COMPLETE CONCEPT MOLINISM

GODEHARD BRÜNTRUP & RUBEN SCHNEIDER

Munich School of Philosophy

Abstract. A theoretically rigorous approach to the key problems of Molinism leads to a clear distinction between semantic and metaphysical problems. Answers to semantic problems do not provide answers to metaphysical problems that arise from the theory of middle knowledge. The so-called 'grounding objection' to Molinism raises a metaphysical problem. The most promising solution to it is a revised form of the traditional 'essence solution'. Inspired by Leibniz's idea of a 'notio completa' (complete concept), we propose a mathematical model of 'possibilistic' (Molinist) complete concepts. They ground middle knowledge within the very being of the agents themselves. Molinist Complete Concepts can thus serve to reject consequence-style arguments against Molinism. They also allow the Molinist to safeguard a robustly libertarian notion of the ability to do otherwise.

I. INTRODUCTION

The second half of the 20th century saw a renewed interest in Molinism. As a response, many problems with Molinism are eagerly discussed in contemporary analytic philosophy, of which the most severe issues are the well-known 'grounding objection' against middle knowledge and the question whether middle knowledge is able to safeguard creaturely freedom. In Brüntrup/Schneider 2011 we proposed a version of the so-called 'essence solution' to the grounding objection, inspired by the late molinist school in the 17th century and by Leibniz's idea of a 'notio completa' (a complete concept) of every possible individual within the Divine mind as the truth-maker of its counterfactuals of freedom. In this contribution, we will try to provide a refined account of 'Molinist Complete Concepts', defending a substantially revised version of the

original idea against various criticisms. Two key questions are to be answered: why complete concepts instead of the conventional essence solution? What is the additional theoretical advantage of introducing complete concepts as truth-makers of counterfactuals of freedom? How could complete concepts serve to clarify the reasons why Molinism is not to be considered a form of theological determinism – and not even a form of compatibilism? We will show (in section 2) that the semantic and metaphysical problems for Molinism have to be clearly distinguished and (in 3 and 4) that the metaphysical problems require a sort of essence solution, but that the conventional essence solution has to be revised. In section 5 we will explain a precise model of 'possibilistic' (Molinist) complete concepts (5.1) and how it can serve to reject consequence-style arguments against Molinism, how it allows one to hold the 'Principle of Alternate Possibilities' (PAP)[1] (5.2), and how the relation between these complete concepts and the actual individual has to be conceived (5.3).

II. THE MAIN PROBLEMS OF MOLINISM

Middle knowledge (*scientia media*) is the eternal Divine knowledge of all prevolitional and contingent truths. Middle knowledge contains as a subset all the counterfactual conditionals of created freedom (from hereon ccfs): $(P, C) \,\Box\!\!\rightarrow (P, A)$ or for short $C \,\Box\!\!\rightarrow A$ for an individual P, circumstances C and a specific decision or action A. Molinism is the thesis that middle knowledge exists (cf. Perszyk/Mares 2011: 96).[2] Molinism is often classified as a libertarian position whereby libertarianism is conceived of as the conjunction of nomological incompatibilism and the thesis that we have free will.

Perszyk und Mares (2011: 97f.) emphasize that four main problems for Molinism have to be clearly distinguished:

---

[1] This 'alternative possibilities condition for free actions' holds that 'when an agent does something freely she could have done otherwise [under exactly the same circumstances]' (Perszyk/Mares 2011: 103).

[2] Strictly speaking one has to differentiate between *classical Molinism* and *contemporary analytical Molinism*. Classical Molinism as advocated by Molina and his followers argues for an a-temporal concept of God; middle knowledge therefore is an eternal knowledge in the sense of a-temporal knowledge. In the current debate there are also those who advocate a sempiternalist version of Molinism, though (cf. Christoph Jäger, 'Molinism and Theological Compatibilism', this volume). In this paper we will presuppose the a-temporal version of Molinism.

(a) The *semantic problem:* What are the truth conditions for the ccfs, or what is their semantic foundation? Usually this is explicated via the possible-worlds semantics of Lewis and Stalnaker which operates with relative closeness of worlds or class-selection functions (cf. Lewis 1973; Pollock 1976, 1984; Chellas 1980).

(b) The *grounding objection*: What are the truth-makers of the ccfs?

(c) The *priority problem*: The truth values of the ccfs according to possible-worlds semantics are dependent upon which world is actual – which conflicts with the thesis of their explanatory priority and the thesis that true ccfs are guiding principles for God's creative activity (cf. Adams 1977; Kenny 1979: 70: '... what makes the counterfactual true is not yet there...'). The priority problem is closely related to the grounding objection, but still distinct from it (the grounding objection remains independent from the possible-worlds semantics).

(d) The *determinism/compatibilism problem*: Does the prevolitional truth of the ccfs undermine free will in the libertarian sense?

(b), (c) and (d) are metaphysical problems. Perszyk and Mares (2011: 98) emphasize that solutions to the semantic problem do not carry a metaphysical foundation for Molinism with them, and that vice versa the metaphysical problems do not pose a threat to the semantic foundation in themselves. In this paper we address only the metaphysical problems, especially (b) and (d).

III. VERITAS DETERMINATA

The attempt to extract a metaphysical foundation for Molinism from replies to its semantic problems can be exemplarily illustrated by the theory of the 'veritas determinata' (which dates back to Suárez, cf. 'De scientia Dei', 1.8.8):

The so-called 'Might-Problem' leads to the debate concerning whether the Molinist should either take up the Principle of Conditional Excluded Middle (CEM) or the Lewis-Pollock definition (LP) of might-counterfactuals. CEM states that $(C \mathrel{\Box\!\!\rightarrow} A) \vee (C \mathrel{\Box\!\!\rightarrow} \neg A)$ for all C and A, whereas the Lewis-Pollock definition interdefines might- and would-counterfactuals as follows: $(p \mathrel{\Diamond\!\!\rightarrow} q) =df \neg(p \mathrel{\Box\!\!\rightarrow} \neg q)$. Since middle knowledge contains ccfs, and since proponents of middle knowledge are committed to PAP, it seems to follow that:

(1) $C \lozenge\!\!\rightarrow A$
(2) $C \lozenge\!\!\rightarrow \neg A$

Additionally, for middle knowledge CEM must hold:

(3) Either $C \Box\!\!\rightarrow A$
(4) or $C \Box\!\!\rightarrow \neg A$

But with LP it now follows that:

(5) $[(1) \wedge LP] \supset \neg(4)$
(6) $[(2) \wedge LP] \supset \neg(3)$

(5) and (6) are an unacceptable result for the Molinist since they undermine the existence of middle knowledge (cf. Hasker 1994: 145). Possible ways out of this situation seem to consist in either denying that (1) and (2) really follow from a commitment to PAP (cf. Perszyk/Mares 2011: 104, fn. 11) or to reject LP and explicate might-counterfactuals in another way. Perszyk and Mares show that within Lewis-Stalnaker semantics, a rejection of LP is not necessary to hold (1) and (2), since the evaluation of the truth values of the ccfs via similarity relations is context-dependent, and Divine and creaturely contexts are to be distinguished (cf. Perszyk/Mares 2011: 105). The Molinist therefore seems able to simultaneously hold CEM and LP. But on the basis of LP there is a valid objection against CEM posed by Lewis (1973: 79-83):

(a) $(C \Box\!\!\rightarrow A) \vee (C \Box\!\!\rightarrow \neg A)$ CEM
(b) $\neg(C \Box\!\!\rightarrow \neg A) \supset (C \Box\!\!\rightarrow A)$ by (a), and by definition of $\supset$
(c) $(C \lozenge\!\!\rightarrow A) \supset (C \Box\!\!\rightarrow A)$ by (b), LP
(d) $(C \Box\!\!\rightarrow A) \supset (C \lozenge\!\!\rightarrow A)$ obvious (entailed by LP)
(e) $(C \lozenge\!\!\rightarrow A) \equiv (C \Box\!\!\rightarrow A)$ by (c), (d)

If CEM and LP hold simultaneously, the distinction between would- and might-counterfactuals collapses (cf. Bennett 2006: 189). This consequence is unacceptable. Therefore either CEM or LP has to be rejected. There are good reasons to reject LP, more precisely speaking to accept $\neg[(p \lozenge\!\!\rightarrow q) \supset \neg(p \Box\!\!\rightarrow \neg q)]$ and – differing from Lewis – not to reject CEM (cf. Stalnaker 1980; Gaskin 1993; Williams 2010; Jäger, forthcoming).

But if CEM holds for ccfs then both disjuncts $(C \Box\!\!\rightarrow A)$ and $(C \Box\!\!\rightarrow \neg A)$ cannot be simultaneously false, one of them is true. Since an omniscient God by definition knows every truth, he also must know every true ccf. This is the *veritas-determinata solution* to the grounding objection as advocated by – among others – Francisco Suárez (cf. Craig 1988: 212).

IV. THE ESSENCE SOLUTION

But this veritas-determinata solution faces serious criticism: Perszyk and Mares rightly point out – as mentioned before – that solutions to the semantic problem do not provide solutions to the metaphysical problems of Molinism. Leibniz already objected against Suárez that even if the ccfs are either true or false, the fundamental question remains wherefrom the ccfs acquire the definiteness of their truth values (cf. Ramelow 1997: 229).

This therefore poses the question of the prerequisites of their being true. But how can prevolitional counterfactuals be true? If counterfactuals have truth values, it is impossible for these truth values to be verified *extensionally*, since they do not refer to anything in existence and therefore do not have any extension. The only possibility remaining is for them to be verified *intensionally*. That is to say, given the counterfactual 'If P faces circumstance C, she will freely choose action A', an insight into its truth value can only be acquired via an insight into the concept or the essence of P. This is the well-known 'essence solution' to the grounding objection: God contemplates prior to the act of creation from all eternity the individual essences of all possible individuals in all possible worlds which contain all possible and factual decisions of the individuals in question (cf. Kvanvig 1986: 122-126).

But the essence solution carries a host of further problems in its wake:

(a) The *individuation problem*: What individuates the essences prior to the act of creation? (Cf. Zagzebski 1991: 126.) In the Thomistic tradition for example, the essences (forms) are only individuated by their merging with the *materia quantitate signata*. (Cf. ScG, II, c. 93; cf. Schneider 2007: 228.) For Leibniz though, each such essence is an already individuated bundle of qualities without trans-world-identity. But this leads to

(b) the problem of *superessentialism*: If the entities in question are individual essences, is it not inevitable that all the qualities of these possible individuals belong to them necessarily? (Cf. Gale 1991: 125-131.)

(c) This poses the *problem of determinism*: If all its attributes belong to an individual necessarily and there is no trans-world identity, does that not mean that all its factual decisions are already set in such a way as to be determined by its essence? (Cf. Langston 1986: 73 and 91; Hasker 1989: 32, fn. 26.) Does that not make the individual 'a puppet on a string'?

Subsequently, a consequence-style argument against the essence solution can be constructed that runs parallel to the one against standard Molinism (whereby 'N' denotes the No-Choice Operator and 'E' the individual essence):

(CA_E)

(1) $N(E \wedge C)$	Premise
(2) $\Box[(E \wedge C) \rightarrow A]$	Consequence of Molinism
(3) NA	(1), (2), Transfer of Necessity

This argument can be responded to according to classic strategies: (i) by rejecting the Transfer of Necessity Principle (the 'β-rule') or (ii) by rejection of premise (1), i.e. by ascribing a 'counterfactual power' over my essence and God's knowledge of it. But strategy (i) brings up the question whether this does not entail the fall of the classic consequence-argument against nomological (causal) compatibilism – which the Molinist as a libertarian does not necessarily have to endorse, but rejecting it would certainly be disadvantageous for him.[3] With regard to strategy (ii) one can state that Molina himself explicitly conceived of a counterfactual power over the middle knowledge.[4] But this raises the question how this counterfactual power is to be understood: is it only a 'weak ability' in the Lewisian sense (cf. Lewis 1981) or a direct power over God's middle knowledge? And what is the difference between counterfactual power over God's knowledge and counterfactual power over the past and the laws of nature in the case of nomological compatibilism?

But this debate cannot be pursued here, we will follow another path: In our opinion, on the one hand, one needs intensional verifiability of the ccfs and thus a form of essence solution, but on the other hand, the conventional essence solution has to be revised. In the following section a model shall be developed, which is guided by Leibniz and the late-molinistic debate. It provides specific answers to the problems listed above.

---

[3] Cf. Jäger 2011: 258f. Jäger argues that within the nomological consequence-argument and within the anti-molinistic consequence argument there are at work two different transfer-principles, so that the Molinist can reject the one and stick to the other.

[4] Cf. Concordia 4.52.21: Middle knowledge 'would be different in God, as is possible, created free choice were by its innate freedom going to turn itself to the opposite part' ('aliter se haberet in Deo, si liberum arbitrium creatum pro sua innata libertate, ut potest, in oppositam partem foret inflectendum', trl. by A. J. Freddoso). Cf. also Concordia 4.52.10, 30, 32, 34.

V. MOLINIST COMPLETE CONCEPTS

5.1 Complete Concepts as Functions

As early as in the scholastic debate in the time between Molina (1535-1600) and Leibniz (1646-1716) the idea originated that middle knowledge was to be founded upon a complete representation of all possible individuals within the Divine mind. A relevant passage for this idea can be found in the writings of the Molinist Hieronymus Fasolus, S.J. (1568-1639), who refined Molina's concept of 'divine supercomprehension', i. e. of the infinite power of representation of the Divine essence toward a complete comprehension of individual substances (cf. Ramelow 1997: 228):

> In the spirit of Molina [...] the free cause cannot be known in a perfect manner if there is not also knowledge of everything contained within this cause, as well as everything that can possibly be caused by it, what has been caused by it, will be caused by it and *would be caused* by it; for the effects too, and indeed all these effects, stem from the cause; so he who perfectly knows the cause necessarily also knows those effects that depend on it in any respect whatsoever [...]. But it is evident that this perfect knowledge must be infinite regarding the future effects (In primum partem Summae D. Thomae Commentariorum, T.2, Lyon 1629: 269a; transl. by authors. Cf. Knebel 1991: 3).[5]

Even though Leibniz himself rejected the concept of a middle knowledge, it can nevertheless be shown that his idea of a 'notio completa' (complete concept) of an individual arose within the context of the Molinistic-Thomistic debate, and has ultimately a strong affinity with the Molinistic position (cf. Hübener 1988: 114; Ramelow 1997: 401-419). His intuition regarding the Divine knowledge of future contingent actions is in line with the remarks of Fasolus:

> God preserves our being and continually generates it, namely in such a way that we encounter thoughts spontaneously or freely in that order which is carried by the *concept of our individual substance* and in which

---

[5] 'Mente Molinae [...] causa libera [...] non potest perfectissimo modo obiective cognosci, nisi simul cognoscantur et omnia, quae sunt in causa, et praeterea omnia quae ex causa vel esse possunt, vel erunt, vel sunt, vel fuerunt, *vel essent*; nam effectus etiam, atque adeo omnes isti effectus, sunt aliquid causae; ergo qui cognoscit perfectissimo modo causam, eius etiam effectus, quavis ratione ab ea pendentes, cognoscat necesse est [...]. Quod autem haec perfectissima cognitio respectu effectuum futurorum esse debeat infinita, patet.'

it could be foreseen from all eternity (Discours de métaphysique, § 30; transl. by authors; emphasis added).

In his letters to de Volder, Leibniz elaborates further that the complete concept of an individual has to be thought of as a function (Leibniz uses the term 'series' [seria]).[6] This train of thought can serve as a systematic and historical background for the following model (cf. Brüntrup/ Schneider 2011: 234f.):

Definition. Let I be a set of indices, let U be a set of possible conditions $C_k \in U$, $k \in I$, let A be a set of possible actions or decisions of an individual P, and M a set of subsets of A: $\{A_i : i \in I\} \subseteq A$, $\{A_i : i \in I\} \in M$. In this case the following reconstruction holds:

(1) By virtue of his *Scientia naturalis*, God contemplates which sets of actions are coherent with which conditions, formulated as a *function F_p* from U to M:

$$F_p : U \to M,$$
$$F_p(C_k) = \{A_i : i \in I\} =: M_{Ck} \in M$$
(Conditions of coherence)

The individual to be created should be free, therefore several choices among actions coherent with respect to conditions U are available for it. Formally, it can avail itself of several *choice-functions*

$$ch: M \to A.$$

These choice-functions have sets as arguments and one element of the respective arguments as value:

$$ch(\{A_i : i \in I\}) = A_C$$
$$\text{where } A_C \in \{A_i : i \in I\}$$

The individual P has a set of choice-functions CH at its disposal ($ch \in CH$): in the strict logical sense there are several free choices consistent with the single circumstances and the individual's complete concept.

(2) By His *scientia media*, God knows which specific choice-function the individual to be created is going to select. God knows not only the *family*

---

[6] Cf. among others his letter to de Volder dating March 24th / April 3rd 1699 (Leibniz, Hauptschriften, Bd. II: 475), in which Leibniz says of the soul: 'Denn deren Natur besteht doch darin, das *dauernde Gesetz* für eine fortlaufende Reihe von Veränderungen zu bilden, die sie ohne Anstoß durchläuft' ['For does not her nature consist in forming the law for a continuous series of changes without her passing through any impetus'], as well as the letter to de Volder from January 21st 1704 (Leibniz, Hauptschriften, Bd. II: 513–518).

of choice-functions *CH* available to *P*, but also which one the individual *would* select, He knows:

$$ch^\star \in CH,$$
$$ch^\star(\{A_i : i \in I\}) = A_C{}^\star$$
$$\text{where } A_C{}^\star \in \{A_i : i \in I\}$$
$$\text{Thus: } [ch^\star(\{A_i : i \in I\}) = A_C{}^\star] \Leftrightarrow [C_k \,\square\!\!\rightarrow A_C{}^\star].$$

(3) By virtue of his *scientia libera*, God now knows the concrete factual evaluation of the composition

$$S_p{}^\star := ch^\star \circ F_p : U \rightarrow A$$

at the position of the created circumstance $C_k{}^\star$ (whereby the evaluation for all possible worlds is already contained within the *scientia media*):

$$ch^\star(F_p(C_k{}^\star)) = A_C{}^\star$$

The first component is the choice of the free actor, the second component indicates which choices and actions are coherent with the corresponding circumstances (within a coherent framework, i.e. a 'feasible world').[7] These functions are the truth-makers for the ccfs demanded by the grounding objection. They are the medium of knowledge (*medium quo*) by which God contemplates the ccfs, and they are pre-volitional, i.e. not caused by an act of Divine will. They do not, however, represent Platonic entities independent of the Divine intellect, but rather ideas or pre-existent[8] *concepts* in the Divine mind which are ontologically dependent upon it. Of course, it has to be taken into account that distinct concepts within the Divine mind may only be interpreted *modo nostro concipiendi* (according to our mode of understanding): God does not think sequentially in distinct propositions, but contemplates these complete concepts with one *intellectual vision*.

5.2 Determinism, Uniqueness and Law-Likeness

However a consequence-style argument against this model of Molinist Complete Concepts (MCCs) can also be formulated, simply by exchanging *E* with MCC in the original argument directed against the essence solution CA$_E$:

---

[7] Cf. Flint 1998, 51-54.

[8] The late-scholastic Jesuit Antonio Pérez (1599-1649) already formulated the idea of an intentionally pre-existing *futuritio formalis* for the ccfs (cf. Ramelow 1997, 222-230).

(CA$_{MCC}$)
(1) N(MCC $\land$ $C_k{}^\star$)   Premise
(2) $\square$[MCC $\land$ $C_k{}^\star$) $\rightarrow$ $A_C{}^\star$]   Consequence of Molinism
(3) N$A_C{}^\star$ (1), (2), Transfer of Necessity

But here, in the case of MCC, there are notable differences from the earlier argument directed against the essence solution. This can best be demonstrated by providing a graph:

If one ascribes to every circumstance $C_k \in U$ a time-index t_{ck}, it has the effect that the complete concept of an individual P can be depicted as a bundle of curves.
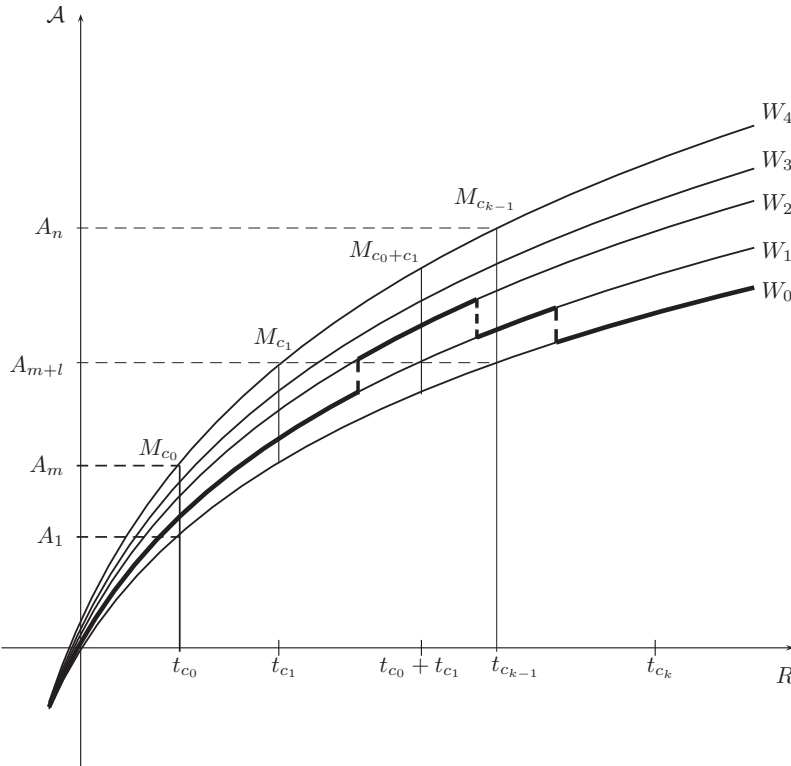
So to every point of time belonging to a circumstance, a set of possible actions A (restricted by the conditions of coherence) is assigned. W_1, ..., W_n present closed world-courses of P (this does not require the physical world to be closed deterministically and causally; an interaction between the mental and the physical dimension remains possible).

A given MCC therefore contains the whole spectrum of possibilities for P. This is the key difference compared to a deterministic 'Leibnizian Complete Concept' (LCC) which would allow for *one* world-course only. The course represented by the thick black line is the actual world-course of P as known by middle knowledge. In the literature this is customarily called the 'thin red line' (TRL), we will follow this convention (cf. Restall 2011). It exhibits discontinuities which are due to the free actions of P (it is also possible that P remains on the smooth sections of the graphs, which again results from free decisions of P).

Absolutely central for our argument is the following distinction: the TRL within a given MCC is on the one hand unambiguous and is known by God as an unambiguous course, but due to the points of discontinuity, the TRL is *missing an essential ingredient to be classified as deterministic*: it does not follow a law-like propagation. But for determinism to hold, more than unambiguousness is required. We define determinism as follows:

Definition. A world-course is *deterministic* if and only if
(1) this course is unambiguous (unique) and
(2) is law-like, i.e. a law determines that an individual, once set on a world-course, can no longer leave it. In the picture above this means: The graph $\Phi\colon R \times A \to A$ describes a path with

$\Phi(0, A_0) = A_0$,
$\Phi(t, A_0) = A_t$ and
$\Phi(t+r, A_0) = \Phi(r, \Phi(t, A_0)) = \Phi(r, A_t)$.

Thus, if there is a $t \in R$ with $\Phi(r, A_t) = \Phi(r, A_t')$, for given actions A_t and A_t', then $A_t = A_t'$ holds.[9]

Lawlike propagation therefore means that an individual moves forward on its world-course without the possibility of leaving it. If the individual P has once entered the state A_0, it is determined on which world course it resides and with this all its positions are set for every point of time.

So determinism entails both unambiguousness as well as lawlike propagation of a world-course. Unambiguousness in itself is not sufficient for the presence of a deterministic process. Lawlike propagation implies unambiguousness, but unambiguousness does not imply law-likeness (cf. Schneider 2009: 130-134). Our model does not obey any lawlike propagation due to the possibility of discontinuities. The TRL

---

[9] We owe this clarification to Christina Schneider. Cf. Schneider, 'Agent-Causation and Paradigms for God's Knowledge', this volume.

is unambiguous but not deterministic. The MCCs are non-algorithmic: There is no algorithm or inner law unfolding through the MCC. The unambiguousness of TRL is fully sufficient for the infallibility of Divine foreknowledge; an additional lawlike structure is unnecessary.

With this, the consequence argument against MCCs becomes vulnerable: it is not possible to *deduce* the TRL from the MCCs. Thus, step (2) in CA_{MCC} is rejected, namely $\Box[(MCC \land C) \to A]$. There is no necessary inferential connection, or respectively no set of premises and no system of rules, from which the decision or action of the individual in question could be deduced with necessity. The only thing that would be truly deducible is the possibility of a certain action (specified for P): $\vdash (MCC \land C) \to \Diamond_P A$. This has significant ramifications for the ability to do otherwise: while LCCs destroy the ability to do otherwise due to their lack of transworld-identity, this does not hold for MCCs.[10] It is the very idea of an MCC that it has a plurality of world-courses built in. Furthermore, within the framework of the Lewis-Stalnaker semantics it holds that the similarity relations relevant for the verification of ccfs are highly context-dependent (cf. Bennett 2006: 179f.). Obviously, 'God's context' and the contexts of free creatures are fundamentally different (cf. Perszyk/Mares 2011: 104f.). This insight can be spelled out metaphysically with aid of the MCCs. Given a true ccf $C \Box\to A$, in the 'context of God' it is not metaphysically possible that $C \Box\to \neg A$. However, in the context of the created individual this is quite possible: while there is an unambiguous TRL within the MCC in 'God's context', the future in the context of a free individual is causally and alethically open. This would not be possible if the TRL in God's context contained a lawlike propagation, or if it were the unfolding of an algorithmic process in addition to the TRL's unambiguousness, for this very unfolding would take place necessarily, i.e. in every possible world in which the individual could be found.

5.3 The Relation Between an MCC and the Subject

The claim that the free individual is not a puppet of its MCC requires a clarification of the relation between MCC and the individual (situated in a created world). As mentioned before, the MCCs are not Platonic entities of which the created individual is merely a 'shadow'. The MCCs are rather concepts in the Divine mind and thus ontologically dependent

---

[10] Also the counterfactual power explicitly conceded by Molina implies the ability to do otherwise (cf. Perszyk/Mares 2011: 103, fn. 10).

upon it. MCCs (in their ontological status) might be conceived of as forms in the Thomistic sense – a *forma substantialis* cannot claim any autonomy prior to creation and prior to the existence of the matter assigned to it. The *forma substantialis* is not a 'homunculus' within the created individual, governing the individual like a puppet on a string – neither is the MCC. Thus the idea that I am determined by my MCC makes as little sense as the idea that I am determined by my *forma substantialis*. There is no independent and ready-made 'I' which could then be controlled by the MCC.

Furthermore, we think MCCs might best be situated within an atemporal-eternalistic framework.[11] If this is assumed, one cannot implicitly adopt the sempiternalist assumption, according to which MCCs have 'already existed' for an infinite time, and then are governing the course of the history of an individual in time. It is a daunting task to adequately explain the concept of eternity, a task we cannot adequately tackle here. At this point it might suffice to claim that the MCCs represent the abundance of the possible self-realisation-process of an individual. They are the 'complete form' of the individual by virtue of which it can unfold itself free from determination, both from without and from within. The free actions of a created individual are radically up to the individual itself – it *causes* its own actions. By virtue of its 'complete form' it accomplishes its own acts and thereby realizes itself.

VI. SUMMARY

We have seen that a theoretically rigorous approach to the various problems of Molinism leads to a clear distinction between semantic and metaphysical problems. Answers to semantic problems do not provide answers to the metaphysical problems that arise from the theory of middle knowledge (Perszyk/Mares 2011: 98). The attempt to solve the grounding objection by referring to semantic principles (such as CEM) is inadequate. The question of the prerequisites of the verification of the ccfs requires a metaphysical answer. The only way to verify prevolitionally given ccfs is to verify them intensionally, i.e. by an insight into the essence of possible individuals. But this 'essence solution' creates new problems, like the problem of superessentialism. A consequence-style argument

---

[11] Molina himself explicitly defends the Thomistic atemporal eternalism in Concordia, disp. 48: 2 and 10ff. (cf. Jäger, 'Molinism and Theological Compatibilism', this volume).

against the essence solution can be construed which runs parallel to the consequence-style arguments against Standard-Molinism. The new model here suggested states that there exist '*possibilistic*' *complete concepts* instead of essences within the Divine mind, which are the *medium quo* of Divine knowledge, ontologically dependent upon it. We have shown that this does not imply Leibnizian superessentialism. These 'Molinist Complete Concepts' are represented by composed choice-functions, which contain the whole spectrum of possible world-courses of the respective individual. By virtue of His middle knowledge, God contemplates a unique 'thin red line' (TRL) of factual choices among these possible world-courses, but this TRL is not a deterministic course. Determinism requires both uniqueness of a world-course and a law-like propagation. Within the proposed mathematical model it can be demonstrated that the unambiguousness of the TRL does not imply law-likeness. The Molinist Complete Concepts do not describe algorithmic automata. Humans are not reduced to automata. The individual is not a 'puppet on a string' of an inner law determined by its complete concept. The relevant consequence-style argument against this form of Molinism can thus be rejected. There is no necessary inferential connection between the complete concept and the decisions of an individual.

In addition, this account of Molinism provides an argument for the claim that within God's context there can be a unique TRL, while in the context of the respective created individual its future is open. A Molinism that solves the grounding objection almost inevitably produces a tension with free will. Whatever grounds middle knowledge is prior to human free choice. Our model dissolves this worry. Molinist Complete Concepts ground middle knowledge within the very being of the agent herself. It even makes perfect sense to claim that, while the future is open from a human point of view, it is accessible to Divine understanding. If the latter fact is considered a threat to human free will for independent reasons, then Open Theism may be the only choice for the libertarian. Our model, however, provides an understanding of Molinism that does not eschew spelling out the metaphysics of the theory. We do not take the truth of the counterfactuals of freedom as inexplicable basic facts. Still, we preserve a rather robust conception of libertarian freedom within the Molinist framework.[12]

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adams, Robert. 1977. 'Middle Knowledge and the Problem of Evil', in: *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 14: 109-117

Bennett, Jonathan. 2006. *A Philosophical Guide to Conditionals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press)

Brüntrup, Godehard and Ruben Schneider. 2011. 'How Molinists Can Have Their Cake and Eat It Too', in: Christian Kanzian, Winfried Löffler, Josef Quitterer, (eds.), *The Ways Things Are* (Frankfurt: Ontos), pp. 221-241

Chellas, Brian. 1980. *Modal Logic: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

Craig, William L. 1988. *The Problem of Divine Knowledge and Future Contingents from Aristotle to Suárez* (Leiden: E. J. Brill)

Flint, Thomas P. 1998. *Divine Providence. The Molinist Account* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press)

Gale, Richard. 1991. *On The Nature and Existence of God* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

Gaskin, Richard. 1993. 'Conditionals of Freedom and Middle Knowledge', in: *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 43: 412-430

Hasker, William. 1989. *God, Time, and Knowledge* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press)

Hasker, William. 1994. 'A Philosophical Perspective', in: Charles Pinnock, Richard Rice, John Sanders, William Hasker, David Basinger, (eds.), *The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God* (Downer's Grove IL: InterVarsity Press), pp. 126-154

Hübener, Wolfgang. 1988. '"Notio completa". Die theologischen Voraussetzungen von Leibniz' Postulat der Unbeweisbarkeit der Existentialsätze und die Idee des logischen Formalismus', in: *Studia Leibnitiana*, Sonderheft 15: 107-116

Jäger, Christoph. 2011. 'Scientia Media and Freedom to Do Otherwise', in: Christian Kanzian, Winfried Löffler, Josef Quitterer, (eds.), *The Ways Things Are* (Frankfurt: Ontos), pp. 241-262

Jäger, Christoph. (forthcoming), 'Einleitung', in: *Vorsehung und Freiheit. Disputation 52 von Luis de Molinas ‚Concordia'*, ed. and transl. by Christoph Jäger, Hans Kraml und Gerhard Leibold (Hamburg: Philosophische Bibliothek Felix Meiner)

Kenny, Anthony. 1979. *The God of the Philosophers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press)

Knebel, Sven. 1991. 'Necessitas moralis ad optimum. Zum historischen Hintergrund der Wahl der besten aller möglichen Welten', in: *Studia Leibnitiana*, 23: 3-24.

Kvanvig, Jonathan. 1986. *The Possibility of an All-Knowing God* (London: Macmillan Press)

Langston, Douglas C. 1986. *God's Willing Knowledge. The Influence of Scotus' Analysis of Omniscience* (University Park PA/London: Pennsylvania State University Press)

Leibniz, G.W. 1996. *Hauptschriften zur Grundlegung der Philosophie*, Üs. Artur Buchenau, Bd. II (Hamburg: Felix Meiner)

Lewis, David. 1973. *Counterfactuals* (Oxford: Blackwell)

Lewis, David. 1981. 'Are We Free to Break The Laws', in: *Theoria*, 47 (3): 113-121

Molina, Luis de. 1988. *On Divine Foreknowledge (Part IV of the Concordia)*, transl. by Alfred J. Freddoso (Ithaca: Cornell University Press)

Perszyk, Kenneth and Edwin Mares. 2011. 'Molinist Conditionals', in: K. Perszyk, (ed.), *Molinism. The Contemporary Debate* (Oxford: Oxford UP), pp. 96-117

Pollock, John. 1976. *Subjunctive Reasoning* (Dordrecht: Reidel)

Pollock, John. 1984. *Foundations of Philosophical Semantics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press)

Ramelow, Tilman. 1997. *Gott, Freiheit, Weltenwahl. Die Metaphysik der Willensfreiheit zwischen A. Perez S.J. (1599 – 1649) und G.W. Leibniz (1646 – 1716)* (Leiden: Brill)

Restall, Greg. 2011. 'Molinism and the Thin Red Line', in: K. Perszyk, (ed.), *Molinism. The Contemporary Debate* (Oxford: Oxford UP), pp. 227-238

Schneider, Christina. 2009. *Metaphysische Freiheit – Kohärenz und Theorie* (München: Philosophia)

Stalnaker, Robert. 1980. 'A Defense of Conditional Excluded Middle', in: W. L. Harper, R. Stalnaker, G. Pears, (eds.), *Ifs: Conditionals, Belief, Decision, Chance and Time* (Dordrecht: Riedel)

Williams, J. Robert G. 2010. 'Defending Conditional Excluded Middle', in: *Nous*, 44: 650-668

Zagzebski, Linda T. 1991. *The Dilemma of Freedom and Foreknowledge* (New York/Oxford: Oxford UP)