
 Access via testimony from or observance of a dependable source
4. Means of Acquisition: **Deductive/Anticipated Agency plus Certainty of Agency**
Type of Foreknowledge: **Objective and Subjective**
 - a. Access to foreknowledge via anticipated agency concurrent with knowledge of the absence of any potential counteracting force and zero probability of a change of will
 - b. Anticipating an action by one's own agency together with certain knowledge that such agency cannot be thwarted⁶⁹
5. Means of Acquisition: **Direct Perception** (Prescience)
Type of Foreknowledge: **Objective and Subjective**
 Access via prescience involves only looking ahead in time and "seeing" what will happen.
6. Means of Acquisition: **Atemporal Agency together with Direct Perception**
Type of Foreknowledge: **Objective and Subjective**
 Access via timeless agency would be based upon the absence or subsumption of all other agents. Similar to number four above but more extensive due to the atemporality of the agency and perception involved, which excludes the possibility of change.

⁶⁷ Acquisition is a temporal concept. Alternatively, "reason for possession of..."

⁶⁸ Michael Lockwood, *The Labyrinth of Time: Introducing the Universe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), ch. 11.

⁶⁹ Feinberg, 522-526. Note his discussion concerning foreknowledge and its relationship to divine decree.

Typical human beings can possess foreknowledge of type (1a) or limited foreknowledge of type (2) under normal circumstances. It must be noted, however, that (2) is extremely limited for humans under normal circumstances. It must also be noted that guesses do not constitute foreknowledge regardless of their associated probabilities. As a result, no human being *knows* any inductively obtained knowledge of the future. Instead, in such cases, human beings possess beliefs about the future. Such beliefs about the future are not actually of the future that will, ultimately, obtain. Instead, anticipations about the future constitute present states of mind that have no temporally backward causal link with the actual future. If there were such a causal link, as Sartre notes, this would create a subject that is “different from the simple *percipi* [‘to be perceived’].”⁷⁰ Such a state would not only be dramatically different from normal human subjects who anticipate the future by induction, but, according to Sartre, if such a subject did not lack anything it “would lose presence to being and acquire in exchange the isolation of complete identity.”⁷¹

However, in some cases, inductive conclusions may turn out to be identical in content with states of affairs that ultimately obtain. Guesses can turn out to be correct. Such guesses, for the purposes of this analysis, may be subjectively indistinguishable from what could have been known and thus have the effect of threatening subjective temporality and presence.

Various human beings have claimed foreknowledge via (3), testimony. Such people are known as prophets. They claim to have access to certain future facts directly from a dependable, supernatural source. If any such experiences are veridical, then such cases would certainly involve real foreknowledge. An exception must be taken at this point, however, because, no known prophet appears to have been given full knowledge of his or her own future thoughts,

⁷⁰ Sartre, 124. Italics in original.

⁷¹ Ibid., 126.

actions, and experiences. Instead, as is typical of reports of self-described prophets, information concerning the world is given. To be relevant, first-person knowledge would have to be given by an outside source in a way that results in knowledge indistinguishable from memorial knowledge.

Beyond these options, (1) through (3), human access appears to be impossible. No human has claimed to have foreknowledge of types (4) through (6) without also claiming to be God. And, most importantly, as was just mentioned for prophets, no human possesses the quality and extent of foreknowledge in question. Specifically, no human, from any of the means listed above, possesses extensive first-person foreknowledge of actions, experiences, and thoughts. Thus, given the extent of human experience available for study, the future knowledge under consideration has always been out of reach. Habitual behavior, circumstances that affect behavior, and the will itself are all susceptible to change. Or, to be more precise, they are all likely to be experienced in a way that differs from the way in which they had been anticipated. Thus, no species of temporality-destroying foreknowledge, has ever been found in human subjects. Not even in the extreme cases involving prophets has such foreknowledge been reported. One may also go so far as to include traditions that describe prophets also claiming to be God. The only known example of which, Jesus Christ, admittedly includes fore-ignorance.⁷²

However, with formulations of the divine subject, such foreknowledge is not only plausible, but many theologians require it as part of the definition of divinity. No part of any formulation of divinity, however, appears to exempt divine subjects from obtaining foreknowledge in some rational manner. That is, it seems plausible to conclude that

⁷² Mark 13:32, “But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.” See also, Matthew 24:36. Given the trinitarian nature of Christianity, this revelation leads the Christian to conclude that, if this is an apodictic statement, then both the Holy Spirit and the Son must experience their lives temporally either omnitemporally, or, minimally, for all times during which this statement is true.

foreknowledge must be obtained from sources on the above list. Thus, the list appears to be exhaustive because the only option that was not given above (1b) appears to have no possible basis.⁷³

(1b) Foreknowledge exists within the subject without being acquired.

To be a legitimate member of category (1), this paradoxical presence of foreknowledge must have no means of acquisition whatsoever. No activity of, nor history of, nor non-temporal (logical) dependence upon acquisition is allowed. Not even direct intuition escapes from (1) because, in all other forms, it would be part of (5). In other words, prescience may include immediate perception without reasoning but it may not include perception without the act of perceiving. Thus, by the very nature of (1b), it is unexplainable. But, for the purposes of this discussion, it is concluded that no category of explanation, if it existed, would be effective in exempting the foreknowing divine subject from the effects of fore-ignorance. Further discussion on this point will be taken up in chapter six.

Therefore, it is concluded that this list is complete and exhaustive. Because there are no known sources of knowledge besides direct perception (and introspection), testimony, deduction and induction (reason), and memory, and because these items are all represented on the list, there seem to be no categories that are not addressed. Because the general list of sources of knowledge is thought to be exhaustive, this gives some indication that the list given above may also be complete. Of course, there remains the possibility that an option may exist based upon some other type of input that has never before been considered. One might also consider middle knowledge as a legitimate candidate for the list as a special form of future knowledge. However,

⁷³ Molinism suggests just such a situation. That is, God is said to possess middle knowledge without having any means of obtaining it. Some suggestions have been proposed, such as super comprehension and immediate

this option does not seem to work in a way that excludes divine subjects from the effects of fore-ignorance. The nature of middle knowledge will be thoroughly discussed in chapter six.

It appears that there is also no reason to remove items from the list of possibilities for the divine means of obtaining and the final status of possessing foreknowledge. All of these options are considered by at least some theologians and philosophers as legitimate types of divine access to foreknowledge. In fact, even (1a), lack of foreknowledge, has been part of some theologies. For example, Hegelian, Process, and Open theologies conceive a divine subject entirely without certain knowledge of the future. Such formulations inherently involve a God who takes risks. Both Process and Open theologies involve a God who thinks and acts temporally. Such a God's access to the future would be comparable in quality to human, inductive foreknowledge (or fore-belief). While possessing an admittedly smaller margin for error than human induction, divine guesses would still involve probabilities.

For classical formulations of the divine attributes, the inclusion of certain foreknowledge leads speculation beyond (1) and (2). Additionally, (3) would be ruled out due to the fact that this would presuppose a source for knowledge independent of God to which God would be forced to turn.⁷⁴ This option appears to be incompatible with omnipotence. Classical theologians (who were also philosophers of religion before the term was coined) have turned to the Boethian strategy involving a God who exists in eternity and is capable of seeing the future in a manner that is analogous to the way that human beings might see states of affairs at a distance spatially. Interestingly, this theory, also known as the prescience view, or (5) above, despite being held by the most conservative of orthodox theologians, appears to be a species of (3). Obviously, such a

apprehension, but neither has been well received even by most proponents of Molinism.

⁷⁴ Theonomy even takes this position with regard to the laws of logic. Molinism, relying upon Modified Rationalism, suggests that God obtains much of his knowledge from logical necessity. It is possible that this could

God is turning to an independent source for information (the future state of affairs that obtains independent of divine agency). If the theologian requires strong omnipotence, then an independent source of information would be ruled out. Indeed, such a strong definition has long been preferred by such theologians. This dilemma is, of course, part of the long-standing battle between human freedom and divine sovereignty. These questions will be addressed further in chapter six as well.

Moving on to consideration of (4), we have a God who knows what he will do, and also knows with certainty that no other agent or state of affairs can stop him. This is certainly, at the very least, plausible. Despite being an implicit challenge to free agency in creatures, it is not incoherent with regard to the defining features of God and creation. However, this view has serious problems with regard to the current project. Namely, the divine subject in question does not necessarily possess first-person knowledge of his own future experiences and thoughts. And, there seems to be a requisite planning stage, whether logical or temporal, and however brief, that must involve discursive thought. Such a God only knows about future actions *subsequent* to the planning stage. There is also a second problem because, to be relevant, the divine subject in this formulation would also need to foreknow what his own thoughts will contain. In other words, merely knowing the future of the world is like the author of a book knowing what he will write before he writes it. This does not include temporality-destroying, first-person foreknowledge because it only includes knowledge of external states of affairs. It remains possible for the divine subject to be ignorant of what he will think about his actions while they are being performed and after they are past. One cannot conceive of a God who also plans his thoughts, without falling into an infinite regress of planning stages.

be seen as a case of receiving knowledge from testimony depending upon the nature of the distinction between God and the laws of logic.

Lastly, since we've discussed (5) sufficiently above, we come to a subtly distinct option, (6). Here, God not only overpowers other agents, as in (4), but creates them and their agency so that their wills and actions are subsumed under the divine will and action. In addition, such a God acts all at once, timelessly in a manner that is concurrent with all his knowledge of his thoughts. Here, there is a strong association with the concept of *continuous creation*. The medieval concurrentists held that God creates each moment from eternity and, as a result, was said to sustain creation continuously.⁷⁵ Within this scheme, the foreknowledge that God has includes subjective, first-person knowledge of all of his own actions, experiences, and thoughts. This is appropriate for the timelessly eternal God of the Scholastics, but notice that it does not include the Boethian modification. Such a formulation involves timeless eternity and must contend with the many criticisms that have been raised against it. Specifically, it is difficult to imagine what this mode of life would involve if it did not involve change, reaction, and reflection.

If it is accepted that this list is exhaustive and that all other options, should any arise, would be subsumed under the above categories in a way that does not disrupt the analysis, then it is the case that no means of obtaining foreknowledge has qualities that are capable of exempting divine subjects from the analyses given earlier. Additionally, if foreknowledge is obtained by means of (4) through (6), then this must entail a distinctly non-human relationship to time. That is, because human-style temporality is characterized by options (1) through (3), and because the remaining options are antithetical to the known manner of human temporal existence, divine foreknowledge must place God into a distinctly alien temporal mode if he is to have foreknowledge at all. Thus, even if the reader is unwilling to conclude that foreknowledge does

⁷⁵ David Vander Laan, "Persistence and Divine Conservation," *Religious Studies* 42:2 (2006): 175-176. This view was held by Aquinas and is essentially identical with what would be known as Malebranchian

necessarily exclude knowledge that is temporally indexical (knowledge of temporal location as “now”), at minimum it should be recognized that any divine temporal status involving foreknowledge is unique to God and substantially different from human temporal modes.

Lastly, it must be noted that only option (6) involves a God that possesses exhaustive foreknowledge. All other formulations include an existential A-series in the mind of the divine subject. All formulations for the divine attributes must include this form of temporality with respect to the divine subject’s inner thought life regardless of which relationship the divine subject has with the world.⁷⁶

The Nature of Memory

Another way to test for the exemption of divine subjects from the implications of fore-ignorance is to consider what memorial knowledge is and how human and divine memory might differ. Because the fore-ignorance effect depends upon the way in which memory-like knowledge is accessed, this course must be pursued.

Recall that all the knowledge that a subject will ever have access to is, for every moment, divided into two distinct sets. The first set contains all knowledge the subject has access to, and the second set contains the knowledge that the subject does not have access to and is ignorant of. This involves, in some sense, a snapshot of every mental moment in the subject’s life. At each moment the subject has access to data that is taken to be about the present and past, but does not have access to data, presumed to exist, that is taken to be about the future. As this account is

Occasionalism.

⁷⁶ Options include: one-to-one temporal relationships and hypertemporal relationships. In the former, God is temporal and relates to the world temporally. In the latter, God may be atemporal. Note that either one can obtain if God is temporal subjectively, but only the latter may obtain if God is atemporal subjectively.

being considered, no doubt a human subject is in mind. Any extension into non-human minds remains, at this point, even in light of the analysis above regarding the potential sources of foreknowledge, intuitive.

How would the fore-ignorance account differ for divine subjects? It seems clear that the situation would become stronger as the accuracy and speed of the mind increases. Thus, as the ability to consider more data at any one moment increases, so too does the temporal sensation. This addresses both forgetfulness as well as extent. Since the human mental process is limited with respect to both retention of data (forgetfulness) as well as capacity to hold multiple bits of data in the mind in singular moments of consciousness, removal of these limits only serves to increase the sensation of absence for future data.

In cases where human memory is considered to be a construct, rather than dealing with bare data and being about a concrete reality, the situation is also magnified for the divine case. Prior to Kant, memory was considered to be about bare data, about events that really happened in the way they were remembered. Subsequent to Kant's "Copernican Revolution," most accounts of human memory and consciousness instead view it as the creation of a phenomenal world out of a manifold of experience. This conception of human consciousness and memory is reached by accepting two propositions about the human mind. First, the human mind is limited in its ability to access reality. Second, the human mind is not able to control the nature of its own functioning. That is, the mind is pre-loaded with many features allowing experiences to fit into well-defined categories, time and space being the most fundamental.

These two assumptions probably do not apply to the divine mind. Thus, when considering this greatest of minds, the view of memory must approach the classical conception and abandon the various conceptions arising subsequent to Kant. God's mind would not be

limited in its ability to access the actual world. It would not be created at all, let alone be fashioned in a manner that pre-determines how the data is interpreted.

Because it is being argued that fore-ignorance is an essential feature of the most basic form of existential temporality, being synonymous with the glaring lack of access to a set of first-person knowledge that is presumed to exist yet remains perpetually unavailable, the increase in access to real and unconstructed “past” and “present” data and the ability to fully appreciate that data only enhances the effect. Therefore, the implications of the fore-ignorance account of what existential temporality is are actually more securely established for a mind that has complete access to all present and past ideas for each distinct mental “moment.”

If all the above is accepted, the following choice becomes mandatory: either God is subjectively/existentially temporal, regardless of the status of time itself, and is unable to know the full future, or God is not temporal like human beings and is only then able to know the full future. This is the conclusion of the thesis with regard to how the new insight into temporality effects the divine temporal status. This is a categorical prohibition; elements of these two categories may not be mixed.

The Pyrrhic Victory

The appearance of an effective mixture of the major options may be achieved, but not in a way that successfully provides a foreknowing and temporal God in the same sense for both attributes. To recognize this, one must make the distinction between foreknowledge of the world’s state of affairs and foreknowledge of first-person thoughts, actions, and experiences. In cases where the future of the created world, including willful creatures, is known in advance by any means, even if the temporality of the divine subject is preserved, it is preserved at the

expense of the freedom of non-divine, created subjects. Thus, the only case in which God can be temporal *and* know the future involves a different application of the word “future” for each element of the assertion. God could not be subjectively temporal, temporal to himself, and also possess foreknowledge of his *own* thoughts, actions, and experiences.

Similarly, God could not witness *as temporal* any other subject and also possess foreknowledge of that subject’s own thoughts, actions, and experiences. This is a very important corollary to the conclusion mentioned above because it addresses what may appear to be a way to avoid the excluded middle presented by fore-ignorance. At best, if one takes this route, it turns out to be a pyrrhic victory because, though it may work technically, it does not preserve the purpose for which the debate is normally engaged, the retention of strong divine control and omniscience on the one hand and libertarian freedom on the other.

To reiterate, God may know the future of the world and be temporal if and only if the world does not appear temporal to God. That is, he must be hypertemporal in relation to the world. The world cannot appear to be “moving through time” to God in the way that the A-series is said to move along the B-series in this scenario. Thus, the main implication of the thesis with regard to the divine temporal status can be viewed from two perspectives.

No mixture of the two sets of options is allowed if the conclusions of this argument are accepted. Fore-ignorance is incompatible with fore-knowledge, yet fore-ignorance is entailed by existential temporality. Thus,

- God is timeless in all senses, cases, and contexts in which God is also foreknowing. Similarly,
- God is temporal in all senses, cases, and contexts in which God is fore-ignorant.

Additionally, even if the “pyrrhic” mixture from the last paragraph is taken,

- No subject who knows another subject’s future can view that other subject as free or temporal.

That is, the second subject must appear static to any future-knowing viewer where the future in question is the first subject's. Or, to make use of a more accurate analogy, the situation is similar to that between a movie and a movie viewer. In some senses, the movie is not static. Yet, the movie never changes. The characters are not free to deviate from their course. The movie may be replayed hypertemporally, yet it remains static in the most relevant sense.

CHAPTER 5

RIGOROUS ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL DISTINCTIONS INVOLVING FORE-IGNORANCE

Working backwards, after consideration of the divine temporal status in light of the fore-ignorance account of existential temporality in chapter four, and after the thought experiment leading to the establishment of the fore-ignorance account in chapter three, a precursor to the whole argument remains to be discussed. To this point, only the thought experiment has received rigorous argumentation, but to some extent, this aspect of the project is auxiliary. The underlying support for the phenomenologically basic description of temporality as ignorance of a specific class of subjective knowledge also requires rigorous support in and of itself. Thus, the above may be considered as a suitable introduction to what follows.

Presumably, the most prominent feature of being temporal is the sensation of existing exclusively in the present. This fits the requirements for apodictic evidence because it is a fundamental given of experience as we know it.⁷⁷ It may also be inferred as a basic belief within foundational epistemologies, and as the only natural frame of reference by idealistic philosophers.⁷⁸ This provides us with our first proposition:

⁷⁷ Molina, 47-48.

⁷⁸ Hao Wang, "Time in Philosophy and in Physics: From Kant and Einstein to Gödel," *Synthese* 102:2 (Feb: 1995), 215.

(1) The temporal status of a subject includes the sensation of existing exclusively in the present.

This immediately gives us the distinction between the statement, “I am,” and statements like, “I was,” and “I will be.” The latter statements do not contain the inherent justification that the former statement possesses. Indeed, this is closely related to the Cartesian *cogito* that was once taken to be the most incorrigible statement that could possibly be made. It is also pre-scientific, as being actually identical with the requirement that it be “given in present experience.”

Next, both by implication of (1) and by further definition of temporality:

(2) The sensation of existing in the present entails the sensation of

(2a) existing before a future

and usually involves the sensation of

(2b) existing after a past.

Both statements involve the defining features of temporality and are known by personal experience, which temporal subjects all share. While it remains possible that a subject can have no past or, at least, no knowledge of the first-person past, the sensation of being before the future is always present in conscious, temporal subjects.

At first glance, this may appear to beg the question. However, the conclusion that is (2a), in addition to being self-evident, can also be arrived at by process of elimination. This is found in the description of (5) to be given below, and is arrived at by means of the thought experiment presented previously in chapter three. In brief, if the presence of the future (*as* future knowledge of the sort that Sartre and the present author employ) must not be part of a temporal subject’s present conscious experience, then the absence of the future must be essential to the same.

To continue, being after the past includes having effects in the present awareness that appear to exist as the result of past causes. This always takes the form of memories for the subject. All physical and objective antecedents are accessed only via memory. All subjective antecedents are also only accessed via memory.

The present self experiences continuity with the past self, but in a third-person fashion. This is expressed by the past tense in language and thought, and it is an artificial extension of the self into a certain category of knowledge. Thus, the subjective past is the set of all memorial knowledge that is centered around the identity or the perspective that the knowledge seems to be directed toward and involves the person the subject remembers being. Analogously, the subjective future is the set of all memory-like knowledge that includes the person the subject expects to be. Like the past self, the future self is not part of the present self. Yet, it is like the past self in every way except with respect to epistemological access. Try as the subject might, no fore-memories can be accessed. Only expectations can be imagined as possibilities. This leads to the third proposition:

(3) Subjects have epistemological access to past and present thoughts, but not to future thoughts.

This is taken to be a common experience that is definitive for normal humanity. The future is not known whereas the past is known. It does not matter if the memories of the past are accurate, constructed, or merely analogous to an outside world. A subject can experience temporality with false memories, poor and partial memories, and extremely brief memories. As for the present, it isn't merely known, it is experienced directly and is the source of the strongest form of justification available to minds of the temporal sort. This provides us with a sort of bare

coordinate system that allows for a unique type of “location” to be experienced by means of comparison, which is temporal location.

(4) The subject’s awareness of temporal location is

(4a) primarily determined by the extent of epistemological access to memory-like information taken to be about the future

and,

(4b) secondarily, by access to memorial information about the past

and,

(4c) is enhanced but not created by embedded meta-data about chronological order

The subject presumes, perhaps of necessity and by nature, existence beyond the present. This is known as continuity or persistence of identity through time. This effect, previously derived by Husserl from experiential data that involves only perceptions of temporal features of objects of consciousness and relations between them in a manner that is somewhat problematic,⁷⁹ is more clearly seen in the manner given here. Memory knowledge is experienced as sufficient proof of past existence. Additionally, the subject has knowledge of temporal succession and of chronological order in the form of embedded meta-data. Thus, the existence of future states of mind are presumed to exist even while they are not known. This inductive process of presuming a future is natural and automatic.

This presents the subject, as it experiences a “now” moment, with two sets of memory-like knowledge, one full of data and the other either empty or filled with anticipations in a

⁷⁹ Peter K. McInerney, “What Is Still Valuable in Husserl’s Analyses of Inner Time-Consciousness,” *The Journal of Philosophy*, 85:11 (1988): 605.

substitutionary fashion.⁸⁰ Such knowledge is third-person, but it is also, paradoxically, subjective. This means that the subject cannot *directly* identify with the person that experienced (or will experience) the “memories.” Assuming identity with the past selves is normal and healthy, but it is not immediate. Instead, it takes on a unique characteristic of quasi-otherness similar to the third-person. Perhaps, third-person may be somewhat too “distant” an ascription. If one takes it for granted that time segments the self, then perhaps the two sets of knowledge (past and future memories) may be interpreted as if they were first-person plural, that is, as the set of subjects that are “me” and therefore constitute a “we.” In any case, the subject’s experience of temporal life, at each moment, is characterized by a perspective that views a set of past memory knowledge on one hand and an analogous though “darkened” set on the other hand.

The two sets are viewed by the subject as similar in nature even though the set of future memories is empty. The emptiness of the set is paradoxically juxtaposed with the mandatory presumption of the presence of real content. This includes the automatic, or subconscious effect called “protention” by Husserl that is taken to be the short-term counterpart of conscious anticipation or expectation. Where anticipation is the future complement of long-term memory, *protention* is the complement of *retention*. The latter set is distinguished by being immediate ingredients of consciousness itself, which are said to be pre-reflective. The duration of the specious present, currently being discussed in the literature, involves the temporal difference between these two elements. Note that in both cases, whether considering the longer-term span held in higher-order consciousness or the shorter-term span held in immediate awareness, the current argument, the fore-ignorance account of temporality, applies.

⁸⁰ This subject will doubtless prove to be a key factor in any subsequent investigations into this account of temporality. It may prove to be integral to the process of decision making as well as taking action.

Despite being empty in actuality, that is, despite the fact that no real future knowledge is accessible at the present, the set is artificially filled with something. Instead of real data, the set is filled with anticipations of what the set might actually contain. These anticipations are accessed and processed, neurologically and psychologically, in a manner nearly identical with past memories.

In addition to the above philosophical argument, empirical data is also available to back up the conclusion:

The subjective experience associated with projecting oneself back into the past and forward into the future in order to re-experience or pre-experience an event is influenced by ... [an event's] temporal distance from the present. These findings suggest that factors such as self-enhancement goals and the perceived similarity between the present self-concept and past or future self-concepts may not only constrain the way we remember our past, but also the way we imagine our future. This suggests that remembering the past and imagining the future are closely related.⁸¹

Additionally, brain scans of 21 students in a recent experiment showed that the similarity between memory and anticipation involves identical regions of the brain. The researchers concluded that thinking about the future is actually impossible without the use of the memorial function.⁸²

Moreover, these properties appear to be essential to basic thought since they are found even in animals by neurobiologists and psychologists. For example, anticipation of the future state of affairs contingent upon choices taken was seen in scrub jays in a recent study.⁸³ The study revealed that the two sets of memory-like information exist both within complex as well as

⁸¹ Arnaud D'Argembeua and Martial Van der Linden, "Phenomenal characteristics associated with projecting oneself back into the past and forward into the future: Influence of valence and temporal distance" *Consciousness and Cognition* 13 (2004): 857.

⁸² Karl K. Szpunar, Jason M. Watson, and Kathleen B. McDermott, "Neural substrates of envisioning the future," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 104 (2007): 642-647.

⁸³ Nicola S. Clayton and Anthony Dickinson, "Episodic-like Memory During Cache Recovery by Scrub Jays," *Nature* 395 (17 Sep 1998): 272-274.

very simple minds. This leads strongly to the conclusion that it is an essential feature of thought for any mind that has the capacity to interact with a temporal environment.

Not surprisingly, this conclusion is also reached by means of the phenomenological approach without reference to psychology or neuroscience. Husserl's immanent temporality, being quite similar to the existential A-series as defined earlier, is the "primal constitutive source of human experience."⁸⁴

This rudimentary feature of temporal consciousness, gives us three types of subjective knowledge. Firstly, and immediately, there is present, first-person knowledge. Secondly, and indirectly, there is memorial knowledge that is taken to be of what became the present subject. Thirdly, and *by inference alone*, there is future knowledge that is expected to exist as future even while being inaccessible as such and while actually existing as memory-like anticipation. Despite the epistemological order, however, the present is taken to be in-between the other two sets.

This is the subjective aspect of anisotropy created by the embedded meta-data about chronological order that exists in memory knowledge. It is the memories themselves that possess this *akoluthic* quality. This means that some information about temporal order is part of the data itself. Such embedded data, it has been argued, is recognized by virtue of the temporal order of receipt. However, if the phenomenological attitude is to be retained, the conclusion of Daniel Dennett on this question is preferred. Chronological order is perceived, in the present, by virtue of information embedded in the memorial information itself. Mary Jeanne Larrabee rightly

⁸⁴ Mary Jeanne Larrabee, "Time and Spatial Models: Temporality in Husserl," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 49:3 (1989), 373.

points out that a distinction in types of perception may lead to other conclusions, yet agrees that Dennett is correct once the definitions employed in this paper are accepted.⁸⁵

It follows that the temporal status, or mode of experience, is dependent upon ignorance of the subject's own future. Without this fore-ignorance, the two sets of memory-like knowledge would be indistinguishable and, because no remaining basis for making the distinction is available, the subject could not retain the temporal mode. If the primary means of distinguishing future memories from past memories is the lack of content for the former, then the loss of this means of distinction would lead to something other than temporality for the mode of the subject's existence. Generally, if characteristic A is necessary for status 1, removal of characteristic A makes status 1 impossible. Thus,

(5) Access to future, subjective knowledge changes the subject's mode of existence from temporal to something other than temporal.

Thus, there are two reasons to hold that this statement is true. First, as a logical consequence of what has been argued, that which was required for the temporal mode of existence, fore-ignorance, must obtain if the temporal mode is to be retained. Second, a point which adds force but does not establish (5) alone, gaining subjective foreknowledge completes subjective knowledge. That is, if all subjective knowledge is given for all times, then subjective knowledge does not change with time. Yet, temporality is without consequence when there is no change. The result would be something akin to Padgett's relative timelessness, but formulated from within and concluded by means of the phenomenological approach.

⁸⁵ Rebecca Roache, "Mellor and Dennett on the Perception of Temporal Order," *Philosophical Quarterly* 49:195 (1999): 231-238. See also, Daniel C. Dennett and Marcel Kinsbourne, "Time and the observer: The Where and When of Consciousness in the Brain," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 15 (1992): 183-201.

Additionally, as a consequence of this last point given in the defense of (5), if complete subjective knowledge cannot change with time, then all bases for determining which moment is the present would be lost. Present temporal location (indexical knowledge), as was given in (4a), is primarily known by the extent and particularity of epistemological access to memory-like information. More specifically, one only knows it is “now” by means of knowing what just happened and by not knowing what is coming “next.” While the chronological order is very helpful in distinguishing the secondary tenses (past perfect, pluperfect, etc.) and the memories that are thereby modified, it is not essential for experiencing the three primary tense relationships.

Further implications of future, subjective access include the loss of any sensation of temporal motion (animation) because its basis is the same as the basis for indexical knowledge. The existential A-series, or the experiences of pastness, presentness, and futurity, would also be eliminated. Only the existential B-series would remain.

To further illustrate this point, Arthur Falk’s thought experiment involving a being called *the scheduler*, who he later admits would be divine, will be examined.⁸⁶ In some ways, the scheduler is similar to the subject of this paper’s thought experiment, because they both have access to a similar set of information. According to Falk’s description, the scheduler receives information about the world in the same way that information is received from a television. This results in a relationship with events that insulates the scheduler in various ways. The thought experiment restricts the scheduler so that the entirety of the scheduler’s experience is received in this manner. The times that the events are witnessed are disconnected from the times that the events occur. The dates of these events are known, however, by means of embedded meta-data.

⁸⁶ Falk, 236-237.

Returning to the television analogy, such data might correspond to the time stamp that is burned into the footage produced by a video camera.

Within this scenario, the scheduler does not need to have information presented in any particular order because information about order is embedded. And, because of the resulting detachment from the actual events, the scheduler is not required to distinguish data perceived through its television-like modality from data perceived by its own memory. Such a subject, Falk rightly predicts, would not experience “now” moments because of the absence of any basis for indexical knowledge.

Falk’s thought experiment provides a subject that, in effect, obtains information about the world timelessly. Perhaps without realizing it, Falk has given us a subject who, for all practical purposes, experiences objective foreknowledge via testimony (option 3 from the list in chapter four). The *scheduler* lives in a timeless state with regard to the world, not as the result of the presence of meta-data about the dates of events, contra Falk, but as the result of the possession of what amounts to foreknowledge about the world.

While attempting to provide an explanation for the experience of A-time, Falk has skipped over the underlying cause of the effect, and as a result, has missed an important distinction. The scheduler, as described, is indistinguishable from a security guard who is locked in a room full of surveillance monitors that only play pre-recorded footage. Such a person certainly has no trouble knowing when it is “now,” but, the indexical knowledge in question in that case only pertains to the man’s own personal A-time. In contrast, Falk describes his scheduler as having lost all access to *any* A-time because Falk is only considering one A-series. In order to produce the effect, which is the loss of the A-series for the scheduler, the thought experiment must include, by the same means of access, all subjective knowledge that the

scheduler will ever have. In other words, all objective *and* subjective information would have to be found exclusively in the recordings. It does not help to suggest that the scheduler does not “have to distinguish perceived information from remembered information,”⁸⁷ because memory would then need to be accessed in a temporal mode that is “hyper” with respect to the timeline of the world. This would necessarily create a distinct A-series for the scheduler that the citizens of the world could not share. This is the reason why the concept of an existential A-series is needed. Even in cases where there is a physically and/or metaphysically absolute A-series, there is much stronger support for the existence of an A-series within the minds of all temporal subjects. And, this second, existential A-series is repeatedly revealed to be independent of the status of the A-series proper.

Furthermore, if Falk intends that his scheduler receive the time-stamped information sequentially (regardless of the order of the events being displayed) within the scheduler’s own isolated, subjective time, then the subject would not actually possess the characteristics described by Falk. This may be the true point of departure from Falk; the scheduler must not receive the information in a temporal manner. If it did, then there would necessarily be a hypertemporal series in which the experiences of the world’s information is perceived. Instead, in order to have the described effect, the scheduler must have all of this information timelessly embedded within its mind in a manner similar to memory the appraisal of which must also be “on tape.”

Only when these modifications are made to the thought experiment can the effect presented by Falk be found. The temporally-challenged scheduler is not produced in the context given by Falk. When the experiment is modified in such a way as to produce the desired result, it is discovered that absence of fore-ignorance is actually responsible for the effect. Thus, the

⁸⁷ Ibid., 236.

elimination of the existential A-series produced by means of foreknowledge, and the distinction between objective and subjective foreknowledge is clarified.

(6) The existential A-series is inseparable from fore-ignorance.

This conclusion is unaffected by the ontological status of temporal becoming. Regardless of whether or not temporal becoming and the (non-existential) A-series prove to be metaphysically ultimate, the subject's experience could not be characterized as having an A-series. Thus it is stated that:

(7) The interdependence of the existential A-series and fore-ignorance is independent of the ontological status of the proper A-series.

This is the case because the connection between fore-ignorance and the existential A-series is demonstrable both in cases where the A-series is taken to be metaphysically real and in cases where it is taken to be metaphysically unreal.

With this last move, the basic categories are established and it becomes possible to apply the results to certain classes of subjects. With the typical human being, removing fore-ignorance is entirely theoretical because it is difficult to imagine how this could be accomplished. However, when considering various formulations of attributes for divine subjects, the case is reversed. Considering the problems that the existence of a divine subject solves, it is actually difficult to formulate a coherent set of attributes that does not include foreknowledge. Despite the unique set of circumstances that divine subjects face, there does not appear to be any reason to think the above analysis does not apply to divine subjects. The reasons for this were adequately addressed previously, so they will not be repeated here. However, it will be added that, with the obligatory increases in the extent of knowledge and the means of its acquisition,

the problem is actually magnified not mitigated. Because the knowledge in question is not merely subjective, but total, the magnitude of knowledge that is gained when fore-ignorance is removed is infinite in multiple respects. It is infinite with respect to temporality, and so it is omnitemporal or timelessly eternal. It is also infinite with respect to category, thus it completes full and true omniscience of two types. First, it not only allows full omniscience of all data involving persons and things other than God, but secondly, it allows full omniscience of all first-person knowledge of any sort whatsoever. Is there any other sort of knowledge that can be known? There is indexical knowledge with respect to person, location, and time. Yet, the temporal aspect of this category has been revealed to be closely related to fore-ignorance, and is likely to be, itself, a form of ignorance. Thus, indexical knowledge is a poor name for the experience. Instead, it should be called indexicalized limitation, or better, systematic ignorance⁸⁸ that leads to indexical perspectives as limitations. Only when the reader understands this point can the full impact of this paper be felt.

The primary implication of this project is a narrowing of the field of options in the Philosophy of Religion when considering both the divine temporal status and divine foreknowledge. The conclusion is simple, but demonstrably firm:

⁸⁸ It is a key ingredient of this species of ignorance that it be systematic and show signs of information in what is selected for exclusion and how these “gaps” in knowledge are arranged. Fore-ignorance, then, is that type of systematic ignorance capable of creating the temporal-indexical perspective. Thus, there would be corollary categories of systematically ordered ignorances for the spatial- and personal-indexical perspectives. Preliminarily, they shall be termed *there-ignorance* (for the sense of here-ness) and *them-ignorance* (for the sense of unique personal identity as distinct from other minds). The ability to distinguish oneself from objects may be subsumed under them-ignorance or it may require its own category, analogously, *that-ignorance*. Loss of these three types of ignorance would create, respectively: existential omnipresence, existential omnipersonality (or perhaps the sensation of subsuming all other minds, thus being the divine side of Berkeleyan, Theistic Idealism), and existential omnidentity (or the sensation of subsuming all). This last situation may be similar to the mystical experience of one-ness with everything or, for the divine case, the sensation of subsuming all objects as their source. This would be another area of compatibility with Berkeleyan Idealism, being distinct from pantheism.

(8) Either God is subjectively temporal and without foreknowledge, or God is not subjectively temporal and is only in this state capable of possessing foreknowledge in a coherent manner.

Because subjective temporality is inseparable from fore-ignorance, we can give a corollary statement:

(8') Either God has fore-ignorance allowing for existential temporality or God has fore-knowledge that disallows existential temporality.

CHAPTER 6

ANTICIPATION AND ANALYSIS OF POTENTIAL DEFEATERS: MOLINISM AND NEO-MOLINISM

Various theories in divergent areas of academic research touch upon and attempt to solve the same problems that fore-ignorance deals with. In this and the following chapter, many of these problems will be fleshed out and the various implications for fore-ignorance will be examined.

Within the Philosophy of Religion, Molinism is perhaps the greatest threat to fore-ignorance because it appears to occupy a position that fore-ignorance predicts to be necessarily vacant. Thus, Molinism will be explored at length. Not only will the general conflict between the two theories be examined, but a more specific breakdown of Molinism will be attempted along with an analysis in light of fore-ignorance. Neo-Molinism, a poorly named pseudo-variant of Molinism, will be briefly discussed as well.

In the following chapter, in a series of brief point-counterpoint sections, other potential defeaters will be discussed. Branched time will be considered both as a quantum mechanical proposal and as a merely diagrammatic conceptualization. The analogy between space and time will be considered as it relates to fore-ignorance. The past will be considered as a potential analog to the future to see if the fore-ignorance effect is unique. The effect of time upon thought

as it relates to fore-ignorance will be considered next. Then, the freedom of God will be discussed subsequent to a discussion of what fore-ignorance says about freedom itself. And, lastly, alternatives to temporality as fore-ignorance will be sought and discussed.

Molinism

General Description

Molinism, originally proposed by the Counter-Reformation Jesuit priest Luís de Molina (1535-1600) and recently revived by Alvin Plantinga, in *Nature and Necessity*, 1974,⁸⁹ attempts to provide a solution to the apparent contradiction between strong divine sovereignty on the one hand and strong (libertarian) freedom in rational creatures on the other. Instrumental to this proposal are time, God, knowledge, and various species of causation.

In the original context for middle knowledge, Western Christian theologians were in the process of rejecting the Theonomy that had previously enjoyed wide-spread support.⁹⁰ The move into various forms of rationalism allowed for new ways of thinking about divine omniscience. Whereas the strongest form of Theonomy had placed God above all laws of logic, weakened forms had begun to allow one or a few logical laws to be equal with or even superior to God. Eventually, rationalistic systems, as seen in its strongest form with Leibniz, allowed for multiple truths to attain metaphysical necessity.⁹¹

In the midst of this transition, Molina made his proposal. While it was not a complete break, he shared much with his thomistic contemporaries. For example:

⁸⁹ Alvin Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974).

⁹⁰ John S. Feinberg, *The Many Faces of Evil: Theological Systems and the Problems of Evil*, revised and expanded ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway books, 2004), 34-37.

⁹¹ Feinberg, *No One Like Him*, 74.

At the moment of creation, God has perfect and infallible foreknowledge of everything that will happen in the created world... he specifically intends or knowingly permits everything that takes place... He knows what will happen in the created world by his knowledge of his own decrees, together with his knowledge of what follows from those decrees, either directly or through the mediation of created causes.⁹²

In addition to these things, the tradition within which Molina worked distinguished the metaphysically necessary truths constituting God's *prevolitional* or natural knowledge from the set of contingent truths that make up God's *postvolitional* knowledge.⁹³ God's act of creation was first a selection from among the metaphysically possible states of affairs and second, it was a "causal contribution sufficient to actualize [the selected] states of affairs."⁹⁴

It is at this point that Molina parts ways with the tradition. Whereas the Thomists maintained that God's causal activity was the sole determining factor extant, and that the will of rational creatures was *physically* determined (despite being somehow free),⁹⁵ Molina, and a few other Jesuits,⁹⁶ suggested that free actions made by rational creatures cannot be known in advance through either pre- or post-volitional knowledge available to God. Neither can any conclusive computation be made based on information from these two sets. To account for this apparent gap in divine foreknowledge, and to allow for what is known today as libertarian freedom, Molina suggested a special class of knowledge, *conditional future contingents*. Knowledge of truths within this set is middle knowledge.⁹⁷

Though it is often overlooked, an essential part of Molina's proposal is the timing of this knowledge, not only *that* it is known, but *when* it is known by God in relation to the creation

⁹² Michael V. Griffin, "Molina, Luis De," *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (Detroit: Macmillan Reference, 2006), 6:321.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 322.

⁹⁵ John A. Mourant, "Scientia Media and Molinism," *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (Detroit: Macmillan Reference, 2006), 8:681.

⁹⁶ Most notably, Robert Bellarmine, Leonard Lessius, Gabriel Vasquez, and Francisco Suárez

⁹⁷ Griffin, "Molina, Luis De," 322.

event. In order to have the desired effect, middle knowledge must be known by God prior to the creative decrees. This must be the case if the free aspects of creation are to obey the sovereign will of God.⁹⁸

Another important aspect of middle knowledge is how it combines aspects of the two other forms of divine knowledge. Review the chart below as an aid in understanding the following sets of attributes. Knowledge of metaphysically-necessary/natural truths (N in Fig. 1) is prevolitional, and knowledge of freely decreed, contingent truths (F) is postvolitional, but middle knowledge (M) mixes the categories in such a way that it is both prevolitional and contingent. That is, not only does middle knowledge exist logically prior to creation, as was noted in the previous paragraph, but it exists contingently.

	N	M	F	T	∅	∅
Necessary	X			X	X	
Contingent		X	X		X	
Prevolitional	X	X				X
Postvolitional			X	X		X

Figure 1. Chart comparing the types of divine knowledge on the horizontal axis with logical states (top two rows) and temporal relationships with reference to the event of creation (bottom two rows). N = God’s Natural Knowledge. M = God’s Middle Knowledge. F = God’s Free Knowledge, being contingent upon the free act of selection. T = Theonomy. ∅ = Incompatible pairings included so that all possible positions on this chart can be clearly seen and addressed.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

Lastly, perhaps the most important element of Molina's theory that must not be missed, middle knowledge is not dependent upon divine decree. This is an implication of its being prevolitional. At this point the criticisms of Molinism must be addressed since the question immediately arises in the mind, "On what does middle knowledge depend if not upon God's volition or action?" In other words, how does God have this middle knowledge of what free, rational creatures would choose before they choose it? ... before the world is even created?

Objections of this sort constitute the grounding objection, which appears to be the most common objection taking various forms both in the time of Molina and in the contemporary debate.⁹⁹ In fact, of the three main types of counterargument being explored recently, all of them appear to be related to the core concept of the grounding objection. This includes both William Hasker's arguments, which Thomas Flint actually labels as variations on the grounding objection, and Robert Adam's vicious circle arguments. All of these seem to be based on causation.¹⁰⁰

Molina answered his critics at this point with *super comprehension* in the mind of God. Since all creatures are "eminently contained" in God's own essence, and because God knows his essence directly, it follows that all creatures and what they would choose to do in all possible situations is known directly as a direct result of their being so contained.¹⁰¹ Suárez, one of Molina's fellow Jesuits and a proponent of middle knowledge, suggested instead that God simply has immediate apprehension of all true propositions including middle knowledge.¹⁰²

During the time of Molina and many centuries afterward, these solutions were not widely accepted despite narrowly avoiding the label of heresy. Recently, however, it has been argued

⁹⁹ Thomas P. Flint, *Divine Providence: The Molinist Account*, Cornell Studies in The Philosophy of Religion (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 3, 122.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 121-127.

that both of these solutions are not, at the very least, incoherent. Because they remain a possible resolution, argues Craig in the name of Molinists everywhere, and because the other objections to middle knowledge enjoy the same status, at least, then it seems that Molinism presents one possible resolution to the paradox. This strategy is minimalist. It is employed not as a solution to the problem, but as a defeater to those who would conclude that libertarian freedom and strong divine sovereignty and foreknowledge are necessarily contradictory.¹⁰³

Besides this dominant criticism, addressed above and considered in their past and present forms, we can also consider several basic types of criticism leveled against middle knowledge at one time or another. The defenders of Molinism contend that all of the common critiques arise from common misconceptions. These come in when one tries to work out other options concerning the source of middle knowledge. One might conclude that the knowledge comes from nowhere, in which case it is arbitrary, or one might think the knowledge is based upon consistency of character—so-called character determination¹⁰⁴—in which case it is necessary, or one might think that this is a case of backward causation such that the free acts of the free rational creature causes what God knew in the past, which is a bit circular, perhaps viciously so. But, none of these have any bite, says Craig, who reduces all of the above to a misconception of what libertarian freedom actually is. True freedom of choice is a fundamental, irreducible form of causation. Free agents are miniature, non-divine, prime movers. And, though such agents may choose one way or another in exactly the same circumstances, such choices are not arbitrary.¹⁰⁵ Apparently, the buck has to stop somewhere, and it stops with the agent him- or herself, and

¹⁰¹ Griffin, “Molina, Luis De,” 322. See also, William Lane Craig, *Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom: The Coherence of Theism: Omniscience* (New York: E. J. Brill, 1991), 267.

¹⁰² Craig, *Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom*, 267.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 243, 269.

¹⁰⁴ Flint, 124, 126. Consistency of “character” within a timeline is considered by Flint to be a poor substitute for real, libertarian free will as it is typically defined.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 261.

asking for further explanation in rational creatures is no more rational than asking for further explanation in the decisions of God. And, without the availability of character determination (analogously divine nature theology), it seems we are encountering something as metaphysically basic as necessary truths themselves.

The Molinist is careful to distinguish between freely made choices and middle knowledge of what those choices will be. Once it is established that the free choices are not caused by the existence of middle knowledge of what those choices will be, it must also be understood that neither do those choices cause the existence of the middle knowledge. Verification of middle knowledge should be seen as a separate matter; the truth of middle knowledge is based upon correspondence with the reality of the choices that are freely made. Note carefully that this is their *only* connection. And this leads back to the central problem. How could God know in advance what a free agent will choose in the absence of all possible causal factors? If libertarian freedom rules out the possibility of any causal factor external to the agent leading up to the decision, and if no consistency of character can be used to make the decision, then what is left? Middle knowledge is true or false based upon correspondence. There have been some difficulties establishing this conclusion, but they seem to be based upon misconceptions of the problem.¹⁰⁶ And, to reiterate, the verification of the truth or falsity of middle knowledge does not address what causes the reality to which the knowledge corresponds. Thus, middle knowledge presupposes agent causation as real, undetermined causation in itself. Nonetheless, and problematically, whether by super comprehension or immediate apprehension or by some other unknown means, if the molinist scheme is correct, God foreknows truly-free actions before he creates these free agents and before he creates the world in which they choose.

Regardless of its source, however, the availability of middle knowledge affords God great power. If it is possible for God to have middle knowledge, counterfactuals of freedom known in advance, then God may create a world that he both controls and foresees but which also contains libertarianly free rational creatures. So, it is God who chooses which free subjects are actualized, *and* it is these subjects who cause the choices that are made. It would seem, if libertarian freedom can exist, then the Molinist truly has his cake and the ability to eat it too.

Implications Involving Fore-Ignorance

Fore-ignorance, as will be shown, not only prohibits the middle ground that Molinism attempts to occupy, generally speaking, but it may also be used in a specific way to present a new kind of counterargument, one not related to the grounding objection. To begin, the fore-ignorance account of existential temporality establishes two main categories according to the allowable temporal relationships between God and world. Internally, within the divine mind, either God knows his own future completely and is thereby able to experience the atemporal mode of experiencing life, or his knowledge changes with time thereby establishing the temporal mode. External to the mind of God, in relation to the world, either God knows the complete future of the world by any means and is existentially hypertemporal to it (see footnote for an explanation of “existential hypertemporal”)¹⁰⁷ or God does not know the future of the world

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ This is a new concept for this paper, but the pieces of the definition have all been established at this point. Existential hypertemporal is the perspective necessitating that people in one temporal state, or timeline, view people in another as static. For example, readers and authors are existentially hypertemporal to the timelines of books. Similarly, movie watchers to movies, and rememberers to memories. The addition of “existentially” to the “hypertemporal” term is necessary because the latter only refers to the metaphysical and/or physical relationship. In the given examples there is a mixture. Readers and movie watchers are metaphysically *and* existentially hypertemporal to books and movies respectively, but rememberers are not hypertemporal to their own timelines despite being existentially hypertemporal to their memories within that timeline.

sufficiently enough to create the hypotemporal experience of the world. Thus, the question arises, does the presence of middle knowledge (M), together with comprehensive knowledge from the other two categories (N and F), have the capacity to eliminate indexical knowledge and thereby disallow existential temporality internally and/or necessitate existential hypertemporality externally, or does it entail enough ignorance of the real future allowing for some degree of existential temporality in the mind of God and/or eliminating the possibility of existential hypertemporality?

The deciding issue here is the question of if and how God's knowledge changes with time. If the content of God's knowledge changes from contingent/possible/middle knowledge to necessary or decretively determined or any other sort of non-contingent knowledge, and if he is aware of this change as a change, then God can and must be temporal existentially. God must also view the world as being on his own temporal level. It has been argued that these categories exhaust the possibilities and that no mixture is allowed.

As Molinism interfaces with various conceptions of time, including the view of the present project, the analysis becomes complex. What follows is a conceptual analysis of the many choices a molinist would need to make as the interface with temporal options is made. Most of the options being explored will have been rejected by the majority. However, an explicit analysis will be helpful in showing which options exist, what their aspects are, and will be an aid, not only in revealing blind alleys and new options within the theory, but in avoiding equivocation. This last problem is, perhaps, the dominant issue because it seems that many who hold to Molinism simultaneously employ aspects of different versions of the theory despite their being, for the most part, incompatible with one another.

To start, it is important to note that Molinism, at first glance, has no internal precommitments to any particular metaphysical conception of time. As a result, corresponding to the two possibilities for temporal becoming, real or not, it seems that Molinists may be divided into two classes.¹⁰⁸ Those within the first group, which I shall label α , retain the classical notion of the metaphysically closed future (See fig. 2 for a visual version of the following analysis). Molinism- α would view each possible world so that it contains a complete future in the logical moment before creation that is determined by some combination of multiple factors: necessary truths, counterfactuals of freedom, and anticipated divine will. Such a future is known in advance by God and is determined in that sense, but not in a way that threatens the freedom of rational creatures. Within this scheme, prior to the creation decree, either within the second logical moment, between the second and third, or at the start of the third, God selects a possible world that matches his will best. In the third logical moment, God actualizes this world eternally in such a way that it exists before him eternally as a complete, alpha-to-omega entity. While this has been criticized as an incorrect characterization of Molinism,¹⁰⁹ it is, in actuality, a path that Molinists might realistically take. It is seen as incorrect because it reverts to one of the positions between which Molinism is attempting to situate itself.

If Molinism- α is done properly, it must first avoid a common misconception. Within Molinism- α , nothing akin to the Augustinian/Boethian prescience of future human choices is in view. If one allows this idea to creep back into the conception, Molinism- α would be making use of backward causation and would fall prey to vicious circularity. Being careful to avoid all of the other possible misconceptions outlined above, it seems that at least one problem is yet

¹⁰⁸ This is merely a conceptual analysis. No suggestion is being made that any particular Molinists fit these categories. Nonetheless, some have denied the need to make these kinds of choices. See, Alvin Plantinga, "Replies," in Tomberlin and van Inwagen, *Alvin Plantinga*, 378, as cited in Flint, 127. This amounts to a plea of Socratic ignorance according to Flint (same page).

unavoidable. The God of α must not only see the world in a static manner, being *existentially* hypertemporal to the world, but must also be *metaphysically* hypertemporal. The retention of an atemporally eternal God within Molinism thus prevents God from existing temporally “at our level.” Moreover, the picture being created is looking more and more like Compatibilism allowing for a version or appearance of freedom within a predetermined world.¹¹⁰ The only difference between Molinism- α and Compatibilism appears to be the degree of divine control. In Compatibilism, God directly creates rational creatures that are physically determined to think and act certain ways. In Molinism- α , all thoughts and actions that are not allowed by God, are prevented from existing. Though the two are distinct, there seems to be no relevant difference. Molinism- α delivers a rational creature that could not have done otherwise.

The second set of Molinists, which I shall label β , eschew the classical conception of time in favor of a metaphysically open future. God knows the future of the world by means of middle knowledge even while it does not yet exist. It seems that this view makes use of the ockhamist approach in addition to middle knowledge. Ockham, in *Predestination: God’s Foreknowledge and Future Contingents*, distinguished hard and soft facts; many contemporary thinkers believe that God’s middle knowledge should be thought of as being full of soft facts. That is, each element of God’s middle knowledge is a soft fact before those events transpire, but presumably becomes a hard fact afterwards.¹¹¹ The β positions, therefore, appear to be a melding of Ockhamism and Molinism. This is because the real issue is not only how God knows but when

¹⁰⁹ Paul Helm, *The Providence of God*, Contours of Christian Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 59.

¹¹⁰ Note the difference between a (physical) determinist, who thinks physical states determine by physical properties and laws alone, and a theological determinist who thinks all states of affairs are determined by divine decree and power. For human action, the theological determinist allows for experiences that are taken to be free, but disallows freedom of the libertarian sort. For a discussion of physical determinism, see Peter van Inwagen, *An Essay on Free Will* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1983), 2.

¹¹¹ David P. Hunt, “Foreknowledge and Freedom, Theological Problem of,” *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (Detroit: Macmillan Reference, 2006), 3:695.

he knows middle knowledge. To the Ockhamist, the event of transference from soft fact to hard fact is a real, temporal change. This “collapse” occurs in real time, not before creation. Here, it is the status of bits of information from the middle-knowledge class that change with time. To be aware of this kind of change, God would need to be able to possess indexical knowledge, which has already been found to be incompatible with foreknowledge.

This becomes another moment of choice for the Molinist who had previously selected β . Either God’s knowledge cannot change with time ($\beta 1$) or it can ($\beta 2$). Molinism- $\beta 1$ might seem preferable if strong fore-knowledge is also preferred.

The Molinist who favors $\beta 1$, however, may pursue two distinct paths. Each will include a God whose knowledge does not change with time, or more accurately, a God who believes his knowledge does not change. The problem, of course, is that, in the metaphysically open scheme preferred by all forms of Molinism- β , the status of the knowledge *does* change with time. Incorporating this apparent contradiction, beginning with $\beta 1a$, God is viewed as possessing knowledge of a fractured character. Conversely, in $\beta 1b$, it is God himself who is fractured.

Recall that, in Molinism- α , God is one and the world is fractured, or relativized, into an infinite number of possibilities. In the two forms of $\beta 1$, however, because God does not change with time, it is he himself, or his knowledge, that is fractured and divided between multiple states. Instead of humanity and the world being relativized into multiple, static possible worlds, it is God and/or God’s knowledge that is relativized. This relativization occurs because one of two situations must be the case with God in $\beta 1$. Either God’s knowledge of the future, at the point of the present and during the past (e.g., eternity past, conceived here as the relatively timeless pre-creation period suggested by Alan G. Padgett¹¹² and championed also in Craig’s view¹¹³), takes

¹¹² Alan G. Padgett, *God, Eternity, and the Nature of Time* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2000).

¹¹³ Craig, *God, Time and Eternity*, 281-284.

on a multi-branched character in which each branch is unreal ($\beta 1a$), or God himself, being inherently omniscient and possessing exhaustive foreknowledge, exists in multiple states each of whom “knows” a different future immutably ($\beta 1b$). In both of these schemes, God or his knowledge of the future, like the wave function of a quantum particle, is “collapsed” into a particular state as each human choice is made.

Thus, it appears that Molinism- $\beta 1$ must involve either the relativization of God or some of God’s knowledge. The notion of relativization in this sense was first proposed, philosophically and scientifically, by Kurt Gödel, a contemporary and friend of Albert Einstein, as he probed the implications of the latter’s general theory of relativity. He says,

It may be objected that this argument only shows that the lapse of time is something relative, which does not exclude that it is something objective, whereas idealists maintain that it is something merely imagined. A relative lapse of time, however, if any meaning at all can be given to this phrase, would certainly be something entirely different from the lapse of time in the ordinary sense, which means a change in the existing. The concept of existence, however, cannot be relativized without destroying its meaning completely.¹¹⁴

Thus, reality or time, Gödel predicted that one or the other must be relativized in *any* analysis of time. Either time becomes relative (variable, divisible, or divisible and multipliable), as with the two theories of relativity, or reality itself becomes relative, as is the case with branched theories of time and quantum theory (both the Copenhagen and Everett Interpretations¹¹⁵). When considering Molinism, an analogous situation is encountered, but the choices under consideration are God (in $\beta 1$) or the world (in α). If both are retained without relativization, then they must both exist at the same temporal level and this level must be ultimate (to be discussed later as $\beta 2b$). Ideally, however, if Molinism worked perfectly, one would think that neither God nor the world would be relativized. As a result, the β branch of Molinism is steered strongly away from

¹¹⁴ Gödel, Kurt. 1949a. “A Remark about the Relationship between Relativity Theory and Idealistic Philosophy,” in *Kurt Gödel: Collected Works*, Vol. II, ed. Solomon Feferman, et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 203, footnote 5.

both versions of $\beta 1$. A God who does not know that his knowledge is fractured, or who is fractured himself, is unappealing since it suggests a God who, in effect, is *hypo*-temporal to the world, following after it for the sake of his own completion. As a result, this view also requires a heavily modified and strange version of omniscience. God may have created the world, but a large portion of his mind is being created by the world as time proceeds in both versions of $\beta 1$.

Perhaps the indictment can be made even stronger. The $\beta 1$ God would possess beliefs that are thought by him to be unchanging knowledge. This God would be unaware of a real, metaphysical change. This is a disturbing feature because it actually proposes a God that is existentially foreknowing despite being metaphysically fore-ignorant. That is, he has a true disconnect with reality. The fore-ignorance account of existential temporality reveals that this God is existentially atemporal while being metaphysically temporal, or, to put it another way, epistemically inflexible in a context that requires him to be flexible.¹¹⁶

Such a divine formulation is obviously inferior. This an unattractive option since it does not allow for God to realize what choices have been made, or which possible world has been actualized, or is being actualized. If the Molinist believes that the future is genuinely, metaphysically open, then many possibilities must change to actuality at some point in time. After a choice has been made, that choice becomes an event and joins the rest of the unalterable past. It is known, correctly, only as an unchangeable matter of fact from that moment on.

The second subset of Molinism- β shall be labeled $\beta 2$. This version, being joined with Ockhamism (soft facts turning to hard facts with time) and conceiving of time as metaphysically open, immediately faces another choice. Considering the moment when a soft fact turns into a

¹¹⁵ Daniel M. Greenberger and Karl Svozil, "Quantum Theory Looks at Time Travel," in *Between Chance and Choice*, ed. by H. Atmanspacher and R. Bishop (Thorverton, England: Imprint Academic, 2002), 303-6. 10.

¹¹⁶ Alvin Plantinga, *Warrant: the Current Debate* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 82. See also, Craig, *God, Time, and Eternity*, 37.

fact of history, the molinist must consider whether God was aware of when and how the change would occur? If the Molinist answers no ($\beta 2b$), then it seems he has entered into full Openism. The future is open, and God must learn what happens as time passes. And, if the Molinist answers yes ($\beta 2a$), then God must be seen as being fully aware of the future despite its being metaphysically open. At this point, the fore-ignorance account of existential temporality becomes dominant, so that such a God does not learn anything new about the world as time passes. Such a God must experience life atemporally. Much like Molina's *super comprehension*, and Suárez's immediate apprehension, the problem here is that we have a genuine lack of a rational, causal connection between what God knows and how he knows it. Additionally, it appears that the soft-fact distinction serves no purpose in the $\beta 2a$ scheme. With this realization, Molinism- $\beta 2a$ appears unable to solve the original problem. We have a fore-knowing God and we have a free group of rational creatures, but no satisfactory way to avoid the paradox.

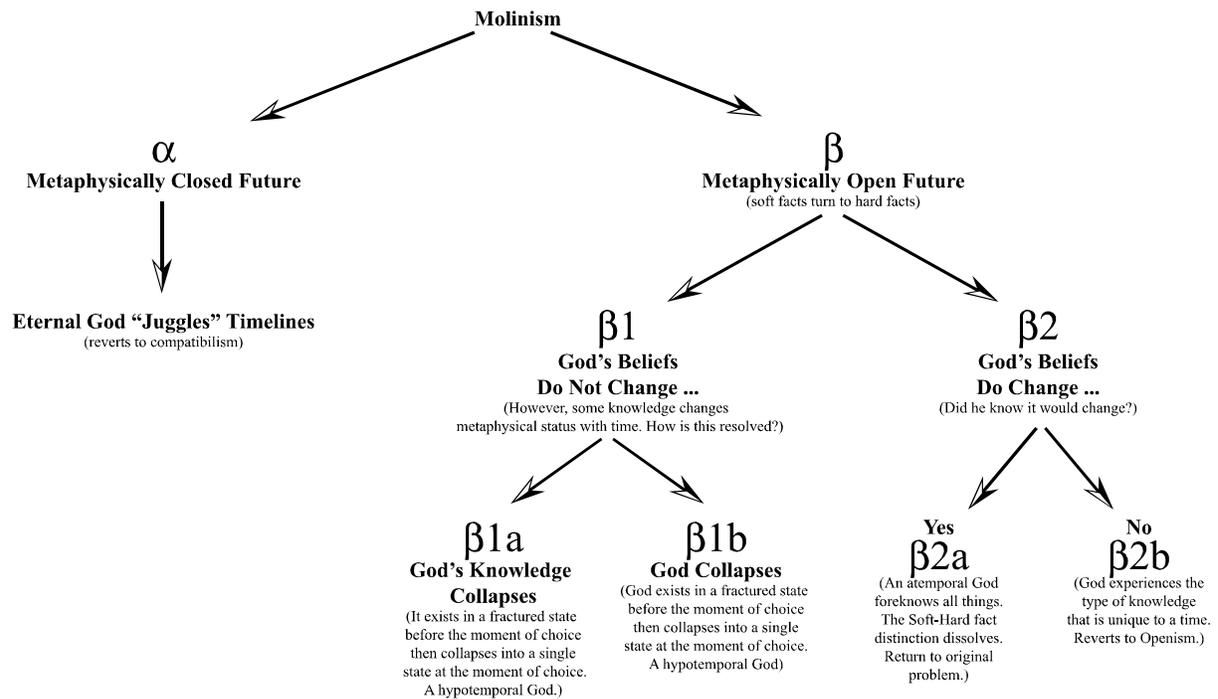


Figure 2. Flow chart as a visual aid to the conceptual analysis of Molinism.

Figure 2 above shows how the analysis works out visually. This has been one way to analyze Molinism in light of the fore-ignorance account of existential temporality. It has been an attempt to uncover the many choices a Molinist faces and to explore each branch to its logical conclusion. Obviously, the temporal issues render Molinism fairly complex. Though the above analysis was relatively thorough, it will be helpful to clarify the effect of the fore-ignorance account of existential temporality in isolation.

Relating the Two Existentially Temporal Modes to the Categories of Molinism Listed Above

To be clear, the fore-ignorance account of *existential temporality* does not claim to answer the question of which view of *time* is correct within the metaphysical debate. Instead, it reveals that *existential temporality* is best described as ignorance of a particular species of knowledge within a phenomenological methodology. Thus, fore-ignorance, as has been argued at length previously, provides two distinct formulations of God. First, there is a God who is existentially temporal and who is thus necessarily fore-ignorant of at least one future event that will be known by God at some point in the future. I shall label this formulation God X. Second, we have a God who is existentially atemporal, and therefore knows his own subjective future completely. I shall label this formulation God Y.

The analysis must now turn to how these two sets relate: God's experience of time X and Y, and the five formulations of the Molinist God that were discussed above: α , $\beta 1a$, $\beta 1b$, $\beta 2a$, and $\beta 2b$ (See fig. 3 below as a visual aid). To begin to make this comparison, the analyst must first distinguish between the metaphysical (or even physical) effects of time upon God from the phenomenological effects that are relevant to the fore-ignorance account. Only the latter will be considered at this point. Another distinction must be made as well. With regard to the mind of

God, the implications of fore-ignorance may be used to examine the situation both internally and externally.

Internally, the fore-ignorance account of temporality states that God, if existentially temporal, cannot know his own personal future in a way that prevents his knowledge from changing with time. Alternatively, an existentially temporal God must possess knowledge that changes with time. God can guess what he might do, and he can be very disciplined about doing only what he guessed. And, God may guess what he might think, and be disciplined in this area as well. And, God may be able to exclude all possible avenues of deviation from his plan. But, his knowledge of his own subjective future is, then, discursive. And, in this case, we have a God who thinks temporally at least in the planning stage. On the other hand, the only formulation of existential atemporality that works is the one that precludes all possible changes in the mind of God. Thus, internal to the mind of God, the implications of fore-ignorance are relatively straightforward and well understood at this point.

Externally, when considering the temporal relationship between God and the world, fore-ignorance allows for a God who is temporal with regard to his own personal/internal timeline, but who can create and manipulate hypo-timelines, possible worlds, that appear static to him. In this scheme, if the reader will recall, God sees each world as we might see books on a bookshelf, each with its own scenarios and characters. Such a God is said to be hypertemporal in relation to the possible worlds being manipulated in this manner. This view is compatible with Molinism- α and involves X. Thus, Molinism- α and God X are compatible. In other words, a God who is fore-ignorant and existentially temporal is compatible with hypertemporality in relation to possible worlds.

Moving on to consider Y, we have a God with full and complete foreknowledge including subjective thoughts, actions, and experiences, who could not experience life temporally. All knowledge is available to this God all-at-once, for all times, or eternally in a timeless sense. Because all knowledge is present in the mind of this God, it might first be thought that he also possesses middle knowledge as a subset of the information about all possible worlds. However, this is a problematic conception. It may be incoherent to mix the notions of eternity and possibility at all. But, even if this is not a problem, the process of selecting which possible world to actualize seems unavoidably discursive. That is, it seems to inherently involve a change. If it did not, then the classification “possible” reduces to “coherent.”

If Molinism- α can be imagined, metaphorically, as God “juggling” possible worlds as temporally complete systems, then God need not change his state of mind with regard to any fact within any world since these do not change. However, given Y, an atemporal-foreknowing God does not actually consider his options discursively. This would make him existentially temporal, internally. One might think that such steps are not temporal, but converting to a logical system over and against a temporal one will not help in the *phenomenological* discussion. God-Y could know all possible worlds, but he would know them *as* eternally possible. In addition to possible worlds, he would also know the actual world, but eternally *as* actual. Thus, the possible worlds are not potentially actual. They would merely exist as other logically coherent world-stories that *are not* actual. God would not see these other worlds as candidates for actuality. There is no possibility that anything other than the actual world could be actualized. Therefore, α and Y are incompatible.

Let me remind the reader at this point that α has been criticized as an illegitimate formulation of Molinism by at least one Molinist. It seems to be very close to the Compatibilist

position. For those who are inclined to agree, to avoid equivocation, the features of α , then, must not be used in any subsequent conceptualization. I.e., one must abandon the notion of God viewing multiple unique possible worlds, having run their course, from an external perspective either as a temporal God or as an atemporal God. This conceptualization necessarily involves a God who is at least existentially and metaphysically hypertemporal to these worlds regardless of his existential mode with regard to an absolute A-series. Additionally, if an absolute A-series is involved, if there are genuine possibilities, this adds to the case for incompatibility between God-Y and Molinism- α .

This leads to consideration of β , Molinism in combination with a metaphysically open future. Molinism- β 1a and β 1b respond identically to the options for God's existential mode of temporal life. Neither of them is compatible with an existentially atemporal, foreknowing God. And, both are compatible with an existentially temporal, fore-ignorant God. This is because, as part of the decision to prefer β 1 over β 2, the commitment to an absence of change within the mind of God had been made. That is, the β 1 category just is a decision not to allow God's internal knowledge (beliefs) to change with time.

The Molinism- β 2 set (β 2a and β 2b) is different than the β 1 set (β 1a and β 1b). The β 2 set responds differently to the options for God's existential mode of temporal life. β 2 is the option that allows God's knowledge to change with time. The difference between β 2a and β 2b, arises when we ask whether God knew in advance that his knowledge would change with time. Within β 2a the answer was yes; God knew that each segment of middle knowledge would change status at the time that the free choice relating to it was made. As a result, paradoxically, though changes occur metaphysically, God foreknows the change completely so that nothing actually changes in the mind of God existentially. This may appear to be a contradiction at first, but it is not. The

definition of β_2 involves a change of knowledge metaphysically, but β_{2a} reverses this change existentially. Here we see the phenomenological method dominating over the metaphysical method. If God is aware of a change beforehand, this does not necessitate an internal change within the divine mind when this change arrives in real time. Therefore, β_{2a} is compatible with God-Y but not God-X.

β_{2b} , conversely, is compatible with God-X but not God-Y. This God was not aware that his knowledge would change. For each individual free choice that is made, despite being aware of the middle knowledge of what the choice would be in the given circumstance, God is yet to experience the choice. That is, there is something missing in his middle knowledge that is filled in when the event actually occurs. This missing element is the very kind of knowledge that the thought experiment above must include. If a Molinist believes that middle knowledge includes this type of knowledge, then all free decisions are completely anticipated within the second logical moment, the one just “before” creation. This is the position of β_{2a} . If the Molinist thinks that this type of knowledge is unique to a time, and that it must be experienced in the learning-new-things sense, then he must subscribe to β_{2b} . As we’ve noted above, however, this is a reversion to full Openism, which is one of the extremes Molinism is trying to avoid.

Thus, with Molinism- α on one extreme, we can only have an existentially temporal God who is existentially and metaphysically hypertemporal to the world that appears static to him. And, with Molinism- β_{2b} on the other extreme, we can only have an existentially temporal God who is metaphysically and existentially temporal along with the world. The former is compatibilistic and the latter is openistic.

Between these extremes, we have three existentially atemporal formulations of God. Molinism- β_{1a} and β_{1b} involve the fractured knowledge or being of God respectively. These

wind up being extremely weak conceptions of God in relation to the world that border on Panentheism. With Molinism- β 2a, the remaining option, the reversion appears to be to the reinstatement of the original problem. In conclusion, it seems that none of the five versions of Molinism resist reversion to some form of the problem Molinism was supposed to solve. The only way Molinism could be seen as a solution, then, would be for the analyst to borrow elements from some of these incompatible versions in order to construct a single theory. For example, elements of α might be taken to solve the problem of foreknowledge and sovereignty, while elements of one of the β versions could be used to solve the problem of libertarian freedom. However, because these two versions are incompatible, it is important to recognize when this equivocation is occurring.

	α	β 1a	β 1b	β 2a	β 2b
God X Temporal = Fore-Ignorant	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
God Y Atemporal = Foreknowing	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

An arrow labeled "Compatibilism" points to the "Yes" cell for God X under α .
 An arrow labeled "Open Theism" points to the "Yes" cell for God X under β 2b.
 An arrow points from the "Yes" cells for God Y under β 1a, β 1b, and β 2a to the text "Omniscience Problems, Hypotemporal, Panentheistic?".
 An arrow points from the "Yes" cell for God Y under β 2a to the text "Original Problem".

Figure 3. Chart comparing five types of molinism on the horizontal axis with the two modes of existential temporality dictated by the fore-ignorance account of existential temporality on the vertical axis.

Neo-Molinism

Gregory Boyd, a leading proponent of Open Theism, sees God as partly open to the future (partly ignorant of it with regard to a new category of middle knowledge) but who also possesses enough control and foreknowledge of middle knowledge of the regular sort to retain strong providential control.¹¹⁷ This is an allowable formulation with regard to the fore-ignorance account of existential temporality with respect to its parts. Once these parts are assembled, however, Neo-Molinism reverts to Openism. Fore-ignorance, according to the above analysis, reduces the options available to Boyd in such a way that it prevents him from achieving the synthesis he seeks.

While Openists sit at one extreme and Determinists/Compatibilists sit at the other, Molinism is an attempt to split the middle and establish an explanation for retaining the best of both extremes, libertarian freedom for humanity and strong sovereignty and providential control for God. Yet, because the openist position has already occupied an extreme, it seems that they feel the need to defend their view against the criticism that it creates an impotent and/or ignorant God with regard both to foreknowledge and an adequate competence in directing the course of history. Because intuition strongly suggests that a lack of “exhaustively certain” foreknowledge mitigates much of the effectiveness of omniscience, Boyd, for one, seeks to defend his view by presenting an argument, akin to Molinism, that gives back to God an adequate measure of foreknowledge and control.¹¹⁸

How is Neo-Molinism similar to Molinism proper? Through the addition of “might-counterfactuals” to the “would-counterfactuals” in the middle-knowledge class, Boyd suggests

¹¹⁷ Gregory A. Boyd, “Neo-Molinism and the Infinite Intelligence of God,” *Philosophia Christi* 5:1 (2003): 188.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

that his view ascribes to God additional knowledge that makes him capable, by means of infinite intelligence, to predict the future discursively with incredible accuracy.¹¹⁹

Considering fore-ignorance and the analysis above, Boyd's view clearly adopts α with regard to causal priority and would-counterfactuals, but adopts the open view with regard to might-counterfactuals. As he states,

To speak more precisely, if God chooses to create a world in which some conjoined might-counterfactuals are true, he is actually creating a delimited *set* of possible worlds, any one of which *might* be actualized, depending on the choices free agents make. In such a world-set, God's knowledge of what will be and what would be would not exhaust what God knows: God would also know what might and might not be. In short, the future, in such a world, would be partly open.¹²⁰

It appears that Boyd is conceiving of a metaphysically temporal God and world. Such a perspective creates a God that knows certain things before creation, and then learns new things through the course of the history of the world. Yet, because of supreme intelligence and access to completely accurate information (might- and would-counterfactuals included), Boyd's formulation of God is also able to figure out nearly every future contingency well before it occurs.

Thus, unlike Molinism, which denies a causal connection in either direction between God's middle knowledge and that to which it corresponds in the world, Boyd views God's knowledge as speculative before each freely determined event and empirical afterwards. Since Boyd clearly conceives of God as temporal, what has been labeled God-X above, the sufficiently fore-ignorant God, and since $\beta 1b$ is disallowed in combination with God-X, it seems that Boyd is adopting God-X, elements of Molinism- α , and elements of Molinism- $\beta 2b$ (full Openism).

To discover this, each stage (logical moment) of the problem must be broken down. In the Neo-Molinist scheme, God possesses might-counterfactuals involving all possible-world sets,

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 192.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 194.

and in this form, the possible-world sets relate to God according to the α scheme. But, within a particular delimited set, once actualized, the would-counterfactual situation dominates. At this point, Boyd reverts to the Openist position rather than turning to $\beta 1a$. That is, he refers to God simply being ignorant of what will be chosen by free agents. Boyd confirms this position when he writes, “the future, in such a world, would be partly open.” as quoted above, and “this... leaves open genuine possibilities.”¹²¹

Therefore, Boyd’s conception of Molinism appears to be limited to the α scheme. He has then proceeded to add an openist accessory by distinguishing between two types of counterfactuals. However, if the critique in the previous section is correct, this is exactly what Molinists are already doing without Boyd’s distinction. While Boyd’s distinction allows him to present his conception explicitly and without equivocation, it seems that Molinists have been making the same moves without realizing it. This is the likely equivocation between α and $\beta 2b$ that was suggested in the previous section.

Nonetheless, Boyd has not succeeded. The actual effect of his distinction is to limit the number of possible worlds before creation with the help of one class of middle knowledge and work out the remainder of the possibilities in real time along with the world, that is, resorting to an open future. Thus, he has created a theory that fails to combine the two extremes. While God-X is coherent on its own and is compatible with Molinism- α , this does not allow for libertarian freedom. And, while the openist position is coherent on its own, and compatible with God-X, it does not allow for strong sovereignty and foreknowledge in God, simple or otherwise. It seems that he has merely narrowed the number of possible worlds down to a number that is more manageable for God. This limits the options for free creatures without eliminating them. But,

¹²¹ Ibid.

what does this accomplish? To Boyd, it allows God to *more* accurately predict, or guess at, the future. The resulting situation is one with improved odds for discursive fore-belief in God.

There is no doubt that Boyd recognizes many of the subtleties of the Molinist position. However, he has ultimately chosen a version, α , that has been criticized as incorrect by those philosophers who have reintroduced Molinism into the current discussion.¹²² As a result, Boyd's suggestions are not likely to please Molinists. He has made an interesting argument that will, no doubt, enable Openism to present itself with greater diversity and depth. However, it does not address the concern that God is not sufficiently powerful and knowledgeable in cases where he is fore-ignorant. It does not really try to occupy the middle position that Molinism attempts to occupy by attributing real foreknowledge to God and real freedom to humanity. Instead, it tries to make one extreme more attractive by making its consequences less severe, thereby making it seem a little less extreme. Therefore, Neo-Molinism, despite being good at what it attempts to accomplish, is named poorly. It need not be associated with Molinism so strongly. In any case, Neo-Molinism is not a threat to the fore-ignorance account of temporality because it does not attempt to violate its categorical prohibition. The God of Neo-Molinism is existentially *and* metaphysically temporal.

¹²² Paul Helm, *The Providence of God*, 59.

CHAPTER 7

ANTICIPATION AND ANALYSIS OF POTENTIAL DEFEATERS: PHILOSOPHICAL, PHYSICAL, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES

Branched time

Many philosophers and scientists think of time as multi-branched in such a way that the possible futures divide away from the temporal origin continuously. Much like an actual tree, each moment in time possesses one route back to the trunk (origin) and yet multiple paths to the sky (future). In this scheme, the past is a collection of choices having been made while the future is a many-optioned panoply of undetermined quantum and personal paths. This is a relativization of reality because it does not involve possibilities *as* possibilities. Instead of possibilities vying for actuality, multiple branches share equal status. Instead of a single choice having been chosen from a number of options, each choice exists as actually having been made. And, perhaps most disturbing, instead of multiple choices being available for one individual, there are multiple future individuals who have each chosen a unique path, each of which is further divided by subsequent branching events. This is the picture given to us by the Everett interpretation of Quantum Mechanics, the so-called “many-worlds” interpretation.

In addition to being useful in resolving the quantum paradox revealed by the double-slit experiment, the branched-time theory may be used as a potential solution to the Aristotelian

problem of the truth value of statements about the future. In this view, statements made at points within this branched scheme are true in some later branches but not in all. Yet, despite its ability to answer certain questions coherently, there are several problems with this theory. It makes use of an equivocation that, ultimately, fails to establish the truth value of propositions about the future. Instead, it divides the propositions in such a way that they are both true and false.¹²³

While it is true that the sense of the value varies according to the difference between branches, being true for one branch and false for another, this situation eliminates the category of necessity for all temporally divided propositions.

Another reason to reject this perspective is that it really doesn't resolve the question of the openness of the future in a useful way. If each option is equally real, then each path from branch to trunk is just as "set in stone" as any other path. The benefits of a truly open future are eliminated by the relativization of the free agents themselves. The benefits of libertarian freedom could only be retained in cases where an agent is a combination of all future possibilities. Dividing the agent into multiple, future branch-versions merely multiplies his temporal parts. Alternatively, this may result in a compatibilistically free agent, one who feels free but who is not, and who has an almost infinite number of nearly-identical twins.

In contrast, the Copenhagen interpretation of QM offers a different conception. Here, the branches of reality are not only local and partially relativized, but exist as options only for a short time. Eventually, the quantum decision is rendered and the multi-faceted wave function collapses into one of the various options. In the philosophy of time, this gives us a picture of a tree whose trunk grows with time. As each moment of decision is reached, the selected branch joins the trunk while the unselected branches drop off from the tree and cease to exist. This view is compatible with the reality of the A-series and real temporal becoming.

¹²³ Yourgrau, 132.

In any event, for each of these versions of branched time, the existential effects of fore-ignorance remain the same. Thus, whether or not the future is real and singular (block universe), multi-branched and real (Everett interpretation of QM), or multi-branched and unreal/possible (A-time/Copenhagen interpretation of QM), fore-ignorance may have its major effect. This is because the foreknowledge that would destroy the temporal mode of experiencing life need not correspond to any real state of affairs. Within the limits of the phenomenological methodology, the reality of the world and its states of affairs is bracketed out. Because of this, the beliefs that are available to consciousness have their necessary effects regardless of their relation to a world or to any mind or object that may have caused them. Therefore, the fore-ignorance account of existential temporality is insulated from metaphysical and physical concerns. Because the fore-ignorance account is phenomenologically valid, it is insulated from the effects of physical and metaphysical states of affairs.

The Space-Time Analogy

In many investigations into time, an analogy with space is made in order to provide a means of understanding concepts. Even in common language, time is often referred to in spatial terms. One might ask how “long” it will be until an event occurs. Or, one might refer to the past by saying “back” then. And most subtly of all, one can say that “God is ‘outside’ of time.” Thus, both in duration, orientation, and status we use spatial language and mental pictures to conceive of time.

Yet, while a lack of knowledge of the future has a pronounced effect, we might assume that a lack of knowledge of the north, for example, would not have an analogous effect.

Knowledge of left and right does not have an analogous effect upon sense of spatial position as fore-ignorance has upon sense of presence. This is anticipated to be a potential defeater to the implications of fore-ignorance that have been stated in this paper.

To answer this problem, it must first be recognized that the temporal side of the analogy deals with perceptions that are internal to one's existence, while the spatial side deals with perceptions that are external. That is, one's perception with regard to temporality (as temporal movement) is confined to one's lifespan, but one's spatial perception is not confined to one's bodily limits. Temporal beings are not capable of perceiving outside of their temporal range or extension, but they can perceive outside of their spatial range. In fact, most spatial perception is external to the material limits of the body. One can perceive objects at a distance with seeing and hearing organs. There is no such apparatus for directly perceiving past or future states of affairs, that is, before birth and after death. Moreover, one cannot believe it is "now" at a time that is prior to one's birth or subsequent to one's death. Thus, perception with regard to a subject's bodily extension and temporal extension are reversed in some ways. This reversal is sufficient to account for the difference in effects created by the revelation of axial information. The past-present-future axis, when fully revealed to the subject at all points along the axis, creates a very different effect from the full revelation of any or all of the three spatial axes. In the latter situation, one merely obtains a sense of position in space. Yet, in the former situation, the revelation of the future has the potential to completely alter the subject's perception of what the axis is, but only within the confines of the subject's own temporal extension. As was argued earlier, sufficient knowledge of the future has the capacity to eliminate temporality entirely, rendering the perception of existence into a formal, static, space-like coordinate system filled with events at various points.

The timeline that is de-indexicalized and de-temporalized by future knowledge is that which exists only within a person's lifespan. Therefore, knowledge of the past, as having been "there" in person, and knowledge of the present as being "here," is indistinguishable from knowledge of the future as a kind of knowledge (not considering how one received this knowledge). It is a correlate of omnipresence that removes the subject from existing in a peculiar way at the boundary of knowledge as if only there they could be animated. If Jones endures a span of time, he is the subject during the whole interval despite being different in some ways at different times. If Jones exists across a space dimensionally, it is the same subject who feels the left and right hand in his subjective center. Thus, Jones may be one subject across space or time. Therefore, it is knowledge that is temporally limited, not existence.

Past and Future as Analogs

If the fore-ignorance effect survives comparison with space, how might it fare if it is turned inside out? Why does knowledge of the future eliminate temporality if knowledge of the past does not? To begin, it has previously been argued at the end of chapter two that a lack of any sense of the past whatsoever would result in the absence of meaningful consciousness as we know it. And this presumes that the subject in question would not then, in place of the past, have knowledge of the future. Thus, the situation considered earlier in chapter two is not a reversal of the fore-ignorance account of existential temporality. To truly reverse the situation, the future would have to be known but the past unknown in the initial state before the thought experiment is engaged. The second state to be considered in the reversed thought experiment would then involve addition of past knowledge to complete all knowledge that the subject would ever have.

Thus, in the first state, the subject would merely experience life in a reversed temporal direction. The subject would know the future but be ignorant of the past and so might learn to reverse the definitions of those words. If this odd tempero-epistemological reversal occurred in this universe, then the subject would remember the future and forget the past. This might appear to breakdown when one considers the current physical laws, and the apparent anisotropy of cause-and-effect relationships. However, since the thought experiment in question is meant to be isolated within Phenomenology, all associations with the physical world ought to be bracketed out during the process of description. For the purposes of discussing this as a rebuttal, the reversal of the theory doesn't work as a defeater.

Nevertheless, in both situations, the second state, wherein the addition of knowledge of the "dark side" of time is accessible, does not allow for any sense of time. Therefore, far from challenging the conclusions of this paper, "reversing the poles" of the thought experiment actually helps to affirm them.

Time and Thought

One might wonder if thought is possible without time or temporality. This is of particular relevance to discussions about God's relationship to time. Does God need to be temporal in order to think? And, if so, doesn't that oblige philosophers and theologians to err on the side of human-like thought? These are all excellent questions that will not be thoroughly discussed in this paper. However, this and the following section will illuminate some of the implications of fore-ignorance with regard to these questions.

Sartre believed that foreknowledge destroys the subject (the For-itself). He believed that the past has being, but that it is dead in its objectivity and changelessness. To him, a living subject was to be found only in the “indissoluble dyad” of being and nothingness, fleeing the death of objectivity in the past and seeking the nothingness of the unknown future.¹²⁴ Nevertheless, despite thoroughly examining the temporality of subjectivity and claiming that, “the For-Itself cannot be except in temporal form,”¹²⁵ Sartre was not able thereby to convincingly rule out any and all alternatives to thought.

It should be obvious that it is impossible to exclude the possibility of non-temporal thought unless one concocts a circular argument based upon a definition of thought that explicitly or implicitly includes temporality. Thus, if one thinks of thought as necessarily discursive, and discursivity is believed to entail a temporal process or another form of change, then it is likely that one will conclude that thought requires time. If this approach is rightly excluded, then we return to the positive conclusion that we must be satisfied with a negative.

If it is possible that thought of some sort might be possible without temporality or time, then it must be concluded that God, the most likely candidate to make such a scheme work, *could* be subjectively atemporal in a coherent way. To put it plainly, it seems presumptuous to assume that, if God cannot think like a human being, then he cannot think at all.

Moreover, the reduction of temporality to a form of ignorance does not answer the question definitively. Openist philosophers and theologians will have no trouble thinking of God as ignorant of the future and have already developed systems in which this is not the privation of a good or excellent property.

¹²⁴ Sartre, 120.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 136.

Of course, thought is not alone but has a few partners appearing in very similar questions. Aristotle equated living with existence for living things. This idea was directly countered by Boethius. Both of these thinkers associated life with time, but in opposite ways. And, of course, freedom may be brought into the same analysis. The fact that life, freedom, and thought as we know them are bound up with temporality simply does not exclude the possibility of different, and possibly superior, forms of all three.

Another option, in addition to supposing that unknown forms of life, freedom, and thought may exist, involves alternatives to temporality itself. That is, rather than attempt to alter conceptions of life, freedom, and thought to accommodate atemporality, one might consider the possibility of alternative species of temporality. These will be considered below.

Is God Free?

To expand on what was introduced above, freedom as an attribute of an atemporal subject, should be considered further. Since freedom, as experienced by human beings, necessarily entails a lack of knowledge of what will be chosen, it follows that any subject who possesses foreknowledge of first-person thoughts, actions, and experiences must not possess freedom. Molina realizes this with regard to middle knowledge. He believed that God could have middle knowledge about the free actions of rational creatures, but not about his own free choices. If he did possess such knowledge, he could not be considered free. Craig agrees with Molina on this point over and against Suárez.¹²⁶

However, unlike the situation with *thought* and time, there is an acceptable sense of *freedom* that allows us another means of answering the question. One can be considered free in

this second sense if one is not hindered from acting according to one's nature. Perhaps action is not even necessary; if one is simply not hindered from *being* according to one's nature, perhaps that is enough to be considered free. In this second sense of freedom, God may be considered free if he is either able to act without coercion or if he is able to be who he is without interference.

Thus, in addition to the negative solution, we have at least one possible positive solution. It remains possible that there are other senses in which God can be considered free.

However, it is important not to move on too quickly. Using the tools created earlier, it seems inescapable that human freedom, along with temporality, is best described, phenomenologically as a form of ignorance, as a deficiency. Thus, fore-ignorance is not just a description of existential temporality, but it is also intimately related to existential freedom. This has not been adequately explored or defended except by association with temporality. However, it is interesting to note that both become negative qualities as a result of the fore-ignorance thought experiment. Animated life, human-like thought, freedom, temporality, and indexical knowledge (as we know them) are all facets of the same epistemological deficiency. When seen from this perspective, it may be better to exclude these five attributes from a divine formulation rather than require them.

Alternative Temporalities

The questions above might also lead one to conclude that, if temporality is necessary for life, thought, etc., then maybe there are other ways to be temporal. In other words, the challenge to fore-ignorance in this case is whether it eliminates all forms of temporality. Yet, if there are

¹²⁶ Craig, *Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom*, 277.

other ways to be existentially or metaphysically temporal, aside from the various forms of hypertemporality discussed in earlier chapters, one has *great* difficulty imagining what the options might be. Moreover, even if some options are found, there is a high probability that they will respond to fore-ignorance in the same manner. At least, each of the candidates that this researcher has discovered has failed to work around the implications of fore-ignorance.

It has been argued previously that the effect of fore-ignorance applies to all subjects. If the temporal way of experiencing life is an epistemological limitation, then subjects may exist in only one of two states: with or without the limitation. Only in the fully unlimited state is existential temporality destroyed. Thus, while temporality may be thought to admit of degrees based upon the extent of access to first-person information, atemporality does not admit of degrees.

However, with temporality, no real alternative may be found in considering degrees of possession of future, first-person knowledge. For example, if a subject is given all but 5% of the first-person information of a one-hundred-year life, this subject will then exist, subjectively, in the state of being 95 years old regardless of their actual age. They will exist in this state, being epistemically inflexible, until they actually reach the age of 95 and resume receiving previously unknown first-person information. Therefore, the extent of possession of first person knowledge of the subject's actual future determines what age they believe themselves to be. There are, therefore, only two options. A subject either has full or partial access to first-person information.

To show how other options will retain the implications of fore-ignorance, the strongest alternative that has been considered by this researcher will be mentioned. Processes that bite their own tails, so to speak, may appear to be circular in such a way that they allow for a semblance of motion without overall change. However, a truly circular history or logical

“motion” despite appearing to offer another category of temporality that might be exempt, fails to escape the jurisdiction of fore-ignorance.

This is actually a very old concept, one that reaches back, at least, to the Neo-Platonists. Proclus, for example, is known to have paid close attention to this possibility of cyclic/circular or reflexive relationships, calling it “spiritual motion” and “motion without motion.” Proclus attempted to retain a meaningful form of motion together with timelessness by means of distinguishing two different kinds of logical relations, dynamic and static. By noting the direction of power donation in certain kinds of relations, he was able to believably attribute a form of anisotropy to non-temporal transmission and legitimately make use of the term dynamic. Apparently, Proclus believed that revealing the one-way nature of some logical relationships was enough to establish the legitimacy of the concept of emanation allowing for being, in the perfect world of the forms, to reach down into the temporal, sensible realm by means of many intermediate steps involving a dynamic and hierarchical transmission of power.¹²⁷

While this analysis might be useful in creating a theory of timeless, divine thought, it does not directly apply to the question of fore-ignorance, but a closely related idea does. When considering formal tension and spiritual motion, one might be led to consider truly circular timelines (as opposed to cyclical histories). Unfortunately, a circular timeline is static when viewed from a hypertemporal perspective, and any becoming attributed to it must occur in a hyper-timeline, just as any mental act of appraising the events inside the timeline is hypertemporal to the timeline. As with the universe that Gödel proposed as a possible solution to

¹²⁷ S. E. Gersh, *Kinesis Akinetos: A Study of Spiritual Motion in the Philosophy of Proclus*, Philosophia Antiqua: A Series of Monographs on Ancient Philosophy, eds. W. J. Verdenius and J. H. Waszink, vol. XXVI (Leiden, The Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1973), 27.

Einstein's field equations, a space-time universe that includes world lines that loop in closed curves must exclude a proper A-series.¹²⁸

Within this conception, one might make use of the analogy of riding a train around a circular track. The damning question, here, is how one would determine one's location on such a path, possessing indexical knowledge of time and place. If there is motion, then location must change. Yet, when one considers what fore-ignorance does to indexical capacity, it becomes clear that "indicating" one's "present" location is not possible without fore-ignorance. As one conceives of the analogy, one might make the mistake of employing one's own (hyper) temporal perspective in order to recognize the position of the train within the (hypo) temporal timeline of the analogy. This mistake is the substitution of temporality in one's own mind, as the performer of a thought experiment, for the temporality of the subject, and objects, "within" the analogy.

The only way to correctly attribute indexical capacity to subjects within the cycle is to imagine that you, the conceiver or viewer of the circular timeline, see the entire timeline statically from a hypertemporal perspective and *then* note that the subject within the circular timeline has no knowledge, at any one point on the circle, of first-person knowledge for future sections of the track. In this way, the subject is ignorant of the next segment of track *at* each segment of the track. Even though this is the situation all the way around the track, such a subject may possibly experience life temporally. While the past and future are metaphysically synonymous in this situation, in the B-series sense, knowledge of position is independent of this fact and is still dependent upon fore-ignorance.

If these two examples are the strongest contenders for alternative temporalities that might threaten the fore-ignorance effect, their failure renders the field empty for practical purposes. All other types of temporality that have been considered by this researcher are even

¹²⁸ Yourgrau, 94.

less promising and fall prey to the same problems. Existential temporality is never obtained in a way that escapes the requirement for fore-ignorance. Therefore, it can be confidently concluded that no such alternative exists. Looking back at the reasons for looking into alternative temporalities, it can also be concluded that the goal for eternalists should not be to seek an alternative to temporality that would be capable of rescuing life, thought, freedom, etc., but a way to formulate life and thought, at a minimum, that does not require any form of temporality.

CHAPTER 8

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Husserl's original intent for Phenomenology was to provide a philosophical method whose primary task was to describe phenomena thoroughly and deeply. Description, not the provision of underlying causal explanation, is the fundamental task that is to be completed before subsequent investigations and theory-making are pursued.¹²⁹ Fore-ignorance is exactly this, the most fundamental phenomenological description of what temporality is. This is what time is to human beings.

Philosophers have rightly distinguished physical time from metaphysical time. However, distinguishing a third category of study is necessary. Phenomenological time, alternatively labeled internal time or mind-dependent time, what has been termed "temporality" and the "existential A-series" in this paper, is a third, distinct category. Describing time physically is a mathematical problem for physicists. Describing time metaphysically is an analytic project for linguists and logicians. Describing *temporality* is a project of an entirely different sort. At its best, it is pre-scientific, and as such it is not empirical, linguistico-logical, physical, mathematical, or psychological. Temporal studies, then, deal with the fundamental features of present, living experience. It is, in a word, existential. Sartre first recognized the import of a lack

¹²⁹ Moran, 9-10.

of true foreknowledge within the subject anthropologically. In his analysis of the ontology of being, he noted that the subject is destroyed by the presence of foreknowledge.

Moving a small step beyond this conclusion, along the same track, the fore-ignorance account of existential temporality concludes that fore-ignorance is essential to temporality (but not time) while also recognizing that it is wrong to conclude that fore-ignorance is required for subjectivity. That is, Sartre reached beyond his analysis when he concluded that the subject would be eradicated if foreknowledge were to become available. In an attempt to correct this error, it was noted here that the philosopher can only conclude that the mode of the subject could not be temporal if foreknowledge were obtained. This would be merely a prohibition of only one possible mode.

By means of a thought experiment, fore-ignorance was revealed to be the best description of temporality available. Furthermore, it was argued that temporality *is* fore-ignorance. Since fore-ignorance is present in all subjectively temporal subjects and absent in subjectively non-temporal subjects, and because it fulfills all the requirements for identity with temporality, this seems to be a strongly grounded conclusion.

However, the description is not an end in itself. The description is provided after “bracketing” out all other elements, such as the metaphysical and physical data and theories. Thus, in order to go beyond Husserl’s Phenomenology, implications can be had only in the process of un-bracketing. The fore-ignorance account of existential temporality has implications only in leaving the phenomenological methodology. Yet, coming from a phenomenological and prescientific methodology, the description of temporality that these implications are based upon will have more weight, or value, or authority, than implications that come out of any system that is meant to describe reality behind appearances along with any causal power such reality is

thought to have, be it logical, metaphysical, or physical. In other words, even if we could be assured that the metaphysical or logical bases for other theories of the essence of time are correct, the idea that temporality *is* fore-ignorance more thoroughly described, if it has implications at all, must provide implications that are more likely to be correct in cases where they conflict with the results of other methodologies. Thus, it matters less what conclusion one draws in the linguistic debate about time (tensed vs. tenseless) or the physical debate between the two dominant physical theories (GTR and QM) in those cases that involve subjects. This way of thinking about temporality is preeminent over all other ways of seeing time because it is capable of looking beyond physical, language/tensed, and analytical notions of time and the problems they each face. It leaps over these examinations of the foundations of metaphysical time directly to the aspect of temporality that is, in many cases, most important.

Implications for non-temporal states would seem to have no practical applications, except by way of negation, for temporal subjects like human beings. In consideration of divinity, however, these issues become capable of having a positive implication in the form of a *categorical prohibition*.

Inherent within the question of God's relationship to time is how God experiences life. Boethius focused on this subtle distinction when he created his famous definition of divine atemporal eternity as *total possession all at once of illimitable life*. This definition deals specifically with what it is like to be atemporal. Thus, the question of God's temporal status has long, but unwittingly, been focused upon temporality and not merely time. Yet, no previous studies have dealt with the experience of temporality as being preeminent over the metaphysical status of God with regard to time.

Within the Philosophy of Religion, William Lane Craig has concluded that both an atemporal and a temporal God may be coherently conceived. “The doctrine of divine timelessness is tenable so long as the tensed theory has not been shown to be a superior account of temporal reality.”¹³⁰ However, he has concluded that the issue may only be settled by recourse to the philosophical study of metaphysical time. “As the tenseless theory of time fares, so also fares the doctrine of divine timelessness.”¹³¹ Craig tackles each of the two dominant, currently contending theories of time in two separate monographs and has concluded that the tensed theory of time is preferable, concluding that temporal becoming is real.¹³²

In this discussion, therefore, the theory of fore-ignorance may take on significance. It is argued here that metaphysical/linguistic arguments like Craig’s have less power than do implications of phenomenological description. As such, fore-ignorance dominates the question. Yet, it *does not* lead to a single conclusion. Instead, it renders untenable those views that would attribute to God complete foreknowledge *and* existential temporality. When Craig defends libertarian free will, he turns to Molinism. Despite being an able defender of Molinism, he and others have failed to formulate Molinism in a way that obtains both libertarian freedom for humanity and relevant foreknowledge for God. This is because fore-ignorance dictates that a temporalist must choose Molinism- α , which destroys libertarian freedom, or Molinism β 2b, which collapses into Open Theism. Yet, these two are incompatible.

Therefore, the theist is left to choose between theological determinism¹³³ on the one hand, and the open view on the other. It seems that the fore-ignorance account of existential temporality has greater jurisdiction to force this choice upon philosophers like Plantinga, Craig,

¹³⁰ Craig, *God, Time, and Eternity*, 137.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² Craig, *Tensed Theory of Time*, and *Tenseless Theory of Time*, and *God, Time, and Eternity*, 138-9.

and Flint than does any metaphysical theory. Moreover, the option of retreating into “Socratic ignorance” has also been removed because fore-ignorance, by strongly ruling out middle positions, demands that one make a choice between one of the two strong options. Full appreciation of fore-ignorance, therefore, within the Philosophy of Religion, must result in polarization.

¹³³ Theological determinism, over and against physical, or “normal,” determinism, is the determination of the world’s states of affairs by divine agency rather than by physical states of affairs in the past. This concept has been considered most notably by Aquinas and Malebranche.

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