

Transworld Depravity and Unobtainable Worlds

Introduction

The free will defense attempts to show that the existence of God is logically compatible with the existence of evil, and it received its most sophisticated development in the work of Alvin Plantinga (1974). Many philosophers believe that Plantinga's free will defense conclusively demonstrates the logical compatibility of God and evil. Philosophers such as W. Alston, R. Adams, and W. Rowe have written that Plantinga's version of the free will defense solves the deductive problem of evil.¹ An integral part of Plantinga's free will defense is the concept of transworld depravity. If every essence suffers from transworld depravity, God could not create a morally perfect world, i.e., a world containing moral good but no moral evil. Thus, if every essence suffers from transworld depravity, God has a reason for creating a world containing evil. Since Plantinga is giving a free will defense and not a theodicy, he does not claim that all essences have transworld depravity.² Instead, he claims that it is possible that all essences suffer from transworld depravity; let us call this the hypothesis of universal transworld depravity.

Recently some philosophers have argued that Plantinga has not proved that universal transworld depravity is logically possible. It has been argued that although it is true that for all we know every essence suffers from transworld depravity, Plantinga has not *shown* that it is really possible. However, even if Plantinga has not shown that it is logically possible that every essence suffers from transworld depravity, philosophers such as Howard-Snyder and O'Leary-Hawthorne have thought it clear that it is epistemically possible, in the sense that we can't rule it out.³ That is, for all we know, it could be the case that every essence suffers from transworld depravity. In the following I will argue that it turns out there is a good explanation of why Plantinga and others have been unable to show the hypothesis of universal transworld depravity is possible: it is necessarily false. It turns out to be quite easy to show that it is not possible that every essence suffers from transworld depravity. It will then also be false that for all we know every essence suffers from transworld depravity. Fortunately, we can modify

the concept of transworld depravity to avoid the problem I raise. I will then point out a surprising consequence of the hypothesis of universal transworld depravity that has not been discussed in the literature. This consequence will allow us to develop a different concept that is easier to satisfy than transworld depravity. We will then formulate an improved free will defense based on this concept instead of the possibility of universal transworld depravity.

Transworld Depravity and the Free Will Defense

To begin our discussion of transworld depravity we first need Plantinga's distinction between God strongly actualizing a state of affairs and his weakly actualizing a state of affairs. According to Plantinga, "[i]n the strong sense, God can actualize only what he can *cause* to be actual." (p. 173). God can strongly actualize a state of affairs if he can cause it to be actual or if he can directly bring it about. This is in contrast to states of affairs that God may be only able to weakly actualize, such as my choosing a good action. By strongly actualizing certain states of affairs God may be able to weakly actualize other states of affairs. Following Plantinga, we will generally use 'actualize' to mean 'weakly actualize'. (p. 173) The basic idea of Plantinga's free will defense is that the world may be such that no matter what state of affairs God would strongly actualize, some essence would choose evil at some point. If so, it would not be within God's power to bring about a world with moral good and no moral evil. The crucial property in Plantinga's free will defense is the concept of transworld depravity:

TWD: An essence suffers from transworld depravity if and only if for every world *W* such that *E* entails the properties is significantly free in *W* and always does what is right in *W*, there is a state of affairs *T* and an action *A* such that

- (1) *T* is the largest state of affairs God strongly actualizes in *W*,
- (2) *A* is morally significant for *E*'s instantiation in *W*,

and

- (3) if God had strongly actualized *T*, *E*'s instantiation would have gone wrong with respect to *A*. (p. 188)

Plantinga then claims it is possible that every essence suffers from transworld depravity, which is the hypothesis of universal transworld depravity. If correct, it is possible that God is unable to actualize a world that contains moral good and no moral evil.

I believe that the hypothesis of universal transworld depravity is false; it is not possible that every essence suffers from transworld depravity. Of course, I also hold that it is necessarily false, and that it is not epistemically possible that every essence suffers from transworld depravity. My argument will be quite simple: I will describe a possible world which implies that it is not possible for the person in it to have transworld depravity. From this it will follow that it is not possible that all persons, or essences, have transworld depravity.

Consider a possible world W_β in which Adam's first and only free choice is whether to kill himself (which is a morally bad action), and in which Adam makes the right choice not to kill himself; W_β is a world in which Adam only chooses the good. In this possible world, God strongly actualizes a situation in which Adam has the free choice to make, and after Adam decides not to kill himself, God announces that Adam has chosen the good and because of this he will make him ruler of Eden. What is important in this example is that the total state of affairs that God strongly actualizes after the good free choice is different from the total state of affairs that God could strongly actualize if Adam chose differently. If Adam chooses to kill himself, God cannot strongly actualize his making Adam ruler of Eden and announcing that Adam chose not to kill himself. These actions by God are inconsistent with Adam's killing himself. Of course, since Adam has this free choice in W_β , there is another possible world W_Γ where Adam chooses to kill himself. Following Plantinga's terminology, let TW_β be the total state of affairs that God strongly actualizes in W_β and TW_Γ be the total state of affairs that God strongly actualizes in W_Γ .

In order for Adam to suffer from transworld depravity it must be the case that if God were to actualize TW_β , then Adam would have gone wrong with respect to his choice, i.e., Adam would have chosen to kill himself. However, this is false. If God were to strongly actualize TW_β , Adam did not kill himself; TW_β is inconsistent with Adam killing himself. Another way of seeing this is that it is not possible for God to weakly actualize W_Γ by strongly actualizing TW_β ; if TW_β were to occur, W_Γ would not be actual. Thus if God strongly actualizes TW_β in a world, Adam chose not to kill himself in that world. We thus see that it is not possible for Adam to suffer from transworld depravity. Necessarily, if God had actualized TW_β , Adam would not have gone wrong with respect to his free choice. Furthermore, since in W_β Adam had only one free choice, if TW_β is actual, we have a world in which there is moral good but no moral

evil.

The above problem arose because in strongly actualizing TW_β , God was actualizing a state of affairs that is impossible if Adam were to have chosen the evil; TW_β implies that Adam chose the good. In general, a person will not suffer from transworld depravity if there is a world in which they only choose the good, but God acts differently than he would have if the person had chosen the bad at some point. This situation may be very common; if God's actions in some morally perfect world depend upon the moral choices someone makes in that world, then that person does not have transworld depravity. This is because if God had acted in the way he does when the person only chooses the good, then the person would not have chosen wrong at any point. Furthermore, it will not even be possible for someone to have transworld depravity if it is necessary that the person would not choose badly if God were to do all the things he does when the person only chooses the good. Once one sees this, it is very easy to describe possible worlds which show that it is not possible for persons in it to have transworld depravity. Thus it is false that it is possible that all essences suffer from transworld depravity.

Modifying Transworld Depravity

In order to avoid the above problem, we need to modify transworld depravity so that the state of affairs that God strongly actualizes does not imply that the wrong choice was not made. The counterfactual conditional in transworld depravity is intuitively supposed to be about what the person would freely do in the situation in which he or she has the free choice. We want the person in the counterfactual situation to be able to freely choose the good, and to freely choose the bad. But the counterfactual situation referred to in transworld depravity may not be consistent with the person choosing the bad. We need to modify the counterfactual situation so that it is consistent with the person freely choosing the bad, as well as consistent with freely choosing the good. One proposal to fix this problem would be to look only at what God strongly actualizes up to and including the time of the person's free choice. Let W_β^t be the state of world W_β up to time t , and let TW_β^t be the total state of affairs that God strongly actualizes in W_β up to and including time t . Consider now the conditional: if God had strongly actualized TW_β^t , then Adam would have gone wrong in his choice. To determine the truth of this conditional, first note that TW_β^t is the same as TW_Γ^t ; thus God strongly actualizing TW_β^t is consistent with Adam choosing to kill himself and with Adam

choosing not to kill himself; this is the counterfactual situation we intuitively want to look at. Therefore, on this proposal we can escape the above problem by changing condition (1) to (1') in Plantinga's original definition of transworld depravity:

TWD₁: An essence suffers from transworld depravity if and only if for every world W such that E entails the properties is significantly free in W and always does what is right in W, there is a state of affairs T and an action A such that
(1') T is the largest state of affairs God strongly actualizes in W *up to and including the time A occurs*, (2) A is morally significant for E's instantiation in W,
and
(3) if God had strongly actualized T, E's instantiation would have gone wrong with respect to A. (p. 188)

Given this modification, the example above does not show that it is not possible for everyone to suffer from transworld depravity.

Although this modification to transworld depravity handles our original example correctly, if God has foreknowledge of future free choices there will be other similar examples that provide problems for this modified account of transworld depravity. Consider possible world W_{Θ} , which is very similar to W_{β} , in which Adam's first and only free choice is whether to kill himself. As in W_{β} , in W_{Θ} Adam makes the right choice and does not kill himself. However, God has foreknowledge of future free choices, and knows that Adam will freely choose not to kill himself. Because of this, in W_{Θ} , before Adam makes his choice, God announces to some of the angels and animals that Adam will make the right choice. The largest state of affairs that God strongly actualized in W_{Θ} up until time t includes God announcing that Adam will freely choose not to kill himself. Thus, if God were to strongly actualize that state of affairs, it would not be possible for Adam to freely choose to kill himself. This is because if God were to strongly actualize that state of affairs, it would be because Adam would freely choose the good. This world shows it is not possible for Adam to suffer from transworld depravity, even given the above modification in TWD₁. It is necessary that if God were to strongly actualize the largest state of affairs he strongly actualizes in W_{Θ} (up until t), Adam would choose the good and not kill himself. Thus it is not possible for Adam to suffer from transworld depravity.

The key to solving this problem is to make use of our concept of the initial segment of a world until time t . The initial segment until time t of a world W includes all of the states of affairs in W up to and including t , but will not include states of affairs like the following:

Joe will freely choose to do X at later time $t+n$.

It is true that at $t+n$ state of affairs X will be actual.

God says that state of affairs X will be actual at time $t+n$

Although it is not easy to say precisely what the initial segment of a world until time t is, we do have an intuitive idea of this concept.⁴ Basically we want to look at the possible world until t , but exclude states of affairs like the ones listed above. This may remind some readers of the discussion between hard facts and soft facts, and using that terminology, the initial segment of a world will only contain hard facts and no soft facts (which are dependent upon the future). We will write SW_{Θ}^t to stand for the initial segment of world W_{Θ} until time t , and TSW_{Θ}^t to stand for the total state of affairs that God strongly actualizes in SW_{Θ}^t .

In this example, there is another world W_{Δ} such that $TSW_{\Delta}^t = TSW_{\Theta}^t$, and in W_{Δ} Adam chooses to kill himself. The conditional we are interested in evaluating is:

If God were to strongly actualize TSW_{Θ}^t , then Adam would have chosen wrong.

God strongly actualizing TSW_{Θ}^t is consistent with W_{Θ} being actual and with W_{Δ} being actual, and thus this is the conditional that we intuitively want to evaluate. We can account for this by modifying Plantinga's definition of transworld depravity to look at conditionals in which God strongly actualizes the initial segment of a morally perfect world, instead of looking at conditionals in which God strongly actualizes a whole world. Our modified version of transworld depravity would be:

TWD₂: An essence suffers from transworld depravity if and only if for every world W such that E entails the properties is significantly free in W and always does what is right in W , there is a time t and action A at t such that

(1) T is the largest state of affairs God strongly actualizes in the initial segment of W up to t ,

(2) A is morally significant for E 's instantiation in W ,

and

(3) if God had strongly actualized T , E 's instantiation would have gone wrong

with respect to A.

This modification of transworld depravity handles both of the examples we looked at above. My argument that it is not possible for Adam to suffer from transworld depravity is ineffective against this new account of transworld depravity.

However, another problem arises which shows that it is not possible for everyone to suffer from transworld depravity, even given the modification in TWD_2 . The basic idea is that if God were to try to actualize a morally perfect world, earlier agents' bad choices might prevent later agents from even existing, in which case they would not make any wrong choices. A specific example would be the following. Suppose that we have a morally perfect world W_ω in which God creates Adam and Eve, and then does not strongly actualize any other later state of affairs.⁵ Adam's first and only free choice is whether to kill himself at time t , and if he kills himself, he will have no offspring; the human race will die out. In this morally perfect world Adam does not kill himself, and he has a son Abel (among others) who makes his only free choice at time t' . If Adam suffers from transworld depravity, then it is true that if God were to strongly actualize all that he strongly actualizes in the initial segment of W_ω until t , then Adam would choose wrong and kill himself. Notice that the largest state of affairs that God strongly actualizes in W_ω until t is the same as the largest state of affairs that God strongly actualizes in W_ω until t' : $TSW_\omega^t = TSW_\omega^{t'}$. From this it follows that if God were to strongly actualize the largest state of affairs that he strongly actualizes in the initial segment of the world until time t' , Abel would not exist, because Adam would have killed himself. From this it follows that if God were to strongly actualize the largest state of affairs that God strongly actualizes in the initial segment of W_ω until time t' , Abel would not choose wrong at t' , because he would not exist. Thus Abel does not suffer from transworld depravity, nor is it possible that Abel suffer from transworld depravity if Adam suffers from transworld depravity. Given our definition of transworld depravity, it is not possible that every essence suffer from transworld depravity.

Fortunately we can modify the account of transworld depravity so that it is possible for every essence to suffer from transworld depravity. The above problem arose because if Adam suffers from transworld depravity, the initial segment of W_ω until t' would not be actual if God were to strongly actualize all that he strongly actualizes in the initial

segment of W_ω until t' . However, Abel suffering from transworld depravity requires the initial segment of W_ω until t' to be actual if God were to strongly actualize all that he strongly actualizes in the initial segment of W_ω until t' . In other words, in order for Abel to have transworld depravity it must be the case that if God were to strongly actualize $TSW_\omega^{t'}$, then $SW_\omega^{t'}$ would be actual. But $TSW_\omega^{t'}$ is the same as TSW_ω^t , and if God were to strongly actualize TSW_ω^t then $SW_\omega^{t'}$ would not be actual. Thus, if Adam suffers from transworld depravity, Abel does not suffer from transworld depravity. We can easily modify the definition of transworld depravity to account for this problem by looking at the counterfactual situation in which the initial segment of W until t is weakly actualized instead of looking at the counterfactual situation in which God strongly actualizes the initial segment of W until t :

TWD₃: An essence suffers from transworld depravity if and only if for every world W such that E entails the properties is significantly free in W and always does what is right in W , there is a time t and action A at t such that

- (1) A is morally significant for E 's instantiation in W at t ,
- and
- (2) if God had (weakly) actualized the initial segment of W up to t , E 's instantiation would have gone wrong with respect to A .

This account of transworld depravity handles this problem, because it is possible for the counterfactual (2) to be true of Abel and W_ω at t' even if Adam suffers from transworld depravity. If Adam suffers from transworld depravity, God cannot actualize the initial segment of W_ω up to t' . But this does not mean that (2) is false. Counterfactuals are “variably strict conditionals” which allows for both Adam and Abel to suffer from transworld depravity according to TWD₃.⁶ We will thus adopt TWD₃ as our analysis of transworld depravity.

An Interesting Consequence

The doctrine of universal transworld depravity has an unusual consequence for worlds in which there is a first free choice. To illustrate, suppose that W_Φ is a world in which everyone always does what is right, but that Adam exists in this world and has transworld depravity. Furthermore, assume that the evil choice that Adam would make occurs late in Adam's life, after he has made many good choices. One might then ask why God does not simply end the world before Adam makes that evil choice,

in which case God would have actualized a world with moral good and no moral evil. More specifically, one might object that if Adam would not choose evil on his first choice, God could end the world after Adam's first choice and have a world with moral good and no moral evil.

The answer to this objection is that the world in which Adam's first choice is good, and then God ends the world, is a possible world different from W_Φ , say W_Ψ . Since Adam has transworld depravity, and W_Ψ is a world in which Adam only does what is right, if God were to put Adam in the situation at time t in which he has to make his only free choice, Adam would choose wrong. In other words, if God were to actualize the initial segment of W_Ψ^t , Adam would do wrong. But notice the initial segment of W_Ψ^t is the same as the initial segment of W_Φ^t , and thus Adam would also go wrong on his first choice if God were to try to actualize W_Φ . What this shows us is that if a person has transworld depravity, if God were to actualize that person being in a situation in which he or she has a first free choice, the person will go wrong on that first choice. In other words, having transworld depravity implies that if God were to try to actualize a world in which that person only chooses the good, that person would go wrong on his or her first choice.⁷

Now suppose that Adam does not have a first free choice: Adam has made infinitely many choices for the good in the past. Transworld depravity implies that there never was a time at which all of Adam's earlier choices would be good, if God were to put Adam in those situations. In other words, for any good choice Adam made, he would have chosen evil on some earlier choice, if God had put him in that situation. The reason for this is the same as above; if there were a time at which there was no earlier choice that Adam would have gone wrong on, then God could simply have ended the world then and had a world with moral good and no moral evil. Since transworld depravity does not allow this, transworld depravity implies that for any good choice Adam made in the past, there must have been an earlier choice he would have gone wrong on if God has strongly actualized the situation in which he had that choice.

Unobtainable Worlds

Plantinga's goal in developing the free will defense was to show that it is possible that God could not actualize any morally perfect world. If an essence has transworld depravity, God cannot actualize a world where that essence's instantiation only does

what is right. From this it follows that God cannot actualize any morally perfect world containing the instantiation of that essence. And if all essences suffer from transworld depravity, then God cannot actualize a morally perfect world. If God were to try to actualize a morally perfect world, every person in that world would choose wrong at some point.

However, requiring that every person would choose wrong at some point is not needed in order to fulfill Plantinga's goal of showing that it is possible that God could not actualize a morally perfect world. All that is really needed is that one person would choose wrong if God tried to actualize a morally perfect world. This, along with the above implications of transworld depravity, suggest that we can develop a free will defense based on a different concept than transworld depravity. Consider the following:

A world W in which there are free choices and every choice is good is *unobtainable* iff:

If there is one or more first free choices in W at time t , then it is true that, if God had actualized the initial segment of W until t , someone would have freely chosen wrong at t .

If there is no first free choice in W , then for any free choice at a time t there is a free choice at an earlier time t' such that, it is true that if God had actualized the initial segment of W until t' , someone would have freely chosen wrong at t' .

The idea is that if a world W is unobtainable, then God cannot bring about W , because God cannot actualize an initial segment of W in which all choices are good. There is nothing God could do that would result in W being actual. If there is a first choice in W , the person would have gone wrong in that choice. If there is no first choice in W , however far back you go, there would always be an earlier evil choice; there is no initial segment of the world in which there would be only good choices.

To base a free will defense on the concept of a world being unobtainable, the free will defender will claim that it is possible that all worlds in which people only freely choose the good are unobtainable. If so, it is possible that God could not actualize a world containing moral good and no moral evil. This would provide a reason for God to permit evil in the world.

Counterfactuals of Freedom

The above concept of an unobtainable world may be objected to on the grounds that, like transworld depravity, it assumes there are true counterfactuals of freedom, i.e., that counterfactuals about the free choices of people can be true.⁸ This is highly controversial in the literature, but fortunately the intuition behind the concept of an unobtainable world does not require the truth of counterfactuals of freedom. We can modify our account of a world being unobtainable so that it does not assume any counterfactuals of freedom are true, and yet still functions in the free will defense:

A world W in which there are free choices and every choice is good is *unobtainable** iff

If there is one or more first free choices in W at time t , then it is false that, if God had actualized the initial segment of W up to t , the persons would have freely chosen right at t .

If there is no first free choice in W , then for any free choice at a time t , there is a free choice at an earlier time t' such that, it is false that if God had actualized the initial segment of W until t' , the person would have freely chosen right at t' .

This modification of a world being unobtainable does not assume there are any true conditionals of freedom, although it may not be as clear as the original version. This version also provides an effective free will defense, because it shows that there is nothing God could do that would result in there being only good free choices. But if there is nothing God could have done that would have brought about only good free choices, then God has a reason for permitting moral evil in the world.

Transworld Depravity and Unobtainable Worlds

It should be clear that if every essence suffers from transworld depravity, then every morally perfect world in which there are good free choices and no bad free choices is unobtainable. Every essence suffering from transworld depravity implies that God cannot actualize an initial segment of a world in which all choices are good, and this is what it means to say that all worlds in which people only freely choose the good

and not the bad are unobtainable. So the hypothesis of universal transworld depravity implies the hypothesis that all morally perfect worlds are unobtainable.

It also is clear that every morally perfect world could be unobtainable and yet it be false that every essence suffers from transworld depravity. Suppose that we have a morally perfect world in which there are two persons, Zeb and Zac, and in which Zac makes some (at least one) free choice before Zeb does. This world is unobtainable, because if God had tried to actualize it, Zac would have chosen wrong on his first choice. However, Zeb would not ever have chosen bad, and instead would have always chosen right. Even though this world is unobtainable, Zeb does not have transworld depravity, because there is no action that Zeb would have gone wrong with if God had tried to actualize this world. Thus the hypothesis of all morally perfect worlds being unobtainable is a weaker claim than claiming all essences suffer from transworld depravity. This is because the hypothesis of universal transworld depravity requires that if God were to try to actualize a morally perfect world, every essence would go wrong at some point. The hypothesis that every morally perfect world is unobtainable only requires that if God were to try to actualize a morally perfect world, at least one essence would go wrong at some point. A free will defense based on the possibility of all morally perfect worlds being unobtainable does not need to assume as much as a free will defense based on the possibility that every essence suffers from transworld depravity.

We thus see that the free will defense can be based on a weaker notion than universal transworld depravity. However, just as Plantinga has not shown that universal transworld depravity is logically possible, I have not shown that it is logically possible that all morally perfect worlds are unobtainable. However, it is clear that this is epistemically possible, i.e., we cannot rule it out. From this it follows that it is epistemically possible that God has a good reason for permitting evil; if all morally perfect worlds are unobtainable, God could not actualize a world containing moral good and no moral evil. A free will defense based on the concept of morally perfect worlds being unobtainable is successful; we have no basis for claiming that God could not possibly have a reason for permitting evil.

Notes

¹ Robert Adams (1985) writes “it is fair to say that Plantinga has solved this problem. That is, he has argued convincingly for the consistency of [God and evil].” William Alston (1991) has expressed similar views: “Plantinga . . . has established the possibility that God could not actualize a world containing free creatures that always do the right thing.” See also William Rowe (1979).

²Plantinga uses the term “theodicy” to give God’s actual reasons for permitting evil, and the term “defense” to give a logically possible reason God could have for permitting evil. Plantinga does not give a theodicy that claims it is true that everyone suffers from transworld depravity; instead he gives a defense that claims that it is logically possible that every essence suffers from transworld depravity.

³For example, after arguing that Plantinga has not shown that it is possible that every essence suffers from transworld depravity, Howard-Snyder and O’Leary-Hawthorne (1998) write “[I]t is not reasonable to believe that TD [universal transworld depravity] is impossible; for all we reasonably believe, it is possible that every essence suffers from transworld depravity.” (p. 15) Later they write “After all, what do we reasonably believe that entails that it is absolutely impossible that every essence suffers from transworld depravity? Is there some compelling argument for it? Is it just obvious? Are we within our rights to accept it without argument? We think not. So far as we can see, our epistemic situation vis-a-vis the proposition that it is impossible that every essence suffers from transworld depravity is precisely that which we are in vis-a-vis the proposition that it is possible that every essence suffers from transworld depravity.” (pp. 15-16)

⁴One might begin to try to define the initial segment until t of a world W by looking at what histories of the world are compatible with all of the choices one might make at t . Suppose that at time t in W_1 Adam has a choice between options 1,2,3,... n . We can then look at worlds $W_2, W_3, \dots W_n$ that are maximally similar to world W_1 until time t ; intuitively, these will be the worlds that share the same initial segment but diverge at the time of the choice. The initial segment of world W_1 (and also of worlds $W_2, W_3, \dots W_n$) will be the intersection of the worlds until time t :

$$SW_1^t = W_1^t \cap W_2^t \cap W_3^t \dots W_n^t$$

where W_i^t is the state of affairs in world W_i until time t . Of course, this obviously is not an analysis of the concept of an initial segment, but it may help understand the general idea.

⁵Some might object that God's sustaining the world in existence involves his strongly actualizing some states of affairs. If so, the world I describe is not possible and this objection to universal transworld depravity does not arise.

⁶See David Lewis (1973).

⁷If we look at Plantinga's original definition of transworld depravity, this follows only if we assume that the relevant counterfactuals of freedom are not dependent upon what God might do after the choice is made.

⁸Plantinga used counterfactuals of freedom in his free will defense because they were assumed to be true by those proposing the deductive argument from evil. One version of the problem of evil assumes that God knows what each person would do in each counterfactual situation. From this it is argued that God should have acted so that there would be moral good and no moral evil. However, if there were no true counterfactuals of freedom, the objector could not say that if God had acted differently, then a world with moral good and no moral evil would have been actual. Because of this, Plantinga granted the objector the truth of counterfactuals of freedom in order to have a strong statement of the problem of evil. Without true counterfactuals of freedom, it is difficult to even state the deductive argument from evil.

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