ARTICLE

Free Will, Foreknowledge, and Creation: Further Explorations of Kant's Molinism

Wolfgang Ertl

Keio University, Tokyo, Japan
Email: w.ertl@flet.keio.ac.jp

Abstract

While Kant's position concerning human freedom and divine foreknowledge is perhaps the least Molinist element of his multifaceted take on free will, Kant's Molinism (minimally defined) is undeniable when it comes to the threat ensuing from the idea of creation. In line with incompatibilism and with careful qualifications in place, he ultimately suggests regarding free agents as uncreated. Given the limitations of our rational insight, this assumption is indispensable for granting that finite free agents can acquire their intelligible characters by themselves. Nonetheless, Kant concedes that creation may, as a matter of fact, be compatible with what for Molina is the pre-volitionality of the counterfactuals of freedom.

Keywords: free will; determinism; libertarianism; philosophical theology; theism

1. Introduction

Luis de Molina (1535–1600), the early modern Scholastic philosopher and theologian who caused such a stir in post-Reformation Europe two centuries before Kant launched his critical project,[1] is certainly not the first one who comes to mind when thinking of Kant's intellectual ancestors. And yet, perhaps at second view, Molina's role in the establishment of a powerful libertarian account of freedom, which – in Kant's immediate vicinity – found its most vocal representative in Christian Crusius, suggests that such a connection may not look entirely far-fetched after all.[2]

In previous contributions (Ertl 2014, 2020), I have tried to show that the core element of the 'machinery' of human free agency, as Kant sees it, namely the intelligible character, can indeed be understood in terms of Molina's celebrated (or infamous) counterfactuals of freedom.[3] Counterfactuals of freedom are concerned with hypothetical scenarios and state how a finite free agent would act in a fully specified possible situation. My suggestion implies that, paradoxically, this Molinist legacy is pertinent, first and foremost, for a position Molina himself did not share, namely the claim that natural causal determinism and libertarian freedom of human agents can coexist.

Hence, the thesis of Kant as a Molinist (minimally defined, as we shall see) obviously involves a good deal of conceptual work, since the similarities do not lie on the surface. In this article, I am going to explore whether those similarities also

emerge on Molina's own turf, as it were, with regard to the question as to whether human freedom can be upheld in the face of God's foreknowledge and his role as a creator.[4] A third, closely related issue, namely freedom in the face of divine *concursus*, i.e., God's causal activity with regard to human agency beyond his role as creator, of which grace is a prime example, will have to be treated at a later occasion.[5]

Obviously, these questions have far less prominence in Kant's œuvre, but one might expect that the similarities (or differences for that matter) are perhaps more obvious in this regard. As it will turn out, this is in one sense indeed the case, but in another sense it is not. The Molinist dimension when it comes to the defence of freedom in the face of creation is undeniable, although not straightforward. Ironically enough, though, Kant's take on free will in the face of foreknowledge is perhaps the least Molinist element in his overall account.

Strikingly, once again Kant's Molinism gains contours against the background of views sometimes strongly diverging from the historical Molina. Molina is convinced of compatibility when it comes to the creation facet (because, in his opinion, creation does not involve determinism), while Kant's position is more complex. Kant distinguishes what we can understand through the insight of our own reason from how things may be beyond that. With regard to how far our own insight reaches, a form of theological libertarianism and hence incompatibilism is the position to take in this respect. This incompatibilism, however, is meant to guarantee the self-accrued status of the intelligible character, and this in turn is the cornerstone of Kant's Molinism.

The article is structured as follows: I shall first give, in section 2, a very brief summary of my claim that Kant – in the context of his take on free will and natural causal determinism – is committed to Molinism minimally defined (MMD). I then turn in section 3 to Kant's discussion of foreknowledge in the theology lectures. As we shall see, in Kant's opinion, if a problem arises at all for the human free will, it does not arise by virtue of divine knowledge strictly speaking but by virtue of the involvement of the divinity in the *generation* of the respective truths. In section 4, this issue will be explored further, and I shall try to show that such a threat indeed arises by drawing on the idea that God himself, through his will, brings about the truthmakers of what is known.

This idea – ironically enough – was at the heart of a Thomist conception of divine knowledge and diametrically opposed to what Molina had in mind. Strikingly, as we shall see, while Kant rejects the compatibilism inherent in a Thomist approach, he first reaches an unsatisfactory position in that he denies the need for transcendental freedom when we try to uphold the demands of morality in the face of creation. In the final section, I shall look at Kant's later attempts to rectify this shortcoming. In these attempts, Kant's MMD – albeit in an unusual disguise – is in full display.

Examining Kant's Molinist leanings in this regard is hopefully not just an exercise of a somewhat esoteric historiography of ideas. Rather, such an approach is meant to help draw some of the contours of Kant's practically grounded metaphysics. It is important to realize that what re-enters into the critical system on practical grounds, after being expelled from its theoretical realm, is in large parts not a fully-fledged Leibniz-Wolffian, and hence ultimately Thomist, style of metaphysics. Such an examination also promises to chart new paths for discussing Kant's position on compatibility altogether, so that this vast topic that easily eludes a concise account

can be explored on safer grounds. Finally, such an investigation can also highlight tensions within Kant's attempted solution to the compatibility problem.

2. Kant's MMD

In Ertl (2014 passim; 2020: 34–47), I tried to show that Kant – in his account of free will and causal determinism in nature – is committed to a form of Molinism. More precisely, Kant is committed to MMD. This is to say, his doctrine of a self-accrued intelligible character (see, e.g., *CpR*, A539/B567, A556/B584; *CprR*, 5: 98; *Rel*, 6: 27 and 31f)[6] can be read in terms of (i) the claim that there are pre-volitional counterfactuals of freedom, which are even beyond God's control. To repeat, a counterfactual of freedom indicates what a finite free agent would do in a fully specified possible situation, and 'prevolitional' refers to God's will. In the light of his doctrine of God as the scrutinizer of the heart, Kant at least implicitly (ii) accepts that there is something like genuine so-called 'middle knowledge' (*scientia media*) by virtue of which God knows how free human agents would behave in all possible situations without, however, using this term in the pertinent context (see *CprR*, 5: 140; *MM*, 6: 392f). By virtue of his ascription of transcendental freedom to human agents (see *CpR*, A547/B575; *CprR*, 5: 3-5), he (iii) endorses a version of libertarian free will.

Kant's MMD can be obfuscated by the very fact that it is pertinent for what we can call 'the natural causal facet' of the compatibility question of free will and determinism. (i)–(iii) play major roles in his attempt to establish this compatibility, and – in my reading – Kant's position amounts to a theologically inflected version of altered-laws-compatibilism: the dependency of the laws of nature on libertarian human freedom can be elucidated through God's special kind of knowledge about it, knowledge that informs the divine creative activity that in turn accounts for the (systematicity of) the laws of nature. To be sure, the assumption of the existence of such a God is a matter of the regulative use of reason and the postulates of pure practical reason. As I said, the historical Molina denied compatibility of freedom and natural necessity and, unlike Kant, rejected determinism in nature (see, e.g., *Conc* 4, 47, 2). In contrast, Molina's natural causal indeterminism resurfaces on the level of things in themselves in Kant, so that – in this regard at least – it seems appropriate to speak of an 'adaptation' of Molina's position.

Crucially then, one needs to distinguish various different facets of the compatibility problem. In my opinion, these are the creation, concurrence, natural causal determinism, divine knowledge, and logico-semantic facets of this problem. This is to say, it is not obvious that a created being, a being whose actions God concurs with, a being operating in a causally determined environment, a being whose future actions God foresees, and a being about whose future actions true propositions exist, can be free.[7]

Before I can turn to the discussion of the foreknowledge facet in Kant, let me make the following four remarks of caution about what not to expect in what follows.

(1) The overall contours of Kant's view on free will (see *CpR*, A532-58/B560-86; *GMM*, 4: 456–7; *CprR*, 5: 94–106) are well known while almost every element of it is contentious. His account draws on the distinction between things in themselves and appearances. Human agents are free insofar as they are things in themselves; causal determinism holds in the temporal realm of appearances with time being a form of

human intuition. There is no correlate of time and no natural causal determinism on the level of things in themselves. Free actions, while originating in the non-temporal realm of things in themselves, also have an appearance-dimension or appearance-aspect. It is notoriously difficult to spell out Kant's contention that, by way of their transcendental freedom, human agents (as things in themselves) act, or make a difference, in space and time. Kant's discussion clearly presupposes that this *can* be done in a satisfactory manner and presupposing this is something I also need to do in what follows.

(2) Kant grants God (whose existence is assumed on practical grounds) cognitive access to the sphere of things in themselves (see, e.g., L-PhDR/Pölitz, 28: 1052f) while maintaining that God's way of representing entities in space and time is not itself spatio-temporal. The details of Kant's account of God's representation of spatio-temporal entities merit a detailed examination in their own right. In particular, it is worthwhile in the light of Kant's main strategy in transcendental philosophy to identify the conditions of the possibility of cognition of objects with the conditions of the possibility of objects. This then allows that in the case of objects in space and time the pertinent cognition must be human and not divine cognition. There is a tension here insofar as God's representation of spatio-temporal entities is in some sense inadequate, but he is still considered to be omniscient.[8] When it comes to free human actions, the difficult part to cognize for humans is the noumenal ground of these actions, while for God it is their temporal manifestation. I need to emphasize, however, that Kant's views on the divine way of representing spatio-temporal entities altogether will not be analyzed in detail in what follows.

(3) Strikingly, when discussing what is commonly known as the problem of freedom and foreknowledge, Kant hardly mentions the transcendental idealist doctrine of time, which in the case of his discussion of the natural causal facet of compatibility is of such importance. At any rate, as Desmond Hogan (2014: 50) has indicated, Kant clearly does not think that this account of time renders the solution to the problem any easier. As we shall see, the real issue for Kant is how God can know about the free actions of his creatures, whether they are temporal or not, given that according to the theist conception of God Kant is committed to, God is a *cognitively autarkic* subject.

(4) Kant, moreover, in the critical period at least, does not discuss questions often arising in connection with the foreknowledge facet, namely the ontological status of the future, i.e., whether it is real or not real.[9] Kant's subscription to causal determinism on the phenomenal level does not pre-empt this question. Even if there is only one future and what that future will be is not open, the status of the future may still be real or unreal. This issue points to the question as to whether Kant's idealist theory of time has (per McTaggart's well-known distinction) A-theoretical or B-theoretical leanings. To simplify things a bit, it is in B-theoretical accounts that the future standardly counts as real.

It has sometimes been suggested (see the discussion in Zagzebski 1991: 47–52) that an eternity view of God, to which Kant also subscribes, entails a B-theoretical reading of time. If this is correct, it would be true of Kant's account in terms of the form of inner intuition as well. Again, I will not discuss this issue in what follows.

With all these points hopefully clarified, I hope I can avoid the impression that at times I must be talking about somebody other than Kant.

3. Free will and divine foreknowledge

When it comes to the critical period, Kant's treatment of foreknowledge compatibility is to be found exclusively in the lectures (and reflections), and here the lectures on metaphysics and the lectures on 'natural theology', as it is called in Baumgarten (*M* §800), are pertinent. Standardly, in Kant's lecture arrangement, natural theology was part of the metaphysics lecture course (corresponding to §§800–1000 of the *Metaphysica*), but on various occasions (i.e., in 1774, 1783/4, 1785/6 and 1787) Kant gave a separate course on natural or philosophical theology.[10] In both cases, Kant's courses were based mainly on Baumgarten's textbook, while in the separate theology courses Eberhardt's textbook and Meiners' concise history of theological doctrines also played some role. I shall focus on Kant's engagement with Baumgarten here, although it is in Eberhardt that Molina and the *Concordia* are explicitly mentioned (see 28: 596; Eberhard and Kant 2016: 62). Baumgarten touches upon the problem of divine foreknowledge in *M* §§875 and 878 of the section *De intellectu Dei*.

I shall now describe the main outlines of what Baumgarten has to say. First and foremost, there is an important contextual point. Baumgarten is arguing against what he calls 'philosophical Socinism' (*M* §875). Socinism, named after the Italian theologians Laelius (1525–1562) and Faustus (1539–1604) Socinus, is a position, which denies that God has foreknowledge of what will happen in the future. Baumgarten is adamant in pointing out that this position is erroneous and that God's knowledge encompasses all three *modi* of time. Strikingly though, Baumgarten does not mention the reason why Socinism denies divine foreknowledge, and at least part of the reason is the conviction that human freedom could not be upheld in the light of God's foreknowledge. Similar to most of the so-called 'Open Theists' of our time, the Socinists were foreknowledge incompatibilists and what one could call 'fore-knowledge libertarians'. In their opinion, the determinism generated through the foreknowledge relation is not benign. Neither does Baumgarten even mention the issue of a possible threat to human freedom arising here. Since, however, he supports the claim that the human will is free (see M §§700–32 as well as Allison 2018: 171–6 and Schwaiger 2018), he must be taken to at least implicitly subscribe to something like foreknowledge compatibilism. Secondly, Baumgarten uses the tripartite distinction of different kinds of divine knowledge prominent not only in Molina (*Conc* 4, 52) but also in Molina's early modern Scholastic opponents, such as the Thomists (see Freddoso 1988: 11–13, 47). As it happens, though, this is a rather superficial similarity and, by itself, does not get us very far for establishing or assessing a link between Molina and Kant. However, taking Baumgarten's handling of this distinction into consideration is an important step in an attempt at doing this.

Baumgarten distinguishes three main types of divine knowledge, *scientia naturalis*, *scientia libera (visionis)*, and *scientia media.* His understanding of at least two of these kinds of knowledge is significantly different from early modern sources. This concerns natural knowledge, which for Baumgarten covers what is metaphysically possible, and middle knowledge, which concerns the counterfactuals of freedom. For reason of constraints imposed by the present venue, I shall focus on middle knowledge. Baumgarten subscribes to what one can call an 'unfulfilled counterfactual reading' (UCR) of middle knowledge. In Molina's original conception, God's *scientia media* is present even prior to creation and covers those counterfactuals the

antecedent of which will be fulfilled in the actual world. For Baumgarten, by contrast, *scientia media* only covers cases, which are purely hypothetical and indeed counterfactual from the point of view of the actual world. As we shall see in more detail, in Baumgarten – unlike in Molina and his Thomist opponents – *scientia media* plays no role in explaining how God's knowledge of future free human actions comes to pass.

Finally, there is *scientia libera (visionis)* in terms of which God knows the determinations of the actual world. It is, however, not exclusively about free *human actions. Libera* here rather refers to God's free will as the ground, or at least part of the ground, of the contingent truths of the actual world and hence ultimately to God's freedom with regard to creating the entities, which make up the core of the actual world (see Insole 2013: 29–57 and Kain 2021). This is of particular importance for the following reason. While *scientia libera (visionis)* is not restricted to human free actions, it is *a fortiori* concerned with them since they are, or at any rate are supposed to be, prototypically contingent entities among the actual entities. To be sure, Baumgarten's usage of the term *scientia libera (visionis)* should not be read as by itself committing him to the claim that *all* the contingent truths of the actual world are dependent only on God's will. After all, Molina, whilst denying this, used this term as well. No doubt, there is a certain tension in the combination of the expressions *libera* and *visionis*.[11] While *visionis* (at least in a non-technical, in particular non-Kantian sense) suggests something like mere truth tracking, *libera* seems to indicate that the truth in question is somehow generated by the knowing subject, in this case God.

Let me now return to one of the major differences between Baumgarten and Molina mentioned above and explain a little further.[12] As I said, in Baumgarten, *scientia media* is not used to explain how God can have foreknowledge of future free human actions. In general, while in Molina the three types of divine knowledge are more like different elements or sources sometimes playing together to account for an instance of divine knowledge (see Freddoso 1988: 23f) in Baumgarten, each instance of divine knowledge belongs in exactly one category. In Molina, the role of *scientia media* in explaining foreknowledge is to contribute an important part of the ground of this knowledge. By knowing how an agent would behave freely in all possible situations, God 'only' needs to know which of these situations will actually arise to reach knowledge of how they will act freely.[13]

The Thomists acknowledge the key role of *scientia media* in this regard (see *Conc* 4, 53, 10–18; Freddoso 1988: 36–42). According to the Thomists, however, it is God who fixes the truth value of counterfactuals of freedom by bringing about their truthmakers through an act of his will, while according to the Molinists it is the finite agents themselves who contribute to doing that (and the difficulty is that these truths are supposed to hold prior to any world being actual). For the Molinists, this human factor is crucial for foreknowledge compatibility while the Thomists are creation compatibilists in the sense that, in their opinion, determination through God's will does not undercut human freedom.[14] The Thomists can claim that on their account it becomes clear how God can generate this knowledge all by himself, without depending on external input. For example, natural knowledge, which in their conception is about causal necessities, and knowledge about which of the natural agents and the free agents he has made actual is all that is required to this end apart from *scientia media*. And natural knowledge ultimately depends on the essences of

things, which are nothing but restrictions of the divine essence. Molina, by contrast, needs to claim that human free agents – even prior to their actualization – have sufficient ontological independence to provide for the truths of the counterfactuals of freedom. This puts pressure on the idea that divine knowledge needs to be generated in an autarkic manner.[15]

With this in mind, let us now turn to Kant (L-PhDR/Pölitz, 28: 1053–6; L-RTh/Danzig, 28: 1271–3). Perhaps most strikingly, he dismisses *scientia media* as a 'useless distinction' (L-PhDR/Pölitz, 28: 1055) and claims that the object of *scientia media* is covered by *scientia naturalis*. To be sure, this first and foremost concerns Baumgarten's 'distorted reading' of *scientia media* in terms of UCR. In line with this dismissal, he follows Baumgarten in not attributing any role to *scientia media* in a foreknowledge account. As a matter of fact, this is also true of the genuine Molinist *scientia media* Kant is committed to (without however using this term) in his critical writings. Recall that in his doctrine of God as the scrutinizer of the heart (which in turn is backed up by the 'God-postulate') Kant maintains that God knows the *Gesinnung* or fundamental attitude of each human agent, and this involves knowing what they would do in all possible cases (see *CprR*, 5: 140).

We are hence facing a rather murky situation, and it may look somewhat desperate to try to identify possible allegiances or differences to Molina or the Thomists here. And yet, in this thicket of shifts of meaning and conceptual reconfigurations there are clear traces of a distinct conception of *scientia media* detectable. Strikingly, though, the variant at issue is the *Thomist* variant. I will now try to identify these traces and then discuss what this means for my claim that Kant is committed to MMD. In any event, the emphasis on MMD plainly does not require agreement on the part of Kant with everything the historical Molina said. We need to focus on the defining criteria of MMD, and here (i) in the list in section 2 above is of particular importance, but it will take a bit of time to get to how the question of foreknowledge connects to this. Clearly, if Kant were to endorse this Thomist doctrine, my claim that he subscribes to MMD could not be upheld. Ultimately, we shall realize that it is outside the context of considerations regarding divine cognition that this issue becomes pertinent. In order to see how to get there, let us now look at what Kant has to say about foreknowledge:

> How God would foresee the future free actions of human beings is no more difficult than how he foresees present human actions; for he does not see as we do; otherwise he would be passible. Since he knows purely through the extent to which he is conscious of himself and of his nature as the cause of their [i.e., the actions'] causality, all difficulty falls equally away. Now, here one difficulty is indeed avoided, but a new one arises from this, namely: God is then regarded as the cause of the free actions of human beings. However, this difficulty always remains, whether one supposes that God knows all things in advance through knowledge of his own nature or not. (L-RTh/Danzig, 28: 1271)

In this passage, Kant makes three striking claims: (i) Divine knowledge as such is not the most pressing problem for human freedom; the point is that this knowledge needs to be generated only through God's nature and his self-awareness. No external factors may be involved, such as in perception realistically construed. (ii) The future status of free human actions is of no particular concern; if a problem arises for them, it arises

with regard to all *modi* of time. (iii) If divine self-awareness is a problem for human freedom, this problem remains even if knowledge turns out not to be 'parasitic' on God's self-consciousness.

What Kant says here and elsewhere (see L-PhDR/Pölitz, 28: 1055) is indicative of his overall *foreknowledge compatibilism*, as has been noted in the literature (see Hogan 2014): nothing in knowledge itself, even if the knowing subject is located in an eternal realm, is a threat to human freedom. The determinism involved in knowledge, simply insofar as it is knowledge, seems to be benign for Kant.[16] Kant's position on the one hand amounts to what one could call an 'altered-eternity compatibilism' or, alternatively and following Vicens and Kittle (2019: 25),[17] a 'multiple atemporal realms response'. According to such a view, the atemporal realm is not fixed: if the human agent had acted differently, God's timeless knowledge would have been different. (Note that this holds regardless of whether human actions themselves are timeless or not). On the other hand, however, one of the key moves of those approaches is blocked. Due to God's cognitive autarky, one cannot maintain that the human action *causes* God's belief. Even though God's belief may not cause the human action, it would appear that something in God must do so if he is supposed to have knowledge.

With this in mind, I will now consider the potential threat to human freedom ensuing from God in more detail. To simplify things a bit, I shall focus on the divine will. Divine nature is of course more comprehensive and includes more than, or is often even contrasted with, the divine will. Divine nature, more precisely God's status as *ens realissimum*, still plays some role for the critical Kant in accounting for the real possibility of things in themselves and therefore also of a putatively free human agent, even though claims like these are beyond the realms of theoretical cognition. Clearly, though, the nature and status of this account of what is *realiter* possible in itself are rather unclear.

Also, I shall look at a particularly obvious case of the involvement of the divine will, namely creation. That there is a causal role on the part of God is perhaps particularly clear in this context. There are other types of *operationes Dei* in Baumgarten's classification (see, e.g., *M*, *synopsis*, pp. 50f), and he summarizes the other main type under the title 'providence' (with a number of subtypes such as governance and *concursus*).[18] In general, there is of course an interplay of divine intellect and will when it comes to divine actions, insofar as he is supposed to be the perfect rational being. In this respect as well, I will have to simplify things a bit.

4. Free will and creation

Let us stay with the theology lectures for a moment. While Kant does not draw on any of the rival early modern conceptions of *scientia media* when discussing foreknowledge and – from the point of view of the early modern perspective – has a distorted 'official conception' of *scientia media* in the first place, clear traces of the *Thomist* account of *scientia media*, albeit not under this name, are detectable in Kant's discussion of the *creation* facet of compatibility. As we shall see, crucially, for Kant the threat to freedom arises out of these traces, and initially at least, he does not have a satisfactory answer as to how to defuse it. This is to say, he struggles to show how the freedom and the creation thesis can be upheld together, because of the very

connection of the concept of creation to these traces of a Thomist account of *scientia media*.

According to Kant in the theology lectures, in creation, in particular when creation involves bringing about entities which are themselves causes, what occurs is something like a *configuration* or *arrangement* of these created causes by the creating cause. Kant uses the term *Einrichtung* (L-RTh/Danzig, 28: 1280), which can indeed be translated literally as 'arrangement'. Kant is not very explicit as to what this 'arrangement' or 'configuration' amounts to, but it is fair to say that in his opinion the creating cause somehow determines how the created cause 'reacts' to external input. In other words, the idea is that the agential profile of the created entity is getting fixed through creation.

Strikingly, it is the notorious example of the *Bratenwender*, i.e., turnspit or roasting jack, which can make this clear. Kant discusses this example in a slightly more extended fashion in LMet L1/Pölitz (which admittedly is of the mid-1770s) while the more famous passage from the *CprR* (5: 97) is not only disarmingly short but may even refer to a different kind of such a device altogether.[19] In any event, the *Bratenwender* of L1 indeed seems a far cry from the comprehensive theocentric metaphysics the Thomists invoke in their account of *scientia media*, but appearances are deceptive here. These two issues have more in common than their shared early modern origin. Let me first describe the type of *Bratenwender* Kant obviously had in mind. It is not the simple device on sale today, but a so-called *Gewichtsbrater*, a weight-driven kind of clock jack, i.e., a rather sturdy mechanical device often fixed close to an open fire place or an oven and whose main function is to rotate a roast fixed to a skewer. Its engine functions like a clockwork installed on a tower; these clockworks are typically driven by a weight suspended on a rope, and this weight, via an elaborate mechanism of gear wheels, keeps the skewer turning at a reasonable speed. There is a crank or winder fixed to a reel by means of which the weight can be lifted. This is what Kant says in L-Met L1/Pölitz:

> Spontaneity in some respect (*spontaneitas secundum quid*) is when something acts spontaneously under a condition. So, e.g., a body which is shot off moves spontaneously, but in some respect (*secundum quid*). This spontaneity (*spontaneitas*) is also called automatic spontaneity (*spontaneitas automatica*), namely when a machine moves itself according to an inner principle, e.g. a watch, a turnspit. But the spontaneity is not without qualification (*simpliciter talis*) because here the inner principle (*principium*) was determined by an external principle (*principium externum*). The internal principle (*principium internum*) with the watch is the spring, with the turnspit the weight, but the external principle is the artist who determines the internal principle (*principium internum*). The spontaneity which is without qualification (*spontaneitas simpliciter talis*) is an absolute spontaneity. (L-Met L1/Pölitz 28: 267f)

When it comes to the turnspit, Kant considers the weight as the 'inner principle' of its agency, the craftsman determining the mechanism as its 'external principle'. This is obviously still a somewhat abbreviated account. Determining must include constructing here, since normally it is not the craftsman who winds up such a

device. Nonetheless, we need to assume that the device has indeed been wound up so that the weight can exert its driving force through gravitation, and that it has been fixed in an appropriate position close to the fire. I will therefore speak of the craftsman 'installing' the mechanism, and this is meant to include all this.

Kant focuses on the merely comparative internality of the inner principle that moves such a device. But the example furthermore excellently illustrates in what sense it is never up to an individual *Bratenwender* how it behaves. In this respect, it is important to see that the mechanism, installed by the craftsman, underwrites conditional statements, counterfactuals about the 'behavior' of the device. Of course, with regard to a *Bratenwender*, counterfactuals underwritten in this manner concern only a rather limited range of its behavior. Importantly, though, some of those at least concern the *individual token* of the *Bratenwender*, not just the type. An example could be:

> If a roast of a certain size and weight were to be fixed on the skewer of this particular machine, the device would move at a certain speed and in a certain manner (perhaps evenly, perhaps smoothly, slowly, haltingly etc.)

This narrowness of scope should not distract us, however. The point is the comparison or association of the respective *inner principles* moving an agent in the case of the *Bratenwender* on the one hand, and a putatively human free agent on the other. As Kant maintains in *CpR*, A538-541/B566-9, in the case of a free agent or at any rate putatively free agent, the inner principle of agency, i.e., the particular capacity of transcendental freedom, is accounted for by the intelligible character. This would suggest that – in Kant's view – what happens through creation, when creation involves configuration, is nothing other than fixing the intelligible character by the creator.

This is all the more poignant, since in my interpretation the intelligible character of a human agent consists of all the counterfactuals of freedom true of him. And this is why I take Kant's thought of configuration through creation to be reminiscent of the Thomist conception of *scientia media*. To be sure, here the issue is completely disconnected from questions of knowledge, in particular divine knowledge, or 'cognition' if we wish to follow Kant. We are on the constitutive level. It does not matter whether anybody knows the counterfactuals true of a particular *Bratenwender*. The point is that the mechanism installed by the agent is that, or at least a major part of it, by virtue of which these counterfactuals are true. And this is precisely the same thought developed by the Thomists: it is God who has brought about the truthmakers of these counterfactuals. Of course, this very much helps to explain how he can know about them, but bringing about truthmakers and knowing the truth are different issues.

With regard to the theology lectures, the transcripts present configuration through creation *as the fact of the matter*, purely descriptive, the way things are, although there are tensions already detectable. Of course, this could be an example of the students not understanding Kant's *Rollenprosa*, as it would be called in German, i.e., his speaking on behalf of somebody in favor of such a doctrine without himself supporting it. Kant concedes:

> In the world, everything has qualified spontaneity (*spontaneitas secundum quid*); for the arrangement (*Einrichtung*) of creatures still comes from God. An original being (*ens originarium*) has absolute spontaneity; for there is nothing external to it that would be the external cause of its means. (L-RTh/Danzig, 28: 1280)

On the face of it, this is a rather puzzling statement: Kant's mature moral theory precisely requires absolute spontaneity on the part of the human agent, and absolute spontaneity – in its practical variant – amounts to transcendental freedom (even though it is beyond theoretical cognition). Here, however, the *Einrichtung* or 'arrangement' of the creatures through an act of the divine will is said to undercut this form of spontaneity.

   Of course, it is contentious when precisely Kant starts maintaining that morality ultimately requires transcendental freedom; it is also true that a structurally similar conflict between creation and absolute spontaneity by virtue of configuration is detectable in L-Met L1/Pölitz, 28: 267f, and this conflict concerns the theoretical variant of spontaneity so that it may predate the conflict between creation and transcendental freedom with regard to morality. In any event, though, as soon as he requires transcendental freedom for morality, we have such a conflict. Without arguing for this further, I shall assume here that it is already in the first *Critique* that the main contours of the doctrine emerge in which he indeed takes morality to require transcendental freedom, even though at least until the *Groundwork* he still thought that there are cognitive routes that connect us to transcendental freedom other than merely the consciousness of the moral law: for example, the experience of practical freedom (in the Canon of the *CpR*, A802f/B830f) or something akin to an inference from insight into the spontaneity of reason related to generating ideas (e.g., in *GMM* III, 4: 452).

   This makes it all the more surprising that, as I said, in the theology lectures Kant presents the connection of creation and configuration as a matter of fact. What is his strategy to defuse this tension? When exploring the difference between the divine and human agent further, Kant says:

> Freedom is practical when I act independently of all sensuous impulses, according to the prescriptions of reason alone. I must presuppose this practical freedom in humans, and indeed in the moral and in all the practical sciences, if their laws are to be valid. But this freedom is *only a mere idea*, and we cannot prove its actuality. However, whoever acts according to this idea and who believes that he must so act is actually free – indeed, not theoretically, but practically. (L-RTh/Danzig, 28: 1280, emphasis added)

What he is recorded to have said here amounts to a remarkable position. Kant, when comparing divine and human agency, explicitly contrasts transcendental and practical freedom. He holds something like hard determinism when it comes to creation and transcendental freedom with regard to human agents, but maintains that practical freedom, short of being grounded in the idea of transcendental freedom, is sufficient for morality. To be sure, even practical freedom, so understood, cannot be proven theoretically according to Kant (In L-DPhR/Pölitz, 28: 1067, Kant

also ascribes practical freedom to God). If it is indeed his position since the first *Critique* that morality requires transcendental freedom (or a form of practical freedom, which is grounded on the idea of it) when it comes to the threat of determinism in nature, it is striking to suggest that, when it comes to the context of creation, morality can somehow survive without it. This is inhomogeneous at best.[20] We have hence discovered an extra layer of difficulties in Kant's critical thinking up to around 1784.[21] Although his efforts at showing how transcendental freedom and practical freedom grounded on it can coexist with determinism in nature were deemed successful by him, he did not have the means yet to solve a further difficulty engulfing these key notions from a different direction along similar lines.[22]

If my reading of Kant's treatment of the natural causal facet of the compatibility problem is correct, this issue is particularly pressing, since the creation thesis is an integral part of the solution of the natural causal facet of the compatibility problem. As I mentioned above, according to this reading, drawing on God's creative act in the light of his knowledge can elucidate how (at least some of) the laws of nature can be dependent on or be sensitive to human freedom. But now it turns out that major ingredients of the solution to one of the facets of the compatibility problem generate challenges in their own right with regard to another facet (which is not entirely surprising given the history of the problem).

We could of course trace possible developments of his take on 'configuration' in later transcripts of metaphysics lectures, but instead of doing this, I will move on directly to Kant's published writings. There are two famous passages in his critical works in which Kant treats the creation facet of compatibility, namely *CprR*, 5: 100–3, and *Rel*, 6: 142f. Brewer and Watkins (2012) have provided a comprehensive reading of the one in the second *Critique*, a reading moreover that is not only fully consistent with my claim that Kant subscribed to MMD but moves Kant closer to the historical Molina in this matter, insofar as creation – at least when properly understood – is not seen as a threat to human freedom any longer. I can therefore be very brief here.

Brewer and Watkins draw on and improve earlier attempts by Beck (1960: 206–7) and Franks (2005: 115–6) and claim that by clarifying that creation concerns things in themselves, not appearances, and by making creation itself an act of freedom on the part of God guided by moral principles, Kant can substantiate the claim that the causality involved in creation does not license the assumption of *transitivity*. This is to say, while God is the cause of the agent as a thing in itself and the agent is the cause of his free action, God is thereby not *eo ipso* the cause of this action. Rather, what God creates is an agent equipped with a certain (universal) nature, in this case a nature, which includes the capacity of transcendental freedom, so that it can indeed be up to the agent to use this capacity in one way or another and hence acquire at least large parts of their agential profile by themselves. Since it is also in the *CprR* (5: 98) that self-acquisition of the intelligible character is identified as crucial for transcendental freedom to hold, Brewer and Watkins thereby also show why the idea that creation involves configuration would indeed undercut transcendental freedom in the first place. Configuration through creation entails that the overall agential profile is provided by God.

Strikingly, when assessing Kant's position here, it is fair to say that Kant clearly holds that creation and transcendental freedom can coexist and are in this sense compatible. This, however, should not distract us from the fact that Kant, in an

important sense, remains a creation incompatibilist.[23] He still holds that if creation amounted to determinism, it would undercut transcendental freedom, because – unlike in the case of knowledge insofar as it is knowledge – this determinism would be causal and would violate the causal-sources condition of freedom. What he now suggests, however, and to repeat, is that creation does *not* involve determinism.[24]

Moreover, with Kant now holding that the assumption of creation entailing configuration (and hence determinism) is *erroneous*, for him, this assumption is in some ways ultimately a correlate of mistaking time as a feature of things in themselves. What precisely Kant has in mind here is certainly not obvious and getting to the bottom of all this would require an article in its own right. Therefore, I should rather like to proceed to the *Religion* passage; it provides perhaps even more interesting material for my original question regarding Kant's overall Molinist leanings.

It is here that Kant more explicitly resumes the thoughts that we have encountered in the lectures on (metaphysics and) theology. And in this passage, he sounds far less convinced that creation compatibility can be established by drawing on key theses of transcendental idealism about time. It now rather sounds as though the assumption of configuration through creation is unavoidable, and in this respect one could argue that it might be something like a case of transcendental illusion. In any event, the creation of free agents is involved in one of the mysteries of pure rational faith. It is here too that he makes the extraordinary suggestion of *exempting* free human agents from the creation thesis, as long as we intend to remain within what we can figure out according to our own 'rational insight'. This lengthy passage deserves to be quoted in full:

> We can form a concept of the universal and *unconditional* subjection of human beings to the divine legislation only insofar as we also consider ourselves his *creatures*; just so can God be considered the ultimate source of all natural laws only because he is the creator of natural things. It is, however, totally incomprehensible to our reason how beings can be *created* to use their powers freely, for according to the principle of causality we cannot attribute any other inner ground of action to a being, which we assume to have been produced, except that which the producing cause has placed in it. And, since through this ground (hence through an external cause) the being's every action is determined as well, the being itself cannot be free. So through our rational insight we cannot reconcile the divine and holy legislation, which only applies to free beings, with the concept of the creation of these beings, but must simply presuppose the latter as already existing free beings who are determined to citizenship in the divine state, not *through their nature dependence,* in virtue of their creation but because of a purely moral necessitation, only possible according to the laws of freedom, i.e., through a call. So the call to this end is morally quite clear; for speculation, however, the possibility of beings who are thus called is an impenetrable mystery. (*Rel*, 6: 142f; trans. Kant 2018: 168)[25]

In this passage, Kant implicitly concedes the shortcoming of our own rational insight with regard to the fact of the matter regarding creation compatibility, and I shall

come back to this below. Nonetheless, he suggests what one could call 'metaphysical existentialism' as the position to take when it comes to our possibly limited perspective.

Let us examine this position in a bit more detail. The main idea is to take the existence of the human rational agents of the actual world as a basic fact, not further accountable in terms of their causal origin. (I shall ignore the question about other possible dependencies here, e.g., those concerning human agents merely as possible beings). Obviously then, the creation thesis has a restricted as opposed to a comprehensive reading. To be sure, even in a comprehensive reading of it, not everything in the world of things in themselves should be and needs to be regarded as created. As Kant himself remarked in the Magath version of the Pölitz lectures, even though he disparaged those points as 'subtilities of the schools' (*Schulsubtilitäten*, L-RTh/Magath, 28: 1092), essences and real negations (absence of realities) are not to be regarded as created anyway (in our rational insight, presumably). The point at issue is rather that in the restricted reading of the creation thesis, some causal agents (which are also natural agents) are exempted from creation.

What Kant is aiming at here is similar to the traditional doctrine of the so-called *pre-existence of the soul*, a topic Aquinas discusses in his highly influential treatise on creation, as one position to be dismissed after all (see *STh*, Ia qu90 art1 obj1). But whereas in this approach human souls are treated as being of the divine substance, metaphysical existentialism rather suggests that human agents (insofar as they are things in themselves) exist independently of God and hence are agents in their own right, as it were, similar to the idea constitutive of Manicheism, according to which there are two independent principles that account for the world.

Kant's suggestions of a kind of metaphysical existentialism here are of course highly unorthodox, and they certainly are not something the historical Molina endorsed.[26] There is therefore an undeniable point of disagreement between Kant and Molina. This disagreement as to the reading of the creation thesis, however, should not distract us from the fact that, arguably and perhaps even paradoxically, metaphysical existentialism is one suggestive way of *underwriting* one of the defining criteria of MMD, the 'existence' of true pre-volitional counterfactuals of freedom. Clearly, if the *existence* of a rational agent is beyond the control of God, it is perhaps easier to see how the way these possible agents freely react to certain situations is beyond his control as well. Expressing the previous point in Kant's parlance, metaphysical existentialism facilitates the assumption that the intelligible character is self-accrued by the agent whose existence is a bedrock fact.[27]

Of course, how one should conceive of such character acquisition is no easy question to answer, but I take it that one can here resort to conceptions developed in the context of the discussion of Kant's take on the natural causal facet of compatibility. My own approach (Ertl 2020: 40) is to extend the account developed by Willaschek and by McCarty, who maintain that the intelligible character is acquired by virtue of actual free actions (such as telling a lie) an agent is carrying out. I would suggest that it is not only the actual but the hypothetical free actions the agent would carry out that matter in this regard.

While Kant certainly has a point here, as it is obviously easier to see how an intelligible character can be self-accrued once we take the existence of the agent in question as bedrock, this should not make us overlook the fact that – in Kant's

opinion, given the limitations of our insight of reason – such a self-accrual may in fact be compatible with the comprehensive creation thesis. This is to say, it may be possible after all that a free agent is both created and has a self-accrued intelligible character. Presumably, this would have to count as a 'mystery' in its own right. In any event, even though the idea of creation 'only' belongs to the regulative employment of reason, this idea may even be construable in a realist manner without undercutting the assumption of freedom.

The last question I wish to consider is whether such a compatibility could in fact be established along the lines of Thomism and hence along creation compatibilist lines. If this were possible, Kant could not be considered as subscribing to MMD with regard to the realm beyond our insight of reason (because Thomism rejects (i) in the definition of MMD). Here, I disagree with Hogan (2014: 63), who suggests, or at least seems to suggest, that Kant intends to leave open the possibility that configuration along with creation and human transcendental freedom can indeed be the fact of the matter. In this case, we would have to be wrong in assuming that configuration undercuts transcendental freedom, but I cannot see any indication that Kant granted this option. Kant confidently puts forward self-accrual of the intelligible character as the constituent feature of transcendental freedom (without insinuating that this may be only how we understand this matter), and it very much looks like a conceptual truth that the configuration of an agent through God undercuts the requirement that the ultimate causal source of the action in question must be internal. Rather, for Kant the core of the difficulty is how it is possible that creation *does not* entail configuration. In other words, the difficulty concerns the historical Molina's conviction that counterfactuals of freedom can be true prior to and in combination with creation. But conceding this concerns an issue beyond Kant's minimal Molinist credentials.

The historical Molina even thinks he has an answer to the question as to how this is possible, but this concerns his doctrine of *concursus*,[28] and as I said above, this will be the topic for another occasion. Suffice it to say that even in this regard there may be surprising similarities to Kant (when it comes to the realm of things in themselves). There may of course be other reasons why freedom falters in the face of creation, so that the absence of configuration may only be one of a number of conditions that need to be met. Moreover, I take it that Kant has perhaps exaggerated the difficulties here. It is not obvious to me why we necessarily think that creation entails configuration, unless perhaps it is part of an explanation how a cognitively autarkic mind has knowledge of the free actions of other persons. In this case, we would have moved full circle. Kant, at any rate, has not provided a comprehensive, let alone convincing foreknowledge account, which goes beyond the minimalist solution of appealing to divine omniscience. And this, while consistent with MMD, is indeed the perhaps least Molinist element of Kant's Molinism.

5. Concluding remarks

It is, unfortunately, time to draw these investigations to a close. My primary, albeit limited, aim has been to show that my idea that Kant is a Molinist, minimally defined, can be upheld against the background of what Kant has to say about human free will in the light of divine knowledge and creation, Molina's own domain. As we have hopefully seen, the real issue for Kant is creation, and in this regard he comes up with

the extraordinary suggestion of a metaphysical existentialism in terms of which his key idea of a self-acquisition of the intelligible character, or in Molina's language of the pre-volitionality of the counterfactuals of freedom, can be secured.

Molina has often been charged with an undue 'externalism', which would exclude an important aspect of reality from the all-encompassing cover of God. Kant's limitation of the scope of the creation thesis can be seen as a paradigmatic example of such a move, but the irony is that for Kant such a move becomes necessary precisely because, in his opinion, we are trapped in the Thomistic idea that creation involves configuration.

Hopefully, all this is indeed not simply a piece of idiosyncratic intellectual history, although I think linking Molina and Kant amounts to an important and overdue correction of a widespread assumption of Kant's intellectual pedigree.

In addition to this, looking at Kant's treatment of the free will problem through the lens of Molinism could perhaps shed light on so-far still rather neglected aspects of his thought on this matter. This not only concerns the multifaceted nature of the compatibility problem as such but also what I have elsewhere called 'Kant's practically grounded metaphysics' (Ertl 2020: 2). The God-postulate is anything but a simple *deus-ex-machina*-move but generates tensions in its own right, in particular in connection with the idea of creation in its regulative use by reason. It seems as though it is ultimately the quest for systematicity of the laws of nature on the one hand and the 'freedom-sensitivity' of some of those laws on the other, which – from our perspective at least – pull in different directions and require us to assume a comprehensive creation thesis in one context and a limited variant in another, thus opening up a similar rift to that of freedom and natural causal determinism in the first place. While we have also seen that in Kant's opinion the fact of the matter may allow for a comprehensive account of creation to coexist with freedom, to understand how this is possible is – in his opinion at least – something that eludes human insight. In order to *understand* freedom in the face of creation, at any rate, we need, according to Kant, to go one step further than Molina himself and cannot restrict human emancipation to the realm of the possible.

Notes

1 See MacGregor (2015) for a comprehensive intellectual biography of Molina.

2 Desmond Hogan (2013) initially shared the intuition that Kant is a Molinist of sorts, but then in Hogan (2014) came to the conclusion that this is not the case after all. As we shall see, my attempt at clarifying the pertinent concept of Molinism is meant to show that the disagreement between Hogan and myself is, in part, merely verbal. There is, however, a substantial disagreement due to different readings of a key passage in Kant's œuvre (*Rel*, 6: 142f) and the assessment of the idea of knowing through creating on the part of God. According to Hogan, Kant, overall, does not have a consistent theory of divine foreknowledge but wavers between a Thomist, post-volitional model – to be explained in more detail below – and a model based on Leibniz's doctrine of possible worlds. Pereboom (2006) also detected Molinist thoughts in

Kant, notably with regard to his unorthodox version of compatibilism of freedom and natural necessity, but I disagree with how Pereboom spells this out in detail (see Ertl 2014: 426).

3 See, e.g., Freddoso (1988), Zagzebski (1991: 125-52), and Flint (1998) for an elucidation of the central place counterfactuals of freedom occupy in Molina's take on human freedom in the face of God's omniscience and omnipotence.

4 The most comprehensive accounts of divine foreknowledge and human freedom, and creation and human freedom, in Kant to date have been provided by Hogan (2014) and Insole (2013), respectively.

5 For an account of *concursus* in Kant, see Hogan (2021). For a concise analysis of the threat of divine grace to freedom in Kant, see Chignell (2014: 110–15).

6 With the exception of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, references to Kant's texts are given by volume and page number of the Akademie-Ausgabe (AA): *Immanuel Kants gesammelte Schriften,* ed. königlich preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (and successors) (Berlin: Reimer [and successors], 1900–). Unless indicated otherwise, the pertinent volumes of The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant (ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood) have been used for translations into English (Kant 1996, Kant 1992, Kant 1997). References to the *Critique of Pure Reason* are to the pagination of its first (A, 1781) and second (B, 1787) edition and to Kant (1998). For L-PhDR/Pölitz, Wood's translation in Kant (1996), while for L-RTh/Danzig the translation by Fugate and Hymers in Eberhard and Kant (2016) has been employed. Abbreviations are as follows.

    (1) Kant, lectures. L-PhDR/Pölitz = Philosophical Doctrine of Religion according to Pölitz; L-RTh/Danzig = Danzig Rational Theology according to Baumbach; L-NTh/Volckmann = Natural Theology Volckmann according to Baumbach; L-RTh/Magath = Rational Theology Magath; L-Met L1/Pölitz = Metaphysics L1 Pölitz; L-Met L2/Pölitz = Metaphysics L2 Pölitz; L-Met/Dohna = Metaphysics Dohna; L-Met K2/Heinze = Metaphysics K2 Heinze, Schlapp; L-Met/Mron = Metaphysics Mrongovius.

    (2) Kant, published works. *CpR* = *Critique of Pure Reason*; *CprR* = *Critique of Practical Reason*; *GMM* = *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*; *MM* = *The Metaphysics of Morals*; *ND* = *Principiorum primorum cognitionis metaphysicae nova dilucidatio*; *Rel* = *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*.

    (3) Other sources. *Conc* = *Liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis, divina praescientia, providentia, praedestinatione et reprobatione Concordia* (Molina 1953); *M* = *Metaphysica* (Baumgarten 2013); *STh* = *Summa de Theologia* (in Aquinas 2000).

7 Irrespective of how to precisely distinguish facets of the compatibility problem concerning threats emerging from God for human free will, see Vicens and Kittle (2019), Timpe and Speak (2016), McCann (2016), and Timpe (2014) for a discussion of human freedom in the context of theist assumptions. For an overall account of the foreknowledge facet – perhaps most prominent in the contemporary discussion – and the history of ideas regarding key positions connected to it, see Vicens and Kittle (2019: 3–31), Craig (1988), Fischer (1989), Hasker (1989), and Zagzebski (1991).

8 Some philosophers take the properties of omniscience and eternity to be incompatible altogether. See the discussion in Zagzebski (1991: 43f).

9 In ND, however, he touches upon this issue. As is well known, in the dialogue between Caius and Titius (ND, 1: 401–5) – and this is part of the account of the difficulties related to the validity of the *principium rationis determinatis vulgo sufficientis* (proposition IX of section II) – Kant dismisses Crusius' account of freedom in terms of freedom of indifference. In one of the subsequent *addidamenta* to this problem, Kant then (1: 405) turns to divine foreknowledge, and he maintains that – irrespective of their freedom – divine foreknowledge of future human actions presupposes that these actions need to have their determining ground. Strikingly, Kant is not simply arguing in terms of the requirements of divine cognition but also in terms of basic ontological considerations: unless future actions have their determining ground, there is nothing which could be known, in whatever manner this knowledge is supposed to come to pass, we may add. See Allison (2020: 32f) for a very brief discussion of this point.

10 To be sure, the terms 'natural theology' and 'philosophical theology' are not synonymous when it comes to Kant. There are five sets of students notes, all (in large parts at least) stemming from the course given in 1783/4. Four of them are available in AA 28, and two of them have been translated into English. (Ironically enough, the only surviving original manuscript is of the set which is not fully reproduced in the AA.) While a detailed comparison of these versions (including the respective reflections on the pertinent paragraphs in *M*) is of course worthwhile, I shall focus here on L-PhDR/Pölitz and L-RTh/Danzig. The section on the divine intellect is in 28: 1049–58 and 28: 1266–75, respectively. A particularly comprehensive account of the divine intellect in the lectures on metaphysics is to be found

in L-Met L1/Pölitz, 28: 327–33. For a much more detailed examination of these sources see Hogan (2014). For a recent take on Kant's overall conception of the divine intuitive intellect, see Brewer (2022). The following should also be noted. L-RTh/Magath (discovered by Henrich in 1981 and the only manuscript of the sets surviving intact) has been treated as a variant of L-PhDR/Pölitz in AA (29: 1051–77); however, it looks more metaphysically alert than the Pölitz text, especially with regard to the very account of God's cognition. With regard to the theology lecture transcripts as a whole, see the notes by Lehmann in AA 28: 1360–4, the extremely helpful 'Translator's Introduction' for the Danzig set in Eberhard and Kant (2016: xv–xlvii, in particular xxxv–xxxix, as far as content is concerned), and of course Beyer (1937) and Naragon (2023). Divine foreknowledge and human freedom are also treated in the theology part of the metaphysics lectures, namely in L-Met L1/Pölitz, 28: 331–333; L-Met L2/Pölitz, 28: 607f; L-Met/Dohna, 28: 698f; L-Met K2/Heinze, 28: 802-805. Unfortunately, *none* of the theology sections has been translated in the excellent Cambridge Edition volume of the metaphysics lectures (Kant 1997).

11 This is true both when taking Baumgarten to mean that the terms *scientia visionis* and *scientia libera* are synonymous, as Kant seems to do in L-PhDR/Pölitz 28: 1056, and when taking Baumgarten to suggest that *visionis* merely specifies *scientia libera*.

12 Wood, in his translation in Kant (1996): 477n38), notes that the terminology originates in Molina, but maybe it is Fonseca who preceded his student in this respect.

13 Incidentally, one important advantage of assuming Molinist middle knowledge in the first place is that it contributes to making possible divine deliberation (prior to creation) about how to integrate libertarian human freedom into the creation (see, e.g., Flint 1998: 44f).

14 The main idea of creation compatibilism is that God's causality, which determines our actions, is somehow different from 'ordinary' forms of causality (see McCann and Johnson 2017).

15 Therefore, the historical Molina supplemented his account by a doctrine of *supercomprehensio* (see Freddoso 1988: 51-3). Arguably, though, supercomprehension does not explain how *scientia media* comes to pass, but it is more like an account of what precisely needs explanation here and why only a divine mind can have this knowledge. It is not sufficient to know what creatable entities can do (i.e., what they do in different possible worlds), but what they would do when made actual. Note also that in Molina's approach, what is created are substances, not worlds.

16 At first view, it might look as though Kant denies that divine knowledge generates any form of determinism whatsoever, but at the end of the day he only rejects that knowledge entails *natural necessity*. I take it that there are forms of determinism other than those involving natural necessity. In L-Met K2/Heinze, 28: 804, Kant suggests the following picture: creation concerns substances, and these substances are causally active. If their actions were only a matter of natural necessity, God could somehow draw on natural necessity for knowing how entities created by him will act.

17 'Multiple pasts compatibilism' with regard to the foreknowledge facet is structurally parallel to so-called 'altered-past compatibilism' when it comes to the natural causal facet, but Kant, as we have seen, denies that God is temporal. However, just as some versions of multiple pasts compatibilism deny that the past is fixed, the same strategy is prevalent in a so-called 'atemporal solution', which denies the fixity of the atemporal realm (see Vicens and Kittle 2019: 16–21 and 21–25 with reference to Rogers 2007).

18 This is notable, since in contemporary accounts, such as Vicens and Kittle (2019), the main distinction of threats emerging from God for human freedom is being made rather along the lines of foreknowledge and providence. This suggests that providence is supposed to include creation.

19 Not necessarily though, since winding up (*Aufziehen*) applies to both types, the spring-powered (in the *CprR* passage) and the weight-powered variant (in the L-Met L1/Pölitz passage) of a clock-jack. For a concise account of the various types of roasting jacks and their history, see Charles Nijman's blog (2023).

20 Of course, the infamous passage in the Canon (*CpR*, A802f/B830f) in which Kant says that practical freedom is accessible to experience may also seem to suggest that he has a different conception of practical freedom in mind here. In Ertl (1998: 132f), I thought that this very passage also alludes to God as a causal threat to human freedom, although the act of freedom in question clearly has to do with enacting the moral law. In any event, Kant's position regarding the creation facet of compatibility needs in one way or another to be taken into account when assessing his claims about the relation of practical and transcendental freedom. I am now inclined to think, however, that Kant can be read in the Canon as maintaining that it is actually the very variant of practical freedom grounded on the idea of transcendental freedom, which is accessible to experience.

21 Klemme (2018: 192), with regard to the 1782/3 metaphysics lecture L-Met/Mron 29: 900f and 903, comes to a somewhat different conclusion, since he takes Kant's position in the *CpR* not to be settled when it comes to the relationship between practical and transcendental freedom. Still, he says: 'Kant can also be understood as arguing that in a practical respect we do not have to care about whether transcendental freedom is compatible with the concept of God'. For an overall account of Kant's doctrine of freedom in L-Met L1/Pölitz, see Allison (2018).

22 In L-Met L1/Pölitz by contrast, Kant tried to mitigate the structurally similar problem of a tension between theoretical spontaneity of the human subject and creation by qualifying the configuration thesis. Creation only 'very probably' (*sehr wahrscheinlich*, 28: 268) involves arrangement or configuration of the created causes. As Ameriks (2000: 195) pointed out, in the 1770s metaphysics lectures, the 'prima-facie threat to freedom that first concerns him is the omnipotence of God' and it is 'only a natural and "subjective" fact that we can't explain our freedom, while having absolute freedom and being able to give an explanation of it do not amount to the same thing'. In Ameriks' view, to be sure, in these lectures there can be no morality without absolute freedom for Kant.

23 In a sense, Kant's position of creation incompatibilism is similar to Pereboom's (2016a, 2016b) theological incompatibilism. According to Kant, though, it is only that we *necessarily think* that creation involves determinism; hence – given this assumption – we cannot attribute freedom to human agents when also assuming creation.

24 Insole (2013) holds that the critical Kant is a mere conservationist and that while mere conservationism, in Insole's opinion, by itself does not undercut compatibility, he takes Kant to hold an incompatibilist position in his critical period with reference to theology by virtue of Kant's stance on *concursus*. Mere conservationism implies that apart from keeping things in themselves in existence God does not contribute causally to their actions 'after' creating them. To my mind Kant, in line with an agnostic position, rather concedes the possibility of divine concurrence (on the level of things in themselves, for example, when it comes to grace) but holds that only some conceptions of *concursus*, namely paradigmatically a Molinist one, are acceptable for Kant. This topic, however, will have to be treated elsewhere. See Ertl (2017) for an extended discussion of Insole's approach.

25 The fourth italicized passage in this quotation has been added and corresponds to 'durch ihre Naturabhängigkeit' (*Rel*, 6: 142, l. 37) in the German original; this passage is *missing* in the cited translation; the omission also occurs in the Cambridge Edition volume (Kant 1996: 168). Here is an alternative translation:

> We cannot think of the universal *unconditional* submission of human beings to the divine legislation except insofar as we regard ourselves simultaneously as his *creatures*, just as God can be regarded as the author of all natural laws only because he is the creator of the things of nature. However, it is absolutely ungraspable to our reason how beings could be created for the free employment of their powers; for according to the principle of causality we can attribute to a being, assumed to have been produced, no other inward basis for its actions except the one put into it by the producing cause; but then every action of this being would also be determined through this basis (and hence through an external cause), and hence this being itself would not be free. Therefore, the legislation that is divine and holy, and hence pertains merely to free beings, cannot through our rational insight be reconciled with the concept of a creation of these beings; rather, one must regard them already as existing free beings who are determined not *by dint of their dependence on nature*, owing to their creation, but through a merely moral constraint possible according to laws of freedom, i.e., a call to citizenship in the divine nation. Thus the calling to this purpose is morally entirely clear, but for speculation the possibility of these called beings is an impenetrable mystery. (Trans. Palmquist 2016: 365; some of the emphasis added and all editorial brackets removed – W.E.).

Overall, Palmquist himself has based his translation on Pluhar's version. Pluhar himself (Kant 2009: 158) has 'through their dependency on nature'. Arguably, though, *Naturabhängigkeit* (as the context of the discussion in the lectures suggests) rather means 'nature-dependence' in the sense of 'dependency of (their) nature'.

26 In his important discussion of this passage, Insole (2020: 316) speaks of a '(rather Origenist) thought experiment of conceiving of God coexisting with uncreated free agents'. For a comprehensive account of the idea of the pre-mortal existence or pre-existence of human souls, see Givens' somewhat oddly titled

(2009). Givens points out (p. 3) that there are two variants of this thought, i.e., the souls as uncreated, and the souls as created prior to the physical birth of the person. Origen may actually be a good example of the latter type, but Kant clearly insinuates uncreatedness *tout court*, a status associated with 'entities' like *Sophia* in some readings of the Biblical account of this mysterious character (Givens 2009: 50). Strikingly, though, in his discussion of Kant, Givens misses the key passage in *Rel*, 6, 142f. Instead, following an account of the nineteenth-century German theologian Johann Friedrich Bruch, Givens takes Kant's doctrine of the noumenal status of the agent as itself a variant of the pre-existence topos (p. 200). Bruch took the idea of pre-existence to be detectable in a number of German writers and philosophers of the early nineteenth century, such as Schelling and Rückert.

27 A similar line of thought has even been pursued in the contemporary discussion of Molinism: it is sometimes argued that such an approach avoids the problem of individuating merely possible objects, as Zagzebski (1991: 126) has put it. One of the key modal-metaphysical features of Molina's approach is the claim that objects are transworld-identical. What Zagzebski is alluding to suggests that without actual objects there is no *individual* or *particular*, which could be said to be numerically identical across possible worlds.

   According to Galen Strawson (2010), there is no libertarian freedom because it presupposes self-creation, which, at least in the case of human agents, is impossible. This argument partly derives its strength from the assumption that the prototypically free agent, namely God, is to be regarded as *causa sui*. It must be said, however, that such a (Spinozist) conception of God is not part of standard forms of theism in which God is rather said to be *uncaused*. Along this line of thought, being uncaused at least fits with being free.

28 The basic idea is this: just as human agents on their own can never be sufficient for bringing about an effect without the *concursus* of God, God – for some effects at least – needs the *concursus* of human free agents, whose cooperation is beyond God's control, in order to achieve his overall end when creating the world.

References

Allison, H. E. (2018) 'Freedom of the Will in Baumgarten and Kant's ML1'. In C. D. Fugate and J. Hymers (eds), *Baumgarten and Kant on Metaphysics* (New York: Oxford University Press), 171–81.

—— (2020) *Kant's Conception of Freedom: A Developmental and Critical Analysis.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ameriks, K. (2000) *Kant's Theory of Mind: An Analysis of the Paralogisms of Pure Reason.* New edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Aquinas, T. (2000) *Sancti Thomae de Aquino opera omnia* recognovit et instruxit Enrique Alarcón automato electronico Pompaelone ad Universitatis Studiorum Navarrensis aedes a MM A.D. https://www.corpusthomisticum.org/iopera.html (Accessed on 7 August 2023).

Baumgarten, A. G. (2013) *Metaphysics. A Critical Translation with Kant's Elucidations, Selected Notes, and Related Materials.* Translated and edited with an introduction by C. D. Fugate and J. Hymers. London, New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

Beck, L. W. (1960) *A Commentary on Kant's Critique of Practical Reason.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Beyer, K. (ed.) (1937) *Kants Vorlesungen über die philosophische Religionslehre.* Halle: Akademischer Verlag.

Brewer, K. (2022) 'Kant's theory of the intuitive intellect'. *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 39(2), 163–82.

Brewer, K. and Watkins, E. (2012) 'A difficulty still awaits: Kant, Spinoza, and the threat of theological determinism'. *Kant-Studien*, 103(2), 163–87.

Chignell, A. (2014) 'Rational hope, possibility, and divine action'. In G. E. Michalson (ed.), *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason: A Critical Guide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 98–117.

Craig, W. L. (1988) *The Problem of Divine Foreknowledge and Future Contingents from Aristotle to Suarez.* Leiden: Brill.

Eberhard, J. G. and Kant, I. (2016) *Preparation for Natural Theology: With Kant's Notes and the Danzig Rational Theology Transcript.* Translated and edited with introduction and notes by C. D. Fugate and J. Hymers. London, New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

Ertl, W. (1998) *Kants Auflösung der "dritten Antinomie". Zur Bedeutung des Schöpfungskonzepts für die Freiheitslehre.* Freiburg, München: Verlag Karl Alber.

—— (2014) '"Ludewig" Molina and Kant's Libertarian Compatibilism'. In M. Kaufmann and A. Aichele (eds), *A Companion to Luis de Molina* (Boston, Leiden: Brill), 405–45.

—— (2017) 'On Christopher Insole's "Kant and the Creation of Freedom"'. *Critique*. https://virtualcritique. wordpress.com/2017/06/28/wolfgang-ertl-on-christopher-insoles-kant-and-the-creation-of-freedom/ (Accessed on 24 January 2023).

—— (2020) *The Guarantee of Perpetual Peace*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fischer, J. M. (ed.) (1989) *God, Foreknowledge, and Freedom*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Flint, T. P. (1998) *Divine Providence: The Molinist Account*. Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press.

Franks, P. W. (2005) *All or Nothing: Systematicity, Transcendental Arguments, and Skepticism in German Idealism*. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press.

Freddoso, A. (1988) '"Introduction" in Luis de Molina (1988)'. In *On Divine Foreknowledge (Part IV of the Concordia)*. Translated, with an introduction and notes, by A. J. Freddoso (Ithaca NY, London: Cornell University Press), 1–81.

Givens, T. (2009) *When Souls Had Wings: Pre-Mortal Existence in Western Thought*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Hasker, W. (1989) *God, Time, and Knowledge*. Ithaca NY, London: Cornell University Press.

Hogan, D. (2013) 'Metaphysical motives of Kant's analytic–synthetic distinction'. *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 51(2), 267–307.

—— (2014) 'Kant on foreknowledge of contingent truths'. *Res Philosophica*, 91(1), 47–70.

—— (2021) 'Kant's Theory of Divine and Secondary Causation'. In B. C. Look (ed.), *Leibniz and Kant* (New York: Oxford University Press), 265–94.

Insole, C. J. (2013) *Kant and the Creation of Freedom: A Theological Problem*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

—— (2020) *Kant and the Divine: From Contemplation to the Moral Law*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kain, P. (2021) 'The Development of Kant's Conception of Divine Freedom'. In B. C. Look (ed.), *Leibniz and Kant* (New York: Oxford University Press), 293–317.

Kant, I. (1992) *Theoretical Philosophy 1755-1770*. Translated and edited by D. Walford in collaboration with Ralf Meerbote. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

—— (1996) *Religion and Natural Theology*. Translated and edited by A. W. Wood and G. di Giovanni. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

—— (1997) *Lectures on Metaphysics*. Translated and edited by K. Ameriks and S. Naragon. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

—— (1998) *Kritik der reinen Vernunft. Nach der ersten und zweiten Originalauflage neu herausgegeben von Jens Timmermann*. Hamburg: Meiner.

—— (2009) *Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason*. Translated by W. S. Pluhar. Introduction by Stephen R. Palmquist. Indianapolis, Cambridge: Hackett.

—— (2018) *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason and Other Writings*. Translated and edited by A. Wood and George di Giovanni. Revised with an introduction by Robert Merrihew Adams. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Klemme, H. F. (2018) 'Kant's metaphysics of freedom (1775-1782): theoretical and practical perspectives'. In C. D. Fugate (ed.), *Kant's Lectures on Metaphysics: A Critical Guide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 179–93.

MacGregor, K. R. (2015) *Luis de Molina: Life and Theology of the Founder of Middle Knowledge*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

McCann, H. J. (ed.) (2016) *Free Will and Classical Theism: The Significance of Freedom in Perfect Being Theology*. New York: Oxford University Press.

McCann, H. J. and Johnson, D. M. (2017) 'Divine providence'. In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2017 Edition)*. Edited by E. N. Zalta. https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2017/entries/providence-divine/ (Accessed on 20 October 2022).

Molina, L. (1953) *Liberi Arbitrii cum Gratiae Donis, Divina Praescientia, Providentia, Praedestinatione et Reprobatione Concordia*. Ed. Iohannes Rabeneck. Madrid: Sapientia.

—— (1988) *On Divine Foreknowledge (Part IV of the Concordia)*. Translated, with an introduction and notes, by A. J. Freddoso. Ithaca NY, London: Cornell University Press.

Naragon, S. (2023) 'Kant in the Classroom' (updated 15 April 2023). http://www.manchester.edu/kant/ (Accessed on 2 July 2023).

Nijman, C. (2023) 'Everything you need to know about antique roasting jacks'. In *antique-fireback.com blog*. https://www.firebacks.net/blog/everything-you-need-to-know-about-antique-roasting-jacks (Accessed on 3 July 2023).

Palmquist, S. R. (2016) *Comprehensive Commentary on Kant's Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason*. Oxford, Malden, MA and Chichester: Wiley Blackwell.

Pereboom, D. (2006) 'Kant on transcendental freedom'. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 73(3), 537–67.

—— (2016a) 'Libertarianism and theological determinism'. In K. Timpe and D. Speak (eds), *Free Will and Theism: Connections, Contingencies, and Concerns* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 112–31.

—— (2016b) 'Theological determinism and the relationship with God'. In H. J. McCann (ed.), *Free Will and Classical Theism: The Significance of Freedom in Perfect Being Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press), 201–19.

Perszyk, K. (2011) 'Introduction'. In K. Perszyk (ed.), *Molinism: The Contemporary Debate* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 1–24.

Piro, F. (2014) 'The philosophical impact of Molinism in the 17th century'. In M. Kaufmann and A. Aichele (eds), *A Companion to Luis de Molina* (Leiden, Boston: Brill), 365–403.

Rogers, K. A. (2007) 'Anselmian eternalism'. *Faith and Philosophy*, 24(1), 3–27.

Schwaiger, C. (2018) 'Baumgarten's Theory of Freedom: A Contribution to the Wolff-Lange Controversy'. In C. D. Fugate and J. Hymers (eds), *Baumgarten and Kant on Metaphysics* (New York: Oxford University Press), 42–60.

Strawson, G. (2010) *Freedom and Belief*. Revised edition. New York: Oxford University Press.

Timpe, K. (2014) *Free Will in Philosophical Theology*. New York, London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Timpe, K. and Speak, D. (eds) (2016) *Free Will and Theism: Connections, Contingencies, and Concerns*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Vicens, L. C. and Kittle, S. (2019) *God and Human Freedom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Zagzebski, L. T. (1991) *The Dilemma of Freedom and Foreknowledge*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.