

Dependence and the Freedom to Do Otherwise

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Abstract An increasingly popular approach to reconciling divine foreknowledge with human freedom is to say that, because God's beliefs *depend* on what we do, we are free to do otherwise than what we actually do despite God's infallible foreknowledge. This paper develops a new challenge for this *dependence response*. The challenge stems from a case of backward time travel in which an agent intuitively lacks the freedom to do otherwise because of the time-traveler's knowledge of what the agent will do, and this is so despite the fact that the time-traveler's knowledge depends on what the agent will do.

1. Introduction

An increasingly popular approach to reconciling divine foreknowledge with human freedom is to say that, because God's beliefs *depend* on what we do, we are free to do otherwise than what we actually do despite God's infallible foreknowledge.¹ Call this the *dependence response*, and call its proponents *dependence theorists*. This paper develops a new challenge for the dependence response. As background, I will summarize, in section 2, Patrick Todd's recent argument against classical compatibilism—compatibilism about causal determinism and the freedom to do otherwise. In section 3, I will explicate the dependence response to the argument for incompatibilism about divine foreknowledge and the freedom to do otherwise. Then, in section 4, I will provide a case of backward time travel in which an agent intuitively lacks the freedom to do otherwise because of the time-traveler's knowledge of what the agent will do, and this is so despite the fact that the time traveler's knowledge depends on what the agent will do. Finally, in

¹ This view is often traced back to Origen's *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (c.246/2002), but for some recent developments of the view, see Law (2020; 2021), McCall (2011), Merricks (2009; 2011), Swenson (2016; 2017), Wasserman (2021), and Westphal (2011; 2012). For discussion, see Cyr and Law (2020), Fischer and Todd (2011), Fischer and Tognazzini (2013; 2014), Todd (2013), Todd and Fischer (2013), and Wasserman (2022).

section 5, before concluding, I will explain why this case constitutes a formidable challenge to the dependence response and will respond to three potential objections to my argument.

2. Todd's Manipulation Argument Against Classical Compatibilism

Classical compatibilists not only take free will to be compatible with causal determinism but also take free will to require the freedom (or ability) to do otherwise.² The most widely discussed argument against classical compatibilism is the Consequence Argument. According to this argument, if determinism is true then propositions describing all of our actions are entailed by propositions expressing the laws of nature and propositions about the intrinsic state of the world long before we existed. Our having free will, then, would require having a choice about either the laws of nature or the intrinsic state of the world in the distant past. Since we do not have a choice about either, however, it follows that, if determinism is true, we lack free will.³

Todd (2017) presents a new argument against classical compatibilism—one that builds on the increasingly popular Manipulation Argument against (all forms of) compatibilism. As background, consider the following case by Alfred Mele:

² To use terminology from Fischer (1994), classical compatibilists include “Multiple Pasts Compatibilists,” such as Saunders (1968) and also “Local Miracle Compatibilists,” such as Lewis (1981). For a newer account of the freedom involved in classical compatibilism, see the view that has come to be known as “the new dispositionalism,” as seen in Fara (2008), Smith (2003), and Vihvelin (2004; 2013), and see Clarke (2009) and Franklin (2011) for critical discussion. Arguably, the new dispositionalists will be members of one of these other camps (Multiple Pasts Compatibilists or Local Miracle Compatibilists), since, on these accounts, the relevant context in which the agent does otherwise, will be one in which either the past or some law would have had to have been different. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for this latter point.

³ See van Inwagen (1983, chapter 3) for a full discussion of (various versions of) the argument.

Diana [a goddess with special powers] creates a zygote Z in Mary. She combines Z's atoms as she does because she wants a certain event E to occur thirty years later. From her knowledge of the state of the universe just prior to her creating Z and the laws of nature of her deterministic universe, she deduces that a zygote with precisely Z's constitution located in Mary will develop into an ideally self-controlled agent [Ernie] who, in thirty years, will judge, on the basis of rational deliberation, that it is best to A and will A on the basis of that judgment, thereby bringing about E. (Mele 2006: 188)

Todd flags three especially salient features of this case: "Diana (1) knows the (deterministic) laws of nature, (2) has the unilateral power to secure various sets of 'initial conditions', and (3) [has] the computational power to deduce what happens in the future, given those conditions" (Todd 2017: 396). Based on this case, Mele develops (but does not endorse) the Zygote Argument against compatibilism, which proceeds roughly as follows: since there does not appear to be a relevant difference between Ernie and an agent in an ordinary (and Diana-free) deterministic universe, if Ernie is not morally responsible for A-ing, then causal determinism and moral responsibility are incompatible.⁴

The Manipulation Argument targets all forms of compatibilism, but it relies on the intuition that Ernie lacks moral responsibility.⁵ Todd's new argument against classical compatibilism relies instead on the (arguably stronger) intuition that Ernie lacks the

⁴ For another influential instance of the Manipulation Argument against compatibilism, see Pereboom (2001, chapter 4; 2014, chapter 4).

⁵ Because of this, it is vulnerable to a "hard-line" reply, which denies the premise that the manipulated agent lacks moral responsibility. See McKenna (2008) for a full defense of the hard-line reply.

freedom to do otherwise. Here is how Todd argues.⁶ We are introduced to Diana and learn that it is very important to her that Ernie tells a certain lie in 30 years. We also learn that Diana wants Ernie to be *torn* about whether or not to lie, and she wants it to be in Ernie's power to lie and also in Ernie's power not to lie. 30 years later, we notice that Diana is not nervous, despite Ernie's impending decision, which leads us to ask Diana a series of questions:

Us: Diana, isn't it important to you that Ernie lies here in a few minutes?

Diana: Yes.

Us: You realize that he's currently deliberating about doing just that? And that he's feeling awfully torn about what to do?

Diana: Yes.

Us: And didn't you say that you've left it up to Ernie whether to lie or tell the truth? That is, didn't you say that it would be up to him which to do?

Diana: Yes.

Us: Well, if it is really up to him, aren't you in the least bit *worried* that he's in fact going to tell the truth?

Diana: No.

Us: Why on earth not?

Diana: Because I am entirely certain that he will lie.

Us: But I thought you gave him free will—so couldn't he refrain?

⁶ For the full argument, see Todd (2017: 397-399). For a similar argument, see Cohen (2015).

Diana: I did give him free will, and yes, he has the power to refrain. But I'm entirely certain that he won't.

Us: What, do you have a crystal ball or something?

Diana: No, I don't have a crystal ball. And I have no magical powers of prevision. And nor am I somehow "outside time". I'm just a goddess, not God.

Us: Then how can you be so certain that Ernie's going to lie, if he has the power to do otherwise, and sees every reason in the world not to?

Diana: Because someone can be free not to do something, even if there is no objective chance whatsoever that he won't. And that's what I've arranged. Ernie is causally determined to lie, but is perfectly free not to. Neat trick, isn't it? (Todd 2017: 397-398)

Todd explains what is going on here as follows:

Genuine freedom, we think, should worry even someone like Diana. But this is not so, on classical compatibilism. Diana might have given Ernie free will, but might nevertheless have *perfectly planned* everything he ever does, and be appropriately *absolutely certain* that he will do only and everything she expects for him to do. But this result seems unacceptable. (Todd 2017: 398)

Diana's non-nervousness is a sign that Ernie is not free to do otherwise. If Ernie is not free to do otherwise, then, according to classical compatibilism, Ernie lacks free will. Provided that there is no relevant difference between Ernie and an agent in an ordinary

deterministic universe (a non-manipulated but nevertheless causally determined agent), it follows that free will and causal determinism are incompatible.

3. The Argument for Incompatibilism and the Dependence Response

Consider, now, an argument for a different form of incompatibilism— incompatibilism about free will (in the same sense) and divine foreknowledge.⁷ Here is a simple version of the argument.⁸ Suppose that, 1,000 years ago, God knew that you would read this paper today. Then it follows that, 1,000 years ago, God believed that you would read this paper today. If God had such a belief, did you have the freedom to do otherwise than read this paper today? To have such freedom, you would need to have either the ability to make God's past belief false or the ability to make God have a different past belief. But no one can do either of those things. So, if God knew 1,000 years ago that you would read this paper today, then you did not have the freedom to do otherwise. And the argument generalizes, so God's foreknowledge is incompatible with the freedom to do otherwise.

Something like this argument has been around for millennia, and compatibilists (about free will and divine foreknowledge) disagree on the best way to respond.⁹ As mentioned in the introduction, however, an increasingly popular response to this argument, though, is to say that, because God's beliefs *depend* on what we do, the

⁷ For helpful discussions of this argument, see Fischer (1994), Pike (1965), and Zagzebski (1991).

⁸ See Cyr and Law (2020).

⁹ For a helpful introduction to the types of responses, see Fischer (1989, introduction; 2016, introduction) and Zagzebski (1991).

argument for incompatibilism is unsuccessful.¹⁰ More precisely, dependence theorists are committed to two claims:

- (1) God's past beliefs are dependent, in the right way, on what we do.
- (2) If a fact is dependent, in the right way, on what an agent does, then that fact should not be held fixed when assessing whether that agent has the ability to do otherwise.

Taken together, these claims give the dependence theorist a reason to reject the premise that we do not have the ability to make God have a different past belief.¹¹ Proponents of the argument for incompatibilism typically support this premise by appealing to the fixity of the past; if God believed 1,000 years ago that you would read this paper today, it would seem that you have no choice about the matter—after all, God had that belief long before you were born, and the past is fixed (or “over and done with”).¹² In response, while they will admit that we do not in general have power over the past, dependence theorists will say that, in the case of the dependent past (i.e., elements of the past that depend on the future), we do have a choice about what the past was like.

I have just said that dependence theorists are committed to two claims, one about the dependence of God's beliefs on what we do and the other about what facts are to be

¹⁰ See the works cited in the first note. It is worth noting that other responses to the argument for incompatibilism, including Ockhamism, Multiple Pasts Compatibilism, and Atemporalism, may turn out to rely on the dependence response. See Cyr (2020a; 2020b) for discussion.

¹¹ Dependence theorists have not always been clear about where exactly the argument for incompatibilism goes wrong, but see Cyr and Law (2020) for a defense of this perspective on the dialectic. Of course, dependence theorists will need to provide an account of the relevant sense of dependence. See Wasserman (2021) for an excellent critical survey.

¹² See Fischer (1994: 78-85) and (2016, chapter 6) for discussion of the fixity of the past.

held fixed when assessing our freedom. Some theists will reject the first claim for theological reasons.¹³ In the remainder of this paper, I will argue that we have reason to reject the second claim.

4. A Time Travel Story

Consider the following story:

At time t_1 , Artemis asks Bernie for the combination to the lock on his time machine, and Bernie is torn about whether to lie (by giving the wrong combination) or whether to tell the truth. After some deliberation, Bernie tells the truth at a later time t_2 . Later on, at time t_3 , Artemis uses the combination to unlock the time machine and uses the machine to go back to t_1 . From a distance, she observes Bernie's process of deliberation, and, as t_2 rolls around, she observes Bernie telling the truth. And this is just as Artemis expects, for she was absolutely certain that Bernie would tell the truth.

This is a simple case of backward time travel.¹⁴ Because Artemis uses the time machine to return to an earlier time that she has already experienced, Artemis exists in two places at each of the times mentioned (t_1 - t_3). (Even though the times themselves do not exist a "second time around," there is a sense in which Artemis does, because she has traveled

¹³ For example, Thomists who accept God's simplicity will find a tension between, first, Aquinas's claim that God's knowledge is the cause of all things, including human actions, given that his will is joined to his knowledge, and, second, the claim that God's knowledge depends on what actually occurs. See Cyr (2020a: 163, n. 24).

¹⁴ This is not to say that backward time travel is simple, of course. See Lewis (1976) for the classic treatment of the (arguably merely apparent) paradoxes of time travel, and see Wasserman (2018) for an updated and book-length discussion. Like Lewis, I am assuming a single-timeline model of time travel, though see Goddu (2003), Meiland (1974), and van Inwagen (2010) for alternative models.

back in time.) At t_1 , when older Artemis steps out of her time machine, she sees (from a distance) a conversation between Bernie and a younger Artemis—a conversation that she remembers having not long ago. As t_2 approaches, she watches Bernie as he deliberates (as she did when she was younger, though now from farther away). This time, however, she knows that Bernie will tell the truth, as she remembers him telling the truth to her younger self not long ago.

According to the dependence response, we should not hold older Artemis's knowledge fixed when evaluating Bernie's freedom. Clearly Artemis's knowledge depends on what Bernie does, since it is Bernie's telling the truth that causes Artemis's experience and memory of Bernie's telling the truth (a memory that she retains when she travels back in time). And if Artemis's knowledge depends on what Bernie does, then, according to the dependence response, we should not hold Artemis's knowledge fixed is assessing what Bernie is free to do. Unless we have some independent reason to think that Bernie is unfree, then, the dependence response tells us that Bernie is free.

Yet Bernie is not free to do otherwise, and we can tell that Bernie is not free by seeing that Artemis knows what he is going to do. Suppose that we meet up with (the older) Artemis as she is watching Bernie deliberate from a distance, and suppose she tells us that, while it is very important to her that Bernie tells the truth at t_2 , she takes Bernie to have the freedom to do otherwise than tell the truth at t_2 . We see her calm composure, though, and begin to ask a series of questions:

Us: Artemis, isn't it important to you that Bernie tells the truth at t_2 ?

Artemis: Yes.

Us: You realize that he's currently deliberating about doing just that?
And that he's feeling awfully torn about what to do?

Artemis: Yes.

Us: And didn't you say that it's up to Bernie whether to lie or tell the truth? That is, didn't you say that it would be up to him which to do?

Artemis: Yes.

Us: Well, if it is really up to him, aren't you in the least bit *worried* that he's in fact going to lie?

Artemis: No.

Us: Why on earth not?

Artemis: Because I am entirely certain that he will tell the truth.

Us: But I thought you took him to have free will—so couldn't he refrain?

Artemis: He does have free will, and yes, he has the power to refrain. But I'm entirely certain that he won't.

Us: What, do you have a crystal ball or something?

Artemis: No, I don't have a crystal ball. And I have no magical powers of prevision. And nor am I somehow "outside time". I'm just a time-traveler, not God.

Us: Then how can you be so certain that Bernie's going to tell the truth, if he has the power to do otherwise and has a reason to lie?

Artemis: Because someone can be free not to do something, even if doing otherwise would require a time-traveler's knowledge of what he will do to be false. And that's what is happening here. Bernie is going to tell the truth—I know for certain, given that I've just heard him tell the truth when I was a bit younger—but he is perfectly free not to. Isn't that amazing?

And that would be amazing, but we would rightly reject Artemis's assessment of Bernie's abilities, just as we would reject Diana's assessment of Ernie's abilities. Imagine yourself in Artemis's shoes. When you first ask Bernie for the combination, you might be worried about the possibility that he lies. But, having heard Bernie tell the truth, you will not be worried about the possibility that he lies as you watch him deliberate on your second time around. It would be like filming the conversation and then playing back the recording—as you watch the recording, having already experienced the events recorded, you would not be worried about what Bernie will do.

Now, why isn't Artemis worried about Bernie lying? Artemis's non-nervousness is a sign of Bernie's lack of freedom.¹⁵ Genuine freedom to do otherwise should worry Artemis, but she is not worried, as she is absolutely certain that Bernie will tell the truth. (Her very presence there in the past, observing Bernie's deliberation, depends on his telling the truth and providing the combination!) In fact, this case offers some support for the fixity of the past. Very roughly, the fixity of the past is the idea that no one is able to

¹⁵ Bernie is free to do otherwise in the sense that no one is compelling him to tell the truth, but lack of compulsion is not sufficient for genuine freedom. Lewis (1976) would say that Bernie is free to do otherwise in view of the relevant facts (Bernie "has what it takes," the conditions are perfect for lying, etc.), but I take cases like this one to call Lewis's view of freedom into question. See Vihvelin (1996) for further argument.

act in such a way that would require the past to have been different.¹⁶ It is plausible that, since the past is “over and done with,” we cannot do anything that would require the past to have been different.¹⁷ Dependence theorists reject the fixity of the past, opting for some related principle about the fixity of the *independent* past (the parts of the past that do not depend on what we do). But the case of Artemis and Bernie suggests that even the *dependent* past can restrict our freedom to do otherwise, and this is a problem for dependence theorists.

Now, perhaps not everyone will share my judgment about Bernie’s lack of freedom. I do hope that many readers agree and see that they have reason to reject the dependence response. Additionally, it is worth noting that there is precedent for my claim about Bernie in the literature on the metaphysical possibility of backward time travel—a debate that has developed without issues of God’s foreknowledge in mind, so far as I can tell. Consider a special case of the “grandfather paradox” that has been called the “retrosuicide paradox” (or the “autoinfanticide paradox”): Tim enters his time machine and travels to the time when he was an infant with the aim of killing his infant self. Can Tim achieve his goal? Although they may disagree on the exact reasons why, many find

¹⁶ Again, see Fischer (1994: 78-85) and (2016, chapter 6) for discussion of the fixity of the past.

¹⁷ Of course, if backward time travel is possible, then perhaps there is a sense in which the past is not over and done with, since an agent’s future experiences might be in the external past—see Lewis (1976) for the distinction between personal and external time. Even so, cases like that of Artemis and Bernie seem to show that the external past is fixed even when an agent’s personal future lies in the past. Just before t_3 , when Artemis is unlocking the time machine, her arrival in the external past lies in her personal future, and it is hard to believe that she is free to act in a way that would require her not to arrive in the past, given that she already has.

it intuitive that Tim is not free to kill his infant self.¹⁸ For one thing, Tim's travels back in time depend on his surviving childhood, so he his succeeding in killing his infant self would preclude his very mission to achieve that goal. If one finds this sort of reasoning plausible, however, one will have reason to reject the dependence response, for, according to the view, if Tim's travels are dependent on whether he does or doesn't kill his infant self, then we should not hold facts about his travels fixed when assessing whether he is free to kill his infant self. More generally, those who accept that backward time travelers are not free, or at least that they are not free in cases that give rise to the grandfather paradox, have reason to reject the dependence response.

5. The Problem for the Dependence Response

But it isn't only the case of time-traveling Artemis that presents a challenge to the dependence theorist. The very same reasoning can be applied to the case of God and his foreknowledge. Just as Diana isn't worried that Ernie won't lie, and just as Artemis isn't worried that Bernie won't tell the truth, God isn't worried that you won't read this paper now. If you had the freedom to do otherwise, and if it is important to God that you read this paper now, then God should have been worried that you wouldn't read this paper now. And just as Diana's/Artemis's non-nervousness is a sign of Ernie's/Bernie's lack of freedom, so too God's non-nervousness is a sign of your lack of freedom.

In other words, the time travel story helps us to see that there is a problem for one of the dependence response's key claims. Recall that dependence theorists maintain that if a fact is dependent, in the right way, on what an agent does, then that fact should not be

¹⁸ For example, see Vihvelin (1996) and Rea (2015).

held fixed when assessing whether that agent has the ability to do otherwise. But what the time travel case shows is that even dependent facts about the past should be held fixed when assessing an agent's present freedom, for a fact can be dependent on what an agent does (as Artemis's knowledge of what Bernie does is dependent on his doing it) and yet still constrain the agent's freedom. So even if God's beliefs are dependent, in the right way, on what we do, we do not have reason to ignore those beliefs when assessing what we are free to do.¹⁹

I can imagine three types of objection to my argument: first, objections that point to differences between Todd's case of Diana and Ernie and my case of Artemis and Bernie; second, objections that point to differences between the case of Artemis and Bernie and the case of divine foreknowledge; third, objections to the use of time travel in my Artemis and Bernie case. Let us consider each of these types of objection in turn.

Perhaps Artemis's knowledge is like a "crystal ball," whereas Diana's knowledge is not. While some have described divine foreknowledge in mysterious ways (as involving something like a "time telescope"), there is nothing mysterious about how Artemis came to know what Bernie will do.²⁰ But perhaps a crucial difference is not with respect to the (non-)mysteriousness of their knowledge, but in way their respective

¹⁹ My conclusion is similar to the one drawn in Todd (2013), but our arguments rely on very different cases. In addition, my argument establishes the stronger conclusion that, at least sometimes, Y can be an effect of X, and yet when we're assessing whether an agent is free with respect to X, we must hold fixed that Y occurred. So, on my view (but not on Todd's), something can depend on what you do in about as strong a way as anyone might want to imagine, and yet *still* it is fixed for you.

²⁰ Perhaps someone will say that backward time travel itself seems mysterious, and so there remains a relevant difference between Todd's case and mine. Admittedly, not everyone agrees that backward time travel is possible, but it is not utterly mysterious, and there are good defenses of its possibility—again, see Lewis (1976) and Wasserman (2018).

knowledge is obtained. In particular, Artemis (unlike Diana) has *immediate* knowledge—knowledge of what Bernie will do that comes through direct observation (by virtue of seeing and hearing Bernie perform the action)—and perhaps the immediacy of her knowledge is a relevant difference.²¹ But even though Artemis observed Bernie’s telling the truth and so came to have knowledge in this immediate way, what’s odd about the case is that she has done so at a future time.²² Given this feature of the case, her knowledge at the earlier time is intuitively more like Diana’s knowledge about what Ernie will do (given her knowledge of the laws and state of the world)—it is genuine *foreknowledge*—than it is like knowledge of what a person is doing now that comes through direct observation.

Another potentially relevant difference between Todd’s case and mine is that, whereas Diana *plans* Ernie’s lie, Artemis merely foreknows that Bernie will tell the truth. Given the dependence response’s attention to the importance of the order of explanation, this is a natural place to look for a relevant difference, as Ernie’s action seems to be explained by Diana, whereas Bernie’s action does not seem to be explained by Artemis. But the fact that Bernie’s action is not explained by Artemis is not relevant, since, as the case shows, a fact that is dependent on what an agent does (and, we can add, that does not at all explain the agent’s behavior) can nevertheless constrain the agent’s freedom. Since Bernie appears unfree even though Artemis’s knowledge does not explain Bernie’s action, the difference in order of explanation is not relevant.

²¹ Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for raising this point.

²² This is to say, in Lewis’s terms (cf. note 17), that Artemis’s observation took place in her personal past but in the external future.

Even if Todd's case and mine are not relevantly different, someone might object by pointing to a difference between my case and the case of divine foreknowledge. In particular, one might point out that, unlike God, Artemis is not essentially omniscient. In particular, it is possible for Artemis to have a false belief, but God could not have a false belief. This is relevant because Bernie's doing otherwise than telling the truth would not require that Artemis have a different past belief (only that her belief be false instead of true), whereas your doing otherwise than reading this paper would require that God have a different past belief (since you cannot make God have a false belief—God is essentially omniscient, after all). But if Bernie's doing otherwise would simply require Artemis's belief to be false, then there is no reason to think that Bernie is not free to do otherwise.

The first thing to say in response to this objection is that, even if it works, it seems to undercut the dependence response to the problem of divine foreknowledge and free will by maintaining that God's essential omniscience would undermine our freedom to do otherwise but a time-traveler's knowledge would not. But the objection can be restated to avoid this problem: if the case of Artemis and Bernie does not give any new reason to reject the dependence response, then the argument of this paper does not advance the dialectic; and the case of Artemis and Bernie fails because Bernie is perfectly free to do otherwise—this would simply require that Artemis have a false belief.

But Bernie's doing otherwise would require more than Artemis's having a false belief. Bernie's doing otherwise would require that Artemis not have arrived at t_1 via the time machine, for her arrival at that earlier time is dependent on Bernie's telling the truth about the combination to the lock on the time machine. In other words, if Bernie were to do otherwise than tell the truth, older Artemis would not be watching from a distance, for

she would not have traveled back to the past. From the perspective of older Artemis (who is not worried at all about Bernie lying), Bernie's lying would require that she not be there watching him deliberate. Given that she is there, however, watching Bernie deliberate, of course he is not free to lie. Bernie is not free to make it the case that someone who has been watching him has not been watching him.

Finally, I can imagine someone objecting to the use of time travel in the case of Artemis and Bernie. One common objection to the possibility of backward time travel is that it would generate causal loops, which are closed causal chains in which some causes precede their effects and others do not.²³ For example, suppose that Richard gives a compass to Locke, who then goes back in time and give the compass to (a younger) Richard. The compass's presence at each time has a causal explanation, but there is no explanation for the loop itself.

It is not clear to me that causal loops are impossible, but we can set aside this response to the objection here. More importantly, the case of Artemis and Bernie does not generate a loop, and so this objection to the use of time travel in the case is unsuccessful.²⁴ When Artemis goes back to t1, she watches Bernie deliberate *from a distance*. We can suppose that this distance is sufficiently great that older Artemis cannot intervene and thus is not plausibly considered a cause of Bernie's telling the truth.²⁵

²³ See Lewis (1976: 148-149) and Wasserman (2018, chapter 5) for discussion. It is worth noting that neither of these authors thinks that causal loops are impossible.

²⁴ Perhaps there are other objections to my use of time travel, but I do not see any paradoxes that are not shown to be merely apparent by Lewis and Wasserman.

²⁵ While it seems eminently plausible to me that older Artemis does not cause Bernie's action, some may disagree—see Mellor (1981: 175-176) and Rea (2015, section 3). Those who disagree and also think causal loops are impossible are committed to the

Without older Artemis having any causal effect on the events that lead to her time-traveling, there is no reason to think that this case involves a causal loop.²⁶ Even if causal loops are impossible, then, the case of Artemis and Bernie may nevertheless reveal a problem for the dependence response.

6. Conclusion

Dependence theorists claim that, when assessing whether an agent has the freedom to do otherwise, we should not hold fixed any fact that depends on what the agent does. Combined with the claim that God's past beliefs are dependent on what we do, this dependence response aims to show that divine foreknowledge is no threat to our freedom to do otherwise. I have argued, however, that there are cases (like the case of Artemis and Bernie) in which a fact is dependent on what an agent does and nevertheless constrains the agent's freedom (and thus is held fixed in assessing whether the agent is free to do otherwise). We can see that the agent's freedom is constrained by attending to the non-nervousness of certain other agents in the scenario—in the case of Artemis and Bernie, we saw that Artemis was not nervous about whether Bernie would lie, as she would have been were Bernie free to do otherwise. Since cases like this give us a reason to reject the dependence theorist's claim that we should not hold fixed dependent facts, they constitute a formidable challenge to the dependence response.

impossibility of backward time travel, however, which is not an insignificant theoretical cost of this combination of views.

²⁶ See also Hanley (2004: 130) for a case of backward time travel that does not generate a causal loop.

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