

***Is Circumventing the Euthyphro Dilemma By
Appealing to God's Nature Problematic?***

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Abstract: The Euthyphro dilemma has plagued theistic metaethics and undermined moral arguments for the existence of God throughout history. More recently, this has led a number of philosophers and theologians to try to circumvent the dilemma by appealing to God's nature. I argue that these appeals are *prima facie* problematic because they lead to a metaphysical constraint on God's will, commands, and actions which seems to conflict with divine omnipotence and divine free will. However, I argue that these apparent issues can be resolved by treating metaphysical constraints to God's omnipotence in the same way that many philosophers treat logical constraints to His omnipotence and by asserting that this constraint is compatible with divine free will.

Introduction

The dichotomy between theistic metaethical theories and metaethical theories that are not based on the divine is one of oldest distinctions in metaethics – dating back to at least as far as Plato’s *Euthyphro*. Deciding between these two views has immense implications in ethics and beyond. Specifically, it impacts how we answer two of the most persistent human questions: “What is morality?” and “Does God exist?” Historical and contemporary proponents of theistic metaethics have linked their answers to these questions by offering moral arguments for the existence of God. These moral arguments play an important role in Western philosophy of religion and contemporary Judeo-Christian apologetics because, unlike many arguments from natural theology, they provide a reason to think that a perfectly good, omnibenevolent, God exists.¹ Being perfectly morally good is a necessary condition both for being worthy of worship and for being the omnipotent God commonly discussed in philosophy.² Therefore, moral arguments set forth by proponents of theistic metaethical theories offer evidence for the existence of such a being.

Divine command theory is the most prominent theistic metaethical theory in Western philosophy, and many proponents of moral arguments for the existence of God ascribe to versions of this theory.³ Consequently, they are interested in responding to criticisms of divine command theory in order to bolster their moral

arguments for the existence of God. Given that the Euthyphro dilemma is the most famous criticism of divine command theory – and of the entire theistic metaethical – project divine command theorists are particularly concerned with escaping this dilemma. To this end, many of them have developed so-called ‘modified divine command theories’, which attempt to circumvent the dilemma by appealing directly to God’s nature.

In this paper, I argue that these appeals to God’s nature to circumvent the Euthyphro dilemma impose a metaphysical constraint on God’s will, commands, and actions, creating two apparent conflicts (i) with divine omnipotence and (ii) with divine free will. Moreover, I suggest that (i) constitutes *prima facie* evidence against the existence of an omniperfect God and that (ii) provides *prima facie* evidence against the existence of a God worthy of worship. This is especially problematic because the principal aim of theistic metaethical theories is to explain how morality depends on an omniperfect God who is worthy of worship. However, I contend that this constraint is actually compatible with divine omnipotence and free will. First, I argue that modified divine command theorists may be able to reconcile this metaphysical constraint with God’s omnipotence by treating it as relevantly similar to logical impossibilities. Then, I offer compatibilist arguments to assert that this metaphysical constraint does not actually violate divine free will.

Divine Command Theory and the Euthyphro Dilemma

Divine command theory can refer to a specific constructivist metaethical theory, which I will refer to as “DCT”, or to a broad class of constructivist theories, also called “theological voluntarism.”⁴ Metaphysically speaking, constructivism holds that moral facts and properties exist and that these facts and properties are response dependent. That is, they constitutively depend, at least in part, on the attitudes and reactions of certain observers. In both the specific and broad cases, divine command theory holds that God is the observer whose will, commands, attitudes, reactions, practices, etc. are of interest. This makes divine command theory a theistic metaethical theory. Theistic metaethics requires that, at the end of every chain of explanation, each moral fact be metaphysically explained by some fact(s) about God. For the purposes of this section I will focus on DCT and generalize to theological voluntarism as needed. Metaphysically, DCT purports that moral facts and properties exist and they are grounded in facts about God’s commands. Essentially, the theory suggests that God’s commands constitute morality and that moral duties exist because God commands things. For example, if God gives the commandments “Do not murder” and “Obey your parents” then, according to DCT, there is a moral duty/obligation to not murder and to obey your parents.

The Euthyphro dilemma gets its name from

Plato's *Euthyphro*, in which Socrates asks the pivotal question, "is the pious loved by the gods because it's pious? Or is it pious because it's loved?"⁵ Having been adapted to fit a monotheistic context, the Euthyphro dilemma still applies to theistic metaethical theories like DCT. The contemporary version of the dilemma can be stated as: does God command things because they are morally obligatory, or are things moral obligatory because God commands them?⁶ As the disjunction implies, the dilemma has two horns — a non-voluntarist and a voluntarist horn.

On the one hand, the non-voluntarist horn (i.e., God commands things because they are morally obligatory) problematically suggests that the things that God commands are morally obligatory prior to God commanding them. This means these things have a prior moral status that does not depend on God, and thus, that moral facts are not ultimately explained by facts about God. Consequently, accepting this horn of the dilemma makes morality independent of God. This not only violates theistic metaethics' requirement that every moral fact be fundamentally explained by some fact(s) about God, but also makes it impossible to give a moral argument for the existence of God.⁷

Conversely, the voluntarist horn of the dilemma (i.e., things are morally obligatory because God commands them) is problematic because it either leads back to the first non-voluntarist horn or it makes moral truths arbitrary; either God has reasons for com-

manding something or He does not have reasons for doing so. If the former is true, then the proponents of DCT have opened themselves to the objection that the things that God commands are morally obligatory because of His reasons for commanding them and not merely because He commands them. This seems to return us to the problematic non-voluntarist horn. Conversely, if the latter is true and God has no reasons for commanding things, then it seems that God's commands are arbitrary and that we have no morally significant reasons to obey them or to care about moral facts grounded in them. We might, nevertheless, have prudential reasons to obey, e.g. so that God does not smite me where I stand. However, the proponents of DCT, and of theological voluntarism in general, need morality to matter and depend on God because they want the existence of some set of moral facts or desired moral ends to provide evidence for the existence of an omniperfect God who is worthy of worship.

Circumventing the Euthyphro Dilemma by Appealing to God's Nature

The Euthyphro dilemma is supposed to establish that DCT, and theological voluntarism more generally, cannot be true because it leads to either the non-voluntarist or the voluntarist horns of the dilemma. As a result, a number of philosophers and theologians have developed various 'modified divine command theories,' which try to escape the Euthyphro dilemma by

appealing to God's nature.⁸ Typically, they do this either by suggesting that the two horns of the dilemma are not exhaustive or by arguing that the voluntarist horn can be made non-problematic. I consider both of these strategies below.

Some philosophers, like William Lane Craig, appeal to God's nature to argue that the horns of the Euthyphro dilemma are not exhaustive. Craig suggests that there is another non-voluntarist option, which involves asserting that moral facts exist prior to God willing things. However, these moral facts are grounded in God's nature, as opposed to being independent of God. Craig summarizes this position saying:

I think it [the Euthyphro dilemma] is clearly a false dilemma because the alternatives are not of the form "A or not-A" which would be an inescapable dilemma. The alternatives are like "A or B." In that case you can always add a third one, C, and escape the horns of the dilemma. I think in this case there is a third alternative, which is to say that God wills something because he is good. That is to say, God himself is the paradigm of goodness, and his will reflects his character. God is by nature loving, kind, fair, impartial, generous, and so forth. Therefore, he could not have willed that, for example, hatred be good. That would be to contradict his very own nature. So God's commands to us are not arbitrary, but neither are they based upon something independent of God. Rather, God himself is the paradigm of goodness.⁹

It is crucial to understand the modality of "could not" in this passage. Craig suggests the reason that God

could not have willed hatred to be good is that it would contradict His nature. Metaphysically speaking, it is impossible for any object or being to take any action or have any property that contradicts its nature. Otherwise that object or being would not have its particular nature, which is to say it would not be identical with itself – an absurd conclusion. So, given that Craig grounds moral facts directly in God’s nature, saying ‘God could not have willed that hatred be good’ is equivalent to saying ‘it is metaphysically impossible for God to will that hatred be good.’ Thus, appealing to God’s nature in this way circumvents the Euthyphro dilemma by imposing a metaphysical constraint on what God can command.¹⁰

On the other hand, some philosophers, like Glenn Peoples, argue that the voluntarist horn – i.e., things are morally obligatory because God commands them – can be made non-problematic. Peoples suggests that God’s commands do in fact constitute morality but emphasizes that God “has a particular nature.”¹¹ Peoples argues God’s commands are non-arbitrary because they are informed and constrained by His nature without being metaphysically grounded in it. Thus, God does not command just anything; His nature gives Him reasons to command certain things. Summarizing his position, Peoples says:

God cannot command that which He hates, even though it is within His power. Whatever God commands is right, and torture could never be

right because God would never command it, nor would His character, His nature and His desire permit him to. For example (and others could be given), if God is benevolent, then He does not command that which is repugnant to benevolence.¹²

For Peoples's statement to be consistent, saying 'God can do X' must not be identical to saying 'X is within God's power.' Additionally, 'God is permitted to do X' also must not mean the same thing as 'X is within God's power.' This distinction is especially important because Peoples does not want to metaphysically constrict God's power to command and thus violate His omnipotence; he does this by suggesting that "the metaphysical possibility would still exist" for God to command something that conflicts with His nature.¹³ So, 'X is within God's power' must be equivalent to 'it is metaphysically possible for God to command X.' Thus, Peoples is proposing that God's nature constrains His commands without reducing His metaphysical power to command, making the constraint a non-metaphysical one. However, this position seems to conflict with my treatment of Craig's account.

Metaphysical Possibility and Constraints Based in God's Nature

In order to resolve this conflict, I consider the analogy Peoples offers to explain his view. In this analogy, a woman refuses to eat a food that she "utterly despises" and that makes her "nauseous even to look

at.”¹⁴ Peoples suggests that if the only relevant causal factors affecting her decision to eat the food are her “will and desire” and, further if she “has no reason to eat it,” then not only will she never eat the food but he thinks she actually “could not” eat it.¹⁵ Nevertheless, he thinks it is still “metaphysically possible” for her to eat the food in question.¹⁶ Analogously, Peoples thinks that, while God’s nature does not permit Him to command certain things, it is still metaphysically possible for God to command these things.¹⁷

However, it seems that Peoples confuses God’s nature with His will and desires. If Peoples intends to defend DCT and theological voluntarism, he needs to present a constraint to God’s commands, will, and desires. Yet, in the analogy, the woman’s desires and will are not constrained; on the contrary, they provide the constraint to her behavior. So, if we accept his analogy, Peoples’s modified divine command theory at best constrains God’s commands with His will and desires. This does not resolve the Euthyphro dilemma. It merely shifts the problem from the Euthyphro dilemma for DCT to the Euthyphro dilemma for theological voluntarism in general, wherein God’s will and desires are either arbitrary or based on reasons that make morality independent of God. However, we can improve the analogy and Peoples’s account by deriving a constraint from the woman’s constitution – the physical analog of her nature – instead of her will and desires. This would require that she have something like a severe allergy

to the food in question that causes her throat to swell shut before she can ingest it. In such a case, the woman's physical composition would render it impossible for her to eat the food. This amounts to a constraint of physical possibility. Similarly, the analogous constraint on God's commands, will, and desires derived from His nature will amount to a metaphysical constraint, as in Craig's account. Importantly, the physical constraint in our improved analogy leaves open the metaphysical possibility for the woman to eat the food. Similarly, the metaphysical constraint in Peoples's – and Craig's – modified divine command theory leaves open the logical possibility for God to command something that conflicts with His nature. In summary, both of these strategies to circumvent the Euthyphro dilemma by appealing to God's nature lead to the conclusion that God cannot command evil metaphysically but can command evil logically.

Moreover, this metaphysical constraint seems to conflict with divine omnipotence and divine free will. Peoples argues that the constraint in his theory is not a metaphysical constraint so as to avoid violating God's omnipotence. This is because such a constraint would entail that it is metaphysically impossible for God to command things that are inconsistent with His nature.¹⁸ However, it seems God would have more power, metaphysically speaking, if He could command these things. Thus, because both varieties of modified divine command theory impose a metaphysical constraint,

they seem to imply that God is not omnipotent. Because an omniperfect God must be omnipotent, these theories provide *prima facie* evidence against the existence of an omniperfect God. It also seems like metaphysical constraints – including this one – inherently limit free will, as “‘free will,’ as a philosophical term of art, means just exactly what I mean by ‘metaphysical freedom.’”¹⁹ Given that many philosophers think moral agents must have free will in order to deserve moral praise or blame,²⁰ the existence of any metaphysical constraint on God’s will suggests that His moral perfection might not make Him worthy of praise or worship. Because of this metaphysical constraint, these modified divine command theories, if true, also constitute *prima facie* evidence against the existence of a God who is worthy of worship. These implications of modified divine command theory ultimately undermine moral arguments for the existence for an omniperfect God who is worthy of worship and challenge the foundational proposal of theistic metaethics: moral facts depend on God.

Reconciling this Metaphysical Constraint with Divine Omnipotence

While the metaphysical constraint in these modified divine command theories seems to imply God is not omnipotent, I think it would be a mistake to simply accept this as fact. There are two reasons for this. First, I think that the metaphysical impossibility for God to command things inconsistent with His nature

may be relevantly similar to the logical impossibility for God to create a round square. Many philosophers and theologians do not think the latter impossibility reduces God's omnipotence. They maintain that creating round squares and bringing about other "logical absurdities" simply falls outside of the realm of possibility even for a fully omnipotent being.²¹ Similarly, I maintain that God commanding something – or doing anything – inconsistent with His nature may likewise be outside of the realm of possibility for an omnipotent being.²² If this is the case, then this metaphysical constraint on God's power to command does not actually violate God's omnipotence; it just highlights a necessary metaphysical impossibility. So, rather than simply entailing that God is not omnipotent, I believe this metaphysical constraint points to a real, substantive debate in theology and philosophy of religion regarding God's nature and what it means to assert that He is omnipotent.²³ Thus, until this debate is resolved, the apparent conflict between this metaphysical constraint and divine omnipotence need not undermine the modified divine command theorist's project. Second, it is consistent with this metaphysical constraint to think God's will is still in some sense unrestricted. This is because both Craig's account and Peoples's account leave open the logical possibility for God to command/will differently. Perhaps this logical possibility is enough to avoid violating God's omnipotence.

Compatibility Between Metaphysical Constraints and Divine Free Will

Though modified divine command theories constrain God's will, commands, and actions by requiring that they be consistent with God's nature—which seems to *prima facie* violate divine free will—I believe free will is compatible with such a constraint. I start by examining the libertarian view that free will requires alternative possibilities. The pertinent question in this case is whether this metaphysical constraint eliminates God's alternative possibilities. Initially, it seems that, even if God's nature fixes the moral facts and makes them metaphysically necessary, this does not entail that God does not have choices in moral matters. After all, we can imagine a situation in which morality, and in particular justice, requires that someone be punished for wrongdoing and the arbiter of justice can choose between various punishments that are all morally satisfactory. If God were the arbiter of justice in such a situation, then He would be able to choose between various punishments. So, it is possible that God does have alternative choices in certain moral situations. However, there are clearly situations in which God does not have options. We arrived at this discussion because divine command theorists want to be able to say things like, "God cannot command that murder is right." Hence, when faced with a choice regarding whether to command or forbid murder, torture, rape, etc., this constraint eliminates God's alternative possi-

bilities. Thus, the constraint in question clearly implies that God does not have alternative possibilities in every moral situation. So, if free will requires alternative possibilities, then God does not have free will in at least some moral situations.²⁴

However, we can also consider the compatibilist view that free will does not require alternative possibilities. This moral constraint is derived from God's nature and it ensures that God acts in a way that is maximally consistent with His nature in every moral situation—even if He does not have alternative possibilities because the constraint has eliminated them. Furthermore, it seems quite intuitive to say that always acting in a manner consistent with one's own nature is the very epitome of free will. This is because it seems that a person's will is made less free when they lack the power, knowledge, etc. required to act in accordance with their nature. Conversely, when a person possesses more power, more knowledge, or more of anything else that enables them to act in accordance with their nature, then it seems that this person has greater freedom of will. Consequently, when a being is always able to act in a manner consistent with their nature, then it seems like they are maximally free according to this view. Thus, on this view, metaphysical constraints to God's actions that stem from His nature do not violate divine free will, but rather point to its presence. Descartes makes a similar point in his error theodicy in the *Meditations*:

For in order to be free, there is no need for me to be capable of moving both ways; on the contrary, the more I incline in one direction—either because I clearly understand that reasons of truth and goodness point that way, or because of a divinely produced disposition of my inmost thoughts—the freer is my choice. [...] But the indifference I feel when there is no reason pushing me in one direction rather than another is the lowest grade of freedom; it is evidence not of any perfection of freedom, but rather of a defect in knowledge or a kind of negation. For if I always saw clearly what was true and good, I should never have to deliberate about the right judgment of choice; in that case, although I should be wholly free, it would be impossible for me ever to be in a state of indifference.

Descartes suggests if humans were to have perfect free will then they would always act in a particular way. The metaphysical restrictions that I have been considering help ensure that God always acts in such a way. Thus, instead of actually limiting or destroying God's free will, perhaps these metaphysical restrictions point to the fact that His will is maximally free.

Frankfurt examples, inspired by Harry Frankfurt's "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility," offer another good reason to think this metaphysical constraint does not reduce the freedom of God's will even if it eliminates all of God's alternative possibilities.²⁷ Consider a situation where Sarah goes to vote in an election. However, unbeknownst to Sarah, a powerful scientist has previously implanted her brain with a computer chip that will not allow her to vote for

anyone other than candidate A. If she tries to vote for either candidate B or candidate C, then the chip will take over and force her to vote for candidate A. However, if she wants to vote for candidate A and tries to vote for her, the chip will not interfere. Suppose Sarah actually wants to vote for candidate A and that she wants her desire to vote for candidate A to result in her actually voting for candidate A.²⁸ Then, when she goes to vote, Sarah votes for candidate A of her own accord without any interference from the chip in her brain. It seems that Sarah's will is free in this situation even though she could not have taken any other action. Even if this chip is programmed to impact all of Sarah's decisions, it seems Sarah could still exercise her will freely if she always chooses – and wants to choose – the actions that the chip would have otherwise forced her to take without the chip actually activating at all. Similarly, if God always chooses to act in a manner consistent with His nature, which is analogous to the computer chip in Sarah's brain, then it is possible that God's will is fully free even though it is metaphysically impossible for Him to do otherwise. Moreover, given that the constraint we are concerned about comes from God's own nature rather than an external source (e.g., the scientist's computer chip), it seems that this argument is even more compelling when applied to God than when applied to Sarah. This is because, intuitively, it seems that the elimination of a person's alternative possibilities by something external to them is a greater threat

to that person's free will than the elimination of their alternative possibilities by something inherent to their nature.

Conclusion

I have shown that the two main strategies used by modified divine command theorists to circumvent the Euthyphro dilemma by appealing to God's nature lead to a metaphysical constraint on God's will, commands, and actions. Further, because this constraint seems to conflict with divine omnipotence and free will, it appears to turn the truth of modified divine command theory into evidence against the existence of an omniperfect God who is worthy of worship. Thus, modified divine command theory initially seems to undermine both theistic metaethics and moral arguments for the existence of God. However, I have provided reasons to think that this constraint can, in fact, be compatible with both divine omnipotence and divine free will. In particular, I have argued that we should treat the implications of metaphysical impossibility for omnipotence in the same way that many philosophers treat the implications of logical impossibility for omnipotence—that is, by taking them to be compatible with omnipotence. Further, I suggested that God always acting consistently with His nature, as He does under this constraint, might actually be the epitome of free will, and I also argued that Frankfurt examples provide a good reason to think that this constraint is

compatible with divine free will.

Thus, I conclude that modified divine command theories are viable theistic metaethical theories and are not a liability to the proponents of moral arguments for the existence of God. Rather, they offer a robust account of the dependence of moral facts on God while managing to avoid the famous Euthyphro dilemma. Hence, modified divine command theories can actually augment moral arguments for the existence of God. As a result, the proponents of such arguments can safely argue that their preferred version of modified divine command theory offers a better metaphysical explanation for a particular set of moral facts than the alternative secular theories and, consequently, that these moral facts are evidence that God exists.

Notes

1. See: Evans, C. Stephen. "Moral Arguments for the Existence of God," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2016 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta.; Baggett, David, and Walls, Jerry L. *Good God*. (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), 4.
2. For further discussion see: Garcia, Laura. "Moral Perfection," In *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology*, ed. Thomas P. Flint and Michael Rea (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), 217-219.
3. For examples, see Robert Adams, William Alston, David Baggett, Jerry Walls, William Lane Craig, Glenn Peoples, John Hare, and C. Stephen Evans.
4. Theological voluntarism refers to all metaethical theories that "hold that what God wills is relevant to determining the moral status of some set of entities." See: Murphy, Mark. "Theological

Voluntarism,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2014 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta.

5. Euthyphro, 10a

6. Other moral concepts (e.g., ‘morally wrong’) can be substituted as appropriate for ‘morally obligatory’ here. Additionally, ‘will’ can be substituted for ‘command’ to make the dilemma target theological voluntarism in general instead of DCT specifically.

7. For further discussion see: Evans, “Moral Arguments for the Existence of God.” Evans suggests that moral arguments for the existence of God either “begin with alleged moral facts and argue that God is necessary to explain those facts, or at least that God provides a better explanation of them than secular accounts can offer” or “begin with claims about some good or end that morality requires and argue that this end is not attainable unless God exists.” If morality is independent of God, both strategies fail.

8. These include Robert Adams, William Alston, David Baggett, Jerry Walls, William Lane Craig, and Glenn Peoples.

9. Craig, William L. “The Euthyphro Dilemma Once Again.” Last modified January 4, 2015.

10. *Ibid.* Despite its “modified divine command theory” label, Craig’s view falls outside the realm of theological voluntarism because he suggests that, at a metaphysical level, “moral good[ness] is not something that is based in God’s will but in His nature.” However, God’s commands/will still have a role. Specifically, they play an epistemic role by “express[ing]” God’s nature and communicating moral truths to moral agents like humans

11. Peoples, Glenn. “A New Euthyphro,” *Think* 9, no. 25 (2010): 77.

12. *Ibid.*, 78

13. *Ibid.*, 78

14. *Ibid.*, 77

15. *Ibid.*, 78

16. *Ibid.*, 78

17. Importantly, Peoples overlooks that it is also physically possible for the woman to eat the food and that this constraint, which is derived from her will and desires, is more restrictive than the

constraints of physical possibility.

18. If this metaphysical constraint is to fully resolve the Euthyphro dilemma by eliminating the arbitrariness in God's commands/will, then it must also make it metaphysically impossible for God to fail to command certain things. Otherwise, God could arbitrarily choose to forego giving commands like 'do not murder.' This would be unacceptable because, in voluntarist accounts like Peoples's, this would make murder morally neutral even though it should be morally wrong.

19. van Inwagen, Peter. "The Mystery of Metaphysical Freedom," In *Metaphysics: The Big Questions*, ed. Peter van Inwagen & Dean W. Zimmerman (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 368.

20. See: Eshleman, Andrew. "Moral Responsibility," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2016 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta.

21. Pearce, Kenneth L. "Omnipotence," *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* ISSN 2161-0002.

22. See: Horn, Laurence R. "Contradiction," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2014 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta. "Aquinas, [...] underst[ood] omnipotence as the capacity to do only what is not logically impossible. (Others, including Augustine and Maimonides, have noted that in any case God is "unable" to do what is inconsistent with His nature, e.g. commit sin.) For Descartes, on the other hand, an omnipotent God is by definition capable of any task, even those yielding contradictions. Mavrodes (1963), Kenny, and others have sided with St. Thomas in taking omnipotence to extend only to those powers it is possible to possess; Frankfurt (1964), on the other hand, essentially adopts the Cartesian line."

23. Within this debate, Peter Geach even suggests that the Judeo-Christian conception of God does not actually need to be omnipotent (i.e., He does not have the "ability to do everything") but instead needs to be almighty (i.e., He has "power over all things"), which is consistent with this constraint. See: Geach, Peter. T. "Omnipotence," *Philosophy*, 48, no. 183 (1973): 7.

24. It is unclear whether modified divine command theorists hold

that the entirety of God's nature constrains morality or only that some specific morally relevant portion of His nature constrains morality. Even if only a portion of God's nature grounds moral constraints, it seems that the rest of God's nature would still impose other similar metaphysical constraints on His will and actions. While I do not discuss other possible non-moral metaphysical constraints further, my treatment of this moral metaphysical constraint extends to them as well.

25. Descartes, René. *Meditations on First Philosophy*. In *Descartes Selected Philosophical Writings*, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 102.

26. Frankfurt, Harry. "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility," *The Journal of Philosophy*, 66, no. 23 (1969): 829-839.

27. These examples also apply to metaphysical constraints not derived from God's nature as well as logical constraints. Thus, this argument can be adapted to suggest that neither logical constraints nor metaphysical constraints reduce or violate divine free will.

28. Here, I am referring to Frankfurt's proposed sufficient condition for freedom of the will, which he articulates in terms of second order volitions. See: Frankfurt, Harry. "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person," *The Journal of Philosophy*, 68, no. 1 (1971): 5-20.

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