

BANEZ'S BIG PROBLEM: THE GROUND OF FREEDOM

Fr. James Dominic Rooney, O.P.

Abstract (100 words): While many philosophers of religion are familiar with the reconciliation of grace and freedom known as Molinism, fewer by far are familiar with that position initially developed by Molina's erstwhile rival, Domingo Banez (i.e., Banezianism). My aim is to clarify a serious problem for the Banezian: how the Banezian can avoid the apparent conflict between a strong notion of freedom and apparently compatibilist conclusions. The most prominent attempt to defend Banezianism against compatibilism was (in)famously endorsed by Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange. Even if it were true that freedom does not require alternative possibilities, Banezians have a grounding problem.

While many contemporary philosophers of religion are familiar with the reconciliation of grace and freedom proposed by Luis de Molina (i.e., Molinism), fewer by far are familiar with that position initially developed by Molina's erstwhile rival, Domingo Banez (i.e., Banezianism).¹ Both share a 400-year-long and heavily fraught, complicated, intricate history. To avoid complexities of historical interpretation, I will broadly construe these positions in terms of occupying a certain logical space. The domain of this space results from a difficulty because Catholic theology accepts two sets of apparently conflicting claims about human freedom. On one hand, the tradition affirms human beings cannot perform a special subset of actions – call them “supernatural actions” – without God's special causal help:

“If anyone affirms that without the illumination and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit...through the strength of nature he can think anything good which pertains to the salvation of eternal life, as he should, or choose, or consent to salvation, that is to the evangelical proclamation, he is deceived by the heretical spirit, not understanding the voice of God speaking in the Gospel...”²

On the other hand, a strong affirmation of freedom was formulated by the Catholic Church in opposition to versions of Calvinism or other theological traditions, holding instead that human beings have the freedom to resist or cooperate with God's grace, even when acting under that grace. Famously, a view attributed to the Catholic theologian Cornelius Jansen was deemed heretical because his writings were taken to deny the power of the will to resist or obey grace; there are many such examples.³

Considering the space of possible orthodox accounts of how these claims are compatible, two options developed among Catholic theologians. On the Molinist option, one opts to say that

God foreknows how humans will respond to grace in virtue of knowing counter-factual propositions about what that person would freely choose to do in non-actual situations, or ‘counter-factuals of freedom.’ Then, God acts upon a creature⁴ in order to bring about their conversion, for example, by giving those helps (i.e., grace) that He can infallibly know will bring about their conversion; and the same goes for God bringing a person to perform any other supernatural act. As God’s grace brings about what a creature would themselves freely choose, the Molinist proposes, the apparently conflicting truths about human freedom and God’s grace are reconciled.

The other option is Banezianism. Banezians broadly hold that God’s grace is intrinsically such it brings about human free decisions, using technical terminology (viz., ‘physical premotion’) to indicate that God’s grace is causally *efficacious* in achieving these results. They would contrast their position to the Molinist, claiming that Molinism holds that God’s grace brings about supernatural acts, such as conversion, only in virtue of being ‘extrinsically’ efficacious. This is to say that the grace God gives is not, by itself, causally efficacious in bringing about some such result. The Banezian, however, holds that God’s causal determination can directly bring about human free action without undermining their freedom. God’s manner of causing an action is not the same sort usually envisioned in philosophical debates about compatibilism, however, in which typically one thinks of a case where the initial state of the universe and fixed laws of nature casually determine one unique physical future. Instead, the Banezian argues, God can directly bring about properly *free* acts in His creatures, without necessitating or making those actions any less free, because God has unique causal power that nothing else has.⁵

Whereas a typical and prominent ‘grounding problem’ for Molinism involves how there can be counter-factual truths about freedom, and what grounds those truths, a typical problem for the Banezian position is that the view certainly *looks* like some version of theological compatibilism. It is uncontroversial that the Banezian is committed to a ‘strong’ concept of creaturely freedom, as that is a doctrinal commitment of Catholicism, but the aforementioned doctrinal condemnations were controversial texts in the disputes between Molinists and Banezians. On one hand, it is not uncontroversial that, for the Banezian, creatures *can* resist God’s grace. Molinists therefore appealed to such condemnations to argue that Banezianism was heretical. On the other hand, I refrain from saying that the Church requires ‘incompatibilism’ to be true, because there is great debate whether Thomas Aquinas’ own theory of grace or the interpretative tradition that I am calling Banezianism is correctly characterized as ‘libertarian’ or ‘compatibilist.’⁶ Some Banezians straightforwardly bite the bullet of theological compatibilism.⁷

For my purposes, it is unimportant to distinguish whether Aquinas or Banez is truly a ‘compatibilist.’ While many are familiar with the aforementioned grounding problem for Molinism, what this paper argues is that Banezianism’s central problem is an analogate of the ‘grounding problem’ for Molinism.⁸ The Banezian has the burden of explaining *that in virtue of which* it is true that a creature can do otherwise (e.g., resist God’s efficacious grace), much like the Molinist has a burden of showing what it is in virtue of which counter-factuals of freedom are true. My aim is to clarify this problem for the Banezian position generally and broadly. Moreover, this problem, as I will pose it in the context of one recent and prominent version of Banezianism, is unaffected by biting the bullet of theological compatibilism.

Consider, for example, that – for the Banezian of the sort like Garrigou-Lagrange below – God is giving intrinsically different graces to people who cooperate with grace (such as a person

who makes an act of faith and love in God) and those who do not (e.g., a person who remains impenitent until death). A serious consequence of this view is that a person who sins has, *by that very fact*, not received the *same kind of grace* as a righteous person who does not sin. Given that the Banezian holds that God's grace precedes creaturely free choice, God cannot be responding to human decisions (even counter-factually) in deciding who receives the efficacious graces and who does not. Instead, Banezians are clear that God chooses to give, or not give, efficacious grace to an individual, from eternity, and before knowing anything about what such a person would do. Yet, on the supposition that God were to choose not to give efficacious grace to a person, there is no possible world where that person can avoid sinning and, if God *never* chooses to give that person efficacious grace, going to hell.

While one might naturally wonder about theodicy on a view where God denies some people the aid needed to save them from hell, the 'big' problem for the Banezian is ultimately one of coherence. The grounding problem for their view only requires certain claims about the power or ability to do otherwise to get off the ground, and those claims are mandated by Catholic doctrine and accepted by the Banezian. The Banezian needs to account for how it is possible that a creature can do otherwise in the special case when God moves the creature to act through grace. Specifically, what grounds the truth of the claim that, even when God determines human free choices from eternity such that a human being has only one course of action open to them, those human beings are morally responsible for their actions?⁹ If the Banezian view entails that human beings, acting under grace, strictly lack any ability to do otherwise, then the view is incoherent.

I am characterizing the 'ability to do otherwise' in a very broad way because the most prominent strategy for the Banezian involves affirming that humans have an 'ability to do otherwise,' even under the influence of God's efficacious grace, but that this ability to do

otherwise does not involve having alternative possibilities; this strategy was (in)famously endorsed by Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange.¹⁰ I will take Taylor O'Neil's recent *Grace, Predestination, and the Permission of Sin* as an exemplar of this line of argument, what I'll term the 'Garrigou Manoeuvre.' The Manoeuvre is presented within the context of a theodicy, aiming to vindicate God from being the author of sin while presenting a certain picture of how God causes our free acts under grace.¹¹ But the theodicy is not central to my concerns. What I show is that, even if it were true that freedom does not require alternative possibilities, the Garrigou Manoeuvre is incoherent. Surprisingly, the Manoeuvre is only successful if Molinism were true. The Garrigou Manoeuvre cannot account for the ability of the creature to avoid sin (or resist grace) unless it helps itself implicitly to Molinist counter-factuals of freedom. If Banezianism is to successfully overcome its own version of the grounding problem, the Garrigou Manoeuvre is not the way to do so. I will conclude by suggesting that Banezianism need not be compatibilist, and that the versions of Banezianism that are *not* compatibilist will be able to resolve this grounding problem.

1. The Garrigou Manoeuvre

O'Neil sets out to defend the coherence of the Banezian position, which holds that God exercises a real causal influence on the human will through giving them grace, moving them to enter into union with Himself, even though human beings remain free in some strong sense compatible with Catholic dogma on the question. God acts causally to move someone to enter into union with Himself, but this encompasses more than just the initial act of having faith in and loving God that is called 'justification'; indeed, for the Banezian, God must give the help of His grace at any time a created person does anything supernaturally meritorious, where that is some good act not possible merely given the natural powers of the creature's will.¹² At times, however, it is

easier to focus on the initial justification, and so I will often more simply refer merely to cases of free created persons entering into union with God.

The Banezian, further, requires a distinction between two ways God operates on human beings. What they call ‘efficacious’ grace is that causal help from God in virtue of which I *actually* do something supernaturally meritorious.¹³ This technical language of ‘in virtue of which’ is intended to mirror the Banezian claim that, even though I always act *if* God so causes me to act, God does not thereby render my actions necessary, i.e., ‘necessitate’ my acts.¹⁴ When God gives me only *power* to do such a good action, such that it is within my free control to cooperate with God’s offer to enter into union with Him or reject His offer, that is instead ‘sufficient’ grace. Given that doing something supernaturally meritorious is conceived by the Banezian as activating a power, every time one is given an efficacious grace to act, one is also being given or has been previously given by God the sufficient power (i.e., sufficient grace) to act. These distinctions were all attributed to Thomas Aquinas, as the foremost defenders of the theory claimed to be offering interpretations of Aquinas’ texts on grace and predestination, but it is unimportant for my purposes whether they were correct in doing so.¹⁵ Similarly, while the Banezian camp admits of dissenting voices and many historical twists and turns in defining these terms, I will bracket these and focus on Garrigou-Lagrange’s own formulation of the position, as his is the target of my criticisms.

The Banezian theory has been attacked on multiple fronts, not limited to attacks its metaphysical assumptions about the nature of God’s causality and human free choice.¹⁶ A famous debate occurred historically on this question, the *De Auxiliis* controversy from 1580-1607, with the aforementioned Molinist and Banezian positions as what dominated the discussions.¹⁷ O’Neil also criticizes the works of other Thomists, such as Francisco Marin-Sola,

Jacques Maritain, Jean-Herve Nicholas, and Bernard Lonergan, who each attempted in the last century to revise the metaphysics or other elements of the classical Banezian theory. I will not defend or discuss any of these other versions of Banezianism, but rather focus on O’Neil’s defense of Garrigou-Lagrange’s version. In particular, I am not concerned with the metaphysics or details of Garrigou-Lagrange’s account of how predestination occurs, which are highly technical. Instead, I am interested in the way that Garrigou-Lagrange’s *responds* to the worries about the fact his theory seems to entail that humans cannot avoid committing sin, if God chooses not to grant them efficacious grace, and O’Neil’s defense of his responses. This strategy for defending Banezianism is what I am calling the ‘Garrigou Manoeuvre.’

First, the objection and the account. Garrigou-Lagrange took himself to be doing nothing more than working out the implications of the traditional Banezian account of grace and predestination. The primary question for the Banezian in general, as for Garrigou-Lagrange in particular, is this: in virtue of *what* does God give, or not give, some free person efficacious grace? The Banezian cannot say that there are truths about what the person *would* do, as the Molinist can, and thus (for example) cannot claim that God would move someone to supernatural action only if He knew that they would freely consent to it. This is so, according to Banezianism, because there are no truths about what a created person would do apart from God’s choices about whether to give that person the requisite efficacious grace or not. Creaturely freedom is product of God’s causal activity, not something independent of it. Conversely, if there is *nothing* in virtue of which God gives efficacious grace to people – if God does so at His own good pleasure – then it seems like God would be arbitrary (and probably even unjust¹⁸). Thus, the natural question for the Banezian is: how there can be something in control of the free creature that makes God responsive to them, but which is not independent of God’s causal activity? Garrigou-Lagrange

claims that there is something in virtue of which God denies someone efficacious grace, and that this is in the control of the sinner: a person “is deprived of efficacious grace because by sinning he resists sufficient grace . . . [Therefore,] God refuses efficacious grace only to one who resists sufficient grace; otherwise there would be an injustice involved.”¹⁹

But Garrigou-Lagrance also endorses claims that seem to make his explanation circular. On one hand, his metaphysics requires that any act that would precede God’s giving efficacious grace *would require* God’s efficacious grace to perform. Thus, he would rule out the idea that someone could prepare themselves, by some prayer or other interior act, to ask God to give them efficacious grace, without already (by the very fact of doing this preceding action!) having been given that grace. Further, while he claims that “man does not sin on account of insufficient help or any divine neglect, but because of his own deficiency,”²⁰ Garrigou-Lagrance also claims that *everyone always* is deficient, resists God through sin, apart from efficacious grace.²¹ If God chooses not to give me efficacious grace, then it is impossible that I ever act in a way that does not resist God’s offer of entering into union with me (i.e., sufficient grace). But then it seems that, if God decides to not give someone efficacious grace, and that person can do nothing independent of and prior to God’s decisions to cause or impede God from giving that grace, the vindication Garrigou-Lagrance offers is apparently viciously circular: God denied me efficacious grace because I resisted sufficient grace, but I resisted sufficient grace in virtue of God’s withholding efficacious grace from me.

Garrigou-Lagrance attempts to address this apparent circularity in two ways. One strategy involves interpreting this ‘in virtue of’ clause as *mere permission* rather than casual interference (and I will take this to be the central, explanatory move). However, O’Neil focuses on another strategy that involves what Garrigou-Lagrance calls the ‘principle of predilection’: “no man

would be better than another if he were not loved more by God.”²² On this second strategy, the Garrigou Manoeuvre ends in saying that why some receive efficacious grace and others do not ultimately rests only on God’s loving some people more than others – there is no further explanation.

O’Neil tries to dispel the feeling of unease with the Garrigou Manoeuvre, first, by arguing that while it is particularly true of “any variants of the Dominican Thomistic treatment that posit the principle of predilection...[that these] cannot escape the inherent mystery of why God chooses one rather than another,”²³ the problem is also true of any view which holds that God elects some to glory by His free graciousness. All such are committed to the mysterious consequence that: “It is well within God’s power to move each man to his supernatural end infallibly, and yet he does not do so....”²⁴ For example, even on Molinism, there is the mystery why God permitted Judas to exist in circumstances where God knew that Judas would inevitably sin, despite God being able to put Judas in circumstances where Judas would not have sinned (and knowing that there were such circumstances, viz. His middle knowledge).

a. Dissecting the Manoeuvre

One does not need to reject the underlying Thomistic metaphysics that God is the source of all goodness to find that second strategy for resolving the circularity in Garrigou-Lagrange’s explanation of grace unsatisfying. Here I object not so much from intuitions about God’s justice, but rather because the principle of predilection is ultimately satisfactory *if and only if* the first of Garrigou-Lagrange’s strategies for resolving the account’s circularity is coherent. That is, what the Garrigou Manoeuvre needs to account for is what makes it the case that the creature has a power to cooperate with or resist God’s grace, even if it has no alternative possibilities. Only

then does it make sense to say that, if the creature has such a power, God's love of some creatures more than others does not undermine their moral responsibility. Naturally, Garrigou-Lagrange has an answer to this question (which involves appeal to a power). But, first, we need to clearly state that the 'principle of predilection' is a distraction from what is explanatorily central.

To see this, consider that O'Neil is arguing is that God is under no obligation *to save everyone*. This can be granted without conceding that it would be acceptable for God to place creatures in circumstances where, independent of their free choices, they are unable to avoid sinning. The central question is then: in virtue of what are humans responsible for their actions, if God so restricts (from eternity) the course of actions open to them, so that some lack any alternative possibilities for acting otherwise? This is particularly pressing in the case of God denying efficacious grace to a person, where that person (as a consequence) in no possible world can avoid sinning. O'Neil's response is that God's reprobation, His permission for someone to go to hell, is a *non-act* on God's part. Rather than exerting a "positive influence, or a causal exclusion" that makes one unable to do a good act, God's permission of sin is "a non-act, a nothing, a not-giving of something gratuitous, that is, upholding the creature from rejecting God and dying in such a state [of mortal sin]."²⁵ Consequently, O'Neil concludes, God is not responsible for causing the sinner to go to hell.

However, the fact that God's permission is not a 'positive act' would not by itself be sufficient to show that He is not responsible for the sinner's sin. My failing to save a drowning child from the well is a non-act, but one in which I am morally culpable for my non-action – technically, a 'sin of omission.' We have to be careful about framing such a worry, however, as such sins of omission require that I have failed to fulfill a moral duty. For some Thomists (such

as Brian Davies), God has no moral duties or obligations toward His creation.²⁶ It is possible to put to one side this controversial claim about God's lack of moral obligations, however, as the worry can be put without appeal to any of God's moral obligations. O'Neil's defense requires a stronger claim: that God giving a creature the possibility *not to sin* is gratuitous, so that God can still hold a creature responsible for their sins even though they lacked any alternative possibilities that were not sinful. But we still have to disambiguate this claim. The claim could be, either, that creatures are themselves responsible for being in the situations where they lack non-sinful alternatives; God is not responsible for the actions of creatures in these situations, and His grace saves them from themselves. Or, alternatively, we might say that I am free even when I lack alternative possibilities for action, as long as the possibilities that I do have open to me are relevantly in my control.

The question of alternative possibilities is controversial, as I will explain below, but we need to step back for a moment. Recall that, on Molinism, the truths about what I would do in certain counter-factual situations are true in virtue of something independent of God's choices (whether God's essence or my essence). For example, the Molinist thinks it is a fact that Peter would repent of betraying His Lord if Peter was put in exactly the circumstances the apostle Peter historically occupied, but that God knows of other circumstances on which Peter would not have repented. This is a metaphysical fact independent of God's choice to create Peter – even if Peter never existed, God would still know what Peter *would* have done when the cock crowed thrice. For Banezianism, by contrast, truths about what I do are all true in virtue of God's choices about me. For example, Peter's decisions are known by God because all those actions are present to God in His eternal perspective on time.²⁷ God did not create Peter so that Peter would inevitably repent of his betrayal by internal necessity. Instead, in the same 'logical moment' that God

chose to create Peter, God can be imagined to thereby have chosen to create all of Peter's other actions because, even though Peter comes to exist and act at definite points in time, those acts are all present to God in eternity. If God never created Peter, there would be no actions of Peter for God to 'see' from eternity and no truths about whether Peter would betray Christ. For this reason, the Banezian would deny that there are counter-factuals of freedom for my actions that are independent of God's will.

Even more strongly, though, the Banezian claims that God's choices about whether to give efficacious grace will make true whether a person acts a certain way (e.g., whether Peter repents of his betrayal). This is the claim, central to the theory, that God's grace is intrinsically efficacious. There are therefore no truths about whether a person would or would not cooperate with God's grace independent or prior to God's decision to give or withhold that grace – all the truths about Peter repenting, or not, are made true by God's decisions to give Peter grace or not.

I am here using the phrase 'independent of and prior to,' and its correlative 'subsequent to,' in a loose manner to indicate a logical (not temporal) order in God's choices or intentions. My decision to get my car keys, for example, is logically subsequent as well as temporally subsequent to my decision to go for a drive. For God, of course, there are no temporal 'befores' or 'afters' in His decision making, just as there are presumably no separate acts of decision. Nevertheless, there is a logical order: God's decision to create Adam's human heart would be a decision that is logically posterior to His decision to create Adam, a human being, because (we can imagine) God created the heart to serve a particular function in Adam's human body. His decision to create that heart in Adam's case was *not* 'independent of' His decision to create a human being. By contrast, we might imagine His decision to create human beings was prior to and independent of His decision to become incarnate as a human being.²⁸

Nevertheless, the Banezian claims that my actions are not simply *necessitated* by God. A classical distinction was drawn between what I actually do under influence of God's grace, where I necessarily only can perform one act, and what I nevertheless could have done at that very same moment, such that I could have done otherwise than what I actually did (viz. the *sensus compositus/divisus*).²⁹ For the Manoeuvre to work, too, it cannot be the case that creatures are responsible for being in the situations where they lack non-sinful alternatives. Instead, God's permission of sin, or decision to give efficacious grace, is what puts the creature in the modal neighborhood where they have (respectively) the possibilities that they do. The decision to permit a creature to sin is made from eternity, not as 'foreseeing' what a creature does in time or what the creature would do in a counter-factual situation, and as inevitably restricting that creature's alternative possibilities, even if it is a non-act. If the Garrigou Manoeuvre works, then, it does so only because God's choice to restrict a creature's alternative possibilities in this way does not undermine that creature's moral responsibility.

The central claim of the Garrigou Manoeuvre is, then, something like this: that it is sufficient for my being free that I have the relevant *capacities* for free action, even if I never actualize them to choose an action that is not sinful. The story of how I sin, then, is this one: all God does is know that I inevitably will commit sin without His help (perhaps in all nearby modal worlds). He is under no obligation to save me from myself, and so Him leaving me without efficacious grace does not make Him responsible for my sins. God does not take away or impede my normally-functioning capacities for choice when I sin. To the contrary, when I sin, I act fully from my own capacities and volitions; God has only refrained from *miraculously intervening* in those normal processes in such a way as to stop me from doing what I want to do. And *that*, surely, cannot be

something prejudicial to my freedom. Similarly, God is not responsible for what I do, even if He decides from eternity that He will not miraculously intervene to save me from myself.

On my rendering, then, we can state the Manoeuvre in a way that does not require any position on whether alternative possibilities are necessary for freedom. And this is *pace* the infelicitous claims sometimes made by O’Neil and Garrigou-Lagrange. They sometimes reason that, if it was truly impossible for me to act in such a way as to avoid sinning, I would not be responsible for these sinful actions because I would lack the relevant alternative possibilities. For example, if God were to make it that I could not do what the moral law commands, then O’Neil concedes that “it would do away with the real possibility for me to uphold the divine laws of God. God would command something that was impossible....”³⁰ As I will show, this is not quite the right way to put the matter.

Nevertheless, there is a serious problem with the Garrigou Manoeuvre even on this rendering – and without appeal to the way that God’s efficacious grace seems to cut off alternative possibilities – it is the case that the Garrigou Manoeuvre is *incoherent*. Simply put, I will argue that the Manoeuvre works only if Molinism is true. But, by stipulation of the Manoeuvre, Molinism is false. If there are no counter-factuals of freedom, as the Manoeuvre claims, then the Manoeuvre cannot appeal to such counter-factuals – yet it, in fact, does appeal to counter-factuals of freedom. This problem for the Manoeuvre is fatal.

b. The Problem with the Manoeuvre’s Story of Sin

The Manoeuvre’s story of sin, as I’ve given it earlier, relied on an intuition that God leaving me without efficacious grace does not make Him responsible for my sins, because God does not take away or impede my normally-functioning capacities for choice when He does so. What I do

without His grace are *my* acts, even if there is no world where I use my capacities well. God doesn't need to save me from myself, although He certainly can. But the story requires an assumption: that there are truths about what my capacities permit me to do, independent of or prior to whether God has decided to give me efficacious grace or not. This is *not* to say that I can do things absent the divine motion, which all Banezians deny, but that there are truths about my *capacities*, prior to and independent of God's efficacious grace. These facts about my capacities are what are supposed to explain why it is true that I could have done otherwise even at the very moment that God is causing me to perform some particular action.³¹

The assumption initially appears Molinist (and I think the actual Garrigou-Manoeuvre makes use of this Molinist sense). This makes a significant difference because, for the Garrigou Manoeuvre to preserve the responsibility of creatures for their sins, there have to be counterfactuals of freedom that God knows independently of His decision to create that creature *and* to give them efficacious grace. But, if Banezianism is true, there are no such truths. Instead, the truths about whether I cooperate with God's grace are all made true by God's decision to give me efficacious grace. Consequently, God's decision to permit me to sin, to not give me efficacious grace, would be what *makes it true* that I have no possibilities for non-sinful action. If the assumption is *not* read as Molinist, the Banezian will have a serious grounding problem such that the view is incoherent.

Let's step back for a moment to disambiguate the assumption from other nearby claims. There is a claim that plausibly follows from the Christian doctrine of original sin: for any human being that exists post-Fall, that human being will inevitably act sinfully at some time if God does not intervene.³² Further, as we already saw in setting up the problem of grace and freedom, the Catholic tradition requires: a human being cannot do any supernaturally good act unless God

intervenes to assist in production of that act.³³ One could imagine that the Manoeuvre intends to merely reproduce these claims in order to ground its claim that there are truths regarding whether I would or would not cooperate with God's grace, prior to God's decision to give me efficacious grace. Specifically, these claims seem clearly to entail that I would *not* cooperate with God's grace absent God's intervention. Thus, the Manoeuvre does not require Molinism to be true in order to claim that there are truths about what I would do in the relevant situation – all that need be true are these Catholic claims about original sin and grace.

Nevertheless, these claims do not actually help; rather, the Garrigou Manoeuvre needs more. The Manoeuvre presumes that another Christian doctrine is true: the Catholic tradition also claims that God intends to help all – He desires that all be saved.³⁴ For the Banezian, this is translated into the claim that God gives every human being sufficient grace to produce a good act, even if they never cooperate with God's grace to do so.³⁵ Because this is true, then the story of sin cannot be complete without making it clear that the person is culpable of sin only when they are given the opportunity by God to cooperate with His offer of salvation. That is, the relevant moment for the sinner needs to be *subsequent* to God's decision to give sufficient grace to the sinner, but before we know whether God gives that sinner efficacious grace or not.

So, the story of sin can be filled in like this: God does not take away or impede my normally-functioning capacities for choice when I sin, *nor does He take away the power He has given me to avoid sinning, i.e., sufficient grace*. This is because God merely knows that I inevitably will *reject His offer of help, the sufficient grace to avoid sinning, and so that I would always commit sin without His help (in all, or all relevant, modal worlds³⁶)*. Then, God is under no obligation to save me from myself, *from what He knows I would do with that sufficient grace*, and so Him leaving me without efficacious grace does not make Him responsible for my sins. But this is to

say that there are truths about what I would do *subsequent* to God's offer of sufficient grace, but *prior* to His decision to give efficacious grace or withhold it. And these truths are not merely truths relevant to Catholic doctrines of grace or original sin, where it *would* be inevitable that I commit sin without God's help, but in the context of God's having made an offer of help, i.e., sufficient grace, and so a different context where it is no longer inevitable that I commit sin.

Notice that the doctrine of original sin does *not* claim that I will inevitably sin even after being offered sufficient grace to avoid sin. Instead, it seems plausible that, if sufficient grace is a power, then, subsequent to being given sufficient grace, there are possible worlds where I do not sin. For example, if God chooses to give me efficacious grace as well as sufficient grace, then there is a world where I choose to cooperate with that sufficient grace and actually avoid sinning, and it is false that I inevitably sin after being given sufficient grace. The problem is Banezianism by itself can only support such a claim that God knows that I would inevitably sin, after being given sufficient grace, with the proviso that, *if God did not grant the creature efficacious grace*, we know with certainty that the creature can do no good and would sin without that efficacious help.³⁷ But that's not ultimately to the point. The Manoeuvre needs it to be true, prior to or independent of whether God has chosen to give me efficacious grace, that it is always the case that I will inevitably use God's sufficient grace badly, in order to argue that God is under no obligation to save me from what I *would have done* if God had not intervened. But this is clearly a Molinist assumption, a counter-factual claim about what I would have done that is not made true by any decision of God's about whether to give efficacious grace or not.

Similarly, then, facts about my acts proceeding from my rational or volitional capacities are beside the point. Perhaps we might think that alternative possibilities are not required for freedom. A slide between lack of alternative possibilities for action and lack of responsibility is

not obviously justified, even on a libertarian account of freedom. The theological counter-example is obvious: God cannot sin, just as the saints in heaven cannot sin. It is conceivable that both are nevertheless free, even if they lack alternative possibilities that allow them to sin. Even if I lacked alternative possibilities, it might be the case that we have some theory that, as long as I was responsible for the possibilities I *did* have open to me, or was otherwise the ‘ultimate cause’ of my own acts (on some theory of what that requires), I can still be acting freely.³⁸ But this kind of theory is irrelevant for the Manoeuvre’s explanation as to how God is not responsible for sins.

The critical point is that God has to ‘merely know’ that I inevitably will reject His offer of help to avoid sin, in order to give sense to the claim that God *merely permits* that to occur – God is then under no obligation to save me from my own bad choices. But, if there are only truths about what I would do without God’s help *subsequent* to God making a decision to withhold efficacious grace, as Banezianism holds, then that my actions proceed properly from my intellectual or volitional faculties, or that I am the ultimate cause of my own actions (or whatever such theory we might hold in place of a requirement that I have alternative possibilities for action), would not *by itself* be enough to determine what I would or would not do in some such situation. We would need further facts about what God chooses to do, namely, whether God has chosen to give me efficacious grace or not, to say what I *would* do in these situations. However, the Manoeuvre is only explanatory if it can pose a clear distinction between God permitting and causing me to sin. And this apparently requires that we can know what I would do independent and prior to God’s decisions whether to give me efficacious grace or not.

c. The Dilemma for the Manoeuvre in a Nutshell

Clearly, Banezianism is *not* the view that God decides to give efficacious grace *after* sufficient grace because of an act of cooperation or rejection that I perform independent of his decree, which He foresees me performing. Why then think that the Garrigou Manoeuvre requires that God know these Molinist-esque counter-factuals? The dilemma is that there is an instability in the Garrigou Manoeuvre between its explicit account of why God decides to give efficacious grace, where the view is clear in rejecting counter-factuals of freedom, and its claims about what *grounds* attributions of moral responsibility to the creature, subsequent to God's decision to give them efficacious grace.

Garrigou-Lagrange's version of the story of sin begins in eternity – God has from all eternity decreed that He permits me to sin, and knows that I will sin inevitably if He permits it, but has not thereby caused me to sin: “God foresees the sin and its beginning in His permissive decree . . . if God wills to permit the evil which He is not bound to prevent, that real [antecedent] power [to avoid sin] will never be reduced to act. Hence knowing His permissive decree, God infallibly recognized the deficiency, though He does not cause it.”³⁹ The idea is not that God first foresees my sin and *then* permits it; instead, the logical order is the other way around: God makes a decision to let me sin and *then* He foresees my (inevitable) actual sin. Yet, Garrigou-Lagrange tries to draw a distinction between causally intervening and refraining from causally intervening. As God is not affecting my normally-functioning capacities, He recognizes that His refraining from intervening makes it true that I will sin, before I have done anything to which God might be responding and without God having a reason to deny me this intervention. God has not *made* me sin in any casual sense – Garrigou-Lagrange argues – but only *permitted* me to do so.

Consider what happens to the Manoeuvre when we try to remove these counter-factuals from Garrigou-Lagrange's explanation. Banezianism holds that there are no counter-factuals of freedom – God's causality is precisely what makes it that I act a certain way, so that without God's decision there are no truths about what I would do. If there are no truths about what I would do in the event that God gave me merely sufficient grace (i.e., what I *would* do under the influence of God's sufficient grace logically prior to or independent of God's decision to give efficacious grace or withhold it from me) then the whole account of God's *permitting* me to act on my own powers, and so be responsible for my own sinful acts *sans* efficacious grace, becomes unintelligible. Similarly, the language of God *not intervening* in the normal or ordinary course of my actions seems to presume that there *is* some such 'course' my actions would take if He had not intervened.

It seems reasonable to think there are *some* grounds for God to know that I *would* do something, prior to and independent of His efficacious grace, in order for the Manoeuvre to be able to make the relevant distinctions. If I have no possibilities for acting otherwise except logically subsequent to God's decision to give efficacious grace to me at some time (or not), then the Garrigou Manoeuvre's story of sin is false. God's permission for my sin, not giving me efficacious grace, is what makes it true that I will commit sin, in all such possible worlds, and there is no relevant distinction between God 'causing' and God 'permitting' me to sin by choosing to withhold efficacious grace. Consequently, it would *not* have been true that I would have sinned if God had not intervened, because there were no such truths about what I would have done prior to God choosing to intervene or not. God's decision not to give me efficacious grace is what made it true that I would sin. It then seems fairly clear that God's decision is what restricts my alternative possibilities in such a way that I cannot perform any supernatural act – it

is not a moral dilemma such as those that I might enter by my own poor choices, but a dilemma that God causes me to be in, a situation where it becomes impossible for me to fulfill God's commandments.

But this sets up the dilemma for the view. On one fork, Garrigou-Lagrange and O'Neil argue that I am responsible for my sins because it was true that I was going to sin, even prior to and logically independent of God's choice not to give me efficacious grace, and so He is under no obligation to save me from myself. The Garrigou Manoeuvre's story of sin would then claim that God merely knows that I will always freely choose to sin in all worlds where He gives me sufficient grace to avoid sinning, despite the fact that God had given me sufficient grace so that I had non-sinful alternative possibilities open to me. But if there are counter-factuals of freedom, such as those of what I would do prior to God's decision to give me grace, Molinism would be true and Banezianism false. Thus, on this fork, Banezianism is vindicated as non-compatibilist, but at the price of holding that there are counter-factuals of freedom – and so at the price of making the Manoeuvre inconsistent, because it would entail the falsity of Banezian claims that there are no counter-factuals of freedom.

On the other fork, the Banezian needs to rescue the claims about what I can do, but without appeal to counter-factuals of freedom. We should first note that the Manoeuvre fails to meet Garrigou-Lagrange and O'Neil's own standard that God can only hold me responsible for my sin if there were a set of relevant alternative possibilities (or, some possible world) such that it is open to me to avoid sinning. If it were true that there are no counter-factuals of freedom, then God's decision to withhold efficacious grace from me is what *makes* it impossible for me to do anything other than sin, because God's decision cuts off all relevant alternative possibilities where I do not sin. I will inevitably sin, and there are no alternative possibilities open to me, in

all those worlds where God does not give me efficacious grace. But, by their own apparent account, the facts about my volitional or intellectual faculties, plus God's sufficient grace given to me, are not enough by themselves to ground the existence of even one possible world where I can avoid sin. On this reading, where the Garrigou Manoeuvre would require alternative possibilities, it would appear flatly *false* that I can resist God's grace insofar as there is no possible world where I do.

As noted, however, there is an extensive contemporary literature, sparked by Harry Frankfurt, arguing that alternative possibilities are not required for freedom or moral responsibility.⁴⁰ I have suggested that we can make the Manoeuvre more consistent by rejecting (O'Neil and Garrigou-Lagrange's own) appeal to alternative possibilities, instead holding that all we need for freedom or moral responsibility is that free actions proceed from a creature's own intellect and will. On this reading, even though it is true that there are no possible worlds where I do not sin, logically subsequent to God's permission of my sin, I am still responsible for any sins I commit in virtue of having a properly functioning intellect and will. Unlike the cases envisioned by libertarian deniers of the principle of alternative possibilities, I was arguably not the ultimate cause of the restricted set of alternative possibilities that I find myself in when God chooses from eternity to withhold efficacious grace from me.⁴¹ When there are only sinful possibilities open to me, and I would find it unthinkable or undesirable to do anything *but* sin, I did not put myself in this position. Instead, it would appear that God was the one who put me in this position by choosing to withhold efficacious grace from me from eternity. Even if my decision proceeded from my intellect and will, the Banezian account of divine causality appears precisely to undercut the claim that I am the ultimate source or cause of my decisions.

Consequently, the situation here puts the Garrigou Manoeuvre in the neighborhood of other kinds of (what is called) *source compatibilism* in recent literature, rather than the libertarian deniers of the alternative possibilities.⁴² Obviously, the theological compatibilist wing of Banezianism would embrace this position; even if God restricts my possibilities from eternity, making it the case that there is no possible world where I avoid sinning, it is nevertheless true that I am responsible for my acts of sin because they proceed, e.g., properly from my own faculties (insert here another preferred account of what is required for responsibility). Unlike typical source compatibilists, the Garrigou Manoeuvre needs to account for how God's sufficient grace figures in me having the power to avoid sin, in addition to my faculties. The Catholic doctrine of grace requires that, even if my intellect and will function appropriately, I would not have even been able to desire God's grace without His grace already working in me. On this compatibilist reading, then, to say that God is 'permitting' me to sin is meaningful because He has not interfered with the normal function of my faculties, acting under sufficient grace. The Garrigou Manoeuvre also goes beyond typical source compatibilism because it requires God's efficacious grace to be an instance where God is *casually intervening* in the normal operation of those faculties, and where this is compatible with my freedom. Individuating how God's intervention is nevertheless part of or compatible with the proper operation of my own faculties will be tricky.

Those difficulties might not be insuperable, but another is. As noted earlier, the Banezian compatibilist holds that facts about my will, intellect, and God's sufficient grace do not entail that there is any possible world where I can avoid sin, nor that these things would entail that there is a possible world where I can resist grace when I am acting under efficacious grace. What, then, could account for me having such a power either to avoid sinning or to resist God's

efficacious grace? Namely, because I acted from the right process or faculties, operating under sufficient grace. However, a typical way for those compatibilists who appeal to a right or proper process or faculty to individuate the ‘right’ kind of responsiveness required for freedom is through a *modal characterization* of such processes or faculties. Possession of the relevant intellectual and volitional faculties is not enough, for example, for me to be responding to moral reasons or acting on reasons. A sleeping person has these faculties, but his/her actions (e.g., falling out of bed) do not properly proceed from those faculties, as the agent was not responding to reasons in so acting. Instead, the typical construction is that to be responsive to reasons involves *sensitivity* to those reasons. As McKenna puts it, “Different reasons, understood as different inputs, would have yielded different outputs, understood as alterations in modes of conduct. And what this shows is that the agent’s response to the actual ‘inputs’ played a role that was itself sensitive to, or responsive to, the actual conditions in which the agent acted.”⁴³

The Banezian compatibilist cannot appeal to a modal characterization of faculties in this way, because there are no possible worlds where I can avoid sin, if God chooses to withhold efficacious grace, just as there is no possible world where I can resist grace when He decides to give me efficacious grace. In such cases, I am modally sensitive *not* to the reasons for me to act, but rather my acts are sensitive *only* to God’s choices. And other compatibilist strategies by appealing to the mechanism by which I acted – my faculties plus sufficient grace – as reasons-responsive are unhelpful for the same reason: that mechanism is *not* responsive to reasons, but is modally sensitive only to God’s choices.⁴⁴ The compatibilist Banezian might also try to argue that my faculties are like ‘masked’ or ‘finked’ dispositions, where some extraneous factor prevents the manifestation of the power. For instance, salt has the power to be soluble (say, on account either of its chemical microstructure or its essence) but this power will not manifest, i.e.,

is ‘masked’, if that salt is encased in wax.⁴⁵ In the same way, although my faculties plus sufficient grace are such that I have the ability to avoid sin in virtue of being able to act on these faculties, I can never manifest this power without God’s efficacious grace.⁴⁶

In all these cases (as with Frankfurt counter-examples), the question is whether I had the power to have chosen or done differently *under the circumstances*, where the relevant circumstances are either prior to and independent of God’s efficacious grace (in avoiding sin), or subsequent to efficacious grace (in resisting grace).⁴⁷ In neither case, though, can the Banezian compatibilist account for why possessing and acting on my intellectual/volitional faculties (even elevated by God’s sufficient grace) allows for me to have the power to do otherwise, given the barren modal landscape – *every* possible world under either relevant set of circumstances has only one set of possibilities. So, none of the options look good for the Banezian compatibilist to defend the Garrigou Manoeuvre.

d. Conclusion

All that seems left to the compatibilist Banezian is to hold that such a power to do otherwise is a brute fact, following upon me possessing certain intellectual/volitional capacities and sufficient grace. But this would be to abandon the Manoeuvre, in essence, because the brutality of the explanation ramifies upwards and undermines its coherence: to say that my power to do otherwise is a brute fact undermines any *ground* for distinguishing what it means for God to permit, rather than to cause me, to sin. (Ironically, too, it would mirror the traditional way that Molinists have sometimes responded to their own grounding objection.) For this reason, I conclude that the Garrigou Manoeuvre is hopeless without Molinist counter-factuals of freedom. Is all hopeless for Banez and his disciples, even if hopeless for Garrigou? Not at all. While I have

posed a serious problem for all varieties of Banezian theories of God's grace, and even if the Garrigou Manoeuvre fails to show how Banezianism is not incoherent, there remain alternative possibilities open to Banezians.

Even if it were true that grace is intrinsically efficacious in the way the Banezian envisions, and that God chooses from eternity to give efficacious graces only to a subset of all creatures, what is needed is some way that God can be responsive to His creatures, without undermining God's causal priority, so that, when God permits His creatures to sin, this need not doom them to modal worlds where sin is inevitable. The Banezian cannot appeal to the counter-factuals of freedom proposed by Molinism as what makes God's choices about giving efficacious grace responsive to human freedom. Yet there remains logical space in which the Banezian might avoid the apparently compatibilist conclusions of their way of understanding God's causality. In particular, there is no reason that the Banezian must be a source compatibilist, even if they are driven to deny the principle of alternative possibilities. It is often assumed that God's sovereignty over free will, on the Banezian theory of divine causality, requires that God is totally unresponsive to creaturely freedom. Yet, if the Banezian can appeal to *how* God makes a choice to give efficacious grace as accounting for the way in which a creature retains the ability to resist God's grace or avoid sin, there are potential routes for resolving the uniquely Banezian grounding problem. But I will leave that exploration for a future paper.

Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum), Rome, Italy

REFERENCES

- Anfray, Jean-Pascal, "Molina and John Duns Scotus," in *Companion to Luis de Molina*, edited by Matthis Kaufmann & Alexander Aichele (Boston: Brill, 2014): 325-364.
- Clarke, Randolph, "Dispositions, Abilities to Act, and Free Will," *Mind* 118 (2009): 323-351.
- Cowan, Steven B., "The Grounding Objection to Middle Knowledge Revisited," *Religious Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (Mar., 2003): 93-102.
- Craig, William, "Middle Knowledge, Truth-Makers, and the 'Grounding Objection'," *Faith and Philosophy* 18 (2001): 337-352.
- Davies, Brian. *The Reality of God and the Problem of Evil*. London: Continuum Books, 2006.
- Davison, Scott A., "Craig on the Grounding Objection to Middle Knowledge," *Faith and Philosophy*, Vol. 21: Is. 3 (2004): <https://doi.org/10.5840/faithphil200421333>.
- Denzinger, Heinrich; Hünermann, Peter; et al., eds. *Sources of Catholic Dogma*, 30th edition. Trans. Roy Deferrari. Fitzwilliam, NH: Loretto Publications, 1954.
- Diem, William, "Why not to be a 'Thomist'," in *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Apr. 2020): 191-218.
- Fischer, John Martin and Ravizza, Mark, *Responsibility and Control*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Fischer, John Martin, "Van Inwagen on Free Will," *Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 36, No. 143 (Apr. 1986): 252-260.
- Flint, Thomas, *Divine Providence*, Cornell Studies in the Philosophy of Religion. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998.
- Frankfurt, Harry, "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility," *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 66, No. 23. (Dec. 4, 1969): 829-839.
- Garrigou-Lagrange, Reginald, *Grace: Commentary on the Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas IaIIae, q. 109-14*, Trans. Dominican Nuns of Corpus Christi Monastery, Menlo Park. St Louis: Herder, 1952.
- Garrigou-Lagrange, Reginald, *Predestination*. Trans. Bede Rose. St Louis and London: B. Herder Book Co., 1939.
- Grant, W Matthews, "Aquinas on How God Causes the Act of Sin without Causing Sin Itself," *Thomist* 73 (2009): 455-496.
- Grant, W Matthews. "Can a Libertarian Hold that Our Free Acts are Caused by God?" *Faith and Philosophy*, Vol. 27, Is. 1 (Jan. 2010): 22-44.

- Koons, Robert, "Dual Agency: A Thomistic Account of Providence and Human Freedom," *Philosophia Christi* 4 (2002): 397-410.
- Lewis, David, "Finkish Dispositions," *Philosophical Quarterly* 47 (1997): 143-158
- Lonergan, Bernard, *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000.
- Long, Stephen, "St. Thomas Aquinas, Divine Causality, and the Mystery of Predestination," in *Thomism & Predestination*, eds. Long, Nutt, and White (Ave Maria, FL: Sapientia Press, 2018), 51-76.
- Long, Stephen, *Natura Pura*. Fordham University Press, 2010.
- Loughran, Thomas J., "Aquinas, Compatibilist," in *Human and Divine Agency: Anglican, Catholic, and Lutheran Perspectives*, eds. F. Michael McLain and W. Mark Richardson (New York: University Press of America, Inc., 1999), 1-39.
- MacDonald, Scott, "Aquinas's Libertarian Account of Free Choice," *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 52, no. 204 (June 1998): 309-328.
- Martin, CB, "Dispositions and Conditionals," *Philosophical Quarterly* 44 (1994): 1-8.
- McKenna, Michael, "Frankfurt's Argument against Alternative Possibilities," in *Nous* 42:4 (2008): 770-793.
- McKenna, Michael, "Reasons-Responsiveness, Agents, and Mechanisms," in *Oxford Studies in Agency and Responsibility*, ed. David Shoemaker, Vol. 1 (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013): 151-184.
- O'Neil, Taylor Patrick, *Grace, Predestination, and the Permission of Sin: A Thomistic Analysis* [GP]. Washington, DC: CUA Press, 2019.
- Osborne, Jr., Thomas M., "Thomist Premotion and Contemporary Philosophy of Religion," *Nova et Vetera* (English edn) 4 (2006): 607-632.
- Rooney, James Dominic, "Why All Classical Theists Should Believe in Physical Promotions, But It Doesn't Really Matter (For Freedom)" in *International Journal for the Philosophy of Religion* (Feb. 2020): <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11153-020-09745-z>.
- Rota, Michael, "Synchronic contingency and the problem of freedom and foreknowledge," in *Faith and Philosophy*, Vol. 32, Is. 1 (2015): 81-96.
- Shanley, Brian, "Beyond Libertarianism and Compatibilism," in *Freedom and the Human Person*, ed. Richard Velkley. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2007.
- Spencer, Mark, "Divine Causality and Created Freedom," *Nova et Vetera*, English Edition, Vol. 14, No. 3 (2016): 919-963.

Stump, Eleonore and Kretzmann, Norman, "Eternity," in *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 78, No. 8 (Aug., 1981): 429-458.

Stump, Eleonore, "Alternative Possibilities and Moral Responsibility: The Flicker of Freedom," in *The Journal of Ethics*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (1999): 299-324.

Stump, Eleonore, *Aquinas*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

Torrijos-Castrillejo, David, "Was Báñez a Bañecian?" in *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 94, No. 3 (2020): 431-458. <https://doi.org/10.5840/acpq2020943204>

van Inwagen, Peter, "Ability and Responsibility," *The Philosophical Review*, LXXXVII, No. 2 (Apr. 1978): 201-224.

Wallace, R. Jay, *Responsibility and the Moral Sentiments*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998.

NOTES

¹ This ignorance of the Banezian position was noted by Thomas M. Osborne, Jr, "Thomist Premotion and Contemporary Philosophy of Religion," *Nova et Vetera* (English edn) 4 (2006): 607–32. However, there is a slew of recent work on the topic, defending the broadly Thomistic/Banezian position on grace and freedom, even if a revisionary version: David Torrijos-Castrillejo compiled an extensive list of such defenders in his recent, "Was Báñez a Bañecian?" in *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 94, No. 3 (2020): 431, fn. 1. Many of these defenses, however, end up defending the Garrigou-Lagrange version that I criticize here. By contrast, see Mark Spencer, "Divine Causality and Created Freedom," *Nova et Vetera*, English Edition, Vol. 14, No. 3 (2016): 919-963.

² Heinrich Denzinger; Hünermann, Peter; et al., eds. *Sources of Catholic Dogma*, 30th edition, trans. Roy Deferrari (Fitzwilliam, NH: Loretto Publications, 1954), n. 180 [Canon 7 of the Second Council of Orange].

³ Denzinger, n. 1093 [Condemned proposition of Jansen]: "The Semipelagians admitted the necessity of a prevenient interior grace for each act, even for the beginning of faith; and in this they were heretics, because they wished this grace to be such that the human will could either resist or obey." But there are many such parallel dogmatic claims: e.g., in the same decree against Jansen, the proposition is condemned as heretical: "In the state of fallen nature one never resists interior grace"; see further Denzinger, n. 814, n. 797, n. 1363.

⁴ In this paper, my examples are concerned with human persons, but it is generally understood that these claims are also applicable to any free creature, e.g., *angelic* persons as well as human persons. I use 'creature' to indefinitely refer to any such free person.

⁵ See Spencer, 924-925.

⁶ For example: Brian Shanley, "Beyond Libertarianism and Compatibilism," in *Freedom and the Human Person*, ed. Richard Velkley (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2007); Thomas J. Loughran, "Aquinas, Compatibilist," in *Human and Divine Agency: Anglican, Catholic, and Lutheran Perspectives*, edited by F. Michael McLain and W. Mark Richardson (New York: University Press of America, Inc., 1999), 1-39; Scott MacDonald, "Aquinas's Libertarian Account of Free Choice," *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 52, no. 204 (June 1998): 309-328.

⁷ C.f., Stephen Long, *Natura Pura* (Fordham University Press, 2010), esp. 3, 38-41.

⁸ See Thomas Flint, *Divine Providence*, Cornell Studies in the Philosophy of Religion (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), esp. 123. There is a significant literature on the 'grounding objection' to Molinism. For some of the dialectic: William Craig, "Middle Knowledge, Truth-Makers, and the 'Grounding Objection'," *Faith and Philosophy* 18 (2001): 337-352; Steven B. Cowan, "The Grounding Objection to Middle Knowledge Revisited," *Religious Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (Mar., 2003): 93-102; Scott A. Davison, "Craig on the Grounding Objection to Middle Knowledge," *Faith and Philosophy*, Vol. 21: Is. 3 (2004): <https://doi.org/10.5840/faithphil200421333>.

⁹ For example, Long himself accepts that a human being retains a conditional ability to resist grace, even though one never actually would do so; see his "St. Thomas Aquinas, Divine Causality, and the Mystery of Predestination," in *Thomism & Predestination*, eds. Long, Nutt, and White (Ave Maria, FL: Sapientia Press, 2018), 66.

¹⁰ This explanation as to why Banezianism does not entail compatibilism is primarily found in Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange's two works on the subject, *Grace: Commentary on the Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas IaIIae, q. 109–14*, trans. Dominican Nuns of Corpus Christi Monastery, Menlo Park (St Louis: Herder, 1952), and *Predestination*, trans. Bede Rose (St Louis and London: B. Herder Book Co., 1939), but he is largely presenting and expanding on the work of other Thomists, including notably Carolus Renatus Billuart and Joanne Baptista Gonet.

¹¹ Taylor Patrick O'Neil, *Grace, Predestination, and the Permission of Sin: A Thomistic Analysis* [hereafter, GP] (Washington, DC: CUA Press, 2019).

¹² Clearly, everyone on the Banezian side agrees that God is causally involved in producing every creaturely act. But I do not enter into the question here whether God needs to move the will immediately to do something naturally good, and I bracket how to differentiate further supernatural from natural good acts. The tradition had numerous ways of resolving the question, but it is not important for my purposes here. In another paper, I have defended the position that God does not immediately cause a special pre-motion for every natural act of a human being, and that He does so only for each *supernatural* act, but I cannot give my argument for that position here; see my "Why All Classical Theists Should Believe in Physical Pre-motions, But It Doesn't Really Matter (For Freedom)" in *International Journal for the Philosophy of Religion* (Feb. 2020): <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11153-020-09745-z>.

¹³ This definition of efficacious grace is clearly from a Banezian point of view, and I'm not presuming that the Molinist characterization of efficacious grace would be incoherent.

¹⁴ W Matthews Grant argues that this is compatible with libertarian claims about freedom, "Can a Libertarian Hold that Our Free Acts are Caused by God?" *Faith and Philosophy*, Vol. 27, Is. 1 (Jan. 2010): 22-44; "Aquinas on How God Causes the Act of Sin without Causing Sin Itself," *Thomist* 73 (2009): 455-496. See also Robert Koons, "Dual Agency: A Thomistic Account of Providence and Human Freedom," *Philosophia Christi* 4 (2002): 397-410.

¹⁵ O'Neil gives a clear overview of the evidence that Aquinas held the central Banezian claims: GP, 13-67.

¹⁶ Perhaps to be mentioned in connection with the metaphysics was Bernard Lonergan's work that took to task the Banezian interpretation of the relation between a causal power and its manifestation: Bernard Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

¹⁷ O'Neil, GP, 1-2.

¹⁸ He would be unjust, we might think, because God sends people to eternal torment and punishes them for eternity merely on a whim.

¹⁹ Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *Grace*, 223.

²⁰ Garrigou-Lagrange, *Grace*, 260.

²¹ O'Neil, GP, 124-125.

²² O'Neil, GP, 130.

²³ O'Neil, GP, 278.

²⁴ O'Neil, GP, 278.

²⁵ O'Neil, GP, 281.

²⁶ Brian Davies, *The Reality of God and the Problem of Evil* (London: Continuum Books, 2006), 60.

²⁷ See Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann, "Eternity," in *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 78, No. 8 (Aug., 1981): 429-458.

²⁸ According to Aquinas, God would not have become incarnate (or we can't know whether He would have done so) if original sin had never occurred; c.f., *Summa Theologiae* III, q. 1, a. 3.

²⁹ A distinction between two senses of possibility, the *sensus compositus/sensus divisus*, was significant in the historical Banezian/Molinism debates, with Banez giving a complicated account of alternative possibilities on the basis of this distinction. In short, the view was that a person only can, in fact, act in one determinate way (choosing A or B but not both at the same time), and this was the (composite) sense in which, if God grace grants efficacious grace to a person, they only actually cooperate with God. But the Banezian argued that in a different (viz. the divided) sense, even at that moment when they actually cooperated with God's grace, that person could have done otherwise. It is helpful to point out that John Duns Scotus also analyzes freedom with appeal to a similar distinction, as explained in detail by Jean-Pascal Anfray, "Molina and John Duns Scotus," in *Companion to Luis de Molina*, edited by Matthis Kaufmann & Alexander Aichele (Boston: Brill, 2014), esp. 330-353. Further, such a distinction has further been defended by contemporary philosophers as well: see, for example, Michael Rota, "Synchronic contingency and the problem of freedom and foreknowledge," in *Faith and Philosophy*, Vol. 32, Is. 1 (2015): 81-96.

³⁰ O'Neil, GP, 282.

³¹ This is to say, in other words, that these claims about capacities are supposed to ground the truth of the assertions that I could do otherwise *in the divided sense* (i.e., at the moment I am acting under efficacious grace).

³² Denzinger, n. 787-792.

³³ See Denzinger, n. 180.

³⁴ The heresy of Janenism led to a condemnation of the position that not all were given sufficient grace. In *Cum Occasione*, the papal bull condemning propositions attributed to Cornelius Jansen, the following proposition is condemned: "Some of God's precepts are impossible to the just, who wish and strive to keep them, according to the present powers which they have; the grace, by which they are made possible, is also wanting" (Denzinger, n. 1092).

³⁵ C.f., O'Neil, GP, 78-81.

³⁶ The qualification involving 'modal worlds' is intended to leave the Banezian room to choose between these claims; it is not a claim that God knows a disjunctive fact.

³⁷ Notice that my analysis differs from other authors who criticize Garrigou-Lagrange on this count. E.g., Diem argues that one could only know that I would inevitably sin absent God's efficacious grace if human nature were determined to evil; William Diem, "Why not to be a 'Thomist'," in *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Apr. 2020): 191-218, esp. 209.

³⁸ Eleonore Stump has argued that, in cases such as those described, one does not need alternative possibilities to be free; "Alternative Possibilities and Moral Responsibility: The Flicker of Freedom," in *The Journal of Ethics*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (1999): 299-324. See also Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 278. And Aquinas' claim that God has free will in *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 19, a. 10 entails (as in his ad. 2) that the ability to sin is not essential to free will.

³⁹ Garrigou-Lagrange, *Grace*, 228.

⁴⁰ The literature is voluminous. The debate was begun with Harry Frankfurt, "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility," *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 66, No. 23. (Dec. 4, 1969): 829-839. Peter van Inwagen replied with his, "Ability and Responsibility," *The Philosophical Review*, LXXXVII, No. 2 (Apr. 1978): 201-224. Later, a significant response to Van Inwagen was proposed by John Martin Fischer, who argued that Van Inwagen's account was not sufficiently robust; "Van Inwagen on Free Will," *Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 36, No. 143 (Apr. 1986): 252-260.

⁴¹ Stump, "Alternative Possibilities and Moral Responsibility: Beyond the Flicker of Freedom," op. cit.: "But in all these cases, we can suppose, the agent is the ultimate source of her action. The ultimate cause of her action is found in her intellect and will; she does what she does only because of her own beliefs and desires, and there is no other cause of what she does. She is therefore ultimately responsible for what she does. Nonetheless, it isn't necessary for her to have ultimate responsibility that she have alternative possibilities available to her. Her intellect and will might be such that all options but one are unthinkable for her" (324).

⁴² Among those who have called for a move beyond Frankfurt-style counter-examples to the 'principle of alternate possibilities,' Michael McKenna, for example, has argued that any kind of freedom compatible with the examples is not robust enough to attribute moral responsibility; see "Frankfurt's Argument against Alternative Possibilities," in *Nous* 42:4 (2008): 770-793. R. Jay Wallace proposed an account in *Responsibility and the Moral Sentiments* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), where moral responsibility involves an agent having capacities for moral understanding and reflective self-control. McKenna, too, argues that freedom requires being properly responsive to reasons for action, even when the agent cannot do otherwise, but proposes important modifications on Fischer's position; "Reasons-Responsiveness, Agents, and Mechanisms," in *Oxford Studies in Agency and Responsibility*, ed. David Shoemaker, Vol. 1 (New York, NY: OUP, 2013): 151-184.

⁴³ McKenna, "Reasons-Responsiveness, Agents, and Mechanism," 154.

⁴⁴ E.g., John Martin Fischer and Mark Ravizza, *Responsibility and Control* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 38.

⁴⁵ David Lewis, "Finkish Dispositions," *Philosophical Quarterly* 47 (1997): 143-158; CB Martin, "Dispositions and Conditionals," *Philosophical Quarterly* 44 (1994): 1-8.

⁴⁶ My ability to avoid sin is 'masked' by the circumstances of God permitting me to sin, just like my faculty to resist God's grace is 'finked' by God's causal intervention in efficacious grace.

⁴⁷ See the discussion in Randolph Clarke, "Dispositions, Abilities to Act, and Free Will," *Mind* 118 (2009): 323-351.