

Himma on the Free-Will Argument: a critical response

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Abstract: In two recent articles in this journal Kenneth Himma has launched an attack on what he describes as the ‘two versions’ of the Free-Will Argument, the first of which he describes as ‘the standard’ version and the second of which he identifies with Plantinga’s Free-Will Defence in *God, Freedom, and Evil* (1974). In this article I argue for three main claims: (i) that Himma’s objections against ‘the standard’ Free-Will Argument are directed at a straw man; (ii) that Himma’s critique of Plantinga’s Free-Will Defence is based on a misunderstanding; and (iii) that Himma’s critique nevertheless is relevant to Plantinga’s relatively neglected ‘Quantitative Free-Will Defence’ (also found in Plantinga’s *God, Freedom, and Evil*), but fails to undermine this further defence due to its reliance on the unjustified assumption that the afterlife is irrelevant to the problem of evil.

In *God, Freedom, and Evil* (1974) Plantinga develops an argument for the claim that the proposition ‘God is omniscient, omnipotent, and wholly good’ is logically consistent with the proposition ‘[t]here is evil’,¹ and another argument for the further claim that the proposition ‘God is omniscient, omnipotent, and wholly good’ is logically consistent with ‘the vast *amount* and *variety* of evil the universe actually contains’.² The argument for the first claim has been much discussed, and is widely known as Plantinga’s ‘Free-Will Defence’ (abbreviated ‘FWD’). The argument for the latter claim, however, has received relatively little attention in the literature.³ Elsewhere I have dubbed this argument Plantinga’s ‘Quantitative Free-Will Defence’ (‘QFWD’); I shall refer to it by this name also in what follows.⁴

In two recent articles in this journal Kenneth Himma has launched an attack on what he describes as the ‘two versions’ of ‘the free-will argument’ in contemporary discussions.⁵ The first of these versions is dealt with in Himma (2009) and is said to be ‘the standard’ and ‘most common’ version of the Free-Will Argument. The second version is dealt with in Himma (2010) and is identified with ‘Plantinga’s

version of the free-will argument' as it is developed in *God, Freedom, and Evil*.⁶ This identification is initially not entirely clear, for, as we noted above, there are two different free-will defences in Plantinga's *God, Freedom, and Evil*: the FWD and the QFWD. It is plain, though, that Himma has the well-known FWD and not the less-known QFWD in mind, for the only passage in *God, Freedom, and Evil* that Himma quotes as containing the relevant argument is a passage occurring at the beginning of Plantinga's development of the FWD.

In this article I argue for three main claims. First, that Himma's objections to what he calls 'the standard' version of the Free-Will Argument are directed at a straw man, for it is not at all clear that there are any proponents of this version of the Free-Will Argument in the contemporary literature. Second, that Himma's objection to Plantinga's FWD is based on a misunderstanding of Plantinga's FWD, and turns out to be largely irrelevant to Plantinga's FWD. And third, that Himma's objection to the FWD nevertheless *is* relevant to Plantinga's QFWD, but fails to undermine the QFWD due to its reliance on the unjustified assumption that '[w]hat happens in the afterlife is not at all relevant with respect to justifying the suffering done here – even if universalism turned out to be true'.⁷

The 'standard' version of the Free-Will Argument

Himma explains the main difference between what he describes as the 'two versions' of the Free-Will Argument as follows:

The first [version] takes free will, by itself, to be a greater moral good that cannot be secured by God without allowing some evil, and thus purports to reconcile the existence of an all-perfect God with evil. The second, developed by Alvin Plantinga, takes the existence of free beings in the world, whom [sic], on the whole, do more good than evil, as being the greater moral good that cannot be secured by even an omnipotent God without allowing some evil, and thereby shows the logical compatibility of God with evil.⁸

The difference between the two versions, then, is that whereas the first version (call it 'FWA') takes the *mere existence* of free beings (i.e. beings with free will) to be a good that allows for a consistency between God and evil, the second version (i.e. Plantinga's FWD) takes the existence of free beings *who do more good than evil* to be a good that allows for such a consistency.

I begin by making some brief critical remarks on Himma's critique of FWA in (2009). As was noted earlier, Himma says that FWA is 'the standard' and 'most common' formulation of the Free-Will Argument in philosophical discussion.⁹ Surprisingly, however, he does not cite a single proponent of this allegedly standard and most common version of the Free-Will Argument. He simply refers his readers to two encyclopaedia entries in which the Free-Will Argument is taken to be articulated in terms of FWA.

The first of these entries is Michael Tooley's article on the problem of evil in the online *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. In this article Tooley (himself no

friend of the Free-Will Argument) says that '[an] important approach to theodicy' comprises the ideas that free will 'is of great value' and that because of this great value 'it is better that God create a world in which agents possess libertarian free will, even though they may misuse it... than that God creates a world where agents lack libertarian free will'.¹⁰ The second entry is Marilyn M. Adams's article on the problem of evil in the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, in which it is said that '[f]ree will approaches' to the problem of evil take free will to be 'a very great good, whether intrinsically or as a necessary means to God's central purposes in creation', and that God's gift of free will involves 'the possibility that some will misuse their freedom, thereby introducing evil into the world'.¹¹

Adams's entry does not articulate the Free-Will Argument along lines of FWA rather than FWD, however, but allows each version an equal footing: free will is considered a good either 'intrinsically' (as in FWA) or 'as a necessary means to God's central purposes in creation' (as in FWD). It is, accordingly, misleading to refer to Adams's article as presenting a Free-Will Argument along lines of FWA as opposed to FWD.

Of the two encyclopaedia articles Himma refers to, it is thus only Tooley's that unequivocally articulates a Free-Will Argument in line with FWA's claim that free will is of such intrinsic value as to outweigh the evils in the world and hereby allow the existence of evil to be consistent with the existence of an almighty and perfectly good God. (It may be noted, though, that Tooley's explication is not committed to FWA's additional claim that the existence of free beings requires allowing 'some evil': Tooley's explication requires only the *possibility* of evil.)

Tooley provides no references to any philosophers who endorse or advocate the relevant version of the Free-Will Argument. We might therefore legitimately ask: *are* there any such philosophers? This is far from clear. For consider what are arguably the most well-known endorsements of versions of the Free-Will Argument apart from Plantinga's version, namely those of John Hick, Richard Swinburne, and Peter van Inwagen. None of these philosophers endorse FWA's central idea that the mere existence of free beings is an intrinsic good that allows evil to be consistent with an almighty and perfectly good God. Rather, they all take free will to be valuable inasmuch as it is needed for some good *other* than itself. In Hick's case this 'other' good is a 'personal relationship' with God. He says:

[T]here is a necessary connection between personality and moral freedom such that the idea of the creation of personal beings who are not free to choose wrongly as well as to choose rightly is self-contradictory and therefore does not fall within the scope of the divine omnipotence. If man is to be a being capable of entering into personal relationship with his Maker, and not a mere puppet, he must be endowed with the uncontrollable gift of freedom.¹²

In Swinburne's case the 'other' good is (or includes) 'choice of destiny and responsibility'. He summarizes his position as follows:

[S]ince men [with free will] have the power to do each other significant hurt and they are not causally determined to do what they do, it is vastly probable that in such a world there will be a lot of further suffering . . . In these ways evil comes with the good – it would be logically impossible for God to give certain benefits (e.g. choice of destiny and responsibility) without the inevitability or at any rate enormous probability of various accompanying evils. I [have] suggested . . . that they were worth it.¹³

In van Inwagen's case the 'other' good is 'love':

Perhaps we cannot understand *all* his [i.e. God's] reasons for giving human beings free will, but here is one very important one we *can* understand: He gave them the gift of free will because free will is necessary for love.¹⁴

We see then that none of the well-known versions of the Free-Will Argument apart from Plantinga's version incorporates the central idea of what Himma says is 'the standard' and 'most common' version of the Free-Will Argument. (And neither does Plantinga's, as Himma himself concedes.¹⁵)

It seems plain, then, that Himma's claim that FWA is 'the standard' and 'most common' version of the Free-Will Argument is simply mistaken. Indeed, it is not clear that *anyone* in the contemporary philosophical literature defends this version of the Free-Will Argument. In view of this it seems that in arguing against FWA in his (2009), Himma is in effect arguing against a straw man.¹⁶

Himma's general approach to Plantinga's FWD

We turn now to Himma's critique in his (2010) of Plantinga's FWD. Himma understands Plantinga's FWD as 'tak[ing] the existence of free beings in the world, whom [sic], on the whole, do more good than evil, as being the greater moral good that cannot be secured by even an omnipotent God without allowing some evil'.¹⁷ In claiming that Plantinga holds that the greater good 'cannot' be secured without 'some evil', Himma is implying that Plantinga takes evil to be *necessary* for the greater good. Elsewhere he says:

[Plantinga's FWD] is based on the plausible claim that an all-perfect God could be willing to allow some evil if *necessary* to achieve a greater moral good; after all, a morally perfect God would want to create, if not the morally best of possible universes, one that is morally worthwhile.¹⁸

Since Plantinga's FWD recognizes that there is evil in the world, it follows from Himma's above explication that Plantinga's FWD takes evil to be necessary for the greater good, i.e. that without some evil it would be impossible for God to achieve the greater good.

Himma bases his explication of Plantinga's FWD on only one passage from Plantinga's *God, Freedom, and Evil*. (This is in fact the only passage from

Plantinga's writings that Himma refers to in his entire discussion in his (2010).) The passage runs as follows:

A world containing creatures who are significantly free (and freely perform more good than evil actions) is more valuable, all else being equal, than a world containing no free creatures at all. Now God can create free creatures, but He can't *cause* or *determine* them to do only what is right. For if He does so, then they aren't significantly free after all; they do not do what is right freely. To create creatures capable of moral good, therefore, He must create creatures capable of moral evil; and He can't give these creatures the freedom to perform evil and at the same time prevent them from doing so . . . The fact that free creatures sometimes go wrong, however, counts neither against God's omnipotence nor against His goodness; for He could have forestalled the occurrence of moral evil only by removing the possibility of moral good.¹⁹

Himma next goes on to relate Plantinga's FWD to what he calls the 'logical' and 'evidential' arguments from evil.²⁰ The logical argument from evil is said to rely on the claim that 'a morally perfect God would not allow any evil at all',²¹ and the evidential argument is said to rely on the claim that 'there is more evil in this world than can be explained as necessary for the achievement of a greater moral good'.²² The logical argument, says Himma, is 'easily rebutted' by Plantinga's FWD,²³ but the evidential argument is taken to be a more difficult matter. Considering the claim that Plantinga's FWD can 'ground a solution' to the evidential argument from evil,²⁴ Himma goes on to issue this protest (which is, in effect, the main thesis of his article):

[T]here are good empirical and moral reasons, from the standpoint of one plausible conception of a Christian ethics that is far more demanding than ordinary secular moral intuitions, to doubt that Plantinga's version of the [FWD] succeeds . . . Thus, while Plantinga's version might succeed as a defence against the logical problem of evil, it will neither rebut the evidential problem of evil nor, without more, ground a successful theodicy that reconciles God's existence with the evil that occurs *in this world*.²⁵

Himma argues for the claim that Plantinga's FWD fails as a response to the evidential argument from evil as follows. He begins by adopting a Christian ethics as his 'ethical standard' (reminding his readers that 'Plantinga is a Christian'²⁶), and explains this ethics as requiring people to exercise 'a non-self-regarding universal altruistic concern for others'.²⁷ He thereupon proceeds to argue that various empirical facts (such as statistical facts about how much of the US Gross Domestic Product goes to charity) show that human beings fall radically short of this standard, and hence – from the point of view of this ethical standard – do 'more evil than good' in the world.²⁸ And this, Himma believes, undermines Plantinga's FWD construed as a response to the evidential argument from evil: '[God] is not justified, on Plantinga's version of the [FWD], in creating this world'.²⁹

In the next section I argue that Himma's understanding of Plantinga's FWD is flawed. Himma's claim that Plantinga's FWD is unable to respond successfully to

the evidential argument from evil, is, I argue, based on a misunderstanding of Plantinga's FWD.

Himma on Plantinga's FWD as a response to the 'evidential' argument

In what follows I will say nothing substantial about Himma's assessment of Plantinga's FWD when taken as a response to the 'logical' argument from evil. Himma's main point in this regard is that 'a morally perfect God would not allow any evil at all'.³⁰ This seems, by and large, correct. For this – or something very similar to this – is what many well-known proponents of the logical argument from evil have in fact claimed. If we confine ourselves to the three twentieth-century proponents of the logical argument from evil mentioned by Plantinga in *God, Freedom, and Evil*, namely John Mackie, H. D. Aiken, and H. J. McCloskey, we can see, for example, that Mackie's argument assumes that a perfectly good God would 'eliminate evil';³¹ that Aiken's assumes that a perfectly good God would 'prevent evil';³² and that McCloskey's assumes that a perfectly good God 'would have created a world in which there was no unnecessary evil'.³³ These assumptions accord pretty well with the claim that 'a morally perfect God would not allow any evil at all'.

Himma's discussion of (what he calls) the 'evidential' argument from evil is more problematic, however. Himma explicates this argument in terms of the claim that 'there is more evil in this world than can be explained as necessary for the achievement of a greater moral good',³⁴ and in a footnote he refers to Rowe (1979) as a source for this explication.

A first thing that can be noted about Himma's use of the term 'the evidential argument from evil' is that it is non-standard. On the standard way of using this term, which derives in large part from Rowe (1979), the term denotes an argument that aims at showing that 'the variety and profusion of evil in our world, although perhaps not logically inconsistent with the existence of the theistic God, provides, nevertheless, *rational support* for atheism'.³⁵ The claim that there is more evil in this world than is 'necessary for the achievement of a greater moral good' is no part of the evidential argument from evil thus understood, but may be regarded as an optional addition to it; an addition, moreover, which the argument adduced by Rowe (1979) does not incorporate.³⁶ Himma's reference to Rowe (1979) as a source for his explication of (what he calls) 'the evidential argument from evil' is accordingly misleading. The argument that Himma refers to by the term 'the evidential argument from evil', and the argument that standard contemporary usage, following Rowe, identifies by this term, are not the same argument. This is of course no major criticism of Himma's objection to the evidential argument, but serves merely as a caution against assuming that Himma, in discussing what *he* calls 'the evidential argument from evil', is discussing what is standardly discussed under this label.

Let us now consider Himma's objection to Plantinga's FWD construed as a response to what Himma calls the evidential argument from evil. The gist of Himma's objection, as has been noted earlier, is that various empirical facts indicate that human beings on the whole do more evil than good when judged by a Christian ethical standard. This, Himma thinks, decisively undermines Plantinga's FWD construed as a response to the evidential argument from evil, inasmuch as Plantinga's FWD is taken to presuppose that human beings on the whole do more good than evil.

I think Himma's objection can be shown to be unsound. For Plantinga's FWD does *not* presuppose that human beings on the whole do more good than evil. The quotation from Plantinga's *God, Freedom, and Evil*, quoted in the foregoing, which Himma uses as a basis for his explication of Plantinga's FWD, is taken out of context. The passage occurs at the very beginning of Plantinga's discussion of the FWD in *God, Freedom, and Evil*, and is largely *introductory* in character. Indeed, immediately before the quoted passage Plantinga explicitly says: 'we can make a *preliminary* statement of the Free Will Defence as follows'.³⁷ In the corresponding passage in *God and Other Minds* (1967) – of which the passage in *God, Freedom, and Evil* is a revision – the line is even more manifestly preliminary: 'the free will defense is usually stated in something like the following way'.³⁸ In view of this, it seems hermeneutically inappropriate to base a critique of Plantinga's FWD on these lines. The lines are explicitly 'preliminary' and play no role in Plantinga's subsequent and carefully crafted FWD, which is built around the two premises that 'God created a world containing moral good' and '[i]t was not within God's power to create a world containing moral good but no moral evil',³⁹ none of which presuppose that human beings on the whole do more good than evil in the world. It is strange that Himma should base an interpretation of Plantinga's FWD solely on these lines, and neglect these two crucial premises of Plantinga's FWD.

Since Himma bases his objection to Plantinga's FWD on the mistaken assumption that Plantinga's FWD presupposes that human beings on the whole do more good than evil, it is clear that his objection fails as an objection to the FWD, no matter how convincing a case he makes for his claim that human beings on the whole do more evil than good in the world.

Himma's objection and Plantinga's QFWD

Although Himma's objection fails as an objection to Plantinga's FWD, a strong case can be made for the claim that it is of some relevance to Plantinga's aforementioned QFWD. For contrary to Plantinga's FWD, the QFWD *does* seem to involve an assumption pertaining to the amount or proportion of good and evil in the actual world.

To see this, let us briefly survey Plantinga's QFWD. Plantinga's QFWD is developed against the background of some metaphysical assumptions pertaining

to possible worlds, free will, and moral value. These assumptions include (i) that there are such things as ‘possible worlds’, understood as maximal states of affairs, amongst which one is the actual world; (ii) that a possible world can have moral value only by including free persons who – independently of God’s causal activity – perform morally good or evil actions; and (iii) that the way in which God can actualize a possible world containing moral value is by actualizing a segment of a possible world which includes the existence of free persons, who then freely perform various morally significant actions which make up the remaining part of the possible world.

Against the background of these assumptions Plantinga asserts that it is *possible* that any possible world *W* containing ‘as much’ moral good but ‘less’ moral evil than the actual world is such that God is unable to actualize it, since its actualization is contingent on the morally significant actions that the persons in that world freely perform.⁴⁰ Plantinga proceeds to infer from this possibility that the existence of an omnipotent, omniscient, and wholly good God is consistent with as much evil as the actual world contains:

So it’s possible that this [i.e. ‘(creating) a world containing as much moral good as this one but less moral evil’] was not within God’s power; but if so, then (1) [i.e. ‘God is omnipotent, omniscient, and morally perfect’] is compatible with the proposition that there is as much moral evil as Kronos [i.e. the actual world] does in fact contain.⁴¹

This, in brief outline, is Plantinga’s QFWD. Reduced to bare essentials, the argument could be put thus:

- (1) Every possible world that includes as much moral good as the actual world but less evil belongs to the set of worlds that God is unable to actualize.
- (2) Hence the existence of God is logically consistent with the amount of evil that exists in the actual world.

Now (1) obviously assumes that there is a certain amount or balance of good and evil in the actual world, for otherwise (2) would be consistent with God’s actualization of a possible world containing no good but only vast amounts of horrendous and unredeemed evil, which Plantinga obviously does not intend to allow for.⁴²

And this is where Himma’s objection may be relevant. For Himma’s objection comprises the claim that there is more moral evil than good in the world, and, supposing this is true, we may ask if this amount or balance squares with the amount or balance of good and evil assumed in (1). If the amount or balance of good and evil in the world fails to square with the amount or balance assumed in (1), Plantinga’s QFWD will involve a false premise, and so turn out unsound.

Let us, then, take a closer look at the relation between (1) and Himma’s claim that there is more evil than good in the world.

Himma, evil, and the afterlife

Suppose, for the sake of argument, that (1) assumes that there is more good than evil in the actual world, and that Himma is right in his claim that there is more evil than good in the world. Does this supposition imply that (1) is false, and hence that Plantinga's QFWD is unsound?

First appearances notwithstanding, it does not. For in claiming that there is more evil than good in the world, Himma is not using the word 'world' in the sense of a *possible world*, and hence is not making a claim about the *actual world* in the sense assumed in (1). This is clear from the fact that a possible world in the sense assumed in (1) is – as was explained above – a *maximal* state of affairs, whereas Himma deliberately delimits his use of the term 'world' so as to apply only to what he calls 'this life' or 'this world',⁴³ to the exclusion of 'the afterlife' (the possibility of which he concedes), in which case he is not speaking of a maximal state of affairs. Himma says:

The problem of evil concerns what is done in this life and would seem to require an answer that justifies the evil done in this life with some greater moral good that accrues from what is done in this life. . . . What happens in the afterlife is not at all relevant with respect to justifying the suffering done here – even if universalism turned out to be true.⁴⁴

So it is clear that Himma is not using the word 'world' in the sense of a maximal state of affairs, and so his claim that there is more evil than good in the world is not a claim about the 'actual world' in the sense assumed in (1). Hence, even if Himma's claim were true, it would not undermine (1).

Himma's objection may still be of relevance to Plantinga's QFWD, however. For suppose that Himma is right in his above contention that the problem of evil is concerned only with the events of this life. If so, then even if the actual world is a maximal state of affairs and accordingly includes all states of affairs pertaining to the afterlife, these latter states of affairs would all be irrelevant to the problem of evil, and so we could simply revise (1)–(2) so as to be concerned with those segments of possible worlds that fall within the scope of 'this life', for example as follows:

- (1*) It is possible that *any possible world segment pertaining to this life* containing as much good but less evil than *the actual world segment pertaining to this life* is such that God is unable to actualize it.
- (2*) Hence the existence of God is logically consistent with the amount of evil that exists in *the actual world segment pertaining to this life*.

Thus revised, we see that if it is supposed that (1) assumes that there is more good than evil in the actual world segment pertaining to this life, Himma's claim that there is more evil than good in the world would, if true, be inconsistent with (1), and hence would render Plantinga's QFWD unsound. Thus, a crucial question to ask in evaluating the bearings of Himma's objection on Plantinga's QFWD is

whether Himma is justified in taking the events of a possible afterlife to be irrelevant to the problem of evil.

I do not think he is. The only argument Himma seems to give in support of this claim of irrelevance is an argument from personal experience: 'as someone who was an agnostic for much of my life,' he says, 'taking into account the good and evil that might be done in the afterlife would have struck me when I was an agnostic as utterly irrelevant, and continues to seem that way to me even as a serious Christian.'⁴⁵ This, however, would only be a good reason for the claim that 'the problem of evil' is concerned exclusively with 'this life' if 'the problem of evil' were equivalent to 'Himma's problem of evil', which, of course, it is not.

In fact, there seem to be good reasons for rejecting Himma's claim that the afterlife is irrelevant to the problem of evil. Consider, for example, the three philosophers mentioned above as major proponents of the Free-Will Argument apart from Plantinga: Swinburne, van Inwagen, and Hick. All of these authors can be seen to incorporate considerations pertaining to the afterlife into their respective responses to the problem of evil.

Swinburne takes God to be morally justified in permitting evil in the world inasmuch as the possibility of evil must be allowed if there is to be free will, and free will is in turn needed to secure 'choice of destiny'.⁴⁶ By 'destiny' Swinburne is of course not thinking primarily of life on earth, but of life in the hereafter, and so we see that his response to the problem of evil involves considerations pertaining to the afterlife.

Van Inwagen's appeal to the afterlife is no less direct. In developing his so-called 'expanded free-will defence' in response to the problem of evil, he says:

All this evil . . . will come to an end. At some point, for all eternity, there will be no more unmerited suffering: this present darkness, 'the age of evil', will eventually be remembered as a brief flicker at the beginning of human history. Every evil done by the wicked to the innocent will have been avenged, and every tear will have been wiped away.⁴⁷

And Hick is explicit in that any Christian response to the problem of evil must take into consideration the afterlife:

[W]e cannot hope to state a Christian theodicy without taking seriously the doctrine of a life beyond the grave. . . . The Christian claim is that the ultimate life of man - after what further scenes of 'soul-making' we do not know - lies in the Kingdom of God which is depicted in the teaching of Jesus as a state of exultant and blissful happiness. . . . Christian theodicy must point forward to that final blessedness, and claim that this infinite future good will render worth while all the pain and travail and wickedness that has occurred on the way to it.⁴⁸

These sorts of appeals to the afterlife are very common also in the history of philosophy. In the *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*, Hume has Demea say that 'all pious divines and preachers' who have responded to the problem of evil have said that 'this life [is] but a moment in comparison with eternity', and that '[t] he present evil phenomena . . . are rectified in other regions, and in some future

period of existence'.⁴⁹ Although it is probably an exaggeration that 'all' divines and preachers have taken this approach, it cannot be denied that many have done so. Martin Luther's response to the problem of evil in his *The Bondage of the Will* is a pertinent example:

Behold! God governs the external affairs of the world in such a way that, if you regard and follow the judgment of human reason, you are forced to say, either that there is no God, or that God is unjust . . . *And a summary explanation of this whole inexplicable problem is found in a single little word: There is a life after this life; and all that is not punished and repaid here will be punished and repaid there; for this life is nothing more than a precursor, or, rather, a beginning, of the life that is to come.*⁵⁰

It seems, then, that Himma is simply wrong in claiming that the problem of evil is not concerned with the afterlife. The very opposite seems to be the case: the afterlife is frequently brought up in discussions of the problem of evil.

Moreover, it is not hard to see that the afterlife is relevant to an evaluation of Plantinga's QFWD. For even if it is true, as we have supposed, that (1) assumes that there is more good than evil in the actual world, the amount or balance of evil and good in the afterlife will still clearly and obviously be relevant to the truth of (1), for the duration of past or present good or evil states of affairs is infinitesimal in comparison to the possibly endless duration of future good or evil states of affairs.

It is clear, then, that Himma is not justified in taking the afterlife to be irrelevant to the problem of evil. Hence, even though Himma's objection is clearly of relevance to Plantinga's QFWD, it rests on an unjustified assumption, and so could not be said to pose a serious threat to the QFWD (which is not, of course, to say that the QFWD is sound⁵¹).⁵²

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Notes

1. Plantinga (1974), 54–55 (see *ibid.*, 29–55 for the whole argument). The kind of evil here spoken of is *moral* evil.
2. *Ibid.*, 55–57.
3. Plantinga's QFWD is not discussed in any of the following recent (and in my view excellent) papers on Plantinga's Free-Will Defence: Howard-Snyder & O'Leary Hawthorne (1998); Rowe (1998); Bergmann (1999); Oppy (2004); and Otte (2009). For evidence of the absence of discussions of Plantinga's QFWD in the older literature, see the bibliography given under the heading 'Free-Will Theodicy' in Whitney (1998), 18–51.
4. See Kraal (2012).
5. Himma (2009), 395; (2010), 21.
6. Himma (2010), 21, 23–24.
7. *Ibid.*, 25.
8. *Ibid.*, 21.
9. Himma (2009), 397, 414, n. 3.
10. Quoted *ibid.*, 397.
11. Quoted *ibid.*
12. Hick (1988), 266.
13. Swinburne (1979), 200.
14. Van Inwagen (2006), 84. Van Inwagen's position seems to be widespread; Howard-Snyder & Howard-Snyder (1993, 185) report that '[m]any Christian theodicians believe that God's creating us with the capacity to love Him and each other justifies, in large part, God's permitting evil'.
15. Himma (2009), 414, n. 3.
16. This does not imply that Himma's objections to the FWA are invalid or unsound or uninteresting, of course.
17. Himma (2010), 21.
18. *Ibid.*, 23 (my emphasis).
19. Plantinga (1974), 30. The quotation occurs in Himma (2010), 23–24.
20. Himma (2010), 21–22.
21. *Ibid.*, 22.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*, 21.
24. *Ibid.*, 22.
25. *Ibid.*, 22–23.
26. *Ibid.*, 28.
27. *Ibid.*, 38.
28. *Ibid.*, 37.
29. *Ibid.*, 37.
30. *Ibid.*, 22.
31. Mackie (1955), 201.
32. Aiken (1958), 79.

33. McCloskey (1960), 114.
34. Himma (2010), 22.
35. Rowe (1979), 335, n. 1.
36. The argument Rowe proposes runs as follows:

(1) There exist instances of intense suffering which an omnipotent, omniscient being could have prevented without thereby losing some greater good or permitting some evil equally bad or worse.
 (2) An omniscient, wholly good being would prevent the occurrence of any intense suffering it could, unless it could not do so without thereby losing some greater good or permitting some evil equally bad or worse. (3) There does not exist an omnipotent, omniscient, and wholly good being.
 (Rowe (1979), 336)

No premise of this argument entails that 'there is more evil in this world than can be explained as necessary for the achievement of a greater moral good'.

37. Plantinga (1974), 30.
38. Plantinga (1967), 132.
39. Plantinga (1974), 54.
40. *Ibid.*, 57.
41. *Ibid.*
42. In his more recent work on the problem of evil Plantinga explicitly judges the actuality of this sort of world as inconsistent with God's attributes; see Plantinga (2004), esp. 6–7.
43. Himma (2010), 25.
44. *Ibid.*
45. *Ibid.*
46. Swinburne (1979), 200.
47. van Inwagen (2006), 89.
48. Hick (1988), 339–340.
49. Hume (1998), 64. Cleanthes' (and perhaps Hume's) critical response to Demea's appeal to an afterlife is (in effect) that it is *epistemically uncertain*, not that it is *irrelevant*.
50. Luther (2006), 315–316.
51. For some problems with Plantinga's QFWD, see Kraal (2012).
52. My thanks to Alvin Plantinga and to two reviewers for helpful comments on an earlier version of this article. Work on this article was supported by a grant from the Swedish Research Council.