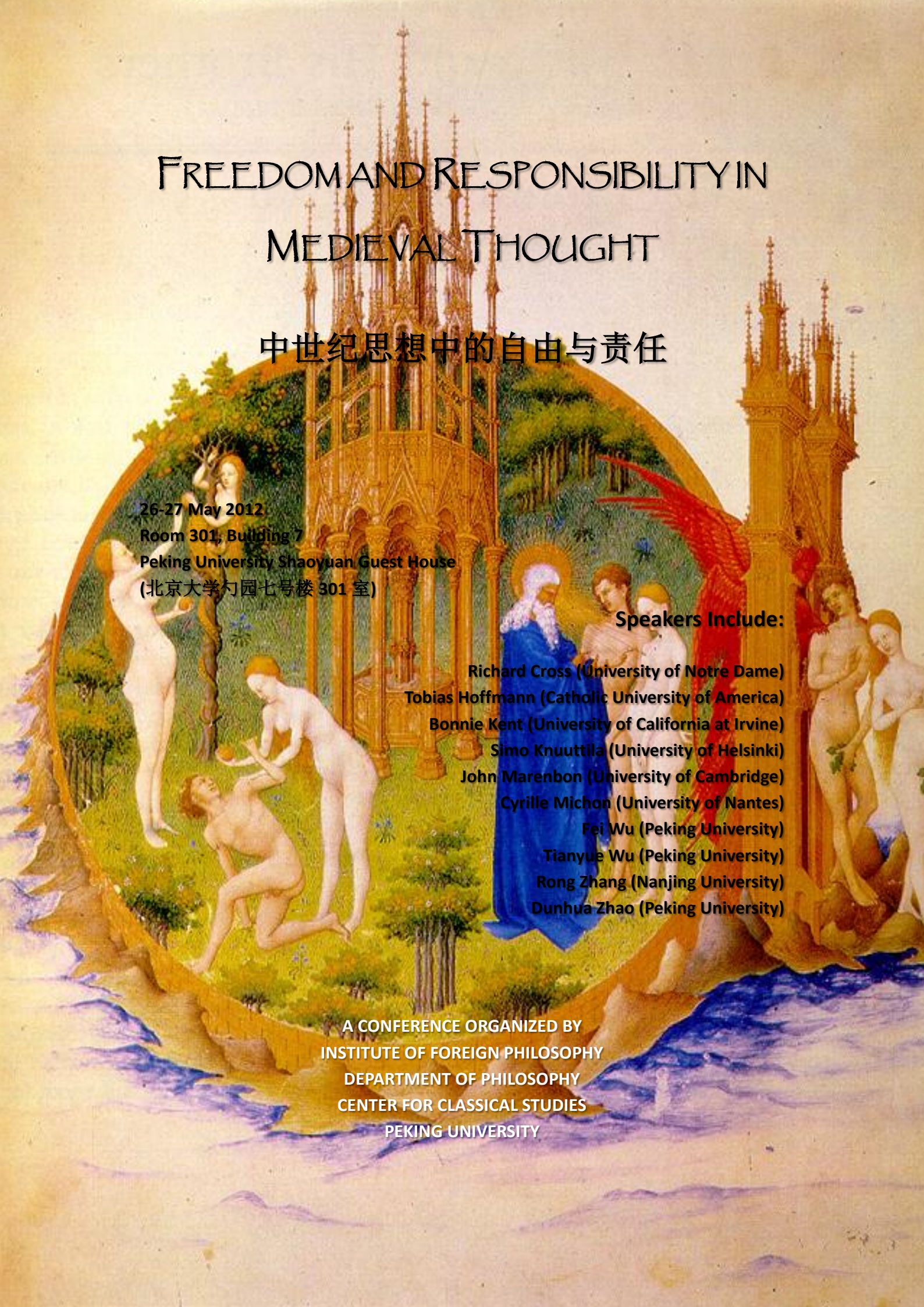

Freedom and Responsibility in Medieval Thought

中世纪思想中的自由与责任

26-27 May 2012
Room 301, Building 7
Peking University Shaoyuan Guest House
(北京大学勺园七号楼 301 室)

Speakers Include:

Richard Cross (University of Notre Dame)
Tobias Hoffmann (Catholic University of America)
Bonnie Kent (University of California at Irvine)
Simo Knuuttila (University of Helsinki)
John Marenbon (University of Cambridge)
Cyrille Michon (University of Nantes)
Fei Wu (Peking University)
Tianyue Wu (Peking University)
Rong Zhang (Nanjing University)
Dunhua Zhao (Peking University)

A CONFERENCE ORGANIZED BY
INSTITUTE OF FOREIGN PHILOSOPHY
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
CENTER FOR CLASSICAL STUDIES
PEKING UNIVERSITY

国 际 学 术 会 议

International Conference

中世纪思想中的自由与责任
Freedom and Responsibility in Medieval Thought

北京大学哲学系
北京大学外国哲学研究所
北京大学西方古典学研究中心
主办

Organised by
Department of Philosophy
Institute of Foreign Philosophy
Centre for Classical Studies
Peking University

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Room 301, Building 7, Peking University Shaoyuan Guest House,

时间：2012 年 5 月 26 日-27 日
Conference Dates: 26 – 27 May 2012

会 议 日 程

Agenda

2012 年 5 月 25 日 **25. 05. 2012**		
19:30 -		欢迎晚宴 （博雅酒店） Welcome Dinner (Lakeview Hotel)
2012 年 5 月 26 日 **26. 05.2012**		
开幕式 Opening Speeches:	**主持人：吴天岳（北京大学哲学系）** Chair: Tianyue Wu (Peking University, China)	
8:30-8:40	发言人 Speaker	**尚新建，北京大学外国哲学研究所所长** Prof. Xinjian Shang (Director of the Institute of Foreign Philosophy at Peking University)
8:40-8:50	发言人 Speaker	**Richard Cross (美国圣母大学哲学系系主任)** Richard Cross (University of Notre Dame, USA)
8:50-9:00	照相	Taking Photos
第一场：圣经与希腊传统 **Session I: The Bible and Greek Tradition**	**主持人：Cyrille Michon (法国南特大学)** **Chair: Cyrille Michon (University of Nantes, France)**	
9:10 - 10:00		Title: The Biblical Relevance to Virtue Ethics *Speaker*: Dunhua Zhao (Peking University, China)
10:00–10:10		Tea Break
第二场：奥古斯 **Session II: Augustine**	**主持人：Bonnie Kent (University of California at Irvine, USA)** ***Chair*: Bonnie Kent (University of California at Irvine, USA)**	
10:10 - 11:00		Title: Augustine on Freedom and Time *Speaker*: Rong Zhang (Nanjing University, China)
11:00 – 11:50		Title: The Unification of Souls According to St. Augustine Speaker: Fei Wu (Peking University, China)
12:00–13:30		午餐 （勺园会议中心） Lunch（Peking University Shaoyuan Guest House）
第三场：最初波动 **Session III: First Movements**	**主持人：Tobias Hoffmann（美国天主教大学）** **Chair: Tobias Hoffmann (Catholic University of America, USA)**	

13:30 - 14:20	Title: First Movements in Medieval Theories of Free Will *Speaker*: Simo Knuuttila (University of Helsinki, Finland)
14:20-15:10	Title: Are First Movements Venial Sins? Augustinian Doctrine and Aquinas's Reinterpretation *Speaker:* Tianyue Wu (Peking University, China)
15:10–15:20	茶歇 Tea Break
第四场：阿奎那 **Session IV: Aquinas**	**主持人：吴飞（北京大学）** **Chair: Fei Wu (Peking University, China)**
15:20 - 17:00	Title: Aquinas on Freedom and Alternative Possibilities *Speakers*: Tobias Hoffmann (Catholic University of America, USA) Cyrille Michon (University of Nantes, France)
17:00 -	晚餐 （农园三层） Dinner （Nong Garden）

2012 年 5 月 27 日 **27. 05. 2012**	
第五场：早期中世纪哲学 **Session V: Early Medieval Philosophy**	**主持人：张荣（南京大学）** **Chair: Rong Zhang (Nanjing University, China)**
08:30 - 09:20	Title: Peter Abelard and His Critics on Divine Necessity and Human Freedom Speaker: John Marenbon (University of Cambridge, UK)
09:20 - 09:30	茶歇 Tea Break
第六场：晚期中世纪哲学 **Session VI : Late Medieval Philosophy**	**主持人：Simo Knuuttila（芬兰赫尔辛基大学）** **Chair: Simo Knuuttila (University of Helsinki, Finland)**
09:30 - 10:20	Title: Peter Olivi on Created Freedom *Speaker*: Bonnie Kent (University of California at Irvine, USA)
10:20 - 11:10	Title: Natural Law, Moral Constructivism, and Duns Scotus's Metaethics: The Centrality of Aesthetic Explanation *Speaker*: Richard Cross (University of Notre Dame, USA)

会议总结 **Closing Session** **11:10–11:20** **11:20-11:30**	发言人：**John Marenbon**（英国剑桥大学） **Speaker: John Marenbon (University of Cambridge, UK)** 发言人：赵敦华（北京大学） **Speaker: Dunhua Zhao (Peking University, China)**
11:30 -	告别宴会 （清华园 全聚德） Banquet (QUANJUDE)

Contents

The Biblical Relevance to Virtue Ethics

(draft only)

Dunhua Zhao (Peking University)

From early fathers, scholastic philosophers to Erasmus and Luther, debates on free choice or will were always inseparable from theological problems of sin, theodicy and grace. The Scripture was therefore referred to as necessary if not sufficient standard or evidence for the truth in the debates. In the modern time, however, when the issue of free will has been founded on human (individual or social) morality alone, the biblical references seem to lose the relevance in philosophical discussions and arguments. Some even despised the use of Bible in philosophy by saying that demons cite Bible too, or that accepting biblical records as evidences is similar to the self-assumed evidences of UFO, devil and magic. If the task of going back to medieval philosophy is not for a purely historical interest, but is intended to resume or to expose the alliance between faith and reason, then it is first and foremost to ask: Which faith? Whose reason? For the medieval people, Christian faith mostly, and Greek reason more or less while for the modern people, Christian faith more or less, and a particular philosopher's reason mostly.

I. Some remarks on MacIntyre's *After Virtue*

Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue* provides an example for the attitudes of the modern (or post-modern) people. He shows the failure of philosophical debates in the moral decision and proposes Aristotle's virtue ethics as a solution. MacIntyre spent a chapter (ch. 13) to evaluate the role of Aristotle's ethics in the Middle Ages after the twelfth-century. He praised the combinations of Christian and heretic teaching, of the Greek cardinal virtues and Christian virtue of charity, of heroic society and feudal community. He sees a contrary tradition that "dismissed all pagan teaching as the

devil's work and sought to find in the Bible an all-sufficient guide. Luther indeed was the heir of this medieval tradition." According to MacIntyre, "its negative dismissals left the problem of the shape of a Christian life in the twelfth-century world, or in any other specific social world, insoluble. That problem is one of translating the Bible's message into a particular and detailed set of discriminations among contemporary alternatives and for that task one needs types of concepts and types of enquiry not made available by the Bible itself." (*After Virtue*, 3rd edition, University of Notre Dame Press, 2007, p. 167).

In that book, one can read some examples of the positive use of the Bible in the medieval moral pluralism. One is the "interiorization of the moral life with its stress on will and law looks back not only to certain New Testament texts, but also to Stoicism." (p. 168) Another is that Maimonides explained holidays in the Torah in terms of opportunities for the making and growth of friendship. MacIntyre concludes, "It is this linking of a biblical historical perspective with an Aristotelian one in the treatment of the virtues which is the unique achievement of the middle ages in Jewish and Islamic terms as well as in Christian." (p. 180)

McIntyre did not tell us what specific text in the New Testament teaches interiorization of moral life in parallelism to Stoic texts, or whether Maimonides was more characteristic than Aquinas with respect to the medieval theory of virtue.[1] This paper is not to deny that certain texts of the Bible were or could be understood in the history of ideas as McIntyre indicated or wished; rather, it is to affirm that the key New Testament texts can be properly and reasonably read as a correction and accomplishment of Aristotle's virtue ethics. I will prove this by textual analysis. The Aristotelian text is selected from Books 2 and 3 of *Nicomachean Ethics*, and Paul's epistles are selected as answers to Aristotle's problems.

[1] "Aquinas' version of Aristotle on the virtues is not the only possible version and that Aquinas is an uncharacteristic medieval thinker, even if the greatest of medieval theorists." (p. 180)

II. Some remarks on Aristotle's virtue ethics

Book 2 of *Nicomachean Ethics* explains why moral virtue is a state of character and what sort of state it is (1106a 15). [2] Aristotle's argument for the first theme is twofold: the first is concerned with the condition of virtue; and the second with the relation between passion and action.

The condition of virtue is like a paradox of circularity: in order to be virtual one must do virtual act while in order to do virtual act the agent must be already a virtual man. Aristotle used a third factor to break off the circularity. That was the ethos of a polis. Due to "a good constitution" (1103b 5) and "the right education" (1104b 13) a man by having done virtual act from infancy possessed the virtual character when he became a citizen, so that "actions are called just and temperate when they are such as the just or temperate man would do; but it is not the man who does these that is just and temperate, but the man who also does them as just and temperate men do them." (1105b 5-9)

Aristotle argued that virtue consists neither in passions nor in faculty of passions, but only in the moral character (ch. 5). For passions or "the feelings that accompanied by pleasure or pain" (1105b 23) were taken as the sign of states of character (1104b 5). Both virtue and vice are habituated with passions, and both are directed to the choice of pleasant objects and avoidance of painful objects (1104b 30). It is not pleasure or pain that differentiate virtue and vice; on the contrary, it is virtue or vice that determines the right or wrong use of pleasure and pain; "for man who uses these will be good, he who uses them badly bad." (1105a 12)

The argument that the habit of a polis determines one's character in acts and accompanies passions did not lead Aristotle to moral relativism (each polis has virtues of its own) or pluralism (each polis has virtues of different standards). He said, it is by

[2] Translations are quoted from McKeon's The Basic Works of Aristotle.

the same causes (i.e. habits) and by the same means (i.e. passions) that virtue is both produced and destroyed" (1103b 8). Again, "it makes no small difference, then, whether we form habits of one kind or of another from our very youth; it makes a very great difference, or rather all the difference." (1103b 25)

Aristotle's virtue ethics has been interpreted at variance with normative ethics, consequentialist ethics or teleological ethics. Nonetheless, none of those distinctions were intended by Aristotle or existed in the moral life at his time. As matter of fact, moral character required "the right rule" or "a common principle" (1103b 33) of the mean, the end of happiness and "made good work" (1105a 23). The choice of virtue or vice is compatible with what Aristotle's taught about habits and community, for the choice is not a free self-decision, but predetermined "three sorts of disposition". The mean was the propensity of choice trained in good habits and the two extremes were also trained in bad habits (1108b 11).

Aristotle admitted moral responsible not because of the free choice of will, but because of the voluntary act of virtue or vice. He did not even have the concept of will. The mental process of choice was attributed to deliberation, which was not an act of independent faculty, but the combination of practical thinking and desire in a way that "when we have decided as a result of deliberation, we desire in accordance with our deliberation." (1113a 14) The voluntary choice was limited in scope and power. First, "we deliberate not about ends, but about means" (1112b 12); second, one's state of character was not self-chosen, but acquired in habits. Still, there left rooms for praise or blame, for the end does not by nature appear to each man, "but something also depends on him"; and "the good and bad man adopts the means voluntarily; in addition, "we are ourselves somehow responsible partly responsible for our states of character" (1114b 13-24). The open and uncertain discussion of moral responsibility in the first five chapters of Book 3 was probably due to Aristotle's intention to keep equilibrium between social determinism and individual voluntarism.

III. An interpretation of Paul's moral teachings in reference to virtue ethics

There is no evidence that Paul read Aristotle. He disputed in an occasion with Epicurean and Stoic philosophers in Athens (Acts 17:18）and spoke once about "philosophy and empty deceit" (Col 2:8). Consider philosophy at that time was very eclectic and ethically orientated. Paul employed philosophical terms such as sophia (29 times), phronesis (30 times), aretē (Phil 4:8), proairesis (2 Cor 9:7), boulē (1 Cor 4:5, Rom 9:9), pathos (Rom 1:26, 7:5, Col 3:5, 1 Thess 4:5). It is highly improbable that he did not share some philosophical problems, or had no response to philosophical ideas in the Greek-Roman world. The crucial problems are: which philosophical problems or ideas he was particularly interested in, and in what manner he differentiated himself from philosophers.

I select some passages from *Romans* to show how is possible to understand Paul's theological teachings were proclaimed as the Christian responses to the moral problems Aristotle attempted to solve by his virtue ethics. We focus on the following six questions to see why Paul could not stand up with Aristotle's position and how he went further towards a radical doctrine of justification and sanctification.

Q.1. Which knowledge is incapable of doing ethical act?

Aristotle distinguished between practical and theoretical knowledge. The former was said to be a condition of possession of the virtues (1105a 32), while the later "has little or no weight" for moral virtues (1105b 3). He criticized that most people "take refuge in theory and think they are being philosophers and will become good in this way." (1105b 13) He believed that by good education and training people can possess the practical knowledge of the right rule and act according to the practical knowledge of desire, means and choice.

Paul would deny the sufficiency of the practical knowledge of Aristotelian kind for

virtual acts. He said, “I do not understand (ginōskō) my own actions. For I do not do (prassō) what I want (thelō) but I do the very thing I hate. ……I can will (to thelein) what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do“(Rom 7: 15, 18-19, NRSV). He cried, “Wretched man that I am (egō)” (24)

One may ask who is the egō here. The answer can be Paul himself, Jews, and any human being. Those three are not alternative. Paul like all Jews knew well the Mosaic Law, while though Gentiles do not possess the law, “what the law requires is written on their hearts, to which their own conscience (syneidēseōs) also bears witness” (2: 15). The Mosaic Law and human conscience can be equated with the Aristotelian practical wisdom (phronesis), none of which, according to Paul, enabled peoples doing the good they desire and avoiding the evil they hate.

Q.2. Can any human habit cultivate moral virtues?

Paul’s description of the human sin can be understood as a denouncement of the sinful habit of all human communities without exception. The human habit in general was characterized with idolatry and immorality. The former was regarded as the cause of the latter: “since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind (adokimon noun) and to things that should not be done (mē kathēkonta). They were filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, craftiness”, etc (1:28-9).

Paul’s strategy of proclaiming the Gospel to Greeks first of all was to change the cause of their sin. (Acts 14:15, 17: 23-24). He did not argue directly against the Greek-Roman immorality. This does not mean his indifference with their immoral life. On the contrary, he condemned homosexual as the terrible example of God’s wrath (Rom 1:26-7, 1Cor 6:9), which had been nevertheless appreciated by Greeks since Socrates.

Q.3. Can one change his or her character from vice to virtue?

Aristotle's virtue ethics could not allow the change from one's good character to the bad, or vice versa, since character was habituated from one's very youth. Paul would not allow one change the character at will either, since no one could get rid of the sinful habit he lives in. Nevertheless, Paul saw a hope, that is, justification by faith through grace.

Paul's doctrine of justification had been interpreted variously and gave rise to vehement debates. Justification is usually meant to be the thoroughgoing change from the sinner to the just, from evil to good. Paul spoke of the justified person as "stripped off the old self (palaion anthrōpon) with its practices (praxesin) and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge (epignōsin) according to the image (eikona) of its creator."(Col 3:9-10, cf. Eph2:15, 4:24) The contrast between the old and new human lies in practice (bad / good), spirit (evil / holy) and image (Adams / Jesus) .Those three elements compose what is commonly regarded as a personal character.

If we understand justification as the change of one's character, it will make Paul's reason morally plausibly. Paul could agree with Aristotle that it is not that the man who does just act is the just man, but that it is the just man who does just act (1105b 6-8). But he disagreed with Aristotle on how to become a just man. Since it cannot be by habit, or by just act without firm and stable moral character, Paul saw the justification by God they believe in as the condition for them to become just men. His theological conclusion can be interpreted as a solution of the moral perplexity.

Q.4. How can the acquired moral character be sustained?

Whether the grace of justification is bestowed individually or collectively, instantly or

constantly, mystically or commonly, once for all or several times is hot issues in theological debates. Taking Paul's experience on the way to Damascus literally, many believe these former alternations in question. Paul's pastoral teachings, however, can courage us to take the latter alternations, confirming that the grace is acquired and sustained in and through the church.

The church (ekklēsias) was the Christian counterpart of Greek polis and Roman urbs, yet not in the political function, but in the roles of cultivating good habit, moral education and virtual characters' transmission. The sinful communities could not be transformed by themselves into the just one, as much as the sinner by no means could become the just by himself. An entirely new community could exist only through the divine force of the Word and Spirit in order to break off the obstacle of human habits. The Church was thus created on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2).

Paul said that the church is the head and body of Christ (Eph 1:22, 23; 5:23). The church embodied the Spirit sent by Christ. The grace was necessitated not only for individual Christians to be justified, but also for the Christian tradition (paradosis, 2 Thess 2:15, 3:6) to be founded firmly and developed rapidly. Paul's pastoral teachings were addressed to the themes such as changing the old habits (ethos), possessing different characters (echontes diaphora charismata, Rom 12:6), and training virtues. The moral practice was particularly important for the witness of the superiority of the Church over the gentile or Jewish communities. Otherwise, the church would be degenerated into a profanatory community just as other sinful communities.

Q.5. Can one choose his or her character freely?

Though Paul denied any voluntarily good act in sinful societies, he affirmed that the sinners do evil voluntarily. "So they are without excuse" (Rom 1:20); that is, they should be morally blamed and divinely condemned for their conduct. By contrast, the grace of justification enables believers to do good voluntarily and they are worth

praising by God. One may say that for both Aristotle and Paul, voluntary act was resulted from the deliberative yet not free choice, and we have said above that Aristotle did not have the idea of free will. The question is whether Paul did not have it either.

Paul's typological exegesis of God's election of Jacob instead of Esau (Rom 9) has been widely interpreted as the cornerstone of the doctrine of predestination by God's free will. The free will of human beings vies-a-vie the divine election was denied by some, and approved by others. Both argued on the basis of biblical interpretation. From the perspective of virtue ethics, we can reformulate the question: can a person choose his or her character freely?

Paul's emphasis on the grace can be understood as an exclusion of the free will on the part of human beings from the determination of their own just and elect character. Nevertheless, this does not exclude the possibility that the just or elect can choose the previously unjust or abandoned character freely. Paul taught Christians, "you were called to freedom (eleutheria), brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become servants (douleuete) to one another. " (Gal 5:13)

Paul can be said to have made the distinction between "freedom from" and "freedom for", yet not in the domain of politics, as modern political philosophers did. In Paul's theology, freedom from sin ought to lead to freedom for the servant of God and people. Theologically speaking, justification by faith is not a single grace once for all, the just is in danger of misusing the gifted freedom for his own interest and thus losing the freedom from sin. Anthropologically speaking, the conflict between proper use and misuse of freedom was described by Paul as "what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh" (Gal 5:17) within the individual; or, the opposition of "deceitful spirits" in the society to Holy Spirit in the church (1Tim 4:2, cf. Eph 2:2, cf. Col 2:8). The church and her members

are facing the choice of good or evil in those confrontations. The choice is free in the sense that it is concerned with the maintenance or abandonment of the freedom, or with the distinction between free man and slave in the authentic sense of the terms.

Q.6. Do theological virtues require divine feeling or divorce themselves from human passions?

Paul's moral teachings covered the list of virtues and that of vice. For instance, "the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these" (Gal 5:19-21). "By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (22-23). Most of those items were commonly acknowledged as vices and virtues by both gentiles and Christians. Aristotle said, some vices by their names are themselves bad, but not bad because of their excess or defect (1107a 10). Paul said, too, "fornication and impurity of any kind, or greed, must not even be mentioned among you" (Eph 5:3).

It is not correct to say that Paul did not teach in particular a "Christian" ethics in difference from the gentile's or Jewish one. In fact the vice of idolatry and sorcery was practiced by gentiles as virtues, and strife and dissensions were spread among Jews at that time not as vice. Paul's Christian ethics was centralized on the virtue of faith, hope, and love, "and the greatest of these is love" (1Cor 13:13), "love binds everything together in perfect harmony" (Col 3:14).

Many theologians pay attention to love (agapē), distinguishing it from human passions, especially from Greek eros. However, in the dialogue between Jesus and Peter spoke agapē and philō interchangeably (John 21; 15-18, agapē 2 times, philō 5 times). This suggests an allegory between divine love and human friendship. The same can be said of pleasure and pain, happiness and suffering. Paul shared those

human passions with Jesus. What is at issue is not to differentiate the divine feeling from the human passions, but to differentiate the virtue from the vice, the good from the evil. As Aristotle pointed out, virtue and vice are motivated by pleasant or painful objects and companied by pleasure and pain, but the difference in objects and passions in act distinguishes virtues from vices. The fact that Jesus and his followers suffered the pain and enjoyed spiritual happiness was not issued from some non-human passions, but from the virtual use of human passions for the divine purpose.

On Augustine's Thinking of Freedom and Questioning of Time

Rong Zhang (Nanjing University, China)

Abstract: Based on my book *Freedom, Mind and Time: A Textual Study on Augustine's Thoughts on the Turning of Mind*, this paper tries to further elucidate three aspects of Augustine's theory. First, freedom and time are not only the reversal points of the turning of mind, but also constitute the foundations of Augustine's ontology; secondly, the free choice of will gives rise to the first turning of mind, and in the second turning, time is the ground of our existence; finally, within the extension of mind and the limitation of freedom, there is an ontological relationship between freedom and time. In all, Augustine's thinking of freedom and questioning of time constitute an excellent attempt to lay the solid foundations for his ontology.

Keywords: Augustine, Freedom, Time, Turning of Mind, Ontology, Foundation

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Freedom and time are two fundamental concepts in western philosophy. Any philosopher who thinks ontologically can't evade these two concepts. Almost every great thinker, including Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Descartes, Leibniz, Kant, Hegel, Bergson, Ricoeur, and Heidegger, faces two questions: the thinking of freedom and the questioning of time. However, many of them don't give equal attention to these two fields, except Aristotle, Augustine, Kant and Heidegger. So now, by focusing on the turning of mind, we try to show out Augustine's thoughts of freedom, time and their ontological implications.

1. Freedom and Time: the reversal Points of the Turning of Mind and the Foundations of Ontology

In Augustine's all works, *De libero arbitro* and *Confessiones* 11 are two most

influential works, in which he narrates his thinking of freedom and his questioning of time. Freedom and time not only constitute the foundation of Augustine's philosophy, but also make the whole basis of Christian philosophy very stable. According to Augustine's reasoning, they lead to two turnings of mind, one from the external to the internal, the other from the internal to the divine. In *De libero arbitrio*, by analyzing the concept of original sin, he elucidates the fundamental role of the free choice of will and then argues sharply for his theodicy. Evil originates from the free choice of will, not by God's force, so his punishment to the evil is totally just. God endows human beings with free will, but it is just because free will makes them able to live a righteous life. Thus, Augustine demonstrates indirectly that God is the origin of human's good will and that there is a necessary relationship between the proof of God and the free choice of will.

In Augustine's thoughts, the free choice of will enlightens the dignity of will, and also enlightens the original role of freedom in our existence. Freedom is the prerequisite of our existence and good life, because the good will originates from God. In the perspective of philosophy, the true meaning of the free choice of will is that, only through this can we accomplish the internal turning of mind. This first turning liberates our mind from any external determinism and makes us turn back to our mind itself, so we have to face our own existence now. For Augustine as the theologian, this inclination of mind is the symbol of evil, since it wishes and assents to desire and concupiscence. But for Augustine as the philosopher, it just manifests the central existence of mind, thus, our mind begins its journey of self-consciousness, to reflect, reconsider and confess its inner life and inner experience.

However, besides the first turning, there must be a second turning for our mind, from the internal to the divine. It is a sacred and transcendent turning. This pilgrimage of mind opens a true dimension for its own existence, by dividing the time of its existence into past, present and future. So our mind can hold past and future at present and make this changeable being (non-being) ascend to being. It is the unique task of mind, i.e., the extension of mind. On the one hand, Augustine tries to overcome the traditional separation between being and non-being, and to make thinking and being

become an integrated one in the extension of mind; on the other hand, his analysis of the extension of mind leads to a concept of uncreated being, and he doesn't regard the concept of being just as a creation of God, but tries to move from understanding to faith. In other words, with the help of his ordinary life experience and his experience of time, Augustine investigates the existence of mind; and through the eternity of God, he also investigates time in the extension of mind. This is the second turning of mind.

His analysis on the working or extension of mind actually constitutes the analysis of time in *Confessiones* 11 which may be called Augustine's book of time. So besides free choice of will, time is also an main point for Augustine. They work together and enlighten the second turning of mind, from the internal to the divine. This means that time is just the extension of mind, and the analysis of the essence of time is also his analysis of the second turning of mind. However, the second turning is almost omitted by many scholars. They only focus on Augustine's questioning of being and essence of time, but ignore other dimensions, for example, how time is, how mind exists, how human beings should exist and whether there is a limitation for the extension and the freedom of mind. The task of *Confessiones* 11 is to answer the questions mentioned above, which are the significant parts in Augustine's questioning of time. Otherwise, if we only focus on chapter 14 to 28, ignoring the other chapters of this volume and then cutting off its relations with other volumes, we would unfairly reduce his questioning of time to a kind of purely philosophical knowledge, and distort the purpose of his whole argument of the turning of mind.

Time is the extension of mind. With this interpretation, Augustine makes the thinking of mind and the existence of mind become one, and his thinking of time then walks on the track of ontology. Consequently, his enlightenment of the limitation of the extension of mind opens more space and dimensions for our further thinking. In conclusion, mind extends itself to generate time in freedom. This is the relationship between freedom and time in essence.

2. Free Choice of will: the Beginning of the First Turning of Mind

Obviously, according to our analysis above, freedom and time are two very moments of the turning of mind, and they are also the foundations of Augustine's ontology. Then we will articulate the internal relationship between freedom and the first turning of mind.

Augustine's thinking of the turning of mind is closely related to his philosophical analysis of original sin. As we all know, the direct intention of *De libero arbitrio* is to refute Manichaean theory on the origin of evil. In Manichaeism, evil is a kind of material substance, just like good, it can exist independently, having nothing to do with our will. Augustine fiercely refutes this kind of external determinism, and traces the origin of evil back to human being's mind and will, but not to Manichaean material substance. In other words, the first turning of mind is related to the origin of evil. In the end of the first volume of *De libero arbitrio*, Augustine openly said, "we do evil out of the free choice of will". In the history of thought, it is the first time to trace thoroughly the origin of evil, and it is a kind of metaphysical thinking of freedom. From the perspective of Christianity, it is the original sin that man defects from God to creatures which are inferior to God as the Creator.

However, the first turning is not a privation or defection described above, but a turning in our own thought, i.e., reflecting why this defection of mind as the original sin would happen. We need to distinguish these two kinds of turning: one is the surficial turning of mind, i.e. defection as the original sin, the other is the turning in our own thought as a reflection of the original sin, which means evil is just derived from our mind, not from the external substance. Otherwise, it is possible for us to mingle them into one. Certainly, the essence of Augustine's philosophical thinking is to theoretically analyze the facts in Christian faith. Therefore, our concern is always how he interprets Christian doctrines by philosophical terms.

In the first part of my book *Freedom, Mind and Time: A Textual Study on Augustine's Thoughts on the Turning of Mind*, I mainly argued that free will or the free choice of will was the key point of the turning of mind, and theodicy was our sole

concern. The argument of God's existence was the same with the argument of God's justice. For Augustine, God's existence is an evident fact, he just needs to prove how God exists, i.e., his goodness and truth. Therefore, the whole argument begins with the question of the origin of evil. Since we do evil out of the free choice of will, this argument of theodicy becomes an argument of the free choice of will, and then becomes a metaphysical thinking of will.

In sum, the origin of evil has nothing to do with God, but originates from the free choice of will, so God is just, but man must be responsible for his own free choice, and it is completely just for God to punish Adam's first sin. With all these analysis, we can see that the free choice of will has its own ontological meanings.

3. Time and the Second Turning of Mind

Under the title "the extension of mind and the essence of time", I analyzed Augustine's famous questioning of time in *Confessiones* 11. As we know, this questioning is extremely significant in western philosophy in that it deeply influences the progress of phenomenology and is even called a milestone-like transformation besides Aristotle's and Kant's in the ideal history of time. [1(S.16)] In my horizon, Augustine's questioning of time is to disclose the second turning of mind.

Time is the extension of mind. This becomes a very moment of Augustine's turning of mind and one of the foundations of his ontology. Concerning this essential statement, I will analyze it in two ways. In Augustine's theory, armed with God's grace, i.e., the will to good, human mind can think of its own world, making past, present and future all become present. Through the extension of mind, our thinking is divided into memory, attention and expectation. From the philosophical point of view, the essence of Augustine's questioning is that he introduces a concept of the uncreated being. According to our ordinary understanding of time, the past things have passed, the present things are ceaselessly moving to past, and the future things have not emerged yet. But by memory, attention and expectation, our mind can make the past, present and future all become present. In all, time extends itself, and by this

trinity-like work, our mind divides the ceaseless time into several measurable time intervals (spatia) and figures out the essence of time via sensitive measurement.

Contrary to the inherited tradition, Augustine measures time not by the moving body, like Aristotle, but by the senses of mind, i.e., memory, attention and expectation. This internalizing turning not only terminates the traditional understanding of time, turning from Aristotle's external-objective time to internal-subjective time, but also overcomes the gap between being and non-being in the traditional ontology. For Augustine, time is the extension of mind. His understanding of time reveals the internal moment of the second turning of mind. By free choice of will, our mind accomplishes its first turning, but after this, the freedom of will does not cease then, and the will to good is not completely destroyed by God's punishment. This freedom still exists in the extension of mind, and memory, attention and expectation just show this freedom. In these three episodes of time, attention is also our present will. [3（p.302）] Time as the extension of mind shows that it is a matrix in which we exist. The target of this extension happens to coincides with the target of mind as turning to goodness. The ultimate goal of the extension of mind is God. As Augustine said in *Confessiones* 11.1, "We confess to you our miseries and the mercies you have shown us in your will to set us free completely, as you have begun to do already; and by so confessing to you we lay bare our loving devotion. Our hope is that we may cease to be miserable in ourselves and may find our beatitude." [2(p.231）]

In the second part of my book *Freedom, Mind and Time: A Textual Study on Augustine's Thoughts on the Turning of Mind*, while analyzing the being of time, I showed that the starting mode of Augustine's questioning of time was "eternity and time", and his articulation of the extension of mind just followed this mode. The extension of mind not only reflects the essence of time, but also reflects the second turning of mind which is eventually related to our redemption. God is eternal. Our mind extends in time towards its goal. In *Confessiones* 11.29, Augustine said, "And you are eternal, but I have leapt down into the flux of time where all is confusion to me. In the most intimate depths of my soul my thoughts are torn to fragments by tempestuous changes until that time when I flow into you, purged and rendered

molten by the fire of your love."[2 (p.257)] He emphasized the experience of life and the extension of mind, just because his desire of happiness makes him look for the way towards it: let our mind focus on eternal God. In *Confessiones* 1.1, Augustine said, "Our heart is unquiet until it rests in you." Therefore, Augustine's analysis on time becomes a Copernican Revolution in the intellectual history of time. The essence of this revolution is the turning of mind, from the external understanding of time to the internal understanding of time, and then the mind ascends to God himself.

Thus, in order to grasp Augustine's understanding of time, we must pay much attention to his specific experience of time and life in Christianity. This analysis of time is always a dialogue between the two understandings of time, and Augustine tries hard to find a kind of balance. If the thinking of freedom is just about the first turning of mind, his questioning of time involves the second turning of mind, i.e., the necessary preparation for completing the second turning of mind.

4. The Extension of Mind and the Limitation of Freedom

In the foreword of my book *Freedom, Mind and Time: A Textual Study on Augustine's Thoughts on the Turning of Mind*, I summarized the relation among freedom, mind and time as "Freedom makes the mind extend in time". In other words, this relation should be entitled "Mind, Freedom and Divinity", because my meditation expanded itself on these three dimensions. People usually emphasize that Augustine's questioning of time is a kind of pure philosophy, for he is always pursuing after the pureness of thinking, and this deeply influences Husserl's phenomenology of internal time-consciousness. However, as we know, how freedom originates and where it will go are two more fundamental questions for Augustine. What is the true goal of our freedom? This is a tough question even now.

If we use this freedom without limitation, we will not have a bright future. In *Confesiones* 11.29-31, Augustine analyzed the limitation of the extension of mind, which means there must be a limitation for the freedom of mind. Unfortunately, my book didn't completely figure out Augustine's research on the inner relation between

freedom and time. In fact, he never intensively and systematically clarified this topic in any book, and his genius as a philosopher is always covered by his theological interest, which means his study on freedom and true freedom always revolves about how the sin and redemption of human beings happen.

However, in Augustine's view, since human is the image of God, freedom and time originate from God's grace. The free choice of mind extend itself into three dimensions, memory, understanding and will, and they all belong to the same mind which is endowed with God's grace. In this close relationship, freedom can't exist without time, and time can't exist either without freedom. Just as "freedom makes the mind extend in time", "time also delimits freedom", i.e., the extension of mind has its own limitation. Moreover, this limitation is given by God himself.

Nevertheless, we should notice that Augustine's philosophy and metaphysics have some features of pure philosophy. Just because he questions the meaning of freedom to our existence, he naturally continues to question the extension of mind and the essence of time. Pure philosophy is primarily a philosophy of freedom, and to love wisdom is also equal to pursue freedom. Augustine's philosophical analysis of original sin is to protect the free choice of will, to chase after the wisdom and the highest good and eventually to defend righteous life and human's dignity.

However, we shouldn't ignore he interprets freedom from a Christian perspective. His primary goal is to defend God's justice. And then he can demonstrate the dignity of free choice of will. Therefore, his view of freedom is totally different from absolute freedom so called by the Enlightenment. For Augustine, freedom is not to think independently or to bravely use your own intellect, but to run toward the eternity of God. In this way, Augustine successfully overthrows material determinism and returns to our own mind. This return is a self-liberation of our spirit, which demands us to be responsible for our free decision. While grasping and overcoming the changing, our mind just can extend and will rest in the eternity of God.

For Augustine, the goal of extension of mind is to ascend and return to the kingdom of God. This is the divine and transcendent dimension of Augustine's philosophy. With this second turning, human soul obtains a kind of divine

consciousness which not only guarantees each person's happiness, but also promotes the welfare of the whole society. This divine consciousness will help us revere "the absolute other", which means God, live in our world peacefully, and love one another with a modest heart.

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The Unification of Souls According to St. Augustine

(A Draft)

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1, Augustine's Rome

The relationship between individuals and groups is a topic that many philosophers have talked about. Facing the decline of Roman Empire, the greatest *civitas* in Western History, Saint Augustine produces a very special project for human history.

Rome occupies a very distinct place in the political history of the West. According to Aristotle's famous saying, human beings are by nature political animals, and their nature is completed in a *polis*. In the era of Rome, while most city-states have been incorporated into the empire, Rome is said to have preserved the civilization of Greek world in a more powerful way. Virgil praised Rome to be an eternal empire,[1] and the empire is described as *orbis terrae*, which is supposed to incorporate the whole world into one empire. After Constantine, this idea of eternal Rome was accepted by Christian Historians. They regarded Rome as eternal because the kingdom in heaven would be realized in Rome. Rome was not only eternal in a traditional sense, but also holy in the Christian sense. Jesus Christ was born not long after Rome was turned into an empire, because he would rule the whole world in this world empire.

The idea to unite human beings in one empire was totally destroyed when Rome was about to be conquered. Augustine profoundly realized the absurdity of this dream, but he loved Rome no less than any other Roman Christian of his time. He did not mourn for Rome as Jerome or Tertullian was doing, but tried to lead the idea of unification of

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the world into another direction.[2] He warned the Christians that the real unification could not be realized but in the city of God. But how could the individuals be unified in that city?

Augustine preached in a sermon that the real Rome does not consist of stones or walls, but of citizens. Hence the breaking down of the walls is not important at all.[3] This metaphor is apparently borrowed from Peter's image that Jesus is the living stone of the spiritual house.[4] In the ruins of the Rome built by Romulus, Augustine wanted the Christian God to build a new Rome, not with stones and bricks, but with the souls of the believers. He claimed that only this new Rome could unify the whole world.

2, The Sacred Sociality of Human Beings

Augustine is quite concerned about the sociality of human beings. In Book 12 Chapter 22 of the *City of God*, he argues that the way God creates human beings already indicates that they must unite into one. According to Augustine, some animals were created to be solitary, like kites and lions, and some others were created to live in company, like doves and starlings. Human beings, however, are different from either type. God created only one man, but he was not destined to live alone. He will live in company, but all other human beings, including his wife, would be created through

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[3] Sermon 81:9, "Roma enim quid est, nisi Romani? Non enim de lapidibus et lignis agitur, de excelsis insulis et amplissimis moenibus. Hoc sic erat factum, ut esset aliquando ruiturum. Homo cum aedificaret, posuit lapidem super lapidem; et homo cum destrueret, expulit lapidem a lapide. Homo illud fecit, homo illud destruxit. Iniuria fit Romae, quia dicitur, Cadit? Non Romae, sed forte artifici eius. Conditori eius facimus iniuriam, quia dicimus, Roma ruit, quam condidit Romulus? Mundus casurus est, quem condidit Deus. Sed nec quod fecit homo, ruit, nisi quando voluerit Deus; nec quod fecit Deus, ruit, nisi quando voluerit Deus."

[4] 1 Peter, 2:4-8: "As you come to him, the living Stone--rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him--you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone," and, "A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the message--which is also what they were destined for."

him. The fact that all human beings are out of one man indicates that God wants them to live like one.[5]

Augustine insists that reproduction is a holy thing because God blessed the primary couple to "be fruitful and increase in number."[6] On the one hand, reproduction is a holy thing; on the other, however, it cannot be completed without sin in the secular world. This dilemma puts Augustine in a very difficult situation, and the famous quarrel between Augustine and Julian of Eclum is all about this. Now we cannot go to the details of this quarrel or who won it. What I am most interested in is why Augustine puts himself in such a difficult dilemma. Marriage and reproduction are necessary steps for human race to be derived from Adam. Although Augustine has taken difficulties to prove that the primary couple could have sex intercourse in the paradise before their fall, the fact is that there could not be marriage or reproduction without sin in the real world. This seems to show that there would not be society without fall. In this case, how can the sociality be sacred?

It seems to me that this is exactly the key to understand Augustine's social philosophy. Although human beings are social by nature and their sociality is blessed by God, the sacred sociality cannot be realized in this world. In other words, the multiplication of human race cannot be completed without sin. The first step of multiplication is the

[5] "Explicata non est arduum videre multo fuisse melius quod factum est, ut ex uno homine, quem primum condidit, multiplicaret genus humanum, quam si id incohasset a pluribus. Nam cum animantes alias solitarias et quodammodo solivagas, id est, quae solitudinem magis appetant, sicuti sunt aquilae milvi, leones lupi et quaecumque ita sunt, alias congreges instituerit, quae congregatae atque in gregibus malint vivere, ut sunt columbi sturni, cervi damulae et cetera huiusmodi: utrumque tamen genus non ex singulis propagavit, sed plura simul iussit existere. Hominem vero, cuius naturam quodammodo mediam inter angelos bestiasque condebat, ut, si Creatori suo tamquam vero domino subditus praeceptum eius pia oboedientia custodiret, in consortium transiret angelicum, sine morte media beatam immortalitatem absque ullo termine consecutus; si autem Dominum Deum suum libera voluntate superbe atque inoboedienter usus offenderet, morti addictus bestialiter viveret, libidinis servus aeternoque post mortem supplicio destinatus, unum ac singulum creavit, non utique solum sine humana societate deserendum, sed ut eo modo vehementius ei commendaretur ipsius societatis unitas vinculumque concordiae, si non tantum inter se naturae similitudine, verum etiam cognationis affectu homines necterentur; quando ne ipsam quidem feminam copulandam viro sicut ipsum creare illi placuit, sed ex ipso, ut omnino ex homine uno diffunderetur genus humanum."

[6] Genesis, 1:28; CDC, 13:23.

creation of Eve out of Adam, and the union of the two through marriage. The creation of marriage, however, soon led to the fall of the two.

Adam and Eve soon had children, and they had a nuclear family now, but this could only mean further fall. A quarrel occurred between Cain and Abel, two sons of the primary couple, and Cain killed Abel. Augustine often cites this story to show the sinfulness of the city on the earth, because Cain built the first city. Another reason for Augustine's interest of this story is that this fratricide resembles the fratricide of Rome. Both the first city and the greatest city in human history are built upon the blood of a brother.[7]

Both family and city are important social organizations as understood by Aristotle, but according to Augustine, both are products of human sins. Although sociality is sacred, it could not be realized in marriage, family, or city in this world.

The next step in human evolution is the building of Babel Tower. In this story, the people of the whole world are organized to build one city and one tower. The city Babylon is described by Augustine as Rome in the East, and Rome is also Babylon in the West.[8] The fate of Babel Tower is the fate of human empires. The result, as described in the Bible, is not the unification of the world, but the confusion of languages and an entire division of peoples. Augustine remarks that the difference of languages renders communications impossible. Although translation makes it better, but no translation is possible without cruel wars. [9]Hence the effort to communication

[7] CDC, 15:2.

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[9] CDC, 19:7, "Post civitatem vel urbem sequitur orbis terrae, in quo tertium gradum ponunt societatis humanae, incipientes a domo atque inde ad urbem, deinde ad orbem progrediendo venientes; qui utique, sicut aquarum congeries, quanto maior est, tanto periculis plenior. In quo primum linguarum diversitas hominem alienat ab homine. Nam si duo sibimet invicem fiant obviam neque praeterire, sed simul esse aliqua necessitate cogantur, quorum neuter linguam novit alterius: facilius sibi muta animalia, etiam diversi generis, quam illi, cum sint homines ambo, sociantur. Quando enim quae sentiunt inter se communicare non possunt, propter solam diversitatem linguae nihil prodest ad consociandos homines tanta similitudo naturae, ita ut libentius homo sit cum cane suo quam cum homine alieno. At enim opera data est, ut imperiosa civitas non solum iugum, verum etiam linguam suam domitis gentibus per pacem societatis imponeret, per quam non deesset, immo et abundaret etiam interpretum

through translation seems but another effort to build Babel Tower.

Now Augustine has deconstructed all the three important social organizations: family, city, and world empire. In none of them could the sacred sociality be realized, because they are all accompanied with sins. If none of the three social organizations is sinless, then no social organization could be sinless, because they are all products of sinful humans. The sociality that God blessed could be realized only in a totally different way.

2, The Mirror for Princes

Augustine's negation of social organizations is too radical to be practicable, and this is why many scholars do not think he could be so radical and take efforts to afford him a theory of a third city.[10] I agree with Cranz and Marrou that Augustine had no idea of a third city. For him, the secular government is nothing but a city of devil, and could not have any positive significance. This does not mean, however, that Augustine entirely denied social life. He still agreed that an emperor could be a good Christian. But he could not be a good Christian by making it a powerful and rich political body. In Chapter 24 of Book 5, *City of God,* the *Mirror of Princes* of Augustine, he says: "If the Christian emperors rule for a longer time, die a peaceful death and leave sons to inherit them, or conquer enemies of the commonwealth, or be able to avoid or suppress the rebellions of the we citizens, we would not say they are happier."[11] Regarding salvation of souls, these emperors have nothing different from common

copia . Verum est; sed hoc quam multis et quam grandibus bellis, quanta strage hominum, quanta effusione humani sanguinis comparatum est? Quibus transactis, non est tamen eorumdem malorum finita miseria. Quamvis enim non defuerint neque desint hostes exterae nationes, contra quas semper bella gesta sunt et geruntur; tamen etiam ipsa imperii latitudo peperit peioris generis bella, socialia scilicet et civilia, quibus miserabilius quatitur humanum genus, sive cum belligeratur, ut aliquando conquiescant, sive cum timetur, ne rursus exsurgant."

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[11] CDC, 5:24, "Neque enim nos Christianos quosdam imperatores ideo felices dicimus, quia vel diutius imperarunt vel imperantes filios morte placida reliquerunt, vel hostes rei publicae domuerunt vel inimicos cives adversus se insurgentes et cavere et opprimere potuerunt."

Christians. They could be saved as far as they do everything for God, and it has nothing to do with whether they rule the commonwealth well or not. Therefore, for Augustine, a typical Christian emperor is not Constantine, but Theodosius, because the latter never could make himself as humble as any another person.

Because the strength of an empire has nothing to do with the soul of the emperor, Augustine attacked the military conquest of the Romans. He does not say that all the wars that the Romans launched were unjust, but he incisively points out that there would not even be just war if everyone were good, and hence every city would remain a small one. Whenever there is a war, even if it is a just war, there must be injustice. The conquest of Rome is preconditioned by injustice. Augustine examines all the seven legendary kings of Rome. Although they contributed to Rome in various ways, they were not necessarily happy. Romulus disappeared in a tempest; Tullus Hostilius, who conquered Alba, was destroyed by lightening; Tarquinius Priscus was assassinated, and Servius Tullius, the best king in Roman history, was miserably murdered by his daughter and son-in-law. Tarquinius Superbus, the evil and last king, however, lived a peaceful life.[12] Augustine is more concerned with the kings' personal life than their political achievement, because for him personal happiness is more important.

Hence in Chapter 3 of Book 4 of the *City of God*, Augustine argues, "It is good for good persons to rule far, wide, and long, but it is beneficial to the ruled, not to the rulers. What is important for themselves is their piety and righteousness, the great gifts of God, suffice to bring them the real happiness in this life and eternity later."[13] For Augustine, the strength of a commonwealth is not good in the real sense, because

[12] CDC, 3:15.

[13] CDC, 4:3, "utile est ut boni longe lateque diu regnent; neque hoc tam ipsis quam illis utile est, quibus regnant. Nam quantum ad ipsos pertinet, pietas et probitas eorum, quae magna Dei dona sunt, sufficit eis ad veram felicitatem, qua et ista vita bene agatur et postea percipiatur aeterna."

it has nothing to do with the salvation of souls. Hence the unification of an empire could not be a sacred thing.

Hence Augustine remarks in the same chapter, "each individual person, like one letter in a text, is, as it were, an element of the city or kingdom, no matter how extensive it is in its occupation of the earth."[14] This is a very important metaphor in Augustine's political thought. As O'Daly points out, this is an inversion of Plato's famous metaphors of big letters and small letters in the *Republic*. In that dialogue, Socrates says that justice in one's soul is like a small letter, and justice in a city is like a big letter on the wall. Because it easier to see the big letter afar, it is better to read the big letter first, and then read the small one.[15] Both Augustine and Plato talk about the similarity between an individual soul and human society, but Augustine wants to begin from the individual while Plato begins from the society. This is not merely an inversion of order, but reflects very different political philosophies.

For Plato, a city is just when everyone does his proper job, and the justice of individuals not only resembles the justice in a city, but also depends on the political justice. But for Augustine, the justice in a soul has nothing to do with justice in the commonwealth. When he says that a kingdom consists of different individuals, he is not emphasizing the social division and interdependence in the kingdom.

Augustine ha another metaphor in the same chapter: a poor but healthy person is better than a rich but sick one. In the same way, a mall but pious city is better than a big but blasphemous one. This idea is not for the ruled, but for the rulers, since as we have seen, it is still better for the ruled to live in a powerful empire. The key in this metaphor is that an emperor's salvation still depends on the piety in his soul, even if he could rule millions of people. In the matter of salvation, every individual is equal

[14] Ibid, "nam singulus quisque homo, ut in sermone una littera, ita quasi elementum est civitatis et regni, quantalibet terrarum occupatione latissimi"

[15]

to each other. When Augustine says that the kingdom consists of individuals, his point is that each individual in the empire has the same problem of salvation. The empire does not depend on the division among these individuals, and the salvation of everyone depends on his own effort, even if he is an emperor. Although Augustine insists on the sociality, this sociality could not replace an individual's effort; on the contrary, it drives everyone back to his spiritual order.

It is in this "text" that the sacred sociality could be realized, and people could be salved as a union. But what is this text, and how is it composed?

3, The body of Christ

This test is not Roman Empire, but the city of God. The City of God, however, is not a city in the strict sense. There is no wall, palace, government, or consul in this city, and there is no ruling, social division, or interdependence in it. In sum, the city of God is not any social organization. For Augustine, such a city has nothing to do with any interpersonal relationship or political body, because interpersonal relationship always means inequality, ruling, and dependence. The sacred unification is realized only when nobody depends on anyone else. The only relationship in this city is that between God and every individual. The unification in the city of God is the unification in Christ.

The image of unification in Christ appears several times in the New Testament. For instance, in 1 Corinthian, Paul says, "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." In the Epistle to the Romans, Paul also says, "Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and

each member belongs to all the others."[16] In Ephesians, he says, "The body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.... Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ." The Church is the body of Christ, and Jesus is its head, while all Christians are its members. It is true that Paul here talks about different works of the Christians, but this is more about the work in the church of this world. When Augustine talks about the body of Christ as the city of God, he emphasizes the similarity between different Christians.

In contrast to the first Adam, Christ is the second Adam. The first Adam is the ancestor of all human beings, and everyone is his offspring. For Augustine the mystery that everyone comes from the same ancestor shows the sacred sociality of human beings. But the relationship of all humans with Adam is by blood and nature, and this nature is already sinful. That is why all human social organizations are sinful and could not be real sacred.

The second Adam, however, is the Holy Son sent by God. Christians' unification in him is not by nature, but by grace, which is exactly the negation of the first Adam and his sinful nature. How can Christians join in the second Adam?

Augustine understands the Crucifixion as a sacrifice: "The great Priest, in his Passion, offered even himself as sacrifice for us, in the form of servant, so that we would be the body of this great Head. It was this form that he offered, and in it he himself was offered. In this form, he became our mediator, the Priest, and the Sacrifice for us."[17]

[16] Romans, 12:4-5.

[17] CDC, 10:6, "qui etiam se ipsum obtulit in passione pro nobis, ut tanti capitis corpus essemus, secundum formam servi [56]. Hanc enim obtulit, in hac oblatus est, quia secundum hanc mediator est, in hac sacerdos, in hac sacrificium est."

In this sacrifice, Christ is both the priest and the sacrifice, and through this sacrifice, he became the head of the body of Christ. It is also through this sacrifice that his followers become the members of this body. When Jesus offered his body as the sacrifice, he offered the members in his body, and hence his followers also joined his sacrifice. By joining in this sacrifice, they were unified in Christ and with Christ.

In Book 10, Chapter 6 of the *City of God*, Augustine describes sacrifice in different levels. First, if one can chasten the body by temperance for the sake of God, body could be a kind of sacrifice; next, if the soul directs itself to God, the soul would be a sacrifice. If both body and soul are directed to God, the whole person is a sacrifice. The real sacrifice, Augustine goes a step further, is the work of mercy shown to the neighbours, and done with reference for God. The whole redeemed city is of course also a universal sacrifice offered by Christ.[18] According to Augustine, everything is sacrifice to God, from an individual body to the whole city of God. The point in this is that they are not different sacrifices, but only one sacrifice.

By applying the metaphor of Temple, Augustine remarks, "For we are God's Temple, each of us and everyone of us as a whole, for he deigns to dwell in both the whole harmonious body and in each of us individually. He is no greater in all men than in each, for He is neither increased by addition or diminished by division."[19] In this

[18] CDC, 10:6, "Corpus etiam nostrum cum temperantia castigamus, si hoc, quem ad modum debemus, propter Deum facimus, ut non exhibeamus membra nostra arma iniquitatis peccato, sed arma iustitiae Deo , sacrificium est. Ad quod exhortans Apostolus ait: *Obsecro itaque vos, fratres, per miserationem Dei, ut exhibeatis corpora vestra hostiam vivam, sanctam, Deo placentem, rationabile obsequium vestrum* . Si ergo corpus, quo inferiore tamquam famulo vel tamquam instrumento utitur anima, cum eius bonus et rectus usus ad Deum refertur, sacrificium est: quanto magis anima ipsa cum se refert ad Deum, ut igne amoris eius accensa formam concupiscentiae saecularis amittat eique tamquam incommutabili formae subdita reformetur, hinc ei placens, quod ex eius pulchritudine acceperit, fit sacrificium! quod idem Apostolus consequenter adiungens: *Et nolite*, inquit, *conformari huic saeculo; sed reformamini in novitate mentis vestrae ad probandum vos quae sit voluntas Dei, quod bonum et bene placitum et perfectum* . Cum igitur vera sacrificia opera sint misericordiae sive in nos ipsos sive in proximos, quae referuntur ad Deum; opera vero misericordiae non ob aliud fiant, nisi ut a miseria liberemur ac per hoc ut beati simus (quod non fit nisi bono illo, de quo dictum est: *Mihi autem adhaerere Deo bonum est*): profecto efficitur, ut tota ipsa redempta civitas, hoc est congregatio societasque sanctorum, universale sacrificium offeratur Deo per sacerdotem magnum,"

[19] CDC, 10:3, "Huius enim templum simul omnes et singuli templa sumus [32], quia et omnium

revealing statement, Augustine shows that the soul of everyone is as big as the city of God as a whole. This is the key to understand Augustine's idea of unification in Christ.

For Augustine, a little different from Paul at least literally, there is no need of division in Christ. As members of the body of Christ, different Christians are not different or interdependent as the body's hand, foot, or any other organ. If they are members in that sense, the body would not be complete if one Christian is lacking. Different from Plato, Augustine regards everyone in Christ as self-sufficient. As far as one is in Christ, he can establish a complete relationship with God without the help of other people. Even the relationship with God is not one of governing, but of imitation. Everyone in Christ is a small christ himself, and hence every soul is a city of God.

As the head of the second Adam, Jesus conquered the Devil by sacrificing himself, without which salvation would be impossible. In order to join in him, one should also conquer the Devil in the same way. Everyone who follows Christ should offered himself as a sacrifice to God and become a member of the body of Christ.

For Augustine, there is only one sacrifice in Christianity, that is, the Passion of Christ. This sacrifice, however, was not completed with the death of Jesus. As the head of the body, his death is only the beginning of this sacrifice. Every follower of Christ is joining Christ by joining his sacrifice. When they imitate Christ, they are offered as a member of the body of Christ. This sacrifice is not completed until the last day, when every member of Christ has joined in him.

"The true sacrifice is prefigured in many things, just as one thing may be expressed in many different words, in order to commend it frequently but without tedium. To this supreme and true sacrifice all false sacrifices have yielded."[20] For Augustine, all the

concordiam et singulos inhabitare dignatur; non in omnibus quam in singulis maior, quoniam nec mole distenditur nec partitione minuitur."

[20] CDC, 10:20, "hoc unum per multa figuraretur, tamquam verbis multis res una diceretur, ut

sacrifices in the Old Testament are signs to prefigure this true sacrifice. The sacrifice in the church, especially Eucharist, is not a sacrifice by itself, but a sign of the true sacrifice too: "He hoped that there should be a daily sign of this in the sacrament of the Church's sacrifice: the Church, as the body of which he is the Head, offers itself through Him."[21] In Eucharist, every Christian symbolically eats the body of Christ, and hence Christ comes into his body, which signifies that he comes into the body of Christ and be united with him.[22]

Christians join the body of Christ not by eating the bread, but by imitating his Passion. Only when they become a christ, could they join the sacrifice of Christ. And hence the individual souls could be united in Christ. It is such an unification that the sacred sociality could be realized. It is not a unification of different and interdependent persons, but a unification of similar christs. Different individuals would not establish a relationship with each other, but would establish a relationship with God by himself. Such a unification would not make a better communication between the individuals, but would reader their lives more solitary.

5, From the One by nature to the One by Grace

The unification in the first Adam is the one by nature, but the unification in Christ is the one by grace. Since there is no justice, but merely sin in the one by nature, the one by grace can be realized only through the negation of the one by nature. Jesus says, "Think not that I came to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law: and a man's foes shall

sine fastidio multum commendaretur . Huic summo veroque sacrificio cuncta sacrificia falsa cesserunt."

[21] CDC, 10:20, "Cuius rei sacramentum cotidianum esse voluit Ecclesiae sacrificium, quae cum ipsius capitis corpus sit, se ipsam per ipsum discit offerre."

[22] CDC, 21:20, "quia non solo sacramento, sed re ipsa manducaverunt corpus Christi, in ipso eius corpore constituti, de quo dicit Apostolus: *Unus panis, unum corpus multi sumus."*

be they of his own household. He that loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." (Matthew: 10:34-37) This famous passage is a very typical description of the Christian negation of familial relationship. Augustine also remarks that a person who loves his relatives more than Christ cannot be saved:

"I do not talk about a man's wife whom he uses for the sake of carnal pleasure in fleshly intercourse, but any of those members of his family whom he may love apart from this kind of pleasure: whoever puts them before Christ, and loves these relatives after a human of fleshly manner, does not have Christ as his foundation. Therefore, he will not be saved by fire. Indeed, he will not be saved at all; because he cannot be together with the Savior, who has said to us most clearly: He that loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."[23]

Augustine does not say that one should not one his parents, but he should love them according to Christ, that is, love them as members of Christ. Therefore, they are not different from other fellow-Christians. The greatest love for a Christian is to make other people love God as oneself. When the familial love and divine love are at odd, one should put the divine love before familial love. The best example for this is doubtless Abraham, who did not hesitate to sacrifice his son to God.

According to the bible, Abraham was not a man without any moral defect. He lied to the Pharaoh that Sarah was his sister; he quarreled with Lot his nephew over the farm; he had more than one wife; when God gave him a promise, both Abraham and Sarah laughed with doubt. Despite these defects, both Paul and Augustine praise Abraham as

[23] CDC, 21:26.4, "non dico uxorem, cuius etiam commixtione carnis ad carnalem utitur voluptatem, sed ipsa quae ab eiusmodi delectationibus aliena sunt nomina pietatis humano more carnaliter diligendo Christo anteponit, non eum habet in fundamento et ideo non per ignem salvus erit, sed salvus non erit, quia esse cum Salvatore non poterit, qui de hac re apertissime loquens ait: *Qui amat patrem aut matrem plus quam me, non est me dignus; et qui amat filium aut filiam super me, non est me dignus."*

the typical believer who can be justified by belief. Although Augustine does not hesitate to criticize Noah or anyone else in the Old Testament, he tries his best to describe Abraham as a morally perfect person. The major reason for this is not that God gave him the promises, but he was about to kill Isaiah for God. Because he did not put the parental love before divine love, he was seen as the best believer of God. God blessed Abraham's descendants by spirit because he has renounced the natural relationship and rebuild a relationship with God.

Abraham left his homeland, his nation, and his family, to build the happiness in the city of God. The city of God has nothing to do with one's family, nation, or homeland. Only after one has been deprived of all the natural relationship, could he enter this city. The unification in the city of God is based on the entire separation in natural relationship. Because it does not depend on any natural relationship, this unification could be the greatest unification; but because it is not based on any natural relationship, it could also be the greatest separation.

In the city of God, Christians are supposed to be unified by grace in the second Adam. How is the life in this city? For Augustine, there is not marriage, family, city, empire, or any other social organization there. Strictly speaking, the city of God is not a city in the social or political sense. There is no wall, palace, government, or any other office. In other word, there is not any substantial relationship between any two persons in this city. The only relationship is that between God and individual souls. Nobody needs or depends any other person, they are unified only because they are in God in the same way.

What is the relationship between God and individual souls in this city? Although God is said to be the king of this city, this king is by no means the head of any social organization. Although Jesus is said to be the head of Christ, the real relationship between Jesus and the members of Christ is imitation, not subordination. God is an

eternal and motionless spiritual being. A true believer of God must make God the true self of his soul, as Augustine himself says in the *Confessions.* Therefore, in the city of God, this only relationship is one between a soul and the soul's essence. Hence in this city, the only relationship is inner relationship within souls.

In this city, there should be a perfect order in the soul, and any spiritual separation or conflict will disappear. According to Augustine, because of the original sin, men fell and there were spiritual conflicts within their souls. In contrast, the men who have been saved should have peaceful souls. Because there is no conflict within a soul, there will not be conflicts between souls and bodies, either, and then there would be no passion or desire. There is no virtue either, because for Augustine, although virtue is a noble thing, there would not be virtue if there is no sin. For instance, if nobody does wrong, justice would be a meaningless word, and if there is no desire, moderation would be useless either.[24]

Not only the souls, but also the bodies would be totally different in the city of God. Because the bodies would be immortal, there is no necessity for different bodily members to function as now. For instance, because men would not need food to live, there is no need for stomach to digest. Because there is no marriage or intercourse, genitals are not necessary, either. These organs will be there, but only for beauty, not for necessity.[25]

In a word, there will be no family, city, empire, emotion, or virtue is the city of God, and there is even no need for bodily organs. No substantial difference is necessary, either between different people, or even between different bodily members. Everybody will be the same, and even everything is the same. This is an entire unification and an entire separation.

[24] CDC, 19:4.4.
[25] CDC, 22:30.1.

Conclusion

Upon the fall of Rome, Augustine was thinking about a new empire, but this was neither another world superpower nor a church in the world, but the city of God, which could exist only in the souls. In order to build this eternal city, Augustine not only negated the significance of any social or political organization, but also any natural relationship in the classical sense. In order to be unified in this city, each soul must be pure, naked, and immune from any desire or ambition. Any soul in this city must be the same. They do not need to depend or relate to each other, but have to depend on God together.

The sociality as understood by Augustine is not in any social or political institution. The divine unification is the overlapping of similar souls. Apparently, people would build an unparalleled unit, but there is nothing substantial in this unit. Only solitary souls could be unified this way, because a soul in the city of God could hold a whole world, and the whole world is also as small as an individual soul. Augustine left the whole world to modern people, but got rid of their nature.

First Movements in Medieval Theories of Free Will

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The brain reacts before we make a conscious decision – does this mean that there is no free choice? Referring to Libet's neuroscientific experiments, many writers have questioned the freedom of the will while others have found them irrelevant.[1] I shall show how some late medieval thinkers and their followers might have reacted to this controversy – not the neurophysiological part, of course, but the conceptual presuppositions of the arguments. Their approach to the acts of the will had a historical background in the theory of first movements which played an important role in the history of moral psychology even apart from the question of free will. In section 1 I shall sketch some lines of this tradition in ancient philosophy, early Christian thought and scholastic theology. In section 2 I explain how the theory of first movements was used in late medieval discussion of the freedom of the will. I argue that Libet's attempt to combine his theory of unconscious origin of volitional process with conscious intentions shows some structural similarity to how free choice was understood by many late medieval thinkers and their early modern followers. However, there are also dissimilarities in understanding intentionality, these being associated with different ontologies.

1. First Movements in Ancient and Medieval Theology

[1] In 'Do We Have Free Will?' (*Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 6, n. 8–9, 1999, 47–57), Benjamin Libet describes his experiments as follows: 'I have taken an experimental approach to this question. Freely voluntary acts are preceded by a specific electrical change in the brain (the 'readiness potential', RP) that begins 550 ms before the act. Human subjects became aware of intention to act 350–400 ms after RP starts, but 200 ms. before the motor act. The volitional process is therefore initiated unconsciously.' In the experiments conducted in the 1980s, Libet asked participants to choose a moment to flick their wrist while he measured the associated brain activity. To determine when the subjects felt the intention to move, he asked them to watch a specially constructed clock and report the time of conscious intention. Libet thought to have found that the brain activity leading up to the conscious decision began half a second beforehand. For a critical discussion of free will skepticism on the basis of Libet's experiments, see T. Bayne, 'Libet and the Case for Free Will Scepticism' in R. Swinburne (ed.) *Free Will and Modern Science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

A well-known part of Stoic philosophy is the philosophical therapy of emotions (*therapeia*) which is known through the works of Cicero, Seneca and Epictetus. Stoic therapy aims at *apatheia*, the extirpation of emotions. This therapy is cognitive because emotions are regarded as value judgements. Instead of treating emotions as a part of the natural constitution of human beings, the Stoics saw emotions to be essentially an acquired habit of forming value-judgements, by which people mistakenly evaluate things from their subjective perspectives. Learning to identify oneself as a representative of cosmic rationality makes emotions disappear. This approach was heavily criticized by other ancient philosophical schools, one part of the criticism being that even Stoic philosophers seem to react emotionally in various occasions. The Stoics developed the theory of pre-emotions (*propatheia*) or first movements (*primus motus*) as an answer to this criticism. Seneca explains that persons might react quasi-emotionally in exceptional circumstances, but this is not really an emotion if no judgmental assent is involved.

> (1) So that first agitation of the mind which the appearance of injustice inflicts is no more anger than is the appearance of injustice itself. It is the subsequent impulse, which not only receives but approves the appearance of injustice, that is anger (*De ira* 2.3.5)

First movements may show various external signs of emotions, but it is a mistake to conclude from them that there is an emotion in a subject who does not assent to spontaneous evaluations, i.e., who does not assent that the objects of standard emotions are something good or evil.

> (2) For with pallor, and falling tears, and irritation from fluid in the private parts, or a deep sigh, and eyes suddenly flashing, or anything like these, if anyone thinks that they are a sign of emotion and a manifestation of the mind, he is mistaken and does not understand that these are jolts to the body. (*De ira* 2.3.2)

While other ancient philosophical schools did not believe that emotions can be eliminated, they were ready to learn from Stoic therapy in their teaching of how to

moderate emotions. First movements were regarded as incipient emotions and it was thought helpful to discern them in an early stage in order to master them. These approaches to emotions had a strong impact on early Christian spirituality in which they were applied to control sinful desires. One influential author was Origen who describes the control of non-voluntary sinful first movements as follows:

> (3) But if someone maintains that what comes from outside cause cannot be resisted when it has happened, let him turn his attention to his own passions and movements and see whether there is not an approval, and assent, and inclination of the commanding faculty to that thing on account of these incentives …. Another man in the same circumstances, with more knowledge and practice, also encounters titillations and incitements, but his reason, as being better strengthened and carefully trained and confirmed by doctrine towards the good, or being near to confirmation, repels the incitement and weakens the appetite. (*De principiis* 3.1.4)

Origen argues that people should not blame uncontrollable first movements for their bad behaviour which in fact is based on their tacit consent. The same model was applied by Augustine in many places. He taught that because of the fall, humans cannot avoid the occurrence of tempting representations of sinful things in their mind. This is part of their fallen condition. Instead of letting these movements to be strengthened, one should expel them as soon as possible.

> (4) When the mind enjoys forbidden things merely in cogitation and, having not yet decided to realize them, revolves them and adheres with a pleasure to thoughts which should be expelled as soon as they enter into the soul, one cannot reasonably maintain that this is not a sin though far less than if it were also determined to accomplish them in an outward act. (*On the Trinity* 12.12)

Like Origen, Augustine taught that evil thought may be unavoidable but assenting to them is not. He summarized his view of the sinfulness of the first movement as follows:

> (5) We do not sin in having an evil desire but in consenting to it. (*Exposition of Some*

Propositions in the Epistle to the Romans, PL 35, 2066)

The occurrence of evil thoughts is a consequence of original sin. Because these movements are not directly under voluntary control, they are not counted as personal sins if one immediately gets rid of them by thinking something else. Keeping them in mind a little longer begins to be sinful, even more so if they are associated with some sort of intention to act. This schema became an influential cornerstone of the extensive medieval doctrine of the sin. All medieval theologians who wrote about sins commented on the scale from involuntary first movements to full mortal sins.

An Augustinian description of sinful first movements is presented in John Cassian's influential handbook for monastic spirituality as follows:

> (6) It is, indeed, impossible for the mind not to be troubled by thoughts, but accepting them or rejecting them is possible for everyone who makes an effort. It is true that their origin does not in every respect depend on us, but it is equally true that their refusal or acceptance does depend on us. (John Cassian, *Conferences* 1.17)

The monastic method for controlling one's first movements was to learn to change the thought. It was assumed there is only one thought in mind at one time. In the Benedict's monastic rule it is said that one should learn to dash evil thoughts against Christ, that is, to move attention to Christ (4.50). The doctrine of first movement was later associated with several distinctions. Simon of Tournai wrote in the middle of the twelfth century as follows:

> (7) 'The first movement of sin' is used in two ways. It may refer to a first movement toward a sin or to a first sinful movement. Furthermore, 'the first movement toward a sin' can refer to a primarily first movement or to a first sinful movement after the primarily first movement. This can be exemplified as follows. A titillation of flesh is aroused in someone without pleasure. This is a primary movement and it is called a sin in the sense of a defect and not a sin due to which one is a sinner. Therefore it is called a penalty rather than a sin … This movement is not imputed as a sin to a person. It is only a burden when it is driven back so that it does not proceed further.

> But if it proceeds and one feels it pleasant without consenting to this pleasure or to an external action, it is called a venial sin and a second movement after the primary one and it is the first of those which are sins. Both are called movements toward a mortal sin, because they provoke one to sin mortally, but none of them is a mortal sin. When consent is given, there is a first movement with consent which is a mortal sin even though there is no external action. (*Disputationes*, ed. J. Warichez, 1932, 44.1 (127.29-128.18))

While Simon follows Augustine in not regarding non-voluntary sinful movements as sins in their first stage, there was a tendency to regard them as venial sins even though they were not voluntary. This view was defended by Peter Lombard in his influential *Sententiae* (c. 1155) and by many others, such as Odo of Soisson from the same time:

> (8) Propassion, titillation and first movement mean the same. Adam sinned through a propassion; however, his sin was not venial, but criminal, because it was within his power to refrain from the first movements. This is beyond our power. There was in him nothing to make them rise, because nature was not yet corrupted, but there is such a basis in us. Therefore a titillation is venial in us but it was criminal in him. Our sensuality first consents to evil will, and this consent is a venial sin; then reason consents to it which makes it a criminal sin (O. Lottin, *Psychologie et morale aux XIIe et XIIIe siècle*, vol. 2, Louvain: Abbaye de Mont César 1948, 496-7).[2]

2. First Movements and the Freedom of the Will

[2] Some further divisions typical of scholastic theology of sin can be found in Peter of Capua (ca. 1202): 'Sometimes a movement of the sensual part toward forbidden things, e.g. anger or fornication, arises without a thought or decision to realize or not to realize it, and this is always a sin, though a venial one. Some people draw a distinction here. They say that some of these movements are primarily first movements, namely those to which we do not offer any opportunity and which occur involuntarily, and they think that these are not sinful. Movements to which we offer an opportunity are secondarily first movements, for example when someone goes to a party for recreation and something seen there gives rise to a first movement without cogitation, and these are venial sins. We call both venial sins, but the latter ones are more serious' (Lottin 1948, 499).

The theory of first movements, whether in ancient philosophy or Christian spirituality, was about non-voluntary emotional reactions. While the controversy between the adherents of Augustine's original position and those counting certain first movements as imputable sins was associated with considerations about will, guilt and responsibility, the question of first movements and freedom became part of more theoretical discussion in late medieval times. One background factor in this development was reconsideration of the traditional division between emotions located in the lower psychosomatic soul and volitions located in the immaterial intellectual soul.[3]

Thomas Aquinas regards the will as a dynamic counterpart of the intellect. Neither of these requires a bodily organ for their action, although cognitive content is received through phantasms. The will is directed to the ends which the intellect considers good and it initiates action by choosing the activities which practical reasoning considers necessary for achieving the end (*Summa theologiae* II-1.8.1-2; 12,1; 13.1). The will is free in the sense that nothing outside the subject compels it to will, but reason as an inner cause determines the content of its act. Aquinas argues that its activity as such is free and voluntary in the sense that it can decide to be not active, but it seems that it cannot decide even this against reason (*Summa theologiae* II-1.9.1, 3; 10.2). Aquinas's view represents Aristotelian rationalism in which the freedom of the will is not discussed from the point of view of whether one could will otherwise at the moment of time when one wills something. This was the voluntarist idea of free will which became a central topic after Aquinas's times because its opposite was taken to be included in Stephen Tempier's condemnation of 219 propositions in 1277.[4] The proposition 131 (160) refuted the view that when the will is actually willing something, it is impossible for the will not will (*non velle*), but this was often understood as the denial of the view that when the will wills something, it could will the opposite instead (*velle oppositum*; see, e.g., John Buridan, *Quaestiones super decem libros Ethicorum*, Paris, 1513, iii.5, f. 44rb).

Since the freedom of will is a matter of the non-necessity of judgements in Aquinas and it was also assumed in other medieval theories that volitions are preceded by cognitions, free decision is discussed in a cognitive context which roughly corresponds

[3] S. Knuuttila, *Emotions in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), 178-195, 265-274.
[4] *La condamnation parisienne de 1277*, texte latin, traduction, introduction et commentaire par D. Piché, avec la collaboration de Cl. Lafleur (Paris: Vrin, 1999)

to what Libet calls conscious intention. Some recent experiments are taken to show that a dip in the brain signals being recorded before what is called conscious intention may merely be a sign 'of some ongoing attention' in the brain and does not indicate that it has 'made a decision'. If one is asked flick one's wrist sometimes after a sign and sometimes not, the dip in the brain signals is the same.[5] Perhaps the difference between flicking one's wrist and not doing so is clearer to a person than to the brain. Instead of considering this, let us go on to late medieval theories.

John Duns Scotus regarded the will as a self-mover and a free cause of its own volitions to the effect that will itself is the ultimate cause of its acts which were chosen among the options presented by the intellect. Scotus's theory was influenced by the view of Henry of Ghent and Peter John Olivi who taught that a cognition is a *sine qua non* cause of volition, the will alone being its total efficient cause.[6] Scotus and Ockham thought that the will reacts spontaneously with liking (*complacentia*) or disliking (*displicentia*) to possible objects of choice. They regarded these first movements as free because they were acts of a free cause, but they were neither effective acts nor choices. Apart from these first movements, Scotus and Ockham argued that there are also passions of the will, joy and sorrow, which are not free acts and only indirectly controllable moods of the intellectual part of the soul.[7] So there are at least three different ways in which the will can be in a new state. One of these is the free choice, but even it is preceded by liking or disliking which are not choices. In commenting on the view of Scotus and Ockham, John Buridan

[5] Judy Trevera and Jeff Miller, 'Brain preparation before a voluntary action: Evidence against unconscious movement initiation', *Consciousness and Cognition* 19.1 (2010), 447-456.

[6] Stephen Dumont, 'Did Scotus Change His Mind on the Will?' in J. A. Aertsen, K. Emery and A. Speer (eds.), *Nach der Verurteilung von 1277. Philosophie und Theologie an der Universität von Paris im letzten Viertel des 13. Jahrhunderts*, Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 28 (Berlin - New York, N. Y.: de Gruyter, 2001), 719–794.

[7] Knuuttila 2006; 265-274; Vesa Hirvonen, *Passions in William Ockham's Philosophical Psychology* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2004), 140-148. Scotus describes the passions of the will as follows: 'That distress, properly speaking, is a passion of the will is seen from the fact that it is not any of its operations ... This passion is not in the will through the will as its efficient cause, because then it would be immediately under the power of the will, as volitions and nolitions are, but this is false, for when one wills against something and it happens, it is seen that distress is not under a subject's her immediate power. If it had the will as its efficient cause, it would be an operation of the will, as a volition is caused by the will and is in the will' (*Ord.* III.15, n. 48, ed. Vat. 9, 499).

interestingly remarks that the acts of liking and disliking as the primary orientations of the will are not free, but the will can freely accept or reject them.

(9) ...the first act attributed to the will is liking (*complacentia*) or disliking (*displicentia*) an object, which arises from apprehension of the object as good or bad, agreeable or disagreeable ... the will is not free as regards that act and is not its lord by lordship and freedom of opposition ... Then, upon the act of liking or disliking there sometimes follows another act which we are accustomed to call acceptance (*acceptatio*) or rejection (*refutatio*). This act properly speaking is called volition or nolition, because what I accept I will, and what I reject I will against, and vice versa ... And third, from the act of acceptance or, properly speaking, of volition, there necessarily follows love (*amor*) and from the act of rejection hate *(odium*); or perhaps the acceptance is, formally, love and the rejection hate. (*Quaestiones super decem libros Ethicorum*, Paris, 1513, 10.2)

After these remarks on the first movements of the will, Buridan continues about desire, pleasure and distress in a Scotist way:

From this acceptance or rejection, provided that with acceptance there is also an apprehension of the thing accepted as something to be had but not had, there necessarily follows desire; and if there is an apprehension of it as something had and present, there necessarily follows pleasure. And if there is an apprehension of a thing rejected as something had, there necessarily arises distress, and if as something that might be had and is not had, there arises the opposite of desire ... the will is not free with respect to those acts, namely, pleasure and distress, except perhaps consequentially, in so far as it is free with respect to the preceding acts or act upon which such pleasure or distress necessarily follows.

Freedom does not pertain to the first movements in Buridan. The acts of the will are free only with respect to accepting or not accepting the suggestions of first movements. Even though Scotus and Ockham somewhat idiosyncratically call the first movements free, they also thought that free choice is later than first movements. Since the first movements of the will are not chosen in Scotus and Ockham and they are necessary in Buridan, one is

not morally responsible for them in the same way as for intentions.

Let us return to Libet's attempt to combine his theory of the unconscious origin of intention with the phenomena of free will. After having maintained that the volitional process is initiated unconsciously, he goes on as follows: 'But the conscious function could still control the outcome; it can veto the act. Free will is therefore not excluded. These findings put constraints on views of how free will may operate; it would not initiate a voluntary act but it could control performance of the act. The findings also affect views of guilt and responsibility'.[8] Libet assumes that the conscious function does not initiate a voluntary act. It only controls performance by consenting to an urge or decides not to follow it. In the light of empirical evidence, Libet seems to be too eager to reduce the intention to the specific brain activity which other researchers characterize as attention rather than preliminary intention. Medieval authors also thought that the will is not empty before it makes a decision. If the antecedent acts of liking or disliking are necessary for all acts of the will, free choice reacts to what is given somewhat similarly to what Libet suggests, except that first movements are not unconscious intentions but rather conscious acts of attending to various options.

[8] Libet 1999, 47

Are First Movements Venial Sins? Augustinian Doctrine and Aquinas's Reinterpretation

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Fear, anger, and joy often come unexpected. As a consequence, passivity is broadly taken as a typical characteristic of emotion. Ancient and medieval thinkers employed terms like *πάθος, passio, affectus* to depict emotions as something we experience passively and even suffer in life.[1] Even the Stoics, who maintain that we can achieve a full control over emotions, concede that certain affective reactions or commotions are unavoidable in a dispassionate sage.

In his criticism of the Stoic ideal of dispassionateness in the *City of God* IX, 4, Augustine relates how a Stoic philosopher reacted affectively while on board a ship during a storm, citing a story from the anthologist Aulus Gellius' *Attic Nights*. During the storm, Augustine notes that the stoic sage 'grows jittery with fear (*pauescere metu*) for a little while, or he shrinks by sadness (*tristitia contrahi*)'.[2] Therefore, Augustine argues, when terrible and awesome things such as a tsunami force certain mental images (*phantasiai*) upon one's mind, even a virtuous person will be immediately moved (*moveri*) and lose his calmness at least for a short time. Unlike a slave to passion, however, a sage does not consent to this initial affective response to the external event which is not in his power, but

[1] For instance, Robert Solomon claims that these terms contributed to the traditional misunderstanding of emotions as irrational. See id. *True to Our Feelings. What Our Emotions Are Really Telling Us*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2007, Chapter 17 "Myth 8: Emotions Happen to Us (They are "Passions")". For a response to this simplified conception of passions, see Dixon, Thomas, *From Passions to Emotions. The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. In this essay, since we focus on the initial emotional response that constitutes the first stage of a passion, a distinction between passion and emotion is not necessary.

[2] Augustine, *De ciuitate Dei* (hereafter *DCD*) IX, 4. For a translation, see *The City of God against the Pagans*, ed. and trans. by R.W. Dyson, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. Unless otherwise specified, the translations given in this essay are modified. To save space, I omit the Latin texts.

remains unshaken in his rational judgment about what ought to be feared or not.[3]

As is well known, the Stoics identify the soul's rational consent (*συγκατάθεσις*, *consentio*) as the foundation of genuine passions. The soul cannot be affected by mere impulses without the approval of the mind.[4] Accordingly, an orthodox Stoic philosopher like Epictetus would interpret the sage's bodily and psychical movements when facing the storm as pre-consensual responses forestalling (*prevenientes*) the function of the rational mind.[5] According to Stoic terminology, it is inappropriate to use emotional words 'fear' and 'sadness' to describe these initial shocks as Augustine does in the *City of God*. [6] In more reliable accounts of Stoic psychology, these instant reactions receive a special term, propassion (*προπάθεια, propassio, antepassio*) or first movement (*primus motus*). [7] These initial agitations of the soul immediately follow our mental images. As Seneca suggests, they should be treated merely as 'preliminary preludes' to genuine full-blown emotions.[8] Nevertheless, Seneca acknowledges that the involuntary (*involuntarium*) reaction of the mind at issue occurs through some innate aspect of human nature and so befalls the sage as well as laymen.[9]

Despite these disagreements, the Stoics and Augustine alike recognize the involuntary aspect of emotions at the initial stage. This psychological feature of emotions

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[3] *DCD* IX, 4.

[4] For recent accounts of Stoic psychology of emotions, see Sorabji, Richard, *Emotion and Peace of Mind,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000; Graver, Margaret, *Stoicism & Emotion,* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007.

[5] In the *Attic Nights,* Gellius refers to an extract of the (lost) fifth book of Epictetus' *Discourses* to account for the real reason for the 'jitters' of the stoic philosopher. Augustine also records this view in the *City of God* IX, 4, but dismisses it as mere verbal sophistry. This story is also recounted in his *Questions on the Heptateuch* I, 30, cf. Sorabji, *Peace of mind,* 380-1.

[6] As recent studies rightly observe, Augustine's account makes few but significant changes in the details of the sage's reactions. Gellius merely reports that the Stoic philosopher shrank (*contrahi*) for a little and grew pale (*pallescere*). It has been suggested that these changes result in a fatal misunderstanding of the first movements of passions according to the Stoics, see Brachtendorf, Johannes, "Cicero and Augustine on the Passions," in *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 43 (1997) 289-308, esp. 297-8; R. Sorabji, *Peace of Mind,* 375-9.

[7] Sorabji suggests that the notion of preliminary emotion is probably Seneca's own invention. See Sorbaji, *Peace of Mind,* 61. For the attribution of this initial impulse to earlier sources, see Graver, Magaret "Philo of Alexandria and the Origins of the Stoic *Propatheiai*," *Phronesis* 44 (1999): 300-325; ea. *Stoicism and Emotion*, Chapter 4; Stevens, John, "Preliminary Impulse in Stoic Psychology," *Ancient Philosophy* 20 (2000): 139-168. For the use of these terms by Christian and Jewish thinkers, see Sorabji, *Peace of Mind,* 343ff.

[8] Seneca, *De ira,* II, 2, 5.

[9] Ibid. II, 2, 2.

can have moral consequences. When the first movement of the soul, no matter whether it is called a prepassion or a passion, is related to a forbidden object such as fornication, it is natural for a moral theologian like Augustine or Aquinas, to raise the question: can we be held responsible for this unpredictable and uncontrollable affective reaction? Is the first movement toward fornication a sin already?

One can anticipate that a Stoic philosopher would simply dismiss the question, claiming that without rational approval of the mind, this ubiquitous affective response is merely a natural movement. It seems absurd to deem such an automatic reaction morally wrong given that it originates from an ineradicable feature of human nature, which is not in our power at all. One should be blamed only when one consents to this initial impulse by an erroneous judgment. This answer might find great sympathy among contemporary readers. For we are accustomed to the idea that moral responsibility is grounded upon choice and the freedom to do otherwise. However, the first movements of emotion are not in our control and we have no alternative possibility available when such initial shocks abruptly overtake us.

Nonetheless, an extreme example might cause us to refrain from giving such a quick answer. Imagine that the storm was so ferocious and precipitous that it not only astonished the Stoic philosopher but even the ship's captain, because it was his first time in charge of the vessel. As a well-trained sailor and a courageous person, he was shocked into inaction only for a short while, say, ten seconds. However, during this short period of inactivity, the ship ran into an iceberg. It seems that due to this inevitable and passive emotional reaction, the captain failed to fulfill his professional obligations.

Is the captain completely free from responsibility for the shipwreck? If this episode seems to be too dramatic, consider situations where we lose our temper over nothing. At the moment of getting irritated, an impression of being harmed assails us unexpectedly and overcomes us so that we are no longer in our right mind. Most of us feel uneasy with this sort of emotional experience afterwards, as well as its consequences that might harm those we love. Is it right for us to feel guilty and blame ourselves for the emotional reaction itself or just cry out that 'the devil made me do it'?

I do not think that an easy answer can be given here without further justification. At least, these cases give us a good reason to revisit the theological reflections on the

culpability of the first movement by Augustine and Aquinas, whose subtle accounts for the degrees of voluntariness and responsibility are still relevant. Incidentally, the significance of this topic for our understanding of medieval theories of emotion has not received the attention it deserves.[10]

In Twelfth and Thirteenth Century moral theology, the problem of the first movement of the soul toward sin occupied a central role. In this period, theoretical interest in the initial impulse to illicit objects grew with the ascetic practice of fighting against temptations in the monasteries. [11] More importantly, this problem touches on the fundamental problem of moral responsibility for one's 'natural' instinct in this imperfect world, or in more theological terms, in this life under the effects of the original sin.

Augustine has long been identified as the authority that inspired this debate, while Aquinas is broadly acknowledged as the culmination of its development. However, most medieval authors, including Aquinas, misinterpreted Augustine's *On the Trinity* XII, 12, 17-18, a well-worn passage in medieval literature on the first movement, concluding from it that for Augustine sin begins at the moment of being tempted. By drawing attention to two other texts in Augustine's earlier writings, I will propose an alternative reading of the text in his mature work *On the Trinity.* It will show that Augustine did recognize the

[10] In his most recent survey of emotion theories in the Middle Ages, Peter King simply dismisses the phenomena of *propassio* as 'mere biological motivations for action, not having any intrinsic cognitive object', see "Emotions in Medieval Thought", in Peter Goldie (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2010, 167. It is noteworthy that in the recent revival of Aquinas's theory of emotion, the commentators tend to neglect the category of first movements in their discussion of the morality of passions. For instance, in Claudia Murphy's detailed study on this topic, she touched on the responsibility for this sort of reason-independent passion, but failed to relate it to the larger debate on the first movements in medieval theology. See ea. "Aquinas on Our Responsibility for Our Emotions" in *Medieval Philosophy and Theology 8* (1999): 163–205. For a superb bibliography on this revival, see Lombardo, Nicholas, *The Logic of Desire. Aquinas on Emotion*, Washington, D.C., The Catholic University of America Press, 2011. For recent studies on Augustine's conception of the preliminary passion, see, Sorabji, *Peace of mind*, 372-399; Byers, Sarah "Augustine and the cognitive cause of Stoic 'preliminary passions' (propatheiai)", *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 41 (2003): 152-172; Knuuttila, Simo, *Emotion in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, For scholastic controversy on the first movement, see Odon Lottin's classic study, *Psychologie et morale aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles*, II, Louvain: Abbaye de Mont César; Gembloux: Duculot, 1948, 493-589. It is summarized and supplemented by Knuuttila, *Emotion in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy*, 178-195. See also Boquet, Damien, *L'Ordre de l'affect au Moyen Âge. Autour de l'anthropologie affective d'Aelred de Rievaulx*, Caen: Publications du CRAHM, 2005, esp. 46-9, 208-14; id., "Des racines de l'émotion. Les préaffects et le tournant anthropologique du xiie siècle", in Piroska Nagy and Damien Boquet (eds.), *Le sujet des émotions au moyen âge*, Paris : Beauchesne, 2008, 163-186.

[11] Knuuttila, *Emotion in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy*, 172-174; Boquet, ""Des racines de l'émotion".

sinfulness of the first movement in our sensuality, but not in our mental images of forbidden objects as medieval theologians believed. Furthermore, he did not refer our moral responsibility to the absolute control of the will over emotional attitudes, but rather to an implicit consent of the will that manifests the innate weakness of the will at the initial state of emotional experiences.

On the other hand, Aquinas adopted the Augustinian conclusion and even his terminology, but offered an entirely different interpretation of the culpability of our uncontrollable reactions in sensuality. His account also located the will as the ground of moral agency, but within the general framework of Aristotelian philosophy of the soul rather than Augustine's original conception of the will. Aquinas's reinterpretation of this Augustinian doctrine shows a strong emphasis on the controlling force of the will over our emotional activities in a moral context. I will appeal to Aquinas's account of responsibility for wrongdoings due to negligent omissions to clarify and question this control-centered position.

This is basically a historical and textual approach to the problem. However, by considering the analyses of this theological issue offered by Augustine and Aquinas, I hope to provide some further understanding of the passivity and morality of emotions more generally.

II

In his first commentary on Genesis, written as early as 388/389, Augustine adapts the Stoic reflection on the formation of emotion to analyze how a **sinful** desire comes into being. He employs the famous metaphors of the serpent, Eve, and Adam to symbolize the different stages of sin (suggestion, desire, and consent) in this life:

> *Even now, when any of us slide down into sin, nothing else takes place but what then occurred with those three, the serpent, the woman and the man. First of all, you see, comes the suggestion (*suggestio*), either through the thought (*cogitatio*), or through the body's senses, by seeing or touching or hearing or tasting or smelling something. If, when the suggestion has taken shape, our desire (*cupiditas*) is not moved (*moueri*)*

> *to sin, the serpent's cunning will be blocked; if it is moved, though, it's as if the woman has already been persuaded. But sometimes reason (*ratio*) valiantly puts the brake on the desire that has been urged, and brings it to a halt. When this happens, we don't slide into sin, but win the prize with a certain amount of struggle. If however the reason does consent (*consentire*) and decide (*decernere*) that what lust (libido) is urging should be done, then the man is expelled from the entire life of bliss, as from Paradise. Sin is already put down to his account, you see, even if the actual deed doesn't follow, since the conscience incurs guilt just by consent.*[12]

The influence of the Stoic theory of affections is obvious in Augustine's division of the completion of a sin into three steps.[13] Augustine's acknowledgement of the presence of desire (*cupiditas*), preceding and independent from the consent of reason, is similar to the Stoic conception of mental agitation or simple impulse as first movements of the soul. Moreover, this desire is likewise treated as a response to our mental image (*suggestio*), which comes either from within or without our bodily sensations. It is the consent of reason rather than a simple **thought (*cogitatio*)** or a corporeal image *per se* that converts the initial impulse into a determinate sinful decision towards forbidden objects.

This analysis of sinful movements of the soul is also adopted, with slight modifications, in Augustine's *Lord's Sermon on the Mount* of 394. Here he comments on Christ's claim that the sin of adultery is committed when attending to a woman with the purpose of lusting after her (Matt 5: 28).[14] In the same place Augustine definitely identifies the initial suggestion (the serpent) with *phantasma*, a traditional term for mental image. Instead of desire or lust, Augustine employs **pleasure (*delectatio*)** in carnal appetite (*carnalis appetitus*) (Eve) to denote the instant response to mental images. Consent (Adam) is once again acknowledged as the determining element for the completion of a sin in our heart. It deserves notice that as in his earlier commentary on Genesis, Augustine carefully distinguishes two levels in judgments of reason or consent with respect to the initial desire

[12] Augustine, *De Genesi aduersus Manicheos* II, 14, 21. See *On Genesis. A Refutation of the Manichees*, trans. Edmund Hill, New York: New City Press, 2002.

[13] Origen and Seneca have been suggested as the sources of Augustine's analysis of the growth of sin. Cf. Sorabji, *Peace of mind*, 372 ff., Byers, "Augustine and *propatheiai*", 433-48; Knuuttila, *Emotion in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy*, 169-171.

[14] Augustine, *De sermone domini in monte* I, 12, 34.

or pleasure. One is simply the consent given to the affective inclination in the heart (*in corde*), and the other is the decision to carry it out through an overt action. Augustine insists that pure consent already proves that sin exists in the heart before the desire is transformed into an actual deed (*in factu*).[15]

Therefore, in these two earlier texts, Augustine confirms that both the initial thought and the immediate response in the form of pleasure or desire are not sinful when the consent of reason is withheld. In other words, there is no essential difference between early Augustine and the Stoics on the moral quality of first movements, even when they are directed to sinful objects through mental images or thoughts.

In the notorious passage in *On the Trinity* XII, 12, 17-18, Augustine still refers to the analogy of Serpent-Eve-Adam, but his moral evaluation of the whole process has changed radically.

First, the serpent still represents an attractive image of temporal and changeable things perceived by the sense of the body. When the serpent addressed the woman, it was a sensory movement of the soul (*sensualis animae motus*) that drew the intention of the mind toward an attractive object. Augustine chooses the word "enticement" (*illecebra*) to emphasize the persuasive power and moral connotation of this mental event. The phrase "*sensualis animae motus*" is rather misleading here, as we will see when we examine the fate of this passage in the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, this sensory activity should not be confused with the first movement of emotion that follows immediately. For the first movement involves our instant pleasure or desire as an initial response to the former. For this reason, regarding the initial stage of the process that may culminate in a sinful act, the depiction in Augustine's *On the Trinity* is consistent with his earlier positions.

However, things get complicated when we come to the second stage embodied by the woman eating the fruit.

First, in Book XII of *On the Trinity*, Augustine makes a distinction between two different functions of reason, namely, the action concerning temporal things and the contemplation of the unchangeable truth: the former is called knowledge (*scientia*), the latter wisdom (*sapientia*).[16] He also uses the first human couple as a visible image of

[15] Ibid., I, 12, 35.
[16] *DT* XII, 14, 22. *On the Trinity Books 8-15*, trans. Stephen McKenna, Cambridge: Cambridge

these two activities of the mind.[17] Moreover, at the beginning of Chapter 12 of Book XII, Augustine speaks of the serpent as the 'sensual movement of the soul which is directed to the senses of the body'. It is tempting to identify the woman in the analogy at XII, 12, 17-18 as lower reason and thereby to ascribe the first movement of emotion as a sensory event to the first step symbolized by the serpent. Actually many medieval commentators and contemporary scholars were led to draw a sharp distinction between sensuality and rationality in the figures of the serpent and Eve. [18]

I think that this interpretation confuses the different levels of Augustine's tripartite analogy of Serpent-Eve-Adam, even though Augustine himself is not explicit about this distinction. Only on a macroscopic level does Augustine intend to associate this metaphor with Sense-Knowledge-Wisdom. In contrast, on a lower level, he divides one element on the higher level of this metaphor, i.e., knowledge or the reason of action symbolized by Eve, further into a three-step process. Augustine makes it clear at the very beginning of chapter 12 that he is giving a fuller account of lower reason in the following discussion. In addition, he mentions that the lower reason is quite close to sensory desire (*appetitus*) because both deal with material objects relating to our well-being.[19] This reminds us that in his earlier works, Augustine introduces this analogy to account for the formation of lust or desire. Finally, the Serpent-Eve-Adam analogy at XII, 12, 17 – 18 is primarily concerned with the formation of a sin, as in his two earlier versions. Later in *On the Trinity* XII, Augustine explicitly cites Job 28: 28: "Behold, piety is wisdom, to abstain from evil is knowledge."[20]

Therefore, it seems more plausible to recognize Eve in the current passage as a symbol only for the second step concerning a sinful act of the lower reason, i.e., the initial pleasure or desire, rather than the lower reason itself. However, Augustine's depiction of this second step to sin is ambiguous and misleading:

University Press, 2002.

[17] Cf. *DT* XII, 3, 3 – 4, 4.

[18] See for instance Peter Lombard, *Sententiae*, II, 24, 6-12; Bonaventura, *Commentaria in Quatuor Libros Sententiarum*, II, 24, par. 2, art. 2, q. 1; Lottin, *Psychologie et morale*, 495; Knuuttila, *Emotion in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy*, 170;

[19] It might not be an accident that Stephen McKenna wrongly translates this sentence as "yet the reason of knowledge has appetite very near to it [sc. The reason of wisdom], seeing that what is called the knowledge of action reasons about the corporeal things themselves that are perceived by the sense of the body."

[20] *DT* XII, 14, 22.

> *But to consent to this inducement is to eat of the forbidden tree. If this consent (*consensus*), however, is content with the* ***mere pleasure of thought*** *(*sola cogitationis delectatione contentus est*), but the members are so restrained by the authority of the higher counsel so as not to be offered as weapons of iniquity unto sin, then it is to be so regarded, I believe, as if the woman alone had eaten the forbidden food.* [21]

Three elements are active in this stage: thought, pleasure and consent. They are so closely connected with each other in this condensed account that it is difficult to specify their peculiar roles in the affective response to the inducement.

This seems to be a faithful illustration of our emotional experience as well: when an enticing image suddenly invades our mind, we not only apprehend some of its sensible qualities, but perceive it as an attractive object of desire with certain pleasure and approval of its appeal. The same is true of horrifying things such as the storm for the Stoic philosopher. It seems rather difficult to account for these three aspects of our emotional experience purely in a chronological order.

However, Augustine explicitly claims in the following discussion that this initial response of the mind is already a sin, even though much less (*longe minus*) sinful than a sin completed in act.[22] To justify this condemnation of Eve, we have to clarify the moral agency in the above-mentioned elements of the initial emotional reaction, viz. thought, (initial) pleasure and consent.

In Augustine's earlier accounts, it is clear that one should not be blamed for the thought or awareness of an illicit object and the initial pleasure or desire for it. He follows the Stoics to take the consent or judgment of the mind as the foundation for the formation of a full-blown emotion and our corresponding responsibility. Accordingly, thought and pleasure as pre-consensual steps to a sin are essentially blameless.[23]

In *On the Trinity,* Augustine still insists that pure thinking or awareness (*cogitatio*) of a sinful object is not itself a sin. For it was the woman together with her husband, not

[21] *DT* XII, 12, 17. Emphasis is added.
[22] *DT* XII, 12, 18.
[23] As I have argued elsewhere, in his early writings, Augustine does not offer a convincing account of our moral responsibility for involuntary acts like these non-rational movements of the soul. See, "Augustine on Involuntary Sin: A Philosophical Defense," *Augustiniana,* 59 (2009): 45-78.

the serpent that ate the forbidden fruit.[24] Nevertheless, following his condemnation of Eve cited above, Augustine does mention that we should ask forgiveness for our thoughts (*cogitationes*) by reciting the Lord's Prayer, "Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive out debtors". [25] It seems to some commentators that the thought itself is already a sin that should be absolved.[26]

First, it should be mentioned that here *cogitatio* does not refer to a pure thought at the beginning of the process to sin, but a thought occurring in the second step on the way to sin, which already involves a certain pleasure and consent of the mind (*libenter*).

Moreover, the object of a thought should be distinguished from the activity of thinking itself. The former might be sinful in that it is forbidden, while the latter is morally neutral by itself. As Augustine suggests elsewhere, we can talk about a sinful desire such as fornication for the purpose of moral education without committing a sin. For it is impossible for us to talk about something without thinking (*cogitare*) it.[27] This also explains why Augustine describes the second step to sin as "a sin thought of with pleasure" in *On the Trinity* XII, 12, 18. [28] It is evident that here the sin refers to the object, which remains the same in the first two steps to sin.

Now, we move to the unusual element in Eve that Augustine introduces in *On the Trinity* XII, 12, 17 i.e., the act of consent. To distinguish it from the final consent represented by Adam, I will refer it as the initial consent$_1$. It seems natural to refer these two consents to Augustine's earlier distinction between the simple consent in the heart (*in corde)* and the full consent in act (*in actu*).[29]

However, this 'natural' reading does not fit the context. In his earlier accounts, Augustine definitely locates the simple consent in heart in Adam rather than in Eve. He is quite clear that the consent in the heart is directed through a fully formed lust towards illicit objects and should be punished as an actual and personal sin. For instance, if someone had made a decision to rob his neighbor but were prevented by an unforeseen tornado, in Augustine's eyes, it would have been a mortal sin, 'since the conscience incurs

[24] *DT* XII, 12, 17.
[25] *DT* XII, 12, 18.
[26] Cf. Sorabji, *Peace of mind*, 372-373.
[27] See Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, XII, 15, 31.
[28] *DT* XII, 12, 18
[29] For instance, Knuuttila, *Emotion in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy*, 170.

guilt just by consent'. Therefore, the initial consent$_1$ cannot be a simple consent in heart to the initial pleasure; otherwise it would be difficult to explain how it is 'much less (*longe minus*)' than the sin incarnated in Adam as Augustine claims.

In light of this observation, I propose a more sophisticated and unconventional interpretation of the initial consent$_1$. Let us go back to Augustine's depiction: "If this consent (*consensus*), however, is **content with the mere pleasure of thought** (*sola cogitationis delectatione contentus est*) (...)." By the phrase in bold, Augustine does not mean that the cognitive pleasure is the object of the initial consent$_1$, but rather that the consent of the mind is satisfied with what it has done in the formation of that initial pleasure in thinking of illicit objects. In other words, the initial consent$_1$ is not the consent **to** but the consent **in** the initial pleasure.

As a result, the initial pleasure of thought is no longer a direct and immediate reaction to mental images, but an affective and spontaneous response of the mind mediated by its consent$_1$. This pleasure is reprehensible because it already contains a silent approval of the mind. Now, the three elements active in the second step to sin constitutes an order: first is a "thought" or sensory perception which offers the intentional object to the initial pleasure, then the mind approves the appeal of this thought in a hidden or mysterious way, finally the mind feels the pleasure in it.

Certainly, we have to concede that this hair-splitting analysis is too sophisticated. Recalling the interaction of thought, pleasure and consent in our own emotional experience, we can see that they are actually three aspects of the same process that occur almost simultaneously. The order we reconstructed here is more logical than empirical. Nevertheless, with this conjectural reading, it will be easy for us to explain why the sin in the second step is a venial sin. For the initial consent$_1$, together with thought and initial pleasure, occurs before the mind makes a definite decision to act. It comes to the mind all of a sudden, or in Augustine's own words, 'forces upon the intention of the mind'.

Nevertheless, the initial consent$_1$ is called a consent and later 'a will of delighting the mind' in *On the Trinity*.[30] This is not because the mind has the freedom to dissent from the suggestion in the mental image, but rather because it is a spontaneous movement of the soul that indicates a minimal involvement of the self. In other words, calling it a will

[30] *DT*, XII, 12, 18.

does not change the inevitability of the initial emotional reaction, because the initial consent$_1$ is not in our control. 'Will' here only refers to our appetite or desire in general, both sensory and rational. Therefore, the initial pleasure is imputable because of the involvement of the self by the initial consent$_1$, but the involuntary participation of the mind in this emotional process is so hidden and implicit that it should not be treated as a mortal sin based upon the free decision of the will.

I have to concede that Augustine's condensed account is quite ambiguous about the implicit consent$_1$ of the will in the initial pleasure. Moreover, some basic problems remain. How can a consent of the will be essentially uncontrollable and involuntary as in the provided description? How can we be held responsible for such involuntary reactions, even in a very limited sense? More fundamentally, why should we suppose that the initial consent$_1$ involves the minimal involvement of moral agency if it is a completely uncontrollable process?

To answer these questions requires a full account of the so-called involuntary sin in Augustine's works, which I treated in another paper.[31] It is clear now, I hope, how Augustine identifies a somewhat mystical initial consent$_1$ in our preliminary emotional reaction like pleasure of thought. Still, his insight into our moral responsibility for this uncontrollable emotional agitation as a venial sin does not presuppose the absolute control of the will by choosing otherwise.

III

The density and ambiguity of Augustine's account of venial sin leaves great space for reinterpretations and distortions. Among them, Peter Lombard's remarks in his influential textbook *Sententiae* constitute an essential starting point of reinterpretation by later theologians. [32]

In Distinction 24 of Book II, Lombard cites in full Augustine's Serpent-Eve-Adam analogy both in *On the Trinity* XII, 12, 17-18 and *On Genesis against the Manichees* II, 14,

[31] See note 26.

[32] For the use of *primus motus* before Peter Lombard, Lottin mentions Roland Bandinelli, see *Psychologie et morale*, 493. Simo Knuuttila adds the discussions on *propassio* by Anselm of Laon, Geoffrey Babion, see *Emotion in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy*, 178-80.

20-21. Nevertheless, he fails to distinguish two different levels of the analogy in Book XII of *On the Trinity* we suggested earlier. Instead, he identifies the first step to sin with sensuality, the second with lower reason or knowledge, and the third with higher reason or wisdom. First, a sensual movement (*sensualis motus*) suggests to the lower reason an enticing image of sin; then the lower reason consents to its suggestion by holding onto the enticing image with "pleasure of thought" (*cogitationis delectatione*) but without the will to fulfill the suggestion from the sensuality; ultimately, the lower reason suggests the enticement further to the higher reason so that the sin can be completed by an overt act.

Furthermore, Lombard definitely differentiates the degrees of culpability in this process. If the enticement resides only in the sensuality, "it is a venial and most light sin". The case with the lower reason is more complicated; "it is sometimes a mortal, sometimes a venial sin".[33] When the enticement of sin is not held for a longtime (*diu*) but immediately dispelled with the help of the higher reason, it is venial. Otherwise it would be mortal. Needless to say, the full will to accomplish what the temptation suggests is the most serious sin.

Unlike Augustine, Lombard identifies a venial sin in the serpent, namely, sensuality. It is worth noting that Lombard does not take sensuality as the faculty of sensory perception as we did earlier. He defines it rather as "a certain interior force of the soul, out of which there is a movement (*motus*), which is stretched out to the senses of the body and **the desires (*appetitus*)** of things pertaining to the body."[34] Guilty of sin in the first step is not only our apprehension or "thinking" of an illicit object, but more importantly a pre-consensual impulse toward such object. In other words, the Stoic distinction between mental impression and first movement of passion, which Augustine maintained by his analysis of the initial pleasure of thought, is now compressed into an ambiguous term of sensuality. The Lombardian 'first movement' (*primus motus*) can be a cognitive event as well as a conative act.

It is unclear whether both are blameworthy as venial sins or merely our pre-consensual impulses. If the former, how can a pure awareness of a sinful object itself constitute a sin? If the latter, the old problem remains: how can such a pre-consensual

[33] Peter Lombard, *Sententiae*, II, 24, 12.
[34] Ibid, II, 24, 4. The emphasis is added.

movement of the soul be sinful?

None of the questions above was addressed in Lombard's misinterpretation of Augustine's theory, which initiated a long controversy lasting to Aquinas's day. Aquinas assumes Lombard's basic position concerning the culpability of the first movement in the sensuality, but incorporates it into a more Aristotelian framework of moral psychology.

Throughout his life, Aquinas maintains that the first movements of sensuality toward sinful objects are venial sins.[35] Nevertheless, he develops a different conception of sensuality. As early as his commentary on Lombard's *Sententiae,* Aquinas explicitly refers sensuality to the sensory appetite (*appetitus sensitivus*) that moves according to preceding imagination or sensation.[36] In *Summa Theologiae* I, 81, 1, he considers three objections, which draw support from *On the Trinity* XII, 12, 17 to argue that sensuality is also a cognitive (*cognitiva*) power. In his responses, Aquinas makes a clear distinction between cognitive and appetitive faculties of the soul by their different relations to the object: cognition is concerned with the mental representation of an extrinsic object, while appetite is directed to the external object itself. Therefore, it is more appropriate to talk about a movement of a sensory appetite than a movement of sensation. Accordingly, the temptation is no longer a pure thought or image of a sensible object, but rather a motivating force symbolized by the serpent.[37]

It seems that Aquinas restores Augustine's distinction between mental image and initial appetite or pleasure. Nonetheless, he does not specify whether the venial sin of sensuality begins with the sensory perception of an illicit object. Instead, he mentions a distinction popular in earlier controversy over the culpability of the first movement, i.e., the primary first movement (*primo primus motus*) and the secondary first movement (*secundo primus motus*). Aquinas insists that the movement of sensual appetite essentially

[35] *In quatuor libros Sententiarum (In Sent.)*. II, 24, 3, 2; *Summa theologiae (ST)* I-II, 74, 3, ad 3; *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate (DV)* 24, 12; *Quaestiones disputatae de malo (DM)* 7, 6; *Quaestiones quodlibetales*, IV, 11; Cf. Lottin, *Psychologie et morale*, 579. It deserves notice that in Aquinas's corpus, *primus motus* exclusively refers to tmovement of sensuality or concupiscence toward an illicit object. However, not all initial movements of sensuality are venial sins. For *propassio*, a term mostly reserved for a similar emotional experience in the lower part of Christ's soul in Aquinas's works, is never directed toward a sinful object. See *In Sent.* III, 15, 2, 3, qc. 3 expos. In this regard, Aquinas's terminology is distinguished from his predecessors in twelfth century, who treated *propassio* and *primus motus* as synonyms. See Knuuttila, *Emotion in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy,* 180ff.

[36] *In Sent.* II, 24, 3, 1;

[37] See *ST* I, 81, 1; I, 78, 1; I-II, 22, 2.

contains a physical dimension, namely, bodily alteration and especially that about the heart, which distinguishes a passion from an act of the will. [38] Therefore in our initial emotional response, the primary first movement is simply a natural and sinless change of physical condition; while a second movement is stirred up by a certain apprehension, and therefore blameworthy. [39] Here, sensory perception seems to be the starting point of sin.

Moreover, the distinction between apprehension and appetite does not play a significant role in Aquinas's moral account of the first movement to sin. The genuine challenge lies somewhere else. For when an enticing image suddenly comes to the mind, both our perception and initial responses to this image occur before, or even forestall (*prevenire*), the judgment of reason and will. For Aquinas, they are both involuntary in that they are not up to us at all. However, Aquinas maintains that an inordinate act is a sin only because it is voluntary or at least has some relation to the will. [40] For only the will and its free decision can make us have full control of our acts and establish the moral responsibility for those genuine "human acts "(*humanae actiones*). But the movements of sensuality **per se**, whether cognitive or conative, are just "acts of human beings" (hominis actiones) that happen to us.[41] How can we be held responsible for those sensory activities common to beasts and us?

Augustine's conception of the initial consent$_1$ of the will cannot offer any help here. For Aquinas is quite aware that when Augustine claims all emotions are nothing but acts of the will (*voluntates*), he simply denotes a certain appetite in general.[42] In contrast, Aquinas adopts a sharp division between passions and acts of the will, and even blames the Stoic conception of passions as psychic diseases for confusing them. He explicitly stresses that the first movement of sensuality occurs before the judgment of reason and leaves no place for any consent of the will **at the moment of its happening**, not even an interpretative or tacit consent of reason as his contemporaries suggest. [43]

One may also appeal to a looser conception of voluntariness, according to which

[38] *ST* I, 20, ad 1; I-II, 22, 3, for this distinction between two sorts of first movements in earlier literature, see Lottin, *Psychologie et morale,* 498ff., Knuuttila, *Emotion in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy*, 185-91.
[39] Cf. *In Sent*. II, 24, 3, 2; *DM* 7, 6 ad 8.
[40] *In Sent* II, 24, 3, 2; *DM* 2, 2.
[41] Cf. *ST* I-II, 1, 1.
[42] *DV* 26, 3 ad 3.
[43] *DV* 25, 5, ad 5. Cf. Bonaventura, *In Sent.* II, 24, par. 2, dub. 1.

even children and animals share in voluntary activity.[44] This does not work as well. For Aquinas definitely claims, "[p]raise and blame follow a voluntary act according to **the full sense** of voluntariness, which is not found in the beasts."[45]

Instead of weakening the full control of reason and will in our moral agency, Aquinas reconsiders sensuality from a different perspective. First, Aquinas identifies sensuality and reason as two different faculties rather than two parts of the same intellective soul, which is the substantial form of the body. He argues that the power of the sensory soul is virtually contained in the intellective soul.[46] Emotional experience is therefore an essential part of a human being as a hylomorphic composite. Accordingly, he assigns sensuality a more positive role in our moral life. As Carlos Steel rightly observes, "for Thomas, the sensible appetite is thus more than just a physical, biological function, since it can be integrated in a spiritual pursuit."[47] This is possible simply because sensuality can "participate" in reason by subjecting itself to the command of reason. [48]

In earlier discussions, we simply assumed that the first movements of sensuality cannot be controlled by the command of the will. This is obviously true at the moment of being overcome by passions. Aquinas does not deny the weakness of reason at the moment of being tempted. Nevertheless, this does not mean that an indirect control of reason and will is therefore impossible. On the contrary, the fact that passions can be moderated by reason is one essential feature of human excellence.[49]

First, Aquinas concedes that the physical dimension of sensory appetite is entirely out of the power of the will and therefore irrelevant for moral evaluation. [50]This explains why the primary first movement is not a sin at all, for it is neither voluntary nor involuntary.

However, sensory appetite always presupposes sensory apprehension. This cognitive dimension brings passions into the domain of rational control. This is possible in two ways. First, reason as a more comprehensive power can regulate our sensory perception. This

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[44] *ST* I-II, 6, 2 sc, Cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachaen Ethics*, III, 2. 1111b8.
[45] *ST* I-II, 6, 2 ad 3.
[46] *ST* I, 76, 3.
[47] Steel, Carlos, "Rational by Participation: Aquinas and Ockham on the Subject of the Moral Virtues", in *Franciscan Studies*, 56(1998): 359-382, at 381.
[48] See e.g., *ST* I, 24, 3; *DV* 25, 4.
[49] *ST* I-II 24, 3.
[50] *ST* I-II 17, 7.

can be done through the mediation of imagination, which makes a particular thing appear pleasurable or disagreeable. For instance, when reason understands the punishment after this life, it might form some horrifying images of eternal fire to elicit a passion of fear. [51] Similarly, the rational appetite can also affect the lower appetite by a certain overflow (*redundantia*) or command. [52] By overflow, he refers to the transformation of the energy of one power to another power.[53] For instance, a repentant person might feel voluntarily ashamed his sins.[54]

It is obvious that we should be held responsible for this sort of passion, which reflects the voluntary decision of reason and will. But even Aquinas himself concedes that a passion is more vehemently stimulated by its proper object, namely, the mental image in our sensory perception, than by the overflow of a higher power of the soul.[55] Moreover, these reason-elicited passions follow rather than precede the judgment of reason. In Stoic terms, they are full-blown passions instead of immediate emotional reactions.

Aquinas is quite conscious of the fact that there are two ways in which passions are related to the judgment of reason: antecedently and subsequently. [56] Antecedent passions denote movements of sensuality that draw a person toward sensible objects before his will can make any decision. In contrast, consequent passions follow decisions of the reason as argued above.[57] It is true that previous acts of the will, for instance getting drunk, can make us more vulnerable to certain temptations and uncontrollable movements of sensuality. Nevertheless, *primus motus*, in so far as it is a sudden movement of sensuality toward an illicit object in Aquinas's terminology, is **per se** an antecedent passion that constitutes the initial step of a sinful decision.[58] Aquinas insists that such an antecedent

[51] *ST* I-II, 17, 7; *DV* 25, 4; 26, 3 ad 13.
[52] *DV* 26, 3 ad 13; *ST* I-II, 30, 1, ad 1; *DM* 3, 7.
[53] *DV* 26, 10.
[54] *In Sent* IV, 17, 2, 3, 1; *DV* 26, 6. For comments, see Miner, Robert, *Thomas Aquinas on the Passions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2009, 103, esp. note 17.
[55] *In Sent*., IV, 17, 2, 3, 1.
[56] ST I-II 24, 3 ad 1; For further references, see Gondreau, Paul *The Passions of Christ's Soul in the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2003, 338, note 197.
[57] *ST* I-II 77, 6.
[58] It should be stressed that the scope of antecedent passion is broader than that of *primus motus*. First, as Lombardo rightly observes, antecedent passion typically but not exclusively refers to the movement of sensuality toward a sinful object. See *Logic of Desire*, 109. Moreover, an antecedent passion can develop into a full-blown emotion that paralyzes the function of reason. Unlike the Stoics, Aquinas believes that sensuality or sensory appetite is naturally moved to an external act, by the cogitative

passion clouds the judgment of reason and that its involuntary character therefore detracts from the moral value of an act following it. An involuntary passion renders a sin less blameworthy, and a good act less admirable. A work of charity solely from the passion of pity is less praiseworthy than that from the judgment of reason.[59]

This refers us back to the starting point: if an initial reaction of sensuality does not follow the command of the will, neither by imagination nor by overflow, but abruptly comes into being without any sort of rational consent as Aquinas himself concedes, how can such an involuntary movement toward an illicit object be called sin, even a venial one? This is not only important for our specific interest in the problem of the first movement of sensuality, but also for understanding the phenomenon of emotion in general. For it is rare and even slightly bizarre for us to experience an emotion as something we have chosen in advance. Even though our emotional reactions constitute a part of our character, which is chiefly shaped by decisions and choices of the reason, they often happen to us in an unexpected manner.

Needless to say, Aquinas is not blind to the independence of emotion at the moment of its arousal. However, he does not believe that it is entirely uncontrollable as we assumed earlier. In *Prima Secundae*, after clarifying the regulation of reason over sensory appetite via imagination, he suggests that even a sudden arousal of emotion can be prevented by reason, provided that it had been foreseen.[60] This idea of preventive intervention is further fleshed out in Aquinas's discussions on the venial sin of the first movement.

> *"[T]hese movements [of sensuality] are in one way in our power, and in another way not. If any of them is considered individually (*singillatim*), they are thus in our power, because we can impede any of them by forestalling [it]. But if all of them are considered simultaneously (*simul*), they are thus not in our power, because when we strive to fight against one, the illicit movement might creep from another part. For the intention of a resistant will cannot simultaneously fight against different things in*

power (*vis cogitativa*) in the sensory soul rather than reason and will. See *ST* I, 81, 3, for comments on the role of this sensory power in Aquinas's theory of passions, see Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 76-82.

[59] *ST* I-II 24, 3, ad 1; I-II 77, 6 ad 2.

[60] *ST* I-II 17, 7.

actuality."[61]

Aquinas does not believe that we can eradicate the inordinate acts of sensuality all at once. He maintains, rather, that the disobedience of sensuality signified by the serpent, which is also called *fomes peccati* (the kindling of sin) in scholastic theology, resulted from the sin of Adam, the effects of which can never be extinguished in this life. In addition to this theological reason, Aquinas also provides an illuminating example to explain why we have to live with the antecedent passions. First, he suggests that one can avoid these inordinate movements of sensuality by diverting one's thought (*cogitatio*) to other objects, for instance, to contemplation of eternal truth, the work of the higher reason. However, this effort might arouse an unexpected movement of vainglory. It is not unusual that one temptation follows on the heel of another. As a specific act of the soul, the first movement cannot be exterminated by reason and will. However, one can prevent each instance of its occasions with a vigilant mind. Aquinas insists, "It suffices for the raison d'être (*ratio*) of voluntary sin that one can avoid individual [movements of sensuality]."[62]

This seems to suggest that we are held responsible for the first movements of sensuality because the will still reserves the power to do otherwise than passively waiting for the attack of a dangerous thought that has been foreseen.[63] It follows that the occurrence of such thought is an indirect result of the will. This conclusion presupposes a subtle conception of voluntariness in Aquinas's moral philosophy.

Above all, Aquinas carefully distinguishes two uses of the word *voluntas*. It can denote the power of rational appetite as well as an act of willing.[64] Both willing and not willing are in the power of the will.

When talking about the moral responsibility or culpability based upon the voluntariness of an act, we refer to the power of the will rather than actual willing. Aquinas argues that moral agency can be established even in an unpremeditated episode without an act of the will. Just as we are held responsible for acting and not acting, so are

[61] *In Sent.* II, 24, 3, 2, ad 4, my translation.
[62] *ST* I-II 74, 3, ad 2.
[63] See Murphy, "Aquinas on Responsibility for Emotions", esp. 191-4.
[64] *ST* I-II 8, 2.

we for willing and not willing.[65]

First, an unintended event can be imputable by being related to a previous voluntary action. For instance, a man who intentionally gets drunk should be held responsible for what he does in a drunken state, even though this effect is not intended.[66] In moral theology, this is also called voluntary *in causa*. However, as mentioned earlier, it is an effect of Adam's free decision to sin that we are susceptible to temptations. The first movements to sin taken as a whole cannot be called voluntary *in causa* unless it can be demonstrated that we all **voluntarily** ate the forbidden fruit in Adam before birth. This apparently goes beyond the scope of moral philosophy.[67] Certainly, one can become more susceptible to some particular temptations by voluntary acts, e.g., getting drunk, taking a pill, or watching an adult video. But in most cases that concern us in our approach to the passivity of sensuality, temptations just creep into the heart without any previous positive act of willing. In particular, a virtuous person would rather endeavor to avoid any of such acts. Nevertheless, the uncontrollable blameworthy movements of sensuality still occur, as vividly described in Paul's verse, "For it is not what I wish that I do, but what I hate, that I do. (Rom 7:15)"[68]

Regarding the failure of the will at the occurrence of the first movement at issue, Aquinas introduces another conception of indirect voluntariness. An event can be ascribed to us because the will failed to prevent its happening. But certain qualifications should be satisfied here: the agent in question **could and should** (*potere et debere*) have taken necessary measures to prevent it.[69] If one failed to do so, this can be called a sin of omission. [70] Here, Aquinas cites a case of shipwreck similar to the one we mentioned at the beginning of this essay: A shipwreck was caused by the inactivity of the ship's captain. However, this captain can be blamed only when he was assigned to steer the ship at that

[65] *ST* I-II, 6, 3, sc.
[66] *ST* I-II 77, 7.
[67] Aquinas insists that the original sin of a descendent from Adam is called voluntary, 'not because of his own will, but because of the will of his first parent.' (*ST* I-II 81, 1).
[68] Aquinas cites it in *ST* I-II 74, 3 sc. For a forceful argument for these verses as descriptions of first movements rather than incontinence, see Kretzman, Norman, "Warring against the Law of My Mind: Aquinas on Romans 7." In T. V. Morris (ed.), *Philosophy and the Christian Faith*, Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988, 172-95, esp. 186.
[69] *ST* I-II 6, 3.
[70] *ST* I-II 76, 3.

very moment and was able to take possible actions to prevent the tragedy.[71] If pirates had taken him captive, for example, he would not be charged for the loss of the ship. A sense of obligation and the ability to do otherwise are both significant for determining the culpability here.

By applying Aquinas's conception of indirect voluntariness reconstructed above to the case of the first movement of sensuality, we can formulate his account as follows:

> *The first movement to sin (or more precisely,* secundo primus motus*) at a moment t is culpable, if and only if (1) it is directly related to an act of the will of an agent x at a previous moment t', or (2) at t' or any other previous moment, (a) x anticipated it, and (b) could, and (c) should have avoided it, but (d) failed to do so.*

We have argued that the first component (1) of this disjunction is not our concern here. Let us take a closer look at its second part (2).

First of all, a temporal interval between t and t' is not irrelevant to determine the responsibility here. For instance, if the pilot had been appointed to steer the ship just ten seconds before it hit an iceberg, it seems absurd to blame this poor man.

Secondly, the ability to anticipate the occasions of temptations is also restricted. Certainly, it is obvious for a repentant drunkard should avoid a pub. Nevertheless, he may, by accident, happen to cross into a wine festival on his way to the church. As shown earlier, Aquinas carefully notices that a temptation can arise in our struggle against another one. Moreover, it is possible at least in a theoretical sense that every corruptible thing in this world can tempt us. Nevertheless, it is absurd for us to avoid them all.

Thirdly, as in the case of anticipation, the ability to avoid or to do otherwise is also doubtful here. For it is impossible for us to make any preparation if we do not anticipate where the first movement will arise. It is impractical, if not absurd, to keep the mind highly vigilant at every moment of life. Moreover, it seems that the failure or the impotency of the will facing the agitation of sensuality is a more familiar experience for us. As shown earlier, even a saint like Paul cannot be exempted from it.

Fourthly, in some cases, our duty is not so clear as Aquinas believes. It seems

[71] *ST* I-II 6, 3.

plausible that a captain should keep calm when a storm arrives, no matter how horrible it is. However, here we are concerned with the movement of sensuality to illicit objects in general. In what sense are we obliged to fight against this inseparable part of human nature?[72]

Finally, since Aquinas believes that in theory, every single occasion of first movement to sin can be avoided, the cause of the failure of the will requires further interpretation. It could not be a previous act of the will; otherwise it would be ascribed to the first group (1) of culpable movements of sensuality. Then, it can only be due to some negligence of the will at some time between t and t' that he failed. However, negligence does not absolve us of moral responsibility as Aquinas argues here. We need to explain why an error due to negligent omission is imputable to a person that did not purposefully bring out this error. It is natural to raise the question: what is the cause of this negligence that is culpable?

If it is due to one's invincible ignorance of the situation, one cannot be called negligent because it is simply impossible for him to do otherwise at all. [73]However, if it is due to a negligent ignorance, the same question arises ad infinitum. As Michael Barnwell convincingly shows in his detailed study of the problem of negligent omission, "Aquinas would need to solve this problem by stating that the ultimate cause of every sin of negligent omission must be a sin of non-negligent omission that is unquestionably voluntary."[74] By "unquestionably voluntary", Barnwell means an act, state or event directly caused by the will. This refers back to the position of (1) again. However, this would present a problem in the case of sensuality. As mentioned earlier, even Saint Paul failed to avoid certain movements of sensuality. It seems to follow that the Apostle failed simply because at a certain moment before their arousal, he deliberately consents that it is appropriate to let such temptations occur. If that's the case, it seems absurd or even pretentious when the Saint claimed, "As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin

[72] Certainly, Aquinas identifies the source of the first movement as *fomes peccati*, an effect of the sin committed by Adam rather than an essential part of human nature created by God. See e.g. *ST* I-II 82, 3; I-II 85, 1 ad 4. However, from a philosophical point of view, this does not change the fact that this involuntary movement constitutes an essential part of emotional life in this world.

[73] *ST* I-II, 76, 3.

[74] Barnwell, Michael *The Problem of Negligent Omissions. Medieval Action Theories to the Rescue*, Leiden: Brill, 2010, 130.

living in me. (Rom 7: 17)" [75]

The final point touches on the central difficulty of a moral account of the first movement to sin: one needs to explain why this involuntary commotion is a fault that is imputable to us as well as how it is distinguished from a mortal sin that is incompatible with virtue.

Augustine's analogy of Serpent-Eve-Adam in *On the Trinity* recognizes an implicit consent$_1$ of the will that occurs inevitably at the initial stage of our passion. This seemingly paradoxical involuntary act of the will exposes the innate weakness of the will in this world. In Augustine's eyes, the will is not a separate faculty of the mind that possesses absolute control over other faculties. It is rather a power that renders our spontaneous reactions possible, in rational decisions as well as in uncontrollable movements of sensuality. In this sense, all passions are nothing but acts of the will.[76] Accordingly, the passivity of emotion in its initial phase is not a failure of the control of the will, but rather a spontaneous movement of the will that reveals an essential part of the self that cannot be changed by will. However, his condensed and ambiguous account only offers a vague clue to a convincing account of the moral responsibility for involuntary activity of the mind.

In contrast, Aquinas offers a sophisticated account of the culpability of the first movement in terms of preventive control. This comes with a misreading of the Augustinian Serpent-Eve-Adam analogy. The conflation of the cognitive and conative dimensions of the first movement leads Aquinas to deny any sort of consent in the initial stage of passion. This is in accordance with his sharp distinction between reason and sensuality. However, it also creates an extremely difficult (if not impossible) mission to account for our responsibility for thinking of illicit objects. Instead of acknowledging the inherent weakness of the will in this life as Augustine suggests by his mysterious concept of initial consent$_1$, Aquinas appeals to the negligence of the will to account for the culpability of the first movement to sin. Besides its impracticability, his emphasis on control renders our failure to prevent the happening of a certain sort of first movement more like a mortal sin that should be condemned. For the inactivity or negligence of the faculty of the will in this occasion can be traced back to a previous positive decision of the

[75] Cf. Kretzmann, "Aquinas on Romans 7", 172-3.
[76] DCD XIV, 6.

will for which we should be held fully responsible. In Aquinas's effort to defend the culpability of first movement in terms of preventive control, he simply explains away the involuntary and passive characteristic of emotions. [77]

[77] The second section of this article is based upon the material of my doctoral dissertation supervised by Professor Carlos Steel (*Voluntas et Libertas: A Philosophical Account of Augustine's Conception of the Will in the Domain of Moral Psychology,* Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 2007, published in Chinese by Peking University Press, 2010.) I am deeply indebted to him for all his help for years. I benefited a lot from comments on the earlier draft by Nicholas Lombardo, Kenneth Boyle, Han-Luen Kanzer Komline, Richard Kim and Samuel Kimbriel. In particular, I am greatly indebted to the critical comments from Nicholas and Kenny, which help me clarify my position in a better way. This research is generously funded by the John Templeton Foundation for the Program "Values & Virtues".

Aquinas on Freedom and Alternative Possibilities

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Abstract: This paper argues for a libertarian interpretation of Aquinas's account of free decision (*liberum arbitrium*). Aquinas's argument against cognitive determinism is not straightforward, but it can be reconstructed analogously to his argument against theological determinism (that is, a determinism imposed by divine foreknowledge or by God's efficacious will). The non-determining causality of reason with respect to the will is manifest in light of the defeasibility of practical reasoning and because the reasons for actions are not contrastive reasons. The practical intellect and the will are inseparable and in a sense in- clude each other. According to the proposed interpretation, Aquinas is neither an intellectualist nor a voluntarist.

In the current debate about the possibility and the existence of free will, philosophers usually focus on its compatibility or incompatibility with causal determinism. It is common to distinguish a *sourcehood* condition (free agents have to be the source of their action) and a *leeway* condition (they have to have the ability to do otherwise). The question of their compatibility with causal determinism can be asked about both. Historically, the main problem was the determination of the act of choice by the judgment of the intellect. It divided medieval thinkers into two camps: intellectualists and voluntarists.[1] Intellectualists insist that the will always follows the agent's intellectual consideration of what is choiceworthy. Voluntarists insist that if the will is to be free, it has to be to a certain extent independent from the intellect, either by contributing to shaping the intellect's verdict, or by being free not to adhere to it.

[***Acknowledgements ***]

Unless otherwise noted, Aquinas's works are cited according to the "Leonine Edition": *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Doctoris Angelici Opera Omnia Iussu Edita Leonis XIII P. M.* (Rome: Commissio Leonina, 1882ff.). Passages from longer text units are cited with line numbers referring to the Leonine text.

[1] We define "intellectualism" and "voluntarism" as mutually exclusive terms. Theories that trace the source of the choice of a specific action to the intellect are "intellectualist," while those that trace the source of choices to the will are "voluntarist."

The opposition between intellectualists and voluntarists is highly relevant to contemporary disputes about free will and determinism. Reasons can be considered as causes, and intellectual determination as a sort of causal determination. If one's judgment determines one's will, it might be argued that free will is threatened. Conversely, the suggestion that the will could diverge from the intellect's judgment about what to do faces what is commonly called the "luck objection": acts of the will would then be irrational, and if there is no reason why the will chooses this rather than that, the acts would not be in the agent's control any more than if they were at random.

Thomas Aquinas's account of freedom is significant on two counts: first, because elements of the opposite contemporary positions (compatibilism and incompatibilism) as well as of the older positions (intellectualism and voluntarism) are simultaneously present in his works; second—if our interpretation is correct—because this account draws attention to a feature of practical reasoning that is highly relevant for the debate, namely its defeasibility or non-monotonicity. Both in his own time and among contemporary commentators, Aquinas has been considered to be an intellectualist, and most interpreters take this to imply that his account is determinist. If he is determinist, he must be a determinist of the compatibilist sort, since he upholds freedom. There is abundant evidence, however, that he sees himself as a libertarian, which means that if he were compatibilist, he would be so unwittingly. Still, there is no widely accepted interpretation, since it is disputed whether Aquinas is an intellectualist, and if so, whether his intellectualism entails determinism. We aim to address these issues by defending a libertarian interpretation that avoids the opposition between intellectualism and voluntarism and relies upon Aquinas's insight into the working of practical reasoning.

First, we will put forward Aquinas's conditions for *liberum arbitrium,* that is, the freedom to choose among alternate possibilities. Then we will consider three threats to *liberum arbitrium*. Two are external threats, which are explicitly dismissed by Aquinas; one is the internal threat of necessitation by reasons, which Aquinas does not discuss ex professo, leaving room for different interpretations. Next we will explore the different interpretations of contemporary commentators, under these two disjunctions: (1) voluntarism-intellectualism and (2) compatibilism-libertarianism. Lastly, we will propose our solution: that Aquinas's hylomorphic conception of choice, according to

which the input of intellect and will concerning choice are related as form to matter, makes the voluntarism-intellectualism disjunction obsolete. This allows us to reconsider the threat of necessitation by reasons, and to argue for Aquinas's libertarianism on the basis of the defeasibility of practical reasoning.

1. Preliminaries: Conditions for Liberum Arbitrium

In order to set the stage for our discussion of Aquinas's account of freedom and alternate possibilities, we will first clarify the meaning of "*liberum arbitrium*" and its defining conditions in Aquinas; then we will present different ways to interpret these conditions; then we will discuss an interpretation that, like ours, considers him to be a libertarian but, unlike ours, denies that this involves admitting alternate possibilities; and finally we will discuss the claim that Aquinas's modal theory excludes him at the outset from being a libertarian.

1.1. Aquinas's Basic Account of Liberum Arbitrium

Textual evidence abundantly shows that Aquinas defines *liberum arbitrium* as a power of the will whose proper act is choice, and that he holds the following three propositions to be true of it:

(LA1) Acts proceeding from *liberum arbitrium* originate in the agent[2] [sourcehood condition]

(LA2) Acts proceeding from *liberum arbitrium* are avoidable by the agent [leeway condition]

(LA3) *Liberum arbitrium* is a necessary condition for moral responsibility, or at least for blameworthiness[3]

The first two are defining and necessary conditions of *liberum arbitrium*, the third is a

[2] We understand by "acts proceeding from *liberum arbitrium*" those acts that are properly acts of *liberum arbitrium* (choices) as well as the acts derived from them (chosen actions).

[3] Aquinas adopts these three conditions for *liberum arbitrium* in, for example, *Summa theologiae* (= ST) 1a.83 and *Quaestiones disputatae de malo* (= QDM) 6, lines 238–75.

truth about *liberum arbitrium* which implies the Principle of Alternate Possibilities.[4]

So characterized, the concept of *liberum arbitrium* is a good candidate for what is in question in contemporary debates on the problem of free will. But the question of how to translate *liberum arbitrium* is highly controversial. "Free will" is not a good translation of *liberum arbitrium*, because it is rather the translation of the Latin "*libera voluntas*," which for Aquinas differs from *liberum arbitrium*.[5] "Free choice" and "free decision" have been proposed, but they indicate an act, that is, an occurrent event, rather than a capacity. Also, *arbitrium* is better rendered as "judgment." "Free judgment" would come closer to the true sense, though it still means an occurrent event. Furthermore, it might be misleading without a prior explanation. The question of how to translate "*liberum arbitrium*" is further complicated by a deeper doctrinal issue. "Source-libertarians" — and more generally "source-incompatibilists"—hold that only LA1 is a condition for free will, and that LA2 (alternate possibilities) is not. Eleonore Stump, a proponent of source-libertarianism, has advocated that Aquinas is a source-libertarian, but not a leeway-libertarian or incompatibilist.[6] The point under debate, then, is Aquinas's conception of alternative possibilities, and whether he considers them to be necessary for moral responsibility. To avoid begging the question, we will continue to use the term *liberum arbitrium* rather than rendering it by a term that suggests a particular view about freedom.

How does Aquinas's notion of *liberum arbitrium* relate to the will and to voluntariness? In his account, not all acts of the will proceed from acts of *liberum arbitrium*. Rather, choices (*electiones*), the acts of *liberum arbitrium*, constitute a subset of acts of the will, which include mere wishes, intentions, and enjoyments of the achieved good. Also, acts of the will constitute a subset of what is voluntary. Although Aquinas closely connects voluntariness with the will, he holds that not all that is voluntary proceeds from *acts of the will*—acts of the will constitute a subset of what is voluntary. The criterion for voluntariness is that the

[4] As defined by Harry Frankfurt in his "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility," *Journal of Philosophy* 66 (1969): 829–39. The PAP is nothing more than the principle according to which LA2 is a necessary condition for moral responsibility. The subsequent literature often refers to alternate possibilities as providing "leeway" for action. One who refuses the PAP can then be an adherent either to compatibilism (the position that free will and / or moral responsibility are compatible with determinism) or merely to "source-incompatibilism" (which holds that determinism's denial of sourcehood is incompatible with moral responsibility, but that no leeway is required). For Aquinas's view, see, e.g., *Quaestiones disputatae de malo* (= QDM) 6, lines 238–60, where he rebuts a view that the human will has sourcehood without leeway, and where he argues that without leeway there is no basis for moral responsibility.

[5] See below, note 9. Aquinas inherited this notion from a long tradition going back to Augustine and further. He gave the term the specific meaning of the power of the will to choose between alternatives; see ST 1a.19.10 and 1a.83.

[6] We will discuss her position in section 1.3 below.

act originates from within the agent in accordance with some kind of perception that gives rise to the act. Accordingly, also animal behavior and human pre-rational acts (such as the actions of infants) are voluntary, although they do not proceed from the rational will, which is an intellectual or rational appetite (*appeti- tus rationalis*). Non-deliberate actions count as voluntary, for the will can bring them under its control. Negligent omissions are voluntary in that they can be ascribed to the agent, even though they do not proceed from an act of the will, but are rather due to the failure to act (and to will to act) when one should act, as Aquinas exemplifies with the steersman who causes shipwreck by ceasing to steer the ship.[7]

These distinctions are important for our purpose, because the leeway condition (LA2) applies only to acts of *liberum arbitrium* (i.e., choices), whereas the sourcehood condition (LA1) applies to all acts proceeding from the will. According to Aquinas, the general orientation of the will is fixed to the good in general. Therefore something good under every point of view, as long as it is understood to be such, is loved neces- sarily. Thus we cannot fail to desire happiness; the blessed, who have perfect knowledge of God (the perfect good), cannot fail to love Him, nor indeed can God fail to love Himself. While the desire for happiness, as well as the love of God by Himself and by the blessed, lack leeway, these acts satisfy the sourcehood condition (LA1). Following Augustine, Aquinas sometimes characterizes them as free despite their lack of alternate possibilities; he speaks of the freedom of the will from coercion.[8]Freedom in this sense is compatible with necessity, but it must be distinguished from *liberum arbitrium*.[9]

1.2. Compatibilist and Incompatibilist Interpretations of LA1 and LA2

As is well known, there may be either compatibilist or incompatibilist interpretations of LA1 and LA2 and thus of the resulting meaning of LA3. This contemporary distinction

[7] See *ST* 1a2ae.6.1–3 and *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate* (= *QDV*) 24.1. Acts of the will are unique to intellectual natures, namely human beings, angels, and God; see *ST* 1a.19.1 and 1a.59.1.

[8] For the will's necessary desire for happiness and for what is known to be required for it, see *QDM* 6 lines 418–40 and *ST* 1a.82.1–2. Concerning God's necessary and free self-love, see, e.g., *Quaestiones disputatae de potentia* (= *QDP*) 10.2 ad 5, *QDV* 23.4 lines 188–93. With respect to the necessary love of God by the beatified, see, e.g., *QDV* 22.6 and 24.8.—Notice that there is also liberum arbitrium in God; see, e.g., *ST* 1a.19.10, and *QDV* 23.4. Although He cannot choose between good and evil, He can choose between two finite goods. For example, He chooses which world to actualize by creating this universe.

[9] See *QDV* 24.1 ad 20, where Aquinas opposes *libera voluntas* to *liberum iudicium* (i.e., *liberum arbitrium*).Grace poses a particular problem which we do not intend to treat in this paper.

between the two interpretations refers to the compatibility of free actions with *causal determinism*. "Causal determinism" should be understood as the idea that all events, including actions and choices, are necessitated by the conjunction of some past state of the world and the laws of nature.[10] Aquinas is certainly not a determinist in this sense, since he does not believe that *natural causality* (as opposed to divine causation) determines everything that happens. Nature leaves room for randomness, fortune, and hence causal contingency.[11] But this is not enough for denying that he is a compatibilist (or that he allows for compatibilism) of some sort. Though for Aquinas the hypothesis of causal determinism is false, (a) it might be compatible with *liberum arbitrium*, and (b) there might be kinds of determination other than by way of natural causes.

A compatibilist interpretation of LA1 emphasizes that, while LA1 excludes *coercion*, it does not exclude the *causation* of choice by factors independent of the agent.[12] For compatibilism the act, in order to qualify as a choice, has to be elicited willingly and according to the agent's beliefs (the causal route to choice passes through the agent's mind in a non-deviant way). But just as the agent's desires and beliefs are generally caused by factors that are not in the agent's control, so the same might be true of the act of choice. In that case, the agent would be the source of his or her action, and the action could be called spontaneous, but he or she would not be the *ultimate* source, and the spontaneity would not be *absolute*.

And of course the compatibilist interpretation of LA2 would insist that not all kinds of necessity are incompatible with freedom of choice: avoidability, or more generally speaking, the ability to do or choose otherwise, could be interpreted as a case of *conditional* necessity. Thus saying that the agent could have chosen otherwise is merely to say this: had the agent had other desires, beliefs, or reasons, he or she would have chosen otherwise.

One can be fully compatibilist or fully incompatibilist concerning *liberum*

[10] In Aquinas's conception of nature, efficient causes are things endowed with causal powers rather than events subsumed under some kind of laws. Notice that for determinism, it is irrelevant whether it results from laws or from necessitating causes. But external causation threatens the sourcehood condition (LA1), while intrinsic necessitation (determination) threatens the leeway condition (LA2).

[11] This point follows from what Aquinas says about randomness and contingency; see, e.g., *ST* 1a.116.1. It may well be that Aquinas does not understand the terms as we do today. (We owe this remark to [***]). We do not consider the differences between his and the contemporary use of these terms to be decisive, but we cannot argue for this here.

[12] Of course, determining external factors that would themselves depend on the agent's activity would give the agent an indirect responsibility for the actions and / or choices determined by such factors. We will be concerned hereafter only with cases of direct responsibility.

arbitrium, thinking that LA1 and LA2 are jointly either compatible or incompatible with determinism. But we also mentioned the intermediary position of source-incompatibilism and that Stump defended it as the correct interpretation of Aquinas.[13] Since we have some disagreement with her view, here is a good place to state it.

1.3. Aquinas and Source-Libertarinanism

According to Eleonore Stump, although LA1 and LA2 are both necessary conditions for choice (*electio*) and thus for *liberum arbitrium*, LA2 is not a condition for moral responsibility, and hence LA3 is false. She bases her interpretation on speculative and textual grounds. She takes Aquinas to adhere to Harry Frankfurt's dismissal of the Principle of Alternative Possibilities (PAP), based on the plausibility of certain scenarios in which an agent could not have done otherwise but is rightly held morally responsible. The attribution of this view to Aquinas is speculative in the sense that it is based on what Aquinas would have said, given what he says on related matters. It is important to bear in mind that Stump's acceptance of Frankfurt's denial of the PAP does not imply an adhesion to compatibilism. In fact, she considers LA1 to be a condition for moral responsibility, and she understands LA1 as incompatible with causal determinism, requiring that the action have its ultimate source in the faculties of the agent (intellect and will) in order to be his or her action. She is more concerned about the *ownership* of the action than with its *contingency*. In contrast, we are mainly interested in the contingency or leeway characteristic of *liberum arbitrium*, and it seems to us that Aquinas never varies in stating that *liberum arbitrium* is a condition for moral responsibility, that is, LA3.

Stump's textual contention is twofold. First, she argues that Aquinas does not hold that alternative possibilities are a necessary condition for freedom. She refers to the above mentioned cases of willing without alternative possibilities, which Aquinas nonetheless calls free: the will of the good as such, of the supreme good when cognized as such by the beatified, or by God Himself. In these cases there is no room for contingency; the willing

[13] For the general statement of source-incompatibilism, see Eleonore Stump, "Libertarian Freedom and the Principle of Alternative Possibilities," in *Faith, Freedom and Rationality*, ed. Daniel Howard-Snyder and Jeff Jordan (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1996), 73–88; David Hunt, "Moral Responsibility and Unavoidable Action," *Philosophical Studies* 97 (2000): 195–227; and recently David Widerker, "Libertarianism and the Philosophical Significance of Frankfurt scenarios," *The Journal of Philosophy* 103 (2006): 153–87. Stump defends her interpretation of Aquinas as source-incompatibilist in her *Aquinas*, 304–6.

is necessary, and the necessity is based on natural inclination. She also refers to those cases in which there is only one suitable means to the end. In such cases, as she says, "election collapses into consent," because rather than choosing among several means that are each consented to because they are judged suitable, only a single one is judged suitable, consented to, and chosen.[14] These are cases of what Aquinas calls the "necessity of the end." Both kinds of necessity (of natural inclination, and of the end) are compatible with freedom, whereas necessity of coercion is not (*ST* 1a.82.1).

Second, Stump argues that alternate possibilities are not required for moral responsibility. This argument is based upon certain passages where Aquinas seems to admit that some sins are committed without being avoidable. If they are sins, moral responsibility is implied. If they are unavoidable, alternate possibilities are excluded. Aquinas says in fact that in some circumstances one may sin under the influence of sudden passion, without being able to submit the sudden desire to the control of reason.

> A sin or its avoidance can exceed the power of *liberum arbitrium* . . . inasmuch as a particular sin occurs suddenly and more or less by surprise, thus escaping the choice of *liberum arbitrium*, even though by directing its attention or efforts to it, *liberum arbitrium* could commit the sin or avoid it.[15] (*QDV* 24.12)

Stump takes Aquinas to hold that in these cases, sin does not imply the ability to do otherwise; and she concludes that there can be moral responsibility without *liberum arbitrium*, which, though it might be a reliable sign of responsibility, is not a necessary condition for it.

Together with the previous remarks about freedom not always requiring the ability to do otherwise, this consideration about the sinfulness of unavoidable actions seems to indicate that Aquinas rejects alternative possibilities not only as a condition for freedom of the will, but also for moral responsibility—in other words, that he rejects the PAP as here defined:

> (PAP) A person has free will with regard to (or is morally responsible for) an action A only if he could have done otherwise

This definition of PAP is twofold; we can split it into a PAP for freedom (PAP_F) and

[14] Stump, *Aquinas*, 297; cf. ST 1a2ae.15.3 ad 3.
[15] All translations from *QDV* are by Robert W. Schmidt (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1954). Most translations used in this paper are emended.

a PAP for moral responsibility (PAP_{MR}). We will not argue here in favor of PAP_F[16], though Aquinas would agree that LA1 is sufficient for the ownership of the action (Stump's initial point). But we will argue that such a freedom without alternative possibilities (LA1 without LA2) is not sufficient for moral responsibility (LA3, PAP_{MR}), and that the texts on sin we quoted can be given an interpretation that coheres with LA3.

Let us note first that these texts do not express a full rejection of the PAP_{MR}, since Aquinas says that the sinner could have avoided sin if he had been careful. This is a conditional analysis, indicating a conditional alternative for each blameworthy action. But it is true that he also says in the case under consideration that sin exceeds the power of *liberum arbitrium*, and this seems to be an explicit rejection of LA3 (and an indication that Aquinas understands both LA3 and LA2 in an compatibilist way). But this interpretation fits badly with Aquinas's (Augustinian) affirmation according to which

> . . . it is enough, for the conditions of a voluntary sin, that an individual be able to avoid each single one. (*ST* 1a2ae.74.3 ad 2)

We therefore favor another explanation. The texts quoted by Stump belong to a larger consideration concerning the question: Is sin necessary? Aquinas's constant position is that it is inevitable over a certain stretch of time to commit *some* sin, because one cannot constantly pay enough attention to avoid sinning, but that each particular sin is avoidable, because with respect to a given case at hand, one can make the effort to pay sufficient attention.[17] And this does not go against LA3, since it does not mean that any particular sin (sin-token) is unavoidable, but only that a person cannot for long avoid committing some sin. Just after the text quoted above, Aquinas goes on to say:

> In the state of corrupt nature it is accordingly not within the power of *liberum arbitrium* to avoid all sins of this sort, because they escape its act, although it can prevent any particular one of those movements if it makes the effort against it. But it is not possible for man continuously to make the contrary effort to avoid movements of this kind on account of the various occupations of the human mind and the rest required for it. (*QDV* 24.12)

Accordingly, what Aquinas expresses is a general limit to the power of *liberum arbitrium*, rather than the idea that *liberum arbitrium* is exceeded in the individual case.

[16] See above, note 8.

[17] More precisely: under the condition of original sin (after the Fall and without grace), one cannot avoid mortal sin for a long time, and even with the help of grace, one cannot avoid venial sin, see *QDV*24.12–13 and *ST* 1a2ae.109.8. The difference between mortal and venial sin consists essentially in the fact that mortal sin destroys charity, whereas venial sin does not. See *QDM* 7.1, lines 277–316; *ST* 1a2ae.72.5.

The reason he gives (namely that inattention was unavoidable) should be understood as a feature of the human condition inevitably leading to sin eventually. Another way to put it is to say that the sin committed under sudden passion was unavoidable at the moment the passion occurred, for at that moment deliberation had become impossible. But it can be traced back to a time where the agent could have avoided it, in particular by avoiding the situation where he or she was subject to such a sudden passion. In that case one can say that some sins are not directly acts of *liberum arbitrium*.[18] Yet they all proceed from *liberum arbitrium*, which remains a necessary condition for moral responsibility. And thus LA3 is vindicated.

1.4. Leeway Incompatibilism and Synchronic Alternatives

To support our interpretation of Aquinas as a leeway-incompatibilist, we have to address a further concern. We have to make it plausible that Aquinas thought that the future is truly open and that it is possible for an agent to add to the actual past and present in different ways and not only in one way. For this, we have briefly to address an objection according to which Aquinas's modal theory would not have allowed him to hold that the future is open and in some significant sense up to the agent, which would entail that Aquinas's theory of *liberum arbitrium* would be, at best, leeway-compatibilist. It has been argued that alternative future events are up to us only if we have alternate possibilities in the present, for it is in the present that we actually elicit the act of choice that entails a future event. Furthermore, it has been argued that having alternate possibilities in the present means that while one actually chooses A, one retains the power to choose non-A ("synchronic contingency"). According to the theory of synchronic contingency, this does not mean, however, that one could make it so that two mutually exclusive choices or events are simultaneously actualized; rather, at the moment that one is actual, the alternative choice or event remains possible—not only logically possible (that is, non-contradictory), but also really possible (that is, accessible to the agent). Accordingly, the proponents of this view argue that not only the future, but also the present is contingent. This theory has been

[18] This might be the reason why Aquinas spoke about "voluntary sins" (see the quotation of *ST* 1a2ae.74.3 ad 2, above), leaving room for involuntary sins, which are consequent upon voluntary choices. The classical example, which goes back to Aristotle, is that of sins committed in the state of drunkenness. A drunk person might sin without having alternatives due to diminished rational capacity, but he or she could have avoided it by not getting drunk; see, e.g., *Summa contra Gentiles* (= *SCG*) 3.160; *QDM* 3.10, lines 79–83.

famously developed by Duns Scotus, one generation after Aquinas.[19] Thomas Williams argues that libertarianism requires synchronic contingency; and, since Aquinas does not embrace a theory of synchronic contingency, Williams claims that he cannot be considered a Libertarian.[20]

It would be too much to address in any detail the merits and the problems of the theory of synchronic contingency, its bearing upon the compatibilism/ incompatibilism-distinction, and the question of whether Aquinas would subscribe to a similar view. While Aquinas does not think that the present is contingent, it is clear that he considers the future to be open and accessible to us, and he even accepts that a power can simultaneously be concerned with two alternative states of affairs:

> . . . although nothing has the power to have two opposite things in existence at the same time, yet nothing prevents a thing from being at the same time capable of two opposites disjunctively, equally and in the same way. For example, I have the power to sit or to stand tomorrow at sunup; not that both might take place at the same time but I am equally capable either of standing without sitting, or of sitting without standing.[21] (*Exposition of Aristotle's Treatise on the Heavens* 1.26)

In conclusion, we do not think that Aquinas's modal theory precludes that he can be considered a libertarian.

Although this does not by itself prove that he is a libertarian, we think that it is reasonable to attribute to him an incompatibilist account of LA1 and LA2, given the manner in which he discusses various threats to *liberum arbitrium*. When Aquinas responds to objections that argue in favor of necessitation of choices, he does not admit that choices are done by necessity while being nevertheless free and imputable. Rather, he refutes the force of the objection and argues for the non-necessity of free choices.

2. *Threats to* liberum arbitrium

To corroborate our claim that Aquinas consistently espouses an incompatibilist view of

[19] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 1.38.2 and 1.39, *Opera omnia* vol. 6 (Vatican City: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis,1963), 417–25.
[20] Thomas Williams, "The Libertarian Foundations of Scotus's Moral Philosophy," *The Thomist* 62 (1998): 193–215, at 208–9.
[21] Translation by Fabian R. Larcher and Pierre H. Conway 2 vols., Columbus, Ohio: College of St. Mary of the Springs, 1963–1964. We thank [***] for drawing our attention to this text. For an illuminating discussion of the senses in which Aquinas admits of synchronic alternatives, see Alejandro Llano, "Aquinas and the Principle of Plenitude," in *Thomas Aquinas and His Legacy*, ed. David M. Gallagher (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1994), 131–48.

liberum arbitrium, we will now examine his arguments against different threats to the non-determination of acts proceeding from *liberum arbitrium*. In addition, what interests us is the formal structure of these arguments, which is in fact the same in each case. In our reconstruction of Aquinas's rejection of intellectual determinism, we will employ the same formal structure and argue from premises to which Aquinas is committed.

The general form of the necessitation objection resembles the so-called "consequence argument."[22] This argument relies upon a principle of transfer of necessity (PTN):

(PTN) If A is necessary (not up to the agent), and A entails B, then B is necessary (not up to the agent)

Then the argument goes like this[23]:

(C1) It is not up to X at t_1 that there are certain laws L, such that if some circumstances C are realized, then the choice c occurs at t_2 [premise of determinism]

(C2) It is not up to X at t_1 that some circumstances C are realized [factual premise]

(C3) ∴ It is not up to X at t_1 that c occur at t_2 [(C1), (C2) and (PTN)]

In the contemporary version of the argument, which considers *causal determinism*, C and L are understood as follows: the circumstances C are any past state of the world and the laws L are the laws of nature; the truth of C1 is that of causal determinism, and the truth of C2 derives from the fixity of the past.

In the objections discussed by Aquinas, C and L receive several interpretations, while the formal structure of the argument remains the same. That Aquinas is fully aware of this argumentative structure is particularly manifest in his various treatments of divine foreknowledge, which we will discuss first. After that we will present his analogous treatment of God's efficacious will, and finally we will argue that his discussion of the internal threat by rational determination follows the same structure.

2.1. Theological Threat to LA2: Divine Foreknowledge

[22] As is well known, Peter van Inwagen has given the canonical version of this argument in his *An Essay on Free Will* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), introduction and chapter 3. He was anticipated by Carl Ginet, "Might We Have No Choice?" in *Freedom and Determinism*, ed. Keith Lehrer (New York: Random House, 1966), 87–104, and David Wiggins, "Toward a Reasonable Libertarianism," in *Essays on Freedom of Action*, ed. Ted Honderich, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), 31–62. We do not claim that Aquinas's version is similarly well crafted, but the basic idea is certainly there.

[23] See note 25 below, where Aquinas employs this argumentative structure concerning the threat coming from divine foreknowledge.

In discussing divine foreknowledge, Aquinas explicitly invokes the principle of transfer of necessity.[24] Then the objection goes that this consequence is necessary: "if God believed p, then p," because of divine essential infallibility, which constitutes the lawlike element (L) in the argument. The antecedent, "God believed p," constitutes the relevant circumstances (C) that are not up to the agent because of the (accidental) necessity or fixity of the past (or, as Aquinas holds, because of the necessity of atemporal eternity). Thus the consequent, which might describe a future choice, is also necessary.[25]

(F1) It is not up to X at t_1 that if God believed at t_0 / believes eternally that X would do A at t_2, X will do A at t_2 [divine essential infallibility]

(F2) It is not up to X at t_1 that God believed at t_0 / believes eternally that X would do A at t_2 [factual premise and fixity of the past]

(F3) ∴ It is not up to X at t_1 that X do A at t_2 [(F1), (F2), (PTN)]

Since God's foreknowledge is universal (it is omniscience and therefore omniforeknowledge), all future choices are necessitated. Of course, this threat bears only on LA2, while LA1 remains unaffected. But Aquinas's way out is not source-incompatibilism, that is, to stick merely to LA1 while giving up LA2. He refuses the conclusion (F3); in other words, he refuses the idea that the choice is necessitated, and he argues that the argument is unsound because of some fault in the premises. He rejects (F1) and (F2) as such and adopts only qualified versions of them. In fact, the known event, which is future and contingent in itself (*in se*), is present and necessary as known by God's eternal knowledge.[26] This is coherent with the affirmation that the event is future and contingent *in se*. The specifics of the solution and its evaluation need not retain our attention. Suffice it to say that Aquinas upholds divine foreknowledge and *liberum arbitrium* without giving a compatibilist interpretation of the condition LA2. Instead, he

[24] Aquinas agrees that the truth of the antecedent of a *necessary consequence* (entailment) does not lead to the *necessity of the consequent*, but only to its truth. But he recalls that, if the antecedent is itself necessary, then the consequent would indeed be necessary.

[25] The argument is found in *QDV* 2.12 arg. 7; *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum* (= *In Sent*.) 1.38.1.5 arg. 4,ed. Pierre Mandonnet, vol. 1 (Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1929), 907–8; *ST* 1a.14.13 arg. 2.

[26] Aquinas's qualified version would be as follows: "God believed at t_0/ believes eternally that X would do A at t_2, *insofar as it is present to God's knowledge*." Replacing this formulation in F1 and F2 would not entail the (slightly revised) F3 "it is not up to X that X do A at t_2 *in se*," but only a very different conclusion F3' "it is not up to X that X do A at t_2 *insofar as it is present to God's knowledge*," which is true, but compatible with the denial of F3. Aquinas is then using a "Principle of epistemic consequences" which he constructs as following from the "Principle of the modes of knowing" that he borrows from Boethius. See John Marenbon, *Le temps, l'éternité et la prescience de Boèce à Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: Vrin, 2005).

dismisses the objection of necessitation.

2.2. Theological Threat to LA1 (and LA2): God's Efficacious Will

Divine foreknowledge is not the only threat, nor even the only theological one. Aquinas is a defender of God's universal and omnipotent will, which entails that everything that happens is willed by God, and that everything that God wills happens necessarily. It not only happens necessarily because of the necessity of the consequence *(necessitas consequentiae*) but also because of the necessity of the consequent (*necessitas consequentis*), since, as with God's knowledge, the antecedent (God wills that p) is necessary.[27]

(W1) It is not up to X at t_1 that if God willed at t_0 / wills eternally that X would do A at t_2, X will do A at t_2 [God's infallible will]

(W2) It is not up to X at t_1 that God willed at t_0 / wills eternally that X would do A at t_2 [factual premise and fixity of the past]

(W3) ∴ It is not up to X at t_1 that X do A at t_2 [(W1), (W2), (PTN)]

This time, not only LA2 is threatened, but LA1 as well, since God as the initiating cause would be the real source of the action. But once again, Aquinas does not adapt LA1 and LA2 to a compatibilist reading. Again, he instead dismisses the conclusion by dis- missing the argument. Here, he denies the second premise: the divine will does not always impose necessity on the willed object. God wills not only the things that occur, but the way they occur: some occurrences He wants to happen necessarily, others to happen contingently (thus LA2 is safe). According to Aquinas, God's unique way of causing does not undermine the causality of secondary causes (hence LA1 is safe). Be- cause God's concurrence with the causality of the will does not remove the will's own causality, moral responsibility is not annulled:

> If the will were so moved by another as in no way to be moved from within itself, the act of the will would not be imputed for reward or blame. But since its being moved by another [scil. by God]

27

> does not prevent its being moved from within itself, as we have stated, it does not thereby forfeit the motive for merit or demerit.[28] (*ST* 1a.105.4 ad 3)

Once again, it is not Aquinas's solution or its critical assessment that should retain our attention here, but only the fact that he considers both God's omnipotent will and the human free will to be defined by LA1 and LA2. In his view, God's will neither necessitates human choices, nor does it deprive us of real sourcehood. The relation between primary (divine) cause and secondary (non-divine) causes is not the relation between two created causes. Were my choice naturally and totally caused by some circumstances that are not up to me, then I would not be the proper source of my choice. But the first cause is involved in everything that occurs, and (apart from miracles) its mode of causing is such that each thing is moved according to its proper condition: it moves necessary causes to produce their effects necessarily, and it moves contingent causes to produce their effects contingently. Hence we must consider exclusively secondary causes in order to determine whether an event was causally *determined* or not.

This answer has to be qualified: it relies on God's creating power, that of a sustaining cause of the universe and of everything it contains ("continuous creation"). The sustaining cause does not deprive created (secondary) causes of their own efficiency, and a distinction between necessary and contingent causes can be maintained, because the First (that is, sustaining) Cause is not on the same level as the created ones. God may well intervene in the world and play the role of an initiating cause; thus He would be the first cause of a series of otherwise natural causes. In that case, God would be the real source of the series. For Aquinas, this actually happens, not only when miracles occur, but also in the natural first move of any created will. God is its prime mover, says Aquinas, and therefore He is the initiating cause of the will's acts.[29]

But this means only that the will is initially set in motion by God, not that every particular act of the will is so caused. Once in motion, having a tendency toward the good in general, the will is able to direct itself toward this or that, and God is then acting only

[28] All English translations of the *ST* are from *The Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger brothers, 1912–1925). For the idea that God moves contingent causes to produce their effect contingently, and for the resulting compatibility of *liberum arbitrium* with God's transcendent primary causality, see also *ST* 1a.19.8, *ST* 1a2ae.10.4, *Expositio libri Peryermeneias* 1.14, lines 437–61, and *QDP* 3.7 ad 13.

[29] *ST* 1a2ae.9.4 and 9.6; *De malo* 6, lines 381–417.

as a sustaining cause. If God were acting as an initiating cause of every act of choice, then created agents would be deprived of ultimate sourcehood.[30]This indicates that Aquinas takes causal determinism (in this case theological determinism) as incompatible with *liberum arbitrium*.

2.3. Internal Threats to LA1 and LA2

The two theological threats we have considered are, so to speak, exterior to the agent.[31] Aquinas also considers internal threats, based on the functioning of the psychological faculties, dispositions, and states. If certain concrete psychological circumstances beyond the individual's control were necessitating the choice, then the choice would once again be neither free nor imputable, and the two conditions LA1 and LA2 would be threatened. The real source would be in the external factors and out of the agent's reach, and the choice would be necessitated by them.

This is certainly what Aquinas says when he considers the threat of necessitation coming from the passions. He acknowledges that the sensory appetite, which is aroused by an external object independently from the agent, might move the will by presenting a certain object under a good aspect *(sub ratione boni*) that apart from the passion of the sensory appetite would not be perceived as good. But he argues that the sensory appetite does not determine the will, since it can always resist the passion and indeed can itself move the sensible appetite, just as it can move the other faculties of the soul. (As Aquinas specifies, the will has a sort of political dominion over the sensory appetite, while it has a despotic dominion over some organs and limbs of the body.)[32] The will is neither necessitated, nor deprived of ultimate sourcehood. Aquinas also agrees that passions may move the agent, although—apart from madness—not in such a way that the influence exercised by the passions would be beyond the agent's control. In general he does not say that passions move the will, but rather that they may bind (or absorb) reason. If the

[30] God is not the initiating cause of every act of choice; nevertheless there is no act of choice that is not traceable to an act of will which God at some point initiated into being willed. But this first act does not necessitate the following ones, but only makes them possible.

[31] Aquinas also mentions the threat coming from the causality of celestial bodies. Aquinas dismisses this threat by arguing that celestial bodies have a direct effect only on the sensory powers, which do not move the will, but merely dispose it in a certain way. See *ST* 1a2ae.9.5 and *QDM* 6, lines 392–406.

[32] *ST* 1a2ae.9.2 c., ad 1, and ad 3. Aquinas takes the political metaphor from Aristotle's *Politics*,1.5.1254b4–6.

binding (or the absorption) is total, as in the case of insane anger or lust, then the will's movement ceases.[33] In fact, because it is a rational appetite, the will presupposes the functioning of reason, and—as we will see—freedom in the will presupposes freedom of judgment.[34] This is a major difference between human beings and other animals, which do in fact act according to their passions and are determined by them.[35] But they are naturally deprived of reason, and so they have no will to begin with.

According to the same formal structure as in the case of the passions, *liberum arbitrium* is under the threat of necessitation by reasons, or by the agent's judgment about which option is best.[36] Aquinas agrees that a sort of necessity could come from the *object* presented to the intellect and judged to be good, that is, desirable, inasmuch as that judgment does not *ultimately* depend on us:

> Some, in their desire to show that the will in choosing is necessarily moved by the desirable, argued in such a way as to destroy the other root of contingency the Philosopher posits here, based on our deliberation. Since the good is the object of the will, they argue, it cannot (as is evident) be diverted so as not to seek that which seems good to it; as also it is not possible to divert reason so that it does not assent to that which seems true to it. So it seems that choice, which follows upon deliberation, always takes place of necessity; thus all things of which we are the principle through deliberation and choice, will take place of necessity.[37] (*Expositio Peryermeneias*, 1.14, lines 462–74)

The argument can be recast along the structure of the consequence argument. The law or necessary conditional (L) at stake now expresses the link between an agent's previous reasons for action, or previous judgment concerning his or her best option, with the actual choice. It has this form: It is not up to X that, if X judges that A is to be done, then X will choose to do A (in other words, the judgment that A is to be done implies the choice of A: $J_A \rightarrow C_A$). The antecedent of this consequence, the judgment made about what to do, is supposed to occur temporally and even causally prior to the choice. Hence once the

[33] *ST* 1a2ae.10.3; cf. *QDM* 6 lines 472–81.
[34] See below, sections 3.2 and 4.3.
[35] See *DV* 24.12 and *ST* 1a2ae.10.3.
[36] One could argue that reasons are causes, and that this is another way of presenting the threat of causal determination. The fact that the threat can be formulated in the same logical way does not mean that it is of the same kind, and so to focus on the formal similarity might beg the question. (We owe this point to [***]). But what is important for our argument is only how Aquinas deals with the transfer of necessity, whatever the kind of necessity.
[37] The English is from Aristotle: *On Interpretation. Commentary by St. Thomas and Cajetan (Peri Hermeneias)*, translated from the Latin with an introduction by Jean T. Oesterle (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1962).

judgment has occurred, one can apply to it the necessity of the past (PNP). Thus one can construct the argument from rational necessitation:

(R1) It is not up to X at t_1 that, if X ultimately judges at t_0 that A is to be done, X will choose at t_2 to do A [intellectualist premise]

(R2) It is not up to X at t1 that X ultimately judges at t0 that A is to be done [fixity of the past]

(R3) It is not up to X at t_1 that X chooses at t_2 to do A [(R1), (R2), PTN]

In short: I cannot choose otherwise because I cannot undo the practical judgment that entails my choice. So we can say that the judgment necessitates the choice, or that the intellect necessitates the will. This is an intellectualist analysis of choice.

We have seen that Aquinas admits that the will can be necessitated by its object, if it is the perfect good perfectly known; but while such necessary acts of desire or love are acts of the will, they are not choices or acts proceeding from *liberum arbitrium*.[38] And with respect to the three kinds of determination considered above—by divine foreknowledge, by the divine efficacious will, and by the agent's own cognition—we have seen that Aquinas understands these to be threats to freedom and argues against the compatibility of *liberum arbitrium* and necessity. This does not make him ipso facto an incompatibilist, for Aquinas could argue for compatibilism on other grounds than determination by reasons. But we have at least a case for considering him *prima facie* as an incompatibilist, and as a libertarian.

Nonetheless, it was argued soon after his death by his adversaries, as well as by contemporary commentators (whether they be sympathetic, neutral, or inimical), that his very analysis implies in fact necessitation of choice. The most common objection to Aquinas is that of intellectual determinism. Many have argued that Aquinas was an intellectualist and hence a determinist of the compatibilist sort. While a professed incompatibilist between *liberum arbitrium* and necessity, Aquinas would in truth be a compatibilist. But this is a much disputed question, to which we now turn.

[38] See note 8 above. Aquinas speaks of "object" and not of "reason." The object is a thing (or an action) *as conceived under the aspect of good*, that is, as an apparent good. When Aquinas asks whether the object necessitates the choice, this comes down to asking whether the judgment that the thing is good, or the conception of the thing under the aspect of goodness, necessitates the choice. Put differently, the question is whether the object necessitates the choice through the judgment.

3. Two Pairs of Rival Interpretations

Aquinas's defense of the contingency of human choices seems to conflict with his claim that each choice is made for a reason. In other words, the leeway condition (the choice that was made could have not been made) is in tension with the intelligibility of the choice as an intentionally chosen human act. If no account can be given of why this specific act was chosen rather than an alternative act, it seems to be a pure chance event that is not imputable to the agent; if, however, an account can be given, laying out the reasons for the choice, it seems that the choice followed of necessity from the reasoning that led to it. Interpreters who emphasize the role of reason in Aquinas's account of *liberum arbitrium*, that is, who see him as an intellectualist, have a tendency to view him as a compatibilist, while those interpreters who view him as a libertarian tend to stress the role of the will in his account and consider him at bottom a voluntarist. Yet as recent interpretations have shown, an intellectualist interpretation does not have to be compatibilist, and conversely even stressing the role of the will does not inevitably result in a libertarian interpretation.[39] We will first discuss the intellectualism / voluntarism alternative and argue for the plausibility of the intellectualist premise R1: "It is not up to X at t_1 that, if X judged at t_0 that A is to be done, X will choose at t_2 to do A." Then we will discuss the compatibilist / libertarian alternative, which turns on whether one accepts R2: "It is not up to X at t_1 that X judged at t_0 that A is to be done."

3.1. Voluntarism vs. Intellectualism

Aquinas frequently presents a sequential model of the relationship between intellect and will. For example, the choice of the will follows upon the judgment of reason; I choose what I have judged to be choiceworthy here and now.[40] He also presents the acts of the intellect as posterior to the will: for example, I deliberate only if I want to deliberate (*QDM* 6 lines 369–77).

[39] See below for discussion of this matter.

[40] *ST* 1a2ae.13.3: ". . . choice results from the verdict [*sententia*] or judgment [*iudicium*] which is, as it were, the conclusion of a practical syllogism. Hence that which functions as the conclusion of a practical syllogism constitutes the domain of choice."

Since in one sense the intellect moves the will, but in another sense the will moves the intellect, the question arises which one of the two, intellect or will, is in the last analysis responsible for making this rather than that choice. *Intellectualism* means to trace the root of the resulting choice to the intellect, while *voluntarism* means to trace it to the will.

We begin with considerations in favor of a voluntarist reading of Aquinas. Ironically, the same texts that are adduced in favor of such an interpretation can also receive an intellectualist interpretation. [41]

(1) At first glance, one might think that Aquinas adopts a voluntarist view of *liberum arbitrium,* because he presents the will as a self-mover that controls its own exercise as well as that of the intellect. Although the will does not cause the content of thoughts (just as the opening of the eyes is not the cause of what is seen), it is up to the will whether the intellect thinks or not and whether it thinks of this or of that (as it is up to the will to open or close the eyes, and to turn them toward this or that). [42] Yet this does not mean that Aquinas advocates voluntarism any more than intellectualism. This control of the intellect by the will may well be motivated by an anterior judgment of the intellect concerning the goodness of thinking or of not thinking, and of thinking of this or of that.

(2) More promising for a voluntarist reading is Aquinas's assertion that the will is free not only with regard to the exercise of its act (willing something or not), but also with regard to the specification of the act (willing this or that). The only thing that moves the will of necessity is an object which is good from every point of view (that is, happiness) or something which is understood to be a necessary precondition for happiness (*QDM* 6, lines 380–81; 429–49; 482–85 and *ST* 1a.82.2). But even this does not exclude an intellectualist interpretation. One might argue that the will's contingent willing is to be traced to a contingent act of the intellect, because it can always consider a finite thing under some good or bad aspect. [43] The alternative possibilities of *liberum*

[41] For interpreters who reconcile voluntarist sounding texts with an intellectualist reading of Aquinas, see Jeffrey Hause, "Thomas Aquinas and the Voluntarists," *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 6 (1997): 167–82, Scott MacDonald, "Aquinas's Libertarian Account of Free Choice," *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 52 (1998): 309–28, and, more briefly, Thomas Williams, "Scotus' Libertarianism."

[42] *ST* 1a2ae.9.1 and 10.2; *QDM* 6 lines 343–63.

[43] Acknowledging that such an intellectualist reading is possible concerning the will's specification, some authors make the more restricted claim that the will is at least independent of the intellect concerning its exercise. They can rely on texts such as *ST* 1a2ae.9.3 ad 3: "The will is not moved in the same way by the intellect and by itself, but it is rather moved by the intellect on account of the object, whereas it is moved by itself as to the exercise of its act, on account of the end." But as mentioned earlier, even this restricted sense of the will's freedom can be understood

arbitrium (LA2) are then to be understood as alternative intellectual considerations, and not as alternative acts of the will independently from the intellect. We could speak of a *conditional analysis* of the power to will otherwise (X is able to will otherwise = X would will otherwise if X judged it to be good to do so).

(3) Maybe the most voluntaristic-sounding statement by Aquinas is an affirmation that presents the will as free not to follow the intellect's judgment:

> However much reason puts one thing ahead of the other, there is not yet the acceptance of one in preference to the other as something to be done until the will inclines to the one rather than to the other. The will does not of necessity follow reason. (*QDV* 22.15 lines 51–56)

Yet even this text cannot be read as a statement allowing for a simultaneous discrepancy between reason and will. The choice may well diverge from a preceding judgment, but only because a further judgment is made, motivating the eventual choice. And thus an intellectualist interpretation is upheld.

In one specific respect it seems justified to speak of a voluntarist dimension in Aquinas's account of *liberum arbitrium*: the first movement of the will, that is, the transition from the state of non-willing to the state of willing, is not traced to the intellect, but to an exterior cause, namely, to God, who according to Aquinas moves the will in accordance with the will's nature as a contingent cause (*QDM* 6, lines 381–417).

The arguments in favor of voluntarism notwithstanding, intellectualism remains possible. Let us see why it appears as a more plausible interpretation of Aquinas.

Within an intellectualist framework, the judgment that A is to be chosen (J_A) and the choice of A (C_A) imply each other. The implication $C_A \rightarrow J_A$ expresses what has been labeled by Scott MacDonald the "Principle of Essential Motivation" (PEM): everything that is willed has to be apprehended as good, that is, as worthy of pursuit. This is a principle that Aquinas affirms throughout his writings (see, e.g., *ST* 1a2ae.8.1; *QDM* 6, lines 420–24). Voluntarist interpreters would not deny this, but they tend to deny the reverse implication $J_A \rightarrow C_A$ (which is expressed in R1). In other words, a voluntarist

according to the intellectualist paradigm.

interpretation of Aquinas would admit that each choice has to follow upon some practical judgment, but deny that a given practical judgment about what is to do here and now (commonly called "last practical judgment" because it expresses the conclusive practical consideration after deliberation) entails the will's choice. Intellectualists, in contrast, would argue that the relation between J_A and C_A is that of a biconditional. Not only PEM ($C_A \rightarrow J_A$) is true, but also our premise $J_A \rightarrow C_A$, for if there were a practical judgment that was not followed by a choice, the will's refusal of the practical judgment would be unmotivated. This seems to be indeed Aquinas's view:

> But a judgment about this particular object of operation here and now can never be contrary contrary to our appetite.[44] (*QDV* 24.2 lines 79–81)

This biconditional ($J_A \leftrightarrow C_A$) is actually not premise R1, so that one can hold the former without the latter. R1 insists in fact on the chronological and causal priority of the judgment vis-à-vis the choice.

Aquinas's repeated affirmation that the root of freedom is in reason may well indicate a priority of the intellect with respect to free willing. Aquinas has two major arguments to that effect.

According to one, the will's freedom to choose among different means to the end is traceable to the intellect's ability to conceive of an end qua end. Thanks to the understanding of what makes something worthy of pursuit, one can conceive of alternative means as conducive to the end (*QDV* 24.1 lines 288–95 and 24.2 lines 87–104). To provide an example: if one understands the purpose of shelter, one can choose from among a number of possible means to build a house. Thus one has freedom of judgment, and because of this one has freedom of choice.

According to another argument, the will's freedom in choosing is traced to the

[44] "Sed iudicium de hoc particulari operabili ut nunc, numquam potest esse appetitui contrarium." See also *ST* 1a2ae.77.1: "it is in the nature of the movement of the will . . . to follow the judgment of reason [motus voluntatis . . . natus est sequi iudicium rationis]" (our translation); *ST* 3a.18.4 ad 2: "For what we judge to be done, we choose, after the inquiry of counsel [illud enim quod iudicamus agendum post inquisitionem consilii, eligimus]. . . ." Notice that to deny that the will can choose differently from the last practical judgment is not to deny the possibility of acting contrary to the dictate of conscience, for the dictate of conscience is distinct from the last practical judgment (or the judgment of *liberum arbitrium*, as Aquinas sometimes calls it). In fact, when my conscience forbids me to indulge in disordinate pleasure, I can continue to deliberate about aspects that make such pleasure appear worthwhile, see *QDV* 17.1 ad 4.

intellect's knowledge of universals. Aquinas's example is the housebuilder who, because he has a universal notion of house, is free to build a square or round house (*QDM* 6 lines 269–96). The particularization is the work of deliberation, that is, of the intellect.

In contrast to human practical judgments, the judgments of brute animals are particularized by nature; thus upon the perception of something delightful, an animal will pursue it, and upon the perception of something disagreeable, it will avoid it (*QDM* 6, lines 297–307). Since they do not understand their ends as ends and are thus unable to select from a range of possible means to the end, their activities are predetermined by nature, such that, for example, all swallows build their nests alike (*QDV* 24.1 lines 270–74).

The intellectualist account of Aquinas seems to be congruent with the texts. It also meets the requirement to indicate a difference between humans and brute animals that is sufficient to account for human freedom and responsibility. But neither of these points suffices to infer the anteriority of the intellect's judgment to the will's choice (R1). When Aquinas says that the root of freedom is in reason in order to explain why the will's choice can be free, Aquinas opposes the intellect not to the will but rather to the sensory faculties of knowledge. He thereby explains why the choices or volitions of brute animals are not free: they do not rely on an intellectual, that is, universal, apprehension of the object. But even if the practical judgment does not precede the choice (R1), one can still argue for intellectual determinism, although not on the grounds of the fixity of the past (R2). The biconditional between judgment and choice would in fact be sufficient to reach a determinist conclusion if one could add to it the unavoidability of judgment. One could claim that judgments are not (directly) up to us. This leads to the unavoidability of choice along a revised argument, which prescinds from any chronological order:

(R1') It is not up to X that, if X ultimately judges that A is to be done, X chooses to do A [intellectualist premise]

(R2') It is not up to X that X ultimately judges that A is to be done [passivity of judgments]

(R3') It is not up to X that X chooses to do A [(R1'), (R2'), (PTN)]

3.2. Compatibilism vs. Libertarianism

It is commonly accepted that Aquinas accepts the intellectualist premise R1', and even some of those who consider Aquinas at bottom a voluntarist do so.[45] Now determinism turns on the truth of premise R2'. Modifying R2 into R2', we cannot argue for the necessity of the judgment on the basis of the fixity of the past, as we did in the other determinist arguments we considered in section 2. There, the necessity of the past was sufficient to state that the relevant circumstances were not under the agent's control, because these circumstances are external to the agent. But in the case of the argument from rational necessitation, the relevant circumstance is the judgment, which is not external to the agent and might have been under his control before it was made. Though the judgment that has already been made is no longer up to the agent, the question is whether it *was* up to the agent. Our R2' above could be expanded thus:

(R2') It is not up to X at t_{0-n} that X judges at t_0 that A is to be done (for any n)

The main argument for R2' is that judgments are passive states, dispositions (that is, dispositional beliefs), or occurrences (that is, occurrent beliefs), which are caused by circumstances that are not up to the agent. For instance, it is not up to me to believe that it is raining here and now.[46] Such a determinist reading of Aquinas was made by some of his contemporary critics as well. This determinist interpretation has many followers today; they are inclined to attribute to Aquinas a compatibilist view, since he defends the reality of *liberum arbitrium*.[47] They argue that this reading coheres with what was said previously about the incompatibility of *liberum arbitrium* with several kinds of necessitation. They maintain that this incompatibility does not extend to intellectual necessitation (thus advocating a compatibilist version of the leeway condition LA2). Also, in their view, *liberum arbitrium* is not threatened by exterior causes, as long as the causal route of the action passes through the intellect's judgments (this being the compatibilist version of the

E.g., David Gallagher, "Free Choice and Free Judgment in Thomas Aquinas," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 16 (1994): 247–77), and Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas*, ch. 9.

[46] We are not concerned here with the indirect power we might have over our beliefs, such as to induce my belief that it rains here and now by going to a place where it rains.

[47] E.g., Jeffrey Hause, "Thomas Aquinas and the Voluntarists"; Anthony Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind* (London: Routledge, 1993), ch. 6; Williams, "Scotus' Libertarianism."

sourcehood condition LA1). Thus in their eyes some kind of conditional analysis of choice (and hence a conditional leeway) would be sufficient, and a merely relative sourcehood of actions in the agent's mind faculties (intellect and will) would suffice to ensure *liberum arbitrium* and moral responsibility. In particular, for them the requirement that the agent's mind be a (relative) source of the action is enough to distinguish human choices from the volitions of brute animals, which are in fact immediately determined by external factors impinging on their apprehensive faculties that move their appetitive faculties.

This intellectualist compatibilist reading (IC for short) might be mitigated if one takes into account some irreducibly voluntarist elements in Aquinas's theory, as suggested by Robert Pasnau.[48] In light of Pasnau's reading, Aquinas might appear closer to a Humean conception of the relative roles or reason and will in action. Reason would just act as a relay between initial desires (that is, passions in Hume's vocabulary) and deliberated choices; reason would be the "slave of passions." In fact, however, contrary to Hume, Aquinas would acknowledge a greater role to reason: it specifies the content of the will (as to first-order as well as second-order volitions). Reason is what makes human choice free, in a sense in which animal desires are not, because it introduces leeway. But this is a compatibilist leeway: the agent could have decided otherwise, if the cause of the will's choice had been different. What causes the first-order volitions are second-order volitions, which are themselves caused by factors outside the agent, and ultimately by the first mover of the will, that is, God. Pasnau argues that human choices are governed by conditional necessity, which differs from the conditional necessity that applies to animal desires, because, thanks to reason, humans have second-order beliefs and second-order desires (which brute animals lack).[49] Despite this higher complexity, human choices occur by conditional necessity. This results in another compatibilist reading of Aquinas, with an emphasis on voluntarist elements that do not introduce the absolute leeway or contingency that classical voluntarism implies. It is a voluntarist compatibilist interpretation (VC for short).

These compatibilist interpretations clash with Aquinas's repeated rejection of all

[48] Pasnau rightly emphasizes the different ways in which the will, its acts, and its habits (virtues and vices) can influence the intellect; see his *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature: A Philosophical Study of* Summa theologiae 1a 73–89 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 224–30. But those interactions cannot decide by themselves about the ultimate source of choice, since those acts and habits of the will could depend themselves on prior judgments. What seems irreducible to an intellectualist analysis is Aquinas's account of the first movement of the will; see above, p. 21.

[49] See Pasnau, 230-33

kinds of necessitation of human choice. To defend the contingency of choice, they rely on a conditional analysis of choice. But Aquinas never attributes merely conditional freedom to human beings. He acknowledges the existence of conditional freedom (*condicionata libertas*), but it is the freedom he reserves for non-rational animals:

> . . . there is in them [i.e., in brute animals] a certain semblance of free choice [*liberum arbitrium*] inasmuch as they can, according to their judgment, do or not do one and the same thing. As a result there is in them a sort of *conditional freedom* [*conditionata libertas*]. For they can act if they judge that they should or not act if they do not so judge. (*QDV* 24.2 lines 115–21)

The animal judgment is not a rational judgment; it is rather a judgment by the so-called estimative faculty, which in a given situation instinctively judges in a given way. Animals are unaware of the reasons of their pursuits, that is, they do not grasp their ends as ends. Thus their judgment concerning whether to pursue or avoid something is ingrained in them from nature: a sheep who spots a wolf cannot help fleeing; a dog who is excited cannot help barking (*QDV* 24.2 lines 104–33).

Now the compatibilist interpretation could insist that the emphasis should not be put on the conditional analysis, but rather on the conditioning feature—the animal's judgment—and on its difference from human, rational judgment. But had Aquinas thought that the difference between animal and human freedom was only in the kind of condition that determined the action (sensory vs. intellectual judgment), it seems that he would have stated this explicitly, and would not have singled out animal freedom alone as an instance of conditional freedom.[50] Admittedly, the compatibilist interpretation remains possible, but it seems highly speculative and should be adopted only if libertarian interpretations face substantial difficulties.

There are two strategies open to a libertarian interpretation (that is, one that rejects R2'). In order to show that the judgment was up to the agent, one can argue that the intellect has alternate possibilities in judging, and hence the resulting choice is not necessitated. Alternatively, one can introduce a voluntarist moment in the sequence of mental acts that leads up to the judgment; in this scenario, the will would have alternate

[50] See, e.g., *ST* 1a2ae.6.4; *QDV* 24.1 ad 1; QDM 6 ad 22.

possibilities in shaping the judgment.

The first strategy can be called an intellectualist libertarian interpretation (IL). Aquinas explains that the freedom of the will, as opposed to animal desires, is due to the fact that the object of the intellect is universal, and hence for there to be a concrete choice, it has to be particularized to this (action or object) rather than that. [51]The object or action under consideration is good under some aspect, and as such the will is inclined toward it, once it is apprehended by the intellect. But as we have seen, the intellect can reflect on its first-order judgments and compare them, so as to have a second-order judgment. While the compatibilist interpretation would insist that the occurrence of a second-order judgment suffices to differentiate human choice from animal choice and to ground moral responsibility, Scott MacDonald's IL-interpretation concludes that the second-order judgment is the locus of libertarian freedom, because according to his interpretation these judgments are not themselves causally determined.[52]

This solution faces a major obstacle. It is true that indeterminacy in second- order judgments would ensure indeterminacy in choice. But, first, as MacDonald recognizes, this leaves one with the question about the nature of the intellectual mechanism allowing for indeterminacy to enter at the stage of second-order judgments.[53] (And we do not see why, if indeterminacy could enter at this level, it could not enter at the level of any judgment whatsoever.) Second, even if it was admitted that indeterminacy entered among judgments, whether of first or of second order, these are passive states that depend on the degree of evidence or plausibility of what is under consideration, which is not up to us. Even if the intellectual mechanism introduced some indeterminacy, the judgments would not be any more up to us than if there were no indeterminacy: there would be luck involved in the production of judgments (or of second-order judgments). Luck is

[51] ST 1a.59.1: "Other things, again, have an inclination toward good, but with a knowledge whereby they perceive the aspect of goodness; this belongs to the intellect. This is most perfectly inclined toward what is good; not, indeed, as if it were merely guided by another toward some particular good only, like things devoid of knowledge, nor toward some particular good only, as things which have only sensitive knowledge, but as inclined toward good in general (*quasi inclinata in ipsum universale bonum*)."

[52] *QDV* 24.2 "Thus, if the judgment of the cognitive faculty is not in a person's power but is determined for him extrinsically, neither will his appetite be in his power; and consequently neither will his motion or operation be in his power absolutely. Now judgment is in the power of the one judging in so far as he can judge about his own judgment; for we can pass judgment upon the things which are in our power. But to judge about one's own judgment belongs only to reason, which reflects upon its own act and knows the relationships of the things about which it judges and of those by which it judges. Hence the whole root of freedom is located in reason. Consequently, a being is related to free choice in the same way as it is related to reason."

[53] MacDonald, 328.

obviously no basis for a conception of *liberum arbitrium* that would guarantee moral responsibility. Luck depends even less on me than an event that happens by necessity, since I would not even be a *caused cause* of an event happening by *luck*.[54] That judgments or other causes of choice occur in me does not entail that they *depend on me* or that they are *up to me*.

This impasse shows that the second strategy, of introducing a voluntarist moment in the generation of the judgment, has some credit. While the IC-reading compromises contingency, and the IL-reading compromises ownership, this strategy would allow one to uphold both leeway and ownership. Aquinas does not say anything explicitly on this point, however; hence such an interpretation would be a dialectical move. [55]

But according to David Gallagher, such a dialectical move has to be made, and here is why. Reason is able to shift from one consideration to another and to look at the same object as either good or bad, and this makes room for an ability to do otherwise. It merely allows for it, however, without conferring an active power to settle for one alternative rather than the other. Thus it provides a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for free choice, for the choice has to be in the agent's control, and this cannot be afforded by reason alone. [56] In support of this view, Gallagher quotes this text:

> Now it is clear that to judge, if nothing is added, does not go beyond the capacity of a power, because it is the act of a power, reason, by its own nature, without requiring the addition of any habit. Similarly, what is added in the adverb 'freely' does not exceed the scope of the power, for something is said to be done freely inasmuch as it is in the power of the one doing it. But the fact that *something is under our control* is in us as the consequence of an operative power, not of a habit. *That power is the will.* (*QDV* 24.4, lines 159–69, our emphasis)

How can the will influence the judgment? According to Gallagher, Aquinas would go further in the *Summa theologiae* than in his previous works. In addition to the exercise of the

[54] At least I would not be the total cause of such an event (since I could be the partial cause of the die turning up as a 5, just by rolling it). Thanks to [***] for this remark.

[55] Hause calls this interpretation "pure speculation" (with implicit reference to David Gallagher) in "Aquinas and the Voluntarists," 181.

[56] "It belongs to the will to be the source of anything done freely, since an act which is free is in the power of the agent and it is by the will that agents have power over their acts" (Gallagher, 255).

act and its specification by the object considered by the intellect, Aquinas now mentions the guise under which the object is considered. The will has no direct influence on the specification. If the object could be considered in only one way, it would necessitate the act act of the will. But when there are many possible considerations—which is in fact the case with objects of reason, as we have seen—the will can control the way the reason considers the object. [57]It would then have indirect control over the specification it receives from the intellect. In conclusion, it should be said, according to Gallagher, that a judgment of the intellect is involved in the choice, but this judgment results from the direction of the intellect's attention which is under the will's control (Gallagher, 269). The choice is then then said to be *according to reason*, but is not *determined by reason* (Gallagher, 277).

This is a voluntarist and libertarian interpretation of Aquinas's account (for short a VL-interpretation) which strongly opposes not only the compatibilist interpretation but also the IL-interpretation. The problem is that according to this account the will's control of consideration is devoid of any judgment and thus irrational, for no account can be given of why the will controls the intellect in one way rather than the other. (After all, one cannot call it rational simply because it produces a judgment.) Gallagher is then tempted to consider the judgment and the choice to be fused into one, but this cannot be clearly understood in the context of a strong division of intellect and will.

At this point, it should be clear that one cannot go any further while maintaining such a sharp division between the activity of intellect and will. But there are good reasons to question it. And to these reasons we now turn.

4. Toward a Solution

The solution we propose builds upon Aquinas's idea of the simultaneous activity of intellect and will in producing free acts, according to the analogy of matter and form as being two principles of a single material substance ("hylomorphic model"). In what follows, we will first discuss the advantages of the hylomorphic account of the will's act. Then we will discuss how practical reasoning manifests that the will is in a sense in the

[57] Gallagher, 267: "An act of choice is specified by the object which reason supplies. But which object reason supplies, or better, under which aspect a particular action is judged, depends upon how the will exercises the intellect's act in its regard."

practical intellect, and that practical reasoning is the locus of freedom. Last, we will argue that the defeasibility or non-monotonicity of practical inferences manifests that the practical intellect, and hence the will, is not deterministic, but free.

4.1. The Hylomorphic Model of the Will's Acts

As mentioned before, Aquinas adopts a sequential model dividing the process leading to action into stages. To perform a deliberate action presupposes most fundamentally that one pursues an end, and then—understanding that it can only be attained by way of some means—one intends to employ suitable means, after which one deliberates about these and chooses among the various candidates (if there are in fact several suitable means). According to Aquinas, each of these stages has a cognitive and a volitional dimension; for example, the actual choice goes along with a practical judgment that this particular means is choiceworthy. The crucial question now is this: does Aquinas *separate* the acts of intellect and will at each of these stages leading to the performance of an action?[58]

In the *Summa theologiae* Aquinas makes an illuminating observation about choice which is not yet found in his earlier works. In answer to the question of whether choice belongs to the intellect or the will, he gives a twofold answer: choice belongs to the will as its subject, or materially, and to the intellect as its cause, or formally. He thus compares the act of choice to a material substance, composed of matter and form. Matter is considered the subject of changes, and form that which gives the substance its nature. Analogously, in the case of choice, the intellect gives it its form, but the choice is materially an act of will:

> The word choice implies something belonging to the reason or intellect, and something belonging to the will: for the Philosopher says [*EN* 6.2] that choice is either "appetitive intellect or intellectual appetite." Now whenever two things concur to make one, one of them is formal in regard to the other. . . . For just as we say that an animal is composed of soul

[58] Aquinas adopted and refined a traditional analysis of the mental acts leading to full action, and he often expressed himself by assigning causal links between those acts, up to the full action itself. According to the reconstruction by 16th and 17th century Thomists, Thomas holds that there is a sequence of twelve mental acts, which are distributed between intellect and will. For a concise exposition of the Thomistic reconstruction, see Romanus Cessario, *Introduction to Moral Theology* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001), 118–22. Some contemporary scholars reduce the number of acts; see Daniel Westberg, *Right Practical Reason: Aristotle, Action, and Prudence in Aquinas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), chs. 8–12, and Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas* (London: Routledge, 2003), 287–94. While Westberg emphasizes the unity of cognitive and appetitive elements in the scheme, Stump adopts a sequential model where volitional acts follow upon cognitive acts.

> soul and body, and that it is neither a mere body, nor a mere soul, but both, so is it with choice. . . . Accordingly, that act whereby the will tends to something proposed to it as good, good, through being ordered to the end by reason, is materially an act of the will, but formally an act of reason. . . . (*ST* 1a2ae.13.1 c.)

The important feature of the matter-form (or hylomorphic) composition, for our purpose, is that neither component can exist separately, nor act separately: the agent is the substance as a whole, *actiones sunt suppositorum.*[59] Applied to the act of choice, the matter-form analogy suggests that one cannot separate the parts played by intellect and will as two distinct acts. To be sure, we are here only invoking an *analogy* made by Aquinas, which taken by itself does not demonstrate anything. But we adopt it as an interpretative move, because—as we hope to show in what follows—it is philosophically superior to the idea that a free act of choice results from a practical judgment as a separate event. The point highlighted by the analogy, that is, the inseparability of the judgment and choice, is sufficiently argued for by Aquinas.

Not only choice is given a hylomorphic analysis; other acts of the series receive the same structure, or are said to rely on both faculties. This is the case of such acts as *intentio* (which is to aim at an end as reachable by some means) and performance (*usus*, the employment of a mental or bodily activity as a means to the intended end).[60] Like- wise consent (which is to approve one or several means toward a certain end) presup- poses some kind of judgment and culminates in the approbation of the will, so that for Aquinas it can be attributed to both faculties (*ST* 1a2ae.74.7 ad 1).[61] This might indicate a way to avoid the Scylla of intellectualism and the Charybdis of voluntarism.[62]

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[59] See, e.g., *ST* 2a2ae.58.2, *ST* 3a.7.13, paraphrasing Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1.1.981a17.

[60] Aquinas does not directly apply the hylomorphic analysis to *intentio* and *usus*, but he insists that the mental ordering of means to an end, which is implied these acts, is derived from reason, see *ST*1a2ae.12.1 ad 3 and *ST* 1a2ae.16.1 ad 3.

[61] The earliest occurrence of this hylomorphic account of choice is in *ST* 1a2ae, a relatively late text in Aquinas's career. This has an important implication on the debate about whether Aquinas's explanation of *liberum arbitirum* became more voluntaristic toward the end of his career. In our view, Daniel Westberg has already successfully proved this hypothesis wrong; see his "Did Aquinas Change His Mind about the Will?" *The Thomist* 58 (1994): 41–60. Yet we must go even beyond Westberg, for whom Aquinas's view is essentially stable. There is development in Aquinas's thought, and it is indeed away from voluntarism. Early in his career, Aquinas subscribed to a widespread view at his time according to which the will is freer than the intellect, because while the intellect is compelled by truth, the will is not compelled by its object; see *In Sent.* 2.7.2.1 ad 2.

[62] Brian Shanley has likewise made the case against an intellectualist or voluntarist reading of Aquinas,see his "Beyond Libertarianism and Compatibilism: Thomas Aquinas on Created Freedom," in *Freedom and the Human Person*, ed. Richard Velkley (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press,2007), 70–89. His reading of Aquinas is quite similar to ours, but he draws a different conclusion than we do. He thinks Aquinas can be considered neither as a compatibilist nor as a libertarian. Unlike Shanley,we understand compatibilism and libertarianism as disjunctive terms;

Eleonore Stump has gone a step further and argued that not only the act of choice and other acts like consent result from both faculties, but that also the power of *liberum arbitrium* itself is a joint product of intellect and will. She argues that it *emerges* from the activity of both faculties.[63] But this "composite analysis" of consent, choice, and *liberum arbitrium* upholds that acts of the will *follow* upon acts of the intellect and thereby maintains the separation between intellect and will, since choice is a kind of confluence or emergence. Moreover, in arguing for the emergence of *liberum arbitrium* from intellect and will, Stump is not concerned with alternative possibilities, but rather with the *ownership* of the action. It is only because choices emerge from the two faculties of the agent that they can be the agent's own. We take it that what yields ownership, in her view, is precisely the emergence of the act of choice from *both* intellect and will, in a way that neither judgments nor sensory desires yield ownership; for judgments — at least insofar as they are beliefs — are presumably passive, and the occurrence of passions is not directly under our control.

We would be happy to embrace such an analysis, which indeed goes in the same direction as ours. But our view differs from Stump's. First, we are interested in alternative possibilities and not merely in ownership of choice. Second, since for Aquinas *liberum arbitrium* is not a faculty by itself, but rather the faculty of the will in its activity of choosing (as opposed to willing simply), it seems to us that one cannot see *liberum arbitrium* as emergent from both intellect and will. Third, the separation between intellect and will is not overcome by the idea that free choices emerge from both.

Hence we have to go further and question the division between intellect and will. We want to apply the hylomorphic analysis to the appetitive faculty of will itself, since it is defined as a rational appetite (*appetitus rationalis*), so that the will *includes* reason in the sense that reason informs the appetite, and that only an appetite informed by reason is an act of will. The appetitive faculty itself is thus informed by reason, being the faculty of rational desires. Furthermore, the activity of reason in practical reasoning is described by means of terms that are usually assigned to the will, so that practical reason includes the will; there is no practical judgment that does not inform a desire.

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that is, once freedom is affirmed, a position must be either compatibilist or libertarian.

[63] Stump, *Aquinas*, 284–85.

Although Aquinas never goes so far as to apply his hylomorphic analysis of the acts also to the *faculties* of intellect and will, it seems to us both philosophically coherent and illuminating when taking into account the work of practical reasoning, as we will see in what follows.

4.2. The Will and Practical Reasoning

We certainly have to distinguish between a purely theoretical work of reason and the practical use, leading to action, of that work. In practical reasoning, the conditional premise according to which a certain intended result (E) follows if a certain action (A) is done is a theoretical judgment. For example, if I open the window, the room temperature will decrease. But both the major premise and the conclusion pertain to the will: the major premise expresses, to use Anscombe's phrase, a desirability characterization (let the room be cool), and the conclusion is the choice to open the window (or the action itself—or at least the forming of an intention). Yet the major premise and the conclusion are embedded in an inference which is the work of theoretical reason.

An objection which is both philosophical and textual can be made to this claim. We just presented choice as the conclusion of the practical inference, whereas Aquinas frequently says that choice *follows* upon the judgment of the intellect, which he presents as the conclusion of the practical syllogism:

> . . . choice follows upon the decision or judgment which is, as it were, the conclusion of a practical syllogism. [64] (*ST* 1a2ae.13.3)

But in other places, he assimilates the choice and the conclusion of the practical syllogism:

> The choice of a particular thing to be done is as it were the conclusion of a syllogism formed by by the practical intellect, as is said in EN 7.3.[65] (ST 1a.86.1 ad 2)

[64] ". . . electio consequitur sententiam vel iudicium, quod est sicut conclusio syllogismi operativi." The term "syllogism" does not need to be understood according to the strict form, as Aristotle studies it in the *Posterior Analytics*. Here it has the general meaning of "inference," that is, of a conclusion from a set of premises.

[65] "Dicendum quod electio particularis operabilis est quasi conclusio syllogismi intellectus practici, ut dicitur in VII Ethic."

Aquinas also insists that the practical judgment and the choice are simultaneous:

> . . . human beings, at the very moment deliberation makes them certain, choose what they are to do. And if they were to be sure about what they should do, they would choose immediately without deliberation, as is evident in the skill of handwriting and the like, in which there is no need of deliberation. (*QDM* 16.4 lines 279–82, *On Evil* 463)

What should we make of this? Does Aquinas express himself more loosely in one text than in the other? Then the question becomes which one of the two is the exact expression of his thought, the distinction between judgment (*sententia vel iudicium*) and choice (*electio*) or their quasi-identification.

As a matter of fact, in some places Aquinas consciously identifies choice, or even action, with the conclusion of a practical inference:

> . . . in conferring about what is to be done, [reason] employs a syllogism, the conclusion of which is an act of judgment, or of choice, or an operation.[66] (*ST*

We take it that the identity-reading is the philosophically adequate analysis and that it is consistent with his hylomorphic model of choice. At the same time, we admit that in Aquinas there are traces of the traditional sequential account of the acts of intellect and will, where their acts leading up to choice and action follow upon each other temporally and causally. So we do not claim that we offer the most adequate exegesis of Aquinas, but rather that it is the best philosophical analysis we can make out of his own sayings.

If by will one understands merely an executive power of decision, its acts might be necessitated by the anterior work (of reason) that led to the decision. But the *appetitus rationalis* is more than an executive power, for it includes the having of an end that is actually pursued (expressed by the major premise), and it is involved in the decision that leads to action (conclusion). Its culminating act is choice, the proper act of *liberum arbitrium*. Accordingly, *liberum arbitrium* should not be considered as a faculty of the will (as opposed to reason), nor as a faculty whose acts *emerge* from reason and will, but rather as

[66] "[Ratio] conferens enim de agendis, utitur quodam syllogismo, cuius conclusio est iudicium seu electio vel operatio."

a feature of the will. The will itself is a composite: the appetite is informed by reason, specifically by practical reason.

We find support for our understanding of the will as including practical reason in the thesis according to which practical reason causes its object, which is a manifest characteristic of the will, while the act of theoretical reason (the concept or judgment) is caused by its object. The idea is now well accepted, after it was revived by Elizabeth Anscombe: in the case of belief, the "direction of fit" is from the mind to the world, but in the case of practical judgment (as well as of desire), it is from world to mind. The list of items put together by the detective who scrutinizes the man who is shopping has to fit the set of items he has bought. If the detective observes an inadequacy in his own record, he has to amend the list. Conversely, the man revising his shopping list would modify the world by buying something else, if he finds some discrepancy in his shopping cart. (The error would be in the shopping cart, not in the list). The shopping list (which exemplifies the practical judgment) was causing his action and thus the results of his action in the world.[67]

Anscombe borrows the idea from Aquinas; it is well known that he often describes God's knowledge as the cause of things (*scientia Dei est causa rerum*). But this is so not only in the case of God; it rather belongs to the concept of practical reason in general that it causes its objects.[68] Thus when Aquinas says that reason moves the will, he is speaking of practical reason, and the judgment of practical reason is not caused by the things as is that of theoretical reason, but rather conversely, the judgment causes the "thing," that is, the action one decides to do.

When taken seriously, the hylomorphic account of intellect and will makes the intellectualism / voluntarism alternative obsolete. But this does not yet solve the problem of rational necessitation (determination), which we will consider next.

4.3. The Threat of Rational Necessitation Revisited

[67] G.E.M. Anscombe, *Intention*, § 32 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), 56. John Searle has systematized the idea in *Intentionality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), ch. 3. He acknowledges his debt towards Anscombe in his *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985), 3.

[68] *ST* 2a.2ae.83.1: ". . . the speculative and practical reason differ in this, that the speculative merely apprehends its object, whereas the practical reason not only apprehends but causes. . . ." See also *In Sent*.4.8.2.1. qc. 4 ad 1: ". . . practical knowledge, which is the cause of things . . ."; *QDV* 5.1 arg. 2: ". . . in us practical knowledge causes the things that we know. . . ."

The hylomorphic account of intellect and will entails that the practical judgment and the choice coincide. Thus the premise R2' and the conclusion R3' in the argument from rational necessitation collapse into one:

> (R2'/3') It is not up to X (at t_{0-n}) that X judges (at t_0) that A is to be done / X chooses (at t_0) to do A

Now the choice is the conclusion of a practical inference. Thus the question of whether the judgment / choice is necessary coincides with the question of whether the conclusion of a practical inference is necessary, and this is the same as to ask whether the premises necessarily entail the conclusion. Accordingly, the problem of the leeway condition is no longer formulated by the reasoning from R1' and R2' to R3', but in terms of the defeasibility or non-monotonicity of a practical inference.

There is good evidence that Aquinas defends the contingency of the conclusion, or in other words its defeasibility. Consider his response to an objection arguing for intellectual determinism:

> . . . choice follows the reason's judgment of what is to be done. But reason judges of necessity about some things, on account of the necessity of the premises. Therefore it seems that choice also follows of necessity. (*ST* 1a2ae.13.6 arg. 2)

> The reason's decision or judgment of what is to be done is about things that are contingent and possible to us. In such matters the conclusions do not follow of necessity from principles that are absolutely necessary, but from such as are so conditionally, as, for instance, 'If he runs, he is in motion.' (Ibid., ad 2)

Even if Aquinas does not himself explain the leeway condition by the defeasibility of practical inferences, this is what we take him to be considering when he says that the conclusion is not necessitated by the premises. A practical inference can be defeated by the addition of a new premise which blocks the conclusion drawn from earlier premises, so that the considered means (M) toward the intended end (E) is abandoned. The practical

inference appears to be non-monotonic, since it is not true that a set of premises that lead to a conclusion do so always. For example, a plane would take me quickly to this place, but I want to save money. The new premise can be the consideration of another means (M') toward the same end (E), which is thought to be superior to the first one because it satisfies an additional end (E') (a car is less expensive, more comfortable, etc.). Or it can be the consideration of a different end (E') of the agent (rather than traveling, I should stay home with my family), which is jeopardized by the selected action (M toward E), so that this action is then abandoned (M' = not-M preserves E').

It is true that sometimes a simple calculation might suffice to decide what to do in order to achieve a specific end. In this case, one can indeed admit that the reasons do determine the decision, because they are reasons for doing this (M) rather than that (M'), and for doing it rather than not. These are called contrastive reasons. In Aristotelian terms, this is proper to *technical* reasoning, which operates within a given set of ends (the simplest case would be with one end only). The physician abandons the resolution of amputation because a less painful way of saving the patient is accessible. This is a medical decision. When all the medical considerations have been made, there is no more defeasibility of the reasoning, and the reasons that remain at the end of the deliberation are contrastive, that is, reasons for doing such-and-such *rather than not*. Such contrastive reasons indeed necessitate the choice. Yet this is not so with *practical* reasoning. When a physician abandons the goal of saving the patient (the technical end of the physician), he does so because the prospects of recovery are dim or because he is more needed in another place. This deliberation implies considerations of a nontechnical sort and introduces ends external to the profession, such as political or military ends. This is not a medical decision, nor does it involve technical reasoning, but it is a properly practical decision. The physician is a *man* who can abandon his goal as a physician, and thus he gives up the conclusion he reached when reasoning as a physician. His contrastive reasons to do such-and-such *as a physician* were not contrastive reasons overall.

One might object that the overall conclusion of the practical reasoning comes about as the result of a combination of both types of considerations, that is, technical and practical. All means are compared, all ends are considered, so as to have overall contrastive reasons for doing this rather than that. — But this objection starts from the

supposition that a finite collection of available means and ends is in play. Again, this is true of *technical* reasoning: if the physician is to act as a physician, he cannot but decide to cure the patient, and he has to choose the best medical means, which can only be finite in number. But the distinctive mark of *practical* reasoning is that it is not constrained by a finite set of ends, and hence by a finite set of means—either because there might indefinitely be other ends to be considered, or simply because they are not commensurable. We could then say that a practical agent has different ends (E and E'), with best means (M and M') toward each one. There are good and maybe contrastive reasons for choosing each means, given the postulated end (if the doctor wants to save this life, he has to perform surgery; if he wants to do what is in the overall interest of the army, he has to let the patient die and take care of someone else, that is, not perform surgery). But there are no overall contrastive reasons, if the two ends cannot be rationally ranked by the agent.

This feature of practical reasoning is not described as such by Aquinas, but he makes the following three points (the first two of which have already been mentioned): First, no particular good fully instantiates the "universal good," which is the object of the will. Just as the housebuilder can realize the general idea of a house in various ways, so it is possible to will any particular good under the formality of the universal good.[69]

Second, the point of view under which an action is judged as good (to be done), may always be abandoned in favor of another aspect under which it is not good (or at least less good than the alternative).[70] "The good is manifold [*bonum est multiplex*]" (*ST* 1a.82.2 ad 1). This allows for contingency and for the absence of overall contrastive reasons.

Third, the person him or herself can always pose an obstacle to the effectiveness of the reasons he or she is considering:

> Not every cause necessarily brings about an effect even if the cause is sufficient, since the cause can be prevented from sometimes achieving its effect. . . . Therefore, the cause that that makes the will will something need not necessarily achieve this, since the will itself

[69] *QDM* 6 c., lines 288–96. See also *ST* 1a2ae.13.2 and SCG 2.48. Cf. David Gallagher, "Thomas Aquinas on the Will as a Rational Appetite," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 29 (1991): 559–84, at 578–82.

[70] *QDM* 6 c., lines 441–49: "But if the good is such as not to be found good in every conceivable particular, it will not necessarily move the will even regarding specification of the act. This is so because a person will be able to will its contrary, even when thinking about it, since the contrary is perhaps good or suitable regarding some other particular consideration. For example, something good for health is not good for enjoyment, and so forth." The English translation is from Thomas Aquinas, *On Evil*, translated by Richard J. Regan, edited with an introduction and notes by Brian Davies (Oxford and New York: Ox- ford University Press, 2003), 260.

> can present an obstacle, whether by removing the consideration that induces the will to will it or by considering the contrary, namely, that what is presented as good is not good in in some respect. (*QDM* 6 ad 15)

Aquinas's way of speaking employs the two faculties-model: the intellect is the sufficient cause of the will, but does not necessitate the will's effect, since the will can present an obstacle to the intellect's causality. At the same time, Aquinas attributes to the will the capacity to "consider" a respect under which the presented object is not good. But to consider is a proper capacity of practical reason. It seems clear, then, that in the above quote Aquinas adopts a manner of speaking where he does not intend to oppose the will to the intellect, but where he rather uses the term "will" as shorthand for the agent as a whole.

We could add some force to this reading by using the famous analysis Aquinas makes in the context of the explanation of incontinence.[71] Adopting Aristotle's account of what makes *akrasia* possible (*EN* 7.3), Aquinas explains that the incontinent as well as the continent are wavering between two rival major premises, one prohibitive, the other permissive. When combined with a corresponding minor premise, this leads either to a prohibitive or a permissive conclusion:

No fornication is to be committed	Everything pleasurable is to be enjoyed
This act is fornication	This act is pleasurable
This act is not to be done	This act is to be done

Aquinas's example of the continent and the incontinent considering both major premises is a case where the practical reasoning is defeated by adding another premise: "Everything pleasurable is to be enjoyed" is added to the premise "No fornication is to be committed," whereby the incontinent abandon their resolution to be chaste in favor of an action that gives them pleasure.

[71] Aquinas explains the syllogistic structure of the reasoning involved in incontinent action in *ST* 1a2ae.77.2 ad 4 and *QDM* 3.9 ad 7. For his more general treatment of incontinence, see *ST* 2a2ae.156. A fine comparison between Aristotle's and Aquinas's explanation is found in Bonnie Kent, "Transitory Vice: Thomas Aquinas on Incontinence," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 27 (1989): 199–223; for a detailed account, see also Denis J.M. Bradley, "Thomas Aquinas on Weakness of the Will," in *Weakness of Will from Plato to the Present*, ed. Tobias Hoffmann (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 82–114.

Since the opposition is here between reason and passion, one could of course say that the incontinent act irrationally in that they do not follow their better judgment. But we are above all interested here in the structure of the analysis. In the case of a practical choice like the choice the physician has to make between immediate care of the patients right here and the better help he would afford to the army by going elsewhere, we could see the choice as one between two conclusions of two practical syllogisms. Both conclusions and thus both actions would be done for some reason, but there is no reason that necessitates one over the other by making a definite contrast between them. It is a *contingent*, but still a *rational* choice.

If the prevailing set of reasons does not determine the choice because it *weighs* more than the alternative set of reasons, then we must attribute to the agent the power of *weighting* one set over the other.[72] This weighting is what happens when the agent stops deliberating and settles on a specific choice.

What makes an agent settle on his or her reasons cannot be fully explained, at least not from a third-person perspective. What seems clear, however, is that for Aquinas it is not chance that bridges the hiatus between non-contrastive reasons and action. It is rather the agent him or herself, to whom he often refers when he speaks of the "will." The language of will marks the control Aquinas wants to attribute to the agent. As we saw, a causal conception of practical reason has the same effect. The agent has a special causal power (through his or her action) on the world which is other than the simple absence of determining causality that we associate with chance. This certainly positions Aquinas as a theorist of agent causation.[73] But his account of agent causation only proposes the idea that the agent is a cause of some state of affairs by acting for reasons. This is what sets the agent's choices and actions apart from other indeterminate events. And this is what Aquinas often expresses as the non-necessitation of the will by reason, which we have in the end interpreted as the non-necessitation of choice by practical reasoning, that is, by the

[72] Cf. Robert Nozick, *Philosophical Explanations* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), 294–300.

[73] Roderick Chisholm introduced the terminology of agent causation (as opposed to event causation), relying occasionally on Aquinas; see "Human Freedom and the Self," repr. in *Free Will*, ed. Gary Watson, 2nd edition (New York, Oxford University Press, 2003), 26–37. Aquinas certainly thinks of causes as things endowed with natural powers rather than as events subsumed under general laws, but there might be disputes about the aptness of Chisholm's use of Aquinas. In particular, it seems doubtful that Aquinas would have said that the agent caused his or her action. The action is rather the causing (causation) by the agent of some state in the world. Timothy O'Connor defends a view of agent causation that would be largely in agreement with the view presented here; see his Persons and Causes: The Metaphysics of Free Will (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

reasons for which the choice is made.[74]

Conclusion

In this paper, we have argued for a libertarian interpretation of Aquinas's account of *liberum arbitrium*, relying on his rejection of various kinds of compatibility of necessity with freedom (and also with moral responsibility). Though he did not address the threat of necessitation by reason as clearly as he addressed other forms of necessitation, we have argued that his overall conception of freedom implies an analogous rejection. This could not be done without abandoning the dichotomy of intellectualism and voluntarism, which was erected by his commentators and adversaries. Not only can the act of choice not be traced back to one faculty rather than the other, but the faculty of will itself must be seen as including reason, and likewise the faculty of practical reason as including the will. The solution we offered relies then on the particular character of the defeasibility of practical reasoning joined to the idea that, without contrastive reasons, the will / practical reason can nonetheless have control over the choice, which, though contingent, is not a mere matter of chance.

The interpretation is somewhat speculative, but it allows for a coherent reading of Aquinas. He seems to have been quite aware of many of the problems that have been discussed over the centuries about free will, and his own theory manages to give an answer to these problems. Whether our reading is fully coherent philosophically, and in particular whether it successfully addresses the problem of luck, is beyond the scope of our paper. But articulating Aquinas's answer to the threat of necessitation by reason seems to be a first step in that direction.

[74] See *QDV* 22.15, quoted above, p. 29.

Peter Abelard and His Critics on Divine Necessity and Human Freedom

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According to Christians, or at least medieval ones, God is omniscient, omnibenevolent and omnipotent. When God chooses between courses of action, therefore, because he knows everything, he knows which is the best course and, from his benevolence, he chooses it; and, being omnipotent, nothing can prevent him from making this choice. It seems, therefore, that God cannot but choose whatever course of action is the best at any juncture: he has no alternative possibilities. Moreover, in so far as God ordains all things, if he can do so in only one way – the best, then it seems that there is only one way in which things can be. God's lack of freedom will also be his creation's.

This line of reasoning seems like one which no Christian thinker would want to accept – and, in the loose form in which it has just been put, there are many different ways of rejecting it. The first person, however, to formulate this argument, and to put it much more tightly than in the paragraph above, was a Christian thinker, and he proposed it, not so as to refute it but, on the contrary, because he accepted it and its first conclusion, that God cannot do other than he does, though not the seeming consequence that God's creatures are similarly unfree. He was Peter Abelard, who began to discuss this question in his *Theologia Christiana*, probably from the mid to late 1120s, and gave his fullest presentation of it in the *Theologia Scholarium* from a few years later.[1] In this paper, I shall begin by giving a fairly full presentation of Abelard's version of this reasoning – what I call the Divine Necessity Argument – as found in the *Theologia Scholarium.* Unlike many of Abelard's ideas, the Divine Necessity Argument was widely discussed, both in his own time and in the later Middle Ages. In the second part of the paper, I shall look at some of these responses to Abelard's reasoning. Although very different in their angles of attack, all these writers, from Hugh of St Victor to Leibniz, share one feature: they reject Abelard's reasoning. Are they fair to do so? I shall end by explaining why Abelard's view, although clearly unacceptable for a

[1] All references to the *Theologia Scholarium* (*TSch*) are to the books and sections as given in *Petri Abaelardi opera theologica* III, ed. E. M. Buytaert and C. J. Mews, Brepols: Turnhout, 1987 (Corpus Christianorum continuatio mediaeualis 13).

Christian, may be more convincing than generations of his critics have thought.

I

In the *Theologia Scholarium*, Abelard puts his central argument that cannot do other than he does like this: -

> For should we suppose that he could do more or fewer things, or stop those that he is doing, we shall indeed be detracting from his highest goodness. For it is obvious that he can do nothing except good things, nor anything except for those things which it is fitting for him to do and which it is good that he does. Similarly, it is obvious that he can neither desist from doing any things, so that he stops doing them, unless they are fitting for him to desist from, or it is good that he desists from doing them. It is not fitting for him to do and desist from doing the same thing, nor is it good. Indeed, there is nothing about which it is fitting at one and the same time that it be done and that it be desisted from being done, and it cannot be good that what is good to be done stops being done, because the only thing contrary to good is evil. Nor can there be a rational cause which is the basis for why the same thing should be done and desisted from being done. If, therefore, since it is good for something to be done, it is not good for it to desist from being done, and God can neither do nor desist from doing anything except what it is good that he does or desists from doing, then it seems that God can do or desist from doing only what he does or desists from doing, because that alone is good for him to do or desists from doing. For if it is good for him to desist from doing what he desists from doing, it certainly is not good for him to do that very thing, and consequently he cannot do it. (*TSch* III.27-28)

There is one important preliminary to understanding how he puts the argument here. The way in which he speaks of 'desisting from' or 'not desisting from' what he is doing may seem strange, but it is not. If, as here, God is presented as acting and choosing to act in time,[2] when we talk about whether God can do other than he does, we are not talking about whether he can ever stop doing something he has started – it would be absurd to think that, if God is making it rain now, he can never desist from making it rain (though on an English summer's day, one might be excused for thinking in this way). We are talking about whether, although God is in fact making it rain at this moment, t1, it would have been possible for him to have been making it dry at this moment, t1. Abelard's use of the rather clumsy language of

[2] This is, however, just a simplified way of talking for Abelard, in order to make God's workings comprehensible to us. He does *not* think that god is timelessly eternal, but he believes that God acts immutably for all eternity.

desisting and not desisting from an action might be put down to his discomfort about the idea of synchronic alternative possibilities, such as that it is raining at *t*1 and possibly it is dry at *t*1. Abelard probably *did* find such conjunctions problematic – and perhaps with good reason.[3] But the point he wants to make about God not need to involve synchronic possibilities. Abelard is thinking about God as choosing to act in this or that way. Choosing to act precedes the action, even if only momentarily. Suppose I choose to do *x*. I make this choice (at the latest) at *t*0, and then I do *x* at *t*1. At t0, I might either be doing *x*, in which case I do not desist from doing *x*, or I may be doing something else, *y*, in which case, following my choice, I desist from doing *x* and do *y* instead. Abelard's language, therefore, needs no excuses. In order not to complicate the presentation unnecessarily, the argument below has God simply doing or desisting from what he does, *x*, at *t*, but more precisely be understood as just explained in terms of God's choice at *t*0 to act at *t*1.

The argument presented above seems to be: -

1. God does *x* at *t*. [Premise]
2. God cannot do anything at any time which is not good to do at that time. [Premise: supposedly Christian doctrine]
3. If it is good for *x* to be done at *t*, it is not good that *x* be desisted from being done at *t*. [Premise]
4. It is good that *x* be done at *t*. [1,2]
5. It is not good that *x* be desisted from being done at *t*. [4,3]
6. God cannot desist from doing *x* at *t*. [2,5]
7. God cannot do other than *x* at *t*. [1,6]

The same reasoning applies, of course, to any instant of time, and so it shows that God cannot ever do other than he does.

If 'good' in this argument is taken to mean just 'has some degree of positive value', so that although it is good for *x* to be done at *t*, it is consistent to say that it is better for *y* to be done at that time, then Abelard's reasoning makes little sense. Clearly, by 'good', here, he means 'the best', and this is brought out by the way in which, a little further on, Abelard speaks in terms, not only of what it is good for God to do, but also what it is right that he should do (*quod fieri uel dimitti oportet*), what it is just that he should do, and what he is required to do (*facere debet*).[4] Most important, he links what it is good, right, just and requisite for God to do or desist from with having a 'reasonable cause' for doing or desisting

[3] See the end of Section III.
[4] *TSch* III.35.

from it: 'Indeed, there is nothing that he does or desists from doing, except from the best, reasonable cause, although it may be hidden from us.'[5] Abelard clearly considers that, for each action of God's, there is a reason – that it is the best, justest, rightest, most requisite action – for him to do it, which is independent of him.[6] It is this position which will allow him to defend the most obviously questionable premise in the argument, (3).

(3) should, in the light of the explanation above, be read as: 'If it is best (right, most just etc.) for *x* to be done at *t*, it is not best (right, most just etc.) that *x* be desisted from being done at *t.*' This conditional is based on the assumption that whether *x* is the best (etc.) thing for God to do at *t* is independent of whether or not it is actually done at *t* by God. One line of objection to the Divine Necessity Argument, which targets (3), is voluntarism. According to the voluntarist, whatever god wills, and so does, is the best thing to do, simply because God has chosen it: God sets the standards of goodness and rightness, not according to any reasons, but simply through his will. It will not follow, therefore, that, if *x* is the best thing for God to do at *t*, it is not the best thing to desist from doing *x* at *t*, because if, in fact, God desists from doing *x* at *t*, then desisting will be the best thing for God to do. Abelard rejects this attack: -

> In everything which God does he pays such attention to what is good that he may be said to follow in each thing he does, not the desire of his own will, but rather the value itself of the good. This is the reason behind what Jerome writes commenting on Daniel, in his exegesis of the third vision, where Nebuchadnezzar speaks about God in the following way: 'He does according to his will in heaven and on earth, and there is no one who may resist his hand and say: 'Why have you done so?' 'And this', says Jerome, 'he says like a man of the world. For God does not do a thing because he wishes, but because the thing is good, God wishes it. Nebuchadnezzar spoke in such a way that, whilst he attributed power to God, he seemed to fault his justice because he (Nebuchadnezzar) had undeservedly suffered punishments.' When Jerome says, 'For God does not do a thing because he wishes, but because the thing is good, God wishes it,' it is as if he were to say**:** God does not act as Nebuchadnezzar judges that he does, in the manner of those who, in what they do, pay attention not to what is good but aim to satisfy their will, whatever it may be. About such people it has been written: 'I will this, I order it so. Let my will take the place of a reason!' (Juvenal VI, 223). Rather, he

[5] *TSch* III.31; cf. III.37.

[6] Abelard does indeed consider that God is the highest reason, but this simply means that he must follow the reason for acting in each case: (*TSch* III.37): 'nor can he, who is the highest reason, either will or act anything against what is fitting to reason. For nothing which diverges from reason can be reasonably willed or acted.' This, in fact, constitutes another, briefer argument for the conclusion that God cannot do other than he does: There is a reason why *x*, and not anything else, should be done by God at *t*; God as highest reason cannot go against what it is reasonable to do; God cannot not do *x* at *t* .

> should be said to will that each thing happens, because he sees that it is good that they happen. (*TSch* III.33)

According to Abelard, then, God does not make his will take the place of reason: rather, he chooses what things to do because he sees 'that it is good that they be done.' The idea is clearly that there is a standard of goodness independent of God, in accord with which he acts.

Even supposing that voluntarism can be rejected, (3) seems to have another, more obvious weakness. Just as two runners sometimes must share the prize because they cross the finishing line at exactly the same moment, so it seems that there might be situations where two or more different actions are the best (rightest, justest etc.), since they are equally good and better than all other actions. Abelard's answer to this problem is based on his fundamental idea that, in doing the best, God is acting according to a reasonable cause. Were it ever to be the case that two courses of action, A and B, were equally good and fitting, then there could be no good reason for God to do one and not the other:

> But perhaps you will say that in the same way as what he is doing now is just, good and reasonable, so it would be equally good were he to stop doing this – A – and do something else – B. Well, if what he stopped doing (A) when he chose B were equally good, there was absolutely no reason why he should have stopped A and chosen B. 'There was', you will say, 'because – since both ought not to have been done and it was equally good that A or B should be done, whichever of them were done would be done with reason.' But truly, according to this reasoning, what was done and what was not done equally ought to have been done, and it was equally good that A was done as B. Now, when that which is done is good, and it has a reasonable cause for which it should be done, whoever does not do what he is aware should be done by him acts irrationally indeed. And so we fall back again into the contradiction noted above. Now, if you say about B, the thing which was not done, that it was not good that it should be done except in such a way that A, the other thing, should stop, clearly by this very reasoning one will not be right to grant without qualification that it would be good for B to be done, since it has been agreed that A and B are equally good to be done. Has God therefore done what it was not good to do? Perish the thought! And if only that which he does is good to be done by him, then indeed he – who can do nothing except that which is good to be done by him – can do only that which he does. (*TSch* III.36)

And so there can be no dead heats with regard to divine choices for action. There is a single best choice, which God makes. A very strong Principle of Sufficient Reason ('God performs only the action which is better than any alternative action') applies where God's actions are

concerned.

The most elaborate objection to the Divine Necessity Argument which Abelard considers is based on the effect which it will have on his creation, and humans in particular, f God cannot do other than he does. Abelard writes:

> But, indeed, if we propose that God can do only what he does, we seem to run into much that is contrary both to reason and authority. For who does not know that this man who ought to be damned (*damnandus*) can be saved, or that this man who is good can be made better than he is ever going to be, though both these things cannot happen save only through God. For if this man who ought to be damned were entirely unable to be saved, nor to do those things through which he would be saved by God, he could not be blamed at all nor considered guilty that he does not do those things which he could not do. Nor would those things through which he would have been saved have been rightly commanded by God, since he could by no means do them. Now, if he *were* able to be saved by the Lord through the works he might perform, who would doubt but that God could save him – he who, however, is never to be saved. For how could he be saved by God, unless it was also the case that God could save him? What indeed is it for him to be saved by God other than for God to save him? So, if it is possible for him to be saved by God, how should it not be possible for God to save him? For when the antecedent is possible, so is the consequent, because something impossible never validly follows from what is possible, since it is obvious that what something impossible follows from is itself impossible. Who would deny that from the antecedent 'Now this man is saved by God' there follows 'God saves him', since, as I have said, for the man who is to be damned to be saved by God is entirely the same as for God to save him? Since therefore it is possible for this man who is to be damned to be saved by God, who will deny that it is also possible for God to save him? God can therefore do what will never be done at all, and it is clear that what I have already reasoned above – that God can do only what he at some time does – is entirely false. Otherwise no thanks at all should be paid to him for the things which he does, since when he acts he is led to do these things which he cannot stop doing, driven by a certain necessity of his own nature rather than by his free will. (*TSch* III.39-40)

In this objection, the word *damnandus* means 'someone who ought to be damned', and Abelard seems to have in mind that the person concerned will as a matter of fact be damned because his or her deeds will deserve damnation. The objector begins from a premise about

the relationship between (8) 'The *damnandus* is saved by God' and (9) 'God saves the *damnandus*'. He says that everyone will accept the argument that from

8. The *damnandus* is saved by God.

it follows that

9. God saves the *damnandus*.[7]

He then asserts a Transfer of Possibility Principle:

10. If *A* then *B*, then if possibly *A*, possibly *B*,

which is justified by the claim that what something impossible follows from must itself be impossible. From this Principle (10), along with (8) and (9), there follows

11. If it is possible that the *damnandus* is saved by God, it is possible that God saves the *damnandus*.

But the antecedent of (11) must be admitted, since to say of anyone that he cannot be saved would imply that there is nothing he can do to prevent himself from being damned and so, Abelard says, 'he could not be blamed at all nor considered guilty that he does not do those things which he could not do.' The consequent, 'it is possible that God saves the *damnandus*' is therefore true. But since in fact the *damnandus* will be damned – that is the initial hypothesis, and why he is referred to as *damnandus* – it follows that there is something which it is possible for God to do (to save the *damnandus*) which he does not do.

Abelard might seem to have posed an objection which he will be unable to answer. Yet he considers that he can reject this line of attack as resting on a logical error. Although it is true that if the *damnandus* is saved by God, God saves the *damnandus*, it does not follow, he claims, that if it is possible that the *damnandus* is saved by God, it is possible that God saves the *damnandus* (11). The Transfer of Possibility Principle (10) must be rejected in this case. Why? Abelard begins by pointing out how what would nowadays be called oblique contexts may change the meaning of terms. He gives as examples 'a speaking man is silent' and 'a man who is speaking is silent' and 'that which is white is black' and 'whiteness and blackness to be in the same thing at the same time'. He says that

12. The speaking man is silent

is impossible, but

13. The man who is speaking is silent is possible. And that

14. Whiteness and blackness are in the same thing is impossible, whereas

[7] The link between (8) and (9) is expressed as that of a premise and conclusion, rather than in an 'if … then …' statement, but Abelard goes on to treat it as if it had been an 'if … then …' statement. Abelard is usually sensitive to this difference, but here it is not important.

15. That which is white is black is possible. These propositions are in fact each examples of a phenomenon Abelard had analysed in his logical works: the compound (12, 14) sense and the divided (13,15) sense. Abelard, following Aristotle, had noticed that a proposition of the form 'It is possible that *a* Fs and *a* does not F' can be read as either (compound) 'Possibly this is true: *a* Fs and does not F' or as (divided): '*a* Fs and possibly *a* does not F'. For many such propositions, in the compound sense they are false, but in the divided sense they are true. The new element that Abelard adds here to this idea is that different formulations of the same non-modal proposition, when modalized, may lend themselves to being interpreted especially in one of the two senses, divided or compound.

From these analogies, it would seem that Abelard is arguing that (11) can be rejected for the same reason. The antecedent is to be analysed in the divided sense, to mean, 'This man ought to be damned and it is possible that he will be saved by God' – which is true (since it is possible for anybody, even someone who will actually be damned, to be saved). The consequent is to be analysed in the compound sense, to mean, 'The following is possible: this man ought to be damned and God saves this man': this proposition is false, since it is not possible for God to do what is not fitting, and it would be unfitting to save someone who ought to be damned. (11), then, has a true proposition as its antecedent and a false one as its consequent, and so it is false.[8]

Abelard adds to this analysis a further argynebt which reveals more about his underlying view of modality. Throughout his writings, he has a tendency to consider possibility in terms of potentiality: rather than consider whether or not a given state of affairs can take place, he looks rather at what is possible for a given thing, in view of its nature. Already when discussing the same objection in the *Theologia Christiana,* Abelard had answered by following this strategy of reducing possibility to potentiality to its extreme and so distinguishing what is possible for the *damnandus* and what is possible for God. He returns to the same argument here: -

> When we say that he can be saved by God, we refer the possibility to the capacity of human nature, as if we were to say that it does not go against the nature of man that he should be saved, because in himself he is changeable so that he might consent either to his salvation or his damnation and he might offer himself to God as one to be

[8] Abelard might, to put things more generally, have said that the when '*p*' and '*q*' are propositions with exactly the same meaning as each other, then, whilst it will be true that 'If *p* then *q*', the Transfer of Possibility Principle may not apply to 'If *p*, then *q*' and 'Possibly *p*', because of the way that the possibility operator can change the meanings of *p* and *q*. The proposition, 'If someone is saved by God then God saves him', is of this sort.

> treated in the one way or the other. When, however, we say that God can save the man who is not at all to be saved, we refer possibility to the very nature of the divinity: we are saying that it would not be repugnant to the nature of God for God to save him. This is entirely false. It does indeed go against the divine nature to do what detracts from its dignity, and what it is not at all fitting that he should do. (*TSch* III.49)

II

Abelard's Divine Necessity Argument attracted critical comment even before it reached its final development, as discussed above, in the *Theologia Scholarium*. Although there were one or two close followers of Abelard who accepted it, almost everyone rejected its conclusion, which, indeed, was included among the heresies condemned at the Council of Sens in 1140. The following survey will concentrate on just five of the many philosophers and theologians, from the 1120s to the late seventeenth century, who explained why it should be rejected.

Master Rolandus

The most careful, and in many ways, sympathetic examination of Abelard's argument is due to theologian and lawyer working in Bologna, called Rolandus – and no longer identified with the Rolandus Bandinelli, who went on to become Pope. Rolandus wrote his his *Sentences* probably between 1149 and the late 1150s. Whether God can or cannot do more than he does is considered as a genuine *quaestio*, with arguments for and against; and, although Abelard is not named, the main arguments for the position that God cannot do more than he does are his. There are, however, details in the argument which go beyond anything found in Abelard's surviving works. Rolandus may have had a fuller source for Abelard's teaching than any still available, or have been reacting to Abelard's position as developed by his followers (although there are no other records of such a development). The larger part of the *quaestio* is devoted to setting out the Abelardian position and its exponents' answers to criticisms, and Rolandus says nothing against the *damnandus* argument. But, despite these signs that he took Abelard's position and arguments very seriously, he produces a fine counter-argument to the main contention of the Divine Necessity Argument.

Roland targets the way Abelard applies his strong Principle of Sufficient ReasonHe considers a sample action of God's: creating a soul. God might choose to create or not to create a soul. According to Roland, both alternatives are goods and equal goods: -

> Some say that to create is a greater good. We say that that, in themselves, to create

> and not to create are equal, and yet it is not without reason that God does the former and desists from the latter. For in him there is a hidden justice, because of which he should choose the one and desist from the other.[9]

An example of this, he adds, is found in the election of Jacob and reprobation of Esau: God *could have* equally reprobated Jacob and chosen Esau, but 'it was not done without the hidden justice set up in God that he chose the one through grace and reprobated the other through justice.' According to Abelard, were it ever the case that there was no reason for God to choose to do *x* rather than desist from doing *x*, because both were equally good, then God would have to act without reason – which is unacceptable. Rolandus *accepts* this principle, but he adds that the reason might not be in the nature of the actions chosen but in God himself. For God to create or not to create this soul are equal goods. But God can, none the less, choose one alternative *for a reason* – a hidden reason within him.

Roland does not elaborate further on this idea, but what he might have in mind can be illustrated by a human example and without the apparatus of hidden reasons. Suppose that for me now to write the next paragraph or to go to the University Library are, in themselves, exactly equally good actions. Given their equality, then even if I make myself like God by binding myself to choose the best, I can freely choose one or the other. Yet, in the pattern I go on to construct of all my actions, I can make the choice of, say, to go to the library rather than continuing writing one made according to reason. For me, living in time, it would only be subsequent to my action that the reason for it was constructed. But for God, who – according to Abelard's own proper way of thinking about it – decides all things immutably for eternity, the reason would be constructed by him simultaneously with the action.

Peter the Lombard

The second of the treatments of the Divine Necessity Argument is less sympathetic than Roland's, but it was far more influential. It was because Peter the Lombard discussed whether God can do other than he does in his *Sentences* that Abelard's argument was discussed, though anonymously, by most scholastic theologians, since the *Sentences*, written in c. 1155, were, along with the Bible, the textbook of theology faculties from the thirteen to the fifteenth centuries. Peter the Lombard thus both determined the form of the Divine Necessity Argument that was discussed in later medieval centuries and, as it turns out, the method by which it was attacked. For, whereas on many questions, the Lombard's own arguments were

[9] *Die Sentenzen Rolands nachmals Papstes Alexander III*, ed. A. M. Gietl, Freiburg: Herder, 1891 [rep. Rodopi: Amsterdam 1969] (hereafter *Rolandus*) , 57:27 – 58:1.

quickly left behind by commentators, on this question his basic approach continued to be followed.

> The Divine Necessity Argument is presented in the *Sentences* like this: -
>
> *The opinion of some who say that God can do nothing except what he does.* Some people, however, glorying in their own views, have tried to restrict God within a measure … For they say: 'God cannot do other than he does, nor do better than he does, nor omit any of the things he does.' They attempt to support this opinion of theirs with verisimilar arguments and made up reasons, as well as scriptural testimonies, saying: God cannot do except what is good and just to be done; but only what he does is good and just to be done. For if something other than he does is good and just for him to do, he does not therefore do what is good and just for him to do. But who would dare to say this? ....[10]

He puts it somewhat allusively, but the Lombard has captured form of the central argument as found in the *Theologia Scholarium*, except that he talks in terms of doing one thing or another, rather than in doing something and desisting from it. The premise is given that 'God cannot do except what is good and just to be done' (= ~ 2 in Abelard's argument). It is supposed that God is doing *x* at some given time, *t*, (cf. Premise 1 in Abelard's argument) and understood (though not explicitly stated) that *x* is therefore good and just to be done (= 4 in Abelard's argument). It is then argued that (since *x* is what is good and just to be done at *t*), if God did something else, *y*, at *t*, he would not do what it is good and just for him to do (= ~ 3 in Abelard's argument), and that cannot be the case and so God cannot do anything other than *x* at *t* (= ~ 7 in Abelard's argument). But, although the Lombard presents Abelard's argument faithfully, he does not give the whole of his reasoning: by contrast with Rolandus, for example., he does not at any point in his presentation give Abelard's reasons for insisting of a strict Principle of Sufficient Reason; nor does he explain the rejection of voluntarism.

As his introductory comments will have already indicated, the Lombard does not believe that the argument he has presented is at all convincing. He continues: -

> To these we reply, opening up the twofold understanding of the words and uncoiling what has been coiled up by them, in this way. When 'God cannot do except what is good and just', has the meaning 'God cannot do anything except that which, if he did it, would be good and just' then it is true. But God *can* do many things which are neither good nor just, because they are not nor will be, nor are they done well or shall

[10] Peter the Lombard, *Sententiarum libri IV*, 3rd ed. Grottaferrata: Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas (Spicilegium Bonaventurianum 4), I d. 43.

be done well, because they will never be done.

The Lombard, therefore, judges to be false: -

16. This is possible: God does *x* and *x* is not good and just.

But he allows as true: -

17. *X* is not good and just, and it is possible that God does *x*.

The difference between (16) and (17) is, of course, that between understanding the negation of the main premise of the argument, (2), in the compound (16) or the divided (17) sense, and there is irony in the fact that, although this distinction goes back to Aristotle, it was Abelard who had rediscovered it and for whom it was a favourite move in argument. The Lombard, who normally shies away from such logical subtleties, is here attacking Abelard with his own weapons. His contention is that Abelard has been taken in by the very sort of ambiguity he himself loved to uncover. Understood as ruling out (16), (2) is true, but in this sense it asserts just that, as the Lombard puts it, whatever God actually does is good and just: -

2* God can only do what, if he does it, is good and fitting.

But 4 follows from (1) and (2*) only if it is read as meaning

4* The following is good and fitting: that, if God is doing *x* at t, God does *x* at t1.

Accepting 3, the Strong Principle of Sufficient Reason, unchanged:

If it is good for *x* to be done at *t*, it is not good that *x* be desisted from being done at *t*,

it does *not* follow that

It is not good that *x* be desisted from being done at *t* ,

because 4*, unlike 4, does not assert the antecedent of 3. If, by contrast, 2 is taken as ruling out (17) as well as (16), and so understood as

2**The good and fitting thing is the only thing God can do,

then the rest of the argument (3-7) follows. But the Lombard believes that in this sense, 2 is not true.

The Lombard continues, following the suggestions in *TSch* III.35, by playing variations on the same theme, considering various ways of putting basically the same argument, starting out from premises based on God's justice ('He cannot do except what his justice requires'), his rightness ('He cannot do anything except what he should') and his rationality ('He can do only what there is reason for him to do'). These premises are each subjected to analyses parallel with that just studied. Each is found to be ambiguous, with one interpretation asserting, truly, the impossibility of God's actually doing something unjust, or which does not befit him, or which is unreasonable, and the other claiming, falsely says the Lombard, that God can only do what he in fact wills to do because of his justice, rightness or

rationality.

From the Lombard's discussion, it seems that the Abelardians have made a basic error in argumentation. They have not noticed the first premise in their argument is ambiguous. It has a meaning in which it is true and one in which it is false, and the conclusion they urge follows only when it is understood in the false sense. But this impression is misleading. Abelard has not made an error in argument, because he would hold that these premises are true in both senses. Not only is (2*) true, but also (2**): whatever is the good and fitting thing for him to do at a given juncture is the only thing that God can do then. The reasons why Abelard holds (2**) are precisely the positions which he uses to answer the two first counter-arguments he anticipates – those based on voluntarism and 'dead heats'. To each he opposes the idea that there is a reason independent of God which he must follow in acting, a reason such that there could never be any case where one action was not, in itself, the best and therefore that which God must choose. Of course, this is a highly contentious view of God, which few Christian thinkers would accept, and those who reject it would not affirm (2) in the sense (2**). The Lombard does not explicitly go into which of the assumptions behind Abelard's counter-arguments he would reject, but from the remarks he makes in the course of analysing the variety of forms of (2), put in terms of justice, rightness and so on, there are some hints. At one point, he says

> ... although there is a reason within him [God] for which he does some things and desists from doing others, he can however according to the same reason desist from what he is doing and do what he is desisting from.

This sounds as if he would not accept Abelard's principle that there can be no dead heats. The Lombard is not putting forward the idea of a voluntarist God, who makes things good by doing them. Along with Abelard, he accepts that God has to have reasons – and, unlike Rolandus, he seems to be thinking of independent reasons – for acting as he does, but he thinks that the same reasons might authorize alternative, equally just and fitting actions. In place of Abelard's very strong Principle of Sufficient Reason ('God performs only the action which is better than any alternative action') he would put the less strong: 'God performs only the action which is no worse than any alternative action'

In one sense, then, the Lombard does not do justice to Abelard's position, since he does not give the details of his argumentation and his answers to the objections he has anticipated, and he omits entirely the incisive counter-argument about the *damnandus* and Abelard's unexpected by characteristic way of rebutting it. In another sense, though, the Lombard is not unjust. Abelard's argument does make it appear as if, from (2) ('God can do

only what is good and fitting') and its variants – statements which seem, on the surface, to be ones which any Christian would accept – it follows, by a process of rigorous logical argument, that God cannot do other than he does. The Lombard shows that, understood in the sense which most Christians would choose, (2) does not entail this consequence; it entails it only if it is understood in a sense which most Christians would reject.

William of Ockham

Still, though perhaps justified, the Lombard's treatment in effect neutralizes the Divine Necessity Argument without needing to confront its assumptions and its details. Although the Lombard shows some signs of having thought quite carefully about the argument, probably as presented in the *Theologia Scholarium*, he did not present the university theologians with the material that could have enabled them to do the same. To them, it seemed like the simple case of position which needed disambiguation so as to prevent an obviously unacceptable conclusion – that God cannot do other than he does – being drawn from it. None the less, in explaining the ambiguity, theologians often, as the Lombard himself had done, touched on the reasons why they found the unacceptable interpretation (from which it followed that God cannot do other than he does) unacceptable, and so indicated which of Abelard's presuppositions they would reject. In the case of the Lombard, it has been suggested, the Principle of Sufficient Reason proposed by Abelard was too strong. William of Ockham, not unexpectedly, has a different underlying objection. In his commentary on the Lombard's *Sentences*, he explains his point by a reference to his theory of modal logic:-

> Because, although God cannot do anything except what it is just to be done, something which is not now just to be done because it is not done by God can however be just to be done if God were to do it. And so such a mixing of possible and non-modal premises is not valid, but it isn't our business to discuss why here, since this pertains rather to logic.

In his *Summa of Logic*, (III-1.34, p. 452), Ockham in fact explains that in a first-figure syllogism where one of the premises is non-modal and the other asserts possibility in a composed sense – that is to say that the possibility operator ranges over the whole proposition – a possible proposition does not follow as a conclusion. The sort of syllogism he has in mind to illustrate the discussion about God's power might be:

18. No unjust act is possible for God.
19. Every sparing the guilty is an unjust act.
20. No sparing of the guilty is possible for God.

This is invalid if (19) is taken in the composed sense to mean:

19*. The following is impossible: 'God does something unjust'.

The syllogism would be valid were (19) taken in the divided sense – where the possibility operator has narrow scope – to mean

19**. With regard to every unjust act, it is impossible for God to do it.

But whereas (19*) is true, Ockham would reject (19**) because, as he says, 'something which is not now just to be done because it is not done by God can however be just to be done if God were to do it.' It is fairly clear that Ockham is suggesting that God's actions are just simply because God does them. That is to say, Ockham accepts the voluntarist objection as immediately as Abelard rejects it.

Thomas Aquinas

There is, however, at least one of the scholastic theologians who, without knowing the details of Abelard's argument, tackled its central aims rather than seeing it simply as an exercise in disambiguation. And he is the most famous scholastic author of all, Thomas Aquinas. Indeed, Aquinas even seems to know that the argument was Abelard's. In his *Disputed Questions on Power*, he refers to the error

> of certain theologians who considered the order of divine justice and wisdom, according to which things are made by God, and they said that God cannot act except in accord with it, and so they came to saying that God can do only what he does. And this error is attributed to Master Peter Almalareo. …(q. 1, a. 5)

The garbled name suggests that Aquinas did not know about Abelard's position only from the anonymous argument cited in the Lombard's *Sentences*. He may well have found some other source of information about it after his early years, when he wrote his commentary on the *Sentences*, where his treatment of the argument (I d.43, art 2 and exp text) is much nearer to the usual ones. In these questions, and in the *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas constructs an argument which, if accepted, undermines proposition (3) in Abelard's argument, by showing that the very strong Principle of Sufficient Reason is inappropriate for God's actions.

Aquinas shows no trace of the voluntarism which lies at the background of, for instance, William of Ockham's approach. God's will is seen as moving towards its natural end, in the same way as any other will does. 'It is necessary', he says in the discussion in the *Questions on Power*, 'that any will' – God's included – 'should have some end which it naturally wills, and the contrary to which it cannot will.' He continues

> And along with the will's necessarily willing its natural end, it also wills of necessity those things without which it cannot have the end, if it knows that [i.e. that it cannot

> have its end without them], and these are commensurate with the end, as for instance if I will life, I will food. But those things without which the end can be had, which are not commensurate with the end, it does not will of necessity.

By 'commensurate with the end' Aquinas may mean here just 'required by the end'. For he goes on to say that the natural end of the divine will is its goodness, which it must will. But since God could manifest this goodness without these creatures – he could do it 'through other creatures ordered in a different way' – the creatures that there happen in fact to be are not commensurate with God's end, and so his will does not have to will them.

Understood in this way, however, Aquinas is merely asserting that God's goodness could manifest itself through different creatures (and so through different actions). But this does not meet Abelard's contention that, since he is always good and just, God's action must always be that one which is the best and most just. The *Summa Theologiae* does, however, give a reason to reject Abelard's contention.

> But however the order put into things by the divine wisdom, on which is based what justice is … does not adequately correspond to divine wisdom in such a way that divine wisdom should be limited to this order. For it is clear that the whole rationale of the order which a wise person imposes on the things made by him is taken from its end. When, therefore, the end is proportioned to the things that are made for the sake of the end, the wisdom of the maker is limited to some determinate order. But the divine goodness is an end that exceeds created things beyond all proportion. For which reason the divine wisdom is not determined to any certain order of things in such a way that another course of things could not flow from it. And so it should be said without qualification that God can do other things than he does. (Ia q.25, a.5)

The most important notion here – and one which is perhaps also implied by the use of the term 'commensurate' in the *Questions on Power* – is that of being out of proportion. Aquinas is saying that God does indeed will according to a rule of goodness and fittingness, but this rule is set according to God's ultimate aim, which is to manifest his own goodness. Were there a proportion between God's goodness and the manifestation of it in a good and just universe, then there would indeed be just one best way of manifesting it, one fitting action at each point. But because there is no proportion between infinite goodness and finite goodness, there is no reason to think that there are not many ways of its being manifested, all equally good though all completely inadequate. This argument is an effective counter to Abelard, but only so long as one is prepared to accept that there is such a gap between divine goodness and any possible non-divine manifestation of it. We might want to ask whether, in this case, we

can call God 'good' at all – or if we call God 'good', whether we can apply the word to any created thing. Aquinas moves to an almost Maimonidean level of negative theology, which Abelard would certainly have rejected.

Leibniz

Well over a century after the Lombard's *Sentences* had ceased to be a widely-used text-book, Abelard's Divine Necessity Argument made an unexpected reappearance in philosophical discussion, now at last read in its entirety as set out in the *Theologia Scholarium*, thanks to the D'Amboise and Duchesne's 1616 *editio princeps* of the works of Abelard (and Heloise) and to the bibliomaniac avidity of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz.[11] In the *Essais de Théodicée* (1710) he writes: -

> The renowned Peter Abelard was of a view near to that of Diodorus, when he said that God can do only what he does … The reason he gives for it is that God cannot do except what he wills; and he cannot will to do other than he does, because it is necessary that he wills whatever is fitting: from which it follows that all that he does not do is not fitting, that he cannot wish to do it and in consequence that he cannot do it.

Leibniz is not very sympathetic. He continues:

> Abelard himself admits that this opinion is peculiar to him, that almost no one agrees with it, that it seems contrary to the teaching of the saints and of reason and to derogate from the greatness of God. It seems that this writer was a bit too inclined to think and speak differently from everybody else.

At the bottom, Leibniz argues, Abelard is doing no more than playing with words: -

> Power and will are different faculties, and they have different objects too. To say that God can do only what he wills is to confuse them. On the contrary, among several possible things, he wills only that which he finds the best. For we consider all possible things as objects of his power, but we consider the things which actually exist as the objects of his always effective will.

Leibniz's idea here is that when we talk about God's power, we should not consider what he can or cannot will. Divine power includes everything possible to be created. Abelard would reject this position, since he considers that God is bound, by his benevolence, to act in accord with a standard of goodness that is independent of him.

[11] *Essais de Thédoicée* , Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1969, II.171 (pp. 217-218).

Leibniz claims that Abelard recognized that God can do what he does not do, because of his counter-argument about the *damnandus.* He believes that the analysis Abelard gives in order to reject this argument amounts to little more than playing with words, and so that Abelard is really forced to accept the force of the counter-argument: -

> Abelard recognized this himself. He puts this objection to himself. A damned person can be saved. But he cannot be saved unless God saves him. And so God can save him, and as a result do something which he does not do. He replies that we can indeed say that this man can be saved with regard to the possibility of human nature, which is capable of salvation; but we cannot say that God can save him with regard to God himself, because it is impossible that God should do what he should not do. But since he accepts that we can indeed say in one sense, speaking absolutely and setting aside the supposition that he is damned, that such a person, who is among the damned, can be saved – and that thus that which God does not do can be done, he could therefore speak like everyone else, who mean the same thing when they say that God can save this man and that he can do what does not do.

III

Was Leibniz right to take such a negative attitude? The story told in the last section might seem to be one about a bold and original line of argument which, thanks to the manner in which it was transmitted by Peter the Lombard and the condemnation which attached to it, did not receive the serious consideration it merited, except perhaps from Rolandus shortly after Abelard's lifetime. But it might, by contrast, be seen as a justifiably dismissive stance to a line of reasoning which, when examined in its details, does not stand scrutiny, as Leibniz's comments show. Leibniz's criticisms, though, turn out to be unfair, though understandable given Leibniz's own perspective.

One of the remarkable features of Abelard's approach is the overall shape of the position he advocates. As the opening remarks of this paper indicated, the general line of reasoning which limits God's scope for action because of his benevolence poses two problems, one about God, one about creation. First, it does not seem to be in keeping with the nature of God, as conceived by Christians, that he should not be able to do other than he does. Not only does it seem to limit his omnipotence; it also turns him into something more like a natural principle and less like the personal God whom Christians worship. Second, if God cannot do other than he does, then it seems to be implied that many or even all the events in the created world happen of necessity. Most Christian thinkers consider that the consequences with

regard to God's nature are enough to rule out the position that God cannot do other than he does, and so the problem about necessity in the created world does not arrive. By contrast, Abelard, as Section I above makes clear, accepts that God cannot do other than he does, but he believes that he can reject the supposed implication that this position subjects humans to necessity.

Abelard's argument that God cannot do other than he does is sound, so long as his presuppositions about the relationship between divine action and reasonable causes are granted. Abelard believes that God must, by his nature, act according to an independent criterion of reason, which never leaves any scope for alternative actions, because of a very strong Principle of Sufficient Reason, according to which there is at every juncture one action for God which is better than any other. These presuppositions are themselves inconsistent with the Christian idea of a personal God: in showing that God cannot do other than he does, Abelard is simply drawing out the implications of his underlying conception of the divinity.

By contrast, it might seem that, when Abelard argues that, although God cannot do other than he does, and so cannot save the *damnandus,* the *damnandus* still has the freedom to be saved by God, his reasoning has gone astray. It is not necessary to go as far as Leibniz, who believes that Abelard really admits that God *can* do what he does not do, but disguises the admission by speaking in an unusual way. Rather than accuse Abelard of trying to cover up a blatant self-contradiction which he recognized, a more charitable, and more plausible, interpretation accepts that Abelard genuinely intends to show that

(20) It is possible for the *damnandus* to be saved by God,

is true, but

(21) It is possible for God to save the *damnandus,*

is false.

The question is whether he succeeds in doing so, and there appear to be strong reasons to say that he does not.

In the *Theologia Schoalrium,* Abelard gives two sets of grounds for his contention (see above, Section 1). First, he maintains that (20) should be understood in the divided sense:

(20d) This man ought to be damned and it is possible that he will be saved by God

but (21) the compound sense, to mean,

(21c) The following is possible: this man ought to be damned and God saves this man.

Clearly Abelard is right to hold that (20d) is true and (21c) is false. But (20) could also be read in the compound sense:

(20c) The following is possible: this man ought to be damned and he is saved by God,

in which case it is false; and (21) could also be read in the divided sense:

(21d) This man ought to be damned and it is possible God will save him,

which is true. In short, there does not seem to be any reason to link the divided sense interpretation with 'The *damnandus* is saved by God' and the compound sense interpretation with 'God saves the *damnandus*'. Whether it is a matter of God's saving him or his being saved by God, in the compound sense it will be impossible for the *damnandus* to be saved or for God to save him, because he is *damnandus* (he is someone who in fact dies unrepentant having done what merits damnation), and in the divided sense it will be possible for him to be saved, in the sense that he might not have been *damnandus.*

The other ground given by Abelard for the contention that (20) is true and (21) false is that the two sentences make assertions about different things: (20) about what is possible for God, and (21) about what is possible for the man, the *damnandus*. Yet these grounds too apparently collapse for the same sort of reason. Clearly it is not possible for God to save the *damnandus* given that he is *damnandus*. But then it is not possible for the *damnandus* to be saved by God, given that he is *damnandus*. It is possible for the *damnandus* to be saved by God, in the sense that he might not have been *damnandus* (as Leibniz puts it 'speaking absolutely and setting aside the supposition that he is damned'): he might not have sinned or have repented before his death. But then, in this sense, it is possible that God save him. In short, as these examples and those in the previous paragraph show, the word *damnandus* generates divided-sense possibility propositions, which refer to what might have been the case absolutely speaking for the man who is *damnandus*, and compound-sense possibility propositions, which refer to what is the case given that he is *damnandus.* Not surprisingly their truth-values differ. But it seems that Abelard has illegitimately prised apart the meanings of (20) and (21) by linking (20, referring to whether he can be saved by God) to what is possible given that the man in question is *damnandus* and (21, referring to whether God can save the man) to what is possible for him absolutely.

Yet there is very good reason to believe that Abelard's position is not, in fact, open to these criticisms, because they are based lies on a mistaken interpretation of what he means by his claim that God cannot do other than he does. When I say, '*A* cannot do other than he does', I might be talking either about possible states of affairs, or about the possibility of alternative actions. By the states-of-affairs interpretation it follows from my assertion that whatever *A* does is a matter of necessity. By the alternative actions interpretation, it follows merely that, if under such and such circumstances *A* does *x*, he could not have chosen and done otherwise.

It is not a matter of necessity that he does *x*, however, because these circumstances might never have obtained. Assume (were it only the case) that my computer is mechanically infallible: when I press a certain combination of keys, there is only one word or picture that can appear on the screen: there are no alternatives so far as the computer's action is concerned. But, of course, so long as I am assumed to be free, there are many possibilities about which are the words or pictures that appear on the screen.

Abelard's Divine Necessity Argument is about the necessity of God's choices, not of states of affairs. Abelard's conception of God, as acting always in the best way according to an independent standard of goodness forces him, he believes, to deny that God can choose between alternative courses of actions, but not to deny that it is open what these alternatives might be. In the case of the *damnandus,* for example, there are two open possibilities. The first, which never becomes actual, is that the person who is described as *damnandus* (because that is what he is in the actual world) repents and dies in a state of grace. In that case, God cannot do other than save him. The second, which is what actually happens, is that he dies in a state of sin. In this case, God cannot but damn him. According to Abelard's theory of grace, no individual intervention from God is needed. God simply makes available to all freely the grace they need to act so as to be saved, if they choose to take it up.[12] He does not give or withhold grace in a way that would affect the decisions the person takes on his or her way to damnation or salvation. God cannot save the *damnandus,* then, because he has no alternative possibilities with regard to saving the *damnandus*. Of course, were the *damnandus* to have repented, he would have saved him: but that is an alternative course of action for the person, not for God. Moreover, Abelard would have good reason to deny (21d): 'This man ought to be damned and it is possible God will save him.' There is no possibility, in the sense of possible action open, for God to save him: nothing that God can do, given that in fact he will die *damnandus* and God must then damn him. But (20d), which refers implicitly to the *damnandus*'s possible actions in doing what he needs to do in order to be saved, is true.[13]

That this is the right way to understand Abelard is indicated by Rolandus who, as

[12] Abelard sets out his theory of grace most fully in his commentary on Romans (*Petri Abaelardi opera theologica* I, ed. E.M. Buytaert, Turnhout: Brepols, 1969 (Corpus Christianorum continuatio mediaeualis 11), 240-242. Abelard leaves it rather unclear whether some people might not be given grace at all (for example, pagans), though the tendency of his thinking as a whole is to suggest that it would be available to them. But, at least so far as those who receive it initially, there is no need for an extra gift of grace, which God might give or withhold, to go on acting well. God offers his grace freely to them all. See also J. Marenbon, *The Philosophy of Peter Abelard*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 326-327 and 'Peter Abelard's Theory of Virtues and its Context' in *Knowledge, Discipline and Powerin the Middle Ages. Essays in honour of David Luscombe,* ed. J. Canning, E. King and M. Staub, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011 (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters 106), 231-242.

[13] (20c) is, indeed, false. Abelard does not need to deny that there is a way to interpret (20) which would make it false, but merely to show that there is a way in which it is true. By contrast, he does need to be able – as he is – to show that (21) is false whether understood in the composite or the divided sense.

mentioned above, seems to have had access to more Abelardian material than now survives. He reports the objection about the *damnandus* fully and thoroughly, but gives the Abelardians' answer as follows: -

> [The Abelardians] say that what [the objectors] have said, 'the *damnandus* can be saved' is true, yet they say it is not the case that he [God] will be able to do what he could not do now, because, were he to save the *damnandus*, the *damnandus* would have charity with perseverance, and [God] always has this power – that is, the power to save someone who perseveres in charity. For which reason, if he were to save the *damnandus*, it does not follow that he could do something, which he cannot do now.[14]

This view recognizes that there are indeed two possible state of affairs, that the person described as *damnandus* dies in a state of sin, or that he dies in a state of grace, and that God will damn in the former case and save him in the latter one. But this does not mean that God has the power for alternative actions which Abelard wants to deny. The answer may seem to go off the point, by considering whether or not God has the same powers at one time as at another. But the 'now's here are modal, rather than temporal, and the point of the answer is that, whether the person dies unrepentant or not, there is a set way God must respond, a one-way power to damn if he is damnable and a one-way power to save him if he perseveres in charity. Rolandus's presentation of the Abelardian argument also shows explicitly its connection with his theory of grace. They insist – as in the way that the argument is interpreted above – that the *damnandus* can have the grace of perseverance from God 'because God sets grace before all people.'[15]

It is easy to mistake Abelard's position, because he seems to have lacked the conceptual tool needed to clarify it. In explaining Abelard's view just now, the distinction was made between (*a*) the counterfactual possibility, 'God saves this man (the *damnandus*)', supposing that he repented (which he did not) and (*b*) God's possible choices with regard to the man, which are fixed: if, as is the case, he has not repented, God cannot but damn him. But (*a*) represents a way of talking Abelard avoids. He recognizes the phenomenon which we conceptualize by talking in terms of counterfactual possibilities (and which, going a step further, we might describe using the language of possible worlds): that things have been or be other than they are – for example, that a blind man might see, not because he regains his sight but because he might never have become blind. But he always prefers to think about such examples in terms of the potentiality of different sorts of things. Rather than envisaging a

[14] *Rolandus*, 56:14-20
[15] *Rolandus* 56:13-14.

possible world, other than the actual one, in which Handel composed the *Messiah* whilst enjoying the full use of his sight, he would say that it is possible that Handel could see when he composed the *Messiah*, because humans have, by nature, the power to see. Handel's life story might have been different, although, within his life story, once he had become blind there was no possibility of his reverting to being able to see.[16] It would not, however, be quite right to say that a notion of counterfactual possibility plays no part, even implicitly, in his thought. In some cases, such as damning the unrepentant sinner, the single choice available to God is provided immediately by the independent standard of goodness, rightness and justice: whatever the circumstances, it is the best course of action that an unrepentant sinner be damned. But in other circumstances mentioned by Abelard, such as whether or not he makes it rain now (*TSch* III.45), the 'extremely reasonable cause' which means that God cannot but choose to make it rain must involve different possible consequences, some of which will be counter-factual states of affairs: for example, that it is best for the harvest that it rain today and be dry tomorrow, rather than vice versa. This implicit use of counter-factual states of affairs does not, however, mean that Abelard thinks about them explicitly.

There might seem, though, to be a contradiction between the interpretation advanced here, by which it is true to say, of Abelard's God, that as we would put it, 'It might have been the case that he did *x* rather than *y*, which is what he actually did, because the circumstances might have been different' and Abelard's own assertions that God arranges things for the best. For example, the Christian in the *Collationes* (probably written a few years before the *Theologia Scholarium*) declares (almost certainly here speaking for Abelard) that 'God's highest goodness, which permits nothing to happen without a cause, arranges even evil things so well, and also uses them in the best way, so that it is even true to say that it is good for there to be evil, although evil is in no way good.'[17] In fact, there is no contradiction to be found here. Abelard never makes a claim like Leibniz's, that God considers all the possible worlds there might be and chooses the best. Not only would this be a way of conceptualizing matters unfamiliar to him; he would consider it false. Abelard accepts that there is a range of events, the volitions of humans and other rational agents, over which God has no control; given the ways they decide, God will always choose to arrange those events over which he has power in the best possible way. To put it in unAbelardian language: our world is not, for

[16] On Abelard's theory of modality, see J. Marenbon, 'Abelard's Concept of Possibility', *Historia Philosophiae Medii Aevi. Studien zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters*, ed. B. Mojsisch and O. Pluta, Amsterdam and Philadelphia: Gruner, 1992; and C. J. Martin, 'Abaelard on Modality. Some Possibilities and Some Puzzles' in *Potentialität und Possibilität: Modalaussagen in der Geschichte der Metaphysik*, Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 2001, 97-125.

[17] *Collationes* (ed. J. Marenbon and G. Orlandi, Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2001, sec. 210. Abelard also touches on the same view in the discussion in the *Theologia Scholarium* (III.44)

Abelard, the best possible world but the best possible world given that agents with free will exercise it in the ways they have, do and will do (and how they will exercise it is undetermined); and to have such free-willed creatures in a world makes it much better than it would be otherwise.[18]

Perhaps it is not surprising that Leibniz, who saw the problem from so different a perspective, ended up by misjudging Abelard's position and dismissing him as someone who merely plays with words. The irony is that, at the cost of some imprecision, Abelard was able to make the idea of an omni-benevolent God compatible with human freedom, whilst Leibniz struggled, perhaps unsuccessfully, to avoid determinism.

[18] See his *In Hexaemeron* (*Petri Abaelardi opera theologica* 5), ed. M. Romig and D. Luscombe, Turnhout: Brepols, 2004 (Corphus Christianorum continutio mediaeualis 15), sections 451-455, for example.

Peter Olivi on Created Freedom

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For many years Peter Olivi's writings were little known to specialists in medieval philosophy, except for a small number dedicated to studying Franciscan thought. The situation has changed very much for the better in the last fifteen years. More of his works have been edited; other critical editions are in progress; and his work has even won praise in a recent presidential address to the American Philosophical Association.[1]

The account of human freedom presented in qq. 57-59 of Olivi's *Summa*[2] does much to explain the growing interest in his work. Three features in particular have been highlighted. First, it includes strong criticisms of Aristotle, along with contemporary masters Olivi reviles as Aristotle's footsoldiers. In this group he includes Aquinas as well as "Averroist" masters of arts.[3] Second, Olivi's account features a defense of synchronic contingency, an innovation in modal theory that later became central to the thought of Duns Scotus.[4] Scotus's teachings on the freedom of the will are so well known that Olivi's work now enjoys some reflected glory (or some reflected infamy, depending upon one's point of view.) Last but not least, he approaches human freedom from a standpoint unusual for the period. Instead of starting with the psychological faculties involved in human action and the causal relationships between them, Olivi starts the ethical and experiential data: friendliness and hostility, gratitude and ingratitude, hope and distrust, and several other aspects of human experience akin to what Strawson calls "reactive attitudes." Olivi considers such attitudes "unshakeable evidence for the existence and nature of free will," as Robert Pasnau puts it. Normore too highlights Olivi's appeal to reactive attitudes, relating them to Olivi's conception of what it is to be a person.[5]

While these three things all figure in Olivi's discussion of human freedom, their evidentiary value varies. Olivi's criticisms of Aristotle and his followers are not aimed

[1] Normore 2007, 57-61.
[2] *Quaestiones in secundum librum Sententiarum,* herein after cited as '*Summa,*' followed by the question number, then the volume and page numbers.
[3] Kent 1995, 84-88, 129-37.
[4] Dumont 1995, 161-67.
[5] Pasnau 2008 and 1999, 15-16; Normore 2007, 57-61; Strawson 1982.

exclusively at what he regards as their denial of human freedom. They appear in many different passages in his *Summa*, as well as in other works,[6] and testify to a deeply unAristotelian perspective on a wide range of issues. On the other hand, we also find in the *Summa* many straightforward appeals to Aristotle's authority, even on the same issues where other passage reject Aristotle's teachings as worse than useless. Thus the text as a whole is rather puzzling. Although in substance Olivi's thinking runs steadily along unAristotelian lines, his hostility to Aristotle seems to rise and fall dramatically, possibly leading readers to wonder whether he suffered from a mood disorder. But thanks to the labor of scholars involved in collecting and comparing manuscripts of Olivi's various works, we know that the explanation lies mainly in the nature of this particular text. The *Summa* is a compilation of questions he composed over the course of about twenty years, at different times and in different places. Near the end of his life (1294-95) Olivi edited them and arranged them into a comprehensive overview of theology.[7] Judging from Book II, the only part of the *Summa* that survives, stylistic consistency was low on his list of editorial priorities.

Synchronic contingency is directly relevant to Olivi's account of freedom but not specific to *human* freedom. This explains why he launches his defense of it much earlier in the text – in q. 42, which considers whether an angel could have sinned in the very first instant of its creation. Angelic sin is so important to him that he follows with a second question dedicated to explaining why "certain philosophizers" seem to have trouble believing the teaching of the faith on this topic.[8]

In contrast, the extensive use that Olivi makes of reactive attitudes is, if not entirely unique to his defense of specifically human freedom,[9] at least distinctive of it. He does not give them nearly so prominent a role earlier in the text. Philosophers naturally take an interest in this argumentative strategy. Even as Olivi adopts an approach that seems to anticipate Strawson's, he draws a strikingly different conclusion.

That said, there is a significant drawback to focusing narrowly on Olivi's arguments about human freedom: they can easily overshadow his account of the freedom that humans and

[6] See esp. Olivi's *Tractatus de perlegendis philosophorum libris.*

[7] Piron 2010, 21-22. See also Piron 2006 on the spread of quodlibetal disputations from the University of Paris to Franciscan *studia* in Italy and southern France.

[8] *Summa* 43, 1:714: ". . .Quia vero quibusdam philosophantibus videtur incredible quod primus angelus sic peccaverit sicut doctrina fidei tradit, idcirco aliquid breviter de hoc subdo."

[9] One of the many arguments that Olivi presents in defense of God's freedom is that, if God could not do something other than what he does, all fear and reverence, hope and pleading would be useless (*Summa* 5, 1:97).

angels have in common. One element of it is a question that people typically ignore: q. 41, on "whether the power to sin is part of our freedom." The word 'our' in this context refers to humans and angels together, as creatures with intellect and will. *Our* freedom is created freedom, in contradistiction to the uncreated freedom of God.

This question about the power to sin comes right before the much-noticed question about an angel's sinning in the first instant of its creation. Maybe readers skip it because one luminary after another had already discussed the issue, and none had anything very interesting to say. Why not? Probably because the illustrious Anselm of Canterbury had argued that the power to sin can*not* belong to the definition of freedom, and nobody considered Anselm's position so utterly wrong that he felt honor-bound to reject it. Philip the Chancellor, Robert Grosseteste, Albert the Great, Bonaventure, and Thomas Aquinas all found a way to endorse Anselm's view.[10] But not only does Olivi reject it, he makes Anselm's dialogue *De libertate arbitrii* his principal target.

I want to explore this question about the power to sin because it helps to explain why Olivi considers the differences between humans and angels trifling by comparison with what we have in common. The crucial distinction in his work lies between our created freedom and the unique, uncreated freedom of God. Although the questions he devotes specifically to human freedom are surely well worth studying, I do not to think that the argumentative approach he adopts there sheds much light on how how he thought about created freedom in general or even human freedom in particular. By that point in his *Summa* the heavy lifting has already been done. Olivi has done his utmost to establish that angels and humans are alike in a great many ways. Differences between humans and angels that readers might assume to be essential have been exposed, more often than not, as merely accidental differences. Olivi thinks we would do well to remember this if we hope for heaven. To ensure that we do remember it, he inserts a question comparing the rational powers of the human soul with angelic powers immediately before he starts discussing free decision in humans (*Summa* 56, 2:298-304).

Recall that Strawson's work focuses on our practice of holding people responsible, then argues that it makes no difference whether determinism is true. Even if it were psychologically possible to divest ourselves of reactive attitudes and continually adopt the objective standpoint, rationality could not demand this because our quality of life would decline significantly.

[10] Philip 1985, 1:83; Robert 1912, 220; Albert 1890, 403-4; Bonaventure 1885, 613-15; Thomas 1888, 688 and 1976, 118.

Olivi's perspective on freedom could hardly be more different. Not only does he think it impossible for determinism to be true, he develops an account of freedom that looks back to God as our creator and forward to heaven. While the practice of holding people responsible figures prominently in our brief earthly life, it should not distract us from what I believe Olivi considered far more important – namely, Christ's promise that in heaven we will be equal to the angels.[11] From his perspective, philosophers who regard humans as nothing more than rational animals have at once misunderstood us and devalued us.

Of course, Olivi's account of created freedom raises a problem: will we lose the power to sin in heaven, so that we are no longer free, or will we remain free but retain the power to sin? Olivi argues that we will remain free but retain the power to sin. I will return to this topic towards the end. First I want to consider his criticisms of Anselm, beginning with a quick review of what Anselm himself argues and the Augustinian background.

Anselm on Freedom of Decision

Augustine bequeathed to the West a great many texts discussing freedom and free decision. Generalizations about them are risky, in part because Augustine's thinking changed over time, but one generalization seems to me indispensable for understanding Anselm's work. Augustine usually distinguishes between free decision (*liberum arbitrium*), a natural capacity of angels and humans that cannot be lost, and what he calls *true freedom*, or sometimes just *freedom* (*libertas*), meaning liberation from the slavery of vice and the necessity of sinning. He argues that freedom was lost through original sin and can be restored only by God's grace. Unlike free decision, freedom exists in different degrees and does not require the power to sin. On the contrary, Augustine thinks that the blessed in heaven lack the power to sin. For this very reason they are *more* free than people on earth who, through God's grace, have the power not to sin but (alas) also the power to sin.

Anselm's dialogue *De libertate arbitrii* aims chiefly to construct a clear account of freedom of decision, not free decision. He understands this freedom along Augustinian lines, as something entirely positive that exists in various degrees. Anselm's definition, however, is more carefully formulated than any of the various definitions Augustine proposed. Anselm

[11] Mark 12:25; Luke 20:36. Cf. Matthew 22:30.

defines freedom of decision as "the power to preserve rectitude of will for its own sake."[12] He must therefore contest the common view that freedom of decision is the power to sin and not to sin. Rather than postpone the problem, he tackles it head-on at the very beginning of the dialogue. Three of his arguments, all of them quoted and criticized by Olivi, run as follows:

1. *The argument from definition.* Although human freedom of decision differs from that of God and the good angels, the definition of the word 'freedom' should be the same. For example, even though one animal differs from another, whether substantially or accidentally, the definition of the word 'animal' is the same for all animals. Since the freedom of decision of God and the good angels is unable to sin, the power to sin caanot be even part of the definition of freedom (*DLA* c.1; *Summa* 41, 1:689).

2. *The argument from scale.* A will that lacks the power to sin, so that it cannot be turned away from rectitude, is more free than one that can be averted, because someone who has what is fitting and advantageous in such a way that he cannot lose it is more free than someone who has it in such a way that he can lose it (*DLA* c.1; *Summa* 41, 1:689).

3. *The distinction between causal powers.* Adam and the bad angels sinned of their own accord (*sponte*)[13] and through their own decision, which was free, but they did not sin *through that in virtue of which* it was free – namely, the power by which it was able not to sin (*DLA* c.2; *Summa* 1:689-90).

Having begun by defining freedom of decision as the power to preserve rectitude of will for its own sake, Anselm proceeds to argue that this power can be exercised only if one actually has rectitude of will. Regrettably, rectitude was lost through Adam's sin and can only be restored in fallen man by God's grace. Even when we lack rectitude , says Anselm, we still have the power to preserve it, just as someone with normal vision still has the power to see a mountain even when there is no mountain in the area (*DLA* c.3).

Nobody doubts whether people have powers that we cannot exercise in particular circumstances; but does it make sense to say that people have the power to preserve rectitude, let alone preserve it for its own sake, when they themselves have never been able to exercise this power in the past, cannot exercise it now, and will never be able to exercise it in the future? Modern readers often reject Anselm's line of argument, insisting that people should be held

[12] In c. 13 (Anselm 1968, 225) he explains why he considers this the complete (or perfect: *perfectus*) definition.
[13] Nowhere in his extant works have I ever found Anselm saying that someone sins freely. He consistently describes humans and angels as sinning *sponte.*

morally responsible only if they can now exercise the power make good decisions, or at least had this power in the past and are themselves to blame for losing it. We turn now to q. 41, where Olivi flays Anselm for suggesting that any creature with a will could ever lack the power to make *bad* decisions.

Olivi on the Freedom of Creatures

Olivi surely knew that many other theologians had endorsed Anselm's definition of freedom, but he focuses overwhelmingly on the arguments in Anselm's dialogue. On one side of the issue he quotes passages from *De libertate abritrii*, tossing in for good measure a snippet from Anselm's *De concordia*. On the opposite side he cites what he calls "Jerome's second letter to Demetria," along with *De fide orthodoxa* (by John of Damascus), two works by Augustine, and even a couple of works by Aristotle. In fact, the letter he attributes to Jerome was written by Pelagius.[14] While modern scholars might regard this as a serious mistake, it was common in the Middle Ages. I doubt whether Olivi would have been much disturbed to learn the letter's true author because he assigns no special weight to it. He simply quotes the letter, along with more than a half dozen other texts, before getting on with the serious business of presenting his own views.

Olivi manages to enlist Aristotle as an authority favorable to his cause by distorting what he says in Book III, c. 5 of the *Nicomachean Ethics.* Here Aristotle argues that, as "virtue depends on us (*eph' hēmin),* so too does vice." Contrary to Socrates, what holds for good actions must also hold for bad ones. Since in both cases "the origins of the actions are in us, the actions themselves depend on us and are voluntary" (*NE* 3.5.1113b6-7, 21-22). Modern translators sometimes take Aristotle to mean that both virtue and vice, both good actions and bad ones, are "up to us" – which suggests, at least to my ear, a bit more than what Aristotle intends. The translation by Robert Grosseteste is more conservative, even deflationary. Grosseteste presents Aristotle as saying only that the sources of both good and bad actions are "*in* us." Olivi manages to transform Aristotle into a supporter of his case against Anselm by repeatedly inserting after the phrase "in us" "that is, in our free power."[15]

[14] *Epist. XVII Pelagii ad Demetriadem,* c.3, in *Patrologia latina* 33, col. 1100-1, qtd. in *Summa* 41, 1:691-2.

[15] *Summa* 41, 1:696: ". . .Quia 'virtus est in nobis, id est, in nostra libera postestate, similiter autem et malitia. . . .' Item paulo post [Aristoteles] dicit quod 'ad monstrandum quod tam mala quam bona sunt voluntaria quorum principium est in nobis,

As Olivi understands Anselm and his followers, they deny that the power to sin is even part of our freedom because they regard it as something defective rather than effective.[16] Even though the power to sin is an active cause of vicious acts, not merely something passive, they think it has to do with slavery rather than freedom. Olivi denies that the power to sin has this lowly status. He describes it instead as the "great and noble character of created and substantial freedom, albeit with the essential defect by virtue of which it falls short of the supreme freedom of God."[17] Created freedom differs essentially, not just accidentally, from divine freedom. It essentially includes both the power to choose good acts and the power to choose bad ones. In order to prove this Olivi must dispatch Anselm's arguments to the contrary.

Olivi faults the argument from definition on two grounds. First, there is no reason to assume that the definition of freedom must be the same for God and creatures. It has to be the same only when a word is used univocally, not when it is used equivocally or analogically. Second, "even though the concept of freedom that is common to the freedom of God and creatures is the same as regards that commonness," it does not follow that there is no differentia through which created freedom differs and which belongs to the definition of created freedom. From Olivi's perspective, then, Anselm's whole approach is misguided.

Olivi limits the scope of the argument from scale so that it no longer proves what Anselm wants. Granted, that freedom which is essentially incapable of sinning is more free than than any freedom that is essentially capable of sinning; but this only goes to show that God is essentially more free than any creature, which nobody doubts. It does not show that creatures become *essentially* more free in heaven. They are only accidentally more free in virtue of accidental dispositions (*habitus*) of glory and grace.[18] Even in heaven their freedom essentially includes the power to sin.

As for the subtle distinction between causal powers, Olivi argues that Anselm is wrong to claim that free decision is free simply because it is able to preserve justice and not sin. This is only part of our freedom, says Olivi; and pause to consider the implications of Anselm's position.

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id est, in nostra libera potestate, testificantur ea quae fiunt a legislatoribus. . . ."

[16] Note that this criticism extends to Bonaventure, a distinguished master of Olivi's own Order.

[17] *Summa* 41, 1:696: "Alii vero sequentes Hieronymum et Damascenum at Augustinum et etiam Aristotelem dicunt quod potentia peccandi, et maxime prout sumitur active, non dicit purum defectum seu negationem, immo magnam et nobilem entitatem libertatis creatae et substantialis, cum defectu tamen essentiali suae limitationi per quam deficit a summa libertate Dei substantialiter impeccabili et indefectibili."

[18] *Summa* 41 ad 2, 1:699: ". . .Illa libertas quae est essentialiter inobliquabilis et impeccabilis est essentialiter liberior quacunque obliquabili; illa autem quae non est essentialiter inobliquabilis, sed solum ratione accidentalis habitus gloriae et gratiae sibi adiuncti non est ex hoc essentialiter liberior, sed solum accidentaliter."

For one thing, it suggests that only our virtuous actions are caused by free decision insofar as it is free. What about indifferent acts? If I go for walk with no virtuous motivation for walking, but no bad one either, am I not exercising the power of free decision insofar as it is free? For another thing, Anselm's position suggests that someone with the power to do good but lacking the power to sin would be capable of meritorious acts, which Olivi thinks impossible, at least as regards the merit of creatures "in the complete and proper sense."[19] (He takes care to add that the merit of Christ is a special case.)

Now one might well wonder why Olivi would be so adamant about the power to sin as an essential component of created freedom. The explanation cannot be that he envisions heaven as a tumultous place where people sometimes behave badly and get evicted. He excluded this possibility in q. 40, just before picking a fight with Anselm. There he distinguishes between the "remote" power to sin built into the created will and essential to its freedom, and the "proximate" power making it disposed, or at least easily disposable, to evil. While the second can be taken away through grace, even God himself cannot eliminate the first – because it is impossible for God to make a creature both free and essentially unable to sin.[20] In q. 41 Olivi expands on his answer, emphasizing that the disposition of glory has the status of accident, so that our essentially fallible created freedom remains. Later he explains that what is truly essential to our freedom is the power to act as a self-mover, not the power to choose opposite acts of any kind whatsoever. The second kind of power, especially as regards the power to choose between meritorious and demeritorious acts, is not so essential that we cannot lack the free use of it.[21] Perhaps the blessed will still have decisions to make in heaven, but none of them would be the morally significant decisions we have to make in earthly life.

Does Olivi share the standard Augustinian view that we will be *more* free in heaven than we are on earth? He does not claim that we will be more free, nor does he deny we will be more free. He finesses the problem by arguing that the state of glory is *nobler* (not freer) from

[19] *Summa* 41, 1:697.

[20] *Summa* 40 ad 2, 1:688: ". . . Prout peccabilitas dicit solum ordinem potentiae remotae, aut prout dicit possibilitatem competentem voluntati sine habitu ad contrarium determinante sumpte, sic est essentialis nostrae voluntati; prout vero dicit ordinem potentiae propinquae et dispositae aut de facili disponibilis et mobilis a se ipsa ad malum, sic non est essentialis et ideo potest tolli per gratiam et gloriam consummatam." There are obvious comparisons between Olivi's position on this issue and Scotus's, which I omit for the sake of brevity. On Scotus's position see Cross 1999, 149-51, and Gaine 2003, 51-70.

[21] *Summa* 57 ad 29, 2:378: ". . .In omnibus illis statibus liberum arbitrium potest operari et operatur aliqua tanquam a se motum, licet in eis non possit simpliciter in quaecunque opposita. Posse enim operari tanquam a se est essentiale ipsi libertati, sic vero operari est essentiale eius libero usui, et ideo sine primo nunquam potest esse nec sine secundo potest habere liberum usum. Posse vero in quaecunque opposita, et maxime in meritum et demeritum, non sic spectat ad eius essentiam aut ad eius liberum usum quin sine ipso possint esse."

one perspective, while our current state is nobler from another perspective (*Summa* 41, 1:702). Maybe he shrinks from admitting that the state of glory will not make us more free because he thinks we love our freedom more dearly than anything else God could create.[22] Thus we might have trouble imagining a state that would be better for us but not freer.

Equality with the Angels

The question where Olivi criticizes Anselm's definition of freedom is only one of many where he argues that humans and angels are very much alike, even in the kind of freedom that we have. In contrast, the angels described by Aquinas are more like creatures in science fiction, so superior that we can scarcely understand them. Thomistic angels seem at once enviable and pitiable – enviable because their intellectual powers are so great, pitiable because the first choice they make is irreversible, and perhaps also because no two of them belong to the same species. Many scholars have remarked on Olivi's rejection of Aquinas's position on the relation between soul and body in human beings. Fewer have noticed that he attacks Aquinas from the other flank as well. As Olivi makes humans more like angels than Aquinas does, so too does he make angels more like humans. For example, he insists that angels reason discursively, except when enjoying the Beatific Vision; and it is a mistake to think that the angelic will is by nature any more irreversible than the human will.[23]

Olivi gives his most interesting and explicit comparisons between humans and angels in a question he inserts just before shifting his focus to human freedom. The question is simply whether humans' rational powers and angels' are of the same species. Olivi argues that they are. On his view, those who insist that the rational soul according to its complete formal essence is the soul of the body are "compelled" to say otherwise. They must regard it as different in species *simpliciter*. Those who think, as he does, that the rational soul is the form of the body only according to its sensitive part, are not "compelled" to this conclusion.[24] But why

[22] Olivi, *Lectura super Apocalipsim*: "Praeterea, tantum Deus appretiatur omne a nobis sibi datum, quantum nobis est dilectum et carum, et quanto ipsa donatio est magis supra naturam voluntatis nostrae. Sed nihil sub Deo est nobis ita dilectum et carum sicut libertas et dominium voluntatis nostrae. Hoc enim infinite appretiamur; appretiamur enim illud plus quam omnia quae Deus posset facere, quae sunt infinita, et plus quam aliquid quod sit in nobis. . . ." (qtd. in Forni 1999, 352).

[23] *Summa* 57, 2:380-81; 56 ad 3, 2:303-4.

[24] *Summa* 56, 2:302: "Qui enim volunt quod anima rationalis secundum totam formalem suam essentiam sit forma corporis coguntur dicere quod non solum secundum suam formam sensitivam, sed et secundum intellectivam differat specie simpliciter a mente anelica, quia nihil essentialius est forma alicuius materiae quam quod sit formal et actus respectu illius materiae. –Qui

does Olivi see any compulsion here? Thomists seem quite willing, even eager, to underscore the differences between humans and angels. Aquinas usually wins praise for treating the rational soul as the form of the body and thereby perserving the unity of the human being as a whole.

Olivi sees the soul-body relation very differently, as more like a branch from a pear tree being grafted onto an apple tree. The horticultural imagery helps to explain his idea of a living, growing unity formed from different kinds of things. He does not arrive at this view of human beings by thinking about reactive attitudes. He arrives at it by thinking about Christ's promise that we will be equal to the angels in heaven. Indeed, all five of Olivi's arguments against the Thomistic conception of the rational soul appeal to equality (*Summa* 56, 2:299-301). How could we ever be equal to the angels if the rational powers of the human soul are of an intrinsically inferior kind?

An earlier question of Olivi's *Summa*, in the section on angels, goes to defending equality from another angle. How could humans possibly replace the fallen angels in heaven, as "the entire Church commonly holds," if humans are essentially inferior? On the face of it, angels would have to be replaced with other angels, newly created to to make up the missing number. It would be unseemly for them to be replaced with something of lower value (*Summa* 48, 1:755-6). This is what I take to be Olivi's chief concern: the *value* of human beings as creatures with intellect and especially freedom of decision. To be sure, we are not the same as the angels, but because we are equal in value we are suitable replacements – like so many different precious gems inserted as replacements in a royal crown.[25] If this were not the case – if the human mind were essentially inferior to the angelic mind – how could the soul of Christ be nobler than any angel's? Olivi concludes that the angelic mind has higher status thanks to accidental features, not essential ones – only different dispositions "annexed" to it.[26]

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vero ponunt animam rationalem esse formam corporis secundum solam partem suam sensitivam non coguntur tenere quod unio vel unitva inclination partis intellectivae ad partem sensitivam et ad corpus sensifacatum sit omnino id ipsum quod absoluta essentia partis intellectivae, sed sufficit quod sit quaedam essentia relativa illi annexa, sicut piro insertae in arborem pomum est annexa inclinatio et unio ad pomum cui est inserta. . . ."

[25] *Summa* 48, 1:759: "Et idem est de corona regia habent plures gemmas sibi incastratas; de qua quibusdam cadentibus aliae alterius speciei, aequalis tamen decoris et valoris, iterum inseruntur."

[26] *Summa* 48, 1:759-60: ". . .Quidam non indocte volunt quod mens angelica et humana quoad absolutam quidditatem suarum specierum simpliciter sunt aequales, in suis vero individuis iuxta beneplacitum creatoris possunt accipere gradus quantum ad substantialia et quantum ad accidentalia et quantum ad naturalia et gratuita. Unde et animam Christi quoad omnia credimus nobiliorem omni mente angelica. Quod igitur mens angelica a sua creatione nobiliorem statum accepit quam natural human factum est hoc quoad accidentia sibi inserta. Unde quod angelus clarius et altius et copiosius potuit omnia intelligere quam homo non fuit ex absoluta essentia intllectuum suorum, sed potius ex variis habitibus claritatibus et

Recall that the blessed in heaven will likewise benefit from God-given dispositions. Like the angels, they will remain essentially fallible creatures, complete with the power to sin. Only God's grace ensures that they cannot exercise that power, just as only God's grace determines how close to him we will be.

On this interpretation, it is true that Olivi does not develop his account of human freedom by starting with the psychological faculties involved in human action and the causal relationships between them. But neither does he start with ethical and experiential data, let alone with the human practice of holding people responsible. He starts with the conviction that all humans are intrinsically equal in value -- not only to each other but even to angels, at least as regards the rational powers of the soul. While it matters a great deal how we use these powers, even our utmost exertions will not guarantee us a top-tier place in heaven. As the hierarchy in heaven rests on no caste system, neither does it rest on some individual "merit" independent of God's grace. It rest wholly on God's generosity – a message unlikely to inspire much enthusiasm at a convention of the American Philosophical Association.

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dispositionibus sibi annexis. . . ."

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Natural Law, Moral Constructivism, and Duns Scotus's Metaethics:

The Centrality of Aesthetic Explanation

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Scotus's metaethics has long been the subject of considerable controversy, focused in particular on the following question: does Scotus, or does he not, accept some kind of divine command theory, such that the moral value of an action is dependent simply on the divine will? All sides in the dispute (rightly) agree that, according to Scotus, moral norms governing human behavior towards God – represented by the first two (or perhaps three) commands of the Decalogue – belong to natural law, such that the goodness and obligatoriness of such actions follow automatically from the nature of the terms involved. But at stake is the status of moral norms contained in the second table of the Decalogue. The debate is caused by certain things that Scotus says quite clearly: first, that such norms are not part of natural law, but are somehow merely 'consonant' with it; and, secondly, that God can dispense from any of these norms, such that the norm no longer obtains.

One side of the debate – defended by Allan B. Wolter and, more recently, by Mary Beth Ingham – finds in Scotus, at heart, a traditional teleological Aristotelianism. Wolter interprets the consonance claim to amount to a claim about human teleology: human nature is such that there are ways in which any instance of it should behave and be treated. On teleology – the notion of an ethic directed to the goal of human life, or human perfection – Wolter suggests the following:

> What right reason tells us . . . is what perfects man's human nature naturally, and this should suffice for the development of a rational ethics by those who claim man's moral behavior is not essentially dependent upon a divine command.[1]

[1] Allan B. Wolter, *Duns Scotus on the Will and Morality* [= *WM*] (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1986), 29.

And, supposing that the second table of the Decalogue is somehow intrinsically related to this teleology, this reading in turn means that God's power to dispense from the second table of the Decalogue is somehow determined by features of human nature. As Wolter puts it,

> Scotus maintains . . . that while the second table represents what is 'valde consonans' with natural law, certain aspects of the second table of the decalogue can be dispensed with according to right reason, when their observation would do more harm than good. But God could obviously not dispense from all its precepts at once, for this would be equivalent to creating man in one way and obligating him in an entirely different fashion, something contrary to what he 'owes to human nature in virtue of his generosity'.[2]

The crucial point here is that Wolter's reading presupposes that following the second table of the Decalogue, at least *ut in pluribus* (as for Aquinas)[3] is somehow intrinsically linked with the teleological attainment of the vision of God. At the other extreme of interpretation is the view of Thomas Williams, who maintains that the claim about consonance is to be understood simply in terms of God's will: what makes norms of the second table consonant with natural law is simply that God wills them, and, since God can will entirely different moral norms from those that he in fact wills, it follows that moral norms (other than those governing behavior towards God) can be known only by revelation. For Williams, God exhibits right reason simply in choosing ends before choosing means: thus making right reason a part of action theory, not moral psychology.[4]

A third interpretation is located between these two – though not quite mid-way, since it is

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[2] Wolter, *Duns Scotus on the Will*, 24. I discuss the quotations from Scotus below.

[3] See Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* [= *ST*] 1-2.94.4 c.

[4] See Thomas Williams, 'How Scotus Separates Morality from Happiness', *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, 69 (1995), 425-45; 'Reason, Morality, and Voluntarism in Duns Scotus: A Pseudo-Problem Dissolved', *The Modern Schoolman*, 74 (1997), 73-94; 'The Unmitigated Scotus', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, 80 (1998), 162-81; 'A Most Methodical Lover? On Scotus's Arbitrary Creator', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 38 (2000), 169-202. Williams provides a brief summary of his thinking on the matter in 'From Metaethics to Action Theory', in Thomas Williams (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 332-51. Mary Beth Ingham has replied to Williams along lines consistent with Wolter's understanding in her 'Duns Scotus, Morality, and Happiness: A Reply to Thomas Williams', *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, 74 (2000), 173-95, and 'Letting Scotus Speak for Himself', *Medieval Philosophy and Theology*, 10 (2001), 173-216. More recently, Allan B. Wolter too offered a reply to Williams in his 'The Unshredded Scotus: A Response to Thomas Williams', *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, 77 (2003), 315–56. Williams has an article on his website replying to some of this recent literature:
<http://shell.cas.usf.edu/~thomasw/The%20Divine%20Nature%20and%20Scotus%27s%20Libertarianism.pdf>

clearly closer to Williams's than to Wolter's. Hannes Möhle agrees with Williams that Scotus's ethics abandons the kind of teleological approach accepted by Wolter, and he agrees too that God can make any and every norm of the second table other than it is.[5] But he understands the consonance claim to refer to the way in which general commands are made applicable to specific cases. For example, suppose such-and-such is a general objective (my term, not Möhle's), then the achievement of the objective may involve acting in this or that specific way: and thus, if the general objective amounts to something expressed as a moral norm, so too will be the specific activity. But nothing about human nature entails (other than in genuine cases of norms belonging to natural law) that the general objective might not be quite different from what it is, and amount to something expressed as a quite different moral norm. Given this conceptual relation between general and particular (a connection that Möhle describes as 'neither purely intuitive nor deductive'),[6] it is possible to ascertain rationally the ways in which one should behave. God's actions are constrained by the principle of non-contradiction, and this entails that God's actions must be (morally) consistent within any given ordering:

> The validity of the principles of commutative justice and the weighing of goods . . . are not themselves called into question in [Scotus's] discussion of the possibility of dispensation. Instead, those principles are used in order to make clear the coherent structure of a whole ordering that is subject to dispensation.[7]

Möhle's discussion does justice to the rational accessibility of moral norms in a way that Williams has trouble dealing with, but which is clearly present in Scotus's texts.

In what follows, I attempt to give an account of Scotus's metaethics, focusing on what Scotus himself seems to regard as the most important feature of the system, namely, the different attitudes God takes to various moral norms, and the ways in which God is motivated to take these attitudes.[8] Scotus (unusually) makes Aquinas his target,[9] so I begin by describing aspects

[5] See Hannes Möhle, *Ethik als scientia practica nach Johannes Duns Scotus: Eine philosophische Grundlegung*, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, N.F., 44 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1995), summarized conveniently in Möhle, 'Scotus's Theory of Natural Law', in Williams, ed., *Cambridge Companion*, 312-31.

[6] Möhle, 'Scotus's Theory', 319.

[7] Möhle, 'Scotus's Theory', 323. A position intermediate between Williams's and Wolter's is also defended in Terence Irwin, *The Development of Ethics: A Historical and Critical Study. Volume I: From Socrates to the Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 687-700, though Irwin does not present his account in terms of the Williams-Wolter debate. I offer some comments on Irwin's discussion below.

[8] I have long thought that the question of the restrictions – or lack thereof – on God's will are the key to Scotus's ethics, and I

of Aquinas's complex view, with an eye on bringing out the ways in which Scotus's contrasts with it. (I do not claim that my account of Aquinas fully integrates everything that he has to say about practical rationality – far from it. I focus merely on Aquinas's understanding of divine justice, and try to draw out certain consequences from it. This approach best allows us to see what Scotus believed he was reacting to in Aquinas. It may well be that what Aquinas has to say about divine justice does not comport well with other claims that Aquinas makes about human practical rationality. But that is a different story.) Compared with Aquinas's discussions, Scotus's treatment is brief and not very fully worked out. So where Scotus does not make his own philosophical motivations clear, I try to offer plausible speculations as to why Scotus might defend the views he does.

1. Aquinas

On Aquinas's teleological understanding of the created realm, certain kinds of activity and certain kinds of objects constitute natural goals for substances of given kinds. This view of reality drives Aquinas's account of moral normativity. Aquinas holds that the teleological requirements that ground normativity run, as it were, in two directions, relative to the agent and to the object (I use 'object' not in any technical sense here, but merely to pick out the thing affected by the action). The first is that the object of a given action is such that the action directed to it is somehow required for an agent to achieve a certain natural goal. The second is that the agent's action is somehow required for the object's teleological perfection too. Normativity, in other words, is explained by the fact that an action is good for the agent and good for the object, and the binding nature of moral norms is based on these requirements.[10] Aquinas makes the point most clearly in his discussion of divine justice:

> People are owed what is theirs. And something is said to belong to someone if it is

have laid out some of these intuitions in past work (see my 'Duns Scotus on Goodness, Justice, and What God Can Do', *Journal of Theological Studies*, 48 (1997), 48-76, and *Duns Scotus*, Great Medieval Thinkers (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 89-95). The view I defend here, I hope, supersedes those accounts, but nevertheless starts from the same basic intuition. In particular, I now believe that the goodness, as well as the obligatoriness, of the entire second table of the Decalogue depends on God's free approval of the norms therein contained.

[9] He lays out what he takes to be Aquinas's view at *Ordinatio* [= *Ord*.] 3.37.un., nn. 8-12 (ed. C. Balić and others (Vatican City: Vatican Polyglot Press, 1950-), X, 274-6).

[10] I leave on one side whether or not arguments from teleology to obligation are guilty of the naturalistic fallacy. If they are, then both Aquinas and Scotus are guilty, though Scotus less so since he grounds fewer obligations on teleology, as we shall see.

> ordered to him. . . . The term 'debt' implies a certain order of requirement or necessity of the thing to which it is ordered. And there is a two-fold order to be considered in things: one, by which something created is ordered to another created thing, as parts are ordered to a whole, and accidents to substances, and each thing to its goal; and another order by which all created things are ordered to God. . . . He, however, is not a debtor, because he is not ordered to other things; rather, they are ordered to him.[11]

The opening two sentences here make it clear that part of the explanation for the binding nature of moral norms lies in the teleological requirements of the object (here, specifically, of intelligent agents, but I assume that the point can be generalized): what is required is that the object has what is 'its': and this is, most crucially, its teleological perfection. Moral duties require too that there is a sense in which the agent is 'ordered' to the object: that is to say, that the agent has its activity, relative to the object, as some sort of teleological goal. Aquinas makes this clear a little earlier in the quotation too: each thing is ordered 'to its goal'. And elsewhere Aquinas talks of the binding force of moral norms in terms of the agent's achievement of its teleological purpose:

> Binding has a place in those cases of necessity in which necessity is imposed by something else. There is a two-fold necessity which can be imposed by another agent: one [the necessity] of coercion; . . . the other conditioned necessity. . . . The first necessity, i.e. of coercion, has no place in the motions of the will. . . . The second necessity can be imposed on the will: namely, that it is necessary to choose this if this good ought to be pursued, or if this evil ought to be avoided.[12]

Despite the language ('conditioned necessity'), it would be a mistake, I think, to count this merely as a weak view of what it is for moral norms to be binding – i.e. to amount to nothing more than the assertion of a conditional kind of necessity: that such-and-such an action is necessary for the achievement of such-and-such a goal. Aquinas accepts a strong principle of practical rationality according to which it is not possible to will against an occurrent judgment

[11] Aquinas, *ST* 1.21.1 ad 3.
[12] Aquinas, *De veritate* 17.3 c.

that such-and-such is a good (I ignore questions of *akrasia* here). Aquinas expresses this most forcefully in the context of a discussion of the impossibility of not desiring God if granted direct acquaintance with God. In the limit case that we experience the vision of God, we simply cannot will against it: our willing it is naturally necessary:

> Natural necessity is not incompatible with the will. Furthermore, it is necessary that, just as the intellect of necessity inheres in first principles, so the will of necessity inheres in the ultimate goal, which is beatitude.[13]

So the fact that we necessarily desire the ultimate goal entails that we have an obligation to pursue it: and this obligation is the result of some kind of *categorical* necessity.

The general, idea, then, is that acts are obligatory simply to the extent that they foster the achievement of the final goals of the agent and/or object. Aquinas does not have an *additional* notion of obligation, over and above this. This might suggest that what it is to be binding is simply the necessity of acting *in accordance* with moral norms, without there being the extra component, as it were, of having to *follow* the norm. What I mean here is that an agent might act in accordance with a moral norm even though that norm does not represent a strictly moral obligation for the agent, one that the agent is somehow subject to. In his account of God's justice Aquinas suggests that at least in the divine case there is indeed some kind of difference between these two ways of being related to a norm, and I mention it here because it forms a striking contrast with Scotus's account of divine justice (and a relevant one, given that Scotus's target, as I note below, is Aquinas's view). Thus, Aquinas maintains that God owes certain duties to himself:

> God's justice regards what befits him, inasmuch as he renders to himself what is owed to him.[14]

So – presumably – moral norms relating to the ways in which God is treated bind even God in some sense stronger than merely requiring God to act in accordance with the norm – although, of

[13] Aquinas, *ST* 1.82.1 c.
[14] Aquinas, *ST* 1.21.1 ad 3.

course, the ground for the norm is simply God's own teleological perfection as the final goal of all existence, including his own.[15] But God is not so bound in his dealings with creatures. Rather, Aquinas holds, God acts in ways which accord with what would be the duties of a moral agent were it the case that God was a moral agent (i.e. an agent subject to these kinds of moral obligations), and that he does so necessarily. Thus, 'God is not a debtor' to creatures – his obligations do not relate to the teleological perfections of creatures – but, nevertheless,

> It is owed to any created thing that it has what is ordered to it: as [it is ordered] to a human being that he has two hands, and that other animals serve him. And in this way too God exercises justice, when he gives to each what is owed to him according to the notion of its nature and condition. . . . And although God gives what is owed to something, he, however, is not a debtor.[16]

In line with this, Aquinas thinks of the justice exhibited in God's actions towards creatures as merely an *analogue* of distributive justice:

> [There is a species of justice] that consists in distributing: and it is called distributive justice, by which a ruler or steward gives to each in accordance with its desert. Therefore just as the order appropriate to a family or any governed multitude reveals this sort of justice in the ruler, so the order of the universe, which appears both in natural things and in voluntary ones reveals the justice of God.[17]

The idea, of course, is that the universe does indeed correspond to the requirements of distributive justice, and so do God's actions relative to creatures, even though these requirements are not morally binding on God. (Commutative justice governs exchanges between equals, and, since nothing is God's equal, commutative justice cannot govern God's dealings with

[15] Note that Aquinas assumes that God necessarily follows his duties. Scotus makes a similar assumption, as we shall see below: from which we can infer that neither of these thinkers holds that *freedom* is a presupposition of duty. I take it that this is a striking divergence from modern understandings of duty, and one that might easily lead to misunderstanding. But having noted, it, I do not comment on it further.

[16] Aquinas, *ST* 1.21.1 ad 3.

[17] Aquinas, *ST* 1.21.1 c.

creatures.)[18]

Aquinas is explicit that whatever God does is *necessarily* in accordance with the teleological dispositions of creatures – God acts in accordance with the relevant norms (but not such that his acting in accordance with the relevant rules amounts to following the rules):

> It is not appropriate to the maximal goodness of God that he does not lead to perfection the things that he has produced. The highest perfection of anything is in the pursuit of its goal. So it pertains to divine goodness that, just as he produced things in being, so he leads them to their goal.[19]

So the requirements of distributive justice are not morally binding on God; but they do seem to be binding in some other way.[20] Aquinas makes much the same point when addressing an objection to the effect that God's complete freedom entails that his will cannot be bound by considerations of justice:

> Since the cognized good is the object of the will, it is impossible for God to will other than the reason of his wisdom approves: which is a sort of law of justice, according to which his will is right and just. Whence, whatever he does according to his will he does justly, just as what we do according to law we do justly. But we [do so] in accordance with the law of some higher being, whereas God is a law for himself.[21]

The idea, again, is that in such cases God acts in accordance with moral norms, but not such that he treats these norms as rules to be followed. Aquinas's terminology is different from ours: his sense of 'in accordance with', in the quotation, clearly means *following*, being bound by.

Now, all of this entails that Aquinas makes a strong distinction between his account of divine justice, on the one hand, and that of natural law, on the other. The only duties that God has are to himself. But the first principle of natural law is wider than merely an expression of duties to God: it is a function of the natural dispositions of creatures:

[18] Aquinas, *ST* 1.21.1 c.
[19] Aquinas, *ST* 1.103.1 c.
[20] The observant reader will have noted that I ascribe to Aquinas more or less exactly the position defended in Thomas V. Morris, 'Duty and Divine Goodness', *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 21 (1984), 261-8.
[21] Aquinas, *ST* 1.21.1 ad 2.

> The first principle in practical reason is one that is grounded on the nature of the good, which is that the good is what all desire. Therefore this is the first precept of law, that the good is to be done and pursued, and the bad avoided.[22]

(As above, this secures that the binding nature of moral norms relates specifically to the necessity of our desiring our goal.) This is not the principle that God follows in his activity (even though he necessarily acts in accordance with it). As we shall see, Scotus disagrees strongly with this: he holds that the obligations imposed by natural law cannot extend further than the scope of divine justice, since natural law is supposed to include norms that are globally binding.

One result of God's acting in accordance with a rule (that does not bind him, and that he does not follow) is that humans who are bound by the rule (expressed in the second table of the Decalogue) necessarily *follow* the rule if they are to achieve their goal. And the reason for this is that following the commands of the second table of the Decalogue is necessary for the achievement of the ultimate goal of human existence. And in this context, Aquinas highlights two kinds of goal, corresponding to the two tables of the Decalogue:

> It is necessary in the divine law that there are firstly included precepts ordering a human being to God; and then other precepts ordering a human being to others, neighbours, living together under God.[23]

(Aquinas makes it clear that divine law, restricted to its expression in the Decalogue, is included in natural law.)[24]

So Aquinas holds that for a principle of natural law other than the first to be such it must be entailed by the first principle ('they can be known immediately from the first common principles').[25] Given this, the content of the various moral norms is, according to Aquinas, determined simply by considering the kinds of behaviour that things standardly engage in, and

[22] Aquinas, *ST* 1-2.94.2 c.
[23] Aquinas, *ST* 1-2.100.5 c; see too *ST* 1-2.90.2 c.
[24] See Aquinas, *ST* 1-2.100.1 c. Divine law encompasses too divine *positive* law (see e.g. *ST* 1-2.91.5).
[25] Aquinas, *ST* 1-2.100.3 c.

using this analysis as the basis for an account of what the natural goals of things might be.[26] So the precepts of both tables of the Decalogue, normative for human activity, represent inferences from the same first principles of practical reasoning: not that the second table precepts can be inferred from the first, but that both can be inferred from the first moral principle that the good is to be done – coupled, I assume, with teleological claims (howsoever derived) about what constitutes the good for human beings.[27] But God's reasons for affirming the two tables are nevertheless different: the first table represents expressions of divine duty, whereas the second, despite following from the same necessary principle, is commanded by God in virtue of his necessarily following what would be duties were he an agent that had duties in respect to his creatures.

Aquinas holds, then, first, that the moral norms of both tables of the Decalogue gain their content and their binding nature from considerations of teleology; secondly, that these moral norms are all derived inferentially from the same first principle of practical reasoning (i.e. that the good is to be done and evil avoided); and thirdly, that, while God has no obligations to creatures, he certainly acts in accordance with what would be moral obligations were he a moral agent – and this is what it is for God to be just in his dealings with creatures. Scotus dissents from all three of these claims, and this dissent results in his adopting a very different kind of metaethic. On the first of these, Scotus denies that any precepts of the second table can be derived from teleological analyses; on the second, while he agrees that any principle of natural law other than the first must be entailed by the first principle, he has a different account of what the first principle is; and on the third he holds that God acts contingently – he has motivations for affirming the precepts of the second table, but they are neither expressions of duties nor expressions of non-moral claims that would be duties if God had such. Indeed, as we shall see, Scotus's account of divine justice focuses on the question of God's just motivations. Aquinas's God does what he should, or what accords with what would be an obligation were God a moral agent, just because he should, or because it accords with what would be an obligation were God a moral agent. Scotus's God does what he should, but this is because he is *motivated* to do it: his justice (necessarily) inclines him to act in accordance with his obligations and normative

[26] Aquinas presents the first stages of such an analysis at *ST* 1-2.94.2 c. The details need not concern us here.

[27] See e.g. Aquinas, *ST* 1-2.90.2 c; *ST* 1-2.93.1 c; *ST* 1-2.100.5 c; *ST* 1-2.100.9 c; *ST* 2-2.59.4 sed contra and c. At *ST* 1.82.2 c Aquinas notes that there are certain particular goods that have 'a necessary connection to beatitude', though he does not specify what these are.

judgments.

2. Duns Scotus

One of the most striking differences between the metaethical theories of Aquinas and Scotus is that Scotus holds that the first principle of natural law is not that good should be done, but that God should be loved. And – like Aquinas – he holds that any precept in natural law must be such that it is entailed by the first principle. Now, like Aquinas, Scotus holds that this entailment is grounded in a teleological claim about the ultimate good of human nature as fulfilled in the beatific vision. But Scotus does not hold that the precepts of the second table of the Decalogue have any intrinsic connection with human teleology, and, as we shall see, the combination of these two claims (that the first principle of natural law is that God is to be loved, and that any precept of natural law must be such that it is entailed by the first principle) leads to a very different account of the explanation for the normativity of the second table of the Decalogue. Scotus's remarks are surprisingly sketchy, but I begin with his two main statements of the first principle of natural law:

> 'If God exists, he is to be loved as God alone' is a necessary consequence.[28]

> Legal [justice] could be posited in God if there were some other law prior to the determination of his will, with which law and legislator, as other (as it were), his will would rightly agree. And there is indeed this law, 'God is to be loved', if however it should be called a law and not a practical principle of law.[29]

Legal justice is the expression of binding moral norms.[30] The idea is that God has an obligation to love himself. This basic precept is morally binding on God, and thus represents a general

[28] Scotus, *Ord*. 3.37.un., n. 20 (Vatican, X, 280). In this paragraph, Scotus suggests that this principle is one from which other practical principles of natural law follow, and the context makes it clear that he regards any unique principle from which other principles can be inferred as a practical principle 'known from its terms' (*Ord*. 3.37.un., n. 16 (Vatican, X, 279): from which it can be gathered that the principle that 'God is to be loved as God alone' is a (the) first principle of natural law.

[29] Scotus, *Ord*. 4.46.1, n. 3 (12 vols, ed. L. Wadding (Lyon, 1639), X, 238); I follow the lightly revised text in *WM*, 240.

[30] Scotus, *Ord*. 4.46.1, n. 2 (Wadding, X, 238).

moral norm, simply on the basis of what is owed to God as the necessary good.[31] As far as I can see, the reason for this shift from Aquinas's view is simply that the norms of natural law are supposed to be exceptionless and universally binding. Thus the first of the two passages just quoted comes from the very beginning of Scotus's discussion of natural law, and seems clearly to imply that God's activity is included under the scope of the norms of natural law; and the second passage arguably maintains that legal justice is present in God.[32] And the only norm that can bind God is this one, or norms entailed by it.

The second quotation here makes it clear that this obligation is a first principle of practical reasoning. The first seems to suggest that it is an immediate entailment of a theorem of theoretical reasoning, namely that there is a God. I am not sure whether this is Scotus's exact view or not. In particular, it is not clear to me whether or not Scotus would want to ground this entailment in some kind of teleology, such that the explanation for the normativity of this principle of practical reasoning is the fact that God is the ultimate goal of desire.[33] (Think of Aquinas's explanation of normativity: the good is desirable, and therefore should be desired.) The alternative, perhaps suggested by the first passage just quoted, grounds the normativity on God's nature independently of teleological considerations.[34]

Scotus also seems to assume that mere talk of normative reasons is not sufficient to explain God's good activity. Rather, he persistently talks of God's just motivations. God's motivations (or, as Scotus puts it, *inclinations*) are wholly good, and the fact that the first principle of practical reasoning is automatically justified entails that it automatically motivates God:

> Since justice, properly speaking, is rectitude of a habituated will, and consequently inclines as it were naturally to another, or to oneself as to another, as it were, and [since] the divine will has no rectitude inclining it determinately to anything other than to its

[31] As Scotus puts it, even God's will is naturally inclined to will his own goodness: *Ord*. 4.46.1, n. 7 (Wadding, X, 252).

[32] Scotus's explicit opinion is that it is not possible to distinguish different kinds of justice in God, since God's justice is wholly unified: see *Ord*. 4.46.1, n. 7 (Wadding, X, 252). But, as he puts it in the same passage, he does not want to 'disprove' the distinction between legal and other kinds of justice in God, since he clearly holds that something relevantly analogous to legal justice exists in God.

[33] On this, see e.g. Scotus, *Ord*. 1.2.1.1-2, n. 60 (Vatican, II, 165-6).

[34] As we shall see, Scotus also holds that following such a duty is good for creatures: that is to say, it is necessary for them to achieve their teleological goal. But this has no role in explaining its binding nature: this is perhaps because Scotus rejects the necessity of loving God even in the case of the beatific vision (see Scotus, *Ord*. 4.49.6, n, 11 (Wadding, X, 455). There is no *necessity* in cases such as this, so there is no obvious explanation of bindingness either.

> goodness as other, as it were . . . it follows that it has no justice other than for paying to his goodness what suits (*condecet*) it.[35]

The divine case here contrasts with creatures. As Peter King has shown, Scotus holds that the only natural motivations that rational creatures have is for their own advantage; following moral norms is in some cases a matter of willing *against* any natural internal inclination that might be in play, and doing the right thing simply because it is right.[36] (I return to this below.)

Scotus clearly holds that God does more than merely in act in accordance with this first principle of practical reason: he follows it, as a *rule*. Scotus makes the point most clearly discussing a case in which God does merely act in accordance with a rule, rather than following it. Scotus holds that the procession of the Holy Spirit represents a case of God's acting in accordance with a duty that he has to himself (i.e. loving himself), but not following that duty. The basic Trinitarian idea here is that a perfect (i.e. infinite) will necessarily desires the divine essence, and its act of desire is supposed to be identified as a divine person – the Holy Spirit. But unlike the case of God's moral self-love, this act of desire can be sufficiently explained merely by appeal to the infinity of the divine will, irrespective of its rectitude:

> The divine essence is the first object of [his] will, and is to be willed of itself. Therefore that will is necessarily in a right act of willing that object which is rightly to be willed of itself.[37] . . . But it does not seem that the will's being right is to be assumed along with its being infinite, as two equal but different [premises in the argument for the necessity of the production of the Holy Spirit], because then the infinite will is not a sufficient power for communicating the [divine] nature, even when the object is present: rather, an infinite right will [is the sufficient power for communicating the divine nature]. Again, if this rectitude is conformity to right reason, it follows that reason is the principle of the production of the Holy Spirit, at least as a rule, just as it is the rule of an act of willing.[38]

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[35] Scotus, *Ord*. 4.46.1, n. 7 (Wadding, X, 252); I follow the text in *WM*, 246,

[36] See Peter King, 'Scotus' Rejection of Anselm: The Two Wills Theory', in Ludger Honnefelder and others (ed.), *Johannes Duns Scotus 1308-2008: Investigations into his Philosophy*, Archa Verbi, Subsidia, 5 (Münster: Aschendorff; St Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2010), 359-78. As I noted above, it is striking that Aquinas never speaks in terms that suggest that considerations of justice *motivate* God's activity (i.e., in the medieval jargon, 'incline' God to act in certain ways). Aquinas's God does his duty simply because he should.

[37] Scotus, *Ord*. 1.10.un., n. 48 (Vatican, IV, 359).

[38] Scotus, *Ord*. 1.10.un., *text. int.* (Vatican, IV, 360, ll. 7-12).

The idea is that God does not produce the Holy Spirit as the result of an obligation to do so: he does it automatically, irrespective of his obligations.

Scotus makes much the same point, though less clearly, when discussing Anselm's definition of 'justice' as 'rectitude of will observed for its own sake'.[39] Scotus comments as follows:

> [God] has rectitude of will, indeed [he has] an unturnable (*inobliquabilem*) will, because it is the first rule, and 'observed for its own sake' – not such that 'observed' implies some reception (*susceptionem*) or passion in relation to the person observing it [viz. the will's justice], but 'observed for its own sake', that is, always spontaneously disposed [to observe it].[40]

Scotus's point is that the divine will necessarily[41] and spontaneously observes its own norms (the moral rules that govern it), and follows (observes) these rules for their own sake.

So God's duties to himself are moral norms that he is automatically motivated to follow. There are no other norms like this. First of all, to belong to natural law, a moral norm must either be a first principle or be entailed by such a principle. And, as Scotus notes, the precepts of the second table of the Decalogue do not satisfy this condition:

> In one way, something can be said to belong to the law of nature . . . as first practical principles known from their terms, or as conclusions necessarily following from them: and these [conclusions] are said to belong to the law of nature most strictly. . . . And it is not like this speaking in general of all the precepts of the second table, because the natures of the things that are there prescribed or prohibited are not simply necessary, or simply necessary conclusions. For in the things that are there prescribed there is no necessary goodness relative to the ultimate goal; neither in the things prohibited is there any malice that would necessarily turn someone away from the ultimate goal. For even if this good was not prescribed, the ultimate goal could be reached and loved; and if that

[39] Anselm, *De veritate*. 12 (*Opera omnia*, 6 vols, ed. F. S. Schmitt (Edinburgh: Nelson, 1946-61), I, 194, l. 26).
[40] Scotus, *Ord*. 4.46.1, n. 2 (Wadding, X, 238).
[41] See too Scotus, *Ord*. 4.46.1, n. 7 (Wadding, X, 252), quoted above.

evil was not prohibited, the acquisition of the final goal would be consistent with it.[42]

Basically, a moral norm would be entailed by the first principle of natural law if following the norm were a necessary condition for a creature's attainment of the final goal. But, Scotus claims, no precept of the second table of the Decalogue is such a necessary condition. Scotus puts the point most bluntly when considering an objection to the effect that someone's loving God requires willing that person to will that all other human beings love God too, on the grounds that the highest love is not jealous.[43] Scotus offers three alternative responses. First, it might be that the first principle of natural law, grounding the first table of the Decalogue, is not 'love God', but 'do not hate God': and this principle does not clearly entail that there are any norms governing behaviour between human beings.[44] Secondly, supposing that the first principle is 'love God', this principle does not obviously entail that we are obliged to will our neighbour to love God: consider, for example, the case of someone damned, whom God does not will to love God.[45] Thirdly, suppose (for the sake of argument, I think) that an obligation to love other human beings were part of the natural law, still this obligation would not entail any of the principles of the second table:

> It is possible for me to will that my neighbour love God, and nevertheless will that he not have corporeal life, or not will it [viz. that he has corporeal life]; or that his conjugal fidelity be preserved; and thus for the rest.[46]

The modalities here are broadly logical: I can will that such-and-such a person love God, but this does not require that I will his or her following any of the precepts of the second table of the Decalogue – or *vice versa* – and this suggests that my willings of this various things, or God's willings of these things, are independent, and thus that the things themselves are independent.[47]

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[42] Scotus, *Ord*. 3.37.un., nn. 17-18 (Vatican, X, 279-80).
[43] Scotus, *Ord*. 3.37.un., n. 31 (Vatican, X, 285-6).
[44] Scotus, *Ord*. 3.37.un., n. 32 (Vatican, X, 286).
[45] Scotus, *Ord*. 3.37.un., n. 34 (Vatican, X, 287).
[46] Scotus, *Ord*. 3.37.un., n. 36 (Vatican, X, 288).
[47] Scotus sometimes talks of God as willing in the most ordered or rational way. But by and large these discussions have to do merely with the sequence in which God wills things: the means before the end, for example. I explore some of this in my 'Christocentrism and Theological Methodology in Duns Scotus', in Martín Carbajo Núñez (ed.), *Giovanni Duns Scoto: Studie e ricerche nel VII Centenario della sua morte, in onore di P. César Saco Alarcôn*, 2 vols (Rome: Antonianum, 2008), II, 109-131, basically following the insights of Thomas Williams, 'A Most Methodical Lover?'.

To see more clearly why Scotus believes this, we need to look in more detail at his account of what makes the second table binding. The claims cannot express universal norms, or norms that God necessarily wills, for reasons outlined already. So, basically, Scotus takes a constructivist line here: what makes the claims about moral duties outlined there true is simply God's attitude to those claims. It is not that God does not have reasons for favouring these claims: but that these reasons are not moral ones. Instead, Scotus appeals to *aesthetic* reasons, and these are the reasons that God has for favouring certain moral claims. God sees that the norms of the second table are, first, 'in harmony' with the first principle of practical reasoning, and, secondly, somehow 'fit' with the nature of the beings governed by the norms. On the first of these, Scotus comments as follows:

> In another way things are said to belong to the law of nature because they are very much in harmony (*multum consona*) with that law, even though they do not necessarily follow from the first practical principles which are known from their terms, and necessarily known to every intellect. And it is certain that all the precepts of the second table belong to the law of nature in this way, because their rectitude is greatly in harmony with the first practical principles, necessarily known.[48]

Scotus goes on to give an example:

> Given a practical principle of positive law that there should be peaceable living in a community or state, it does not necessarily follow from this that each person should have distinction of possession, or possessions distinct from someone else's possessions. For there could be peace in a community or society even if all things were common to them – and this is not a necessary consequence even if we grant that those who live or live together are weak. Nevertheless, that possessions are distinct in the case of human weakness is very much in harmony with peaceable living. For the weak care more about goods that are proper to them than [about] common goods, and more greatly will those common goods to be their own property than [they will them] to be shared with the community and the guardians of the community: and thus there would be strife and

[48] Scotus, *Ord*. 3.37.un., nn. 25-6 (Vatican, X, 283).

disorder [if there were no private property].[49]

The idea is that if the goal is peaceable living, this is most readily achieved with private property, at least in the state of weak (i.e. fallen) human nature – it is harmonious with the achievement of the goal of peaceable living that private property is the means. Now, the argument here seems to suggest that the aesthetic constraints here might be quite strong. But they fall short of the sort of logical constraints suggested by Aquinas's entailment claims – and this, I think, is all that Scotus needs to relax the relations between general deontological *principles* (i.e. that God should be loved) and further ethical norms.

Analogously to the case of private property and the objective of peaceable living, the precepts of the second table of the Decalogue are in harmony with the duty to love God. And they somehow fit with the natures of the creatures governed by the norms, too:

> In a second way, justice is said to be in a creature from the correspondence of one created thing to another (just as it is just on the part of the creature that fire is hot, and water cold, and that fire goes up and water goes down, and such-like), on the grounds that this created nature requires that as something corresponding to it.[50]

Admittedly, the language of harmony is lacking here. But elsewhere Scotus claims that we can make judgments about the appropriateness of certain moral acts – their appropriateness (*convenientia*) or lack thereof (*disconvenientia*) with creaturely natures – and (as we shall see in a moment) he takes 'appropriateness' and 'harmony ('consonantia') to be equivalent:

> The [moral] goodness of a thing . . . which is accidental or supervenient on entity, is the integrity of its appropriateness; or its integral appropriateness to something else to which it should fit (*convenire*), or of something else to it. And these two kinds of appropriateness are generally connected.[51]

(Note here Scotus's tepid acceptance of Aquinas's two-fold reciprocal requirement: goodness

[49] Scotus, *Ord*. 3.37.un., n. 27 (Vatican, X, 283-4).
[50] Scotus, *Ord*. 4.46.1, n. 8 (Wadding, X, 252).
[51] Scotus, *Quodlibet* 18, n. 3 (Wadding, XII, 475).

(though not, in every case, obligation, according Scotus) requires both that the rational object is perfected, and that the agent is.) Equally, the talk of requirements should not be thought to commit Scotus to the view that God could not bring about the opposites of the states of affairs that express the natural fit of different kinds of natures. I will return to this in a moment.

On this view, God has reasons, but not moral ones, for endorsing certain moral claims. It might be thought that these aesthetic considerations are too weak to do the relevant grounding. But Scotus believes that they are much more robust than we might imagine, albeit falling short of the merely logical constraints that Aquinas holds to be relevant in these ethical cases. (Not that Scotus's God is not subject to logical constraints, but that these constraints are not relevant to the relation between first principles and other ethical norms, since these other norms are consistent with the first principle but not entailed by it.) For example, as part of his defence of the logical coherence of the concept 'infinite being', Scotus appeals to such aesthetic considerations:

> The sense powers, which are less cognitive than the intellect, immediately perceive inappropriateness (*disconvenientiam*) in their object: this is clear in the case of hearing relative to an inappropriate object. Therefore if *infinite* were incompatible with *being*, the intellect would immediately perceive this inappropriateness and incompatibility, and then it could not have infinite being as its object.[52]

A parallel discussion makes the aesthetic component more explicit:

> The intellect, whose object is being, finds no incompatibility understanding something infinite: rather, it seems perfectly intelligible. But it is remarkable if a contradiction in relation to the first object is made evident to no intellect, when discord (*discordia*) in sound so easily offends the hearing.[53]

[52] Scotus, *Reportatio* 1-A.2.1.1-3, n. 72 (2 vols, ed. Allan B. Wolter and Oleg Bychkov (St Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2004-8), I, 137).

[53] Scotus, *Ord*. 1.2.1.1-2, n. 136 (Vatican, II, 208). I am grateful to Oleg Bychkov's ground-breaking work on Scotus's aesthetics, and for drawing my attention to these two passages, the significance of which I would not have spotted but for Bychkov's work. See e.g. his '*Decor ex praesentia mali*: Aesthetic Explanation of Evil in the Thirteenth-Century Franciscan Thought', in *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales*, 68 (2001), 245-69; 'What does Beauty have to do with the Trinity? From Augustine to Duns Scotus', *Franciscan Studies*, 66 (2008), 197-212; "'Aesthetic' Epistemology: Parrallels between the Perception of Musical Harmony and the Cognition of Truth in Duns Scotus," in Honnefelder and others (ed.), *John Duns Scotus 1308-*2008, 345-56. Irwin's account of Scotus's ethics also makes much of the notion of consonance in this context, though he does not make so explicit the seriously aesthetic connotations of the concept as Scotus understands it. For some emphasis on the aesthetic in this

Aesthetic judgments are akin to detecting contradictions – again suggesting that the constraints they place are quite strong – though of course fall short of the logical requirements in contradiction. 'Discord', here, I take it, is the opposite of 'harmony', and thus, just as 'discord' and 'inappropriateness' are equivalent, so too are 'harmony' ('consonantia') and 'appropriateness' ('convenientia'). The kind of thing Scotus has in mind in these passages is the kind of aesthetic reaction that (say) mathematicians sometimes have to an elegant proof, or physicists to the order of the universe. It is not the sight – the sensory appearance – of the universe, for example, that provokes just that reaction. As Scotus thinks, both the senses and the intellect are capable of distinctive aesthetic perceptions: and it is this kind of perception that grounds God's endorsement of certain moral claims. Note that these reasons are not in fact *judgments* (despite my suggestion to the contrary above): Scotus claims, rather, that we immediately *perceive* the aesthetic properties of things, and (I take it) the intellect intuitively grasps them without the need for a judgment. The argument is that this kind of perception is a cognitive function: if the senses have it in relation to their objects, then the intellect – more perfectly cognitive than the senses – has it in relation to its object too.

So God perceives the aesthetic qualities of certain moral norms, and on the basis of this perception endorses these norms. Scotus takes it for granted that God's necessary goodness means that his endorsing the relevant norms is in accordance with his motivations. Just as in the case of the first table of the Decalogue, God's motivations correspond to the reasons that he has for endorsing certain norms (and not others). Talking of God's activity in relation to creatures, and of his endorsing certain moral norms on the basis of their harmony with God's genuine duties (i.e. to himself), Scotus comments as follows:

> The single justice [in God], which inclines him deterministically merely to his first act [i.e. self-love], modifies his secondary acts, although none of them necessarily, such that it could not modify them in the opposite direction. Neither does justice precede the [divine] will, by inclining it naturally to some secondary act. Rather, the will determines itself to any secondary object, and from this the act is modified by that first

context, see too Mary Beth Ingham, "Duns Scotus' Moral Reasoning and the Artistic Paradigm," in Leonardo Sileo (ed.), *Via Scoti: Methodologica ad mentem Joannis Duns Scoti*, 2 vols (Rome: Antonianum, 1995), II, 825-37.

> justice, because it is harmonious with the will to which it is conformed, as if the first justice were the rectitude inclining [the will].[54]

The idea is that whatever God wills is in accordance with his (good) motivations. Scotus seems simply to regard this as an assumption that does not need justification. The claim that justice does not 'precede' the will is simply a way of expressing the fact that God is not bound by the relevant moral norms; neither is he bound to prefer any given norm over its opposite. There are many possible harmonious scenarios, incompatible with each other and governed by different and conflicting moral norms. Scotus gives an example: God's permitting bigamy in the time of the Patriarchs:

> God could either have clarified or (in some case) revoked his law about the [marriage] exchange, and done so reasonably in the case in which a greater good would come from revoking the law than observing it. In this case, when there was a necessity for multiplying the human race, either simply speaking or on account of divine worship (since there were few who worshipped God), there was a necessity that those who worshipped God should procreate as much as they could, because faith and divine worship continued to exist in their succession: therefore in that case [God] reasonably dispensed so that one man might share his body with the bodies of many women, increasing the number who worship God, which could not have been achieved without this.[55]

Notoriously, Scotus holds that God could permit or even command murder, with no difference in the situation other than his command.[56] Presumably, Scotus holds that there would be an aesthetic appeal in either case (murder or not murder).[57] He has in mind, of course, the

[54] Scotus, *Ord*. 4.46.1, n. 8 (Wadding, X, 252).
[55] Scotus, *Ord*. 4.33.1, n. 4 (Wadding, IX, 705); I use the text in *WM*, 290-2. It is not clear to me that this would make a difference other than in the case that there were fewer women than men: but Scotus does not seem to consider this.
[56] Scotus, *Ord*. 3.37.un., n. 13 (Vatican, X, 276-7).
[57] Thus, in the passages just quoted, Scotus claims that God has reasons for his commands and dispensations – i.e., aesthetic ones. This leads Irwin to an objection: "How can it be up to God to choose the secondary principles, if some courses of action are especially consonant with nature and the higher principles? Scotus concedes that even though the correct secondary principles do not follow necessarily from the higher principles, rational inquiry can discover their special consonance with the higher principles. In that case God should have practical knowledge of the secondary principles, contrary to Scotus' view": Irwin, *Development of Ethics*, 694. Analogously, the converse argument can be raised against dispensations: "If we can discover by

command to Abraham to sacrifice Isaac: where, perhaps, the aesthetic appeal lies in the simple obedience and service owed to God.

Now, the account thus raises an acute difficulty. Scotus holds that principles of natural law, and theorems entailed by them (given certain further claims about the ways in which created moral agents behave *ut in pluribus*, Aquinas-style), are universally and automatically binding. One way of showing that human beings have a duty to obey God would be by claiming that this duty follows from the duty to love God. But as far as I can see Scotus does not make such a claim, and so this way of accounting for the normativity of divine commands is not open to him. Aquinas proposes a different solution:

> Anyone who obeys is moved by the authority of the one whom he obeys, just as natural things are moved by their movers. But just as God is the first mover of all things that are moved naturally, so too he is the first mover of all wills. . . . And for this reason, all natural things are subject by natural necessity to divine motion, so also by a certain necessity of justice all wills are bound (*tenentur*) to obey divine authority.[58]

But Scotus does not appeal to this kind of teleological argument either. Scotus agrees that God is both universal legislator[59] and judge,[60] and he agrees that God's commands *bind* us:

> Positive law justly requires . . . authority in the legislator, . . . because 'law' (*lex*) comes from 'binding' (*ligando*), and not every judgment of a prudent person binds the

practical means that a general rule is consonant with the law of nature, we should also be able to discover by practical reason the exceptions to the general rule that are consonant with the primary aim of the rule. . . . If Scotus were to say this, he could not claim that God exercises freedom in dispensing us from the natural law; he would have to claim that God's superior practical knowledge sees appropriate grounds for recognizing exceptions to general rules": Irwin, *Development of Ethics*, 694 (at 694, n. 49, Irwin ascribes this latter strategy to Wolter's "right reason" approach to Scotus's ethics). My response: God has options in cases that each alternative choice can be perceived to be aesthetically pleasing; in other cases, he has no choice. But nothing about the choice requires that the two or more alternatives are equally pleasing (though of course they could be), and Scotus presumably could allow too that God might choose the less pleasing. What Scotus is explicit about is that there is no secondary precept that is such that it is *always* more pleasing than its opposite, or than its dispensation. Whether or not he also seems to believe that some secondary precepts are such that their opposites are sometimes not at all pleasing (and thus cannot be commanded by God I do not know; if he did, it would tend to moderate his voluntarism (for a version of this observation, see Irwin, *Development of Ethics*, 695). But that seems fine: I think Scotus is more concerned with providing a non-empty account of the grounding of the secondary principles than he is with preserving radical voluntarism, and in any case it might be that no secondary precepts are such that their opposites are sometimes not at all pleasing. (I return to Scotus's voluntarism below.)

[58] Aquinas, *ST* 2-2.104.4 c.

[59] See e.g. Scotus, *Ord*. 1.44.un., nn. 5-6 (Vatican, VI, 364-5).

[60] See e.g. Scotus, *Ord*. 4.17.un., n. 7 (Wadding, IX, 298).

community, or [binds] anyone if the person is head of nothing.[61]

But what explains the fact that God's commands have this kind of binding character? Scotus does not make his answer explicit. But he usually notes the *coercive* power of law-givers in this kind of context. For example, he notes that Sarah – Abraham's superior for these purposes – 'quasi-coerced' Abraham into having sex with Hagar.[62] Scotus usually spells out this coercive force in terms of the threat of punishment. For example, defending his abhorrent belief that a ruler can justly promulgate laws constraining Jewish people to be baptized, Scotus notes that laws can 'coerce with threats and terror' (*cogerentur minis et terroribus*).[63] And God is 'a just judge, avenging sin':[64] God's laws bind in virtue of the threat of punishment. This account of Scotus's view of the binding character of legal norms is admittedly speculative. But if it is right, Scotus moves decidedly in the direction of grounding the binding nature of such norms in terms of *sanctions*. The cost of not obeying a law is not the failure to achieve teleological perfection, but suffering a sanction. And this is what explains the binding force of the norm.

Now, on the face of it, Scotus's view is puzzling in a further way too. Why not simply accept an account like Aquinas's, where God necessarily acts in accordance with principles that would be moral duties were he a moral agent? Underlying Scotus's shift away from such an account is his strong commitment to divine freedom, a commitment that Aquinas clearly does not share.[65] Scotus holds, if I am right, that there are two kinds of constraint on divine external activity: the principle of non-contradiction, and aesthetic perception. But this second sort of constraint, he maintains, is such that God can will against any given precept in the second table of the Decalogue, with the mere proviso that he can perceive some aesthetic appeal in so doing: and, of course, the assumption is that God can find such appeal in given cases. And in any case, they cannot count as *normative* for God, since for Scotus the only genuinely universal norm is expressed in the content of the deontological requirement to love God. Suppose there were norms guiding God's behaviour to his creatures, antecedent to God's attitude towards the various

[61] Scotus, *Ord*. 4.15.2, n. 6 (Wadding, IX, 156).
[62] Scotus, *Ord*. 4.33.1, n. 5 (Wadding, IX, 705).
[63] Scotus, *Ord*. 4.4.4.2-3, n. 170 (Vatican, XI, 276).
[64] Scotus, *Ord*. 4.17.un., n. (Wadding, IX, 298).
[65] Scotus is the first thinker, as far as I know, to develop a strong libertarian account of freedom, one that he applies to God too. On the libertarian account, see e.g. *In metaph*. 9.15, nn. 31-2 (OP, IV, 683-4).

norms. God's freedom is such that these norms would not provide a reason for God to act in accordance with the norms, or motivate him to do so. And this would be contrary to God's goodness:

> It does not seem probable that God could not act beyond the second [justice], because he can do, and thus will, whatever does not include a contradiction. But he cannot will something that he cannot rightly will, because his will is the first rule. Therefore, he can rightly will whatever does not include a contradiction, and thus, since this second justice determines to something whose opposite does not include a contradiction, God can will, and rightly will, and act, beyond this second justice.[66]

If God were governed by such norms, he would have necessary reasons for acting in certain ways, and these reasons (on Scotus's account) would amount to *causes* of God's activity. The fact that God is wholly good, and totally free, entails that the norms of the second table are dependent upon his approval. Scotus has an argument in favour of God's being totally free in relation to his activities *ad extra*:

> Something is caused contingently; therefore the first cause causes contingently. . . . The consequence is proved: any second cause causes insofar as it is moved by the first cause. Therefore, if the first cause moves necessarily, every [cause] is moved necessarily, and everything is caused necessarily.[67]

The argument – not very clearly expressed – is that we can infer the contingency of *all* divine activity *ad extra* on the basis of the fact that some creaturely activity is clearly contingent – i.e. free action. In the case at hand, obligation *ad extra* would amount to some kind of necessity in God's action *ad extra* (given that his obligations motivate him such that he is not free relative to them). (I am not concerned here with the cogency of this argument – I am simply trying to explain the intellectual motivations for Scotus's metaethical position.) The same would obtain if Scotus were to accept Aquinas's view that God necessarily acts in accordance with norms that

[66] Scotus, *Ord*. 4.46.1, n. 6 (Wadding, X, 241); I follow the text in *WM*, 244.
[67] Scotus, *De primo principio* 4, n. 5 (ed. Allan B. Wolter (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1982), 83 (¶ 4.15)).

would represent duties for a moral agent in God's relevant circumstances: God's freedom would be restricted. So, as I pointed out above, the first principle is not that good should be done (since this would restrict God's freedom), but that God should be loved.

Now, this is sufficient to show that the first principle endorsed by Aquinas cannot in fact be the first principle of practical reasoning. And Scotus sees no need to accept the view that God necessarily acts in accordance with what would be norms were he a moral agent, because Scotus believes that he can preserve both divine goodness and freedom by proposing an alternative account of divine goodness. On the face of it, the view might seem to provide an overly attenuated account of divine goodness. At worst, it might just be trivially true that God only approves the aesthetically appealing, since the content of the aesthetically appealing might be determined simply by the choices that God makes. But I think this analysis would be a mistake. Nothing in Scotus's texts suggests that he believes there to be no constraints on what God can will. Rather, God's willing is contingent in the sense that he could will a different order from the one that he *de facto* wills, and within any ordering there are no norms (other than those of natural law) that are such that God necessarily acts in accordance with them. God is free to vary the norms (in accordance with his aesthetic perceptions about the suitability of given ends and given means) – and God is free in principle to vary *any* norm not entailed by the first table of the Decalogue. Hannes Möhle makes the following helpful comment:

> This argumentative structure thus gives Scotus complete freedom to show the legitimacy of a plurality of orderings, but each of these must be shown to be rational in its own right.[68]

Möhle is right to suggest that God's varying norms would result in a different order, but the point is tangential to my argument here. What is significant is that the fact that God can vary any norm entails that he is neither bound by the norms, nor such that he necessarily acts in accordance with such norms. God cannot command just anything, since the aesthetic requirement places limitations on what he can do. (Scotus does not give any clear examples of such limitations: though I suppose that he could not command murder if he perceived no aesthetic appeal in the state of affairs commanded.) In any case, the point is that any given

[68] Möhle, 'Scotus's Theory', 320.

norm is contingent, and might be varied as time and circumstance require. If the norms were moral norms belonging to natural law, or if God necessarily acted in accordance with such norms, they would be *invariable*, not allowing any exception. And this is what Scotus wants to avoid, and what he believes his aesthetic account can avoid.

But it seems to me that we can say more than this. One of the most striking features of Scotus's account, certainly if we contrast it with Aquinas's, is its focus on questions of divine *motivation*: in Scotus's language, on questions of the different ways in which justice *inclines* God's will. This is entirely absent from Aquinas, who seems to believe that normative reasons alone are sufficient to explain God's following, or acting in accordance with, moral rules. Scotus does not make his reasons for this explicit. As we saw above, he talks of God's will as 'habituated' by justice (although not in such as way as to be 'receptive' of a habit of justice: this habit is not an accident but a necessary feature of God). So we can get some understanding of the importance of motivation in Scotus's discussion if we look at his account of virtuous habits. Roughly, Scotus holds that moral goodness springs simply from the conformity of an act with right reason, and explicitly rejects the view that motivation (e.g. the presence of a moral virtue) could have any bearing on the moral status of an act.[69] But he believes that the only explanation for someone's *regularly* acting in a certain way is that they are inclined or motivated so to do: wherever there is habitual behaviour of a certain kind, there is an inclination towards such behaviour,[70] and wherever there is 'habitual conformity to right reason' there is a virtuous habit or inclination.[71] So I think Scotus would claim that, since God's acts satisfy this condition, they must be motivated acts: and his necessarily good motivation is what God's goodness amounts to. God, rather than being an agent who does what is right simply because he ought, is one who is necessarily maximally virtuous. And this view of divine goodness allows Scotus to offer a metaethics that is consistent both with divine freedom and with divine goodness.

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Scotus's account of natural law represents an attempt to spell out a natural law metaethic that

[69] Scotus, *Ord*. 1.17.1.1-2, n. 62 (Vatican, V, 164).

[70] Strictly, Scotus claims that the presence of a habit of a given kind entails that an agent can do certain corresponding sorts of acts 'with pleasure, easily, expeditiously, and readily (*prompte*)': *Ord*. 1.17.1.1-2, n. 7 (Vatican, V, 142).

[71] Scotus, *Ord*. 1.17.1.1-2, n. 65 (Vatican, V, 167). Right reason requires the intellectual virtue of prudence (see Scotus, *Ord*. 1.17.1.1-2, n. 66 (Vatican, V, 168-9): but this guides cognitive judgment, and is not anything like a desire or motivation.

takes as its basis something other than teleological motivations. This is not, I think, because of a lessening of interest in, or commitment to, teleology in Scotus. Rather, Scotus sees aesthetic considerations to provide a way of grounding natural law without compromising divine freedom – a novel way, in other words, between the horns of the Euthyphro dilemma. What is perhaps striking is the way in which Scotus's view gets developed in a thinker such as Ockham. Ockham takes on the voluntaristic elements of Scotus's view, but without any grounding either in teleology or aesthetics: and this leads to a decided shift in favour of a straightforward divine command metaethic, something that Scotus believes he has the tools to avoid.

Turning again to the scholarship with which I began, I would suggest that both Wolter and Möhle are, in different ways, too restrictive on the nature of the aesthetic perception that grounds God's approval of the norms in the second table of the Decalogue. Presumably this approval might be based on a perception of the harmony of means with ends (Wolter) or of general with specific cases (Möhle) – though I do not think that (as Wolter seems to suppose) any such divine judgment about harmony necessitates God's approval of a certain norm in certain circumstances. Williams, it seems to me, is not sufficiently restrictive, but in any case seems not to consider the importance of aesthetic perception underlying Scotus's metaethics. And none of these commentators focuses much on the significance of God's motivations in all of this. To this extent, I hope to have made a small advance in the complex and difficult area that is Scotus's metaethics.[72]

[72] I acknowledged above my deep debt to Oleg Bychkov in framing this discussion. Thanks too to Jean Porter and the other contributors to this volume for helpful comments, many of which guided my approach to the issues. But I perhaps owe most to Gerald J. Massey, whose detailed comments on the penultimate version of this paper forced me to deal with a set of objections that, I believe, would have proved fatal to the earlier version. Faults, of course, fatal or otherwise, remain mine and mine alone.