Arguing from Molinism
to Neo-Molinism

ELIJAH HESS
Department of Philosophy
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, Arkansas
echess@uark.edu

In a pair of recent essays,[1] William Lane Craig has leveled a series of objections to certain open theist understandings of the nature of the future. Most prominent, perhaps, has been his complaint that bivalent accounts of the alethic openness of the future[2]—such as those promoted by Gregory Boyd, Alan Rhoda, and Thomas Belt[3]—which construe "will" and "will not" propositions as being contradicted by statements asserting what "might not" and "might" occur are, in each case, both semantically and modally confused. "Boyd," Craig specifically notes, "proposes a reform of the English language according to which the contradictory of '*x* will occur' is '*x* might not occur,' and the contradictory of '*x* will not occur' is '*x* might occur.' The statements '*x* will occur' and '*x* will not occur' are on this view contraries, not contradictories."[4]

ABSTRACT: In a pair of recent essays, William Lane Craig has argued that certain open theist understandings of the nature of the future are both semantically and modally confused. I argue that this is not the case and show that, if consistently observed, the customary semantics for counterfactuals Craig relies on not only undermine the validity of his complaint against the open theist, they actually support an argument for the openness position.

1. William Lane Craig, "God Directs All Things: On Behalf of a Molinist View of Providence," in *Four Views on Divine Providence*, ed. Dennis W. Jowers (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 79–100; and "Response to Gregory A. Boyd," in *Four Views on Divine Providence*, 224–30. Cf. Craig and David P. Hunt, "Perils of the Open Road," *Faith and Philosophy* 30 (2013): 49–71.

2. According to Alan Rhoda, the future is *alethically open* at time *t* if and only if for some state of affairs *x* and some future time *t** (i) neither <*x* will obtain at *t**> nor <*x* will not obtain at *t**> is true at *t* and (ii) neither of their tense-neutral counterparts, <*x* does obtain at *t**> and <*x* does not obtain at *t**>, is true *simpliciter*. See Rhoda, "The Fivefold Openness of the Future," in *God in an Open Universe: Science, Metaphysics, and Open Theism*, ed. William Hasker, Thomas Jay Oord, and Dean Zimmerman (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011), 74.

3. See Gregory Boyd, "Two Ancient (and Modern) Motivations for Ascribing Exhaustively Definite Foreknowledge to God: A Historic Overview and Critical Assessment," *Religious Studies* 46 (2010): 52–5. Cf. Rhoda, Boyd, and Belt, "Open Theism, Omniscience, and the Nature of the Future," *Faith and Philosophy* 23 (2006): 432–59.

4. Craig, "Response to Gregory A. Boyd," 229. For an early proponent of the idea that "will" and "will not" statements are actually contraries rather than contradictories, see Charles

Depicted on a square of opposition, these logical relations appear as follows.

X will ◄———— contraries ————► X will not

T | | | ↑   T | ↑

subalternation   *contradictories*   subalternation

contradictories

F | ↓   F | ↓

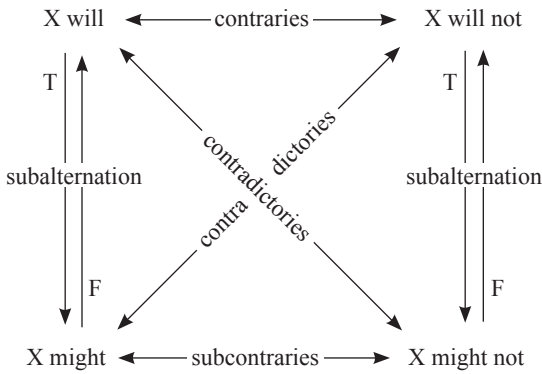X might ◄———— subcontraries ————► X might not

Figure 1.

For open theists, the above picture illustrates how it's possible for the future to be a realm of both settled and unsettled aspects. That is, instead of ultimately being describable in terms of what *will* or *will not* take place, the future may also be comprised of that which has yet to be written into the "storyline" of world history—a realm of what still *might and might not* occur.

These ontological possibilities form a distinct category apart from truths about what will and will not happen and are what the aforementioned sub-contraries, when expressed conjointly, are meant to represent. Indeed, it is the open theist's conviction that this tripartite division of logical space provides the *best* representation of the future in a world where genuine inde-terminism exists. And since, like their Molinist and Arminian brethren, it is also the open theist's conviction that we have been granted a degree of inde-terministic or "libertarian" freedom, such theists are convinced that figure 1 presents the best depiction of the future in *our* world.[5]

Craig, however, isn't buying it. His primary complaint about this open future square of opposition is that such a picture illicitly mixes modal lo-cutions ("might" statements) with nonmodal locutions ("will" statements). According to Craig,

Hartshorne, "The Meaning of 'Is Going to Be,'" *Mind* 74 (1965): 46–58.

5. For further defense of the logical relations that appear on figure 1, see Elijah Hess, "Neo-Molinism and the Open Future Square of Opposition: A Defense," *Sophia* (forthcoming). In-deed, if figure 1 can be defended as logically coherent, then there are possible worlds in which the future *is* partly open. Moreover, since God is a necessary being, he inhabits such worlds and knows the future(s) there as such. Thus there is nothing inherently inconsistent in supposing that a maximally perfect being faces a partly open future.

> He [Boyd] is speaking his own idiolect here. . . . In normal English, the statement that something will occur, but might not occur, is perfectly coherent. That is just to affirm that it will occur contingently. Boyd must be assuming that 'will' statements are disguised modal statements to the effect that something 'must' occur and so can be set in opposition to 'might' statements.[6]

In what follows I'll argue that, contrary to Craig, all that open theists need to arrive at the opposition between "will" and "might not" (and, similarly, "will not" and "might") is to show that these indicatives are simply *related* to a certain class of conditional statement. After laying the groundwork for this relation, I demonstrate how Craig's attacks on Boyd's so-called neo-Molinist understanding of might-statements can be turned and used, instead, as an argument in *support* of the open theist's view of the future. I conclude by considering three objections to the argument and note that, in their attempts to block it, traditional Molinists like Craig have revealed that they are operating with a far more attenuated account of free will than many have realized—an account that may end up inadvertently providing a libertarian with considerable incentive to move from Molinism to neo-Molinism.

Preliminaries

To start, then, consider how the traditional Molinist views reality. "In the Molinist view," Craig writes,

> there are two logical moments prior to the divine decree: first, the moment at which God has natural knowledge of the range of possible worlds and, second, the moment at which he has knowledge of the proper subset of possible worlds that, given the counterfactual propositions true at that moment, are feasible for him to create. The counterfactuals which are true at that moment thus serve to delimit the range of possible worlds to worlds feasible for God.[7]

Hence, according to the Molinist picture (allowing circles to represent possible worlds), the logical "moments" at which the various stages of God's knowledge occur fall in this order:

---

6. Craig, "Response to Gregory A. Boyd," 229.
7. Craig, "God Directs All Things," 82–3.

Moment 1:   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

Natural Knowledge: God knows what *could* be the case.

Moment 2:   ○   ○   ○   ○

Middle Knowledge: God knows what *would* be the case.

God's creative decree

Moment 3:   ○

Free Knowledge: God knows what *will* be the case.

Figure 2.

This picture is the key to seeing how, on the Molinist's understanding, future-tense indicatives are logically related to certain other conditional terms. In particular, future-tense indicatives stand in a definite relation to *counterfactual* terms. Moreover there are open theists who, to a large extent, agree with the Molinist picture. So-called neo-Molinist accounts of open theism, like those advocated by Boyd, also conceive of God's precreational knowledge in two stages.[8] On the traditional as well as the neo-Molinist model, for any true "will" proposition in the actual world there is a corresponding "would" counterfactual proposition that logically *preceded* it and was known by God via his middle knowledge. However, just as the neo-Molinist will insist—over and against other classical theists—that the future is alethically open and thus ultimately apprehended by God via his free knowledge in terms of what "will," "will not," and (in the case of future contingents) what "might and might not" occur, here too neo- and traditional Molinists will ultimately divide over the content of God's middle knowledge.

For instance, when considering so-called counterfactuals of creaturely freedom (CCFs hereafter), traditional Molinists ultimately acknowledge just two categories of counterfactual conditional in God's middle knowledge, *would*-counterfactuals and *would not*-counterfactuals. That is, they endorse the *law of conditional excluded middle* (CEM)—the claim that, for any counterfactual $P \,\square\!\!\rightarrow Q$ (read: "If P were the case, Q would be the case"), either $(P \,\square\!\!\rightarrow Q)$ or $(P \,\square\!\!\rightarrow \neg Q)$ is true. The law is notoriously controversial,[9] but

---

8. Boyd, "Neo-Molinism and the Infinite Intelligence of God," *Philosophia Christi* 5 (2003): 187–204. For a brief explication and defense of the "stages" of God's knowledge on the neo-Molinist model, see the ensuing discussion below.

9. Though, for various defenses of CEM, see Charles B. Cross, "Conditional Excluded Middle," *Erkenntnis* 70 (2009): 173–88; Richard Gaskin, "Conditionals of Freedom and Middle

it would appear the traditional Molinist is committed to something like it, at least when the species of counterfactual is a CCF. For as Craig points out, since the circumstances C in which the free agent is placed are fully specified in the counterfactual's antecedent, it would seem that if the agent were placed in C and left free with respect to action x, then she must either do x or not do x. "For what other alternative," Craig wonders, "is there?"[10]

Whereas the traditional Molinist posits only two logically distinct categories of counterfactual pertaining to the hypothetical actions of creatures at this moment in the divine mind (that is, "would" and "would not" conditionals), the neo-Molinist allows for *three*—namely "would," "would not," and "might and might not." And it is specifically the latter sort of proposition that the neo-Molinist maintains is needed to properly express CCFs. Indeed, the neo-Molinist account of middle knowledge is unique in that it distinguishes between *volitional* and *creational* aspects of God's activity in relation to the divine knowledge. By "volitional" activity, the neo-Molinist means to refer to activity that depends on God's will. Relatedly, when speaking of "creational" activity, she means to refer to activity in which God produces (or instantiates) concrete and material effects. In this way, the latter implies the former but not vice versa. Middle knowledge, on the neo-Molinist scheme then, is between natural and free knowledge in that it is *precreational*—that is, prior to creation (like natural knowledge but unlike free knowledge), but also volitional and, hence, dependent on God's will (like free knowledge and unlike natural knowledge). Here's how the "neological" stages in the divine mind proceed.[11]

In God's *natural knowledge*, an individual creaturely essence I is known, necessarily, as a mere possibility ($\diamond I$ & $\neg I$). God also knows what such essences *could* do in any situation they might be in. For example, Adam could eat the forbidden fruit, or he could refrain from eating it. But, necessarily, God knows that it's possible that Adam eat the fruit for at least two different reasons: Adam could eat the fruit because he's been *determined* to do so, or Adam could *freely* eat it. The same two possibilities account for how Adam could refrain from eating the fruit.

In God's *middle knowledge*, Adam's essence—once a mere possibility—is willed by God to exist. It is not yet instantiated, but it has been willed by God to be an *actual* creaturely essence. Moreover, God has decided that, were Adam to be placed in the garden, Adam should freely decide whether

Knowledge," *Philosophical Quarterly* 43 (1993): 412–30; Robert C. Stalnaker, "A Defense of Conditional Excluded Middle," in *Ifs: Conditionals, Belief, Decision, Chance, and Time*, ed. William L. Harper, Robert Stalnaker, and Glenn Pearce (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1981), 87–104; and Dean A. Kowalski, "On Behalf of a Suarezian Middle Knowledge," *Philosophia Christi* 5 (2003): 219–27. For further discussion, see also note 25 below.

10. Craig, "Middle Knowledge, Truth-Makers, and the Grounding Objection," *Faith and Philosophy* 18 (2001): 338.

11. For a summary chart containing the neo-Molinist's account of divine knowledge, see figure 4 included at the end of this paper.

to eat of the forbidden fruit. Thus, God grants the capacity for libertarian freedom to Adam's essence, thereby grounding the truth of the following counterfactual conditional: "If Adam were in the garden, he *might and might not* eat the forbidden fruit." Because free will is a gift from God, whether an essence should possess such a capacity is contingent upon God's choice and is, thus, dependent on God's activity.[12]

At the moment of God's *creative decree*, God creates *ex nihilo* a "world-type," that is, a delimited *set* of possible worlds, any one of which *might* be actualized depending on the choices free agents make. However, God also simultaneously decrees what he shall do in response to his free creatures' potential choices as well as the precise *range* of possibilities available for agents to choose from on any given occasion.[13]

12. This idea, i.e., that God grants a (once merely possible) creaturely essence both existence and a capacity for free choice at this moment in the divine mind, allows the neo-Molinist to turn back David Werther's charge that might-counterfactuals should be classed as necessary truths in God's natural knowledge. Werther points out that a proposition like "If one possess libertarian freedom regarding an action in some set of circumstances then one might or might not perform that action" is necessarily true. However, as he goes on to note, "It is not possible that a person possess libertarian freedom regarding some action unless both the performing of the action and the refraining from its performance are possibilities. But, if this is so, then neo-Molinism's so-called might counterfactuals are rightly classed, along with all other necessary truths, among God's natural knowledge" (Werther, "Open Theism and Middle Knowledge: An Appraisal of Gregory Boyd's Neo-Molinism," *Philosophia Christi* 5 (2003): 213). What Werther fails to realize here, however, is that it is not necessary that a creature have libertarian freedom. Since it is up to God whether such essences should be granted libertarian freedom, it is his decision that this be so that accounts for the transition from natural to middle knowledge at this point.

13. Critics of the open view often worry that, were the future "open" in the way that open theists suppose, God's ultimate purposes for the cosmos could potentially be thwarted. For instance, Craig contends that "knowledge of mere 'might' counterfactuals is insufficient to give God the sort of specific providential control described in the Bible. Nor is it clear that such knowledge is sufficient to bring about God's desired ends" (Craig, "God Directs All Things," 90–1). Similarly, David Hunt has claimed that the God of open theism could very well lose something as simple as a game of rock-paper-scissors (see Hunt, "The Providential Advantage of Divine Foreknowledge," in *Arguing about Religion*, ed. Kevin Timpe (London: Routledge, 2009), 374–85). However, over and against other openness models to date, the neo-Molinist account of divine knowledge presented here allows God a significant amount of providential control. For, according to the neo-Molinist, the *topography* of modality is largely shaped by God. E.g., God knows that, were he to enter into a game of rock-paper-scissors with Satan, he could potentially lose *that* game depending on what Satan plays. But God has the ultimate "say-so" concerning which creational "games" he enters into. So, if Satan's winning this game would be detrimental to God's overall plan, then God needn't risk ever losing such a game with Satan. Without completely abrogating Satan's freedom, God simply decides to enter into a game where he's left open to Satan *two* rather than three options to choose from. By allowing Satan, say, the possibility of choosing either rock or scissors, God knows that by playing rock he'll never lose this game with Satan. Indeed, as this example shows, the precise range of possibilities available to us is under God's power and may vary greatly from circumstance to circumstance. According to the neo-Molinist, then, this ability to determine *which* possibilities will remain open to us allows God a robust level of providential control over a world in which freedom is thought to consist in genuine, alternative possibilities. Aspects of my account of God's knowledge and providential activity build upon a similar view put forth by Boyd. For Boyd's "infinite intelligence" argument and how it relates to God's providential control on the neo-Molinist

In God's *free knowledge*, what were once known as might-counterfactuals are now known as a delimited set of might-*factuals*, ontological possibilities that now partly comprise a future describable in terms of what "will," "will not," and "might and might not" be. God knows what contingency plans he's set in place as well as the delimited set of might-factuals that he himself has providentially left open to instantiated creaturely essences endowed with libertarian freedom to choose from.

Commenting on the neo-Molinist view of counterfactuals, Craig correctly observes that

> a few openness theologians have attempted to accommodate the insights of Molinism by affirming that God does have middle knowledge of 'might' counterfactuals of creaturely freedom, even though he lacks middle knowledge of 'would' counterfactuals of creaturely freedom. Thus, he knows logically prior to his decree what any person he could create might or might not do in any set of circumstances in which God should place him.[14]

"But," Craig asks,

> if 'might' counterfactuals can be true logically prior to God's decree, then why not also 'would' counterfactuals? It is important to understand that in the customary semantics for counterfactual conditionals, 'would' counterfactuals logically imply 'might' counterfactuals, so that in the Molinist view, *both* are true and known to God via his middle knowledge.[15]

Here Craig wants to know what basis the neo-Molinist could have for denying the truth of "would" CCFs when they accept the truth of "might" CCFs. After all, if it's true that I *might* order a pizza, then the subjunctive "I would order a pizza" *could* be true. Likewise, if it's true that I *might not* order a pizza, then "I would not order a pizza" could be true.[16] Apparently, the fact that might-conditionals have this implication for would-conditionals leads Craig to believe that the neo-Molinist's denial of true "would" CCFs is unjustified. "If . . . open theists are willing to accept true 'might' counterfactuals," he writes, "then I see no reason remaining to deny the truth of 'would' counterfactuals as well."[17]

As it turns out, however, the neo-Molinist has a very good reason for supposing God lacks middle knowledge of "would" CCFs, one that—despite what Craig's gloss might seem to suggest—relies on an important distinction

---

account of open theism, see especially his "Neo-Molinism and the Infinite Intelligence of God," 196–203; "Response to William Lane Craig," in *Four Views on Divine Providence*, 136–9; and "Randomness and Assurance: Does Everything Happen for a Reason?," *The Other Journal* 20 (2012): 75–85.

14. Craig, "God Directs All Things," 88.

15. Ibid., 89.

16. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for this example.

17. Craig, "God Directs All Things," 89.

within standard counterfactual semantics. In the next section, I demonstrate what the semantic basis for neo-Molinist middle knowledge is and how the open future square of opposition can be derived from it.

Is the Neo-Molinist Counterfactually Confused?

We've seen how on both Molinism and neo-Molinism future-tense indicatives like "will" and "will not" can be understood to relate to "would" and "would not" counterfactuals. But in order to demonstrate how the contradictory relations exhibited on the open future square of opposition can, *pace* Craig, actually be derived from standard counterfactual semantics, we'll need to uncover just what exactly these standard or "customary" semantics for counterfactual conditionals are. As it turns out Craig and his colleague, philosopher J. P. Moreland, provide the answer in their remarkable book *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*. There they reveal that, "for want of a better alternative, most philosophers use the Stalnaker-Lewis semantics."[18] Named after the pioneering work of philosophers Robert Stalnaker and David Lewis, the Stalnaker-Lewis semantics for counterfactuals is a similarity-based approach to determining the truth of these conditionals relative to possible worlds. Lewis's preferred model, for example, has us think of similarity as a "closeness" relation between worlds arranged into a system of spheres, $, where $ is (conceptually) structured as a series of concentric circles. As Lewis explains, the $ used in interpreting counterfactuals

> is meant to carry information about the comparative overall similarity of worlds. Any particular sphere around a world w is to contain just those worlds that resemble w to at least a certain degree. This degree is different for different spheres around w. The smaller the sphere, the more similar to w must a world be to fall within it.[19]

As Craig and Moreland go on to elaborate, if we want to determine the truth of $P \;\square\!\!\rightarrow Q$ from, say, the perspective of the actual world W, we consider the worlds in the nearest sphere centered on W in which the antecedent of our counterfactual is true. If in *all* the worlds in which the antecedent is true, the consequent is also true, then a "would" counterfactual is true. If in *some* of the worlds in which the antecedent is true, the consequent is also true, then a "might" counterfactual $P \;\diamondsuit\!\!\rightarrow Q$ (read: "If P were the case, Q might be the case") is true.[20]

18. J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 53.

19. David Lewis, *Counterfactuals* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 14. The "w" in the above quotation is my symbolization (Lewis uses "i"). Here and throughout, unless otherwise noted, I use w to represent an arbitrary world.

20. Moreland and Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*, 53.

Now, importantly, Craig seems to think that when the neo-Molinist uses the modal locution "might" (or "might not") in reference to future contingents, they are doing so in a way that is fundamentally at odds with the way those terms are understood in the counterfactual semantics mentioned above. "In counterfactual discourse," Craig avers, "'might' has a technical sense that is quite different from Boyd's usage. Boyd uses the word to affirm causal indeterminism. Counterfactual discourse pairs 'might' with 'would,' not 'will' as Boyd does."[21] We've already seen that by "counterfactual discourse" Craig is referring to the Stalnaker-Lewis semantics. But if "might" is supposed to be some kind of *terminus technicus* within these counterfactual systems, then what does it mean? How does it function? According to Craig, "In counterfactual logic, $P \diamondsuit\!\!\rightarrow Q$ is simply defined as the contradictory of $P \square\!\!\rightarrow \neg Q$, that is to say, as $\neg(P \square\!\!\rightarrow \neg Q)$."[22] Interestingly, by conceiving of the $\diamondsuit\!\!\rightarrow$ connective in this way, Craig is endorsing Lewis's "interdefinable" account of the counterfactual operators.[23] Here's what the definitions for these operators, given Lewis's approach, look like.

Lewisian interdefinability:

$P \diamondsuit\!\!\rightarrow Q =_{\text{def.}} \neg(P \square\!\!\rightarrow \neg Q),$

$P \square\!\!\rightarrow Q =_{\text{def.}} \neg(P \diamondsuit\!\!\rightarrow \neg Q).$

Based on these definitions Moreland and Craig construct what they call a "square of opposition for counterfactual statements"[24] which is reproduced below.

21. Craig, "Response to Gregory A. Boyd," 228n94.

22. Moreland and Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*, 53. See also Craig, *Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom: The Coherence of Theism: Omniscience* (Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1991), 252, 258.

23. Lewis, *Counterfactuals*, 2.

24. See figure 2.3 in Moreland and Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*, 53.
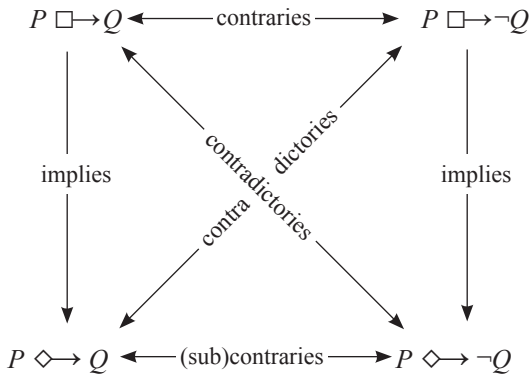
$P \,\square\!\!\rightarrow\! Q$ ◄——— contraries ———► $P \,\square\!\!\rightarrow\! \neg Q$

contradictories

contradictories

implies   implies

$P \,\diamondsuit\!\!\rightarrow\! Q$ ◄——— (sub)contraries ———► $P \,\diamondsuit\!\!\rightarrow\! \neg Q$

Figure 3.

Notice, however, that this diagram—and the interdefinability of the coun-
terfactual connectives on which it's based—is *precisely* the sort of square
of opposition that the neo-Molinist endorses for counterfactual condition-
als. After all, it is exactly because of the logical relations shown here that
the neo-Molinist concludes that God's middle knowledge must contain a
threefold division between what "would," "would not," and what "might and
might not" occur.

Since the latter (conjunctive) type of proposition can stand in distinc-
tion from both "would" and "would not" counterfactuals, the neo-Molinist
contends that, from a strictly logical point of view, God's middle knowledge
cannot be restricted in the way advocates of CEM suggest.[25] Indeed, in sup-
port of the logical relations outlined on figure 3, Lewis tells us that

---

25. For the majority of Molinists, the idea that CEM holds for CCFs is upheld because such
an idea is thought to be required for God's providential control; hence, in the present context,
it is primarily a *theologically* driven postulate. But Molinists also attempt to defend the claim
on philosophical grounds. Craig, for example, says the idea is plausible since "we are talking
in this case about a very special set of counterfactuals involving the choices of some agent in
fully specified circumstances. Such restrictive parameters remove the sort of ambiguities that
serve to support mere might-counterfactuals" (Craig, "Ducking Friendly Fire: Davison on the
Grounding Objection," *Philosophia Christi* 8 (2006): 163n4; cf. Craig, *Divine Foreknowledge
and Human Freedom*, 258; and Jonathan Kvanvig, *The Possibility of an All-Knowing God* (New
York: St. Martin's, 1986), 146–8). Craig's claim that CCFs can plausibly be thought to be true
so long as the circumstances described in the antecedent are—in terms of accounting for all
the relevant factors—"fully specified" is far from obvious however. On the contrary, given that
these conditionals are supposed to be about the *indeterministic* actions of agents, sober philo-
sophical reflection would seem to suggest that no amount of (additional) information would be
of any help in determining what are, through and through, causally indeterminate events. Dean
Zimmerman makes the point well:

Many (I would guess most) philosophers simply do not have [Craig's] reaction:
when carefully attending to the causal indeterminacy of a certain outcome in cer-
tain possible circumstances that may never obtain, most of us do not find much
plausibility in the idea that there is a definite fact about what would happen in those

> If the 'would' counterfactual $P \;\square\!\!\rightarrow Q$ is non-vacuously true, then the
> 'might' counterfactual $P \;\diamondsuit\!\!\rightarrow Q$ also is true. If $P \;\square\!\!\rightarrow Q$ and its opposite
> $P \;\square\!\!\rightarrow \neg Q$ are both false, then $P \;\diamondsuit\!\!\rightarrow Q$ and its opposite $P \;\diamondsuit\!\!\rightarrow \neg Q$ are
> both true; for this is the case in which Q is true at some of the closest
> P-worlds and $\neg Q$ is true at others of them. But when $P \;\square\!\!\rightarrow Q$ is false
> and its opposite $P \;\square\!\!\rightarrow \neg Q$ is true, Q holds at none of the closest P-
> worlds and $P \;\diamondsuit\!\!\rightarrow Q$ is therefore false.[26]

Thus while it's true that would-counterfactuals logically imply might-counterfactuals, as figure 3 illustrates, the relation is *asymmetric*. A true "might" conditional, then, *could* mean that its corresponding "would" conditional is true, but we could not infer that it is on this basis alone. So long as we're adopting Lewis's standard semantics, CEM as construed above is in trouble.

The reason is simple: Lewis's definition of "might" places "would" and "would not" in a *contrary* rather than contradictory relation.

The preceding insights concerning the relationship between future-tense indicatives and counterfactuals finally allow the neo-Molinist to arrive at the opposition between "will" and "might not" as depicted on figure 1 by way of the following syllogism:

(1) x will occur $\supset$ x would occur (from figure 2)

(2) x would occur $\supset$ not [x might not occur] (from figure 3)

(3) x will occur $\supset$ not [x might not occur] (from 1 and 2 by transitivity)

Therefore it looks as if, from premises put forward by Craig himself, we can arrive at a conclusion, (3), which is just an affirmation of the open theist's view of the future (the same argument can be run, *mutatis mutandis*, for "will not" and "might").

Craig's Counterfactual Conflation

What all this points up is an important fact—CEM, on the one hand, and Lewis's understanding of the counterfactual operators, on the other, are formally incompatible. CEM, while valid on *Stalnaker's* semantics, is invalidated on Lewis's definition of $\diamondsuit\!\!\rightarrow$. The reason is because Stalnaker assumes an antisymmetry constraint for the similarity relation between pos-

---

circumstances—at least, not a fact that could be known infallibly ahead of time. . . . Throwing in more and more details about the situation would strike most of us, I believe, as irrelevant if the details leave the situation precisely as indeterministic as ever. (Zimmerman, "An Anti-Molinist Replies," in *Molinism: The Contemporary Debate*, ed. Ken Perszyk (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 182)

Though not an open theist herself, Linda Zagzebski expresses a similar sentiment regarding the relation between CEM and indeterminism. See Zagzebski, *The Dilemma of Freedom and Foreknowledge* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 139–40.

26. Lewis, *Counterfactuals*, 21. For sake of uniformity, I've here replaced Lewis's antecedent and consequent symbolization (Φ and Ψ) for P and Q respectively.

sible worlds. As Theodore Sider explains, "Anti-symmetry prohibits 'ties'—it says that two distinct worlds cannot be at least as close to a given world w as the other."[27]

Lewis, on the other hand, allows for ties in similarity to obtain between worlds (and between world segments). Hence a counterfactual describing an indeterministic event such as "If I had tossed the coin, it might have landed heads" is, as Jonathan Bennett points out, "true [on Lewis's interpretation] because it means that it is not the case that if I had tossed the coin it *would* have come down tails; or, in the 'worlds' dialect, Toss-worlds at which the coin comes down heads are as close to w as any at which it comes down tails."[28] As such, Lewis's semantics seem much better suited to model the metaphysical situation envisioned by libertarians, that is, that there are, for any circumstances C in which I freely choose x, other worlds in which, in the same C, I choose not-x instead.[29]

We can notice, further, how the following argument (borrowed from Bennett) demonstrates that, by accepting CEM *and* Lewisian interdefinability, as Craig appears to, one actually *collapses* the distinction between "would" and "might."

(4) $(P \,\square\!\!\rightarrow\! \neg Q) \lor (P \,\square\!\!\rightarrow\! Q)$ (CEM)

(5) $\neg(P \,\square\!\!\rightarrow\! \neg Q) \supset (P \,\square\!\!\rightarrow\! Q)$ (from 4 by def. of "$\supset$")

(6) $(P \,\diamond\!\!\rightarrow\! Q) \supset (P \,\square\!\!\rightarrow\! Q)$ (from 5 by Lewis's definition of "$\diamond\!\!\rightarrow$")

(7) $(P \,\square\!\!\rightarrow\! Q) \supset (P \,\diamond\!\!\rightarrow\! Q)$ (obvious; entailed by Lewis's definition)

(8) $(P \,\square\!\!\rightarrow\! Q) \equiv (P \,\diamond\!\!\rightarrow\! Q)$ (from 6 and 7 by trivial logic)

---

27. Theodore Sider, *Logic for Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 206.

28. Jonathan Bennett, *A Philosophical Guide to Conditionals* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 191.

29. By saying that the Lewisian semantics better "model" the metaphysical situation envisioned by libertarians, I am *not* saying that Lewis's semantics explain *what makes* counterfactuals like "If I had tossed the coin, it might have landed heads" true. Rather, I am simply saying—along with Zimmerman—that the acceptance and use of these semantics has definite *implications* for what makes such propositions true. "The standard way to assign a meaning to the 'nearness' relation among worlds," Zimmerman rightly observes, "takes a stand on what sorts of similarities among worlds are relevant to these truth conditions—it is not a mere blank, that yields equally adequate theories of the meanings of conditionals not matter how it is filled in. The standard interpretation provides a candidate relation. In the case of an actually existing coin-flipping machine, the truth or falsehood of the conditional: 'If it were triggered at such-and-such time, it would yield "heads,"' must (given this choice of the 'nearness' relation) supervene upon the actual laws and the actual categorical history leading up to the time of potential triggering. If the machine is in a state that would, as a matter of actual lawful behavior, yield heads, the conditional is true. If it is in a state that, due to indeterministic actual laws, might yield heads or tails, standard application of the Stalnaker-Lewis truth conditions requires that the conditional be false. Similarly, in the case of actual indeterministic processes of choice, the Stalnaker-Lewis semantics, with 'nearness' interpreted in the standard way, says that the actual world does not include enough facts to make the Molinist's [CCFs] true" (Zimmerman, "An Anti-Molinist Replies," 166).

As Bennett notes, "This conclusion is patently unacceptable, so something must yield: either CEM or Lewis's account of 'might.'"[30]

Since the Lewisian definition of $\diamond\!\!\rightarrow$ is, as we've discovered, incompatible with CEM, it should come as no surprise that the Molinist opts to challenge it. In order to block the neo-Molinist's move from (1) and (2) to (3) in the previous argument, therefore, (2) is where the real action is. I now turn to consider three objections to this particular premise and the counterfactual square of opposition it's predicated on.

Molinist Objections (and Neo-Molinist Replies)

Objection 1

The first objection that Craig and other Molinists are likely to raise against (2)—and the counterfactual square on which it's based—is that the "might" in the requirement for freedom is *not* the same as the $\diamond\!\!\rightarrow$ counterfactual connective. While the "might" counterfactual is technically defined as the negation of $P \:\square\!\!\rightarrow \neg Q$ so that $P \:\square\!\!\rightarrow \neg Q$ and $P \:\diamond\!\!\rightarrow Q$ are logically incompatible, still, the Molinist will insist, it remains true that if P were the case it *could* be the case that $\neg Q$. In other words, I *could* do otherwise, even if it is not the case that I *might* do otherwise. Craig, for instance, has pointed out that if one imagines "would" counterfactuals as being incompatible with creaturely freedom, then that person "has forgotten the difference between what one *could* do and what one *might* do in any set of circumstances. *Freedom requires only that in a given set of circumstances one be in some sense capable of refraining from doing what one would do; it is not required that one might not do what one would do.*"[31]

Reply

As Craig's comment makes clear, the above objection is based on the idea that "could" and "might" ought to be construed as distinct notions of possibility. When properly parsed, one will see that the libertarian needn't require Lewis's standard account of might-counterfactuals in order to express and affirm a robust sense of free will. Or, so the thought goes.

This objection is unpersuasive—or at least it should be if one wants to uphold common libertarian assumptions. For once we uncover what the difference between these two modal terms is supposed to be, we'll discover that the Molinist is operating with a far more attenuated account of freedom than many have realized. To see this we simply need to look again to Craig. In the

---

30. Bennett, *A Philosophical Guide to Conditionals*, 189.
31. Craig, "God Directs All Things," 89 (emphasis in original).

very same paragraph in which he approvingly gives Lewis's definition for $\diamondsuit\!\!\rightarrow$, Craig explains the relevant difference between the notion of "could" on the one hand, and the "might" of counterfactual logic on the other.

> 'Might' counterfactuals should not be confused with subjunctive con-
> ditionals involving the word 'could.' 'Could' is taken to express mere
> possibility and so is a constituent of a modal statement expressing a
> possible truth. The distinction is important because the fact that some-
> thing could happen under certain circumstances does not imply that it
> might happen under those circumstances. 'Might' is more restrictive
> than 'could' and indicates *a genuine, live option under the circum-
> stances*, not a bare logical possibility.[32]

This account of the "might" counterfactual operator, of course, follows Lewis's usual usage. And it is more than a bit baffling why Craig would sup-pose that the open theist description of causally indeterminate events in terms of what "might and might not" occur is at odds with it. Far from eschewing their differences, when the neo-Molinist affirms that an agent *S* might have done other than *x*—that is, *might not* have done *x*—she is expressing an idea that Lewis's semantics are perfectly well-equipped to handle. She is saying that there are, for any circumstances *C* in which *S* freely chooses *x*, other worlds in which, in the *exact* same *C*, *S* chooses not-*x* instead. Such an account of freedom is what Alfred Mele has appropriately dubbed *deep openness*. As Mele puts it,

> Sometimes you and I would have made an alternative decision if
> things had been a bit different. For example, if you had been in a
> slightly better mood, you might have decided to donate twenty dollars
> to a worthy cause instead of just ten. But this isn't enough for the kind
> of openness at issue. . . . What's needed is that more than one option
> was open to you, given everything as it actually was at the time—your
> mood, all your thoughts and feelings, your brain, your environment,
> and indeed the entire universe and its entire history. Having been able
> to have made a different decision if things had been a bit different is
> one thing; having been able to have made a different decision in the
> absence of any prior difference is another.[33]

Counter-Objection

It has occasionally been pointed out in the literature, however, that be-sides his usual "not-would-not" reading of "might," Lewis also admitted a "would-be-possible" reading of the $\diamondsuit\!\!\rightarrow$ operator where "possible" means

---

32. Moreland and Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*, 53 (em-phasis added).

33. Alfred R. Mele, *Free: Why Science Hasn't Disproved Free Will* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 2.

"some minute (though nonzero) chance."[34] The idea is supposed to be that a counterfactual such as

(9) If it were that *P*, then it would not be that *Q*

can be true and is compatible with

(10) If it were that *P*, then there would be some chance that *Q*.

But since (10) implies

(11) If it were that *P*, then it might be that *Q*

it would follow that (9) and (11) are compatible rather than contradictory. In other words, (9) is only incompatible with (11) when the "might" in (11) is taken as "not-would-not." The upshot is that on the alternative "would-be-possible" reading of (11), both (9) and (11) can be true together (similarly for "would" and "might not")—thus, figure 3 would be rendered invalid.

The question, then, is whether the traditional Molinist could adopt this "would-be-possible" sense of "might" as an adequate reading of our libertarian intuitions and in so doing deny (2) in the neo-Molinist's argument, (1)–(3), above. Against those who have put forward similar arguments,[35] this seems to be exactly what Craig's objection is getting at. And there have been other Molinists who have objected to this line of reasoning in a similar fashion. For example, Edward Wierenga and Thomas Flint have claimed that the Molinist should not agree that a situation in which an agent makes a libertarian free choice with respect to doing or not doing *x* is a situation in which the agent *might* do *x* but also *might not* do it. "Rather," Wierenga urges, "if an agent would do *x* if the agent were in *C*, then it is *possible that* the agent be in *C* and not do *x*, and there are other worlds with the same initial segment in which the agent *is* in *C* and does not do *x*."[36] Flint, too, is satisfied with this response and has even gone so far as to say that Wierenga has said "all

---

34. This has been recognized, for instance, by Keith DeRose, "Can It Be That It Would Have Been Even Though It Might Not Have Been?," *Philosophical Perspectives* 13 (1999): 396–7; as well as Edwin Mares and Ken Perszyk, "Molinist Conditionals," in *Molinism*, 104n12. For Lewis's discussion of this alternate interpretation of "might" see his "Postscripts to 'Counterfactual Dependence and Time's Arrow,'" in Lewis, *Philosophical Papers*, vol. 2 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 63–5; and the appendix in *Counterfactuals*, 146.

35. For arguments that have attempted to show—given Lewis's standard account of the might-counterfactual—that there are no true "would" CCFs, see Robert Merrihew Adams, "Middle Knowledge and the Problem of Evil," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 14 (1977): 109–17; William Hasker, "A Philosophical Perspective," in *The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994), 145; and Peter van Inwagen, "Against Middle Knowledge," in *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 21 (1997): 232.

36. Edward Wierenga, "Tilting at Molinism," in *Molinism*, 136. Cf. Wierenga, *The Nature of God: An Inquiry into Divine Attributes* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), 140–3. Again, in order to maintain uniformity with the symbols used throughout this paper, I've substituted "*x*" for Wierenga's "*A*" to represent the arbitrary action of an agent.

that needs to be said" to defuse arguments like (1)–(3) which rely on Lewis's standard semantics.[37]

Counter-Reply

Contrary to what Craig, Wierenga, and Flint might wish however, the sort of possibility at issue in Lewis's alternative reading of $\diamond\!\!\rightarrow$ is much too thin to capture common libertarian intuitions. Whereas, on Lewis's usual "not-would-not" reading of the "might" counterfactual, (11) means that *some* of the most similar worlds where P is the case are also worlds where Q is the case, the "would-be-possible" reading simply means that all of them are worlds where it is possible for Q to happen. In fact, as Lewis points out, it's only when all of them are worlds where Q is an *unfulfilled* possibility that makes the "would-be-possible" interpretation of (11) true rather than the "not-would-not" interpretation.[38] Accordingly, the "would-be-possible" reading is an unattractive account of "might" for libertarians. As the quotation from Wierenga above makes clear, the libertarian doesn't just want to affirm that there's "some minute chance that Q" when that possibility is understood to be so thin as to never actually obtain in *any* of the nearest worlds. Thus for Molinists like Craig, Wierenga, and Flint, the alternative "would-be-possible" interpretation of the might-counterfactual is unavailable if they want to maintain that it is *both* (i) possible that a free agent be in C and not do x, and that (ii) there are other worlds with the same initial segment in which the agent *is* in C and does not do x.

I conclude, therefore, that—*contra* Craig—the neo-Molinist has not "forgotten the difference between what one *could* do and what one *might* do in any set of circumstances." In contrast to the traditional Molinist who rejects the standard account of $\diamond\!\!\rightarrow$ in favor of a "bare possibility" interpretation, the neo-Molinist is upholding the mainstream libertarian intuition that, under any circumstances in which we freely act, choosing otherwise was indeed always a "genuine, live option."

Objection 2

Another way Molinists might object to the neo-Molinist's use of the counterfactual square of opposition is by pointing out that the neo-Molinist's assumption that would-counterfactuals negate opposing might-counterfactuals requires the neo-Molinist metaphysic to be unduly fatalistic. For example, if the truth of "I would order a pizza" means that the subjunctive "I might not order a pizza" is false, this would seem to suggest that it's not

---

37. Thomas Flint, "Whence and Whither the Molinist Debate," in *Molinism*, 38.
38. Lewis, "Postscripts to 'Counterfactual Dependence and Time's Arrow,'" 64.

possible for me to refrain from ordering a pizza. So, I *must* order a pizza. But that's absurd, the Molinist will claim, for we are supposed to be talking about conditionals of *freedom*. Recall that Craig made a similar complaint above concerning the logical relations on the open future square of opposition. "In normal English," he wrote,

> the statement that something will occur, but might not occur, is per-fectly coherent. That is just to affirm that it will occur contingently. Boyd must be assuming that 'will' statements are disguised modal statements to the effect that something 'must' occur and so can be set in opposition to 'might' statements.[39]

The idea, then, is that in order for the contradictory relations on the above squares of opposition to have any metaphysical import, open theists have to assume two things: future-tense indicatives are actually modal, and the relevant modality in question is that of necessity.

Reply

As we've already seen, like the traditional Molinist, the neo-Molinist does indeed want to suggest that future-tense indicatives are related to modal statements. Specifically, they want to maintain that the "will" statements that make up God's free knowledge are logically preceded by and were once ap-prehended as "would" statements in God's middle knowledge. So, the state-ment "Johnny will order a pizza" was logically preceded by "Johnny would order a pizza" which, on the Lewisian semantics, means that "Johnny might not order a pizza" is false. Does this mean that it's *impossible* for Johnny to refrain from ordering a pizza? No. The Molinist complaint here fails to take into consideration a point they were so eager to bring forward in the previ-ous objection—that is, that modality comes in varying degrees and strengths. The neo-Molinist will insist that even though it's not the case that Johnny might not order a pizza, still, he *could* refrain from ordering a pizza. Such a thing after all is logically possible. Johnny could have done other than order out, but the worlds in which he refrains from dialing for delivery are less similar to and, hence, more distant from the actual world than those worlds in which Johnny orders his pie. Therefore, the neo-Molinist needn't assume that either "necessarily, Johnny will order a pizza" or "necessarily, Johnny would order a pizza" are true since they can happily acknowledge that he doesn't order a pizza in *every* possible world he happens to inhabit.[40]

However the neo-Molinist will be quick to point out that, while Johnny does not do what he does *of necessity*, this fact is not, in and of itself, enough

---

39. Craig, "Response to Gregory A. Boyd," 229.
40. I'm speaking loosely here; I don't mean to be making any metaphysical commitments concerning counterpart theory, modal realism, etc.

to secure the sorts of goods theistic libertarians typically think genuine free will affords. For instance, in order to be genuinely free and, thus, ultimately responsible for an action in a way that is God exonerating, the neo-Molinist will argue that we need a kind of freedom that will rule out the possibility of manipulation. Manipulation scenarios, as Robert Kane has suggested, can be cases of "nonconstraining control," whereby

> the controllers do not get their way by constraining or coercing others against their wills, but rather by manipulating the wills of others so that the others (willingly) do what the controllers desire. The controlled agents consequently do not feel frustrated or thwarted. They act in accordance with their own wants, desires or intentions. Yet they are controlled nevertheless by others who have manipulated their circumstances so that they want, desire, or intend only what the controllers have planned.[41]

Recently, Dean Zimmerman has argued that exactly this sort of control is possible for the God of traditional Molinism.[42] And, in his response to Zimmerman, Craig has revealed that the traditional Molinist should have no problem with such cases of control. Here's how Craig summarizes the objection:

> [The worry is that] . . . given that the circumstances *C* are non-determining, it must be a brute, contingent fact how [some agent] *S* would choose in *C*. But then it is plausible that there are an indefinite number of circumstances *C** that differ from *C* in imperceptible or causally irrelevant ways (for example, a different stellar event in Alpha Centauri at the same time of *S*'s decision), in which *S* would choose differently than in *C*. So God by placing *S* in one of these circumstances *C** could bring it about that *S* choose freely whatever God wishes without any deleterious impact upon God's providential plan.[43]

To be sure, Craig objects to this argument in numerous places, but what's important to note is this: he contends that even if such control were possible and utilized by God, we would *still* be free in the relevant sense. As he puts it,

> What is the import of such an objection? It does nothing, I think, to undermine the Molinist account of providence as such. In particular, it does not in any way undermine the freedom of the creatures in whatever circumstances they find themselves, for their choices are in every case causally undetermined. If a choice is freely made in *C*, then it would be freely made in *C** which includes some causally irrelevant event not included in *C*. If God places *S* in *C*, then *S*'s freedom is not

---

41. Robert Kane, *The Significance of Free Will* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 65.

42. Zimmerman, "Yet Another Anti-Molinist Argument," in *Metaphysics and the Good: Themes from the Philosophy of Robert Merrihew Adams*, ed. Samuel Newlands and Larry M. Jorgensen (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 33–94.

43. Craig, "Yet Another Failed Anti-Molinist Argument," in *Molinism*, 145.

compromised by the mere fact that had God placed *S* in *C** instead, *S* would have chosen differently.[44]

Craig, however, seems here to have overlooked a subtly important implication of this objection: even if it could be argued that *S*'s freedom is in no way compromised in the above scenario, God's *character* potentially would be. For suppose that, unlike *S*'s choice in *C**, *S*'s choice in *C* is one for which *S* will be held morally blameworthy. By purposely placing *S* in *C* rather than *C**, God would be deliberately bypassing an avenue—an avenue readily open to *both* him and *S*—in which *S* freely chose the good, and then punishing *S* for it. Hardly the behavior of a just and benevolent being! But, of course, it is exactly situations like this that occur on compatibilist conceptions of freedom and are why libertarians find such conceptions of freedom so objectionable. For given compatibilism, it is the case that for every *C* in which *S* sins, God could have determined instead that *S* freely *not* sin. This is possible after all since, on this account of freedom, freedom and determinism are understood to be *compatible*. Hence libertarian theists reject such accounts of freedom, not because compatibilist accounts of freedom can't be given, but because such accounts allow for morally problematic views *of God*.[45] Compatibilists offer an account of freedom in which the agent, from the libertarian's perspective anyway, is not acting in a way that gets God sufficiently "off the hook." So, the agent is not ultimately responsible in the sense relevant to theistic libertarians outlined above.

Thus while Craig and other Molinists *formally* deny compatibilism, given the relatively broad reading of possibility they endorse, their understanding of what counts as a free choice nevertheless leaves room, in principle, for God to act in similarly objectionable ways. And to that degree at least, such a conception of freedom is one that many libertarians, including the neo-Molinist, will find troubling.[46] It is for this reason, then, that the neo-Molinist adopts the more restricted notion of possibility available on Lewis's standard account of "might" when thinking about libertarian free action. For it is the ability to do other than what we actually do, not just in some possible world or other, but *in the exact same circumstances that we are in* that allows us the kind of God exonerating freedom that so many theistic libertarians are intuitively after.

---

44. Ibid.

45. For a trenchant analysis of the problematic nature compatibilist conceptions of freedom pose for God's character, see Jerry L. Walls's excellent article, "Why No Classical Theist, Let Alone Orthodox Christian, Should *Ever* Be a Compatibilist," *Philosophia Christi* 13 (2011): 75–104.

46. Interestingly, the Reformed theologian Dennis Jowers has also recognized this very point. "William Lane Craig," Jowers observes, "sets forth a conception of freedom that sharply diverges from Boyd and resembles in important respects the conception ordinarily advocated by Calvinists" (see Jowers, "Conclusion," in *Four Views on Divine Providence*, 247).

Objection 3

After having finally been confronted with the aforementioned incompatibility between the Stalnaker-Lewis semantics (and the trouble it can pose for their conception of middle knowledge), traditional Molinists often simply reject the standard counterfactual semantics as being "inadequate" to the task of analyzing CCFs.[47] Once again, Craig's response is representative:

> [O]bjections to middle knowledge based on its alleged incompatibility with the possible worlds account of . . . counterfactuals strike me as very unimpressive. That account was drafted without any consideration of the peculiar situations engendered by theism . . . or middle knowledge. The account may simply be inadequate for the concerns of the philosopher of religion. In fact, I think it is evident that the possible worlds semantics for counterfactual conditionals *is* defective, for that account cannot adequately handle counterfactuals with impossible antecedents.[48]

Reply

Such a retort is unsatisfactory for at least two reasons. In the first place, the supposed difficulty for standard possible world semantics posed by counterfactuals with "impossible antecedents" (that is, counterpossibles) that Craig cites is, as Wierenga has demonstrated, easily resolved. Specifically, one can avoid such difficulties *and* continue to accept Lewis's interdefinable account of the counterfactual operators by adopting the following modification of Lewis's definition: $(P \diamondsuit\!\!\rightarrow Q) \equiv \neg(P \,\square\!\!\rightarrow \neg Q) \vee (P \,\square\!\!\rightarrow Q)$.[49]

Second, and more importantly, in light of his above complaint concerning Boyd's understanding of might-conditionals, Craig's response here regarding the use of possible worlds semantics is rather strange. For if the customary semantics for counterfactual conditionals are, as Craig states, ultimately inadequate, one wonders why he would attempt to object to the neo-Molinist's understanding of might CCFs based on an alleged *misunderstanding* of these semantics. Such an objection seems to imply that a correct understanding would serve to support Craig's position (or at least fail to support the neo-Molinist position). But it does nothing of the sort.[50] As I've tried

---

47. This, for instance, is Kowalski's recommendation. See his "On Behalf of a Suarezian Middle Knowledge," 225.

48. Craig, "Hasker on Divine Knowledge," *Philosophical Studies* 67 (1992): 103.

49. Wierenga, "Theism and Counterpossibles," *Philosophical Studies* 89 (1998): 94.

50. Despite what Mares and Perszyk argue ("Molinist Conditionals," 104–5), Lewis's standard account of "might" does *not* allow the Molinist to say there are worlds that are feasible for creatures to get to but unavailable to God. For while it is true that, given Molinist assumptions, Adam (somehow) has counterfactual power over the true CCFs about him, this does not mean that it was open to Adam to get to a world, say, in which he refrained from eating the forbidden

to show in this essay, in arriving at her view the neo-Molinist *is* observing and maintaining the standard distinctions between Stalnaker and Lewis's actual formal semantics for counterfactuals. And it is because of these distinctions that, from the neo-Molinist's point of view, the truth of some conjoined might-counterfactuals is, given libertarian freedom, much more plausible than the validity of CEM. Since the neological stages in God's knowledge provide a coherent alternative to the traditional Molinist account, therefore, the above argument not only shows how one *could* move from Molinism to neo-Molinism, it shows why a libertarian *might* actually want to do so.[51]

Stage	Truths Known	Modal Status	Relation to God's Activity
Natural knowledge	What "must" ("must not"), "could" ("could not") be	Necessary	Independent, prevolitional
Middle knowledge	What "would," "would not," and "might and might not" be . . . . Counterfactual Square of Opposition (fig. 3)	Contingent	Dependent, precreational God decides to bring creaturely essences into being by willing their existence and gifting the power of contrary choice to such essences.
God's creative act of will	What parameters and contingency plans are in place	Contingent	Dependent God instantiates creaturely essences endowed with free will.
Free knowledge	What "will," "will not," and "might and might not" be . . . . Open Future Square of Opposition (fig. 1)	Contingent	Dependent, postcreational God works toward his creational goals within the context of the parameters and contingency plans he's put in place for each individual creature.

Figure 4. Neological Stages in God's Knowledge

fruit. In order for Adam to have actually refrained from doing what he in fact did, God would have had to been presented with a different CCF. But this doesn't get Adam to a world in which he passes on his wife's offer. In order to get to *that* world, God has to place (i.e., instantiate) Adam in the relevant circumstances. And whether God decides to do this is not up to Adam at all. Indeed, the transition of any true "would" CCF into a true future-tense indicative proposition is effected by God's creative decree. On the traditional Molinist scheme, therefore, it is ultimately *God* who decides what we will do, not us.