

On Molinism and Manipulation:  
Does Molinism answer the problems about Providence,  
Foreknowledge and Free Will?

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**“It would be preferable to subscribe to the legends of the gods than to  
be a slave to the determinism of the physicists”**

*-Epicurus*  
*Letter to Menoeceus, 134*

## Dedication

I dedicate this work to my late mother, Marjory Anne Anderson, who taught me how to ask questions, and my late father, Donald Ian Anderson, who taught me how to answer them.

My father, born Scottish Presbyterian turned strong atheist,  
My mother, born Roman Catholic turned agnostic.

I could not find myself in better circumstances, to ponder.

Yet would to God that I had listened to your hurt with more empathy;  
But I was so much older then, I'm younger than that now.

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*Let those who call themselves philosophers bear the risk to their mental health that comes from thinking too much about free will.* — John Earman

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## ABSTRACT

Molinism attempts to resolve the incompatibility of divine foreknowledge and human libertarian freedom by the inclusion of the divine will into the solution. Moreover, middle knowledge is providentially useful under the Molinist model because of the *way* God uses it. This speaks of an integral link between the divine will and intellect that works in such a way as to provide a foreknowledge solution and, allegedly, the best view of providence.

Nevertheless, there have been several anti-Molinist arguments *by analogy* which suggest that the God presented in the Molinist model is a manipulator, and therefore something is lost or undermined in the libertarian freedom that Molinism purports to uphold through its model of foreknowledge and providence.

This thesis examines the anti-Molinist charge of manipulation primarily by analysing how God uses information known through middle knowledge. The findings of the anti-Molinist arguments from analogy are reconstructed to form deductive arguments. These are evaluated against standard definitions of objectionable manipulation. It is concluded through analysis of these stronger, deductive arguments that divine providence under the Molinist model is a case of objectionable manipulation, one which many theists, classical or progressive, should find abhorrent. The effects of manipulation on ostensible libertarian freedom are then analysed, leading to the conclusion that Molinist-style manipulation results in a form of free-will compatibilism, ergo, the divine foreknowledge problem is not answered, nor is the result compatible with libertarian freedom. Given that it is close to a form of divine determinism, Molinism is then compared with Calvinism along several lines of criticism, namely whether such a God is good, loving and personal.

***I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree or qualification.***

***I certify that any help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledge in this thesis.***



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Signature

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