

Transworld Depravity, Transworld Sanctity, & Uncooperative Essences

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1. Transworld Depravity

Thanks to Richard Otte for showing that my definition of transworld depravity (TWD) in *The Nature of Necessity* (p. 188) won't do the trick. There I proposed to argue that

G: God is omnipotent, omniscient and wholly good

is logically compatible with

E: There is evil

by finding a proposition R consistent with G and such that its conjunction with G entails E. Say that an action *A* is *morally significant for S* just if *S*'s performing *A* would be morally right and her failing to do so morally wrong or vice versa, and say that a world *contains moral good* just if it contains free creatures who sometimes do what is right. The proposition I suggested was

R: God actualizes a world containing moral good, and every essence suffers from transworld depravity (call it 'TWD'),

where the definition of TWD goes as follows:

(TWD₁) An essence *E* suffers from TWD iff for every world *W* such that *E* entails the properties *is significantly free in W* and *always does what is right in W*, there is a state of affairs *T* and an action *A* such that

- (1) T is the largest state of affairs God strongly actualizes in W ,
- (2) A is morally significant for E 's instantiation in W

and

- (3) If God had strongly actualized T , E 's instantiation would have gone wrong with respect to A .

It would be nice to put this more briefly. Assume the obvious definition of 'significant freedom'; let ' $E+$ ' be the instantiation of an essence E , let an ' E -perfect world' be one in which E is exemplified and $E+$ is significantly free but always does only what is right, and let ' $T(W)$ ' be the largest state of affairs God strongly actualizes in a world (W). We can then put (TWD₁) as

(TWD₁) E suffers from TWD iff for every E -perfect world W , there is an action A such that if God had strongly actualized $T(W)$, $E+$ would have gone wrong with respect to A .¹

The conjunction of G with R entails E . Furthermore, I claimed that R is consistent with G ; R implies that God could not have actualized a world with significantly free creatures and no evil, but that is compatible with his actualizing a very good world. (In fact it is plausible to think that the best possible worlds contain Incarnation and Atonement, or at any rate Atonement, and hence also contain sin and evil.²)

What Otte points out is that (TWD₁) is completely unsuccessful. For suppose

(TW) All essences suffer from TWD;

it follows that Adam's essence suffers from it; so for every world W in which Adam always does only what is right, there is an action A such that if God were to strongly actualize $T(W)$, Adam would go wrong with respect to A . Now let W be a possible world in which Adam is significantly free, but does only what is right—and in which, furthermore, God commends him (on his deathbed, perhaps) for so

¹ Many writers misunderstand transworld depravity; for an account of how Johns Mackie and Hick have misunderstood it, see Michael Bergmann, "Might-Counterfactuals, Transworld Untrustworthiness and Plantinga's Free Will Defense," *Faith and Philosophy* 16:3 (July 1999), p. 346.

² See my "Supralapsarianism, or 'O Felix Culpa'" in *Christian Faith and the Problem of Evil*, ed. Peter van Inwagen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004).

doing. Then $T(W)$ includes God's commending Adam for always going right; if so, however, it can't be that if God had strongly actualized $T(W)$, Adam would have gone wrong with respect to some action A . No possible world contains both *Adam's going wrong* and *God's commending Adam for always going right*. Hence there is a possible world W in which Adam does only what is right which is not such that if God had strongly actualized $T(W)$, Adam would have gone wrong with respect to some action A . Adam's essence, therefore, doesn't suffer from TWD; hence, given this definition of TWD, both (TW) and R above are false. Furthermore, since it is necessary that there be a possible world in which God commends Adam for always doing what's right, it is necessarily false that all essences suffer from TWD; R, therefore, is necessarily false, in which case, of course, it is not consistent with G.

The way to handle this, one thinks, is to pay attention to the time at which that action A takes place; one's first thought is to try something like the following. Let W be a world in which Adam is free with respect to a morally significant action A , t the time at which, in W , Adam performs or fails to perform A , $tI(W)$ the t -initial segment of W (the initial segment of W up to t), and $T(tI(W))$ the largest state of affairs God strongly actualizes in $tI(W)$; then

(TWD₂) E suffers from TWD iff for every E -perfect world W , there is an action A at a time t such that if God were to strongly actualize $T(tI(W))$, $E+$ would go wrong with respect to A .

The thought is that the relevant t -initial segment of W will not contain God's commending Adam for always going right. But another problem rears its ugly head: what if God doesn't commend Adam at the end of his life, but instead predicts (at Adam's birth, perhaps) that Adam will always go right? Here Otte refers to discussions of divine foreknowledge and human freedom. Following William of Ockham³ we must distinguish propositions (and states of affairs) that are *strictly about the past* from those that are about the past, all right, but are also, as Ockham says, "equivalently about the future." We must distinguish such a proposition as *in 2006 Ric perfected French free climbing technique* from *in 2006 Ric correctly predicted that the sun will rise on January 1, 2100*; the first but not the second is strictly about the past. It's not easy to give a rigorous statement of this distinction, but as Otte says, we do have an intuitive grasp of it; and we should think of the

³ See my "On Ockham's Way Out" *Faith and Philosophy*, 3:3 (July, 1986), pp. 243-45.

t -initial segments in (TWD₂) as involving only states of affairs that (unlike *God's predicting that Adam will always go right*) are strictly about the past with respect to that time t .

But Otte isn't satisfied with (TWD₂) either; it ignores what other creatures might do during that t -initial segment. For example, suppose W is a world in which both Adam and Abel do only what is right, and suppose that all essences suffer from TWD. This means, of course, that for Adam there is an action A such that if God were to strongly actualize $T(tI(W))$, Adam would go wrong with respect to A ; and it also means that there is an action A^* at t^* such that if God were to strongly actualize $T(t^*I(W))$, Abel would go wrong with respect to A^* . Now suppose that if God were to strongly actualize $T(tI(W))$, Adam would indeed go wrong; in fact he would do something preventing Abel from living long enough to be confronted with a morally significant action; and suppose further that what God strongly actualizes in $T(tI(W))$ is the same state of affairs as what he strongly actualizes in $T(t^*I(W))$. (God strongly actualizes $T(tI(W))$ but then strongly actualizes no other state of affairs before or at t^* .) Then it is not the case that there is an action A^* such that if God had strongly actualized $T(t^*I(W))$, Abel would have gone wrong with respect to it: for if God had strongly actualized $T(t^*I(W))$ (i.e., $T(tI(W))$), Abel wouldn't have lived long enough to face a morally significant action and hence would not have had the opportunity to do something wrong. But then Abel does not suffer from TWD (given (TWD₂)); hence it is not the case that all essences suffer from TWD after all. As Otte points out, however, $T(tI(W)) = T(t^*I(W))$ only if it is not the case that

C: Necessarily, any time at which a created being exists is a time at which God conserves it in being;

that is because t^* is later than t , so that (given C) $T(t^*I(W))$ includes God's conserving his creation between t and t^* . Since C is part of classic Christian doctrine, this difficulty may not really apply to (TWD₂).

In any event, Otte not only points out the problems with my definition of TWD; he also makes the needed repairs:

(TWD₃) An essence suffers from transworld depravity iff for every world W such that E entails the properties *is significantly free in W* and *always does what is right in W*, there is a time t and action A at t such that

(1) A is morally significant for E 's instantiation in W at t ,

and

- (2) If God had (weakly) actualized the initial segment of W up to t , E 's instantiation would have gone wrong with respect to A .

Employing the above definitions, we could put this more briefly as

(TWD₃) E suffers from TWD iff for every E perfect world W , there is an action A at a time t such that if God had weakly actualized $t^*I(W)$, $E+$ would have gone wrong with respect to A .

And here the difference from (TWD₂) is that we replace 'God *strongly* actualized the largest state of affairs he strongly actualizes in $T(t^*I(W))$ ' with 'God *weakly* actualized the t -initial segment of W .' With respect to Adam and Abel of the preceding example, it is true (ignoring C) that $T(t^*I(W)) = T(tI(W))$ (so that God's strongly actualizing the one is identical with his strongly actualizing the other); however it is not the case that God's weakly actualizing the one is the same state of affairs as his weakly actualizing the other.

Otte goes further. The whole point of introducing TWD was to show how it could be that it wasn't within God's power to actualize a world containing free creatures who always do what is right; it is possible that the counterfactuals of freedom should fall out in such a way as to preclude God's doing that. (And of course the truth or falsehood of those counterfactuals of freedom isn't within God's power.) But clearly the proposition that all essences suffer from TWD, while sufficient for that task, isn't necessary; there are weaker propositions that will do just as well. Consider the fact that no matter how the counterfactuals of freedom are disposed, there will be worlds such that it isn't within the power of God to actualize them; following Otte, say that such worlds are unobtainable. (That a world is unobtainable, of course, is contingent.) What's required, for the proposition that it wasn't within God's power to actualize a perfect world, is just that all the perfect worlds are among the unobtainable worlds. Hence there is a proposition weaker than (TW) (one entailed by but not entailing (TW)), that can play the same role:

U For every perfect world W , there is an essence E and an action A at a time t such that E is exemplified in W , and if God were to actualize the t -initial segment of W , $E+$ would go wrong with respect to A .

2. Against TWS

I have little to say about Otte's penetrating piece but yea and amen (and thanks). Instead, I want to turn to an argument by Daniel Howard-Snyder and John O'Leary-Hawthorne ('H&O'), an argument for the conclusion that the free will defense as I presented it fails: "His argument that God and Evil are compatible is neither 'convincing' nor 'fairly compelling,'" and it fails to "establish" or "show" its conclusion.⁴ Now given Otte's contribution, this is of course entirely correct; on my original definition of TWD, R is necessarily false and therefore not compatible with anything, let alone G. But H&O don't mention *that* problem; they seem to take it for granted that R as stated is possible. Their arguments, however, if effective against (TWD₁), are also effective against Otte's (TWD₃); so let's consider their comments as directed against the free will defense, with (TWD₃) as the definition of TWD.

So why do H&O think the free will defense fails to show or establish that G is consistent with E? Of course it is not entirely easy to say what *showing* and *establishing* consist in, but H&O offer a necessary condition of doing either of those things—a necessary condition, they say, that isn't satisfied in this case. We can state this condition as follows. I argued that R is consistent, in the broadly logical sense, with G; this entails, of course, that R is possible (in the broadly logical sense). But if there is a proposition *S* that is not compossible with R (i.e., not such that they can both be possible), and if there is as much reason to think *S* is possible as to think R is, then the free will defense fails to show or establish that G is consistent with E. This is the route H&O follow: they propose to exhibit a proposition not compossible with R (in particular with the conjunct according to which every essence suffers from TWD); but "since it is no less reasonable to believe that this proposition is possible than it is to believe that TD [i.e. (TWD)] is possible, it is reasonable to refrain from believing that TD is possible; hence Plantinga's defense fails . . ." (005).

Now as a procedure for arguing that the free will defense as stated fails, this seems sensible. But of course everything depends upon that proposition *S*: what proposition do they propose? It is

(S) Necessarily, at least one essence is blessed with transworld sanctity,

⁴ "Transworld Sanctity and Plantinga's Free Will Defense," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 44:1 (August, 1998), pp. 1-2. I realize that William Rowe ("In Defense of 'The Free Will Defense'" *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 44(2): 115-120, Oct. 1998) has already come to my defense; I hope to supplement his comments.

where

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

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

it is the case that

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

Given earlier definitions, we could put this more simply as

(TWS) an essence E enjoys TWS iff for every initial segment S of an E -perfect world W , it is not the case that if S were actual, $E+$ would go wrong with respect to some action.

The possibility of (S) is indeed incompatible with the possibility of R. For suppose (S) and R are both true: then (given the usual S5-like condition that p is possibly necessary iff p is necessary) every essence suffers from TWD and necessarily, some essence enjoys TWS; hence some essence E displays both TWD and TWS. Consider any world W in which E always does what is right: by TWD there is an action A at a time t such that if the t -initial segment of W were actual, $E+$ would go wrong with respect to A ; but by TWS, for no such initial segment is it the case that if it were actual, $E+$ would go wrong.⁵

Now R and (S) are non-compossible: if either is possible, the other is not. And H&O claim that it is as reasonable to believe that (S) is possible, as it is to believe that R is possible. This claim seems to me mistaken. The proposition that (S) is possible is

(\diamond S) Possibly, necessarily some essence enjoys TWS.

⁵ Here I make the assumption (harmless in the present context) that S 's being actual is equivalent to *God's weakly actualizing S*.

But given the S5-like assumptions H&O and Otte and I were all making, the initial ‘possibly’ of (\diamond S) is otiose: (\diamond S) is equivalent to (S). Indeed, the relation between them is considerably stronger than that; for reasons that are obvious but tedious (and difficult) to explain in detail, (S) is the proposition to consider in this context.

H&O, therefore, propose that it is as reasonable to believe (S) as it is to believe

(\diamond TW) Possibly, all essences suffer from TWD.

This is the claim I mean to question. We needn’t linger over the point that (S) is a claim of necessity, predicating a property of all possible worlds while (\diamond TW) is in some way weaker, claiming only that at least one possible world displays the relevant property. This is indeed true, but of no significance. The question is whether it is as reasonable to believe S as to believe (\diamond TW); and of course it is not the case that possibility claims automatically enjoy a leg up here. *Necessarily*, $2 + 1 = 3$ is much less venturesome than *possibly*, *human beings are material objects*.

Is it as reasonable to believe (S) as to believe (\diamond TW)? The first thing to note is that there is an interesting difference between the definitions of TWD and TWS. The former involve the *truth* of counterfactuals of freedom: roughly, that for every essence E and E -perfect world W , if the relevant initial segment of W were actual, $E+$ would go wrong. The definition of TWS involves instead the *falsehood* of counterfactuals of freedom: roughly, for every essence E and E -perfect world W , it is *not* the case that if the relevant t initial segments of W were actual, $E+$ would go wrong. Now on the usual (Lewisian) semantics for counterfactuals, a counterfactual $A \rightarrow C$ is not equivalent to $A \rightarrow \sim C$; counterfactual excluded middle isn’t valid. Perhaps it is also intuitively invalid. For example, suppose quantum mechanics involves genuinely chance events, as on certain collapse interpretations, and suppose (as in a Stern-Gerlach experiment) a particle is shot between the poles of a magnet. Consider a particle that wasn’t shot between those poles: it may seem wrong to say that if it had been shot between those poles, it would have been deflected to the left (for example) but equally wrong to say that under those conditions it would not have been deflected to the left. Here perhaps both $A \rightarrow C$ and $A \rightarrow \sim C$ are false.

But what about counterfactuals of freedom, and in particular, counterfactuals of freedom where the action involved is morally significant for the person in question? Here (given anyway, as the free will defense assumes, that there are true counterfactuals of freedom) conditional excluded middle seems much more plausible. Nevertheless, suppose it

doesn't in fact hold; suppose the falsehood of such a counterfactual does not entail the corresponding counterfactual with negated consequent. Then it becomes much easier to see how it could be that it wasn't within God's power to weakly actualize a perfect world.⁶ For him to be able to weakly actualize such a world, it must be the case that if he weakly actualized an appropriate initial segment of a perfect world, the relevant essence instantiations would all go right: that is, there would have to be true counterfactuals of freedom of the sort

If God were to weakly actualize the *t*-initial segment of *W*, *E*+ would go right.

But perhaps none of these counterfactuals is true, and not because their counterfactual negations are true: both they and their counterfactual negations are false. Then it wouldn't be within God's power to weakly actualize a perfect world: indeed, then (given the definition of weak actualization in *The Nature of Necessity*) it wouldn't be within God's power to weakly actualize any world containing free creatures. But then a free will defense would be trivially easy to develop: it wouldn't be within God's power to actualize a world with moral good but no moral evil because it wouldn't be within his power to actualize any world that contained either moral good or moral evil.

Let's assume, therefore, that there are true counterfactuals of freedom, and that conditional excluded middle holds for counterfactuals of significant freedom. Then the H&O definition of TWS would be equivalent to the result of replacing the denials of those counterfactuals with their counterfactual negations. To say that an essence *E* enjoys TWS would be to say, roughly, that for every perfect world in which *E* is exemplified, and every relevant initial segment of that world, if God were to weakly actualize that initial segment, *E*+ would go right.

But then it follows (what in any event H&O seem prepared to concede) that no essence enjoys TWS *essentially*; no essence has that property in every possible world. For if some essence *E* did enjoy TWS necessarily, then there would be no possible world in which *E* is exemplified and *E*+ goes wrong with respect to some action; *E*+, therefore, is such that there is no possible world in which she goes wrong with respect to any action; hence there is no action with respect to which it is possible that she go wrong; hence there is no action such that she is

⁶ And hence in assuming that there are true counterfactuals of freedom, the free will defender is really making a concession to the atheologian. The latter is inclined to hold that since God knows what the exemplifications of essences would freely do in any circumstance, he would or should have exemplified only those essences whose exemplifications would not have gone wrong in the relevant circumstances.

free to go wrong with respect to it; therefore she does not have significant freedom.

The H&O suggestion, then, is that it is necessary that there be at least one essence with TWS, but there is no essence such that it has that property essentially. This just as such is not paradoxical. It isn't true in general that if it's necessary that there is something with property P , then there is something that has P essentially. If there are men in North Dakota, it is necessary that there be a meanest; no one (we hope) has essentially the property of being a meanest man in North Dakota.⁷ It's necessary that there be an actual world; no world is essentially actual. So there are cases where it's necessary that there is an x with P , but no x that has P necessarily (or essentially). These cases, however, are all cases where there is something like a comparison, or maybe a competition, among the x 's, at least one of which has to win. These are contest situations, situations where there is a property in terms of which the x 's are compared with each other—meanness, or actuality, or winning the race, and the like. In all these cases there will be a certain kind of structural relation between the x 's, a relation in virtue of which it must be the case that at least one will have the property in question. But we don't have that structure here. There is no structural reason why at least one of the essences must enjoy TWS. If there are finitely many essences, there will have to be one or some that are maximal with respect to their goodness profile (where the latter is something like an integration of the good they do over the worlds in which they are exemplified); if there have been human beings for only a finite length of time, there will have to be one or more essences enjoying the distinction of being the first to be exemplified; but nothing like that holds for TWS.

This may lead to initial suspicion of the claim that it's necessary that some essence enjoy TWS, given that no essence necessarily enjoys that distinction. That suspicion can be buttressed by the following considerations. Let $\{E\}$ be the set of essences, and pick out any particular essence E^* you like. If (S) is true, then

Necessarily, if none of the members of $\{\{E\}-E^*\}$ enjoy TWS, then E^* enjoys TWS.

But this seems paradoxical. E^* , of course, doesn't *essentially* enjoy TWS; but then why should the fact that these *other* essences don't

⁷ The purist may object that here we don't have the right structure; the purist can be mollified by changing the property P to the property *being such that if there are men in North Dakota, then there is a meanest among them*.

enjoy TWS entail that E^* does? What does their having or lacking that property have to do with E^* 's having or lacking it?⁸

Further, (S) has no intuitive support. True: it certainly seems *possible* that some essence enjoy TWS. Further, perhaps some essence actually has that property; but why think it's *necessary* that this be so? This proposition simply doesn't *seem* to be necessary. Why couldn't it be that no essence enjoys this property? That wouldn't require, of course, that any essence suffer from TWD; it requires only that for each essence E there is a world W and a t-intial segment $tI(W)$ such that if $tI(W)$ were actual, $E+$ would have gone wrong on at least one occasion. More simply, what it requires is that for each essence E there is *some* set S of circumstances such that if S had been actual, $E+$ would have done something wrong. Doesn't that seem possible?

Accordingly, (S) has no intuitive support, and its denial,

(\sim S) Possibly, no essence enjoys TWS

itself enjoys intuitive support.

What about

(\diamond TW) Possibly, all essences suffer from TWD?

When I think hard about (\diamond TW) it seems to me to be true. Doesn't it seem *possible* that the counterfactuals of freedom should fall out in such a way that each essence E is such that for every E -perfect world, there is some initial segment of that world such that if that segment were actual (if God weakly actualized it) E would go wrong with respect to some action? What would prevent them from falling out that way? (\diamond TW) does have intuitive support. And it isn't as if (\diamond TW) is one of those peculiar propositions such that both they and their denials seem to have intuitive support:

($\sim\diamond$ TW) Necessarily, some essences do not suffer from TWD

does not have intuitive support. There seems no reason at all to think it must be the case that some essences do not display TWD.

So I say (\diamond TW) has intuitive support; it seems true. Of course one can make mistakes about what is possible; for example, one can confuse *seeing that p is possible* with *failing to see that p is impossible*. But forewarned is forearmed; once one is aware of that pitfall, and it *still* seems

⁸ This is essentially the point Rowe makes in "In Defense of 'The Free Will Defense.'"

possible that p , then the thing to do is suppose that p is possible. True; here we may be near the limit of our modal abilities; (\Diamond TW) is a complex proposition about an area where our knowledge is limited. Still, it does seem that (\Diamond TW) is true; if so, the thing to think, I believe, is that indeed it *is* true. Of course one's confidence, here, will be far from maximal; (\Diamond TW) seems true, but not with the clarity or insistence or *éclat* of a proposition like *possibly I'm wearing brown socks*. Perhaps the right course is not actually to come right out and *believe* (\Diamond TW), but to adopt some weaker positive epistemic attitude towards it: it is (epistemically) likely that it is true, perhaps, in the way in which one thinks it likely that Goldbach's conjecture is true (Euler thought it is "ein ganz gewisses Theorema") despite the fact that it hasn't been proved (and is, of course, noncontingent). Another example: perhaps you are inclined to reject existentialism, the view that singular propositions about some object (Mohammed Ali, for example) can't exist if that object doesn't. You are inclined to think it possible that

Socrates does not exist, but the proposition *possibly Socrates exists* does exist.

You think you can see that this proposition is possible, though perhaps a bit tentatively, not with overwhelming clarity and certainty. Then perhaps you won't outright *believe* the denial of existentialism; but you will think it likely that it is true. And perhaps that attitude is the one appropriate for (\Diamond TW).

As we saw above, H&O propose to refute the free will defense by coming up with a proposition S that is not compossible with

R God actualizes a world containing moral good, and every essence suffers from transworld depravity

and furthermore is such that there is as much reason to think (S) is possible as to think R is. As I've argued, however, their candidate here—(\Diamond S), that is, (S)—has no intuitive support, and indeed is such that its denial does have intuitive support. (\Diamond TW), on the other hand, does have intuitive support. It follows, I think, that there is more reason to believe (\Diamond TW) than to believe (\Diamond S). If so, their refutation of the free will defense fails.

3. Uncooperative Essences

We can go further. In the present context, our question is whether it is possible that it wasn't within the power of God to actualize a perfect

world, one in which there is moral good, but no moral evil, a world in which there are free creatures (creatures free to do wrong) who always do only what's right.⁹ This is indeed possible if (\Diamond TW) is true. As we saw above, however, there is also a weaker proposition that can play the role of (TW) in the free will defense:

U For every perfect world W , there is an essence E and an action A at a time t such that E is exemplified in W , and if God were to actualize $tI(W)$, $E+$ would go wrong with respect to A .

Say that an essence E is *uncooperative with respect to a world W* iff it meets the condition U states for W and E ; then we can put U more simply as:

U For every perfect world there is an uncooperative essence.

As we saw above, U is weaker than TW. Hence there is a good sense in which the (logical) possibility of U is weaker than the possibility of TW (despite the fact that each is noncontingent, true in all worlds or true in none).

So think of the free will defense as involving (\Diamond U) rather than (\Diamond TW). And doesn't it seem that (\Diamond U) is true? Doesn't it seem possible that the counterfactuals of freedom fall out in such a way that for every perfect world W there is at least one uncooperative essence, at least one essence E such that if God were to actualize the relevant initial segment of W , $E+$ would go wrong with respect to some action? So one should think that (\Diamond U) is true, or at least likely—unless, of course, some other proposition incompatible with the possibility of U has equal or greater intuitive warrant, seems at least as likely as (\Diamond U). I don't know how to prove that there is no such proposition—wouldn't that be a bit too much to ask?—but it's massively doubtful that there is any such proposition. Such a proposition would have to entail

□ There are worlds for which there are no uncooperative essences,

which doesn't seem true at all.

⁹ That is, the free will defense as stated is an argument for the possibility that God could not have actualized a perfect world. Of course it might be that God could indeed actualize a perfect world, but chose not to, because there are much better worlds that contain moral evil. Many imperfect worlds are better than some perfect worlds. Indeed, probably some imperfect worlds are better than any perfect world; see footnote 1.

By way of conclusion: what we have is first, that on careful reflection, (\diamond TW) seems more likely (has greater intuitive support; is epistemically more probable) than its denial; it also seems more likely than (S). (\diamond U) seems even more likely than (\diamond TW). But (\diamond U) entails that it wasn't within the power of God to actualize a perfect world. Perhaps this doesn't constitute a *proof* that possibly, it wasn't within the power of God to actualize a perfect world; and hence perhaps one can't properly claim that the free will defense *shows* or *proves* that G and E are consistent. Indeed, it may be, as David Lewis once suggested, that only Gettier and Gödel have accomplished the feat of actually showing or proving, with respect to some serious philosophical claim, that it is false (and even here there are nay-sayers). Perhaps all the free will defense shows is that it is *likely*, in fact, *very* likely, that G and E are consistent. But to show that much would go well beyond the claim that G and E are epistemically consistent, and if it shows that much, then, contrary to H&O, the free will defense is both 'convincing' and at least "fairly compelling".¹⁰

¹⁰ My thanks to Ric Otte, Brian Boeninger, Eric Hagedorn, Kenny Boyce, Anders Kraal, Matt Lee, Josh Rasmussen, Luke Van Horn, and Rene van Woudenberg.