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infinitives of different tenses. In the absence of any other justification for distinguishing such senses of 'ought', it seems simpler and better not to multiply the senses of 'ought'. This leaves no escape from the conclusion that 'ought' does not semantically imply 'can'.

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#### REFERENCES

- [1] H. P. Grice, 'Logic and Conversation', in *The Logic of Grammar*, ed. D. Davidson and G. Harman (Encino, California; Dickenson Publishing Co., 1975), pp. 64-75.
- [2] W. Sinnott-Armstrong, "'Ought" Conversationally Implies "Can"', *Philosophical Review*, vol. XCIII, no. 2 (April 1984, pp. 249-61).

### DELIBERATING ABOUT THE INEVITABLE

By BRUCE N. WALLER

**I**F I believe that I shall inevitably perform a certain act — that it is uniquely determined that I shall perform a certain act — can I *deliberate* about what act to perform? A crucial step in Peter van Inwagen's argument for universal belief in free will (*An Essay on Free Will*, Oxford 1983, pp. 153-61) requires a negative answer to that question. I shall argue for the affirmative.

Briefly, van Inwagen's argument: first, 'One cannot deliberate about whether to perform a certain act unless one believes it is possible for one to perform it.' (For van Inwagen, to believe that it is *possible* to perform an act is to believe that one is deciding between or among 'various incompatible courses of action' (p. 154; also pp. 30, 68-9) and that each of those courses of action could actually be selected and put into practice. Also the *possibility* of performing a certain act is not merely a conditional possibility: I *could* have done X *if* I had wanted to, had had different desires, had chosen differently, etc. Van Inwagen rejects this 'conditional analysis of 'could have acted differently' in his superb critique of compatibilism, pp. 114-26.) Two, if one believes determinism to be true, then one believes that one's future acts are inevitable (and that no other acts are really possible). Three, we do deliberate about whether to perform certain acts. Therefore, we cannot believe in determinism.

Van Inwagen's argument is valid: by *modus ponens* on the first and third premisses we derive the consequent of the first premiss, and then by *modus tollens* with the second premiss we validly conclude that no one (at least no one who deliberates) believes in determinism. Furthermore, the second and third premisses are surely true. Thus the vital question is the truth of the first premiss: is it true that 'one cannot deliberate about whether to perform a certain act unless one believes it is possible to perform it'?

Van Inwagen suggests that anyone who doubts such an obvious fact should:

... imagine that he is in a room with two doors and that he believes one of the doors to be unlocked and the other to be locked and impassable, though he has no idea which is which; let him then attempt to imagine himself deliberating about which door to leave by (p. 154).

But this example is too simple, its conclusions too obvious. There is no real decision about which door to leave by: the other alternative is obviously (and literally) barred. But in this case deliberation is precluded by the salience – not the inevitability – of the conclusion. In a similar manner, I cannot deliberate whether to walk or (flap my arms and) fly to the tavern; but I *can* deliberate about whether to walk or drive, even if I firmly believe that the decision resulting from that deliberation (as well as the decision to deliberate) is determined (by causes set in inexorable motion long before St Patrick drove the snakes out of Ireland).

The possibility of determined deliberation is clearer in a more complex example: what sort of wager to make on the Grand National Steeplechase. I am a determinist, and I believe that my ultimate choice is completely and uniquely determined (by my learning history, my past patterns of reinforcement, the current influences on me): my bet will be the causal result of those determining factors, and I could not choose other than I shall choose. Will I now find it impossible to deliberate about a number of options, since I believe that only one is really possible? Certainly not. For I must still carry out the determined deliberation process in order to arrive at my betting choice; just as I must still trudge to the betting window, even if I believe that it is determined that I shall arrive at that window. I recognize that my deliberation process – involving my beliefs, memories, hopes, changing knowledge of odds and jockeys and weather conditions – is an essential part of my choosing among various horses. Even though that deliberation process is completely determined it will be no less a process of genuine deliberation and no less important in selecting a fancy (it will still play a causal role in determining my wager). Without that deliberation process (if I instead bet on an appealing name, or my reasoning process were addled by drugs) the final selection would probably be quite different. It is determined *that* I shall deliberate, *how* I shall deliberate, and what the *result* of my

deliberation will be; but why should any of that preclude deliberation or lessen its importance?

But (determined) deliberation is not only possible when the course to be taken is unknown; deliberation is even possible in the cases that seem most congenial to van Inwagen's analysis: deliberation is possible even when the *result* of the deliberation is fore-known, and is acknowledged to be determined, fixed, and inevitable. Imagine that computer simulations have been developed to a remarkably sophisticated level, so that an enormously complex simulation takes into account all the influences impinging upon each individual (the effects of interaction between individuals and their social and physical environments, the reasoning processes and emotional patterns of each individual) and projects precisely what each individual will decide and do. (Whether such perfect predictability of rational processes is possible is of course a vexed question. I am only considering the implications of such an obviously deterministic-mechanistic system, not assuming that it is genuinely possible.) This computer simulation is so accurate that I have come to consider it practically infallible, and it would never occur to me to doubt its projections. Suppose further that I am now deliberating my wager for the Grand National Steeplechase, and I am reliably told that my projection reveals that I will bet on Corbiere. At this point I know (or at least I have no doubt) that I shall bet on Corbiere. Is it still possible for me to deliberate about my choice? Certainly. Suppose I had rather fancied Greasepaint, and thought it likely that my deliberations would yield Greasepaint as my betting choice. I am thus surprised by the simulation result (I have no doubt that it *is* the result that I shall deduce), and proceed through the deliberation process in order to see exactly *how* I decide on Corbiere. Thus even if I firmly believe it is not possible for me to do anything other than wager on Corbiere, I can still deliberate about betting on Greasepaint; and van Inwagen's claim '... that no one could deliberate about whether to perform an act that he does not believe it possible for him to perform' (p. 156) is mistaken.

But perhaps that is not sufficient. For van Inwagen elsewhere acknowledges that one *can* deliberate while believing in determinism, at the cost of engaging in contradictory behaviours. Van Inwagen claims that '... to reject free will is to condemn oneself to a life of perpetual logical inconsistency,' that '... anyone who denies the existence of free will must, inevitably, contradict himself with monotonous regularity' (p. 160). This follows from the fact that we must deliberate, combined with '... the fact, for fact it is, that in deliberating one manifests in one's behaviour a belief in one's free will with respect to the act under deliberation' (p. 158). And to specify the belief that is necessarily manifested by deliberation:

In my view, if someone deliberates about whether to do A or to do B, it follows that his behaviour manifests a belief that it is *possible* for him to

do A — that he *can* do A, that he has it within his power to do A — and a belief that it is possible for him to do B (p. 155).

So if one denies free will, one might still be able to deliberate; but on pain of contradiction, since one's deliberation necessarily manifests belief in free will.

But why *must* an individual who believes that the result of his/her deliberation is completely determined (and that the resulting choice and behaviour are absolutely fixed) none the less manifest (by deliberating) belief in free will, belief that the deliberation result is genuinely open? The deliberation processes of most people may manifest such beliefs, since most people probably believe in free will and believe that they are deliberating among genuinely open possibilities; but ordinary manifestations are not helpful here. The question is whether it is *possible* to deliberate without manifesting belief in free will. Speaking of illness at one time usually manifested belief in demons; but there was then and is now no inconsistency in speaking of illness without believing in demons. Deliberating may ordinarily manifest belief in free will; but there is no inconsistency in deliberating without believing in free will; and if others should believe that a determinist's deliberation manifests belief in free will, then those others are mistaken — just as a believer in demon possession would be mistaken in concluding that a modern physician's diagnosis of illness manifests belief in demons.

Why does it supposedly follow that deliberation *must* manifest free will? Obviously not because when one observes deliberations one always sees something additional manifested: belief in free will. (Even if one did make such observations, they would not establish that deliberation *must* manifest belief in free will.) Van Inwagen's sole grounds for asserting that deliberation must manifest belief in free will is his claim that the deliberation process *requires* belief in free will, and that therefore anyone who deliberates must manifest such a belief. Thus his claim that belief in free will is *manifested* by deliberation rests on his claim that belief in free will is *required* for deliberation. But if van Inwagen's reason for claiming that deliberation manifests belief in free will is his assertion that belief in free will is necessary for deliberation; then obviously the conclusion that deliberation manifests belief in free will cannot be used to support the claim that belief in free will is a condition of deliberation. Or at least it cannot be so used without making the argument spin in place.

In conclusion: van Inwagen has no independent grounds for maintaining that deliberation must manifest belief in free will; nor does he establish that deliberation requires belief in free will. And the counterexamples and answering arguments indicate that deliberation is compatible with believing all elements of deliberation — including processes of deliberation, results of deliberation, and decisions to deliberate — are completely and uniquely determined.

Or perhaps not. Van Inwagen confidently asserts that:

... all philosophers who have thought about deliberation agree on one point: one cannot deliberate about whether to perform a certain act unless one believes it is possible for one to perform it (p. 154).

This gives me pause, for it seems to follow – since I do not agree on that point – that I am not a philosopher; and thus I may have been drawing my meagre salary under false pretences. Thankfully, however, the dilemma has another horn: from the outset I believed that the conclusion I would draw would be (given the determining causes) the only one I could possibly reach; so – if deliberation requires belief in free will – perhaps I have not been deliberating about deliberation at all.<sup>1</sup>

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## IMPECCABILITY REVISITED

*By W. R. CARTER*

AT the end of his paper 'Impeccability' (ANALYSIS 43.2, March 1983) Thomas V. Morris concludes that the 'traditional theist thus seems to be on quite solid ground in affirming that God is impeccable, or essentially sinless, as well as being all-powerful. If there is any problem about impeccability, or the traditional concept of God incorporating impeccability, it remains to be shown' (p. 112). It is charged that my earlier argument in behalf of inconsistency ('Omnipotence and Sin', ANALYSIS 42.2, March 1982) fails to establish that any occupant of the divine office must be essentially sinless (impeccable). Morris is nonetheless inclined to *accept the thesis that God must be essentially sinless*.<sup>1</sup> His position is that the impeccability thesis is both true (though not demonstrated by my arguments) and innocent of the charge of generating inconsistency.

<sup>1</sup> See especially page 44 of Morris' more recent paper 'Properties, Modalities, and God', *The Philosophical Review* XCIII (January 1984).