Chapter 5

Molina on Foreknowledge and Transfer of Necessities

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5.1 Introduction

In disputation 52 of part IV of his *Concordia*, Luis de Molina reconstructs, and rejects, seven arguments against the compatibility of divine omniscience with human freedom. Let us call the position of Molina's opponent 'theological incompatibilism' and its negation 'theological compatibilism'. The second argument Molina considers is widely regarded as one of the most powerful objections to theological compatibilism. Molina closely follows Aquinas's exposition of the problem (STh I, q. 14, a. 8) but offers his own, original solution. This solution, I believe, contains one of the most insightful and systematically promising ideas developed in the *Concordia*. In fact, it anticipates an argument about causal determination and moral responsibility that has recently reentered the philosophical stage and is hotly debated in the contemporary free will literature. Molina's reconstruction of his opponent's reasoning is couched in terms of 'absolute necessity':

![Quote A](image)

2 Disp. 52, 3, pp. 337–8/pp. 164–5. *Si conditionalis aliquas est vera et eius antecedens est absolute necessarium, consequens est etiam absolute necessarium; alioquin in bona consequentia esse posset antecedens verum et consequens falsum, quod nulla ratione est admittendum. Sed haec conditionis est vera: si Dei sciret hoc esse futurum, id ida eventur, alioquin*
Since all human actions and decisions are among the "future things" in question, this argument would demonstrate that unrestricted divine omniscience entails that no human action (or decision) is contingent. From this the critic concludes that no human action (or decision) is free.

This argument has a certain surface clarity. However, on closer inspection, some perplexing questions arise, both with respect to what exactly it states and to what Molina responds. A key question is whether the argument should be understood as maintaining that for every human action and decision God knew at any given prior point in time that it was going to occur; or that He enjoys eternal knowledge about all human actions and decisions, where 'eternal' is construed in an extratemporal sense. As we shall see, whether Molina offers a viable solution to the problem depends essentially on whether we opt for an intratemporal or an extratemporal reading. According to what I shall call the 'standard interpretation,' Molina adopts a temporal reading and rejects his opponent's argument because he rejects a modal closure principle about some temporal kind of necessity. Thus, Alfred Freddoso, and following him Linda Zagzebski, John Martin Fischer, and others, suggest that Molina rejects the above argument because he dismisses the view that so-called 'accidental necessity' is closed under entailment. Roughly, accidental necessity is a time-relative kind of necessity that pertains to states of affairs that are already past and thus 'over and done with.' If a state of affairs is accidentally necessary, no one can affect it anymore. However, under that interpretation, I shall argue, Molina's attempt to refute the argument presented in quote A fails. Moreover, Molina shares the Thomistic view that God's mode of existence is timeless eternity. In this respect, he is strongly committed to the Augustine-Boethius-Aquinas tradition. Strictly speaking, Molina's official position thus does not allow God to be described as having knowledge at certain times. Instead, the sentence 'God scintia Deo esset falsa; et antecedens est absoluta necessarium, tum quia aeterrm, tum etiam quia praetertum et ad praetertum non est potentia. Ergo consequens erit etiam absolutum necessarium ac praeinde nullum futurum praecipitum a Deo erit contingens.' Here and in what follows the English translation follows Freddoso's (in FREDDOSO, Molina: On Divine Foreknowledge [1988]), with page references, in this order, to Rabeneck's Latin edition and Freddoso's translation.

FISCHER, Molinism [2008].

Though FISCHER, Molinism [2008] does not seem to question Freddoso's interpretation of Molina on this topic, he presents an extensive critique of Freddoso's Molinism, the core of which is that the account does not provide a solution to the foreknowledge dilemma, but presupposes that divine omniscience is compatible with human freedom. I think that Fischer is right here. After all, the very notion of divine middle knowledge, as Molina construes it, comprises God's knowledge as to what every possible human creature would freely do in any possible situation. In what follows, I argue that Molina successfully defends the coherence of that notion by rejecting a certain modal closure principle.

5.2 The argument from absolute necessity

Let us begin with some of the more obvious features of the argument presented in quote A. (i) Molina invokes the familiar distinction between absolute and hypothetical necessity. The consequent of a conditional is 'hypothetically necessary' iff, assuming the antecedent holds, it is impossible for the consequent not to obtain; the consequent is necessary only on the hypothesis that the antecedent is true. A proposition or state of affairs is 'absolutely necessary,' by contrast, if the necessity operator operates unconditionally on the proposition or state of affairs in question. For example, although it is not absolutely necessary that Adam existed (for he might not have existed), it is necessary in the hypothetical sense that, if someone knew at a given time before Adam existed that Adam would exist, Adam would exist. Sometimes Molina makes a related point by employing the distinction between necessitas in sensu diviso and necessitas in sensu composito, or the distinction between necessitas consequentiae and necessitas consequentis. The statement 'Whatever God knows must (necessarily) obtain' is ambiguous. It is true if the whole conditional falls within the scope of the necessity operator. Otherwise, Molina argues, i.e., if the necessity in question is taken in sensu diviso, or as a necessitas consequentis, the statement is false. (Not every proposition God knows is a necessary proposition).8

(ii) At first blush, one may nevertheless be tempted to reject the argument Molina reproduces in quote A as obviously misguided – and hence wonder why he takes it seriously at all. Thus, if we interpret the necessity operator as referring to metaphysical necessity and the phrases 'if a conditional is true' and 'valid consequence' as referring to material implication, the argument would employ the (false) modal principle: If necessarily p and p (materially) implies q, then necessarily q. However, Molina does not construe his opponent's reasoning in this way. He is thinking of an argument that is much harder to refute (if it can be refuted at all). This emerges

8 Cf., for example, Concordia, disp. 52, sect. 32, 35, 36.
9 A state of affairs is metaphysically necessary iff it obtains in every possible world.
from his response, as he presents it in sections 32-34 of disp. 52. There Molina explicitly says, first, that the conditional under consideration 'is necessary (because in the composed sense these two things cannot both obtain, namely that God foreknows something to be future and that the thing does not turn out that way).\(^{10}\) Molina construes the argument as assuming – correctly – that it is a conceptual truth that, if God knows that \(p\), then \(p\); he reads his opponent as maintaining that the conditional 'if God knows that \(p\), then \(p\) is necessarily true.' Second, as regards the 'absolute necessity' that allegedly transfers from the antecedent to the consequent of the conditional in question, it seems clear that what is under consideration is not metaphysical necessity. The fact that God 'foresaw' a given state of affairs (Adam's existing, Judas' betrayal of Christ, etc.) is metaphysically contingent. Had He chosen to actualize a different world, things would have gone differently, and consequently God would not have known what in fact He did know about what would happen. Molina, it seems, does not want to portray his opponent as (false)ly maintaining the contrary. Given these observations, the principle referred to in the first sentence of quote A appears to be of the following general form:

\[(P) \text{ If (i) it is necessary in some sense (which is not that of metaphysical necessity) that } p, \text{ and (ii) } p \text{ entails } q, \text{ then (iii) it is necessary in some sense (which is not that of metaphysical necessity) that } q; \text{ in short: } Np, C(p \Rightarrow q) \Rightarrow Nq\]

According to this view, what, if not metaphysical necessity, is at issue?

5.3 The standard interpretation

The distinction between 'absolute' and 'hypothetical' necessity is a purely syntactic distinction that does not tell us anything about the metaphysical nature of the modality thus characterized. However, Molina says that the antecedent of the critic's argument is absolutely necessary because, among other things, it is 'past-tense and there is no power over the past' (see quote A). This invites an interpretation in terms of the temporal necessity that Ockham and before him William of Sherwood dub 'accidental necessity' (henceforth for short: A-necessity). William of Sherwood writes:

That is accidentally necessary which neither now nor in the future can be false, but once might have been false. (\textit{Necessearium autem per accidens est, quod non potest nec poterit esse falsum, potuit tamen.})\(^{11}\)

The core idea here may be captured by saying that a true proposition (or state of affairs) \(p\) that is metaphysically contingent is A-necessary at \(t\) if it is beyond anyone's power at and after \(t\) so to act that \(p\) would not have been true. For example, that Caesar crossed the Rubicon on January 10, 49 B.C., is now A-necessary. The event

\(^{10}\) \textit{In sensu composito cohaerere non possunt ista duo, quod Deus aliquid praesciat futurum et illud non eo modo eveniat} (disp. sect. 34, p. 353/p. 189, my emphasis).

\(^{11}\) \textit{William of Sherwood, Introductions in logicam [1995], II, p. 34.}
it freely? The answer requires a somewhat more precise characterization of A-necessity. Let us say, again following Freddoso,15

\[(A\text{-Necessity}) \text{ A proposition } p \text{ is accidentally necessary at } t \text{ iff } p \text{ is (i) metaphysically contingent and (ii) true at } t \text{ and every moment after } t \text{ in every possible world that has the same history as our world at } t.\]

Thus understood, A-necessity entails that if \( p \) is A-necessary at \( t \) then no one has the power at or after \( t \) to contribute causally to anything that would render \( p \) false. Consider an instantiation of \( p \) that describes some human action. If that proposition is A-necessary at \( t \) then no one has the power at or after \( t \) so to act that \( p \) would have been false, i.e., no one - including the agent - has the power to see to it that the action in question is, or was, not performed. Premise (4) maintains that, if this is the case, the action is not performed freely. Hence (4) subscribes to the principle of alternate possibilities (PAP). PAP maintains, in its most prominent version, that an agent performs an action freely only if she could have done otherwise. A-necessity, however, rules out 'alternative possibilities control.'16 However, PAP is controversial. It may be questioned on the grounds of Harry-Frankfurt-style reasoning according to which actively does not require the agent to be able to do otherwise, but only that she sufficiently identify with the relevant desires.17

This is an initial potential weakness of Argument I. Those who like Frankfurt, John Martin Fischer and others reject PAP can immediately reject the above argument because it implicitly relies on PAP.

Molina, however, accepts that freedom requires alternative possibilities, and here I shall not pursue the question whether he is right on that issue. I will shortly discuss premise (1), but let us first consider the deduction of (3) from (1) and (2). What general rule, or principle, does that deduction rely upon? Deducing (3) from (1) and (2) would be licensed by an instantiation of (P), complemented by a time index, in which the necessity in question is construed as accidental necessity. That is, (3) would follow from (1) and (2) if the following principle were true:

\[(P^*) \text{ If it is A-necessary at } t \text{ that } p, \text{ and } p \text{ entails } q, \text{ then it is A-necessary at } t \text{ that } q.\]

According to Freddoso,18 Zagzebski,19 Fischer,20 and other commentators who follow Freddoso in this respect, Molina is discussing something like Argument I in the relevant passages of disp. 52 and rejects this argument because he rejects \((P^*)\). In support of this interpretation, these authors point to Molina's official response to the argument. Here is the relevant passage, from which we have already quoted, in toto:

Quote B:

In such a case, even if (i) the conditional is necessary (because in the composed sense these two things cannot both obtain, namely, that God foreknows something to be future and that the thing does not turn out that way), and even if (ii) the antecedent is necessary in the sense in question (because it is past tense and because no shadow of alteration can befall God), nonetheless the consequent can be purely contingent.21

At first sight, the wording of this passage does seem to support a reading of the argument Molina wishes to refute in terms of A-necessity, plus the idea that he attempts to do so by rejecting \((P^*)\). On closer inspection, however, a number of worries arise. (i) First, a notorious question is on what grounds Molina might dismiss the closure principle he regards as central to his opponent's argument. Perhaps the hardest problem for the above proposal is that there would not seem to be any good reason for rejecting \((P^*)\). If a proposition is now accidentally necessary since it can no longer be false, then any proposition it entails is accidentally necessary as well and can no longer be false either. If it is now accidentally necessary that Caesar crossed the Rubicon in 49 B.C., how could it now fail to be accidentally necessary that Caesar crossed a river in 49 B.C., or that he existed at that time? Given Molina's generally great logical competence, it is hard to believe that he should - mistakenly - reject the view that accidental necessity is closed under entailment. Freddoso notes this difficulty and argues that Molina must thus reject the above understanding of accidental necessity.22 However, perhaps Molina does not in fact deny that A-necessity is closed under entailment, because he does not construe the argument he wishes to refute in terms of A-necessary. This is the view that I shall argue for.

(ii) Another problem with the accidental-necessity interpretation is, as Zagzebski notes,23 that A-necessity is distinctive of the temporal asymmetry between past and future. Necessity per accidens pertains to past states of affairs. But then nothing is necessary per accidens at all moments of time. This should, Zagzebski warns us - correctly, I believe - immediately alert us to a problem with any argument for theological determinism that employs this notion of necessity. If the distinguishing feature of A-necessity is pastness, how could any future event be A-necessary?

(iii) Third, remember that one of the reasons Molina cites for the absolute necessity of the antecedent is that it is 'eternal' (see quote A). To be sure, in the Concordia, Molina frequently oscillates between portraying God and His cognitive and voluntary states as eternal, and using temporal language for describing these states. Moreover, Molina often does explicitly ascribe 'foreknowledge' (praescientia,
praecongittio) to God. However, as we have already seen, Molina’s official position is the Thomistic view that God’s mode of existence is extratemporal eternity. From the standpoint of extratemporalism, however, it is incorrect to maintain that He holds knowledge at certain points in time. Hence, when Molina slips into temporal lingo, he may best be interpreted as trying to say that God enjoys extratemporal knowledge of matters that only from an intratemporal point of view — only nostro intelligendi modo — can be described as past, present, or still coming to be. If this is true, then Molina could, and should, immediately reject premise (2) of Argument I. Molina should reject this premise since, according to his timeless view, God has no foreknowledge of anything, and none of His knowledge of metaphysically contingent states of affairs is necessary (in whatever sense) at any time. This observation, too, suggests that the accidental necessity interpretation of the argument Molina reproduces in quote A is not on target. Even though it may at first appear as if he is concerned with some kind of temporal necessity, on closer inspection this interpretation runs into trouble. What kind of modality then, if not accidental necessity, is at issue?

5.4 The ‘causal-impact argument’

The relevant kind of necessity that human agents may confront, I claim, is lack of power on their part to exert any causal influence on the necessary states of affairs in question. Call this kind of necessity ‘causal impact necessity’; for short: CI-necessity. Somewhat more precisely:

(CI-Necessity) A metaphysically contingent proposition or state of affairs p is CI-necessary for a given agent at t iff it is not within the agent’s power at t to contribute causally to something that constitutes, or grounds, a necessary or sufficient condition for p.

Every proposition that is A-necessary at t is also CI-necessary at t (for any subject); A-necessity entails CI-necessity. The converse however does not hold. That Caesar crossed the Rubicon in 49 B.C. is both A- and CI-necessary for us now. However, while, for example, the laws of nature are, for every human being at every time, CI-necessary, they are not, at any time, necessary per accidens. The reason why natural laws defy our causal influence is that they are past, and it is logically possible that they will change in the future.

Deploying the notion of CI-necessity puts us in a position to state what seems to be an undeniable requirement for an action to be free:

(RF) An agent performs an action freely at t only if it is not CI-necessary for him at t.

This is a moderate and very plausible condition. If an event is such that the agent has no causal influence whatever upon it, how should it qualify as a freely performed action? Indeed, many would say that in such a case it does not qualify as an action at all. Moreover, Molinists accept (RF). It is part of their doctrine, which was widely endorsed by medieval Aristotelians, that human agents must be ‘secondary causes’ of their freely performed actions. According to this view, the ‘primary cause’ of everything is God. Yet a human action is free only if the creaturely agent gives God’s ‘general concurrence’ that makes that action possible a particular direction by causally contributing to it as well. It follows that if t is CI-necessary for S that S do X, S does not do X freely.25 We can now formulate the critic’s reasoning against the compatibility of divine omniscience with human freedom in a way which, unlike Argument I, conforms to Molina’s theological extratemporalism and thus meets him on his own ground. Two versions of such an argument must however be distinguished. The first considers God’s knowledge about what actually happens in the actual world. Molina calls this kind of knowledge ‘free knowledge’ (scientia libera), because it depends on God’s free decision as to which world shall be actual. This knowledge occurs ‘postvolitionally’ in God, for even He can avail Himself of it only (logically) after the creative act of His will by which He has actualized the actual world. The second version of the critic’s argument concerns God’s comprehensive eternal knowledge about what would happen were He to actualize a certain world. This kind of knowledge, which Molina famously dubbed ‘middle knowledge’ (scientia media), occurs ‘prevolitionally’ in God, i.e., it occurs logically before He actualizes a certain world. In particular, in the Molinist model God’s middle knowledge comprises His knowledge what every possible free creature would freely do in every possible situation. I turn first to the anti-Molinist argument concerning God’s postvolitional free knowledge about actual human actions.

Suppose again that some agent S does X at T (for example, that Judas betrays Christ when Christ and the disciples are gathering in the Garden of Gethsemane). According to Molina’s official position God postvolitionally, but timelessly, knows that S does X at T. However, in Molina’s view God’s absolute sovereignty also entails that humans cannot exert any causal influence upon anything He knows. In section

25 For more on this topic, see for example FREDDOSO, Introduction [1988], pp. 16–8.
20 of disp. 52, for example, Molina discusses the views of the 'holy Fathers' on the topic. Consider divine foreknowledge, as it occurs in Christ, of Judas's betrayal. Molina reports that Justin Martyr, for example, does say that 'Christ is not a cause of the betrayal, but rather [that] the betrayal is a cause of the Lord's foreknowledge.' However, Molina explains, Justin does not use the term 'cause' here 'to stand for a real cause; for the things are not a cause of Christ's foreknowledge. Instead, what Justin really means, Molina argues, is the reason or explanation of why this foreknowledge exists. If God is a timelessly eternal being, there is in any case a good reason for denying that human beings can ever have any causal influence upon Him and His knowledge. How could anything that happens in the temporal world act as a cause, even a partial one, of something that happens outside time? These observations yield the first premise of our second argument:

**Argument II: the causal-impact argument regarding God’s extratemporal postvolitional knowledge about actual human actions**

1. At any time in S's life, it is CI-necessary for S that God know (postvolitionally, but from extratemporal eternity) that S does X at T.

However:

2. The fact that God knows (postvolitionally, but from extratemporal eternity) that S does X at T entails that S does X at T.

From (1) and (2) the theological incompatibilist infers that:

3. At any time in S's life, it is CI-necessary for S that she do X at T.

But from (3) it follows with our condition

**RF** An agent performs an action freely at t only if that action is not CI-necessary for her at t.

that:

4. S does not do X freely at T.

Like Argument I, Argument II can obviously be applied to any action performed by any human being we may consider. The key difference between the two arguments is that Argument II, unlike Argument I, does not ascribe to God knowledge at times, and that it does not rely on the notion of divine foreknowledge. Still, Argument II only concerns God's postvolitional knowledge of actual human actions. How does human freedom fare under God's prevolitional middle knowledge?

Given (RF), however, this conclusion contains a self-contradiction. (3) says that S, when put in C, freely does X yet has no causal influence whatever upon doing so. Yet (RF) rules out that an action on which the agent has no causal influence is free. Hence, with (RF) we can deduce the self-contradictory statement from (3) that:

5. S is not free in doing X freely when placed in C at T.

Here the critic can by analogous reasoning argue that, given (RF), the very notion of middle knowledge is not even coherent. Suppose once more that S, when placed in circumstance C at T, does X. For the reasons laid out above Molinists hold that:

**Argument III: the causal-impact argument regarding God’s extratemporal prevolitional middle knowledge**

1. At any time in S's life it is CI-necessary for S that God know (prevolitionally, and from extratemporal eternity) via middle knowledge that S, when placed in circumstance C at T, would freely do X.

2. God’s knowing (prevolitionally, and from extratemporal eternity) via middle knowledge that S, when placed in circumstance C at T, would freely do X, entails that S, if placed in C at T, freely does X.

3. Hence, it is CI-necessary for S that, when S is placed in C at T, S freely does X.

Given (RF), however, this conclusion contains a self-contradiction. (3) says that S, when put in C, freely does X yet has no causal influence whatever upon doing so. Yet (RF) rules out that an action on which the agent has no causal influence is free. Hence, with (RF) we can deduce the self-contradictory statement from (3) that:

4. S is not free in doing X freely when placed in C at T.

(4) is necessarily false. But (RF) is true (and part of the Molinist doctrine). (2) is true, and (3), Molina's opponent argues, follows from (1) and (2). If that is correct, then premise (1) is the culprit and Molina must give up the view that yields (1). That is, if Molina's opponent is correct, Molina must either give up the idea that divine knowledge is CI-necessary or abandon the claim that God enjoys middle knowledge. However, commitment to the view that everything concerning God is CI-necessary for every human being at any point in his life is one of the most fundamental doctrines of Molinist theology. Hence, the critic concludes, the Molinist should abandon the notion of middle knowledge.

What can Molina respond to this argument? And how could he counter Argument II? Although Argument II and Argument III differ in certain important respects, Molina can take them in one package. In neither version is (1) a candidate for rejection. Molina is deeply committed to the doctrine that God's mode of existence is extratemporal eternity and that He enjoys middle knowledge. He also emphasizes frequently that because of God's absolute sovereignty no creature can have any causal impact on what He knows. Premise (2), again in both arguments, cannot reasonably be rejected either and (4) does follow, again in Argument II and III, from the respective (3) and (RF). But what shall we say about the deduction, in both arguments, of the intermediate conclusion (3) from (1) and (2)? As in Argument I, in versions II and III the deduction of (3) relies on a certain closure or transfer principle. It is a structural cousin of (P*), the difference however being that it deals, not with A-, but with CI-necessity. The principle in question maintains that:

26. "Non Christus proditionis causa sit, sed proditio causa est Domini praeventiae. ... Non studet tamen causam pro vera causa, res nuncque non sunt causa praeventiae Christi ... sed loquitur de ratione, quare illa sit" (disp. 52, sect. 21, p. 348/p. 181)
(P**) If it is CI-necessary for a given subject at t that p, and p entails q, then it is CI-necessary for that subject at t that q.

The Molinist can reject both Argument II and III, I claim, because he can – rightly – dismiss (P**). This thesis fits well with what Molina says in the relevant passages, and it has some important advantages over Freddoso’s reconstruction. It fits with what Molina says in quote B, namely that the antecedent of his opponent’s argument (concerning divine knowledge of human actions) is necessary because it refers to the past (quod praeteritum), and because ‘no shadow of alteration can befall God’. Clearly, this argument works not only for A-necessity but equally well for CI-necessity. Whatever is already past at t is necessary at t in the sense that it is impossible for anyone still to exert any causal impact on it at or after t. Granted, Molina does use the term ‘foreknowledge’ in this context and writes that God’s foreknowledge is already past. As already noted, however, this should be read with a nostro-intelligenz-mode proviso. Speaking from an intratemporal perspective, we may say that at times which for us are already past God had knowledge about what for us was still coming to be. In the same vein we should also interpret the argument in quote A as claiming that the antecedent of the critic’s argument is necessary because it is both ‘past’ and ‘eternal’. God’s knowledge of human actions is extratemporally eternal since it does not occur at any time. Yet for us that knowledge can also be described as necessary because there were times past in our lives, now causally inaccessible, when it was already present.27

There are at least three advantages of this account over the accidental-necessity interpretation of Molina’s views on the transfer of necessities. First, unlike Freddoso’s reading, the present reconstruction fits Molina’s theological extratemporalism. Second, as laid out in this section, the CI-account is applicable both to an argument concerning God’s postvolitional free knowledge and to an argument concerning His prevolitional middle knowledge about (possible) human actions. Third, and perhaps most importantly, unlike the analogous closure principle regarding A-necessity, (P**) is indeed false. In the following, penultimate section I shall corroborate this claim by presenting two counterexamples against (P**).

5.3 Is causal-impact necessity closed under entailment?

Consider cases of causal overdetermination in which an event to which an agent causally contributes would – due to other causes on which the agent has no causal influence – have ensued anyway. For example, remember Agatha Christie’s Murder on the Orient Express. Hercule Poirot, the ingenious detective, eventually finds out that Mr. Ratchet has been stabbed by twelve different people (by Princess Natalia Dragomiroff, Hector Willard McQueen, Colonel Arbuthnot, Hildegard Schmidt, etc.). Each of them had their own go at the victim. We can easily construe such cases in such a way that each act of stabbing was causally sufficient for Ratchet’s death, and that each stabbing caused his death via deterministic causal chains. Suppose that in addition none of the protagonists could have had any causal influence on any of his fellow conspirator’s lethal actions. Then (i) for each conspirator the stabbing performed by any of his or her fellow murderers is CI-necessary. (ii) Second, it holds by assumption that, necessarily: If one of the relevant actions is performed, the victim will die; there is no possible world with the same laws of nature in which the victim is stabbed by one of the conspirators but survives. Yet (iii) Ratchet’s death is not CI-necessary for any of the murderers, since each of them had some causal impact on that event. Ex hypothesi each individual act of stabbing was causally sufficient for the victim’s death. This is a counterexample to (P**). We have instantiations of the fact that it is CI-necessary for some subject S that p; p entails q; but it is not CI-necessary for S that q.

Similar examples can also be found in contemporary philosophical debates about free will and moral responsibility. Some 400 years after the second edition of the Concordia appeared in print (in 1595), a fellow Jesuit of Molina’s, Mark Ravizza, constructed a counterexample against Peter van Inwagen’s famous closure principle for moral responsibility, known as (the responsibility version of) ‘rule Beta’.28 This rule says: (i) If p, and no one is, or ever has been, morally responsible for p; and (ii) p (materially) implies q, and no one is, or ever has been, morally responsible for the fact that this implication holds; then (iii) q, and no one is, or ever has been, morally responsible for q. When a growing number of counterexamples against this principle began to surface in the literature, Ted Warfield suggested a necessity version of rule Beta (call Warfield’s rule Beta-Responsibility) which, he argued, was immune to the objections that had been launched against van Inwagen’s original Beta.29 In particular, Warfield argued that Ravizza’s counterexamples against van Inwagen’s Beta fail against Beta-Responsibility. The battle went on, and in a next movement Eleonore Stump and John Martin Fischer reformulated Ravizza-type counterexamples against Beta-Responsibility.30 These counterexamples can be accommodated to fit our (P**) as well. One of the Ravizza-Stump-Fischer stories is Avalanche and goes as follows:

27 This view implicitly invokes a concept that Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann have dubbed ‘ET-simultaneity’ (Eternity [1991]). ET-simultaneity is a relation between timelessly eternal and temporal entities. Contrary to intratemporal simultaneity, ET-simultaneity is symmetrical, but neither reflexive nor transitive. Otherwise it would not be guaranteed that the relata are constituted by an extratemporal and a temporal entity. For a helpful critical discussion of the notion of ET-simultaneity that contains important objections against theological extratemporalism, see for example Swinburne, God and Time [1993] and Fales, Divine Intervention [2009], ch. 5.


29 Cf. Warfield, Determinism and Moral Responsibility [1996]. Warfield’s rule about responsibility is structurally equivalent to a principle David Widerker had suggested in an early criticism of van Inwagen’s original rule Beta, as applied to the notion of having no choice about a state of affairs. See Widerker, Argument for Incompatibilism [1987].

30 Cf. Stump and Fischer, Transfer Principles [2001].
Let it be the case that, necessarily, if the actual laws of nature obtain and the conditions of the world at $T_2$ (some time just before $T_3$) are C, then there will be an avalanche that destroys an enemy camp at $T_3$. Let it also be the case that at $T_1$ Betty freely starts an avalanche that is sufficient to destroy the camp at $T_3$ and which contributes to its destruction at $T_3$. Finally, let if be the case that Betty's freely starting an avalanche is the result of some suitable indeterministic process.

In this example, it holds that (i), necessarily, if the laws of nature (L) obtain and the condition of the world at $T_2$ is C, there will be an avalanche that destroys the camp at $T_3$. Moreover, Stump and Fischer argue, we may assume that (ii) no one is even in part morally responsible for L or the fact that the conditions of the world at $T_2$ are C. Though (i) and (ii) are true, however, (iii) it is not true that no one is, even in part, morally responsible for the fact that there is an avalanche that destroys the camp at $T_3$. After all, Betty freely and intentionally does something that is sufficient for, and causally contributes to, there being an avalanche that destroys the camp at $T_3$.

A critic may raise the following query with respect to this example. First, can it reasonably be stipulated that no one is even in part morally responsible for C if C stands for the conditions of the world, i.e., for the state of the world in toto at $T_2$? This is a fair question, but I do not think it causes much trouble for Stump and Fischer. Simply restrict C to those conditions of the world at $T_2$ that are causally relevant to the avalanche (the one that has not been caused by Betty) and stipulate that no one is morally responsible for this partial condition C of the world. Such a scenario is certainly possible, but raises no worries as to whether people may at least be partially responsible for the relevant state of the world.

Another worry may be that Betty's action is supposed to be the outcome of an indeterministic process. This is required for the example in order to avoid begging the question against incompatibilist views of the relation between causal determinism and moral responsibility. In the example, Betty's action must be free, and she must be morally responsible for it. Yet if the story assumed that a free and responsible action was the result of some deterministic process it would assume that determinism and moral responsibility are compatible. Since this is precisely what is at issue in the debate, such an assumption would beg the question against incompatibilism. On the other hand, L and C are supposed to necessitate the avalanche at $T_2$. L and C are supposed to initiate some deterministic causal chain that leads to the camp's destruction. (Otherwise the story would not constitute a counterexample against Warfield's necessity version of Beta Responsibility.) Stump and Fischer's example thus invokes a universe in which both deterministic and indeterministic processes occur. However, while this may merit notice, I do not think the point can be massaged into a problem for the story. Universes with both deterministic and indeterministic features are clearly possible and, as many argue, even empirically plausible.

The debate between van Inwagen, Ravizza, Warfield, and Stump and Fischer concerns the notion of moral responsibility. However, the above example can easily be adapted to a corresponding argument regarding our notion of CI-necessity. After all, moral responsibility would seem to entail CI-contingency. (Arguably, if an agent is morally responsible for an event, he/she must have had some kind of causal impact upon it.) Suppose, then, that both the conditions C of the world, which together with L cause the avalanche at $T_3$, and the natural laws L themselves are CI-necessary for Betty. We then have: (i) It is CI-necessary for Betty that C and L obtain. Second, by hypothesis (ii) C and L entail that an avalanche destroys the camp at $T_3$. (iii) It is not the case, however, that the camp's destruction by avalanche is CI-necessary for Betty. For she performs an action (detonating the explosives) which is causally sufficient for the camp's being destroyed by an avalanche and which in fact contributes to the destruction. This is another counterexample against (P*). (P*), it emerges, is indeed false.

5.6 An objection

I have argued that while A-necessity is closed under entailment CI-necessity is not. However, I also said that A-necessity entails CI-necessity. Are these two claims consistent? Is it possible both that a certain kind of necessity N entails another kind of necessity N' and that N is closed under entailment, but N' is not? Compare the case to relations, not between alethic, but between epistemic modalities. A famous, though controversial, epistemic principle is that knowledge is closed, not just under entailment simpliciter, but under known entailment. Regarding that principle, Anthony Brueckner, for instance, once argued that, if knowledge is closed under known entailment, then it seems quite plausible that each necessary condition for knowledge must also be so closed. In another paper, he even states without any qualification: 'Knowledge is closed under known implication only if each necessary condition for knowing is so closed.' (Brueckner here uses 'implication' in the sense of strict implication or entailment.) He then argues that certain necessary conditions for knowledge – such as believing, and having justification for the belief in question – are not closed under known entailment and that therefore knowledge is not so closed either. A critic of the argument laid out in the present paper may object in analogous fashion that, since accidental necessity entails CI-necessity and the latter kind of necessity is a necessary condition of the former, it is impossible that accidental necessity is closed under entailment but CI-necessity is not.

But such an objection would rest on a confusion. If A-necessity entails CI-necessity, but not vice versa, the set of things that are A-necessary is a proper subset of those that are CI-necessary. Hence items that are CI-necessary need not share all the logical properties of those that are A-necessary. What turns CI-necessity into A-necessity may remove precisely those items from the set that are not closed under

31 Stump and Fischer, Transfer Principles [2000], p. 49.
32 Brueckner, Structure of the Skeptical Argument [1994], p. 831.
33 Brueckner, Skepticism and Epistemic Closure [1985], p. 91.
entailment. For an analogous reason, Bruckner's argument against the closure of knowledge under known entailment is flawed.\textsuperscript{34} It is not true that if some (alethic or epistemic) modality $M$ entails another modality $M'$, then if $M$ is closed under (known) entailment, $M'$ must be closed under (known) entailment. So, just as it is coherent to maintain that knowledge entails, for example, belief and is closed under (known) entailment but belief is not, it is also coherent to maintain that while necessity \textit{per accidens} is closed under entailment, causal-impact-necessity is not, even though the former entails the latter.

5.7 Conclusion

I have reconstructed and discussed a central step in Molina's treatment of the so-called foreknowledge dilemma, as he presents it in disputation 52 of his \textit{Concordia}. I have argued that there are several reasons for which the standard interpretation, according to which Molina rejects a closure principle concerning accidental necessity, is problematic. The chief worry is that Molina officially commits himself to an extratemporalist account of divine eternity. This does not blend well with a construal of his response in terms of accidental necessity. However, Molinists can also, and more coherently, reject an argument for theological incompatibilism which is cast in terms of an extratemporal kind of postvolitional divine knowledge and which relies, not on a closure principle for accidental necessity, but on a structurally similar principle concerning the lack of power to exert causal impact on a given state of affairs. A related argument, which relies on the same closure principle, concerns God's prevolitional middle knowledge. I have argued that when Molinists reject these causal-impact arguments against the compatibility of divine omniscience with human freedom by dismissing the view that CI-necessity is closed under entailment, the palm goes to them.\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{34} For an illuminating discussion of this point, see \textsc{Hales, Epistemic Closure Principles} [1995].

\textsuperscript{35} For helpful discussions of an earlier draft of this paper I am indebted to Evan Fales, Otto Muck, Katherine Munn, and Christian Tapp.