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Thomas Aquinas' concept of freedom in the context of his treatment of God's knowledge of future contingents.

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

This thesis examines Thomas Aquinas' concept of human freedom in the context of his treatment of God's knowledge of future contingents.

Much has been written about Aquinas' attempt to solve the problem of how humans can act freely if God knows all future things, but little of that work comments on a major underlying assumption in his treatment of the problem – namely, the concept of human freedom pre-supposed. This thesis therefore seeks to establish the nature of the freedom that Aquinas was assuming in the important discussions of God's knowledge of future contingents.

Chapter 1 sets out Aquinas' statement of the problem and his solution to it, that since God is outside time, he knows things not as future but as 'present'; and knowing *x* as 'present' imposes no necessity on *x* itself. Some criticism of Aquinas' solution is reviewed. It is noted that although Aquinas' approach seems to imply a concept of freedom which includes the possibility of doing otherwise than one does, other interpretations are possible. It is noted also that modern commentators hold differing views on what Aquinas' concept of freedom is.

Chapter 2 examines the link between contingency and freedom and makes the point that, for Aquinas, contingency in human behaviour seems to arise from the peculiarly human way of bringing things about i.e. by voluntary action. As a preliminary to looking at his analysis of voluntary action, Aquinas' distinction between 'human acts' and 'acts of a man' is noted and a further distinction drawn between 'simply' and 'fully' voluntary acts. It is concluded that the nature of freedom will be found in Aquinas' description of human, or fully voluntary, acts.

The elements of voluntary action are considered in Chapter 3, and two main elements – an inner principle of motion and knowledge of the end to which action is directed – identified and examined. The nature and operation of the will, the principle of motion of human action, is considered in detail. Aquinas' distinctions between animal and human action are highlighted to bring out the key point that the will is determined only to the good in general, and not to any particular good. Further key points identified are that every thing may be accepted or rejected, since every thing may be seen as both good and bad in different respects, and that man can review his judgment of what is 'good'. These points are seen as the basis of 'liberum arbitrium', man's ability to decide for himself what particular ends to pursue.

Chapter 4 examines Aquinas' account of the process by which particular ends are pursued. Deliberation and choice are identified as crucial stages in that process, and the nature and role of each considered. Some form of reasoning is concluded to be an essential part of human action. The respective roles of will and intellect in choice and deliberation are considered and it is shown that human acts are a product of both, inextricably related. Chapter 4 also questions whether choice is a necessary element of human acts and concludes that it seems to be so, despite Stump's argument that Aquinas' approach to the sinfulness of sudden actions shows otherwise.

Aquinas' view that God's knowledge is the cause of what he knows is identified in Chapter 5 as a possible stumbling block to the view that choice is necessary for freedom. Craig's arguments for holding that the causal nature of God's knowledge destroys human freedom are rejected on the ground that 'causes' is being used analogically of God and man, and so it is possible for humans to be effective contingent causes. It is recognized that this approach might imply potentiality in God, which would be inconsistent with Aquinas' wider views on God's simplicity. That difficulty would be

avoided if Aquinas' concept of freedom were compatible with God's determining human action, which would however exclude choice. Arguments for a concept of freedom which excludes the possibility of choice are considered, and arguments against Aquinas' holding that position put forward.

Chapter 6 concludes that the key characteristics of the concept of freedom underlying Aquinas' treatment of God's knowledge of future contingents are self-direction, the combination of will and intellect which produces it, and choice. It is recognized however that this account of freedom reveals tensions with other views held by Aquinas.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND CITATIONS

The abbreviations used in the following chapters are:

DM: *Quaestiones disputatae de malo*

DV: *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*

SCG: *Summa Contra Gentiles*

ST: *Summa Theologiae*

References to the *Summa Theologiae* are as illustrated below:

STIa.5: ST, first part, Question 5

STIa.IIae.6.1c: ST, first part of the second part, Question 6, Article 1, body of response

STIIa.IIae.10.1 Obj 1: ST, second part of the second part, Question 10, Article 1, first Objection

STIIIa.18.4 ad 2: ST, third part, Question 18, Article 4, reply to Objection 2.

References to *De Veritate* are made by Question, Article, and Difficulties raised; references to the *Summa Contra Gentiles* are by Book, Chapter and paragraph.

Quotations in English from the ST are taken from the Blackfriars Edition, except where noted.

The notes indicated by end-note numbers in the main text are placed at the end of each chapter.

INTRODUCTION

There is an argument which says that the writing of this thesis is a necessary event.

This argument runs that because God is omniscient and infallible, he knew that I would write it before I did so, indeed even before I was born. But if God knew in 1901, say, that I would write this thesis, it must have been true that I would write it, since only what is true can be known, by God as well as by humans. And if it was true in 1901 that in 2001 I would write a thesis on Thomas Aquinas' concept of freedom in relation to his treatment of God's knowledge of future contingents, then there was nothing I, or anyone else, could do in the intervening years to prevent my writing that thesis. The writing of the thesis was therefore unpreventable, and so came about necessarily. That being so, since I could not prevent its being written, I did not write it freely.

This is one presentation of an argument which has concerned philosophers since before the time of Aristotle to the present day, an argument which raises fundamental issues about the nature of truth, of knowledge, of time – and of freedom. For example, to be known, *x* must be true, but if *x* is a future

event, can a statement about it be said to be true now? If *y* is not yet determined one way or another, can it be known at all? Does knowledge of the future require certainty? If what has happened already is necessary because it has happened, is what is yet to happen also necessary? And if what is yet to happen is necessary, how can there be any contingent events? Such issues are obviously important, and difficult in themselves, but they become particularly acute when considered in the context of the knower's being a God who is believed to be omniscient, infallible, eternal and providential. And who is believed to have created free human beings.

It is against precisely such a background that Aquinas considers God's knowledge of future contingent events. For him, there is the dilemma that denying God's knowledge of future contingent events would seem to deny God's omniscience and providence, but accepting that God knows future events would seem to make these events necessary and so deny human freedom.

How Aquinas presents this dilemma in his major works, and how he seeks to resolve it, are examined in Chapter 1 of this thesis. It will be seen there that the major elements of his argument are that:

a. something which is future and undetermined cannot be known, even by God;
b. something which is present is however already determined and so can be known;
c. if something <u>is</u>, then, necessarily, it is – otherwise there would be a contradiction;
d. the logical necessity involved in c. does not make the thing which is necessary in itself.

Aquinas is here making the mediaeval distinction between necessity *de dicto* and necessity *de re*. The relevance of this to God's knowledge of future contingents is that God's knowledge, Aquinas argues, is in a way similar to human knowledge of something that is present. Since God, being eternal, is outside time, there is for him no past or future but only something eternally like our present. He knows things, therefore, as if, in human terms, they were present to him – as though he were standing on the summit of eternity looking down in one glance on the whole course of time, as it is famously put in *In Peri Hermeneias*. But something which is present is not <u>in itself</u> necessary simply because it is present.

In this way, Aquinas explains how God can have knowledge of what humans call future events without that knowledge imposing any necessity on the event itself. The problem of God's knowledge of future

events has thus become the apparently much less threatening issue of God's knowledge of present events.

Aquinas' solution to what might be termed the 'temporal fatalism' problem, and his treatment of the issues raised, have been regarded by both mediaeval and modern commentators as unsatisfactory in some respects, notably in relation to God's knowledge of temporal things. Some of the criticisms are considered in Chapter 1. The chief aim of this thesis is not, however, to evaluate the criticisms nor to defend Aquinas against them, both of which have been done on many occasions by many people. Rather the aim is to examine what lies behind Aquinas' assumption that human freedom would be destroyed if God did know future contingents as future.

Aquinas' statement of the dilemma seems to imply that he holds a concept of freedom incompatible with the future's being necessary or already determined. In *de Veritate* (DV) 2.12, for example, he says "...others have said that God has knowledge of all future events, but that all take place necessarily, otherwise his knowledge of them would be subject to error. But neither can this opinion stand, for it would destroy free choice and there would be no need to ask

advice."[1] But Aquinas also holds that God's knowledge of every thing – present or future in human terms – is, together with his will, the cause of that thing. Since God's will is irresistible, every thing would therefore seem to be necessary and determined by God. Despite this, Aquinas nevertheless maintains that human beings are free. There must therefore be doubt about what Aquinas' concept of freedom really is. The works of modern commentators on Aquinas provide a variety of opinion, not always consistent, on this, and leave uncertainty about a major underlying assumption in his discussion of God's knowledge of future events. The main aim of this thesis therefore is to establish, in the context of Aquinas' treatment of God's knowledge of future contingent events, what his concept of freedom is.

The approach adopted has been to look first, briefly, at Aquinas' concept of contingency, from which it is seen that contingency in human acts, as opposed to natural effects, seems to lie in the peculiarly human way of bringing things about – that is, by voluntary action.

However, before Aquinas' concept of voluntary action is examined to see how such action brings about contingent effects, an important distinction is drawn which both sets the scope of the actions to be

examined and carries implications for the nature of freedom. This is the distinction Aquinas makes in the *Summa Theologiae* (ST), in STIa IIae.1.1, between human acts (actiones humanae) and acts of a man (actiones hominis). The latter are 'unthinking' or 'unconscious' acts such as tapping one's fingers on the desk or rubbing one's ear while concentrating on a problem, and they are not classed as voluntary acts. The former - human acts - are those which matter in the context of freedom. They are those acts done by a man when acting as a man, i.e. acts which make use of his powers as a rational animal. They are said by Aquinas to be acts done for a purpose, arising from reason and will. They are also the acts to which responsibility, moral or legal, attaches. As Davies points out, Aquinas "uses the phrases 'actiones humanae (human actions) and 'actus humani vel morales' (human or moral action) almost synonymously."[2] Since, it is argued, the purpose of a concept of freedom of action is to ground responsibility, it is in the analysis of actions to which responsibility is attributed – i.e. human actions - that the nature of freedom can be found.

A further point has to be noted. It is argued that human acts are voluntary acts and they are free acts. 'Voluntary' and 'free' are not however synonymous terms, for both humans and other animals are

capable of voluntary action, albeit to differing extents, but it is only human actions which are described as 'free' (or not). In the distinctions Aquinas makes between 'limited-voluntary' animal action and 'fully-voluntary' human action may be found the essentials of free action.

The various elements in Aquinas' account of voluntary action are examined in Chapter 3. This examination follows the line of the two key elements of voluntary action identified by Aquinas: that it has an inner principle of motion and that the agent has knowledge of the end to which the action is directed (all action, whether voluntary or not, being for some end or other). The main issues highlighted in Chapter 3 as indicating the nature of human freedom are the linking of form to action, and its consequences; knowledge of the end to which action is directed; the possibility of choice between particular goods; and the self-movement of the will, the inner principle of motion in human action.

Aquinas' linking of form to action is regarded as particularly important. With a thing's form comes 'natural inclination' or 'appetite' (appetitus) for what will lead to that thing's perfection or good, and from appetite comes action. This general statement of the source of action, or inner principle of motion, leads to

a crucial differentiation between animal and human action. An animal's appetite is determined, because of the animal's nature, to a limited number of particular things which constitute its good; human, rational, nature is such that the peculiarly human appetite, the will, is determined only to the universal good and not to any particular good. Consequently, while everything that man pursues he pursues because he sees it as 'good', what he sees as good is not limited or determined by his nature. It is demonstrated that Aquinas' view that the will is not determined to any particular good plays a critical role in his concept of free action.

As well as holding that action comes from form, Aquinas holds, with Aristotle, that all action is for an end; voluntary action is for an end which is known. Here again Aquinas is seen to make a distinction between animal and human action which provides valuable insight into the nature of freedom. Only humans, as rational animals, can recognise an end as an end, and can see the relationship between ends and means. They can also judge whether what they plan to do will meet their desired end or not – and they can review that judgment.

To the lack of determination to any particular good and the ability to judge means and ends is added

Aquinas' metaphysical view that everything that exists is, so far as it does exist, good. Since nothing created exists perfectly, no created thing is perfectly good. This means that every existing thing is good in some respect and not-good in others, and can therefore be seen as desirable in some respects but not in others. It is this which makes it possible for man to accept or reject any particular thing - in other words, to choose or not choose *x*, or to choose *x* or *y* - while still being motivated by the universal good.

These three factors – the lack of determination to any particular good, the ability to judge planned actions and to review that judgment, and the fact that everything that exists has both desirable and undesirable aspects - together give man the ability to decide for himself how to direct his action (liberum arbitrium). They are the basis of Aquinas' description of the will as a 'self-mover'.

Such an important point cannot of course go unchallenged and Chapter 3 looks at the three main objections Aquinas considers in his account of the will as a self-mover in STIa IIae. One objection which causes particular difficulty is the argument that God is an external mover of the will and so it cannot be said to move itself. Although Aquinas appears to have an answer to this, his argument has wider

ramifications which are identified here, but consideration of them is postponed until Chapter 5.

Two major points are drawn from the analysis of Aquinas' account of voluntary action. First, that human voluntary action is driven by what a man himself sees as good. Since it is open to him to see every thing as good in some respect or other, movement toward a particular thing implies that that thing has – somehow – been singled out by him as appropriate to be pursued, as good. Second, that while will is the inner principle of motion of voluntary action, intellect also plays an essential role, for it is this which enables a man to recognise an end as an end and to judge the relationship between means and end.

If human, fully voluntary, action is free action, therefore, two key factors in freedom would seem to be the ability to single out a particular end to be pursued as 'good', and the actions of intellect and will which lead to this singling out.

This picture of freedom is considered, in Chapter 4, in the context of Aquinas' analysis of a voluntary act in STIa IIae.8-16. The aim here is not to evaluate that analysis as a theory of action, but to look in detail at Aquinas' account of the process by which a particular

end is pursued, for it is in the description of this process that Aquinas' concept of freedom begins properly to emerge.

The crucial stages in the process, from the point of view of the nature of freedom, are those of deliberation and choice. Aquinas' description of these stages in STIa IIae.14 and 13 respectively raises interesting and often-debated questions about the relationship of the will and the intellect in freedom. Although Aquinas assigns 'choice' as an act to the will, his analysis of it makes clear that it is much influenced by intellect – as deliberation, ascribed to intellect, is much influenced by will. The conclusion best drawn from his discussion in the Questions dealing with deliberation and choice – and from his treatment of voluntary action as a whole – is, I argue, that Aquinas sees a free act as a product of intellect and will inextricably linked, acting and reacting together.

This of course raises the question whether deliberation and choice are, for Aquinas, essential components of a free act, or merely elements in some or most voluntary actions. I argue first that choice is an essential component of a free act: the interaction of will and intellect in the constitution of a human act as described by Aquinas ensures that there is always

the possibility of choosing to do otherwise than one does, in the same circumstances. This view is defended against a powerful argument put forward by Eleonore Stump[3] that choice is not an essential element of freedom. Of the two main grounds for her argument, considered in Chapter 4, the view that Aquinas regards actions done under the sudden impulse of passion as sinful and hence voluntary although the agent was unable to do otherwise, is particularly interesting. Although I conclude that the treatment of this issue in DV24.12 is not sufficient to support an argument that choice, or the ability to do otherwise than one does, is not an essential element of fully voluntary, human, free, action, there is no doubt that there is some tension between what Aquinas says there and his analysis in STIa IIae.6-17. This is particularly evident when one looks at how a sudden thought can be regarded as voluntary and sinful at all, and it seems that there is room here for some more fruitful consideration of Aquinas' position.

If choice is an essential element of a human act, is the deliberation which precedes it also essential? Aquinas' position on this is not entirely clear – on the one hand he says that deliberation ('a sort of enquiry') is necessary only when there is some doubt about what is to be done; on the other, he says that human acts come from a 'deliberated will' ("ex voluntate

deliberata procedunt"). And if it is the case that deliberation is an essential element, does this not restrict the class of free acts to very few members - since many acts appear to be carried out without any deliberation - and so make Aquinas' concept of freedom valueless? These issues are also considered in Chapter 4, and the view taken that some kind of reasoning process is an element of many more acts than it might seem, however 'automatic' some of these acts might appear to be, and is an essential element of a human act.

The purpose of this examination of a human act, as defined and analysed by Aquinas, was said at the outset to be a way of establishing what his concept of freedom was. The evidence provided by the examination so far seems to show that, for Aquinas, freedom is the ability to decide for oneself, by means of one's intellect and will working together, what to do to achieve what one considers to be good. And that in coming to this decision, one always has the possibility of choosing to do otherwise than one does. I characterize this as a 'wide' concept of freedom, and it seems to be this wide concept that Aquinas wishes to preserve in putting forward the solution he does to the temporal fatalism which arises if God has knowledge of future events as future.

That Aquinas did hold this 'wide' concept of freedom is, however, challenged by an examination of what he says about God's knowledge of present events, the kind of knowledge which is the core of the solution to the fatalism problem. Aquinas holds that God's knowledge of things is, together with his will, the cause of these things. In other words, God's knowledge that I am doing *x* comes not from my doing *x*, as my knowledge that you are doing *y* would be caused by your doing *y*, but from his causing me to do *x*. This view leads to a difficult and complex argument, considered in Chapter 5, about how something caused by God can also be said to be caused, contingently, by a human. William Lane Craig's arguments for saying that Aquinas has effectively destroyed human freedom in holding that God's knowledge is causal and so determines human action, are rejected. Instead, a possible solution to the problem is thought to lie in the argument that the term 'causes' is used analogically of God and man. This argument runs that God's causation is so significantly different from human causation that 'causes' cannot be used univocally. Examination of how God causes, particularly as described by Aquinas in *Quaestiones de Potentia* 3.7, shows that analogical use is the most appropriate. And the way God causes makes it possible for humans to be contingent secondary causes and so to act freely.

While this argument is thought persuasive, it is seen to create another difficulty, for it seems to imply that God's knowledge in some way depends on human decisions, which would be inconsistent with other views Aquinas holds on there being no potentiality in God. This difficulty disappears, however, if Aquinas' concept of freedom is in fact rather narrower than it has so far been thought to be. The possibility of Aquinas' holding a concept of freedom which is compatible with God's determining events, but determining them in such a way that humans could also be considered a cause of these events, is also therefore explored. One implication of God's determining events is seen to be that there would be no possibility of one's doing otherwise than one does: if he has determined that I shall write this thesis in 2001, there is no possibility of my not writing it. There is a plausible concept of freedom which does not require that there should be the possibility of doing otherwise than one does for an act to count as 'free', and modern arguments in favour of it, particularly those put forward by Eleonore Stump, are considered.

The conclusion reached is, however, that the evidence is against Aquinas' having held such a concept. Particularly telling in this respect is the important

distinction Aquinas made between humans and animals that humans can judge the relationship between means and ends, and can review their judgments. That possibility of review implies a possibility of changing one's mind, and so of doing otherwise. But there could be no such possibility if God determined what was done.

Although this conclusion leaves unresolved tensions among some of Aquinas' views, it is considered that his concept of freedom is indeed what is characterized as the 'wide' one, which includes the possibility of real choice between doing or not doing *x*, or between doing *x* or *y*.

Through an examination of Aquinas' concept of voluntary action, and his analysis of a human act, this thesis seeks to show, therefore, that Aquinas held a concept of freedom inconsistent with God's knowing future events, qua future, and that the concept he held can be defended against the causal implications of God's knowledge of 'present' events.

Notes

[1] DV2.12c: "...alii dixerunt quod deus omnium futurorum scientiam habet; sed cuncta ex necessitate eveniunt, alias scientia dei falleretur de eis. Sed

hoc etiam esse non potest quia secundum hoc periret liberum arbitrium, nec esset necessarium consilium quaerere"

[2] Davies [1993] p.221

[3] See Stump [1997]

Chapter 1

THE DILEMMA OF GOD'S KNOWLEDGE OF FUTURE CONTINGENTS

> Others apart sat on a hill retired,
> In thoughts more elevate, and reasoned high
> Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate,
> Fix'd fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute,
> And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.
>
> Milton: Paradise Lost

Introduction

Some eight centuries before Aquinas, Augustine put the dilemma created by God's knowledge of the future so:

"How is it that these two propositions are not contradictory and inconsistent: (1) God has foreknowledge of everything in the future; and (2) We sin by the will, not by necessity? For, you may say, if God foreknows that someone is going to sin, then it is necessary that he sin. But if it is necessary, the will has no choice about whether to sin; there is an inescapable and fixed necessity. And so you fear that this argument forces us into one of two positions: either we draw the heretical conclusion that God does not foreknow everything in the future; or if we cannot

accept this conclusion, we must admit that sin happens by necessity and not by will."[1]

Even in Augustine's time, the issues raised by foreknowledge of the future were not new. The issues of whether the future can be known, and whether such knowledge implies necessity, can be traced further back than Aristotle[2] and Augustine's own source seems to have been Cicero.[3]

Briefly, the problem can be put as follows: if I know on Tuesday that on Wednesday Black will buy tickets for the opera, it must be the case that Black will buy the tickets, for if I know *x*, *x* must by definition be true. If it is true on Tuesday that Black will buy the tickets, then Black cannot not buy them and so cannot be acting freely when he eventually does buy them. This can be described as the problem of temporal fatalism.

Now, this problem raises at least three issues:

(i) Can I know that A will do *x* tomorrow?

(ii) If I do know that A will do *x* tomorrow, is it the case that A must do *x*?

(iii) If A must do *x*, is the act *x* therefore not free?

These issues come sharply into focus when considered in a theological context, as Augustine's

formulation of the dilemma shows. In the centuries between Augustine and Aquinas, the issues were considered notably by Boethius[4] and by many other major figures. Within the Christian tradition, Normore cites Anselm, Abelard, Peter Lombard and Robert Grosseteste[5], and outside that tradition major contributions were made by, for example, Alfarabi, Avicenna, Averroes and Maimonides.

By the time Aquinas considers the issues, therefore, the discussion has ranged over more than 1500 years. Clearly, the issues are not easily settled.

In this chapter, I consider how Aquinas identifies these issues and how he attempts to resolve them in a way that will preserve both God's providence and omniscience, and human freedom. Although some brief criticism of Aquinas' arguments will be given, the main purpose of this consideration will not be to assess his approach or his success in reconciling foreknowledge and human freedom. Rather it will be to provide an expository background against which to investigate what Aquinas means by human freedom in this context. The concept of freedom employed is clearly crucial to the success of any reconciliation but, as will be seen from his treatment of the problem of God's knowledge of future contingents, it is not

entirely clear what concept Aquinas is employing in that treatment.

A. Can God know future contingents?

In DV2.12, Aquinas considers at length whether God knows singular future contingents, in the context of a Question dealing with various aspects of God's knowledge. The same issue is considered in the *Summa Contra Gentiles* (SCG) Book 1 and in the ST (ST1a.14.13), with the different approaches suitable to their format. What follows here concentrates mainly on the arguments in DV and ST.

DV2.12 offers several difficulties designed to show that even if God knows singulars, he does not know singular future contingents and that everything that God does know must be necessary. There are general arguments, relying on Aristotle, seeking to demonstrate that what is future and contingent cannot be known at all: a future contingent has no act of existence, nor is it determined either in itself or causally; hence there is no truth in it, and only the true can be known. Therefore neither humans nor God can know future contingents.

Other arguments are designed to show specifically that what God knows cannot be contingent but must be necessary. In DV2.12.2, the argument is put that if God knew a singular future contingent, the

impossible would follow, namely that God's knowledge would be wrong; therefore it is impossible for God to know a singular future contingent and what he knows can only be necessary. This is proved by supposing that God knows, for example, the contingent future fact that Socrates is sitting. Either it is possible that Socrates is not sitting or it is not possible that he is not sitting. If the latter, Socrates' sitting is necessary - but the assumption was that what God knew was contingent. If, on the other hand, it is possible that Socrates is not sitting, he may not be sitting. There is nothing inconsistent in alleging this. But it would follow that God's knowledge was erroneous. That is impossible. It must therefore be impossible that God knows singular future contingents, since "that from which the impossible would follow is impossible."

Further, in DV2.12.4, it is argued that if God knew as existing something which did not exist, his knowledge would be false. Since his knowledge cannot be false, whatever he knows as existing must exist. If therefore he knew a future contingent thing, it would have to be something which must exist. But a contingent thing cannot be something which must be. And so, again, if God knows it, it can only be something necessary.

Still other arguments depend on God's nature. Since God can know nothing outside himself and since there is no potentiality in him, he cannot know future contingent things, for they have the potential to be or not to be. Similarly, it is argued; God knows everything through the medium of his own essence, which is necessary. Anything known through a necessary medium must itself be necessary. Hence what God knows can only be necessary and he cannot know anything contingent.

The remaining arguments also appear, in slightly different guises, in ST1a.14.13. First, it is put that the more certain knowledge is, the less it has to do with contingents. Given that God's knowledge is most certain, it can have nothing to do with contingents and so can be about necessary things only.

The second and third arguments depend on the premiss that in any true conditional proposition, the consequent will be absolutely necessary if the antecedent is absolutely necessary. 'If God knew that this is going to happen, it will happen' is a true conditional proposition; the antecedent 'God knew that this is going to happen' is absolutely necessary because it is something said about the past and whatever is said about the past is, if true, necessary. Similarly, whatever is eternal is necessary and God's

knowledge is eternal. On both these grounds therefore, the antecedent is absolutely necessary and so the consequent 'It will happen' is also absolutely necessary. Hence, as the point is put in DV2.12.7, "whatever is known by God must necessarily exist."[6]

STIa.14.13 contains a further argument, not included in DV2.12, namely that since from necessary causes there result necessary effects, and since God's knowledge is necessary and is the cause of what he knows, what he knows must be necessary.

The sum of the various arguments raised in the difficulties and objections of DV and ST1a is therefore the dilemma posed by Augustine: either God does not know future contingents at all (in which case how can he be omniscient or provident?) or he does know all future things but these are necessary (in which case, how can man be free?). Aquinas' expression of the dilemma is in the opening paragraph of his reply in DV2.12:

"On this question there have been several erroneous opinions. Some, wishing to pronounce upon divine knowledge from the viewpoint of our way of knowing, have said that God does not know future contingents. This opinion cannot stand, for it would eliminate providence over human affairs, which are contingent.

Consequently, others have said that God has knowledge of all future events, but that all take place necessarily, otherwise his knowledge of them would be subject to error. But neither can this opinion stand, for it would destroy free choice and there would be no need to ask advice. Moreover, it would be unjust to punish or to give rewards in proportion to merit when everything takes place necessarily."[7]

He then goes on to deal with the points made in a way which he believes will provide the solution "God knows all future events; nevertheless, this does not prevent things from taking place contingently."[8]

B. Aquinas' responses

The answers which Aquinas gives to the points made in DV fall into two categories: those responding to the issue of whether future contingents can be known at all and those dealing with the question of necessity.

First, whether future contingents can be known at all.

Aquinas' approach in DV is to draw a distinction between those powers and cognitive habits in which, he claims, there can never be error and those in which error might arise. He cites sense, science and understanding of principles as examples of the former, and imagination, opinion and judgment as

examples of the latter. In relation to things which are necessary (here said to be things which cannot be prevented from happening because their causes are unchangeably ordained to their production) it is possible to forecast without error, and so knowledge of their happening in the future is possible. It is possible to know, for example, that the sun will rise tomorrow.

On the other hand, contingent things can be impeded before they come into existence and so it is possible for us to be wrong about whether they will come into existence or not. Once they have come into existence it is another matter, of course, for then there can be no error about whether or how they are, but as long as they are future and so not yet in existence there is the possibility of mistake about their nature or existence.

Future contingent things are therefore things about which it is possible to be mistaken; because such a mistake is possible, knowledge of them is not possible. Here Aquinas draws on the distinction made earlier between "science and understanding of principles" which are certain and "opinion and judgment" which are not. Knowledge in the strong sense of *scientia* is not possible about future contingents and at best one can have opinion or

conjecture about them. But God's knowledge cannot be opinion or conjecture because his manner of cognition, unlike humans', excludes the possibility of error. All his knowledge is therefore like *scientia*, where there is never error.[9]

Aquinas' argument therefore seems to be:

(i) Knowledge, as opposed to conjecture, requires that there is no possibility of error;

(ii) The definition of future contingents implies that there is always the possibility of error in relation to them;

(iii) Therefore, knowledge of future contingents is not possible.

In responding to the specific objections, set out in DV2.12.1, 12.9 and 12.10, on why knowledge of future contingents is impossible, Aquinas seems to accept the grounds that what is future is not determined, so has no determinate truth, and therefore cannot be known. Similarly, he accepts that the lack of existence of something future means that it cannot be known. His later commentary on Aristotle's *De Interpretatione*, (*In Peri Hermeneias*) is consistent with these views, [10] but he does not develop the arguments in the DV passages: they simply provide additional grounds for why knowledge of future contingents is not possible.

Aquinas' conclusion is that, for all the reasons given, neither God nor man knows future contingents. This is put starkly in the answer given to DV2.12.6: "Neither our science nor God's knowledge can be about future contingents."[11]

This clearly stated conclusion would seem to destroy at a stroke the possibility of an omniscient and provident God, but Aquinas immediately qualifies it by saying that it would be impossible for God to know future contingents "if he knew them as future."[12] This marks yet another crucial distinction between God's knowledge and human knowledge for, Aquinas says, God knows these things as present, not future. I can be said, for example, to know *x* 'as future' if I know today about some thing, *x*, which will not come about until tomorrow. There is thus a temporal relationship between my knowledge and the thing which I claim to know. God's knowledge, however, does not relate to what he knows in this way, for God is eternal and so outside time. Aquinas illustrates this in DV2.12 by the example of a watcher looking at passers-by on a road. If the watcher looked for, say, an hour, he would see everyone who passed by him in that hour, but he would not see them all at the same time because he can only see one after another as they appear in front of him. If he could see everything at

once, he would see all the passers-by in one glance even though they did not all pass by him at the same time. When he looked from that vantage point, they would all be present to his view, although when considered in relation to each other, one would still come before or after the other along the length of the road. God's knowledge of what happens is, according to Aquinas, like that of the man who can see everything at the same time.[13] This is not because God has a long view of time but because God exists outside time – in eternity:

"..since the vision of divine knowledge is measured by eternity, which is all simultaneous and yet includes the whole of time without being absent from any part of it, it follows that God sees whatever happens in time, not as future, but as present. For what is seen by God is, indeed, future to some other thing which it follows in time; to the divine vision, however, which is not in time but outside time, it is not future but present. Therefore, we see what is future as future because it is future with respect to our seeing, since our seeing is itself measured by time; but to the divine vision, which is outside of time, there is no future."[14]

Now, since, on Aquinas' account, a certain judgment can be made about something which is present,

without any danger of error, a present contingent can be known. If therefore, everything, including contingents, is present to God, contingents which are future to <u>us</u> can be known by him.

In ST1a.14.13, Aquinas also concludes that future contingent events can be known by God but only as present events not as future. Here, he draws the distinction between contingents as they actually exist and "in their causes" i.e. as they are going to, or likely to, happen. Only in the former case, as it actually exists, can the contingent event be the subject of certain and infallible knowledge, because only then is it determined to one effect. In the latter case, the effect might turn out to be different from what the cause suggests: the bulb might not flower, despite its having been planted at the right time of year in the right kind of soil. So, I cannot know that the bulb will flower next year until I see it actually flowering. God, on the other hand, knows both the cause of the contingent event, and how it turns out, and he knows both at what in human terms would be 'the same time'. Again, Aquinas gives the explanation that this is because God is eternal, and "eternity, which exists as a simultaneous whole, takes in the whole of time."[15] And Aquinas concludes "It is clear, then, that contingent events are known infallibly by God because they are the objects of the divine gaze in

their presence to him; while on the other hand they are *future* contingent events in relation to their proximate causes."[16]

Aquinas therefore solves the epistemological problem of how something which is apparently undetermined, uncertain and so open to mistake, can be known to God by pointing to God's eternity. Because of the nature of eternity, all events are, he argues, present as far as God is concerned, and so he can apprehend them precisely as they are, with no possibility of error.

Having dealt with this epistemological issue, Aquinas still needs to show how it is possible for God to know *x* without *x*'s thereby being necessary. Both DV2.12 and ST1a.14.13 contain two lines of argument concerned with that issue.

The first deals with the logical necessity involved in the point that if God knows something, it must necessarily be. As it is put in ST1a.14.13 Obj 3: "Further all that is known by God must necessarily be; because everything known by us must necessarily be, and God's knowledge is more certain than ours."[17] Aquinas' answer utilises the mediaeval distinction between *de dicto* and *de re* propositions:

"Accordingly the proposition 'All that God knows must necessarily be' is usually distinguished: it can apply either to the thing [de re] or to the statement [de dicto]. Understood of the thing, the proposition is taken independently of God's knowing, and false, giving the sense 'Everything that God knows is a necessary thing.' Or it can be understood of that statement, and thus it is taken in conjunction with the fact of God's knowing, and true, giving the sense 'The statement *a thing known by God is*, is necessary'."[18]

So, Aquinas is saying that whether the statement 'What God knows necessarily exists' is true or not depends on how it is interpreted. As Kenny points out[19] the different interpretations can be brought out with careful punctuation: 'What God knows, necessarily, exists' is true; 'What God knows necessarily exists' is false. What is important is that the interpretation 'If God knows *x*, *x*, necessarily, exists' does not make *x* itself necessary. Necessity attaches only to the statement 'If God knows *x*, *x* exists' and the possibility that *x* itself is contingent is still open.[20]

The second line of argument concerns the necessity which arises because God has always known what he

knows. In both DV2.12 and ST1a.14.13 the following argument is put:

(i) An absolutely necessary antecedent produces an absolutely necessary consequent in all true conditional statements;

(ii) 'If God knew that *x* was going to happen, *x* will happen' is a true conditional statement;

(iii) The antecedent is absolutely necessary because it refers to something which is past and/or eternal;

(iv) Therefore the consequent is absolutely necessary.

In both DV and ST, Aquinas gives a lengthy and somewhat difficult reply to this argument.

He accepts, after some consideration and rejection of other views, that the antecedent 'God knew that *x* would happen' is absolutely necessary. It would seem from the opening of his reply to Objection 2 in ST1a.14.13 that he accepts this on the grounds that it concerns something which is past, even though it also refers to something future:

"Some hold that the antecedent 'God knew this contingent future event' is not necessary but contingent: because though it is past, yet it refers to the future. That however does not take away its

necessity; because what had in fact a reference to a future event must have had it, even though the future is sometimes not realized."[21]

The necessity which Aquinas is accepting here is not the logical necessity considered above, which arose from the nature of the proposition 'If God knows *x*, *x* must be'. Rather it is akin to the necessity described earlier, in DV2.12, as something which cannot be impeded. What has happened has happened, and cannot now be prevented from having happened – if *x* has existed, nothing can now prevent *x* from having existed. This does not of course imply that, counterfactually, *x* might not have existed, and there is no contradiction in making such an assertion. Aquinas is therefore here accepting historical or temporal necessity rather than the stronger logical necessity of the earlier discussion.

Having accepted that the antecedent is necessary in this way, he also concedes that the consequent is necessary – it is not only necessarily true that God knew that *x* would happen but also necessarily true that, therefore, *x* will happen. Despite this, however, Aquinas argues that *x* can still be contingent. His reasoning is that because the antecedent refers to 'knowing', a mental act, the consequent must be understood in relation to the mode of knowing, not as

it actually is in itself. Since God's knowledge is eternal and outside time, what is known by him is known as 'present'. What is present must necessarily be, but only while it is present; it need not be necessary when its prior causes are considered. Aquinas therefore again appeals to the notion of God's eternity to explain how something humans consider future can be known by God without the thing itself being necessary except in the trivial sense that while *x* exists, it must be true that it exists for otherwise there would be a contradiction. Aquinas therefore also seems to be accepting the temporal necessity of the present, just as he accepted the necessity of the past.

In DV2.12, the argument is put in terms of the relationship between the thing known and the knower, and more generally in ST1a.14.13 in terms of mental acts. Both however make the point that while what is known by God is necessarily true, the thing known, when considered in itself, may still be contingent. So, in DV2.12 ad 7 Aquinas says:

"For what is attributed to a thing in itself is quite different from what is attributed to a thing in so far as it is known. What is attributed to it in itself belongs to it according to its own manner; but what is attributed to a thing or follows upon it in so far as it

is known is according to the manner of the knower. Hence, if in the antecedent, something is signified which pertains to knowledge, the consequent must be taken according to the manner of the knower, not according to the manner of the thing known. For example, were I to say, "If I understand something, that thing is without matter" what is understood need be immaterial only in so far as it is understood. Similarly when I say "If God knows something, it will be" the consequent should not be taken according to the mode of being of the thing in itself but according to the mode of the knower. Consequently we should rather say "If God knows something, it is" than say "it will be". We must, therefore, judge in the same way the proposition "If God knows something it will be", and this one, "If I see Socrates running, Socrates is running", for both are necessary as long as the action is going on."[22]

Similarly, though rather more succinctly, in ST1a.14.13 ad 2:

"...when the antecedent contains something that pertains to a mental act, the consequent is to be understood not as it exists in itself but as it exists in the soul: for the existence of a thing in itself is not the same as its existence in the soul. For example, if we say, 'Whatever the soul knows is immaterial', the

word 'immaterial' is to be understood of the thing's existence in the mind, not of its existence in itself. Similarly, if one said, 'If God knew something, it will happen', the consequent is to be understood in its condition as an object of the divine knowledge, namely in the existence it has in its presence to him. And thus it has the same necessity as the antecedent has, because that which is, when it is, must necessarily be, as we read in de Interpretatione."[23]

And in ad 3:
"But the objects of God's knowledge must be necessary in their condition as such.... Yet not absolutely necessary considered as existing in their own causes."[24]

So, Aquinas seems to be arguing that the antecedent and the consequent must be 'balanced' by attributing to them the same kind of existence if the necessity of the antecedent is to impose necessity on the consequent – like compared with like, in effect. What matters therefore in this true conditional statement, 'If God knew that *x* was going to happen, *x* will happen', is how things are known. God's way of knowing is different from the human way of knowing, just as his way of being is different from human being. He is in eternity, therefore 'knows' in eternity, and therefore knows things as present; we exist in

time, therefore know as past, present, or future. But the necessity of the present imposes no necessity on the event which is happening in that present. Aquinas uses, in DV2.12, the example of Socrates' running. If I see Socrates running, then while he is running it must be the case that he is running. But the most one can say about <u>that</u> necessity is that it attaches to the running only while the running is happening (or after it has happened). It says nothing about whether Socrates' running was necessary <u>before he started to run</u>. That I see, or know, that Socrates is running does not therefore show that Socrates' running is not contingent. In a similar way, God's knowing that I do *x* does not show that I do not do *x* contingently.[25]

By relying on God's eternity and on the limited sense of necessity which knowledge of something as present implies, Aquinas has sought to show that God can know what we call future events and that these events can nevertheless still be contingent. He has, in effect, changed the problem of God's knowledge of future contingents into the problem of God's knowledge of present contingents, and then shown that the necessity which attaches to present contingents is harmless. The general lines of his solution, although different in detail, remain the same in DV and ST although these are written some

10 years apart. In the later [26] *In Peri Hermeneias* he takes the same approach, though here the emphasis is on eternity and the contrast between human knowledge and God's knowledge. Although lengthy, this passage is worth repeating, for it contains the major points of his mature thought on the issue:

"....in regard to knowledge we should note that a mind contained in some way within time relates differently to the knowing of what happens in time from a mind altogether outside time... Now since our knowing occurs within time, either in itself or incidentally

...things are known as present or past or future. Present events are known as actually existing and perceptible to the senses in some way; past events are remembered; and future events are not known in themselves – because they don't yet exist – but can be predicted from their causes: with certainty if their causes totally determine them, as with things that must happen; conjecturally, if they are not so determined that they cannot be obstructed, as with things that happen usually; and not at all if they are only possible and not determined either to one side or the other, as with things that might be either.....

God's knowing, however, is altogether outside time, as if he stands on the summit of eternity where everything exists together, looking down in a single

simple glance on the whole course of time. So in his one glance he sees everything going on throughout time, and each as it is in itself, not as something future to himself and his seeing and visible only as it exists within its causal situation (although he sees that causal situation). But he sees things altogether eternally, each as it exists in its own time, just as our own human eye sees John sitting there himself, not just as something determined by causes. Nor does our seeing John sitting there stop it being an event that might not have been when regarded just in relation to its causes. And yet while he is sitting there we see him sitting there with certainty and without doubt, since when a thing exists in itself it is already determined. In this way then God knows everything that happens in time and without doubt, and yet the things that happen in time are not things that must exist or must come to exist, but things that might be or might not be."[27]

The consistency of approach which the key texts show would therefore seem to demonstrate that Aquinas regarded the eternity of God's knowledge and the limited nature of the necessity of the present as the lynch-pins of the solution to the dilemma of God's knowledge of future contingents and human freedom which arises from temporal considerations.

C. Problems with Aquinas' solution

Whether Aquinas' approach resolves this temporal aspect of the dilemma, or even whether the concepts he employs are coherent, has been the subject of considerable debate for a considerable length of time. That debate has raised important theological, epistemological and logical issues. Although the arguments put forward for and against Aquinas' position are complex and important, a proper evaluation of them is peripheral to this thesis and so only brief mention will now be made of the major points of concern.

1. Relationship between eternity and temporal events.

First, Aquinas' view, crucial to his resolution of the dilemma, that God, in a timeless eternity, knows everything that happens in time.

Aquinas considers the eternity of God in ST1a.10, where he argues that the notion of eternity derives from unchangeableness, just as the notion of time – to which it is opposed – derives from change. God is utterly unchangeable and so eternal. Eternity exists, he says, as an instantaneous whole, lacking successiveness [28] and within that instantaneous whole God "comprehends all phases of time".[29]

In ST1a.14.13 he says:

"Now although contingent events come into actual existence successively, God does not, as we do, know them in their actual existence successively but all at once; because his knowledge is measured by eternity, as is also his existence; and eternity which exists as a simultaneous whole, takes in the whole of time..... Hence all that takes place in time is eternally present to God... because he eternally surveys all things as they are in their presence to him."[30]

Aquinas' views on the relationship between eternity and temporal events have however been criticized by both mediaeval and modern writers. Goris, for example, cites William de la Mare and Scotus[31] and Kenny argues that Aquinas' concept is simply incoherent: "The whole concept of a timeless eternity, the whole of which is simultaneous with every part of time, seems to be radically incoherent. For simultaneity as ordinarily understood is a transitive relation."[32] So, if I see A and B simultaneously, A must be simultaneous with B. But this would seem to imply, to use Kenny's example, that from God's perspective, while Kenny writes his criticism of Aquinas' argument, Nero fiddles heartlessly on, since God sees both Kenny's writing and Rome's burning at the same time i.e. present.

This criticism seems to be a misrepresentation of Aquinas' position, trading as it does on the expression "simultaneity as ordinarily understood". Simultaneity as ordinarily understood is a concept which applies to relationships in time. Kenny is of course correct in saying that if I see his writing and Rome's burning at the same time they must be simultaneous with each other, but that is because all three relationships (me to Kenny, me to Rome, Kenny to Rome) exist in the same time. God is outside the time in which Kenny and Rome exist, for neither Kenny himself nor Rome itself exists in eternity.

Aquinas attempts to explain the relationship in SCG1.66.8 by using the example of the centre of a circle and its circumference:

"Let us consider a determined point on the circumference of a circle. Although it is indivisible, it does not co-exist simultaneously with any other point as to position, since it is the order of position that produces the continuity of the circumference. On the other hand, the centre of the circle, which is no part of the circumference, is directly opposed to any given determinate point on the circumference. Hence whatever is found in any part of time co-exists with what is eternal as being present to it, although with respect to some other time it be past or future.

Something can be present to what is eternal only by being present to the whole of it, since the eternal does not have the duration of succession. The divine intellect therefore sees in the whole of its eternity, as being present to it, whatever takes place through the whole course of time. And yet what takes place in a certain part of time was not always existent."[33]

The spatial analogy of the centre and the circumference of a circle may not be entirely helpful[34] but the key to Aquinas' treatment seems to lie in what he perceives as the difficulty of describing God's eternal knowledge in a human vocabulary:

"The difficulty in this matter arises from the fact that we can describe the divine knowledge only after the manner of our own, at the same time pointing out the temporal differences. For example, if we were to describe God's knowledge as it is, we should have to say that God knows that this is, rather than that it will be; for to Him everything is present and nothing is future."[35]

Even to say however that everything is present imports a human temporal sense, for in eternity there cannot be a 'present' exactly as there is for us, since our present is defined by 'past' and 'future'. Although the present tense may be the most appropriate to

apply to God[36] it would seem from Aquinas' discussion of the tenses that should apply to God[37] that even that tense inadequately reflects his being. As with other attributes, 'present' may therefore be considered to be said analogically of God. The present of eternity is therefore Present* perhaps, and so future contingent events are Present* to God, or 'as if' present. But Present* suggests simultaneity* and simultaneity* need not have all the characteristics of temporal simultaneity. Simultaneity* need not then be transitive; Stump and Kretzmann's development of ET-simultaneity adopts this kind of approach.[38] And an intransitive simultaneity avoids Kenny's writing and Rome's burning being simultaneous events though both are present to God.

Much more might be said on the difficulty of working through Aquinas' concept of eternity and the relationship between God's eternal knowledge of things and their existence in time. Here, however, it is merely noted that there are difficulties, though these may be resolvable.

2. Omniscience

Even if it is granted, however, that the concept of a timeless eternity simultaneous with every part of time is coherent, there are still difficulties over what limitations such a concept would place on God's

knowledge. The most obvious is that God cannot know the <u>future</u>, as Aquinas himself points out. On the other hand, this seems to be irrelevant to both his omniscience and his providence since he knows *x* even if he knows it as present rather than as future. Kenny objects however,[39] that on Aquinas' approach of reducing everything to the present one would always have to say that 'God knows a man is landing on Mars'. But that is false at a point in time when no man is landing on Mars and so cannot be known by God; God therefore could not know what we express by 'A man will land on Mars'. This objection seems to ignore the point that there is a difference between the human present and the eternal present (Present*). God's saying, as it were, 'A man is landing on Mars' is not the same as our saying 'A man is landing on Mars', for the latter means that a man is <u>now</u> landing on Mars. But 'now' is a temporal expression and cannot apply to what God knows. As Craig points out,[40] what God knows, on Aquinas' account, is not that a man is [now] landing on Mars but that "God knows that the proposition 'Men are landing on Mars' is true at *tn*, after having been false at *tn-1*."

If, however, statements about what God knows cannot be qualified by time, this seems to lead directly to the criticism made by Prior, that if God's knowledge is timeless then he can know only truths

which are timeless. If that is so, there will be many things which humans can know which God cannot. Prior's own example[41] is that God cannot know that the 1960 final examinations at Manchester are now over, since that is something which was not true in 1959, and hence is not timelessly true. "All that can be said on this subject timelessly is that the finishing-date of the 1960 final examinations is an earlier one than the 29th August [the date of Prior's writing] and this is <u>not</u> the thing we know when we know that those examinations are over .....what we know when we know that the 1960 final examinations are over can't be just a timeless relation between dates because this isn't the thing we're <u>pleased</u> about when we're pleased that the examinations are over." If Prior is correct, God would be rather less than omniscient. It is not clear however that Prior's argument succeeds, for it is arguable that what God knows is indeed the same as what humans know, but that it is not open to God to express it in the same way (See, for example, Hasker [1989] pp.160-161 and Kenny [1979] pp.42-48).

Whatever the status of these arguments, it is at least fair to say that Aquinas' account of God's eternal knowledge of things which exist in time causes tension with accounts of God's omniscience.

3. Necessity of the present and past

That God's knowledge of temporal things is 'as if they were present' also seems to raise a difficulty in relation to the Aristotelian dictum 'Everything which is, when it is, must necessarily be' on which Aquinas relies. In human temporal terms, this means that while something currently existing must be existing, before it came into existence it might or might not have happened i.e. its coming into existence can be contingent but its existence once it has so come is necessary (for as long as it is in existence). But such an analysis clearly depends on a 'before' and 'after', which do not apply to God's knowledge. It seems to make no sense to apply the dictum to things which exist outside space and time, for example numbers or logical truths, for when would 3 or the law of non-contradiction exist?

Now, God's knowing eternally that *x* exists does not by itself make *x* eternal, as Aquinas points out in ST1a.14.8 ad 2: "Knowledge is the cause of things in accordance with the way things are in the knowledge. But it was no part of God's knowledge that things should exist from eternity. Hence although God's knowledge is eternal, it does not follow that creatures exist for eternity."[42] But what the Aristotelian dictum applies to in ST1a.14.13 ad 2 is specifically not *x* in itself but *x* as an object of God's knowledge – and *x* as

an object of God's knowledge is present to him, always. Therefore, as far as God is concerned, there is never 'a time' when *x* can be anything other than necessary. If this is so, it would seem that *x* is necessary in relation to God but it might (somehow) still be contingent in relation to humans. Whether and how this is possible, and its implications, are considered later, in Chapter 5. Here the point is made only that reliance on the eternal nature of God's knowledge appears to create a difficulty if one wishes to rely also on the harmless necessity of the temporal present, which must be different from Present*.

Apart from the issue of eternity, questions can also be raised about Aquinas' approach to the point raised in ST1a.14.13 Obj 2. His reason for rejecting the argument that the antecedent 'God knew this contingent event' is contingent rather than necessary because it is knowledge of something which refers to the future even though the knowledge itself is past, is not entirely clear. Aquinas' view was certainly not shared by all his predecessors. Bonaventure and Albert are cited by Gornall in his Blackfriars translation of this passage as examples of people who held otherwise and Normore cites Robert Grosseteste and Peter Lombard.[43] And it was notably disputed by Ockham.

What Aquinas argues is that the antecedent is necessary "because what had in fact a reference to a future event must have had it, even though the future is sometimes not realized."[44] It is difficult, however, to see how there can be knowledge of a future event which fails to be realized, and therefore to see what Aquinas' point is. Nevertheless, Hasker offers a plausible explanation.[45] He takes 'Whatever has had a relation to the future' to be some kind of intentional attitude (belief or hope for example). If in 1999 I hoped that *x* would happen in June 2000, it is now [in 2001] necessary that I did so hope, because that hope is now in the past, and it is irrelevant to that necessity whether *x* happened or not. As Hasker points out, if the intentional attitude is knowledge then *x* must happen, but Aquinas makes his point stronger by considering the more general case not involving knowledge.[46] So, the antecedent is necessary because the intentional attitude is in the past. This seems to me to be a plausible interpretation of what Aquinas is saying, and as such to provide a good ground for rejecting the argument that the future reference makes the antecedent contingent.

Whether Aquinas is right to accept the necessity of the past is itself open to dispute, but this is an argument which goes well beyond the scope of this

chapter; it is sufficient for this purpose simply to note that there are differing views. Aquinas nevertheless did accept that what was, in human terms, a past event was now necessary and so the antecedent 'God knew....' was necessary. He could not therefore, on his own account of the issues, deny the logic of the argument that the consequent was in some sense necessary. His only escape therefore seemed to be to try to defuse that necessity.

D. Future contingents and freedom

Aquinas' consideration of God's knowledge of future contingents raises, as has been seen, many epistemological and logical issues. Examination of these issues is obviously valuable in itself, as the brief summary of some of the problems raised by Aquinas' solution to the apparent dilemma of God's knowledge of future contingents and human freedom shows. But there is another major issue, arising not from the solution to the problem, but from the statement of the problem itself.

The quotation from Augustine with which this chapter opens argues that either (a) God knows the future or (b) sinning is necessary and therefore not free. As we have already seen, Aquinas' opening response in DV2.12 envisages a similar dilemma:

"Some, wishing to pronounce upon divine knowledge from the view point of our own way of knowing, have said that God does not know future contingents. This opinion cannot stand, for it would eliminate providence over human affairs, which are contingent. Consequently, others have said that God has knowledge of all future events, but that all take place necessarily, otherwise his knowledge of them would be subject to error. But neither can this opinion stand, for it would destroy free choice and there would be no need to ask advice."[47]

Here Aquinas seems to make the assumption, as Augustine does, that if all future events take place necessarily, then there can be no human freedom. Because such lack of human freedom would be as theologically and morally repugnant as the idea of God's not knowing all future events, he goes on to try to defuse the effect of 'necessary' to make God's knowledge consistent with human freedom. But need the necessity which such foreknowledge implies have that effect? Or, put another way, even if Aquinas' grounds for his solution to the problem posed by God's foreknowledge were wrong, is human freedom destroyed? Say, for example, that I know (per impossibile, on Aquinas' account) that tomorrow Jones will decide to go to the opera. On the arguments put forward in DV, ST and *In Peri*

Hermeneias, it is necessary, in some sense or other, that Jones make that decision. But it must also be the case that tomorrow Jones <u>does</u> make that decision. Now, what is it about that decision-making that leads one to say that it was not free? The answer to this seems to depend crucially on what one thinks counts as freedom.

One might argue that it was not in Jones' power to do other than decide to go to the opera if it were necessary that he make that decision, since what is necessary cannot be impeded, and it must be necessary if I (or God) knew that it was to happen. If it were not in his power to do otherwise, Jones was not free.

On the other hand, it is arguable that what matters is that <u>Jones</u> made the decision to go to the opera. No one forced him to make such a decision and he was not, for example, in the grip of some psychological affliction which compelled him to go to every opera advertised. It is hard to see how the fact that I knew he was going to make such a decision could, even if he were aware of my foreknowledge, compel him to make it. Therefore, even though he could not have done other than make the decision, he made it freely.

On the second argument there seems no need to defuse the necessity which arises from the temporal problem of foreknowledge of the future in order to protect human freedom. That Aquinas even attempts to do so because he assumes that foreknowledge destroys human freedom therefore seems to show that his concept of freedom must be one which implies a power to do otherwise, rather than one which requires simply a lack of compulsion i.e. his concept must be one where I am said to do *x* freely because I could instead not have done (or at least could have chosen not to do) *x* or could have done *y*. Nevertheless, that interpretation of Aquinas' position is not the only one possible. For example, in an important article, considered in detail in Chapter 4, Eleonore Stump argues that the ability to do otherwise is not an essential feature of Aquinas' concept of freedom.[48] And specifically in the context of discussions of God's knowledge of future contingents there are widely differing views of what Aquinas' concept of freedom consists in. Calvin Normore, for example, takes it that Aquinas denies that "being able not to choose A is a necessary condition for choosing A freely."[49] - whereas Copleston, in a more general context, says that "[Aquinas] obviously thought that free choice implies the power to choose otherwise than one actually does choose."[50] Kenny, in *Divine Foreknowledge and*

Human Freedom, casts his whole discussion against an assumption that an ability to do otherwise is essential: "For in order for me to be able to do an action freely, it is necessary that it should be within my power not to do that action."[51] And Craig[52] simply claims that Aquinas' treatment of the dilemma has eliminated human freedom altogether. Without saying what he thinks Aquinas understands by human freedom.

There is however another aspect of God's knowledge of future contingents which may cast a different light on Aquinas' concept of human freedom, and indeed may help to explain why commentators' views vary. This is hinted at in ST1a.14.13 Obj 1: "For from a necessary cause there proceeds a necessary effect. But God's knowledge is the cause of the things he knows..."[53] In addition to the problems raised by God's knowledge of the future described above as 'temporal' problems, there are also 'causal' problems raised by the view that such knowledge is the cause of what is known. So, God does not just know that Jones will decide to go to the opera tomorrow: in knowing this he also causes it. Yet Jones, according to Aquinas, is still free. This aspect of the problem might indicate that Aquinas' understanding of freedom is not as it first appears. Or Aquinas might again defuse the necessity which God's causation

seems to imply, making room for an 'alternative possibilities' concept of freedom.

The wide divergence of views about a major assumption on which Aquinas bases one of his most frequently considered discussions is intriguing and important. At best, it can be said that the concept of freedom he is employing is not clear, but since this is a crucial element in any reconciliation of God's knowledge of the future and human freedom, it merits further investigation. What will now be considered therefore is the concept of freedom which seems to underlie Aquinas' arguments in DV2.12 and ST1a.14.13. The interim conclusion reached will then be considered against the second part of the problem, the causal nature of God's knowledge. The problems raised by God's causing what he knows, how Aquinas deals with those, and the implications of this for his concept of freedom, are considered in depth in Chapter 5. From this it should then be possible to take a view on the nature of human freedom which Aquinas was so anxious to preserve in dealing with the issues surrounding God's knowledge of future contingents.

Notes

[1] De libero arbitrio Book 3

[2] See Sorabji (1980) esp. Chapters 6 & 7

[3] De civitate dei, Book 5, 9

[4] The Consolation of Philosophy, Book 5

[5] Normore [1982] pp.358-381

[6] DV2.12.7: " ergo omne quod scitum est a deo necesse est absolute esse."

[7] DV2.12c. "circa hanc quaestionem diversimode est erratum. Quidam enim de divina scientia iudicare volentes ad modum scientiae nostrae, dixerunt quod "deus futura contingentia non cognoscit. Sed hoc non potest esse, quia secundum hoc non haberet providentiam de rebus humanis, quae contingenter eveniunt. Et ideo alii dixerunt quod deus omnium futurorum scientiam habet; sed cuncta ex necessitate eveniunt, alias scientia dei falleretur de eis. Sed hoc etiam esse non potest, quia secundum hoc periret liberum arbitrium, nec esset necessarium consilium quaerere; iniustum etiam esset poenas vel praemia pro meritis reddere ex quo cuncta ex necessitate aguntur."

[8] DV2.12c: "et ideo dicendum est, quod deus omnia futura cognoscit; nec tamen propter hoc impeditur quin aliqua contingenter eveniant."

[9] In humans, understanding (intelligentia) and science (scientia) are used of knowledge of principles and of conclusions respectively. We come to know things by working from understood principles to known conclusions. In God, there is no such division of knowledge and he simply 'knows': ST1a.14.1 and 14.7. It can at least be said that his knowledge is like human intelligentia or scientia in that there can be no error in it.

[10] See *In Peri Hermeneias* Bk 1, 13-15

[11] DV2.12 ad 6: "sicut scientia nostra non potest esse de futuris contigentibus, ita nec scientia dei"

[12] DV2.12 ad 6: "et adhuc multo minus, si ea ut futura cognosceret; cognoscit autem ea ut praesentia sibi, aliis autem futura; et ideo ratio non procedit"

[13] A more famous illustration perhaps is that in *In Peri Hermeneias*, where Aquinas uses the example of a watcher looking at travellers on a road. Those travelling along the road can see only those travelling with them and perhaps some of those ahead of them who travelled the road earlier; they

cannot see those behind, who are still to come along the road. But if someone were outside this stream of people – standing on a high hill, for example – he would be able to see all the travellers in one glance, even though they were not all at the same point on the road. The points Aquinas makes in *In Peri Hermeneias* are considered below.

[14] DV2.12c: " unde cum visio divinae scientiae aeternitate mensuretur, quae est tota simul et tamen totum tempus includit, nec alicui parti temporis deest, sequitur ut quidquid in tempore geritur, non ut futurum, sed ut praesens videat: hoc enim quod est a deo visum est quidem futurum rei alteri, cui succedit in tempore; sed ipsi divinae visioni quae non est in tempore, sed extra tempus, non est futurum, sed praesens. Ita ergo nos videmus futurum ut futurum, quia visioni nostrae futurum est, cum tempore nostra visio mensuretur; sed divinae visioni, quae est extra tempus, futurum non est."

[15] STIa.14.13c "aeternitas autem tota simul existens ambit totum tempus.."

[16] STIa.14.13c "Unde manifestum est quod contingentia infallibiliter a Deo cognoscuntur, inquantum subduntur divino conspectui sua praesentialitate; et tamen sunt futura contingentia, suis causis proximis comparata."

[17] STIa.14.13 Obj 3: "Praeterea, omne scitum a Deo necesse est esse; quia etiam omne scitum a nobis necesse est esse, cum tamen scientia Dei sit certior quam scientia nostra."

[18] STIa.14.13 ad 3: "Unde et haec propositio, 'omne scitum a Deo necessarium est esse', consuevit distingui: quia potest esse de re vel de dicto. Si intelligatur de re , est divisa et falsa; et est sensus, 'omnis res quam Deus scit, est necessaria'. Vel potest intelligi de dicto: et sic est composita et vera; et est sensus, 'hoc dictum, scitum a Deo esse, est necessarium.'"

[19] Kenny [1973] p.53

[20] And of course, as STIa.14.13 Obj 3 implies, the same distinction can be made in relation to human knowledge, if 'knowledge' is taken in the strong sense of scientia rather than of conjecture. If I know it is raining then it must be raining, otherwise I could not be said to know it was raining. But this does not make the rain considered in itself necessary. Aquinas' point therefore is not one which concerns God's knowledge solely, but one which addresses the wider logical issue of the scope of the necessity being considered.

[21] STla.14.13 ad 2: "Ad secundum dicendum quod quidam dicunt quod hoc antecedens, 'Deus scivit hoc contingens futurum', non est necessarium sed contingens: quia licet sit praeteritum, tamen importat respectum ad futurum.—Sed hoc non tollit ei necessitatem; quia id quod habuit respectum ad futurum, necesse est habuisse, licet etiam futurum non sequatur quandoque." It may seem somewhat odd that Aquinas should hold here that the antecedent is necessary because it concerns something that is past, since the discussion in STla.14.13 and the solution to the problem centre on the eternity of God's knowledge. Nevertheless, in both DV2.12 and STla.14.13 ad 2 the necessity of the antecedent is tackled only in terms of what is past, the latter discussion referring to something's being eternal and expressed as past. Aquinas may therefore be assuming that necessity attaches to eternity just as it does to pastness. He may also however be addressing the point that for us, existing in time, it is possible to say 'God knew ...etc.' and that this expression produces a necessary consequent.

[22] DV2.12 ad 7: "aliter enim est de his quae attribuuntur rei secundum se; aliter de his quae attribuuntur ei secundum quod est cognita. Illa enim quae attribuuntur ei secundum se, conveniunt ei secundum modum suum, sed illa quae attribuuntur ei vel quae consequuntur ad ipsam in quantum est cognita sunt secundum modum cognoscentis. Unde si in antecedente significetur aliquid quod pertineat ad cognitionem, oportet quod consequens accipiatur secundum modum cognoscentis et non secundum modum rei cognitae.Ut si dicam si ego intelligo aliquid, illud est immateriale; non enim oportet ut quod intelligitur sit immateriale nisi secundum quod est intellectum; et similiter cum dico si deus scit aliquid, illud erit; consequens est sumendum, non secundum dispositionem rei in seipsa, sed secundum modum cognoscentis. Quamvis autem res in seipsa sit futura tamen secundum modum cognoscentis est praesens. Et ideo magis esset dicendum: si deus scit aliquid hoc est; quam: hoc erit; unde idem est iudicium de ista: si deus scit aliquid, hoc erit; et de hac; si ego video socratem currere, socrates currit quorum utrumque est necessarium dum est."

[23]STla.14.13 ad 2: "... dicendum est quod quando in antecedente ponitur aliquid pertinens ad actum animae, consequens est accipiendum non secundum quod in se est, sed secundum quod est in anima: aliud enim est esse rei in seipsa, et esse rei in anima. Ut puta si dicam, 'Si anima intelligit aliquid, illud est immateriale', intelligendum est quod illud est immateriale

secundum quod est in intellectu, non secundum quod est in seipso. Et similiter, si dicam, 'Si Deus scivit aliquid, illud erit', consequens intelligendum est prout subest divinae scientiae, scilicet prout est in sua praesentialitate. Et sic necessarium est, sicut et antecedens, *quia omne quod est, quando est, necesse est esse,* ut dicitur in *Periherm."*

[24] STIa.14.13 ad 3: "Sed ea quae sunt scita a Deo oportet esse necessaria secundum modum quo subsunt divinae scientiae....non autem absolute, secundum quod in propriis causis considerantur."

[25] It is perhaps worth noting at this point that Aquinas' argument about the limited necessity of the present or past does not show that I do *x* contingently; it shows only that contingent actions are possible even when these are known by God. Aquinas' argument takes it for granted that human actions are contingent; what makes them so is another issue entirely. This is considered in later chapters.

[26] Dating ST1 in the period 1265-67 and *In Peri Hermeneias* 1269-72. See Appendix.

[27] In Peri Hermeneias 1.14: "Nam primo quidem ex parte cognitionis vel scientiae considerandum est quod ad cognoscendum ea quae secundum ordinem temporis eveniunt, aliter se habet vis cognoscitiva, quae sub ordine temporis aliqualiter continetur, aliter illa quae totaliter est extra ordinem temporis..... Quia igitur cognitio nostra cadit sub ordine temporis vel per se vel per accidens..... Consequens est quod sub eius cognitione cadant res sub ratione praesentis, praeteriti et futuri. Et ideo praesentia cognoscit tanquam actu existentia et sensu aliqualiter perceptibilia; praeterita autem cognoscit ut memorata; futura autem non cognoscit in seipsis, quia nondum sunt, sed cognoscere ea potest in causis suis: per certitudinem quidem, si totaliter in causis suis sint determinata, ut ex quibus de necessitate evenient; per coniecturam autem, si non sint sic determinata quin impediri possint, sicut quae sunt ut in pluribus; nullo autem modo, si in suis causis sunt omnino in potentia non magis determinata ad unum quam ad aliud, sicut quae sunt ad utrumlibet....Sed deus est omnino extra ordinem temporis, quasi in arce aeternitatis constitutus, quae est tota simul, cui subiacet totus temporis decursus secundum unum et simplicem eius intuitum; et ideo uno intuitu videt omnia quae aguntur secundum temporis decursum, et unumquodque secundum quod est in seipso existens, non quasi sibi futurum quantum ad eius intuitum prout est in solo ordine suarum causarum (quamvis et ipsum ordinem causarum videat), sed omnino aeternaliter sic videt

unumquodque eorum quae sunt in quocumque tempore, sicut oculus humanus videt socratem sedere in seipso, non in causa sua. Ex hoc autem quod homo videt socratem sedere, non tollitur eius contingentia quae respicit ordinem causae ad effectum; tamen certissime et infallibiliter videt oculus hominis socratem sedere dum sedet, quia unumquodque prout est in seipso iam determinatum est. Sic igitur relinquitur, quod deus certissime et infallibiliter cognoscat omnia quae fiunt in tempore; et tamen ea quae in tempore eveniunt non sunt vel fiunt ex necessitate, sed contingenter."

[28] ST1a.10.1c.: " ipsa aeternitas successione caret tota simul existens."

[29] ST1a.10.2 ad 4: " ...verba diversorum temporum attribuuntur Deo inquantum ejus aeternitas omnia tempora includit, non ita quod ipse varietur per praesens, praeteritum et futurum."

[30] STla.14.13c: "Et licet contingentia fiant in actu successive, non tamen Deus successive cognoscit contingentia prout sunt in suo esse, sicut nos, sed simul; quia sua cognitio mensuratur aeternitate, sicut etiam suum esse; aeternitas autem tota simul existens ambit totum tempus.... Unde omnia quae sunt in tempore, sunt Deo ab aeterno praesentia... quia ejus intuitus fertur super omnia ab aeterno, prout sunt in sua praesentialitate."

[31] Goris [1996] p.242 onwards

[32] Kenny [1969] p.264

[33] SCG1.66.8: "Cuius exemplum utcumque in circulo est videre: punctum enim in circumferentia signatum etsi indivisibile sit, non tamen cuilibet puncto alii secundum situm coexistit simul, ordo enim situs continuitatem circumferentiae facit; centrum vero, quod est extra circumferentiam, ad quodlibet punctum in circumferentia signatum directe oppositionem habet. Quicquid igitur in quacumque parte temporis est, coexistit aeterno quasi praesens eidem: etsi respectu alterius partis temporis sit praeteritum vel futurum. Aeterno autem non potest aliquid praesentialiter coexistere nisi toti: quia successionis durationem non habet. Quicquid igitur per totum decursum temporis agitur, divinus intellectus in tota sua aeternitate intuetur quasi praesens. Nec tamen quod quadam parte temporis agitur, semper fuit existens."

[34] There are nevertheless human experiences which may make the point Aquinas is seeking to make. A composer, for example, may conceive the whole of a new piece of music in an instant – the Hallelujah Chorus presenting itself, entire, to Handel, say. But as well as hearing the whole work instantaneously the composer will also hear in his mind's ear the

temporal unfolding of the individual notes which constitute the work and the relationship between these notes and the complete work. The instantaneous presentation of the work implies that every note is present simultaneously – but there is certainly an 'order of before and after' among the notes themselves. This analogy may also be limited, but it does seem to make it possible to grasp how temporally distinct events could be comprehended simultaneously. A similar analogy is suggested by Broadie [1990] p.14

35 DV2.12c: "Difficultas autem in hoc accidit, eo quod divinam cognitionem significare non possumus nisi per modum nostrae cognitionis consignificando temporum differentias: si enim significaretur ut est dei scientia. Magis deberet dici quod deus scit hoc esse, quam quod sciat futurum esse; quia sibi nunquam sunt futura, sed semper praesentia."

36 See for example ST1a.13.11

37 See for example Commentary on the Sentences, ds8 q2 art3

38 Stump and Kretzmann [1981] pp.429-458

39 Kenny [1973] p.55

40 Craig [1988] p.107

41 Prior [1962] p.29

42 STla.14.8 ad 2: " Scientia est causa rerum secundum quod res sunt in scientia. Non fuit autem in scientia Dei quod res essent ab aeterno. Unde, quamvis scientia Dei sit aeterna, non sequitur quod creaturae sint ab aeterno."

43 Normore [1982] pp. 358-381

44 STla.14.13 ad 2: "Ad secundum dicendum quod quidam dicunt quod hoc antecedens, 'Deus scivit hoc contingens futurum', non est necessarium sed contingens: quia licet sit praeteritum, tamen importat respectum ad futurum. Sed hoc non tollit ei necessitatem; quia id quod habuit respectum ad futurum, necesse est habuisse, licet etiam futurum non sequatur quandoque."

45 Hasker [1989] p.11 n.24

46 Hasker [1989] p.12 n.24

47 DV2.12c: "Quidam enim de divina scientia iudicare volentes ad modum scientiae nostrae, dixerunt quod 'deus futura contingentia non cognoscit'. Sed hoc non potest esse, quia secundum hoc non haberet providentiam de rebus humanis, quae contingenter eveniunt. Et ideo alii dixerunt, quod 'deus omnium futurorum scientiam habet; sed cuncta ex necessitate eveniunt, alias scientia dei falleretur de eis. Sed hoc etiam esse non potest,

quia secundum hoc periret liberum arbitrium, nec esset necessarium consilium quaere; "

[48] Stump [1997] pp.576-597

[49] Normore [1982] p.366

[50] Copleston [1991] p.196

[51] Kenny [1973] pp.50-60

[52] Craig [1988] p.126

[53] STIa.14.13 Obj 1: " A causa enim necessaria procedit effectus necessarius. Sed scientia Dei est causa scitorum."

Chapter 2

CONTINGENCY AND FREEDOM

Article 13. Has God knowledge of contingent future events?.....

Editor's footnote: "The chief interest of the present article is in connection with free will."

Editor's footnote to STIa.14.13

Introduction

It has already been seen in Chapter 1 how Aquinas shows that God does have knowledge of what humans call future contingent events, but knows them as present (Present*) events. What is to be explored in this chapter is the connection between contingency and freedom, to provide a starting point from which to try to discover the nature of freedom as seen by Aquinas. For the relationship between contingency and freedom is by no means obvious, as the need for an editorial footnote to the discussion of God's knowledge of future contingents in the Blackfriars' edition of the *Summa Theologiae* suggests (taking, for the moment, 'free will' to mean human freedom).

It is proposed to examine first, briefly, Aquinas' concept of contingency. The distinction between

human and natural contingency will then show that contingency in human behaviour, or action, seems to lie in the peculiarly human way of bringing about such action. Since the term 'free' is applied to contingent human actions but not to contingent natural effects, this distinction will provide a basis for an examination of what Aquinas understands by freedom. As a preliminary to that examination, the purpose of his concept of freedom and his definition of human actions are considered.

A. Contingency and necessity

Aquinas uses the term 'necessary' in several different ways, and takes the view – in STIa.82.1, for example - that there are several kinds of necessity. But it would seem that for Aquinas the notions of necessity and its opposite, contingency, are primarily aspects of being. In SCG 3.72.3 for example he says: "But being is divided into the contingent and the necessary, and this is an essential division of being."[1] Further, in STIa.82.1, he defines the necessary as "that which cannot not be."[2] and in STIIIa.46.1 he endorses Aristotle's description of the necessary as "something which by its very nature cannot be otherwise."[3]

Whether something is the kind of thing which cannot not be, or the kind which can be or can not be,

depends on that thing's nature. In STIa.82.1, absolute necessity is said to come from an intrinsic cause, material or formal: "For the necessary is that which cannot not be. Now this can be from an intrinsic cause, whether material, as when we say that anything compounded of contraries must cease to be, or formal, as when we say a triangle has to have three angles together equal to two right angles. Such is natural necessity."[4] A similar approach is taken in his later description of natural necessity in STIIIa.14.2: "The other kind of necessity [i.e. not externally imposed necessity] is natural, the kind that follows on natural principles, such as form (for example, it is necessary that fire should give heat) or matter (it is necessary that a body composed of opposites should eventually decompose)."[5] That the necessary is related to the intrinsic nature of a thing is also argued in *In Peri Hermeneias* 1.14, where Aquinas is commenting on Aristotle's views on possibility and necessity. Having rejected the views that necessity and possibility are to be distinguished on the basis of what always happens or what sometimes happens, or by whether or not something can be obstructed from happening, Aquinas goes on to endorse[6] what he believes to be Aristotle's view:

"So other people have formulated a better distinction by reference to the nature of things, saying that *must*

be is constrained by nature to exist, *can't be* is constrained by nature not to exist, and *can be* is not entirely constrained to either, but is sometimes inclined more to one than the other and sometimes equally balanced between the two – the so-called '*might be either*' "[7]

It seems, therefore, that *x* is necessary because of its nature. This necessity can arise from either *x*'s form or its matter. It is the form of "having three angles together equal to two right angles" which makes the thing under discussion to be a triangle and anything with that form must therefore be a triangle – it cannot <u>not</u> be a triangle. Similarly, necessity may arise from a thing's matter, Aquinas says, and he gives the example of the inevitable ceasing to be of a thing whose matter is a compound of contraries. Thus a human's ceasing to be is said to be necessary because the matter of a human body is composed of contraries – the 'wet' and 'dry' of blood and skin, for example.

What it is about *x*'s nature which determines whether it is necessary or contingent is also set out in SCG2.30:

"...there are some things in the universe whose being is simply and absolutely necessary.

Such is the being of things wherein there is no possibility of not-being. Now some things are so created by God that there is in their nature a potentiality to non-being; and this results from the fact that the matter present in them is in potentiality to another form. On the other hand, neither immaterial things, nor things whose matter is not receptive to another form, have potentiality to non-being, so that their being is absolutely and simply necessary."[8]

So, beings who have in their own nature a potentiality to non-being are contingent beings; those with no such potentiality in their nature are necessary beings. This natural potentiality arises from the principles of form and matter. In beings which are purely form, for example angels and souls, there <u>is</u> no matter which can take on another form, and so there is no potentiality within an angel, say, for it to be anything other than it is. Likewise, according to Aquinas, in those beings whose matter is fully actualized by their form there is no potentiality for another form and so they too have no potentiality to be otherwise, and consequently no potential to non-being. Celestial bodies are what he has in mind here.[9]

Both angels and celestial bodies are therefore necessary beings.[10] Beings whose matter is open to

the possibility of taking on another form are however contingent beings, and humans clearly fall into this category, as do all other natural things except, in Aquinas' cosmology, the heavenly bodies.[11]

Now, contingent causes, in Aquinas' view, can produce only contingent effects: "...an effect whose cause is contingent cannot be a necessary one; otherwise the effect could be even though the cause were removed."[12] And an effect must be commensurate with its cause: "Now contingent effects follow from a changeable cause for an effect cannot have a more stable being than its cause."[13] Since both natural things and human beings are contingent beings, what they do will be contingent if they are both contingent causes. But it seems that it is not simply that relationship between the nature of being of the cause and effect which accounts for the contingency of the effect, for Aquinas gives a very different explanation for the roots of contingency in what he calls natural causes (plants, for example) and human causes. And it is at this point that the link between contingency and freedom begins to appear.

In the case of natural causes, their effect is contingent because of some imperfection either in them or in something external on which they are

acting. Conversely, what humans do is said to be contingent because of the source of human action itself. This sharp distinction is made in SCG3.73, where Aquinas says:

"Now among inanimate things the contingency of causes is due to imperfection and deficiency, for by their nature they are determined to one result which they always achieve, unless there be some impediment arising either from a weakness of their power, or on the part of an external agent, or because of the unsuitability of the matter. And for this reason, natural agent causes are not capable of varied results; rather in most cases, they produce their effect in the same way, failing to do so but rarely. Now the fact that the will is a contingent cause arises from its perfection, for it does not have power limited to one outcome but rather has an ability to produce this effect or that; for which reason it is contingent in regard to one or the other."[14]

This is consistent with what is said in *In Peri Hermeneias*, where the contingency arising from human causes is put down to the human ability to deliberate, following Aristotle's explanation of the "can be and might be in human behaviour as due to our ability to deliberate."[15] And deliberation, it is said elsewhere, can always turn out in different ways.[16]

In natural things such as plants, therefore, the fact that the outcome is not always the same is put down to a failure of some sort. The action of bulbs is to flower, but they do not always do so. If they do not flower, it is because of some fault in the bulb itself, or in the soil, or in the atmosphere. Were all the conditions perfect, the bulb would always perform the same action i.e. flower. Contingency exists only because of the possibility of failure in the pre-programmed outcome. With humans, on the other hand, the contingency is pre-programmed. The source of action, whether identified as 'will' or 'ability to deliberate', has itself the power to produce different effects.[17]

It seems therefore that humans are themselves contingent causes in a way that natural things are not. Now, contingency is clearly not to be identified with freedom, for both people and plants are contingent beings and both produce contingent effects, but only people are said to cause, or do, anything freely or otherwise. Freedom perhaps therefore lies in the peculiarly human way of causing contingent effects, so far put down only to 'the will' and the 'ability to deliberate'. The assertions made by Aquinas about the will and about deliberation clearly need further examination and it will therefore be

necessary to look in some depth at Aquinas' concept of how humans do produce effects i.e. at what is generally known as his theory of action. I shall approach this by considering first, the purpose of the concept of freedom and second, what it is that is free.

B. Purpose of concept of freedom

It is important to consider the purpose of Aquinas' concept of freedom, for one valuable way of evaluating the content of such a concept is against the purpose it is thought to serve. And different concepts of freedom may serve different purposes. For example, the concept of freedom which was a cornerstone of the then EEC was arguably one designed to serve the end of economic growth. It is in the light of that aim that the question of whether a particular way of transferring goods, capital or labour between member states counts as 'free' or not falls to be decided.

It seems clear from Aquinas' discussions of whether or not actions are contingent that his main concern is responsibility, whether people can be praised or blamed for what they do. In DV2.12 for example, he talks of it being "unjust to punish or to give rewards in proportion to merit" if nothing happens contingently. In SCG3.73.5, he refers to both moral and legal responsibility: "[If there were no freedom]

the praise of human virtue, which is nothing if man does not act freely, would be destroyed. Justice, which rewards and punishes, would also be destroyed if man could not freely do good or evil."[18]

The very close link for Aquinas between freedom and responsibility can perhaps be seen best in his treatment of human acts in general, in STIa IIae.6-17, particularly in Question 6 which deals with voluntary and involuntary acts. As will be considered later, free acts are, Aquinas maintains, a subset of voluntary acts. In considering whether fear or ignorance makes an act involuntary, Aquinas uses examples which are clearly ones of legal responsibility. In STIa IIae.6.6 for example, he talks of jettisoning a cargo from fear of the ship's foundering in a storm. If this is a voluntary act, then the person who jettisons the cargo will be legally responsible to the ship owner, and if not, there will be no such liability. And in STIa IIae.6.8, in considering whether ignorance renders an act involuntary, he cites examples of a man shooting his enemy – both a legal and a moral responsibility. In his approach here he appears to follow Aristotle, whose concerns were also with both moral responsibility and law.[19] The issues of moral responsibility are clearly emphasised in STIa IIae.7, where the relevance of the circumstances of a human act is considered. The importance too is seen in the

linking of voluntary actions and sin – there is, it seems, no sin without voluntary action.[20]

It appears therefore that for Aquinas the question of freedom in relation to action is not an abstract one but one which is to be considered in the context of responsibility. This may seem obvious, particularly when viewed from the other end of the telescope, for it is difficult to see how a society can have rules of law or morality without corresponding concepts of human freedom and responsibility. As Fuller puts it: "To embark on the enterprise of subjecting human conduct to the governance of rules involves of necessity a commitment to the view that man is, or can become, a responsible agent, capable of understanding and following rules, and answerable for his default."[21] But to hold someone "answerable for his default" pre-supposes a way of determining both that it was a default and that it was his. This is the role that a concept of freedom fills.

It is nevertheless worth emphasising that responsibility is the purpose of Aquinas' concept of freedom in relation to action, for this has two important implications. First, there may be more than one concept of freedom which will satisfy the need to decide whether or not A is to be held responsible for what he has apparently brought

about. In Chapter 1, it was argued that Aquinas' concept of freedom might be found to be one which depended solely on lack of compulsion, external or psychological. Such a concept may be thought limited, but it is compatible with the purpose of the concept's being the need to allocate or attribute responsibility.

Second, the question of responsibility, and of freedom or voluntariness, often arises only after the event. Say, for example, that A signs a document at B's request. The question of whether or not he did so freely will arise only if one seeks to hold him responsible for that action, and this is likely to come about only if the content of the document is subsequently disputed. This means however that in establishing what A did and whether or not he is responsible for it, one has to reconstruct the action. In other words, A is to be asked to explain retrospectively what he did. That such an explanation is a retrospective analysis is, it will be shown, an important aspect of Aquinas' theory of action. This point is dealt with in Chapter 4.

C. What is it that is free?

So far, the expressions 'freedom of action' or 'human freedom' have been used even in contexts where the

modern term 'freewill' might have seemed the more natural. This is deliberate.

One of the major difficulties of writing about this topic is the need to translate into modern English the terms Aquinas uses when considering freedom under various aspects, and moreover into English terms which will not pre-judge the nature of the concept of freedom which one is trying to discover. This is well illustrated by, for example, the Blackfriars translation of STIa.82 and 83, Questions headed respectively 'Will' and 'Freewill'. In STIa.82 Aquinas considers whether the will (*voluntas*) as a faculty acts from necessity – "Utrum voluntas aliquid ex necessitate appetat; Utrum omnia ex necessitate appetat" (Articles 1 and 2) - and concludes that while in one respect, that of seeking happiness, the will acts necessarily, in others it does not. In the latter respects, the will, i.e. the faculty *voluntas*, is exercised freely. In STIa.83 however, what is translated as 'freewill' is "*de libero arbitrio*" and this Question deals with one particular act of the will, that of free choice or decision, liberum arbitrium. So, does one look for freedom in the faculty of will itself, or in the individual acts of the will, or even in one particular act of the will?

These questions are further complicated by the differing mediaeval views on the relationship between will and intellect, which debate might lead one to ask whether the question ought to be "Is freedom to be found in the will at all or in the intellect?" On one side there was the view that the intellect was the 'nobler' power and the ultimate determinant of action; for others, the will had primacy. Scotus for example, notably took the view that will was not determined by intellect, but was the seat of freedom and a nobler power than the intellect. Copleston describes this as, generally speaking, a Franciscan view, and states that Aquinas took a different view.[22] There is no doubt that Aquinas held the view that something has to be known before it can be willed and that in this sense intellect must be prior to will. The understanding of the universal good to which will is necessarily directed is also a matter for the intellect and in this sense too intellect might be said to direct will. But while Aquinas is often credited with the view that intellect is nobler than will, his position, as will be seen, was rather more subtle than a simple ranking of the powers would suggest.

In some respects, however, all these questions are sterile, for what matters to Aquinas is whether or not a person acts freely. It is not the faculties of will or of intellect which act, but the person who has these

faculties and who acts through them. This thesis does not therefore address the issue of whether the intellect determines the will or whether the will is more important than the intellect in order to come down on one side or the other. It will be shown however that how these faculties act together in bringing about a free act is of crucial importance in Aquinas' concept of freedom.

D. Human action

The concern over God's knowledge of future contingent events was said in Chapter 1 to be that if God knows that A will do *x*, A cannot then do *x* freely. Aquinas argues that God's knowledge of future contingent events is present knowledge of what to us is future, and present knowledge that A is doing *x* does not exclude the contingency of *x*. It has been seen above that contingent effects may be caused by both plants and people, leading to the conclusion that a contingent effect is not necessarily something which happens 'freely', since the effects of plants are not said to be free. But the contingency in human effects, or action, seems to lie in the peculiarly human way of bringing things about – through 'deliberation' or 'the action of the will' according to Aquinas in *In Peri Hermeneias* and SCG respectively. These two elements come together in Aquinas' analysis of human action in STIa IIae.1-17.

For Aquinas, human acts are acts which are willed, voluntary acts. They are more than just willed however, for Aquinas describes them as acts of deliberated willing.[23] Acts are deliberately willed when they are done for an end, or purpose. He here draws a distinction between 'acts of a man' such as scratching one's ear absentmindedly, for example, and 'human acts' which are the kind of acts a man does specifically as a human being rather than as an animal: "Of the actions a man performs those alone are properly called *human* which are characteristically his as a man."[24] And "It should be said that such actions [i.e. rubbing one's chin or shifting one's feet] are not properly human, because they do not proceed from the deliberation of reason, which is the proper principle of human acts. Therefore, they have some imagined end, but not one set out by reason."[25]

Human acts, therefore, are those which involve both will and reason. This additional requirement of reason is of course the same as that which marks man out from other animals, and so human acts can be said to be those in which man acts in his 'higher' role as man, rather than in his animal role. It would seem from the way that Aquinas draws the distinction that physically similar actions may be, on

different occasions, a human act or an act of a man. Scratching one's ear because it itches, for example, and because one knows that scratching will, at least temporarily, relieve the irritation, is a human act, in that it is one done for a purpose. The same arm and finger movements may be made when one is concentrating on a text however, the scratching then having no purpose at all, and so not constituting a human act on this occasion.[26]

A human act is not however simply a voluntary act done for a purpose, for animals may also perform voluntary acts for an end. The dog's scratching its ear may also be a voluntary act on Aquinas' account, and here he extends the role that reason plays in distinguishing between the voluntary acts of animals and those of humans. In STIa IIae.6.2, he argues that non-rational animals also are capable of voluntary action, though in a limited sense. This limitation comes about because while animals do undoubtedly act for an end, they do not act for an end they have recognized as an end. The dog digging in the garden to recover a previously buried bone is clearly acting for an end, but he does not realise that what he is pursuing is an end, nor think of the digging as a means of achieving it. Rational humans, on the other hand, can recognize an end as such, and they therefore have full knowledge of that end. Humans

are said to act in a fully voluntary way, animals voluntarily, but only to a limited extent:

"Now the knowledge of the aim is of two sorts, full and partial. The first consists not only in apprehending a thing which is in fact an end, but also in recognizing its character as an end and the relationship a means bears to it. A being of rational nature alone is capable of such knowledge. Partial knowledge of an end consists merely in perceiving it without appreciating it in terms of purpose and the adaptation of activity to that purpose. This is the sort of knowledge encountered in animals through their senses and natural instinct.

Full knowledge of an end goes with voluntary activity in the complete and proper sense of the term; it is present when a person, having apprehended and deliberating about an end and the steps to be taken, can be moved to it or not. Partial knowledge accompanies voluntary activity in a lesser sense of the term; it is present when there is perception of but no deliberation about the end, and the movement towards the end is unpremeditated.

To sum up: only beings of a rational nature enjoy complete voluntary activity, yet it may be allowed to non-rational animals to a limited extent."[27]

A human act has therefore now become not just one which is voluntary and done for an end, but one in which there is full knowledge of the end, as an end. And there is such knowledge when the end has been apprehended, the means to it deliberated about and the end adopted. This description Aquinas gives of a fully voluntary act is an important one, for he says also that it is to such acts that praise and blame attach[28] i.e. fully voluntary acts are those which carry responsibility. Fully voluntary acts would therefore seem to be those in which freedom is found.

The distinction between 'fully voluntary' and 'partially voluntary', and the human ability to recognize an end as such, will be seen to have important implications for the nature of human freedom.

To establish the nature of that freedom, a detailed examination of Aquinas' concept of voluntary action will therefore now be necessary.

Notes

[1] SCG.3.72.3: "Ens autem dividitur per contingens et necessarium; et est per se divisio entis."

[2] ST1a. 82.1c: "Necesse est enim quod non potest non esse."

[3] STIIIa.46.1c: "Dicendum quod, sicut Philosophus docet in v Meta. necessarium multipliciter dicitur: uno quidem modo, quod secundum sui naturam impossibile est aliter se habere."

[4] STIa.82.1c: "Necesse est enim quod non potest non esse. Quod quidem convenit alicui, uno modo ex principio intrinseco, sive materiali, sicut cum dicimus quod omne compositum ex contrariis necesse est corrumpi, sive formali, sicut cum dicimus quod necesse est triangulum habere tres angulos aequales duobus rectis. Et haec est necessitas naturalis et absoluta." Necessity here is absolute or simple necessity. Aquinas also talks of conditional or suppositional necessity, where B is necessary if A obtains. Such conditional necessity, which arises from an external cause, is considered in ST1a.82.1 explicitly in relation to freedom and will be seen in later chapters to play an important role.

[5] STIIIa.14.2c: "Alia autem est necessitas naturalis, quae consequitur principia naturalia – puta formam, sicut necessarium est ignem calefacere; vel materiam, sicut necessarium est corpus ex contrariis compositum dissolvi."

[6] With qualification – see note 11 below.

[7] In Peri Hermeneias 1.14: "et ideo alii melius ista distinxerunt secundum naturam rerum ut scilicet dicatur illud necessarium, quod in sua natura determinatum est solum ad esse; impossibile autem quod est determinatum solum ad non esse; possibile autem quod ad neutrum est omnino determinatum, sive se habeat magis ad unum quam ad alterum, sive se habeat aequaliter ad utrumque, quod dicitur contingens ad utrumlibet." No clear distinction is drawn here between 'possible' and 'contingent'. Although the two terms are usually distinguished on the basis that contingency is opposed to necessity while possibility, strictly speaking, includes necessity, there are occasions when Aquinas does not make this distinction. See Goris [1996] pp.258 & 268. In the passage from *In Peri Hermeneias* quoted, it seems clear that 'possible' is not being used in the strict sense, since things are described as ' being either' i.e. two way possibility. Things which are possible in the strict sense are those which are properly described only as 'can be', not 'can be or can not-be'.

[8] SCG 2.30.1 &2: "Sunt enim quaedam in rebus creatis quae simpliciter et absolute necesse est esse. Illas enim res simpliciter et absolute necesse est esse in quibus non est possibilitas ad non esse. Quaedam autem res sic sunt a deo in esse productae ut in earum natura sit potentia ad non esse. Quod quidem contingit ex hoc quod materia in eis est in potentia ad aliam formam. Illae igitur res in quibus vel non est materia, vel si est, non est

possibilis ad aliam formam, non habent potentiam ad non esse. Eas igitur absolute et simpliciter necesse est esse." A particularly striking example of the created potentiality to 'non-being' would be human apoptosis, the pre-programming of human body cells to undergo a finite number of divisions, lose their reproductive capacity and die.

[9] See SCG2.30.9

[10] This does not mean that they cannot cease to exist, for God, having created them, could equally well annihilate them. But this is not a potentiality within their own nature. Their ceasing to exist depends on something extrinsic, namely God. All created things, including angels and celestial bodies, are of course in a sense contingent, in that, on Aquinas' account, God need not have created them; he freely willed their existence. Within the created order however some things may still be necessary despite that original contingency of creation and it is in this second, created order, sense that the nature of the created thing is the key to its contingency or necessity.

[11] What Aquinas says in SCG2.30 about celestial bodies might be thought to be at variance with what he says in *In Peri Hermeneias* 1.14 about matter's potential to be otherwise being insufficient to account for contingency. In the latter work, he points out that the heavenly bodies, which are necessary beings, have the potential to be otherwise (even though they have no potential to not-be) for they can be in different locations. He argues that the powers that act on the matter must therefore also be taken into account in explaining contingency. If these powers are irresistibly determined to one course (as, presumably, he believes the power acting on the celestial bodies is) then the potential 'might be' of matter will always be realised only in one way. If the powers are not so determined, there will be contingency. I do not think, however, that this elaboration of the position taken in SCG2.30 affects the thrust of the argument that whether *x* is contingent or not depends on *x*'s nature, for the irresistible one-way determination of *x*'s matter is part of *x*'s nature. The importance of such determination for freedom is considered later.

[12] SCG1.67.6: "...effectus non potest esse necessarius cuius causa est contingens; contingeret enim effectum esse remota causa."

[13] SCG1.85.4: "a causa autem variabili effectus contingentes sequuntur: non enim potest esse effectus firmioris esse quam sua causa." Contingent causes can produce only contingent effects, but necessary causes can produce both contingent and necessary effects. The importance of this view in relation to God's causation is considered in detail below, Chapter 5.

[14] SCG 3.73.2: " In rebus autem inanimatis causarum contingentia ex imperfectione et defectu est: secundum enim suam naturam sunt determinata ad unum effectum, quem semper consequuntur nisi sit impedimentum vel ex debilitate virtutis, vel ex aliquo exteriori agente, vel ex materiae indispositione; et propter hoc causae naturales agentes non sunt ad utrumque, sed ut frequentius eodem modo suum effectum producunt, deficiunt autem raro. Quod autem voluntas sit causa contingens, ex ipsius perfectione provenit: quia non habet virtutem limitatam ad unum, sed habet in potestate producere hunc effectum vel illum; propter quod est contingens ad utrumlibet."

[15] In Peri Hermeneias 1.14 : "Assignat.. rationem possibilitatis et contingentiae, in his quidem quae sunt a nobis ex eo quod sumus consiliativi."

[16] See for example DM6.

[17] The striking difference in the source of contingency in plants and in human action might lead one to suppose that Aquinas has two concepts of contingency. I think however that it would be right to say that he has one concept taking different forms. Contingency is a way of being, for both plants and humans, which arises from their potential for not-being. In both plants and humans contingency results from their nature and their activity results from form. Further, there is a sense, considered in Chapter 3, in which man's natural inclination will result in natural action unless impeded (although crucially the impediment there is not due to something external or to failure, but to man's own decision.)

[18] SCG 3.73.5: "Tolleretur enim laus virtutis humanae, quae nulla est si homo libere non agit. Tolleretur etiam iustitia praemiantis et punientis, si non libere homo ageret bonum vel malum." My translation.

[19] See Ethics iii, 1109 b30 – 1110 a18, in particular the introduction: "Since moral goodness is concerned with feelings and actions, and those that are voluntary receive praise and blame, whereas those that are involuntary receive pardon and sometimes pity too, students of moral goodness must presumably determine the limits of the voluntary and involuntary. Such a course is useful also for legislators with a view to prescribing honours and punishments." Translation Thomson [1976]

[20] See STIa IIae.76.4

[21] Fuller[1969] p.162

[22] Copleston [1990] p.173

[23] STIa IIae.1.1c: "actiones.... quae ex voluntate deliberata procedunt"

[24] STIa IIae.1.1c: "Dicendum quod actionum quae ab homine aguntur, illae solae proprie dicuntur *humanae* quae sunt propriae hominis inquantum est homo."

[25] STIa IIae.1.1 ad 3: "Dicendum quod hujusmodi actiones non sunt proprie humanae, quia non procedunt ex deliberatione rationis, quae est proprium principium humanorum actuum. Et ideo habent quidem finem imaginatum, non autem per rationem praestitutum" Trans. McInerney [1998]

[26]The fact that one might query whether the arm and hand movements then amounted to 'scratching' at all merely underlines that a purpose is necessary if something is properly to be considered an action.

[27]STIa IIae.6.2c: "Est autem duplex cognitio finis, perfecta scilicet et imperfecta. Perfecta quidem finis cognitio est quando non solum apprehenditur res quae est finis, sed etiam cognoscitur ratio finis et proportio eius quod ordinatur ad finem ipsum; et talis cognitio finis competit soli rationali naturae. Imperfecta autem cognitio finis est quae in sola finis apprehensione consistit, sine hoc quod cognoscatur ratio finis et proportio actus ad finem; et talis cognitio finis reperitur in brutis animalibus per sensum et aestimationem naturalem. Perfectam igitur cognitionem finis sequitur voluntarium secundum rationem perfectam, prout scilicet apprehenso fine aliquis potest deliberans de fine et de his quae sunt ad finem, moveri in finem vel non moveri. Imperfectam autem cognitionem finis sequitur voluntarium secundum rationem imperfectam, prout scilicet apprehendens finem non deliberat, sed subito movetur in ipsum. Unde soli rationali naturae competit voluntarium secundum rationem perfectam sed secundum rationem imperfectam competit etiam brutis."

It would seem that Aquinas agrees with Aristotle's statement in *Ethics* iii, 2 quoted in the Sed Contra to STIa IIae.6.2 that children as well as animals share in limited voluntary activity. The position of children is covered specifically in DV24.2 ad 1: "Thus the voluntary is said to be in brutes and in children because they act of their own accord but not by the exercise of free choice." "Ut sic dicatur voluntarium esse in brutis vel pueris, quia, sua sponte aliquid faciunt, non propter usum liberae electionis." Children would presumably be excluded from full voluntary activity because they had not yet reached the age of reason and so would be intellectually unable to recognize an end as such. This re-emphasises the importance of reason in what Aquinas classifies as 'human acts', for the inclusion of children

with animals gives a more complex distinction than would normally be drawn between animals and human beings.

[28] STla llae.6.2 ad 3: "Laus et vituperium consequuntur actum voluntarium secundum perfectam voluntarii rationem."

Chapter 3

VOLUNTARY ACTION AND THE WILL

"Those things which have some grasp of what an end implies are said to move themselves, because within them lies the source, not only of acting, but also of acting with a purpose. And since on both counts the principle is internal to them, their acts and motions are termed voluntary."

"..voluntariness in its full sense is a quality of human acts."

STla llae.6.1c

Introduction

We have seen that 'human acts' are 'fully voluntary acts' and that such acts are free acts, being those to which responsibility attaches. In STla llae.6, Aquinas considers what constitutes a voluntary act, establishing at the outset that human acts are voluntary, and later refining the term 'voluntary' by considering what factors might make an act involuntary.

In STla llae.6.1, he develops the characteristics of a voluntary act, starting from the principle of movement of inanimate things, of animals and of humans in particular. The essential points in this development are:

(i) Some actions derive from an inner rather than external principle of motion e.g. a stone's falling to the ground comes from its inner principle of motion; its rising derives from an external principle;

(ii) Some of these actions which have an inner principle of motion arise from the thing moving having set itself in motion, and some do not;

(iii) Since all actions are for an end, knowledge of that end will be required if the action truly is to be self-movement. Things which have no notion of the end are not moved by themselves but by others;

(iv) Action which is truly self-movement is termed voluntary action.

This is set out in STla llae.6.1:

"Those things, however, which have some grasp of what an end implies are said to move themselves, because within them lies the source, not only of acting, but also of acting with a purpose. And since on both counts the principle is internal to them, their acts and motions are termed voluntary, which conveys the meaning of following a bent quite their own."

Aquinas buttresses this point with reference to the authorities Aristotle, Nemesius and Damascene,

quoted in the Objection to Article 1, for he goes on "they define voluntary action as having *its principle within the agent* together with the added proviso that it is done with knowledge." [1]

So, a voluntary action is an action where both the motion and the end for which that motion is undertaken arise from an internal principle.[2]

Some further consideration of the metaphysical background to Aquinas' argument is necessary to draw out the implications of this description of voluntary action. The elements of his description are therefore considered in turn before returning to what he identifies as the principle of motion in human actions, the will. From an examination of the nature of the will and its acts, some idea of how human acts can be said to be free, and hence of Aquinas' concept of freedom, will emerge.

A. Elements of voluntary action

A.1 Inner Principle of Motion

First, 'some actions derive from an inner principle of motion'.

For Aquinas, all things act in some way or other: a stone's falling down, a daisy's pushing through the

lawn, a dog's burying a bone, a man's locking the door, are all actions. Actions come about from form – form is always accompanied by some tendency or inclination, and it is this that leads to action. This tendency is the 'inner principle of motion' which produces action and may be referred to as the thing's nature. On Aquinas' outdated natural philosophy, a stone's tendency is to be at the centre, for example, and so if dropped from a height will fall towards the centre until its fall is obstructed. Falling downward is the natural movement of the stone; this contrasts with the violent movement which would come about if the stone were thrown upwards. Such a motion is violent because the principle of movement is external to the stone and produces an act contrary to its nature.

There is therefore in Aquinas' account a close link between the nature of a thing and action. It can certainly still be said that the tendency to act in a certain way helps define the nature of a thing, and enables one to classify it as one kind of thing or another. Acids, for example, are substances which have certain tendencies, namely to donate protons: it is part of what they <u>are</u> that they will, in most circumstances, <u>do</u> certain things.[3]

As the example of acids shows, a tendency or inclination is towards something. For Aquinas, endorsing Aristotle, tendencies are towards 'the good', and only the good. In STIa IIae.8.1 for example, he says:

"Now appetite is only for the good. The reason for this is that appetite is simply an inclination for something on the part of the one who desires it. Now nothing is favourably disposed to something unless it is like or suitable to it. Hence since everything, insofar as it is a being and a substance is a good, every inclination is to a good. Therefore the Philosopher says that the good is 'that which all desire'."[4]

The implications of this idea that all inclinations, or appetites, are towards only the good are considered below in relation to the will. At this stage, it is noted only that 'the good' is, on Aquinas' account, what is good for the thing in question, whether plant, animal or man, in fulfilling its nature – i.e. in becoming a perfect example of whatever kind of thing it is. In SCG1.37 for example, Aquinas says that "each thing seeks its perfection as the good belonging to it."[5] And in STIa IIae.1.5 "..each thing desires its own fulfillment and therefore desires for its ultimate end a good that perfects and completes it."[6]

Everything, then, has an inclination towards what is, broadly speaking, good for it. This inclination is however manifest in different ways in natural things (stones and plants, for example), animals (e.g. dogs) and human beings. As it is put in DV23.1: ".. it pertains to everything whatever to have an appetite, natural or animal or rational (that is, intellectual); but in different beings it is found in different ways."[7] So too in SCG1.72.4: "Now, it belongs to every being to seek its perfection and the conservation of its being, and this in the case of each being according to its mode: for intellectual beings through will, for animals through sensible appetite, and to those lacking sense through natural appetite."[8]

In the ST, and in de Malo (DM) 6.1, the reason given for the difference in tendencies is form, and in particular the difference in forms between things with cognition and things without. In STIa.80.1, for example, having said that tendency follows form, Aquinas goes on to say:

"But form means more in things with knowledge than it does in things without it. In things without knowledge, form fixes each in its own determinate being. The propensity accompanying this natural form is called its natural appetite. But things that

know are each fixed in their natural being in such a way as to be open to receive forms from other things. Sense receives sense forms, the understanding receives intellectual forms..."[9]

The distinction between natural, animal and human beings is taken further, and the implications of it spelled out, in DM6.1, where Aquinas says:

"..action in nature originates from things' forms, which give them natural tendencies (called desires of their nature) leading to action, just as in human beings from forms taken in by mind there follow willed tendencies leading to external activity; but also unlike, because forms in nature are forms taken on and made individual by matter, so that the resultant tendency is fixed on one course, whereas forms taken in by mind are general forms covering a number of different things, so that the willed tendencies remain open to more than one course of action..... The active principle in lower animals lies somewhere in between: the forms their senses take in are individual like the forms of nature and give rise to tendencies to react in fixed ways as in nature; yet the form taken in by their senses is not always the same as it is in nature (where fire is always hot) but varies...."[10]

The inner principle of motion in all things is therefore their inclination or appetite for what will lead to their perfection; that comes from form. The type of form which gives rise to action is important, for there is a hierarchy of appetites.[11] Natural appetite comes from natural form, and is determined by that natural form to one course of action: stones dropped always fall downwards, for example, fire always rises up. Animal appetite comes from forms received in the senses and leads to fixed actions, but of more than one sort. Intellectual or rational appetite comes from forms received in the intellect, which forms, being general, leave the particular action which follows open i.e. indeterminate. All three kinds of appetite or tendencies will, it should be noted, be found in man depending on whether he is being considered simply as a natural (as opposed to manufactured) thing, or as an animal, or as a man. When he is acting as a man, the principle of motion is the intellectual appetite – namely, will.

A.2 Self-movers

Since the principal concern in this chapter is human actions, how Aquinas characterizes the will as a self-mover must be the main consideration. Again, however, Aquinas' general statements about self-movement provide illuminating background.

The principle of self-movement is expressed, not altogether clearly, in DV24.1, in a passage that owes much to Aristotle's *Physics*. Here Aquinas again distinguishes between natural, animal and human movement. All things have an inner principle of motion, as we have just seen, but only some of these things can be said to move themselves. Those things which move themselves must be distinguishable into two parts, one of which acts as mover and the other as moved. Here Aquinas follows Aristotle's argument that nothing acting as a whole can move itself as a whole, so that when one says that an animal moves itself, one means that one part of the animal moves another part of the animal.[12] Where, therefore, it is impossible to make such a distinction, there can be no self-movement.

There is a further reason for denying self-movement in some things, namely that the form which is the principle of their movement is given them by their generator: "Because they have [their form] from the being which generated them, they are said to be moved essentially by their genitor and accidentally by that which removes an obstacle, according to the Philosopher. These are moved by means of themselves but not by themselves."[13] By implication, Aquinas seems to say that men and animals do,

somehow, have the forms which give rise to their movement from themselves. But he does not then use difference of form-source as the basis of distinction between those kinds of beings which do move themselves. Instead, he distinguishes self-movement in men and in brutes on the basis of judgment: "Men act and are moved by rational judgment, for they deliberate about what is to be done. But all brutes act and are moved by a natural judgment." He goes on to say, in a passage which will later be seen to have considerable importance for the nature of freedom:

"It is accordingly apparent to anyone who considers the matter aright that judgment about what is to be done is attributed to brute animals in the same way as motion and action are attributed to inanimate natural bodies. Just as heavy and light bodies do not move themselves so as to be by that fact the cause of their own motions, so too brutes do not judge about their own judgment but follow the judgment implanted in them by God. Thus they are not the cause of their own decision nor do they have freedom of choice. But man, judging about his course of action by the power of reason, can also judge about his own decision inasmuch as he knows the meaning of an end and of a means to an end, and the relationship of the one with reference to the other."[14]

In SCG2.47 however, in a fuller description of self-movement, the difference between those things which move themselves and those which do not is clearly put down to the origin of the form which is the principle of their movement. And the distinction between the two groups of self-movers, men and animals, is also put down to the origin of forms, though judgment also plays a part:

"Now natural forms, from which natural motions and operations derive, do not proceed from the things whose forms they are, but wholly from extrinsic agents. For by a natural form each thing has being in its own nature, and nothing can be the cause of its own act of being. So it is that things which are moved naturally do not move themselves. .... Likewise, in brute animals the forms sensed or imagined, which move them, are not discovered by them, but are received by them from extrinsic sensible things, which act upon their senses and are judged of by their natural estimative faculty. Hence though brutes are in a sense said to move themselves, inasmuch as one part of them moves and another is moved, yet they are not themselves the source of the actual moving which, rather, derives partly from external things sensed and partly from nature. For, so far as their appetite moves their members, they are said to move themselves....; but, so far as appetition in them

follows necessarily upon the reception of forms through their senses and from the judgment of their natural estimative power, they are not the cause of their own movement.... On the other hand, the form understood, through which the intellectual substance [sc. man] acts, proceeds from the intellect itself as a thing conceived, and in a way contrived by it."[15]

The important factors in self-movement identified so far are therefore appetite, which arises from form, and the source of that form from which it arises. Animals are not really the cause of their own movement because the forms which give rise to their movement are, in some sense, imposed from outside and subject to only a 'natural estimative power', or 'natural judgment'. The forms which give rise to their movement come from external objects sensed – food smelled by a dog, for example. This sense form does not automatically result in the dog eating the food, however, as the plant's form automatically leads it to turn towards the sun. Dogs may react in more than one way to a sensed form, depending on how the form is received by them. In DM6, quoted above, Aquinas uses the example of fire: a dog may find fire hot, in which case he will run away from it, or as pleasantly warm, in which case he will lie down beside it. Similarly, if he smells food, he will eat it if he is hungry, but reject it if he is not. This is his 'natural

judgment'. The important point Aquinas seems to be making here is that every time the dog feels the fire hot, he will run; every time he smells food and feels hungry, he will eat. In similar circumstances, the action will be fixed. While therefore there is a (limited) range of actions open to dogs, which action they will actually perform is imposed on them by a combination of the external object and a natural pre-programmed response.

Human beings, however, are themselves the source of the forms which give rise to their movement. This is because the forms which give rise to human action are forms taken in by the mind. In Aquinas' epistemology, the forms of external things are, very broadly speaking, taken in by the senses and processed by the active intellect, then stored in the passive intellect for later use, as it were. It is this 'form processing' by which the intellect 'contrives' the form which later gives rise to action: in this way, humans 'discover', as brute animals do not, the forms which move them. As will be seen later, this point that activity is stimulated by forms taken in by the intellect has important implications for the action of the will.

A.3 Action for an end.

In Aquinas' view, everything which acts, acts for an end, or purpose. If it were not so, actions would be random or would not happen at all:

"All efficient causes must needs act for an end..... matter does not achieve form unless it be changed by an efficient cause, for nothing potential is self-actualizing. Now an efficient cause does not start this change except by intending an end. For were it not shaped towards producing a determinate effect, it would not produce this rather than that, and to produce a determinate effect it must be set on something defined, which is what an end, *finis*, implies."[16]

And we have already seen in Chapter 2 that 'being done for a purpose' is what distinguishes 'human acts' from mere 'acts of a man', which are not really acts at all, but simply movements.

The idea of acting for an end is of course implicit in the idea of natural tendencies or appetite: a tendency must be to something, and appetite, an appetite for something. But such a teleological notion need not imply an anthropomorphic belief in the 'acting for a purpose' of flowers when they open their petals to the

sun, for example. It says only that there must be some reason arising from the flower's nature why *x* rather than *y* happens.

That Aquinas' approach is not anthropomorphic is seen in the crucial distinction he makes between the ways that inanimate things, animals and men act for an end. Some things, he argues, have their end imposed on them and they are set in motion towards it, like an arrow towards a target. The archer decides where the arrow is to be aimed and he aims it and then looses it. Though this is clearly an action for an end – hitting a target, killing a deer – the arrow, equally clearly, has no knowledge of this end and does not determine the direction in which it is aimed. This is one reason the arrow cannot be said to be a self-mover, even though it arguably has a property, its impetus, which keeps it moving along the path the archer has chosen. Another example would be a clockwork toy designed to throw balls into the air – when the lock on its mechanism is released, the toy raises its arm and throws a ball, repeating the action until stopped. Its actions are clearly for an end, and there is certainly an internal principle of motion, but the toy obviously has no knowledge of that end. For <u>self-motion</u> there must be not just this inner principle of motion, but also some knowledge of the end to which the motion is directed. The man and the dog

can be said to be self-movers because in a sense they 'aim themselves' at the glass of wine or the bone and do so knowingly. They are therefore both acting for a purpose in a way the arrow is not.

However, as we have already seen, the dog's end has to some extent been imposed externally on him, and to this degree he is not fully a self-mover. This is consistent with the distinction already noted in Chapter 2 between fully voluntary and partially voluntary action, the former arising from knowledge of the end as an end and applicable only to human action.

The distinction between animals and humans leads to another important point about acting for an end in relation to human actions. As well as holding that all human actions are for an end, Aquinas also holds, with Aristotle, that there is an ultimate end to which all human actions are directed. When I do *x*, I am doing it for a purpose, but that purpose has another purpose behind it, and so on until I come to the 'ultimate end'. There must be an ultimate end, since this chain of ends cannot go on indefinitely. In STIa IIae.1.5, Aquinas argues that there can be only one ultimate end, for the ultimate end has to be something that completely satisfies desire so that there is nothing left to desire. Otherwise, of course, it

would not be the final end. "Now this would not be the case were something else outside it still wanted. Hence it cannot be that desire should go out to two things as though each were its fulfilment."[17] The one ultimate end is what everything else done is directed towards, either directly or as contributing towards it: "whatever a man desires is because of its evidence as good. If not desired as the perfect good, that is the ultimate end, then it is desired as tending to that, for a start is always made in order to come to a finish as appears in the products of nature and art alike."[18] The ultimate end is therefore the complete good, and each particular action is a movement towards that, and a movement towards something seen as good in itself or good as a means to the ultimate good.

Whether Aquinas is right in holding that all human acts are done for a purpose and that there is an ultimate end to which all acts are directed is debatable. Kenny, for example, criticises on empirical grounds the view that all human actions are done for the sake of happiness, or for an overarching goal.[19] And Anscombe criticises the Aristotelian basis of Aquinas' argument on the grounds both of its false premiss (that human beings must always act with some end in view) and its logic (the apparent "..illicit transition in Aristotle from 'all chains must stop somewhere' to 'there is somewhere where all chains

must stop'.").[20] Detailed consideration of Aquinas' arguments in relation to the ultimate end is peripheral to this thesis, but there is no doubt that the distinction he draws between the particular goods and the ultimate end has important implications in his own account. There is equally no doubt that he is certain that all human acts, as he defines them, are for an end, and that all human actions are directed to one ultimate end, the complete goodness.[21]

Knowledge of the end is also an ingredient of a voluntary act, and we saw in Chapter 2 that knowledge of the end as an end is a distinguishing mark of human as opposed to animal action. Aquinas is quite clear that without knowledge of the end there can be no voluntary action. This does not mean, however, that there has to be knowledge of every aspect of the end for the action to be voluntary. I may book a flight to Europe on the Internet, for example, having little or no knowledge of how the computer connection is made or the money transferred from my account to the airline's account, or indeed of the airline itself beyond a vague idea of its general reliability. But such ignorance would not normally be regarded as making my action involuntary. Here, the things about which I am ignorant are peripheral to my end, the booking of a flight to Europe. If, on the other hand, I did not know that depressing a certain

keyboard button would book me a flight to America rather than Europe, and I did press the button, my booking a flight to America would seem to be involuntary, for here the ignorance is about something central to the end.

On Aquinas' account, ignorance makes an action involuntary to the extent that that ignorance deprives the agent of the necessary knowledge.[22] He goes on to say, however, that not every kind of ignorance does have this effect. Where the ignorance is itself involuntary, the act which follows is not a voluntary one. Aquinas gives the example of a man who, having taken all proper precautions to ensure that the field is clear, shoots at a target without realising that someone has just walked into the line of fire, and so kills him. That killing is 'absolutely involuntary' because the archer had checked properly before he fired his arrow and would not have shot had he known that there was somebody in line. It is otherwise where the ignorance is voluntary, either because it was willed (if, for example, the archer had decided not to look to see if anyone was coming) or because it arose from failure to do something which could and should have been done (if, say, the archer had not even considered checking). In such cases, the ignorance does <u>not</u> make the action of killing the man who wanders into the line of fire involuntary.

Aquinas also introduces another distinction: the case where there is involuntary ignorance about what is done, but where the act would still have been done had the agent known the facts. If, for example, the archer had shot at what he, justifiably, believed to be a target but was in fact, unknown to him, a man whom he wished to kill, the killing would not be voluntary. In this case however, the killing could not be described as involuntary, Aquinas says, referring to Aristotle, because the effect produced was not against the man's will. Nevertheless, the killing cannot be voluntary, for what is not known cannot be willed; it is therefore non-voluntary.[23]

While this last case is clearly distinguishable from that of the archer who would not have shot had he known the facts, it is debatable whether Aquinas should make the distinction he does on the basis that the killing is not against the archer's will. It is not against his wishes, but he did not in the case in question will to do anything other than hit the target when he drew his bow, and Aquinas elsewhere makes a careful distinction between 'wishing' and 'willing' which he does not seem to have observed here. It would seem that in the particular circumstances of this case, the archer neither willed to kill the man nor

knew that he was doing so –surely enough to make the action of killing him qualify as involuntary.

Some of the unease about this example perhaps comes from Aquinas' description of the actions as 'voluntary', 'involuntary' or 'non-voluntary' when in modern terms they would be considered under the headings of 'intended' or 'unintended'. It is outside the scope of this thesis to examine the concept of intention, or its relationship to voluntariness, although brief mention is made of its place in Aquinas' analysis of a human act in Chapter 4. His treatment of the effect of lack of knowledge on the voluntariness of an act does however bring out some important points about voluntary action, in particular the importance of both knowledge and will to a voluntary act. Also clear from this treatment is the emphasis on responsibility – whether, in these circumstances, A is to be held responsible for what he has done. It brings out too an important point about voluntariness in general: that something may be voluntary even though it is not positively willed, for he says in STIa IIae.6.8 that "ignorance may be voluntary in the way that not willing and not acting can be voluntary: it is an ignorance of what we can and should know."[24]

The question of voluntary 'not willing' or 'not acting' is considered in STIa IIae.6.3, where Aquinas argues that there can be voluntariness without any external action, and indeed even where there is no internal action: "There can be voluntariness without an act, sometimes without an external act though with an internal act, as when a person wills not to act, sometimes however, without even an internal act, as when he does not will to act."[25]

Aquinas' treatment here is interesting, for it extends the notion of 'voluntary' from what a man does to what he does not do – at least in some circumstances. Anything voluntary must spring from will, he argues, but this can be directly from will, or indirectly, just as a ship wreck can come indirectly from a failure to steer the ship (as opposed to its arising directly from, for example, a deliberate steering on to rocks). Aquinas goes on to make the point that the result of non-acting, whether brought about by willing not-to-F or by not-willing F, is "not always to be brought home to the non-acting agent, but only where he could and should have acted."[26] The example used in STIa IIae.6.3 is of a helmsman who fails to steer a ship, perhaps, say, because he was daydreaming, and the ship is then wrecked. The helmsman (H), it seems from Aquinas' account, is responsible for the wreck of the ship because he failed to do what he could, and

should, have done, namely steer the ship. It appears that Aquinas regards the wrecking of the ship as *indirectly* voluntary on H's part, because H either willed something – not to steer – which later caused the wreck, or because H did not will something which he should have done, and that failure caused the wreck. The 'willing' element of this voluntariness may therefore be positive or negative, but in either event the relationship between it and the wrecking is indirect.

What is rather less clear is the relationship between the wreck and the 'knowledge' element of voluntariness. Even indirect voluntariness must require some knowledge of the end which comes from the willing-not-to-act/not-willing-to-act. Now, in the case of H's failure to steer there is, on the facts as stated, no question of his non-willing being directed to the end of wrecking the ship; it appears that he did not think of that at all. It must be the case, then, that knowledge of that end is to be imputed to him, in those cases where he 'could and should' have acted. Though it is not entirely clear, this would seem to be the implication of Aquinas' response to Objection 3 to STIa IIae.6.3, where it is put that there cannot be voluntariness without some activity, because voluntariness requires knowledge and knowledge involves activity. Aquinas' reply confirms that an act

of cognition is required for voluntariness, and that the ability to consider must lie in a person's power for an act to be voluntary. He goes on to say that not considering may be voluntary, just as not willing may be.[27] It would seem therefore that there is what might be described as 'indirect cognition' of the end in such cases of voluntariness.

This extension of voluntariness to not acting and not willing clearly raises some difficulties, not least the question of the circumstances in which I 'could and should' act – fertile ground for theologians, moral philosophers and lawyers. Pursuit of these issues is however beyond the bounds of this thesis. Since the paradigm case of voluntariness is action, most of the consideration which follows relates to human action rather than inaction, as a route to establishing Aquinas' concept of freedom. Here, it is sufficient to note, again, that for Aquinas, 'the voluntary' extends beyond human action - not just to animal action but also to human inaction.

The key elements of voluntary action can be summarized, then, as an inner principle of movement, self-movement and knowledge of the end to which that movement is directed. Animals and men are self-movers and can act for a purpose and so are

capable of voluntary action. But there is a vital distinction between them: the action of animals is to a great extent externally dictated and so they are not the true cause of their own action.

Aquinas' arguments that men are the cause of their own actions are challenged in the texts on three main grounds:

(i) that the source of human acts is in fact external, namely the desirable object which prompts appetite to act;

(ii) that human acts require some external motion before they can start, and so have an external principle of motion;

(iii) that humans cannot act by themselves without God's help.

These challenges will be considered in the context of the will, already identified as the principle of motion in human acts.

B. The will

The will is the intellectual or rational appetite, the desire for good in creatures with understanding.[28] As such, it is one of the five powers of the soul, principles by which a human being carries out its activities. These are listed in STIa.78.1 as vegetative,

sensitive, appetitive, locomotive and intellective, following Aristotle's classification. In STIa.80.1, Aquinas describes the appetitive power as the one by which "an animal can seek after what it knows, not merely going where natural inclination leads."[29] It is therefore the power to go after something apprehended, either by sense or by intellect.

Sense appetite and intellectual appetite are, Aquinas maintains, two distinct powers because their object is different. His argument runs that since appetite is a passive power i.e. one that is moved by its object rather than one which effects some change in an external object, its nature depends on what activates it. The will is activated by something apprehended by the intellect, the sensual appetite by something apprehended by the senses. And "since what intelligence grasps is of a different class from what sense grasps, it follows that intellective appetite is a power distinct from sensitive appetite."[30]

This passage contains several important points about the nature of the will. First, it classifies it as a passive power, one which is moved by something apprehended; second, it highlights the importance of the intellect in the will's operations, for the will is moved by what the intellect grasps; and third, it characterizes the will by the class of objects which

the intellect grasps. At this stage, I consider only the points about the object of the will; the importance of the intellect to the will's operations is considered in Chapter 4.

B.1 The will and the good

Like all appetites, the will moves towards the good. What is distinctive about the will however is that it moves towards the good as apprehended by the intellect, and what the intellect apprehends are universals. As the intellectual appetite, the will is therefore directed towards goodness itself and not just towards a particular good. In STIa.59.1, in considering whether angels have will, Aquinas distinguishes natural, animal and intellectual appetites on the basis of the generality of that appetite:

"For all things emanate from the divine will, and consequently each and every thing has its own distinctive appetite for goodness. But some things move towards goodness without awareness of it, tending to the good simply because of the relation to it that is in their nature. Such are plants and inanimate bodies whose tending to goodness is called natural appetite. Other things move towards the good with some degree of knowledge, but with no idea of goodness as such; they know it only in the particular

instance, in a sensation of what is sweet, or white, or the like; and the tendency that goes with knowledge of this sort is called sense appetite. Finally, there are beings that tend to the good and at the same time know it precisely as good; and this kind of knowing is distinctively intelligent. And the beings that have it are those that move to goodness in the best possible way; as not merely directed towards it, as by some extrinsic power, like the things devoid of knowledge; nor merely tending to this or that good in particular, like things whose knowledge is limited to sensation; but they tend towards goodness itself, taken quite generally. And this tendency is called will."[31]

So, what the will is naturally inclined to (i.e. inclined to by its nature as the intellectual appetite) is just 'goodness in general' and not any particular good, or series of particular goods as, say, a dog would be. This goodness in general is the complete good, or ultimate end. However, this assertion seems, instinctively, wrong, for it is obviously the case that when I want something, I want not 'the universal good' but a particular thing – a coveted book, a ticket for the opera, an end to thesis writing and so on. This point is made in STIa.80.2, Objection 2, in relation to the distinction between sensual and intellectual appetite – since appetite is towards things, which are concrete particulars, all appetite, including

intellectual appetite, must bear on concrete particulars. Aquinas' response is that although will does bear on things which exist externally as particulars, it desires each of these things because it is an example of the good:

> "Intellectual appetite, though it bears on objects which exist outside the soul as concrete particulars, nevertheless attains in them a universal object of reason, desiring a thing precisely because it is *good*. Thus Aristotle observes in his Rhetoric that hate can bear on something universal, as when *we hate every type of thief*."[32]

This distinction between the inclination towards the universal good and the concrete particular which I want can also be looked at in terms of the distinction between the will as a faculty and the acts which are the exercises of that faculty. While the nature of the will as a faculty is inclined to the universal good, each individual act of will, whether 'willing', 'intending', 'choosing' etc. is directed to a particular good. What I want when I go for a walk is just that, to go for a walk. But Aquinas' point is that in willing to do that particular thing, I do so because I see it as an example of something good.

This movement of the will towards the good is a natural necessity as the movement of the flower towards the sun is a natural necessity. But the natural necessity by which the will moves towards the complete good is not one which compels in the sense of forcing. Aquinas is consistent about this. In the *Commentary on the Sentences*, he says: "Coercion and prevention imply violence and are not characteristic of the kind of necessity that follows from a thing's nature: violence is always against nature. So since will is carried towards bliss with a necessity derived from its nature it isn't coerced and is no less free."[33]

Similarly, in DV22.5:

"Although the will wills the last end by a certain necessary inclination, it is nevertheless in no way to be granted that it is forced to will it for force is nothing else but the infliction of some violence."

And at 22.5 ad 2:

"However effectively a good moves the will, it still cannot force it, because as soon as we posit that the will wills something, we posit that it has an inclination to it. But that is the contrary of force. It does happen however that because of the excellence of a good the will is determined to it by an inclination of natural necessity."[34]

Because the movement is natural, it cannot be a forced movement even if it is a necessary one. But it is only the complete good which moves the will necessarily. This has two important implications. First, although the ultimate end, the complete good, is fixed, what that consists in and how it might be attained are not. In the *Commentary on the Sentences*, Aquinas says:

"Now although we can consider things generally in mind without particularizing, things can't exist generally outside the mind without being particulars. And so will can't ever be carried towards good without being carried towards a defined good, and can't ever be carried towards supreme good without being carried towards supreme good defined in this or that way. Now although will is inclined by nature towards bliss in general, an inclination towards bliss of this or that sort comes not from nature but from a reasoned discrimination deciding that the supreme human good is to be found in this place or that."[35]

And, much later, in STIa IIae.1.7, in considering whether all men act for an end, he makes the important distinction between the notion of the ultimate end and how that end is realised:

"We can speak of the ultimate end in two senses, namely to signify first what it means, and second that in which it is realized. As for the first, all are at one here because all desire their complete fulfilment which... is what final end means. As for the second however all are not unanimous for some want riches, others a life of pleasure, others something else."[36]

And in DM6.1 ad9: "For total happiness can be reached by many paths; so though a human being may compulsively will total happiness, none of the paths to it are willed compulsively."[37]

The second implication is that while there are potentially many particular objects which could move my will, the only particular object which would do so necessarily would be one which represented the complete good. And even then there is only limited necessity, Aquinas argues, for the completely good object would only compel <u>what</u> is willed, not the exercise of the will. This distinction between whether or not the will is exercised on the one hand and what it is directed towards on the other is like that between seeing and not-seeing and between seeing red and seeing black, for example. Whether one sees or not depends on whether or not the power of sight is exercised i.e. whether one opens one's eyes or not. <u>What</u> one sees depends on the objects in one's sight.

If I see a red ball it is because I have exercised my power of sight and, normally, because there is a red ball in front of me; but if I never open my eyes, I will never see the red ball, no matter how long it is left there. Whether I see, therefore, depends, loosely speaking, on me; only what I see depends on the object. This is the point Aquinas wishes to make about the will: whether I will depends not on the object, but on me. The distinction between exercise and object is used several times in DM6 to make this point, but it appears also in STIa IIae and in DV22.6, though in slightly different terms.

In STIa IIae.10.2, Aquinas says that no object necessitates the exercise of the will's activity "whatever it is, a man always has the power not to think about it, and consequently not actually to will it."[38] And in DM6, the point is made that even something which is good in every possible respect need not be willed in the sense of not being thought about:

"Now will is an ability to be moved by good in general; so no good will be powerful enough to compel will to will unless it be good in every respect, the only perfect good, total happiness. This our wills cannot not will, if that means willing what conflicts with it; but they can avoid actually willing it by avoiding

thinking of it, since mental activity is subject to will. In this respect then we aren't compelled to will even total happiness, just as one is not compelled to get hot if one can shut down the heat when one wants."[39]

What Aquinas seems to be arguing here is that even the complete good can be rejected by a refusal to think about it. If this is so, it seems to make a powerful case for the will's ability to reject any object whatever offered to it. There must be doubts however over whether this distinction between exercise and object of the will is well made in relation to a totally good object.

Aquinas argues that I can avoid willing the complete good by avoiding thinking about it, or by thinking of something else. The issue is not however <u>thinking</u> about the total good, but the total good itself. It is not difficult to see how I can avoid thinking about the complete good, for the thought of the complete good is not itself the complete good. As Jordan puts it: "The particular act of thinking about beatitude may not possess the same power over the will as the presentation of beatitude itself, and so the will could choose to turn away from thinking about beatitude considered as a particular act."[40] That can be accepted. The problem however is what happens when 'the total good' and not just the thought of the

total good presents itself – how then can the will not will it? To think of something else will require an act of will, and whatever is willed must be willed under the aspect of good. But this alternative, while good in some respect, is bound to be less good than the 'total good' and it would be inconsistent with Aquinas' account for a good recognized at the time as the lesser of two goods to be chosen in preference to the recognized greater good. It might be argued that it is possible for the totally good to be rejected because it is not recognised as such, but Aquinas' argument in DM seems to assume that the object has been apprehended as totally good. Of course, if it is not apprehended at all, for example because one is thinking about something else and does not happen to notice it, then certainly it cannot be willed, for only the apprehended can be willed. Aquinas' point may therefore be that even the totally good cannot force us to apprehend it – but that is saying that the total good cannot compel the intellect, not that it cannot compel the will.

Jordan's answer to this problem[41] is that Aquinas insists on the possibility of rejection to "clarify something in the conditions of the present life", namely that the soul *in via* can always shift attention from thoughts of the complete good, just because thinking about the highest good is something

imperfect. For the reasons given above, I do not think this solution runs. Aquinas would certainly maintain that in the present life one never does meet the complete good, but that is a different point and provides no answer to the question "How can the will not will the total good if that were to be apprehended?"

It seems to me that on Aquinas' own account of the role of the total good, once that has swum into one's ken, as it were, it is too late for one to turn one's thoughts elsewhere.[42] Once the object has been perceived as totally good I cannot choose to will anything else and must will it.

But whether or not the distinction between exercise and object is justified in relation to the totally good, Aquinas is consistent in holding that only the totally good object compels the will.[43]

Aquinas also holds that the will wills only the good. Intuitively, this seems to be an untenable position, for experience clearly shows that people will and do all sorts of things which are inappropriate, unsuitable or simply evil. But Aquinas maintains that it is only the good which is desired. In STIa IIae.8.1, in the important passage quoted above, he says:

"The will is a rational appetite. Now appetite is only for the good. The reason for this is that appetite is simply an inclination for something on the part of one who desires it. Now nothing is favourably disposed to something unless it is like or suitable to it. Hence since everything, in so far as it is a being and a substance, is a good, every inclination is to a good."[44]

Aquinas' point here is that everything can be good, and so can be desired, and what is desired is what is seen as the good aspect of it.

The view that everything that exists is good 'insofar as it is a being and a substance' is expressed earlier in the ST, in the context of the general notion of good, in STIa.5.3: "Inasmuch as they exist all things are good. For everything, inasmuch as it exists, is actual and therefore in some way perfect, all actuality being a sort of perfection."[45] Since anything perfect is desirable and good (STIa.5.1) it follows that "inasmuch as they exist, all things are good". There is therefore goodness in every thing that exists, and every thing that exists is in that way potentially desirable. Conversely, things are bad because they fail to exist in some way: "Nothing that exists is called bad because it exists, but rather because it fails to exist in some way; thus a man is called bad when he fails to be virtuous and an eye bad when its vision

fails."[46] In such a case there is some potentiality which fails to be actualized and in this respect the thing is bad; in the respects in which potentialities are actualized, the thing exists and so is good:

" 'Good'... expresses the idea of desirable perfection and thus the notion of something complete. So things are called 'good' without qualification, when they are completely perfect; when their perfection is not so complete as it should be, then, even though having some perfection inasmuch as they actually exist, they will nonetheless not be called perfect or good without qualification but only in a certain respect."[47]

Now, the statement that all men desire the good seems somewhat unilluminating if it means no more than that all men desire something which exists. Since, however, there is, in Aquinas' view, no created thing which has all its potentialities actualized, everything must have at least one undesirable aspect. Equally, since no thing can be wholly bad, for it would then have no potentialities actualized and so could not exist, everything must have at least one good aspect. It is this metaphysical view which gives Aquinas the resources to be able to say that everything is good in some respect and so everything can be desirable.

Further, the goodness or otherwise of the thing desired is not objective goodness, but subjective. In STIa IIae.8.1, Aquinas goes on to say:

"But it must be noted that since every inclination arises from some form, natural appetite arises from the form that is present in the natural thing, whereas sense appetite as well as rational appetite – the will – arises from a form as known. Hence just as natural appetite tends to a good that is in fact good, so sense appetite as well as the will tend to the good as known. Consequently, for the will to tend to something it is not required that it be in truth good, but that it be apprehended as good."[48]

Aquinas therefore defends his position that the will tends to the good, and only to the good, by arguing that everything which exists is good insofar as it exists, and hence desirable in some respect, and further, that even those aspects of things which are not objectively good can seem to be good.

Such a consistent characterization of the will as a tendency towards only the good also says something very important about the will's nature. The distinctions Aquinas makes between the tendencies of plants, animals and men lies in how their good is identified and sought; in each case the tendency is

pre-set towards the good. It seems therefore that he does not see the will as peculiarly a neutral tendency, but rather as a force positively directed towards the good for a person. As Kretzmann puts it: "...in Aquinas's view [the will's] nature is fundamentally not that of an independent, equipoised capacity for choice, but that of an innate inclination towards what is cognized as good by each individual intellect naturally associated with each individual will."[49]

The will, then, is a power to want what is understood as good. As the intellectual appetite, it is directed towards the good, but to the good in general and not to any particular good as are plants and animals. Because it is not confined to any particular good, it may tend toward anything that is good. And anything that exists is, or may be seen as, good to some extent. The will therefore is a power which may tend towards absolutely anything.

But just as anything may be apprehended as good, so it may be apprehended as 'not good'. Only one thing qualifies as totally good; everything else falls short:

"that good alone which is complete and which lacks for nothing at all is that object which the will is unable not to want. And this is beatitude. All other particular goods whatever, in so far as they fall short

of some good, can strike us as not good on this head, and the will can refuse them or accept them as the case may be for it is able to respond to one and the same object from different points of view."[50]

Here is the vital thing about the will's relationship to particular goods – it can accept or reject them, because they can be apprehended as good in some respects and not in others. It is in this sense only that the will might be regarded as "an equipoised capacity for choice" for it can choose between particular goods, not being determined to any one, and it can see any one as good or bad or as a mixture. This ability to accept or reject any particular thing, peculiar to the will and not shared by non-rational animals, is 'liberum arbitrium'.

B.2 Liberum arbitrium

Because the will is not determined by its nature to any particular good, man can be attracted to any good and, indeed, to anything which seems good. It is possible for him to apprehend any individual thing as good in some respects and not good in others. Since whatever movement he makes is towards the good, it seems that he must therefore be able to 'make up his own mind' about which things are good and which

are not. Aquinas maintains that man does indeed have such a power, 'liberum arbitrium'.[51]

Despite first appearances, this is an appetitive power and not a cognitive one, Aquinas argues in STIa.83.3. His reasoning is that choice is the distinguishing mark of liberum arbitrium, for in exercising that power we are deciding in favour of *x* rather than *y*, or *x* rather than not-*x*. Choice, he points out, involves both cognition and desire because it requires whatever the intellect decides to be accepted by the will.[52] Since choice is directed towards good however and "since good as such is the object of appetite, it follows that choice is more an act of an appetitive power. And so freedom of decision is an appetitive power."[53] That appetitive power is in fact will (STIa.83.4).

The will therefore has the power to choose, and does choose in moving towards one thing or another. And in acting or not acting, bearing in mind Aquinas' distinction between the exercise and the object of the will. If voluntary acts are willed acts, voluntary acts seem therefore also to be chosen acts. How choices are made, and the part choice plays in a voluntary act, are considered in depth in Chapter 4. The idea of choice also highlights, however, the close relationship

between intellect and will in a voluntary act, and that also is considered in Chapter 4.

At this stage, the main points to be noted from this discussion of the will's relationship with the good and what it says about the will's nature are that:

(i) the will, as man's inner principle of motion, is necessarily directed towards the good;

(ii) it is however necessarily directed only towards the complete good; it is not determined to any particular good;

(iii) any thing whatever may be apprehended as good in some respect, and so the will may incline to any thing whatever;

(iv) any thing may also be apprehended as bad in some respect, and so may be rejected by the will;

(v) the will's moving to one particular thing rather than another, or moving rather than not moving is not determined by the will's nature, but seems to arise from the will's choosing between alternatives or options.

To the extent that the will's movement is not determined by its nature therefore, the will might be said to move itself. But is this really so? Might there not perhaps be something else which moves the will and determines what it moves towards? It is this

point, how far the will really is a self-mover, to which I now turn.

B.3 The will as self-mover

We have already seen that Aquinas identifies the will as the inner principle of movement in human actions, and that he characterizes humans as self-movers, since they have within themselves both an inner principle of movement and knowledge of the end to which that movement is directed. Further, humans are self-movers in the fullest possible way, since they have in some sense 'created' the form which initiates their movement. In order for them to be regarded as self-movers, it must be possible to identify a part which moves and a part which is moved: the good as apprehended by the intellect, plays the part of 'mover' and the will, the 'moved'.

The will, on Aquinas' account also moves itself. In STIa IIae.9.3, he argues that it sets itself in motion, by first willing an end and then by willing the means to that end.[54] So, by willing to go to Rome, my will moves itself to will the means of getting there.[55] As Aquinas points out, this two-fold willing of means and ends shows that the will is not both mover and moved in the same respect, and so not (*per impossibile*) simultaneously actual and potential: "It is as actually

willing an end that it brings itself from potentiality to actuality with regard to willing objects for that end."[56]

Nevertheless, there are grounds for doubting that the will really does move itself. The self-movement described above relates only to those instances where the will has already begun to will something. Having willed to go to Rome, I will the means of getting there, but the initial willing of going to Rome still needs to be accounted for, and Aquinas concedes that an external principle of motion is needed to start the will's willing. Further, although it has been seen above that the will's nature does not determine it to will any particular thing, only to will the complete good, might not the external principle of motion be something which moves it towards a particular good? How Aquinas sees the relationship between the internal and external principles of motion is therefore important in his concept of voluntary action.

B.3.1 External principle of motion

In STIa IIae.9.3, Aquinas argues that the will moves itself. Immediately afterwards, in 9.4, he qualifies this by pointing out that the will's claim to self-movement lies in the fact that by willing an end, it brings itself to willing the steps to that end. But the will was not always willing that end, and so something must have brought about that willing. Since such a chain of

willing ends and means cannot go on indefinitely, he says, there must be some exterior efficient cause which initiates the process.

A similar argument is developed in an important passage in DM6:

"...by way of actually willing one thing we move ourselves to actually willing another; from willing health, for example, to willing medicine, since because we want to be healthy, we start to deliberate about what will make us healthy, and eventually, coming to a decision, want to take our medicine. The willing of the medicine is thus preceded by deliberation, which has itself issued in turn from the willer's will to deliberate. Now because will moves itself by way of deliberation.....will does not compel itself to will. But since it hasn't always been willing deliberation, something must have moved it to will deliberation, and if that was itself, then deliberation must have preceded that movement too, and preceding that deliberation, another act of will. Now this can't go on for ever; so we are forced to admit that, in any will that is not always willing, the very first movement to will must come from outside, stimulating the will to start willing."[57]

Aquinas' reason for insisting that something external to the will itself is necessary to start the will's movement comes from his general metaphysical view that "Every agent which is sometimes in act and sometimes in potency needs to be moved by some mover."[58] So, the will can potentially move the intellect to deliberate, or the other powers to their appropriate acts, or it can actually be doing so. But the cause, or explanation, of its moving from potentially doing *x* to doing *x* actually has to be sought outside the will itself. This is a clear echo of Aristotle's arguments for a first mover and of the argument which underpins the first two of Aquinas' 'five ways' of proving the existence of God (STIa.2.3). It is outside the scope of this thesis to examine the soundness of Aquinas' arguments for the need for such an external first cause. What is important for my arguments are the implications of there being such a need.

In the first place, one might have considered that the need for an external principle was inconsistent with voluntary movement, and this point is put in STIa IIae.9.4, Objection 1. Aquinas responds that the internal principle of motion which is the hallmark of voluntary action does not have to be the <u>only</u> principle of motion in such an action. Although in one context, the will can be taken as a self-mover,

this is not so if one looks at the wider context.[59] This is consistent with the view in STIa IIae.6.1 in the context of voluntary action generally: "It is not essential to a voluntary act that its internal principle should be the first principle."[60]

Aquinas is therefore maintaining that the will is a self-mover, but only up to a point. What matters however, particularly in the context of responsibility, is not the need for some external principle of movement but what effect that principle has on the will's movement. We have already seen that the will's self-movement is limited in that it does not move itself to the ultimate end of total goodness; the question now is whether the external principle of motion places any further limitation on the will's movement.

In STIa.105.4, Aquinas makes clear that an external principle of motion does not, per se, force the will – coercion arises only if the external mover moves the object in a way contrary to its own natural inclination.[61] Even if the will is not forced, however, there still seems to be a major difficulty if the external mover is, as Aquinas maintains, God. If God's power is irresistible, as Aquinas must hold, how is it possible for the will to do other than accept that to which God has moved it? And if that is so, how can it

be moving itself? It would seem that God's moving my will leaves no room for my will to move itself. This point is made throughout Aquinas' various discussions of free movement of the will, from *de Vertitate* to *de Malo*. It is made in STIa IIae.6.1 at Objection 3 in the context of voluntary action generally – since without God nothing is possible, humans cannot act by themselves and so cannot act voluntarily. It is made again in STIa IIae.10.4 Obj 1 more forcibly: "Now God, who is of infinite power, is irresistible: so it is written *Who can resist his will?* Therefore when he acts on the human will its motion necessarily follows."[62]

Aquinas' explanation of how the will can be a self-mover even though God is the external principle of movement makes the points that (i) the way God moves my will is very different from the way it moves itself; and (ii) in moving my will, God moves it only in a way that is consistent with its nature.

It is quite clear that Aquinas does not see God's movement of the will as replacing the will's inner principle of movement – there is still a role for the will to play. In STIa.105.5 for example he says:

"There are some who have taken God's working in everything that acts to mean that no created power

effects anything in the world, but that God alone does everything without intermediaries. For example, it would not be the fire giving heat, but God in the fire and similarly in other instances. But this is impossible..." (because 'creation's pattern of cause and effect' would then be taken away, and because there would be no point in creatures' having the active powers they obviously do have if these powers did nothing). "God's acting in creatures therefore must be understood in such a way that they themselves still exercise their own operations."[63]

God's movement of the will is therefore somehow in parallel with the will's own movement. That it is not prior to the will's own movement in the sense of the movement being started by God and then continued by the will itself is clear from what Aquinas says in SCG3.70:

"It is also apparent that the effect is not attributed to a natural cause and to a divine power in such a way that it is partly done by God and partly by the natural agent, rather it is wholly done by both, according to a different way, just as the same effect is wholly attributed to the instrument and also wholly to the principal agent."[64]

The difference in manner between God's movement of the will and the will's causing its own movement can be seen in Aquinas' extensive treatment of God's activity in nature and will in *de Potentia* 3.7. In explaining how it can be said that "God is at work in the very activity of nature and will" he lists four ways in which one thing can be said to cause another's activity. These are summarized at the end of the main body of the response:

"God then causes everything's activity inasmuch as he gives the power to act, maintains it in existence, applies it to its activity and inasmuch as it is by his power that every other power acts. And when we add to this that God is his own power and therefore exists within everything, not as a part of its being but as holding it in existence, it follows that he is at work without intermediary in everything that is active." [65]

This is echoed in STIa.105.5, particularly in the response to Objection 3: " God does not merely impart forms to things, but upholds them in existence, applies them to their actions and is the end of all actions..."[66]

God is therefore said to be the external principle of motion of the will because he creates the will, sustains it in existence and gives it the power to carry

out its proper acts. This external principle sits alongside, as it were, the internal principle or nature which causes the will to will end E and then means M. This latter way of moving the will is clearly very different from God's way of doing so.

There is too a further way in which God moves the will, mentioned in STIa.105.5 ad 3, above - as final cause. As has already been seen, the natural movement of the will is to the universal good. And the universal good, in Aquinas' account, is of course God.[67] God is therefore both the first efficient cause and the final cause of the will's movement.

If God's being the external principle of motion of the will consists in his creating the will, sustaining it in existence and applying it to its activity, it follows that his movement of it will be consistent with its nature i.e. consistent with its being able to accept or reject any particular good and necessarily drawn only to the wholly good. This is expressed somewhat obscurely in DV24.1 ad 3:

"God works in each agent, and in accordance with that agent's manner of acting, just as the first cause operates in the operation of a secondary cause, since the secondary cause cannot become active except by the power of the first cause. By the fact, then, that

God is a cause working in the hearts of men, human minds are not kept from being the cause of their own motion themselves. Hence the note of freedom is not taken away."[68]

In STIa IIae.10.4, the point is expressed in terms of the necessity or otherwise of the will's movement: "Since the will is an active principle without determinism to one but poised before many objects, so God moves it in such a way that it is not pre-determined to one object."

And in 10.4 ad 1:

"The divine will stretches not merely to the doing of something by the thing it moves, but also to the manner of the doing consistent with the nature of the doer. Accordingly it would be more repugnant to divine motion were the will to be forced and set in motion of necessity, for this does not befit its nature, than for it to be set in motion freely, which does befit its nature."[69]

And, finally, in DM6, having identified God as the first mover of mind, he goes on to say that God "just as he moves everything in the way natural to it, light up and heavy down, moves will in the way will is disposed to be moved, not compelling it to one course, but as open to more than one possibility."[70]

Aquinas' argument, deployed consistently throughout the texts, is therefore that God's being an external first cause of the will's movement does not prevent the will's being a self-mover, for the way he moves the will means that it moves only as he designed it to be moved. And he designed it so that it is able to accept or reject any particular good. The will is therefore not determined to any particular good by God's movement of it.

This description of Aquinas' position leaves unaddressed here however the major issue of the relationship between the first cause and my will as secondary cause, in particular how God as first cause can have necessary effects but the will as secondary cause, contingent effects. That issue may cast doubts on Aquinas' account of the will's ability to accept or reject any particular good, and hence on his concept of freedom. It is considered in depth in Chapter 5. At this stage, it is sufficient to note how Aquinas deals with the point that the will cannot be a self-mover, and so human action cannot be voluntary, if God is the external principle of movement.[71]

B.3.2 Other things which move the will.

The will, then, is not moved necessarily, or determined to any particular thing, by either its nature or the external principle which moves it, namely God.

For completeness, it should be noted here that Aquinas also holds that the will is not moved necessarily by the sensitive appetite or by habit. Certainly, he concedes, emotions can influence how one feels about an object, and to that extent can move the will. Objects can, as we have seen, appear to be good in respects in which they are not objectively so; how one feels can affect how one regards the object and make it seem good, or bad, in respects which might appear differently if one were in a different mood. So, if one is or has been ill, food which might previously have seemed desirable is now unappetising. Similarly, if one is in a bad temper, one might see a course of action – hitting the dog, for example – as good when in more relaxed moments one might take some other approach to the dog's behaviour. The example of anger is the one Aquinas uses to make this point in STIa IIae.9.2:

"Now it is clear that man is changed as to his disposition according to the passions of the sense appetite. Hence something seems fitting to a man when experiencing a certain passion which would not seem so with the passion absent; for example, something seems good to a man when angry which does not seem so when he is calm. In this way, on the part of the object, the sense appetite moves the will."[72]

However, although the senses and their corresponding appetite may move the will, they do not ever do so necessarily. In STIa IIae.10.3, Aquinas argues that as long as there is reason, there is will, and it is only where feelings completely overcome reason that they control actions. In such a case, however, a man is not acting as a man, but like a beast. Where there is no reason, there is no will, but where there <u>is</u> reason, there is will, and will is not bound to follow the passion.[73] The reasoning here seems to be that passion will influence how the object appears and if passion completely overcomes reason, the object will be apprehended only as passion dictates, as completely good, say. If reason is still functioning however, it will be able to discriminate and to present the will with an object good in some respects but bad in others, leaving room for choice.

Further, this inability of passion to necessitate the will would seem to apply not just to, say, an isolated bout of bad temper, but also to a habitually bad-tempered disposition. In DM6, for example, Aquinas concedes that although emotions are easier to get rid of than habitual dispositions, even habit "doesn't altogether compel one, but mainly when one is taken unawares; for however habituated you are, given time to ponder you can go against habit."[74]

These passages raise several interesting issues, considered in detail later;[75] their importance here is in showing that while the senses may influence will's action, they do not compel its exercise nor determine its object. It is therefore possible for Aquinas still to claim that the will moves itself, since it is able to choose which objects to move towards.

B.4 Acts of will

Just as the power of intellect is exercised in several different ways, such as understanding or reasoning, the will acts in different ways. Choosing, as noted above, is one act of the will relevant to a voluntary act.

Aquinas divides willed acts into two categories, those commanded by the will and those elicited by it – actus imperati and actus eliciti.[76] The precise nature

of this distinction, and the purpose of it, are not however easy to understand. It would seem that an actus elicitus cannot simply be an act interior to the will in the sense of involving only the will, since choice and deliberation are both said to be elicited acts and both involve intellect (choice being an act of will informed by intellect – STIa IIae.13 – and deliberation an act of intellect prompted by and terminating in will: STIa IIae.14). Equally, the distinction cannot be made on the basis that an actus elicitus is one beginning and ending in the will, since an act of will may itself be an actus imperatus (STIa IIae.17); as such it is an act of reason, based on will and terminating in will.

Kenny describes actus imperati as "acts whose execution involves some power other than the will"[77] but this seems too wide, since it would include deliberation. Brock describes an elicited act of a power as "one exercised by it as that act's immediate source".[78] This would allow choice to be included as an elicited act of the will, but seems still to exclude deliberation. It may be, as Kenny suggests, that deliberation ought to be classified as an actus imperatus; it may also be that there is no satisfactory description of 'actus elicitus' which would allow deliberation to be included. Nevertheless, two

possible explanations suggest themselves for Aquinas' having so included it.

First, to emphasise the very close link between intellect and will in relation to this element of the human act: deliberation is prompted by will's desire for an end and terminates in will's choice of the means to achieve that end. While strictly speaking deliberation is not an act of will but is immediately an act of the intellect, its existence depends utterly on will's desire for an end. Without that desire, there would be no deliberation.[79] Including deliberation with actus eliciti stresses the importance of the willed element.

Second, to emphasize the importance of deliberation as an element in a voluntary human action. Human actions, it was seen in Chapter 2, are those which are deliberately willed – "quae ex voluntate deliberata procedunt".[80] On this account, what gives rise to a human action is not just an act of will but an act of 'deliberated will'. It seems that it is at this point, when the will has become 'deliberated', that the action takes on the characteristic of 'voluntary'. Now, on Aquinas' account, only some acts of the will can be compelled. In STIa IIae.6.4, he says that the will can suffer violence (i.e. be acted on externally against its own natural inclination) only in relation to

commanded acts, here described as acts 'which come under the will yet are performed by other active powers': "As to [actus imperati] the will can suffer violence, to the extent that our external members can be stopped from carrying out its command. As to its own proper act, however, the will cannot be exposed to violence."[81] That I will (or intend, or choose etc.) something cannot therefore come about as the result of external coercion, because the meaning of an act of will is that it should spring from an inner want, from a natural inclination in a being with cognition. If 'deliberated willing' is as important as it seems to the concept of voluntary action, Aquinas would no doubt wish to make the point that the 'deliberate' element could not suffer violence, and so would include deliberation in the class of acts which cannot be compelled.

However, important though this use of the distinction between actus eliciti and actus imperati is, it seems to make the basis of the distinction less clear. Kenny uses the point that violence cannot be suffered by actus eliciti to argue that deliberation cannot then count as an actus elicitus: "a blow on the head may interrupt deliberation about how best to steal the jewellery just as it may interrupt the theft itself."[82] This argument depends of course on deliberation's being regarded as a process which takes some time,

what Kenny calls a 'clockable event', and other reasons have already been given above why Aquinas may be justified in treating deliberation as an actus elicitus. But the distinction between the two categories does seem to be blurred when one considers that an act of will itself may be an actus imperatus. In STIa llae.17.5, Aquinas states clearly that an act of will may be commanded.[83] If this is so, it is difficult to see how violence may be done to it, if 'violence' is used in Aquinas' sense of a coercive external source rather than Kenny's 'blow on the head'.

It seems therefore that the distinction between 'actus elicitus' and 'actus imperatus' is not entirely clear. Perhaps what is more important than the detail of the division is the point that there are some aspects of a human act which can only come from within and cannot be externally imposed. For one important implication of the point that willed action cannot be compelled is that such action is therefore uniquely mine: if I will *x*, it is I and no one else who does that willing. I may, on the other hand, as Aquinas points out, be dragged along by force even if I do not will to move. In such a case my action is involuntary, and indeed on Aquinas' characterization would not seem to be my action at all, since the movement of my limbs is not commanded by my will. But a

commanded act of the will is surely just as much uniquely mine as an elicited act of the will.

Discussion of the division of acts of will into actus eliciti and actus imperati raises however another question about Aquinas' account of acts of the will. There is no doubt from his account in STIa IIae.6-17 that Aquinas regards willing, intending, choosing, deliberating, consenting and enjoying as elements of what counts as a human action. The question frequently raised is whether these constitute an act or acts which take place 'before' I walk or talk, say. Or indeed before I undertake a mental act such as thinking. Or willing.

To consider walking – must the movement of my legs be preceded by some identifiable act of will? There are certainly cases where such an act can easily be identified – at the end of a long walk, for example, where one is all too aware of willing one's legs to cover the last 100 metres. Similarly with thinking – one's mind wandering from a problem and one then willing oneself (i.e. one's intellect) to concentrate on it is a familiar experience. But is Aquinas saying that there must always be such 'acts of will' before a voluntary action takes place, that a voluntary action consists of an act of will + something else? Such a concept would seem to be challengeable, notably on

the grounds put forward by Ryle[84] that such frequent acts as acts of will ought to be describable, but are not found in experience to be so. I may be well aware of my willing my legs to walk the last 100 metres, but am not at all aware, even by considered introspection, of the almost constant acts of will which would have to be taking place for me to perform everyday 'voluntary actions'. Further, since willing itself may be counted as a voluntary act, it too would have to be preceded by an act of willing to count as voluntary, thus leading to an infinite regress.

Kenny[85] defends Aquinas against these challenges by arguing that the various 'acts of the will' are not acts in the sense of something performed, but states of the will: "When Aquinas says that actus eliciti are 'unmediated exercises of the will', he is not referring to mythical acts of pure willing; he means merely that when we describe someone as wanting something, or intending to do something, or delighting in something, we are merely recording the state of his will, and not saying anything about his talents, skills, abilities or the exercises of his other faculties."[86] He argues for this position on the grounds that 'actus' need not mean 'act' but actualization rather than potentiality. On this account, Aquinas would then be talking of the 'actualized' as opposed to the 'potential'

will. In short, the expression 'act of will', while convenient in English, is misleading.

Kenny's argument is plausible; it is not clear however whether it really represents Aquinas' position. What is clear is that Aquinas does not see an 'act of will' as preceding a voluntary act but as an integral aspect of it. This emerges from his description of a human act, a fully voluntary act, as a unity. In STIa IIae.17.4, dealing with the question of whether the act of command and the act commanded are one act or two, he makes the general comparison between a human act and things composed of different parts. Just as a man is a natural unity despite being composed of body and soul, so it is with human acts: "Accordingly it is clear that command and the commanded act form one single human act, for the whole activity is single, though its parts are multiple."[87] To understand the whole human act, the parts of it have to be analyzed and one part is clearly, on Aquinas' account, some activity by the will. In the context of trying to establish Aquinas' concept of human freedom, the most important issue is how Aquinas sees the nature of the will and the role it plays.

C. Voluntary acts, the will and the intellect

We have so far seen how the will is the inner principle of motion giving rise to a human, or fully voluntary,

act. We have also seen that the will can be said to move itself, in that it first wills an end and consequently the means to that end. It can be called a self-mover even though it is moved by both an external principle, God, and by external objects. This is because God moves the will only in accord with the will's own nature, and that nature does not determine which particular things the will moves towards. Instead, the will can accept or reject any particular object and choose to move towards it or not. This lack of determinism, and the consequent ability to choose among objects seen as good distinguishes human acts from those of other animals and from plants etc. The process of choice therefore seems to be a crucial element in the constitution of a human act and since human acts are free acts, in the concept of freedom. A detailed consideration of that process is therefore necessary.

It will become clear in the examination of that process that the will is not the only faculty involved in a voluntary act. Even at this stage however it is clear that an act of will is not sufficient to make an act voluntary. It was established at the beginning of this chapter that knowledge of the end to which an action is directed is necessary for that action to count as voluntary. And it has also been established that knowledge of the end as an end, and of the

relationship the action bears to that end, is necessary for an action to count as fully voluntary and human. Such knowledge comes, clearly, from an act of intellect, not of will, and so intellect must also have a role to play in the constitution of a voluntary action. This is clear too from the discussion of the will's nature and its ability to move towards anything 'apprehended as good': that apprehension is an act of intellect, often described as the intellect's presenting *x* to the will as good.

Further, Aquinas says that by so presenting the object to it, intellect moves the will "as a formal cause". What makes a particular mental activity 'willing' is that it has been caused by the presentation of an object as good by the intellect, just as what makes another particular activity 'heating' is that it has been caused by 'heat'.[88] This description in the ST of the intellect as formal cause of the will's movement raises two further points which will be seen to be important: first, that it is only those objects apprehended by the intellect as 'good and desirable' which move the will (STIa IIae.9.1 ad 2) and, second, that it seems that the intellect does not move the will necessarily (ad1).

Finally, one of the key things which ground 'self-movement' is the ability to judge about one's own judgments – an act of intellect.

The role intellect plays in a voluntary, human, action, and the relationship between intellect and will in the constitution of such an action will therefore also have to be examined. This will be done after the process of 'choosing' has been considered, in the next chapter.

Notes

[1] STla llae.6.1c: "Quae vero habent notiam finis, dicuntur seipsa movere, quia in eis est principium non solum ut agant, sed etiam ut agant propter finem. Et ideo cum utrumque sit ab intrinseco principio, scilicet quod agunt, et quod propter finem agunt, horum motus et actus dicuntur voluntarii. Hoc autem importat nomen *voluntarii* quod motus et actus sit a propria inclinatione, et inde est quod voluntarium dicitur esse, secundum definitionem Aristotelis, et Gregorii Nysseni, et Damasceni, non solum *cujus principium est intra*, sed cum additione *scientiae.*"

[2] As noted above, Chapter 2, Aquinas draws a distinction, in STla llae.6.2, between fully and partially voluntary acts, the former requiring knowledge of the end as an end. These are human acts. The importance of that distinction is considered later.

[3] See Makin [1989] pp.253-256

[4] STla llae.8.1c: "...omnis autem appetitus non est nisi boni. Cujus ratio est quia appetitus nil aliud est quam quaedam inclinatio appetentis in aliquid. Nihil autem inclinatur nisi in aliquid simile et conveniens. Cum igitur omnis res, inquantum est ens et substantia, sit quoddam bonum, necesse est ut omnis inclinatio sit in bonum. Et inde est quod Philosophus dicit in *Ethic.*, quod *bonum est quod omnia appetunt.*" Trans. Oesterle

[5] SCG1.37.2: "unumquodque suam perfectionem appetit sicut proprium bonum."

[6] STIa IIae.1.5c: ".. cum unumquodque appetat suam perfectionem, illud appetit aliquis ut ultimum finem, quod appetit, ut bonum perfectum et completivum sui ipsius." Trans. Oesterle

[7] DV23.1c: "Et quia cuiuslibet rei tam materialis quam immaterialis est ad rem aliam ordinem habere: inde est quod cuilibet rei competit habere appetitum vel naturalem, vel animalem, vel rationalem seu intellectualem: sed in diversis diversimode invenitur."

[8] SCG1.72.4: "Cuilibet autem enti competit appetere suam perfectionem et conservationem sui esse: unicuique tamen secundum suum modum, intellectualibus quidem per voluntatem, animalibus per sensibilem appetitum, carentibus vero sensu per appetitum naturalem."

[9] STIa.80.1c: "Forma autem in his quae cognitionem participant altiori modo invenitur quam in his quae cognitione carent. In his enim quae cognitione carent invenitur tantummodo forma ad unum esse proprium determinans unumquodque, quod etiam naturale uniuscujusque est. Hanc igitur formam naturalem sequitur naturalis inclinatio, quae appetitus naturalis vocatur. In habentibus autem cognitionem, sic determinatur unumquodque ad proprium esse naturale per formam naturalem quod tamen est receptivum specierum aliarum rerum. Sicut sensus recipit species omnium sensibilium, et intellectus omnium intelligibilium..."

[10] DM6.1c: "Convenit quidem quia sicut in rebus naturalibus invenitur forma, quae est principium actionis, et inclinatio consequens formam, quae dicitur appetitus naturalis, ex quibus sequitur actio; ita in homine invenitur forma intellectiva, et inclinatio voluntatis consequens formam apprehensam, ex quibus sequitur exterior actio; sed in hoc est differentia, quia forma rei naturalis est forma individuata per materiam; unde et inclinatio ipsam consequens est determinata ad unum, sed forma intellecta est universalis sub qua multa possunt comprehendi.....Principium autem activum in brutis animalibus medio modo se habet inter utrumque. Nam forma apprehensa per sensum est individualis, sicut et forma rei naturalis; et ideo ex ea sequitur inclinatio ad unum actum sicut in rebus naturalibus, sed tamen non semper eadem forma recipitur in sensu sicut est in rebus naturalibus, quia ignis est semper calidus, sed nunc una, nunc alia."

[11] See for example SCG2.47: "Now in things that lack cognition this sort of appetite [viz. for the good] is of course called *natural* appetite; a stone for example is said to have an appetite for being farther down. But in things that have sensory cognition it is called *animal* appetite. In those that have intellective cognition, however, it is called *intellective* or *rational* appetite, which is will." "Huiusmodi autem appetitus in his quidem quae cognitione

carent, dicitur naturalis appetitus: sicut dicitur quod lapis appetit esse deorsum. In his autem quae cognitionem sensitivam habent, dicitur appetitus animalis..... In his vero quae intelligunt, dicitur appetitus intellectualis seu rationalis, qui est voluntas." Trans. Kretzmann [1997] p.201

[12] See for example *Physics* viii

[13] DV24.1c: "quamvis motus eorum consequatur aliquod principium in seipsis, scilicet formam quam quia a generante habent, dicuntur a generante moveri per se, secundum philosophum in viii phys. Sed a removente prohibens per accidens; et haec moventur seipsis sed non a seipsis."

[14] DV24.1c: " Eorum autem quae a seipsis moventur, quorumdam motus ex iudicio rationis proveniunt. Quorumdam vero ex iudicio naturali ex iudicio rationis homines agunt et moventur: conferunt enim de agendis; sed ex iudicio naturali agunt et moventur omnia bruta.". ... "Unde recte consideranti apparet quod per quem modum attribuitur motus et actio corporibus naturalibus inanimatis per eumdem modum attribuitur brutis animalibus iudicium de agendis; sicut enim gravia et levia non movent seipsa, ut per hoc sint causa sui motus, ita nec bruta iudicant de suo iudicio. Sed sequuntur iudicium sibi a deo inditum, et sic non sunt causa sui arbitrii, nec libertatem arbitrii habent. Homo vero per virtutem rationis iudicans de agendis potest de suo arbitrio iudicare, in quantum cognoscit rationem finis et eius quod est ad finem, et habitudinem et ordinem unius ad alterum."

[15] SCG2.47.4: "Formae autem naturales, ex quibus sequuntur motus et operationes naturales, non sunt ab his quorum sunt formae, sed ab exterioribus agentibus totaliter: cum per formam naturalem unumquodque esse habeat in sua natura; nihil autem potest esse sibi causa essendi..Et ideo quae moventur naturaliter, non movent seipsa: non enim grave movet seipsum deorsum, sed generans, quod dedit ei formam. In animalibus etiam brutis formae sensatae vel imaginatae moventes non sunt adinventae ab ipsis animalibus brutis, sed sunt receptae in eis ab exterioribus sensibilibus, quae agunt in sensum, et diiudicatae per naturale aestimatorium. Unde, licet quodammodo dicantur movere seipsa, inquantum eorum una pars est movens et alia est mota, tamen ipsa movere non est eis ex seipsis, sed partim ex exterioribus sensatis et partim a natura. Inquantum enim appetitus movet membra, dicuntur seipsa movere, quod habent supra inanimata et plantas; inquantum vero ipsum appetere de necessitate sequitur in eis ex formis acceptis per sensum et

iudicium naturalis aestimationis, non sibi sunt causa quod moveant. Unde non habent dominium sui actus. Forma autem intellecta, per quam substantia intellectualis operatur, est ab ipso intellectu, utpote per ipsum concepta et quodammodo excogitata...."

[16] STla llae.1.2c: "Dicendum quod omnia agentia necesse est agere propter finem. ... materia non consequitur formam nisi secundum quod movetur ab agente; nihil enim reducit se de potentia in actum. Agens autem non movet nisi ex intentione finis. Si enim agens non esset determinatum ad aliquem effectum, non magis ageret hoc quam illud; ad hoc ergo quod determinatum effectum producat, necesse est quod determinetur ad aliquid certum, quod habet rationem finis."

[17]STla llae.1.5c: "Quod esse non potest, si aliquid extraneum ad ipsius perfectionem requiratur. Unde non potest esse quod in duo sic tendat appetitus, ac si utrumque sit bonum perfectivum ipsius."

[18] STla llae.1.6c: "Quia quidquid homo appetit appetit sub ratione boni. Quod quidem si non appetitur ut bonum perfectum, quod est ultimus finis, necesse est ut appetatur ut tendens in bonum perfectum: quia semper inchoatio alicujus ordinatur ad consummationem ipsius; sicut patet tam in his quae fiunt a natura quam in his quae fiunt ab arte."

[19] Kenny [1994] p.68

[20] Anscombe [2000] pp.33-34. That human beings, as humans, must act with some end in view is a necessary truth given Aquinas' definition of a human act and so, on Aquinas' account, the premiss must be true. Nevertheless, it might be thought that Aquinas' definition of human action narrows its scope so much that an inadequate account of human action results; this issue is considered in Chapter 4.

[21] For detailed consideration and a defence of Aquinas' position, including a response to the 'Anscombe fallacy', see Scott McDonald [1991a] pp.31-65

[22] STla llae.6.8c: "ignorantia habet causare involuntarium ea ratione qua privat cognitionem quae praeexigitur ad voluntarium....Non tamen quaelibet ignorantia hujusmodi cognitionem privat."

[23] STla llae.6.8c: "Et talis ignorantia non facit involuntarium, ut Philosophus dicit, quia non causat aliquid quod sit repugnans voluntati; sed facit non voluntarium, quia non potest esse actu volitum quod ignoratum est."

[24] STla llae.6.8c: "Alio modo dicitur ignorantia voluntaria ejus quod quis potest scire et debet, sic enim non agere et non velle voluntarium dicitur."

[25] STla llae.6.3c: "Et sic voluntarium potest esse absque actu; quandoque quidem absque actu exteriori cum actu interiori, sicut cum vult non agere; aliquando autem etiam absque actu interiori, sicut cum non vult agere."
[26] STla llae.6.3c: "Sed sciendum quod non semper id quod sequitur ad defectum actionis reducitur sicut in causam in agens ex eo quod non agit, sed solum tunc cum potest et debet agere."
[27] STla llae.6.3 Obj 3: "de ratione voluntarii est cognitio...Sed cognitio est per aliquem actum. Ergo voluntarium non potest esse absque aliquo actu." Ad 3: "eo modo requiritur ad voluntarium actus cognitionis sicut et actus voluntatis, ut scilicet sit in potestate alicujus considerare, et velle, et agere; et tunc sicut non velle et non agere, cum tempus fuerit, est voluntarium, ita etiam non considerare."
[28] SCG2.47, above
[29] STla.80.1c: "per quam animal appetere potest ea quae apprehendit, non solum ea ad quae inclinatur ex forma naturali."
[30] STla.80.2c: "Dicendum quod necesse est dicere appetitum intellectivum esse aliam potentiam a sensitivo. Potentia enim appetitiva est potentia passiva, quae nata est moveri ab apprehenso. ... et ipsa potentia passiva propriam rationem habet ex ordine ad suum activum. Quia igitur est alterius generis apprehensum per intellectum et apprehensum per sensum, consequens est quod appetitus intellectivus sit alia potentia a sensitivo."
[31] STla.59.1c: "cum omnia procedant ex voluntate divina, omnia suo modo per appetitum inclinantur in bonum, sed diversimode. Quaedam enim inclinantur in bonum per solam naturalem habitudinem absque cognitione, sicut plantae et corpora inanimata; et talis inclinatio ad bonum vocatur appetitus naturalis. Quaedam vero ad bonum inclinantur cum aliqua cognitione; non quidem sic quod cognoscant ipsam rationem boni, sed cognoscunt aliquod bonum particulare; sicut sensus, qui cognoscit dulce et album, et aliquid hujusmodi. Inclinatio autem hanc cognitionem sequens dicitur appetitus sensitivus. Quaedam vero inclinantur ad bonum cum cognitione qua cognoscunt ipsam boni rationem, quod est proprium intellectus; et haec perfectissime inclinantur in bonum; non quidem quasi ab alio solummodo directa in bonum, sicut ea quae cognitione carent; neque in bonum particulariter tantum sicut ea quibus est sola sensitiva cognitio; sed quasi inclinata in ipsum universale bonum. Et haec inclinatio dicitur voluntas."
[32] STla.80.2 ad 2: "Ad secundum dicendum quod appetitus intellectivus, etsi feratur in res quae sunt extra animam singulares, fertur tamen in eas secundum aliquam rationem universalem, sicut cum appetit aliquid quia

est bonum. Unde Philosophus dicit in sua *Rhetorica* quod odium potest esse de aliquo universali, puta cum *odio habemus omne latronum genus.*"

[33] Commentary on the Sentences Book 4, Ds 49 qu 1 ar 3b ad 2: "ad secundum dicendum quod coactio, cum violentiam importet et prohibitio similiter, non pertinent ad illam necessitatem quae naturam rei consequitur: quia omne violentum est contra naturam; et ideo cum naturaliter voluntas necessario feratur in beatitudinem, hoc coactionem in ipsa non ponit nec aliquam libertatis diminutionem."

[34] DV22.5c: "Quamvis autem quadam necessaria inclinatione ultimum finem velit voluntas; nullo tamen modo concedendum est quod ad illud volendum cogatur. Coactio enim nihil aliud est quam violentiae cuiusdam inductio." DV22.5 ad 2: "quantumcumque aliquod bonum efficaciter moveat voluntatem non tamen ipsam cogere potest: quia ex quo ponitur quod velit aliquid, ponitur inclinationem habere in illud quod est coactioni contrarium. Sed ex perfectione boni alicuius contingit quod voluntas determinatur ad illud inclinatione naturalis necessitatis."

[35] Commentary on the Sentences Book 4, Ds 49 qu 1 ar 3c. c: "Ad tertiam quaestionem dicendum quod 'bonum quod est objectum voluntatis, est in rebus' ut dicit philosophus in 6 meta.; et ideo oportet quod motus voluntatis terminetur ad rem extra animam existentem. Quamvis autem res, prout est in anima possit considerari secundum rationem communem praetermissa ratione particulari; res tamen extra animam non potest esse secundum communem rationem nisi cum additione propriae rationis; et ideo oportet, quantumcumque voluntas feratur in bonum, quod feratur in aliquod bonum determinatum; et similiter quantumcumque feratur in summum bonum, quod feratur in summum bonum hujus vel illius rationis. Quamvis autem ex naturali inclinatione voluntas habeat ut in beatitudinem feratur secundum communem rationem. Tamen quod feratur in beatitudinem talem vel talem. Hoc non est ex inclinatione naturae, sed per discretionem rationis, quae adinvenit in hoc vel in illo summum bonum hominis constare."

[36] STla llae.1.7c: "Dicendum quod de ultimo fine possumus loqui dupliciter: uno modo secundum rationem ultimi finis; alio modo secundum id in quo finis ultimi ratio invenitur. Quantum igitur ad rationem ultimi finis, omnes conveniunt in appetitu finis ultimi:quia omnes appetunt suam perfectionem adimpleri, quae est ratio ultimi finis. ... Sed quantum ad id in quo ista ratio invenitur, non omnes homines conveniunt in ultimo fine; nam quidam appetunt divitias tanquam consummatum bonum, quidam autem voluptatem, quidam vero quodcumque aliud."

[37] DM6.1 ad 9: "multis viis ad beatitudinem perveniri potest; et ideo licet homo ex necessitate velit beatitudinem nihil tamen eorum quae ad beatitudinem ducunt ex necessitate vult."

[38] STIa IIae 10.2c: "potest enim aliquis de quocumque objecto non cogitare, et per consequens neque actu velle illud."

[39] DM6.1 ad 7: "cum autem voluntas se habeat in potentia respectu boni universalis, nullum bonum superat virtutem voluntatis quasi ex necessitate ipsam movens, nisi id quod secundum omnem considerationem est bonum: et hoc solum est bonum perfectum quod est beatitudo quod voluntas non potest non velle, ita scilicet quod velit eius oppositum; potest tamen non velle actu, quia potest avertere cogitationem beatitudinis, in quantum movet intellectum ad suum actum; et quantum ad hoc nec ipsam beatitudinem ex necessitate vult; sicut etiam aliquis non ex necessitate calefieret, si posset calidum a se repellere cum vellet."

[40] Jordan [1991] p.149

[41] in op.cit. p.149

[42] See, however, Chapter 4 below, on the voluntariness of sinful thoughts, and the possibility that thoughts might develop, voluntarily, from 'inklings' to 'fully fledged thoughts'.

[43] There is a suggestion that Aquinas developed this distinction between the exercise and the specification of an act as a reaction to the Tempier Condemnations of 1270, to avoid any implication of intellectual determinism. See Gallagher [1994] pp.249-250. The distinction, expressed in other terms, appears in earlier works (the Commentaries and DV) and cannot therefore have been introduced as a reaction to the 1270 Condemnations. The emphasis on the distinction does however become more marked in the later works (STIa IIae and DM). See Lottin [1942] pp.252-262. But, in any event, I would contend that Aquinas' account of the relationship between the will and the intellect does not lead to intellectual determinism, irrespective of the distinction between the exercise and the object of the will discussed here.

[44] Text at Note 4 above.

[45] STIa.5.3c: "Omne ens inquantum est ens est bonum. Omne enim ens inquantum est ens est in actu et quodammodo perfectum, quia omnis actus perfectio quaedam est.

[46] STIa.5.3 ad 2: "nullum ens dicitur malum inquantum est ens sed inquantum caret quodam esse, sicut homo dicitur malus inquantum caret esse virtutis, et oculus dicitur malus inquantum caret actione visus." The Leonine Edition here reads "...inquantum caret *acumine* visus." implying

perhaps that the eye is losing its sharpness of focus, say, rather than losing its power of sight completely. The term 'fails' in the English translation '..an eye bad when its vision fails' seems, however, to cover both possibilities. In both cases, Aquinas' point is made that something is called bad because it lacks something it ought to have i.e. it fails to exist in some way or other.

[47] STla.5.1 ad 1: "Sed bonum dicit rationem perfecti quod est appetibile, et per consequens dicit rationem ultimi. Unde id quod est ultimo perfectum dicitur bonum simpliciter; quod autem non habet ultimam perfectionem quam debet habere, quamvis habeat aliquam perfectionem inquantum est actu, non tamen dicitur perfectum simpliciter nec bonum simpliciter sed secundum quid."

[48] STla llae.8.1c: "Sed considerandum est quod cum omnis inclinatio consequatur aliquam formam, appetitus naturalis consequitur formam in natura existentem; appetitus autem sensitivus, vel etiam intellectivus seu rationalis, qui dicitur *voluntas*, sequitur formam apprehensam. Sicut igitur id in quod tendit appetitus naturalis est bonum existens in re, ita id in quod tendit et appetitus animalis vel voluntarius est bonum apprehensum. Ad hoc igitur quod voluntas in aliquid tendat non requiritur quod sit bonum in rei veritate, sed quod apprehendatur in ratione boni;" Trans Oesterle

[49] Kretzmann [1997] pp.202-203

[50] STla llae.10.2c "..ideo illud solum bonum quod est perfectum et cui nihil deficit est tale bonum quod voluntas non potest non velle, quod est beatitudo. Alia autem quaelibet particularia bona inquantum deficiunt ab aliquo bono possunt accipi ut non bona; et secundum hanc considerationem possunt repudiari vel approbari a voluntate, quae potest in idem ferri secundum diversas considerationes."

[51] Frequently translated as 'free will', 'free choice', or 'free decision'. Because it contains elements of all these English concepts, I shall leave it untranslated.

[52] This should not be taken to imply intellectual determinism. The relationship between the will and the intellect in relation to choice is considered in Chapter 4.

[53] STla.83.3c: "Unde cum bonum, inquantum hujusmodi, sit objectum appetitus, sequitur quod electio sit principaliter actus appetitivae virtutis. Et sic liberum arbitrium est appetitiva potentia."

[54] STla llae.9.3c: "voluntas per hoc quod vult finem movet seipsam ad volendum ea quae sunt ad finem."

[55] How these means are identified and a suitable one chosen and willed is a complex issue, looked at in Chapter 4. Here I pursue only the general issue of how the will moves.

[56] STIa llae.9.3 ad 1: "Voluntas non secundum idem movet et movetur, unde nec secundum idem est in actu et in potentia; sed inquantum actu vult finem reducit se de potentia in actum respectu eorum quae sunt ad finem, ut scilicet actu ea velit."

[57] DM6.1c: "ita per hoc quod homo aliquid vult in actu, movet se ad volendum aliquid aliud in actu; sicut per hoc quod vult sanitatem, movet se ad volendum sumere potionem; ex hoc quod vult sanitatem, incipit consiliari de his quae conferunt ad sanitatem; et tandem determinato consilio vult accipere potionem. Sic ergo voluntatem accipiendi potionem praecedit consilium, quod quidem procedit ex voluntate volentis consiliari. Cum ergo voluntas se consilio moveat..... non ex necessitate voluntas seipsam movet. Sed cum voluntas non semper voluerit consiliari, necesse est quod ab aliquo moveatur ad hoc quod velit consiliari; et si quidem a seipsa, necesse est iterum quod motum voluntatis praecedat consilium, et consilium praecedat actus voluntatis; et cum hoc in infinitum procedere non possit, necesse est ponere, quod quantum ad primum motum voluntatis moveatur voluntas cuiuscumque non semper actu volentis ab aliquo exteriori, cuius instinctu voluntas velle incipiat."

[58] STIa llae.9.4c: "Omne enim quod quandoque est agens in actu et quandoque in potentia indiget moveri ab aliquo movente." Trans. Oesterle

[59] STIa llae.9.4 ad 3: "voluntas quantum ad aliquid sufficienter se movet, et in suo ordine, scilicet sicut agens proximum; sed non potest seipsam movere quantum ad omnia....unde indiget moveri ab alio, sicut a primo movente."

[60] STIa llae.6.1 ad 1: "non est de ratione voluntarii quod principium intrinsecum sit principium primum."

[61] STIa.105.4 ad 1: "illud quod movetur ab altero dicitur cogi, si moveatur contra inclinationem propriam; sed si moveatur ab alio quod sibi dat propriam inclinationem, non dicitur cogi; sicut grave, cum movetur deorsum a generante, non cogitur. Sic igitur Deus movendo voluntatem non cogit ipsam, quia dat ei ejus propriam inclinationem."

[62] STIa llae.10.4 Obj 1: "Sed Deo, cum sit infinitae virtutis, resisti non potest; unde dicitur *Rom., Voluntati ejus quis resistit?* Ergo Deus ex necessitate movet voluntatem."

[63] STIa.105.5c: "Dicendum quod Deum operari in quolibet operante aliqui sic intellexerunt quod nulla virtus creata aliquid operaretur in rebus, sed

solus Deus immediate omnia operaretur; puta quod ignis non calefaceret sed Deus in igne, et similiter de omnibus aliis. Hoc autem est impossibile."..... "Sic igitur intelligendum est Deum operari in rebus, quod tamen ipsae res propriam habeant operationem."

[64] SCG 3.70.7: "Patet etiam quod non sic idem effectus causae naturali et divinae virtuti attribuitur quasi partim a deo, et partim a naturali agente fiat, sed totus ab utroque secundum alium modum: sicut idem effectus totus attribuitur instrumento, et principali agenti etiam totus."

[65] De Potentia 3.7c: "sic ergo deus est causa actionis cuiuslibet in quantum dat virtutem agendi, et in quantum conservat eam, et in quantum applicat actioni, et in quantum eius virtute omnis alia virtus agit. Et cum coniunxerimus his, quod deus sit sua virtus, et quod sit intra rem quamlibet non sicut pars essentiae, sed sicut tenens rem in esse, sequetur quod ipse in quolibet operante immediate operetur"

[66] STla.105.5 ad 3: "deus non solum dat formas rebus, sed etiam conservat eas in esse et applicat eas ad agendum et est finis omnium actionum..."

[67] STla.105.5c: "cum enim omnis operatio sit propter aliquod bonum verum vel apparens, nihil autem est vel apparet bonum nisi secundum quod participat aliquam similitudinem summi boni quod est Deus, sequitur quod ipse Deus sit cujuslibet operationis causa ut finis."

[68] DV24.1 ad 3: "deus operatur in unoquoque agente etiam secundum modum illius agentis; sicut causa prima operatur in operatione causae secundae, cum secunda causa non possit in actum procedere nisi per virtutem causae primae. Unde per hoc quod deus est causa operans in cordibus hominum, non excluditur quin ipsae humanae mentes sint causae suorum motuum; unde non tollitur ratio libertatis."

[69] STla llae.10.4c: "Quia igitur voluntas est activum principium non determinatum ad unum sed indifferenter se habens ad multa, sic Deus ipsam movet quod non ex necessitate ad unum determinat." 10.4 ad 1: "Ad primum ergo dicendum quod voluntas divina non solum se extendit ut aliquid fit per rem quam movet, sed ut etiam eo modo fiat quo congruit naturae ipsius. Et ideo magis repugnaret divinae motioni si voluntas ex necessitate moveretur, quod suae naturae non competit, quam si moveretur libere, prout competit suae naturae."

[70] DM6.1c: "qui cum omnia moveat secundum rationem mobilium, ut levia sursum et gravia deorsum, etiam voluntatem movet secundum eius conditionem, non ut ex necessitate, sed ut indeterminate se habentem ad multa."

[71] Also left unaddressed is the question of grace. In STla llae.9.6 ad 3, Aquinas says that God does sometimes move the will to a determinate good "as when he quickens us by his grace." This is a large and important topic in its own right, and beyond the scope of this thesis. Since Aquinas argues that God moves the will only according to its nature, it is possible, I believe, to consider the nature of the will, as here, without considering the effect of grace.

[72] STla llae.9.2c: "Manifestum est autem quod secundum passionem appetitus sensitivi immutatur homo ad aliquam dispositionem; unde secundum quod homo est in passione aliqua videtur ipsi aliquid conveniens quod non videtur ei extra passionem existenti, sicut irato videtur bonum quod non videtur quieto; et per hunc modum ex parte objecti appetitus sensitivus movet voluntatem." Trans. Oesterle

[73] STla llae.10.3c: "To the extent that the reason remains free and not subject to passion the motion of the will survives and is not of necessity driven. In brief, either there is no motion of will in a man because he is dominated by passion, or if there is, then it is not bound to follow the passion." "Inquantum ergo ratio manet libera et passioni non subjecta, intantum voluntatis motus, qui manet, non ex necessitate tendit ad hoc ad quod passio inclinat. Et sic aut motus voluntatis non est in homine, sed sola passio dominatur, aut, si motus voluntatis sit, non ex necessitate sequitur passionem."

[74] DM6.1 ad 24: " consuetudo facit necessitatem non simpliciter, sed in repentinis praecipue nam ex deliberatione quantumcumque consuetus potest contra consuetudinem agere."

[75] See Chapter 4 below.

[76] STla llae.1.1 ad 2: "Actio autem aliqua dupliciter dicitur voluntaria: uno modo quia imperatur a voluntate, sicut ambulare vel loqui; alio modo quia elicitur a voluntate, sicut ipsum velle."

[77] Kenny [1994] p.83

[78] Brock [1998] p.174

[79] This relationship is considered in more detail in Chapter 4.

[80] STla llae.1.1

[81] STla llae.6.4c: "Quantum igitur ad actus a voluntate imperatos, voluntas violentiam pati potest, inquantum per violentiam exteriora membra impediri possunt ne imperium voluntatis exequantur. Sed quantum ad ipsum proprium actum voluntatis, non potest ei violentia inferri."

[82] Kenny [1994] p.87

[83] STla llae.17.5c: "Manifestum est autem quod ratio potest ordinare de actu voluntatis: sicut enim potest judicare quod bonum sit aliquid velle, ita potest ordinare imperando quod homo velit. Ex quo patet quod actus voluntatis potest esse imperatus."

[84] Ryle [2000]

[85] Kenny [1975] [1994]

[86] Kenny [1994] p.86

[87] STla llae.17.4c: "Unde patet quod imperium et actus imperatus sunt unus actus humanus, sicut quoddam totum est unum, sed est secundum partes multa."

[88] STla llae.9.1c: "The object ..... moves by determining the act after the manner of a formal principle, like the form by which action is specified in natural things, for instance heating by heat. Now the first formal principle is universal being and truth, which is the object of the intellect. Hence the intellect moves the will in this way, as presenting its object to it."

"Sed objectum movet determinando actum ad modum principii formalis, a quo in rebus naturalibus actio specificatur, sicut calefactio a calore. Primum autem principium formale est ens et verum universale, quod est objectum intellectus; et ideo isto modo motionis intellectus movet voluntatem sicut praesentans ei objectum suum." Trans. Oesterle

Chapter 4

CHOICE AND DELIBERATION

"The will is the root of freedom, for that is where freedom lies, yet reason is its cause."

STla llae.17.1 ad 2

Introduction

The model of voluntary human action so far constructed has been built on the following foundations:

(i) all action is done for an end;

(ii) among acts done for an end, human acts are distinctive because they are done for an end recognized as an end. All human acts are means to some end or other, and humans are able to understand the relationship between their acts and the end to be achieved;

(iii) the will, which is the internal principle of motion of human acts, can be moved to everything – and away from everything except total happiness, the only complete good. Although it is moved necessarily towards the ultimate end of

total happiness, it can move towards anything believed to constitute that end, and to anything seen as a means of achieving that end;

(iv) the will's movement towards any particular thing is in a man's own power, because he can decide what he is going to move towards. His making such a decision makes his action voluntary.

This model provides, however, only a general picture of fully voluntary human action. To fill in the details of that picture, it is necessary to look further at the process which culminates in movement towards *x*, for it is in Aquinas' account of that process that the nature of the freedom of a human act begins properly to emerge.

We already know from the general model that all action is for an end and that the will moves towards what is seen as good. Particular actions, however, seek rather more specific ends than 'the good' or even 'something apprehended as falling under the description good'. Aquinas' analysis of human action in STIa IIae.12-17 therefore starts with a particular end as its first stage. The act of will which establishes the particular end to which action is to be directed is labelled 'intention' in Aquinas' account. An intended act is more than just willed: it has been resolved on

and a plan for achieving it is to be put in place.[1] 'Intention' is an important and interesting topic in its own right, and has provided much scope for discussion in both philosophical and legal fields.[2] It is mentioned here, however, only as the starting point (and in its realization, the finishing point) of Aquinas' account of a particular voluntary action. The features of that account on which I shall concentrate are those which constitute the next stage of action and which determine how the settled end is to be achieved, namely deliberation and choice. These are the elements which constitute the decision-making process by which the will moves itself to the means of achieving that end.

This account of what deliberation and choice are, and how they operate, will inevitably raise questions about the relationship between intellect and will, and that issue is considered following the examination of the decision-making process. Finally, I shall consider whether choice and its associated reasoning process really are essential features of Aquinas' account of a fully voluntary, human act.

A. Choice

Aquinas deals with choice in the context of voluntary action in STIa IIae.13, describing it in the Introduction to that Question as one of the three

"acts of will with regard to objects which are for an end."[3] He goes on to say, somewhat perversely: "Now in order to choose, we have to deliberate beforehand. Accordingly, we shall consider first choice, second deliberation."[4] It might have been thought logically more appropriate to consider deliberation first, but it may be that Aquinas puts 'choice' first to reflect the fact that conceptually choice comes before deliberation. One deliberates in order to make a choice which one has already implicitly recognized as needing to be made – if I am going to London, it is the need to choose a way of getting there which prompts me to deliberate about the possibilities. Choice is therefore the final cause of deliberation, and so Aquinas' ordering may simply be the normal one of treating cause before effect. Equally, it may be that Aquinas places choice first to give precedence to the role of will: he is, after all, said to be considering the acts of will relating to means to an end, and deliberation is an act of intellect, which alone seem to make it inappropriate as the first thing to consider. Westberg suggests that Aquinas' approach "highlights the primary role of choice, basic to all voluntary human action, and the secondary role of deliberation."[5] Whether deliberation is indeed secondary to choice in Westberg's sense remains to be seen, but I shall follow Aquinas' treatment in the ST and consider choice before deliberation.

A.1 What choice is

However curious this ordering of choice and deliberation in the introduction to Question 13 might seem, it does serve to distinguish choice at the outset from both the acts of will relating to the end and from the intellectual act of deliberation.

Choice is established first, in STIa IIae.13.1, as an act of will, but not simply so. Aquinas uses the term 'electio' for choice, and that term implies, he says, a quality of both reason and will;[6] and if considered as a kind of substance, choice can be said to be composed of both reason and will. Aquinas here uses the analogy of an animal's being composed of body and soul: just as an animal is body and soul together, neither solely one nor the other, so choice is will and reason together.[7] Similarly, just as the soul is the form of the animal, so reason is said to be the form of choice, will the matter. Reason's input is what makes the particular will act one of 'choice' rather than, say, one of simply 'willing'. Further, just as liberum arbitrium is said to be "a faculty of reason and of will"[8] so choice - which is liberum arbitrium in action, as it were - must involve both reason and will.[9]

Despite this admixture in the composition of choice, Aquinas concludes that it is properly an act of will -

but only after careful consideration of both sides of the coin.

In DV22.15, for example, he responds to the question 'Is choice an act of the will?' by saying that it contains something of both will and reason. He cites Aristotle as apparently leaving it in doubt whether it is properly an act of the will or of reason, since he (Aristotle) says it is an act either of the intellective appetite (desire ordered by reason) or of the appetitive intellect (reason ordered by desire). Aquinas' own view is that the former is the more correct, as evidenced both by its object – the means to an end, a kind of good – and the act itself, "the acceptance of something to be carried out."[10]

In STIa.83.3, he again describes choice, "the proper act of liberum arbitrium", as containing both something cognitive and something appetitive; these are said to meet in choice. The responses to the Objections further emphasise the use of both reason and will. So, the powers of appetite are said to accompany those of knowledge (ad 1); choice is described as a kind of judgment, because it accepts a decision of reason (ad 2); and desire is said to opt for one thing rather than another because it has been moved by knowledge's comparisons (ad 3).[11] In the body of the reply, Aristotle is said to leave open

whether choice belongs principally to the will or to the intellect, but to favour the view that it is an intellectual appetite (appetitus intellectivus). This inclination of Aristotle's is again supported by Aquinas on the grounds that the proper object of choice is the means to an end: "Now this precise concern is concern with the kind of goodness called utility. So since good as such is the object of appetite, it follows that choice is more an act of an appetitive power."[12]

By the time of STIa IIae.13.1, however, Aquinas' view is more positively expressed and the emphasis is less on Aristotle's approach than on the composition of choice. As we have seen, the relationship of will and reason is now more intimate. Instead of being a 'concurrence' or simply 'something of will and something of reason', it has become the close relationship of form and matter. Nevertheless, despite this closeness, choice is still said to be an act of will, and now said obviously to be so, since it comes to completion in a "going out of the soul to a good which is preferred, clearly an act of appetitive power."[13]

These passages describing the nature of choice are, I believe, very important. Consistently through the DV and the earlier and later parts of the ST, Aquinas takes the line that choice is composed, in some way

or other, of both will and reason. Certainly by the time of STIa IIae.13, it is clear that both will and reason are essential to choice – just as matter cannot exist without form, so choice cannot exist without reason, for intellect is the form, will the matter. Equally consistently, he takes the line – whether following or explicating Aristotle – that choice is primarily an act of will.[14]

It perhaps seems strange that this is his conclusion. He could justifiably have left it as an open question whether choice was an act of the will or of the intellect, or equally he could have concluded that it was an act of the intellect – considerably influenced by will, of course, but 'principally' an act of intellect. This might have seemed the most likely contender, given that reason is said to be the form of choice, what marks it out from other acts involving the will. However, in all the passages quoted, he assigns the act of choice to the will – and in each case, on the same grounds, namely that the object of choice is the good. From this, one can infer therefore that for Aquinas one of the most important things about choice was that it was concerned primarily with the good, rather than the true.

If choice is indeed an essential component of a human act, then Aquinas' line on the nature of choice

will say a great deal about the nature of free acts. In particular, the significance of his apparent view that the object of choice is primarily the good will emerge when we consider how an act may be said to be free, in Section C below.

A.2 Role of choice.

Choice is that particular act of the will which accepts, or rejects, means to an end. Aquinas distinguishes it from simple willing, which relates only to ends. In STIa IIae.8.2, he makes the point that the activity of willing is, properly speaking, only for something which is in itself an end:

> "For every act denominated from a power designates the simple act of that power; for example, 'understanding' designates the simple act of the intellect. Now the simple act of a power is referred to that which is in itself the object of that power. But that which is good and willed for itself is the end. Hence strictly speaking the simple act of willing is of the end itself."[15]

Aquinas goes on to say that there is an element of simple willing in the willing of the means to the end, in the sense that what is (simply) willed in the means is the desire for the end which they will achieve. He compares this to cognition, where 'understanding' is

said to apply to first principles only, not to the truths which are drawn from them – except in so far as these inferred truths are seen in the first principles. The end, then, is present in the means in the sense that it is the starting point which leads to the means being considered, just as first principles are the starting point in 'matters of cognition'. Further, just as the inferences drawn in a piece of speculative reasoning embody the first principles from which they were drawn, so the means embody the end which is to be achieved.

This parallel between practical and speculative reasoning is drawn again in STIa IIae.13.3 where Aquinas makes it clear that ends are not chosen, endorsing Aristotle's distinction[16] that willing is "of the end but choice of the means" and his view that the end is the starting point of practical reasoning, not the conclusion from which choice results: "Therefore an end is not, as such, a matter of choice."[17] If the end is what drives the reasoning which produces the conclusion from which choice follows, the end cannot be the product of that reasoning. But the product of the reasoning is what is accepted or rejected when a choice is made. Therefore choice cannot be of the end – at least, not of the same end – which prompts the reasoning.

However, having made the point that in a particular piece of practical reasoning choice concerns only the means to achieve a given end, Aquinas goes on to make the equally important point that although ends as such are not a matter of choice, what is an end in one piece of reasoning may be the means in another, and then it may be a matter of choice. He again draws a parallel with speculative reasoning, where the principle of one argument may be the conclusion of another earlier argument. In practical reasoning too, the end to which means are currently being considered may have been the conclusion of an earlier argument. So:

A1. I want to go to London;

A2. The quickest way to London is to fly;

A3. I shall fly to London.

B1. I shall fly to London;

B2. To fly to London, I need to book tickets;

B3. I shall go to the travel agency today.

The conclusion of argument A has become the principle or starting point of argument B; that is, it has established the end for which means are to be found in argument B. That end "I shall fly to London" was itself chosen in the conclusion of argument A: I

could after all have gone to London by some other means.[18]

In a similar way, the end which drove argument A, "I want to go to London", might itself have been the product of some earlier, more general, argument which started, say, with the end "I want to go on holiday". This process of inter-linking arguments can be lengthy, but as Aquinas points out, it does not go on indefinitely. Here again the parallel between speculative and practical reasoning is drawn. Just as the first principles of thought cannot be arrived at by demonstration, so the first end in practical reasoning – the desire for the complete good - cannot be chosen. As we have seen, that end is sought necessarily and is not subject to choice.[19]

All other ends can, however, be chosen as the conclusions of arguments deriving from that first end. We have already seen the importance, in general terms, of the argument that only the final end is determined; its importance here in relation to choice is that even where means to a given end other than the final end are restricted or even necessary, choice is not completely denied, for that end may itself have been chosen.

One other important point about the role of choice is that, since it is the preference of one thing to another as a means to an end, it cannot be attributed to animals. As we have already seen, animals cannot be said to know an end as an end. While therefore they may do things for a purpose, as a dog digs for a buried bone, for example, this is not an act done for an end recognized as such. They cannot then order means to ends, as the process of choice requires. Further, where they do take one thing in preference to another, this preference is determined for them, Aquinas believes, by their "natural estimative power".[20] This exclusion of animals from the process of choice serves to underline its importance in the makeup of fully voluntary acts, from which animals and children are, as we have seen, excluded.

B. Deliberation

Choice, then, is an act of will in which the will moves towards one thing in preference to another. Since choice is only of means, and since nothing is willed without previously having been known, the thing chosen must previously have been identified by the intellect as 'good' in the sense of being a possible way of achieving the desired end. Further, choice is said by Aquinas to be 'informed' by reason, following "a judgment of reason about what is to be done."[21] There

must therefore be some act of the intellect by which means M have been decided on.

According to Aquinas, this decision is – in doubtful matters at least – the result of an investigation, called deliberation (consilium).[22] Like choice, deliberation is concerned with means, not ends, since it is an enquiry into how something may be achieved and therefore takes that something, the end, for granted. Equally, however, the end of one enquiry may be the means in another and to that extent may be deliberated about, just as an end may have been the product of an earlier choice.[23]

Like choice too, deliberation has 'something of both will and reason': "the reason's act of deliberating displays the influence of the will, with respect both to matter, for a man deliberates about what he wants to do, and to motive, for it is because he wants something that he is prompted to deliberate about it."[24] Aquinas highlights the comparison by repeating the Aristotelian authority for referring to choice as "intellectus appetitivus"[25] and citing Damascene as referring to deliberation as 'appetitus inquisitivus' "in order to show how it is a function both of the will and of the reason, for the enquiry is conducted on behalf of and under the impulse of the will, and is pursued by the reason."[26] The will, then, wants to know how

something may be accomplished, and sets the intellect to work to obtain an answer to this question.

It can be seen, therefore, that although no claim is made that deliberation is composed of both will and reason as choice is, the way Aquinas treats deliberation and choice in Questions 14 and 13 respectively highlights the similarity and close relationship between them.

Deliberation also involves a further act of will, consent. This is the will's approval to the means identified by deliberation and comes before choice.[27] It is described, interestingly, by Finnis as the will's "responding with interest, and sustained interest, to one or more of these [identified] possibilities as an interesting proposal, a live option or options."[28]

The sequence of events therefore seems to be:

(i) desire for an end;

(ii) deliberation about the means of obtaining it;

(iii) review of the identified means;

(iv) choice of means.

Aquinas maintains that (iii) and (iv) are separate stages, since deliberation may disclose several means, all of which are approved of but only one of which is later chosen.[29] Consent therefore seems to be a

preliminary, conditional, acceptance of possible means, one of which is – presumably after further input from reason – chosen i.e. taken in preference to the others. In this account, deliberation is a two stage process, and consideration of it as such shows clearly the extent of the interaction between will and intellect. This becomes even more apparent if one supposes that consent is withheld from an identified means. Say, for example, I intend to go to London. Deliberation about how I might do so identifies train, plane, bus and car as possible means of transport. Since I have a great dislike of driving, 'car' is immediately ruled out; consent is, however, given to the other possibilities. The advantages and disadvantages of the remaining three are considered, 'plane' judged the best and that method of transport chosen. Will is therefore not only the start and finish of this process but an integral part of it, for the will keeps deliberation going, through selection of live options, to use Finnis's words, to the point where a judgment and choice can be made.

Now, this description of the ordered sequence for practical action raises an interesting question about how far the role of 'deliberation' extends.

One possible reading of Aquinas' analysis of the early stages of voluntary action is that there are three

stages which can be described as: (a) intention; (b) deliberation about, and judgment of, best means to the intended end; and (c) choice of means. Here choice is seen as the will's endorsement, or otherwise, of the means identified by the intellect as 'best'. Another reading is that put forward by Westberg[30] which sees the stages as: (a) intention; (b) deliberation about means; (c) decision, comprising judgment and 'electio'. Westberg bases his description on a reading of Aristotle which distinguishes two separate and different reasoning processes, or practical syllogisms, one for deliberation and one for decision. He rejects the view that decision is the conclusion of deliberation, arguing instead that "the function of deliberation is to specify the means to a desired end", these means being approved of by the will, in its consenting to them.[31] The function of decision, on the other hand, is to "reason about a particular means or action in relation to achieving the end."[32] He illustrates the difference by the example of someone who intends to become physically fit. Deliberation about how this might be achieved "might eliminate a club membership as too costly, bicycling as too dangerous and jogging as too boring." Getting up early and walking is concluded to be the best solution. At this point, Westberg argues, there is a conclusion to deliberation, but no action; the decision to act he sees as coming from the following reasoning:

"I want to become fit; getting up early is the best way to start; I'd better set the alarm clock for 6.00. There!"

Westberg's point seems to be that the purpose of the reasoning employed in what might be called stage 1 is different from that in stage 2: the former is about establishing what means will achieve end E, the latter about how that approved, though not yet chosen, means can be realised. Only the first of these two stages is, he argues, what Aquinas calls 'deliberation'; the second Westberg calls 'the decision to act' and consists of judgment about means and electio. This would seem to imply that a choice of means to achieve E is not actually made until the way of realizing the means has been worked out.

One difficulty with Westberg's analysis is that by his own account, the conclusion reached at the end of stage 1 is that 'getting up early and walking to work is the best solution'. This singling out of one option in preference to the others would seem to imply both a judgment and an acceptance by the will – in other words, a 'choice', or in Westberg's terms, a 'decision to act'. Westberg however denies that the decision to act comes here - rather, he says, the decision to act comes with the reasoning about the alarm clock. This seems inconsistent with his own account of a decision to act.

Westberg's illustration might equally well, however, be regarded as two linked deliberations each of which concludes in a 'decision to act', or 'choice'. 'Getting up early and walking to work' (M) is the choice of means to achieve the end of becoming fit (E), and has been arrived at after an enquiry into various possibilities, which enquiry was followed by a judgment that M was best. To Westberg's point that there is no act at this stage, only a conclusion, it can be argued that there is an internal act, namely the choice of M. Having chosen to get up early to walk to work however, I make a further enquiry about what needs to be done to achieve that end, and choose to set the alarm. Both these enquiries – 'What is the best way of achieving E?' and 'What needs to be done to bring M (and hence E) about?' seem to fall within Aquinas' description of deliberation.

Aquinas certainly seems to envisage the prospect of such serial deliberation in his discussion in STIa IIae.14.2 where he says that the end assumed in one enquiry may be treated as a means in another.[33] Further, STIa IIae.14.6 would seem to imply that the process of deliberation continues until the first thing to be done to achieve the desired end has been arrived at. There Aquinas says that the finish of deliberation is that which can be done at once: "That

which presents itself as the first thing to be done has the character of an ultimate conclusion, and at this final decision deliberation comes to a stop."[34]

Further consideration of whether Westberg's interpretation of Aristotle, and so of Aquinas, on the scope of deliberation is defensible is beyond the ambit of this thesis.[35] One of Westberg's reasons for separating 'decision' from deliberation is however relevant here, namely the argument that deliberation is not an essential stage in a fully voluntary human action: "For Aquinas, deliberation, as a stage in practical reason, is not even a necessary part of human action. It is choice or decision that provides the essential link between intention and action..... A great many ordinary actions are intended, chosen and executed (and are fully voluntary) without deliberation."[36]

It does seem arguable that Aquinas holds that deliberation is not a necessary stage of all actions. Westberg points to STIIIa.18.4, Aquinas' discussion of whether there was free will in Christ, where the Objection is put that Christ was certain of everything, therefore did not require to take counsel and therefore had no free will. In response, Aquinas says:

"Choice presupposes the taking of counsel, but it does not proceed from it until the counsel has been brought to a conclusion by a judgment. It is what we judge should be done, after we have pursued the inquiries of counsel-taking, that we choose. Consequently, if the judgment that something ought to be done should be formed without preliminary hesitation or inquiry, then this is adequate for a choice to be made. It is clear, then, that hesitation or inquiry are not essential concomitants of choice. They are characteristic of it exclusively in one subject to ignorance."[37]

In STla llae.14.4 also, dealing more specifically with human acts, he makes the point that enquiry is needed into matters which are open to doubt. There, endorsing Aristotle, he gives examples of two kinds of matters which are not deliberated about: trifles, and those which have to be done in a pre-determined way, since such matters are not open to doubt. When it really does not matter whether the daffodil bulbs are planted to the left or to the right of the tree, for example, one does not deliberate but 'just gets on and does it'. Equally, one does not have to deliberate about how to write the letter 'a': there is an established way of doing this.[38]

There are, then, in Aquinas' account, actions which do not have the 'investigation or enquiry' of deliberation as a feature of them; the issue is, are these fully voluntary i.e. human, and so free, actions? In other words, is deliberation an essential feature of a free act and hence an essential component of Aquinas' concept of freedom?

Aquinas' earlier discussion of voluntary action in general seems to imply that deliberation <u>is</u> essential. In STIa IIae.1.1, for example, he says that human acts are those which come from a deliberated will – "quae ex voluntate deliberata procedunt" – and in STIa IIae.6.2 that fully voluntary action is "present when a person, having apprehended and deliberating about an end and the steps to be taken, can be moved to it or not."[39] Similarly, STIa IIae.14.1 would seem to imply that deliberation is an essential precursor of choice, since choice is said, following Aristotle, to be "the desire of what has previously been deliberated on."[40]

But restricting 'human acts' or 'fully voluntary acts' to those which have included an investigative process or enquiry would seem to exclude a great deal of everyday action. There are many things done in a day which do <u>not</u> seem "doubtful and open to question", and which would not, in normal usage, be said to be

deliberated about. In having breakfast or walking to the station, for example, there is seldom an investigative process about how these things might be accomplished, for the answer is obvious. Indeed, the question of how such acts might be accomplished is seldom even raised. But if the normal everyday actions do not count as free acts, does this not then leave very little which would fall within Aquinas' concept of freedom of action?

This seems to me to be a crucial question about Aquinas' concept of freedom, for a concept of free action which excluded most human activity would seem somewhat jejune. There are, I believe, three possible approaches in dealing with the issue of deliberation which prompts the question.

First, one can say that an investigative process is essential to a free act and that acts such as opening the front door to leave the house or of writing the letter 'a' in a certain way are not therefore properly described as free. This conclusion is not however as restrictive as it seems, for the purpose of the concept of freedom is to attribute responsibility, and if an issue of responsibility does not arise the question "Was this act free or not?" will not arise either. "Did he write 'a' as he did, freely?" is an Alice in Wonderland question where there is only one possible

way to write 'a'. So, it can be said that where there can be no doubt, there is no deliberation, but equally there is no issue of responsibility, and hence of freedom.

Second, one can take the line that deliberation is essential, but that Aquinas' description of 'deliberation' is wide enough to cover the situation where one apparently does things without thought. If, for example, I am asked by a colleague to countersign a document which he tells me is a passport application, I may sign immediately, or perhaps after only a very cursory inspection. And this despite knowing well that I should never sign a document without reading it first. Although my response was immediate i.e. I did not stop to think about it – I might later reply, if questioned "Well, it looked like an official form, and I trust A and I was prepared to be a countersignatory, so I didn't feel I needed time to read it, and just signed." Such a retrospective analysis shows the thought process behind my action and gives the reasons why I did what I did. This might count as a sort of 'unexpressed deliberation'. This kind of retrospective analysis could be made of many of one's everyday actions, even if the process is not consciously gone through before one makes a move. This is consistent with what Scott MacDonald says[41] in commenting on Aquinas' approach in STIa IIae.1.6

ad 3: "End-directed action is not restricted to actions done for some reason that the agent actually considered at the time or immediately prior to acting. He [Aquinas] allows for example that each step of a journey results from deliberated willing despite the fact that one does not actually deliberate, either contemporaneously or at any preceding time, about each step."[42]

Third, one can argue that deliberation in the sense of an investigative process is not essential to a human act, but what is essential is a judgment about what to do. That judgment may be the conclusion of a deliberation or of some other reasoning process. This is in part what Westberg is saying, I believe, and it is consistent with Aquinas' statement that where a conclusion is evident without enquiry there is no need for deliberation. Now, a conclusion can be reached only by some kind of reasoning process, but that reasoning process need not be an 'investigation'. This seems to be what is implied by Aquinas' response to STIa IIae.14.4 Objection 1, where he says that "When a judgment or decision is evident without enquiry, there is no need for the enquiry of deliberation."[43] The juridical terms 'judicium' and 'sententia' (translated as 'judgment' and 'decision' respectively) both imply a preceding reasoning process of some kind, even if that is not an enquiry. I

may, for example, be able to judge immediately that the case in front of me is absolutely on all fours with a previously decided, and binding, case, and so not have to deliberate about what the law is. But a thinking process was still necessary to 'match up' the facts now in front of me and those of the earlier precedent before I could judge that the cases were the same, however obvious that match may have been. A further, non-legal, example is when I open the car door, put the key into the ignition, select 'Drive' and move off. This might be said to be an automatic sequence, where I don't think about it at all, but if questioned about why I had selected 'Drive', I would say "Because that's how one usually starts." Now here, arguably, I have not, even on a retrospective analysis, surveyed the alternatives and selected one as suitable. What I have done can however be represented as the swiftly-reached conclusion of an argument which goes "It is normal to select Drive; there is no reason to do otherwise; I shall select Drive." That represents a judgment about what is to be done, sealed in the choice of 'D'. The emphasis is now put on judgment rather than deliberation. That would be consistent with Aquinas' emphasis, already noted, on judgment's being an important distinguishing factor between human and other animal action.

However, regarding 'judgment + electio' as the crucial stage, and deliberation as essential only in some circumstances, still leaves difficulties with Aquinas' view in STIa IIae.6.2. Here Aquinas says that fully voluntary activity requires full knowledge of the end, and such knowledge requires apprehension of the end and deliberation about the steps to be taken to reach it. The importance of deliberation to 'full knowledge of the end' perhaps lies in the focus one inevitably must have on the end when considering whether various means would meet it or not. In deliberating about whether M is a suitable way of achieving E, one has to think not only about M but also about E; one therefore acquires a better appreciation or knowledge of E and can be said to 'know what one is doing'. The rapid practical syllogism which delivers the conclusion 'Select D' clearly does not focus so deeply on either means or ends, but there is nevertheless a recognized relationship between the means and the end, however automatically the conclusion seems to have been reached. This 'tying together' of means and end means that here also I can be said to understand what I am doing, in a way which a child or a dog cannot, and I can therefore be said to be acting in a way which they are not – a fully voluntary way.

It seems to me that what is important in Aquinas' account is that there is a judgment, formed as the result of some reasoning process, about what to do. That the reasoning process is not always an 'investigation or enquiry', and so not deliberation in the normally understood use of that term, seems to be implied by STIa IIae.14.4. Whether one argues that 'consilium' can include the kind of judgment which is 'immediate'[44] or whether one thinks of judgment as a self-contained reasoning process distinct from, and independent of, deliberation seems to me less important than the point that there <u>is</u> a judgment, of reason, which is part of choice.

C. Freedom of choice

We have now reached the stage where it can be said that choice is an act of will which follows an act of reasoning, whether that act of reasoning is described as 'deliberation' or otherwise. What is not yet clear however is how this process of reasoning and willing can be said to be 'free'.

Aquinas deals with this issue in relation to voluntary action in STIa IIae.13.6, where he says that choice is free, not necessary. His grounds for this are that choice is an act of will, and so man can choose or not choose, and, if he does choose, he can choose this or that – just as, as we have already seen, the will can

be exercised or not and can move towards this or that particular object, depending on whether the reason judges it good or bad. Anything the will can be moved towards, or can reject, can be chosen or not. The passage is quoted at length because of the importance of the various strands that go to show there is no necessity:

"Man does not choose of necessity. This is because a possible-not-to-be is not a bound-to-be. Why it is possible for a man to choose or not to choose may be gathered from a double ability. First, to be able to will or not and to act or not; second to will and act thus or thus.

The grounds lie in the very range of reason. Whatever the reason can apprehend as good, to that the will can stretch out. Now the reason can apprehend as good, not only willing and acting, but also not willing and not acting. Again, in any particular good, it can attend to the goodness there, but also to the lack of some goodness; this has the nature of an evil. Accordingly the reason can apprehend it as something to be sought or something to be avoided. The perfect good alone, which is beatitude, cannot be apprehended under the aspect of evil or as displaying any defect..... Now since...choice is of the means, not the end, it is about particular goods, not the perfect

good.... On these grounds we say that choice is free, not necessary."[45]

We have already examined Aquinas' arguments about the will's ability to be moved towards 'this or that', and to exercise itself or not. The additional interest in STIa IIae.13.6 lies in the Objections, and how Aquinas deals with them, for they say a great deal about the practical reasoning which lies behind choice.

The three Objections put in STIa IIae.13.6 are that a man chooses necessarily, not freely, because:

(i) inferences drawn from principles are drawn necessarily; in relation to choice, ends are like principles; therefore choices are made necessarily;

(ii) similarly, reason judges some matters necessarily because the premisses are necessary. Since choice follows reason's judgment, the choice must be necessary;

(iii) less eligible objects cannot be taken in preference to more eligible, so that what appears most eligible must always be chosen, and the others cannot be chosen. Since every act of choosing is about what seems better or best, the choice must be made necessarily.

The response to Objection 1 is that conclusions follow necessarily from principles only when the principles cannot be true if the conclusion is not true. There are, then, cases where conclusions do not follow necessarily from principles. Aquinas has already considered this point in the context of liberum arbitrium earlier in the ST, in STIa.83.1, where he compares practical reasoning and 'dialectical and rhetorical arguments' whose conclusions are not necessary.[46] It is this parallel with dialectical reasoning rather than with deductive reasoning which allows for reason's taking more than one route: "And so in regard to particular acts reason's judgment is open to various possibilities, not fixed to one."[47] And so just as the conclusion is not necessitated by the principles in dialectical reasoning, the means are not necessitated by the principle i.e. the end, in practical reasoning. The same end might have been served by other means, just as the principles might have justified another conclusion.

Aquinas makes a further point in STIa IIae.13.6 ad1: even where the means <u>are</u> necessary, they may not be seen to be such.[48] This follows from the point that what is not wholly good may be perceived as not-good[49] - even where there is only one means of achieving one's desired end, one may not recognize this, and may pursue some other, inevitably

unsuccessful, means. My choice of M as the way to achieve E is, therefore, not a necessary one because:

(i) the argument which produced M as its conclusion might equally have produced Z;

(ii) even if M were the only way that E might be achieved, I might nevertheless not have recognized M as a means, or as the only means, and might mistakenly have concluded that N would also produce E.

In response to Objection 2, Aquinas makes the point that in practical matters, the principles from which the conclusions are derived are not absolutely necessary but only conditionally necessary: "In [practical matters] the conclusion does not follow from categorically necessary principles, but from principles necessary given a condition, as in the statement 'if he is running, he is in motion'."[50] The end, then, which is driving the reasoning process is not absolutely necessary, but only conditionally so: if I am to be in London tonight, I must fly. But it is not absolutely necessary that I should be in London, so the conclusion 'I must fly' is not absolutely necessary. Further, we have already noted Aquinas' points that ends may themselves have been chosen in a previous deliberation[51] and that judgments about means can be reviewed.[52] The necessity of the ends which drive the reasoning process is therefore very conditional

indeed, for that given condition can be changed as a result of my ability to reflect on my decisions.

Objection 3, however, raises a further difficulty, for it argues that whatever is best must be chosen. The argument is made that when two things are equal, a man is not moved to chose one rather than the other; if a choice cannot be made between two equally good objects, a fortiori a choice cannot be made of the worse of two objects. If the worse cannot be chosen, the better must be chosen.

This Objection raises several interesting points – how choice may be made between equally attractive things; what 'best' means in this context; how it is assessed; and whether 'best' must indeed always be chosen. Aquinas' answer does not appear at first sight to deal with these points, except perhaps to imply that 'the best' is indeed always what is chosen, for he says that "The objects presented may both be equal from one point of view, all the same there is nothing to forbid us fixing on some superior attraction in one of them so that the will turns to that one rather than the other one."[53] This seems to sidestep the points raised by the Objection, and to raise some difficulties of its own. Aquinas does not, for example, seem to deny that man cannot choose between two equally attractive objects. Experience

shows that it is clearly not the case that a hungry man faced with two equally attractive dishes starves to death because he cannot choose between them – he certainly does take at least one. It can be argued that he can have no rational grounds for choosing *x* rather than *y*, because, if *x* and *y* are equally attractive, for every reason in favour of *x* there will be the same or an equally compelling reason in favour of *y*. There can therefore be no reason to choose *x* in preference to *y*. On the other hand, it is arguable that the hungry man is not choosing *x* rather than *y*, but simply choosing to eat, and so taking one of them. If he is to live, he must have one of them. Even if he has no grounds for choosing *x* in preference to *y*, he has very good grounds for choosing rather than not choosing. His choice may therefore be to eat, and the action in taking *x* not a choice of *x* but simply a 'plumping for'.

But Aquinas' response, by concentrating on the possibility of ranking *x* and *y*, seems not to address the issue of two things or courses of action being equally attractive. Unless of course he means to imply that two things never actually are equally attractive. It may be that he is re-iterating the view that everything is a mixture of good and bad, and that careful thought will show that *x* and *y* are not equal in every respect, even if they first appeared so. In

practical terms, this usually is the case, for careful re-appraisal of alternatives often results in a different assessment of their relative worth. If this is so, it will indeed always be possible to find, at some stage of the deliberation, some aspect of *x* which makes it preferable to *y*. Aquinas' insistence that there is always some point of view from which this can be done may, therefore, be designed to show that there is always the possibility of choice between *x* and *y* i.e. that a reason can always be found on which to base a preference.

Nevertheless, Aquinas' response to Objection 3 apparently confirms that it is always what appears best (or better) which must be chosen. Further, he does not explicitly deny in that response that what is best must be chosen of necessity. But in the light of the rest of the Article it cannot be taken that he accepts any necessity of choice. What is it, then, about practical reasoning which makes choice a matter of both will and reason, but avoids the necessity of the conclusions of that reasoning while apparently still ensuring that 'the best' is always chosen? To answer this, it is necessary to look more closely at the differences between practical and theoretical, or deductive, reasoning.

The purpose of theoretical reasoning is to arrive at a new piece of knowledge, deduced from something already known. The conclusion must therefore be 'correct' or truthful, and the rules of logic which apply to this reasoning are designed to ensure that if the premisses are true, the conclusion will also be true: that truth is preserved in moving from one to the other. While this does not mean that only one conclusion can ever be validly drawn from a set of true premisses, it does mean that all conclusions validly drawn from these premisses are true, and none can be rejected as false. Similarly, no conclusion validly drawn from these premisses can contradict another conclusion so drawn. For example, I know that all cocker spaniels are dogs with long ears; that C is a cocker spaniel, and that D is a dog with short ears. I can conclude that C is a dog and/or that C has long ears, but I cannot conclude that C is a dog and deny that he has long ears, nor can I conclude that D is a cocker spaniel.

Now clearly practical reasoning operates on different lines from theoretical reasoning. For example:

'I need to be in London tomorrow morning;
If I fly, I shall be there in time;
Therefore I shall go by plane.'

is a standard, and apparently sound, piece of practical reasoning.

P;

If Q then P;

Therefore Q'

is not, however, a valid piece of theoretical reasoning.

The difference is that the purpose of practical reasoning is not to establish a new item of knowledge, and so something true, but to settle on a means of achieving a desired goal. What matters is not therefore the preservation of truth, but whether the end can be achieved in that way. Nevertheless, this does not mean that any identified means will do, for I might in practice reject the idea of flying to London.[54]

What is being sought is a satisfactory solution, one that is both good and suitable, one which achieves the end in a satisfactory way. Whether something is satisfactory or not is not just a matter for intellect, as whether something is true or not is: it is a matter for will also. The conclusion has to be 'correct' in the sense that it does have to be (or at least appear to be) something which is capable of achieving the desired end, but it has to be something more than that: it has to be acceptable to me.[55]

Further, as Kenny points out,[56] "An assertion is either true or false; but a plan is not just satisfactory or unsatisfactory. It may be satisfactory to some persons

and not to others, satisfactory for some purposes and not for others." Not only, therefore, may A and B draw different conclusions from the same set of premisses in practical reasoning, each rejecting the others' conclusion, but A may draw different conclusions on different occasions. There is no one objective 'best' solution but only a solution which is, at most, best in relation to a given set of desires. To take the example of going to London, I may today reason:

(i) I need to be in London tomorrow;
(ii) Both plane and train will get me there in time;
(iii) I shall fly.

The conclusion, that I should fly, has been accepted as 'the best thing to do'. Next month, however, having spent extravagantly, I can no longer afford the flight and conclude that I should travel by train. What I have done here is add another premiss to my argument, which has now become:

(i) I need to be in London tomorrow;
(ii) Both plane and train will get me there in time;
(iii) I need to travel as cheaply as possible;
(iv) I shall go by train.

Practical reasoning, unlike theoretical reasoning, is thus shown to be defeasible, for by adding a further premiss to my practical argument, I have changed the rational conclusion. What was 'the best thing to do' has changed as the circumstances – the sum of the premisses – have changed.

This process may be thought to be a more detailed re-specification of the end rather than a selection of the means to an end. In the example above, my end has become the need to travel to London by the cheapest route, rather than simply the need to travel to London. Such re-specification is often in practice necessary. As Wiggins says in discussion of Aristotle's view of practical reasoning, one may often have only a vague description of something one wants "and the problem is not to see what will be causally efficacious in bringing this about, but to see what really *qualifies* as an adequate and practically realizable specification of what would satisfy this want. Till the specification is available there is no room for means." There may also be a further re-iterative process once the specification is available: "When this specification is reached, means – end deliberation can start, but difficulties that turn up in this means – end deliberation may send me back a finite number of times to the problem of a better or more practicable specification of the end."[57]

This process is not the 'judgment about judgments' of DV24.2 considered above, for we are not now reflecting on whether the means chosen really are appropriate, but trying to establish what means would be satisfactory. Wiggins' point is that the process of trying to establish means may require an even more precise formulation of the end. This raises interesting issues about the dynamic interaction between will and reason in the selection of means, but the point also serves to illustrate both the conditional nature of ends and the flexibility of conclusions reached.

It seems evident therefore that the 'best means' is not some objectively correct solution to the practical problem being deliberated. Further, not only may the conclusion be different as I add more premisses, but I may even recognize that there could be a 'better' solution than the one I have chosen. In the example of my trip to London, I may decide to fly. Enquiries show that there are several flight times, on different airlines. I compare two airlines and choose B. I may recognize that had I compared all 5, say, I might have found a cheaper, more convenient, more pleasant etc. flight, but I am prepared to choose B without further deliberation because it is satisfactory. It meets my most important wants. There may of course be an

unexpressed premiss along the lines "I am very busy, so I must streamline the decision process". But this simply highlights the point that what is best is relative to what one wants at the time of making the decision. This relativity, and consequent flexibilty, is implied by Aquinas' response, in STIa IIae.13.6 ad 3, that there is always some point of view from which x can be regarded as being better than y.

The process of practical reasoning, then, can produce several different conclusions. Whatever conclusion <u>is</u> finally reached has not therefore been arrived at necessarily, even though the outcome is always what is seen as 'best' in the particular circumstances.

However, it is at this point that the question of where the real root of freedom lies must be raised.

D. Relationship between will and intellect in choice

The reasoning process described above raises two questions about the relationship between will and intellect. First, how can the will be said to be the root of freedom if it is the intellect which assesses what is best to meet the specified wants, once these have been established? And, second, if the answer to the first question is that the will can reject the best

solution put forward by intellect, how can the will be said to be 'informed by reason'?

Certainly, Aquinas appears to reject, in DV22.15 for example, the claim that the will must follow intellect at the end of the reasoning process: "For however much reason puts one 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 the other. The will does not of necessity follow reason."[58]

But of course the will can incline towards some thing only if that thing is recognized as good by the intellect, so if it inclines to *x* rather than *y* it can only be because the intellect has judged that *x* would be 'better' in the circumstances. It seems therefore that what really matters in the last analysis is the conclusion reached by intellect. This would seem to be confirmed by what Aquinas says about the crucial area of reflection and judgment.

As we have seen, Aquinas distinguishes the actions of men from those of brute animals on the basis of their respective powers of judgment. Only men have the ability to judge their own judgments. In DV24.1 Aquinas says:

"But man judging about his course of action by the power of reason can also judge about his own decision inasmuch as he knows the meaning of an end and of a means to an end, and the relationship of the one with reference to the other. Thus he is his own cause not only in moving but also in judging. He is therefore endowed with free choice – that is to say, with a free judgment about acting or not acting."[59]

This is spelled out further in DV24.2:
"..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 one judging insofar as he can judge about his own judgments, 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 relationship of the things about which it judges and of those by which it judges. Hence the whole root of freedom is located in reason."[60]

The argument that Aquinas is putting here seems to be that if actions are to be in one's power, then the appetite which drives them must be in one's power. That appetite will not be in one's power if the

intellect's judgment (of the apprehended good which moves appetite) is extrinsically determined. Since actions are, he believes, in one's power, one's intellectual judgment must also be in one's power. It *is* in one's power because one can judge about one's own judgment, through self-reflection.

Now clearly not all one's intellectual judgments are within one's own power in this way. As Gallagher points out, some things appear as they do without any control on one's own part: "Thus on the level of sensory perception it does not seem that I can make a red barn appear as anything but red nor the smell of burning leaves as any other smell. Even at the level of rational cognition there are .. certain areas in which the knower has no freedom. This is especially so for scientia, the knowledge of necessary truths seen in the light of first principles."[61] But what Aquinas is interested in in DV24.2 is not scientia but the cognition of something as 'good'; it is this key judgment which he is claiming to be within one's power.

The emphasis on the importance of judgment would however seem to imply that intellect is, in the final analysis, the determiner of what is to be done.

However, there is a danger in this line of thought about the relative importance of will and intellect, namely that one begins to think of 'will' and 'intellect' as two distinct things inside one's head, as it were, with will second-guessing intellect, 'deciding' whether to follow it or not. This was clearly not Aquinas' view, and it has to be kept closely in mind that for Aquinas it is the man who chooses and acts. As Gallagher puts it: "When we say in a kind of shorthand, that the will moves the intellect or the intellect moves the will, we always mean that the person voluntarily exercises his capacity to know or that the person, through an act of knowing, determines himself to choose one act or another. Thus what appears to be several distinct acts when described in terms of powers of the soul, is actually a single personal act."[62] It is only in a manner of speaking, then, that the question of the primacy of reason or will arises. But even given that caveat, a closer examination of the process of practical reasoning will show that for Aquinas the question of whether action is 'primarily' a matter for reason or for will is beside the point. Aquinas' account, in my view, shows that the process which ends in choice, and so determines action, is ineluctably an inseparable combination of intellect and will, where both act and react on each other. The inseparability is, I believe, implied in Aquinas' chosen analogy for the composition of choice, that of the soul

and the body. And the action and reaction becomes clear when one examines more closely how what is 'best', or satisfactory, is determined.

We have seen how the possibility of an object's appearing good in some ways and bad in others yields the possibility of one object's being considered better than another from a particular point of view, and have seen also how that ranking may change as the point of view changes. This explains how different assessments may be made and so how choice is possible. What is missing from this analysis, however, is how intellect comes to recognize *x* as good, or some aspects of it as good and some as bad, before it is presented to will. Further consideration of this point shows just how closely interlinked will and intellect are in the process which ends in choice.

The understanding of the universal good to which the will is naturally inclined is, clearly, a matter for intellect; the deliberation which produces a particular good in the form of an action to be carried out is also a matter for intellect. Before the process of deliberation starts, the will will have been involved in forming the intention to do *x*, and in 'instructing' the intellect to deliberate about how it might be done. But the will, and perhaps the emotions, will also have been involved at the even earlier stage of *x*'s being

identified as good. Strong emotion may influence how *x* is apprehended, for example, as may taste.[63] More complex and more subtle however is the influence will itself has on intellect's presentation of an object to it as good.

In the first place, intellect's thinking about the object sufficiently to present it to will at all is because the intellect has been moved by will. Will moves all the powers of the soul (except the vegetative powers) as an efficient cause.[64] Similarly, intellect's focusing on some aspects of the object rather than others is because it has been so instructed by will (intellect having previously identified that particular course of action as good). Here it is possible to see not just will's action on intellect but also how closely the two are interwoven. Say, for example, my attention has been caught by a CD review in the newspaper. The CD seems interesting. I note the review, and the high cost of the disc. I close my mind's eyes to the cost and continue with the review until I find the reference number, then make a note of that so that I can buy the disc. This would seem to show that intellect has presented the CD to me as something I might enjoy owning – a good, but not wholly so, because it costs more than I ought to spend. At this point, I might have dwelled (even if only momentarily) on the cost, then turned the page. Instead, I continued with the

review – I had willed myself to continue reading so that I might find out more about this possible good. My intellect continues to focus on the enjoyable aspects rather than on the cost, which 'I refuse to think about' i.e. my will instructs my intellect not to think about, my intellect having also presented such refusal as a good thing.

It seems from this account that intellect's initial identification of the object must encompass several different descriptions of it, several different ways in which it might, in a manner of speaking, be presented to will – as enjoyable but expensive, for example. How intellect arrives at these descriptions provides a further, and critically important, illustration of how will influences intellect's presentation of the object to it.

In describing the relationship between intellect and will in STIa.82.4, Aquinas points out that intellect and will, as powers, include each other in the scope of their acts: "For the understanding knows that the will wills and the will wills the understanding to understand."[65] Similarly in STIa.16.4, dealing with the relative priority of good and truth: "Will and intellect mutually include one another; for intellect understands will, and will wills intellect to understand."[66] That will wills intellect to understand

is commented on above; what is important here is that intellect understands will. Intellect understands that I want and what I want. It understands both that I want goodness in general and the kind of particular good I want. In assessing particular objects therefore, intellect is aware of what I want and this will influence how things are presented. This point is made by Brock in dealing with will and intellect as separate powers: "The will plays a role in determination of its object precisely by playing a role in the process by which the intellect itself comes to provide it with an object. It does this in two ways: by being a moving principle of the intellect's own act, and by being an object of understanding, one whose disposition is itself a potential criterion of one's suitable good."[67]

Even in the process of 'judging about one's own judgments' intellect is not acting alone, but is influenced by will. Here, intellect reflects on whether *x* really does meet my aims, and in the light of this decides whether, and to what extent, *x* really is good. The result of such reflection will be the re-presentation of *x*, under some description, to will. In carrying out this reflection, intellect is both operating under will's instruction and, crucially, is evaluating *x* against the criteria set by will i.e. the ends willed.

Again, therefore, intellect is not acting in isolation but against the parameters set by will.

An account of the relationship between will and intellect which stresses their interdependence raises, however, the prospect of an infinite regress. Will instructs intellect, but only on the basis of intellect's input that such an instruction would be a good thing. But that intellectual judgment came about as a result of will's instruction to think, which in turn could only come about as a result of intellect's input – and so on. This point is put in STIa.82.4 Objection 3: "Again we cannot will anything unless given an understanding of it. So if the will causes understanding by willing an act of understanding, another act of understanding will have to precede that act of willing, and another act of will that act of understanding, in infinite regress." Aquinas' response to that Objection is that there is no infinite regress: "For an act of knowledge must precede every movement of the will, but there does not have to be an act of will prior to every act of knowledge." The source of the thoughts not brought about by will is "an intellectual principle above our intellect, and this is God."[68] This appeal to God as the originator, and escape from the regress, is an elaboration of DV22.12 ad 2 where Aquinas says simply that "There is no necessity of going on to infinity, for we stop at the

natural appetite by which the intellect is inclined to its act."[69] Both responses express the view that the cycle stops with the intellect and the intellect's (God-given) nature to think.

The arguments about regress raise interesting issues, some of which have already been considered in Chapter 3, in the context of the external principle of movement of the will; the implications of the possibility that some thoughts may be unwilled are considered later in the present chapter. At this point, it is simply noted that Aquinas denies the possibility of an infinite regress by putting the starting point firmly with the intellect.

That the process starts with the intellect does not necessarily imply, however, that the outcome is determined by the intellect. Aquinas' accounts of how 'good' is apprehended, judged, presented to the will and deliberated about seem clearly to imply that in the process of choice, will and intellect are acting in concert, affecting and effecting each other. And if one considers choice as a substance rather than a process, it can be seen to be composed of both will and reason, as inextricably interwoven as the warp and weft of cloth. The question of primacy then indeed seems to be beside the point.

E. Is choice essential to a free act?

So far, we have considered the roles of the acts of will and intellect which go to make up the composite 'choice', one of the elements of a human voluntary act as described in STIa IIae. The reason for this extended consideration was the presumed importance of choice in such action, and hence the presumption that choice was an essential element of Aquinas' concept of freedom.

One obstacle to this reading of STIa IIae however is the line Aquinas takes on the question of free choice in the state of mortal sin in DV24.12. There he considers the question of whether man sins by necessity or whether, on the other hand, he can avoid sin without God's grace. His answer reflects the Church's teaching, saving free choice but not excluding the necessity of grace. The interesting point in this answer, in the context of free action, is the discussion of how something may be outside the power of free choice. How Aquinas deals with this raises several important points about his concept of voluntary action and so merits detailed consideration.

Since free choice is, according to DV24.12, "a power established under reason and over the executive power", something can be outside the power of free choice because it exceeds one's motive power (for

example, flying) or because "the use of reason does not extend to it. For since the act of free choice is choosing which depends on counsel, that is, the deliberation of reason, free choice cannot extend to anything that escapes the deliberation of reason. Such for example would be actions which occur without premeditation."[70] This seems to be a strong indication that reasoning and choice are essential for acts to be regarded as free. However, Aquinas goes on to say that some (sinful) actions can occur "suddenly and more or less by surprise, thus escaping the election of free choice, even though by directing its attention or efforts to it free choice could commit the sin or avoid it." One way in which this can come about is from a fit of passion:

"For the movement of anger or concupiscence sometimes anticipates the deliberation of reason. Tending to something illicit by reason of the corruption of our nature, this movement constitutes a venial sin. In the state of corrupt nature it is accordingly not within the power of free choice to avoid all sins of this sort, because they escape its act, although it can prevent any particular one of these movements if it makes the effort against it."[71]

In this passage, Aquinas seems to be saying on the one hand that certain actions, done in a fit of

passion, may escape reason, but on the other hand that these actions are sins – venial rather than mortal, but sins nevertheless. And only voluntary acts can be sins.

On the basis that actions which escape reason cannot be chosen actions, and that if a man cannot choose what he does, he cannot do otherwise, Eleonore Stump takes this Article in DV as showing that Aquinas did not believe that the ability to do otherwise was necessary to freedom: "If Aquinas supposed that liberum arbitrium were identical to free will or if he thought that the ability to do otherwise were essential to free will, he should go on to say [here] that such actions aren't sinful or blameworthy in any respect since they occur unfreely."[72] And he doesn't – he says that they are venial sins.

Her analysis of Aquinas' argument here seems to be as follows:

(i) Actions done in a fit of passion are not freely chosen because they escape reason;

(ii) But they are blameworthy;

(iii) Only free actions are blameworthy;

(iv) Therefore free actions need not be chosen actions;

(v) Therefore choice is not necessary to freedom;

(vi) Therefore the ability to do otherwise is not necessary to freedom.

Now, conclusions (v) and (vi) do seem to be at odds with the account of voluntary action in STIa IIae, which implies that deliberation and choice are essential for fully voluntary acts. That choice is an element of free will also seems to be implied by STIa.19.10, where Aquinas deals with the question of whether God has free will. In response to the Objection that God cannot choose evil, and so there is not free will in God, Aquinas agrees that God cannot will the evil of sin "but he can still choose between opposites, inasmuch as he can will some thing to be, or not to be."[73] The implication of both Objection and Response is that the ability to choose is necessary for free will. And in ST Ia. IIae.76.3, Aquinas makes it clear that voluntariness is essential for sin.[74] So choice would seem to be essential for sin.

It might be thought possible to reconcile the STIa IIae and the DV passages on the basis that what makes an action fully voluntary and free is that man always has the ability to deliberate and hence to choose, since he has reason. The ability to reason is certainly seen by Aquinas as an important test of responsibility, not just in relation to the difference between man and other animals, but also in relation

to the difference between men. In STIIa IIae.189.5 for example, dealing with the question whether children should be received in religion, he says that religious vows will not be binding if made by someone without the use of reason:

"..there are two kinds of vows in religious life. One is a simple vow, consisting only of a promise made to God, proceeding from the interior deliberation of the mind. This vow has its binding force from divine law, but it can be nullified in two ways. First, by lack of deliberation, as in the case of the insane, whose vows do not bind..... The same is true of children who do not yet have sufficient use of reason to be capable of fraud, which use boys attain, as a rule, at about the age of fourteen and girls at the age of twelve....."[75]

Now, as argued above, the importance of reasoning and judging about an action is that the reasoning process inevitably focuses one's mind on the end to be achieved, and ties together the proposed means and the end to be achieved. It can thus be said to lead to full knowledge of the end. Since neither the insane nor children can deliberate, they cannot have full knowledge of their end and so cannot act voluntarily in the full sense of the term. They cannot therefore be held responsible for what they do, since

it is only to fully voluntary activity that praise and blame attach.[76]

While the ability to reason is therefore obviously a necessary element in Aquinas' account of action for which one may be held responsible, it is clearly not sufficient that all sane men above the age of reason have that ability, for not all the actions of sane men are voluntary actions for which they may be held responsible. This is implied by the distinction Aquinas draws (in STIa IIae.1.1) between 'human actions' and 'actions of a man': "Those acts alone are properly called human which are of his own deliberate willing. Others that may be attributed to him may be called 'acts of a man', but not 'human acts', since they are not his precisely as a human being."[77] But man, over the age of 14 and sane, always has the ability to reason and about his actions, whether 'human' or not. So this generalised ability cannot itself be the ground of distinction between human acts – the only ones for which man is responsible – and the others. So it seems that what matters in human acts is not the ability to reason but the employment of that reason. The fact that man in general has the ability to reason would not therefore seem to be sufficient to reconcile the DV24.12 and ST passages.

There seems no question that in the ST, Aquinas regards the use of reason in individual actions as necessary to ground voluntariness. If reason is necessary however, the issue now becomes whether an action done in a fit of passion does escape the use of reason. In DV24.12, it seems that Aquinas takes it that it does (but says that it is nevertheless blameworthy). In the ST, he seems to take a somewhat different view. There, however, he also makes a helpful distinction which is not, overtly, made in DV24.12.

In STIa IIae.6.7, he deals with the question of whether lust makes an action involuntary, responding that it does not. At least, not usually. In reply to Objection 3 of that Article, he says that if lust completely destroys knowledge of the end, the action will not be voluntary: "When lust swamps knowledge entirely, as happens with people out of their minds because of it, there is no question of the action being voluntary."[78] (Temporary) insanity brought about by lust, or anger, would make an action arising from that lust or anger non-voluntary and hence blameless.[79]

However, Aquinas goes on to say:

"Sometimes however in people swayed by lust, knowledge is not entirely taken away; they keep their power of judgment though they lose their

concentration about a particular course of action. Yet even this is to be accounted voluntary as lying within the will's capability; for as it can be responsible for not willing or not acting, so also for not considering."[80]

The point is put even more directly in STIa IIae.10.3. The last sentence of this passage seems particularly important:

"There are degrees in being transformed by passion. It may go so far as to bind the reason completely, as happens when vehement rage or concupiscence makes a man beside himself or out of his mind; this may also come from some physical disorder. In this condition men become like the beasts, driven of necessity by passion; they are without the motion of reason and consequently of will. Sometimes however the reason does not completely surrender but keeps some of its independence and power of decision. And to that extent its motion of will. To the extent that the reason remains free and not subject to passion the motion of will survives and is not of necessity driven. *In brief, either there is no motion of will in a man because he is dominated by passion, or if there is, then it is not bound to follow the passion.*"[81] (my italics)

In the ST, therefore, Aquinas distinguishes the cases where reason is completely destroyed by passion from those where it is still functioning, albeit heavily influenced by passion. In the former case, he seems quite clear that there is no praise or blame attached to the resulting act; in the latter, he seems equally clear that there is. It seems unlikely that in DV24.12 Aquinas has in mind the case where reason is completely destroyed by passion, given that he says earlier in the Question (at 24.2) that the whole root of freedom is located in reason – which seems to indicate that where there is no reason at all, there is no freedom at all. In DV24.12 itself, he says that greater effort could have avoided the sin. This seems to imply that reasoning could have taken place, but that the strength of the passion thrust reason aside. In DV24.8, he seems to be regarding reason as being interrupted or hindered by passion, not by-passed completely, for he explains there that the will cannot tend to evil unless there has been a deficiency in reason which results in something evil's being presented as good. One way in which such a deficiency can arise is because "the lower powers are drawn to something intensely and the act of reason is consequently interrupted so that it does not propose to the will its judgment about the good clearly and firmly." Aquinas says there also that "the judgment of reason is fettered by concupiscence."[82]

Further, in DV24.10, he describes the judgment of reason as being hindered by passion:

"The first is the surge of passion, such as concupiscence or anger, by which the judgment of reason is hindered from actually judging in particular what it habitually holds in general, but is moved rather to follow the inclination of passion so that it consents to that to which passion is tending as good in itself."[83]

These passages from DV24 seem to support the view that in DV24.12, the Article which gives rise to the difficulty about freedom and choice, Aquinas had in mind the case where passion does not overcome reason completely, but rather the case where the reasoning process starts but does not follow its normal course. If this is so, we can now dismiss the thought that Aquinas might have been saying that there can be fully voluntary (human) action without reason. But if there is some element of reason, is there not also an element of choice, since what the will is doing is refusing to consider further and thrusting reason aside?

Take, for example, A, who comes home early to find his wife spring cleaning and burning all his books.

His anger at this event prompts him to hit his wife. Now, assuming that his reason is not "quite absorbed in passion as in those out of their mind" but is only "clouded over by passion", it will maintain some play and to that extent A can "repel passion or at least keep it in check."[84] The idea of hitting his wife having come into A's head, reason – even though clouded- will begin to hint that this has some bad aspects. But A, maddened, metaphorically, by the sight of his books going up in flames, thinks no further and proceeds to beat his wife.

Such action is voluntary in terms of STIa IIae.6, for it has an internal source and is done with knowledge of the end. Even though A is acting in a fit of passion, he can still have sufficient knowledge of the end. But is the action chosen? At the point where intellect perceived that wife-beating had both good and bad aspects, A could have reflected on both aspects, and could have decided for or against hitting his wife. With sufficient determination (or 'willpower'), he could continue to reason about what to do. Instead, tired "because of the many cares with which the human mind is occupied"[85] he shuts reason off and gives way to his anger. At this point, passion influencing his will, he wills not to consider the bad aspects further and commands reason to ignore them and to concentrate on the 'good' aspects. The crucial point is

that because his reason is not destroyed, only clouded, it begins to work. And because the process begins, A can consider further, or he can, as he does, bring the process to a swift conclusion by focussing exclusively on the 'good' aspects of hitting his wife. He could therefore have done otherwise than he did.

The story of A is not difficult to construct from what Aquinas says in STIa IIae about voluntary action and the influence of the passions. However, even though it seems that Aquinas was dealing in DV24.12 only with the case where reason is not completely destroyed by passion, it is difficult to read into that passage a recognition that there is a moment of choice without the benefit of the hindsight provided by STIa IIae. This implies that Aquinas is saying in DV24 that even though reason is operating, there is no prospect of choosing, or of doing otherwise. Such a conclusion would be difficult to reconcile with what he says elsewhere.

But DV24.12 and DV25.5 also raise a further problem in relation to the concept of voluntary action and choice. It would seem from what is said in DV24.12 that not only an act done in a fit of anger, but also angry thoughts themselves may anticipate the deliberation of reason but nevertheless be sinful. This is more explicit in DV25.5 ad 5: "When the

movement of sensuality precedes the judgment of reason, there is no consent either interpreted or expressed, but from the very fact that sensuality is able to be subjected to reason its act, even though it precedes reason, has the character of sin."[86]

Interestingly, Weisheipl is quite clear that this was always Aquinas' position, even if it was not in agreement with others'. In contrasting Aquinas' position with that of Albert, who latterly took the view that first movements of the sense appetite arose spontaneously and were not under the domain of free will, Weisheipl says: "Thomas, on the other hand, maintained his original position taken in the *Scriptum super Sententias* that all such initial movements of the sense appetite toward an illicit object are sufficiently under the domain of free will to constitute them venially sinful, but the lightest of all. There was no change whatever in the teaching of Thomas on the sinfulness of *secundo primi* movements in the sense appetite (initial emotions or temptations of the flesh) even antecedent to conscious awareness."[87]

According to Weisheipl, Aquinas' reason for holding such actions to be sinful was that the movements could have been avoided: "For Thomas these movements of emotion prior to deliberation or even awareness could each have been prevented if the

mind had been thinking of something else, and this possibility indicates sufficient freedom to constitute sin."[88] This is consistent with the view expressed in STIa IIae.74.3 where Aquinas says that the effect of original sin does not "prevent man from using his reason and will to check inordinate sensual movements, if he is aware of them in advance, for instance by turning his thoughts to other things." – scientific speculation for example. Further, in an echo of DV24.12, he says that man cannot avoid all such movements but that "it is sufficient, for it to count as a voluntary sin, that he can avoid each single one."[89] Now, this seems to indicate that Aquinas took the view that there is in each individual case the possibility of doing otherwise and that it is precisely this which makes the thought voluntary. But it is not clear how that possibility comes about if the lustful thoughts, for example, have appeared unbidden. Further, it seems from Aquinas' account that the sinfulness arises not from failure to banish the lustful thought once it appears but from its appearing at all. The mere appearance of the thought must therefore in some sense be voluntary.

It may be that Aquinas has in mind that the thought is voluntary in a very restricted sense. Since his use of the term 'voluntary' covers a range from the voluntariness of animals to that involved in fully

human action, it may be that he sees such sinful thoughts as voluntary only in the partial sense that applies to children and animals. This would be consistent with Aquinas' response to the question of whether ignorance lessens sin. There his reply opens: "Since all sin is voluntary, ignorance diminishes sin only in so far as it lessens free will, and if it does not lessen freedom it does not lessen sin."[90] Since there are some sins which ignorance lessens, these must be voluntary in some restricted sense which means that they are not wholly free. The response in STIa llae.76.4 is consistent with the description of the sin in DV24.12 as venial rather than mortal, since mortal sin is, according to the catechism of the Catholic Church, "sin whose object is grave matter and which is also committed with full knowledge and deliberate consent." Venial sin is committed "when one disobeys the moral law in a grave matter, but without full knowledge or without complete consent."[91] It is perhaps recognized in DV24 and 25 therefore that the sin being committed is done without full knowledge or consent, and so voluntary only in a limited sense, with responsibility being reduced accordingly. One could then perhaps agree that choice is not an essential element in this very limited kind of voluntary action – it is not, after all, an element in the voluntary action of children or animals - but argue that it is an essential element in fully voluntary

actions. This would allow DV24.12 to stand, but with such sinful actions being regarded as voluntary only in a very restricted sense.

But it is difficult to see how Aquinas can regard such thoughts as voluntary in any sense at all.

What is willed must first be known. Aquinas is quite clear that there is no willing without previous cognition. For example, in STIa IIae.6.8, in considering whether ignorance renders an act involuntary, he says: "that which is not known cannot be willed."[92] Specifically in relation to sin, there is STIa IIae.76.1 Objection 3: "Furthermore all sin is willed.... But nothing is willed that is not first known, for the object of the will is the good as perceived. Therefore ignorance cannot cause sin." And the reply: "Although the totally unknown cannot be desired, what is partially known and partially unknown can."[93]

Therefore, to be a sin, *x* must be willed; to be willed, *x* must be known, at least partially, and must be recognized as something at least partially good. This however poses an immediate problem in relation to supposedly sinful thoughts. Thought *x* must have been recognized as something apparently good before it is willed and so before it is a voluntary, sinful,

thought. But in order for it to be known as something good, it must already have been thought. I cannot recognize thought *x* as good – or bad – without actually having had thought *x*.

It would seem on this account that it is impossible for a thought to be voluntary at the point when it first enters one's head, as it were. But that a thought is voluntary at this stage seems to be the implication of DV24.12 and 25.5 – for it seems that the thought provoked by passion is sinful as soon as it arises. If that is so, the concept of 'voluntary' being employed here would seem to be one which does not require cognition, and so one obviously at variance with Aquinas' accounts elsewhere.

But even in the ST, Aquinas seems to endorse the view that thoughts per se can be sinful, and further distinguishes among the thought, delight in the thought and consent to the thought. In STIa IIae.72.7, he accepts, following Jerome, that there are sins of thought, word and deed, and describes all sins of thought as sharing the common characteristic of secrecy, and constituting "one grade of sin, even though they are three different things, either thought, delight or consent."[94] Since sins must be voluntary, it seems again that the thought of something sinful must be voluntary. Again, the question arises of how

a thought can be willed without first being thought, if willing requires previous cognition.

We have already seen how Aquinas tackles the question of the potential infinite regress caused by will's moving intellect and intellect's moving will by arguing that there does not have to be an act of will prior to every act of knowledge.[95] Some acts of knowledge can therefore be involuntary; but these cannot be sinful. Equally, however, Aquinas' answer implies that at least some acts of knowledge must be willed. The Sed Contra to the Objections in STIa.82.4 perhaps gives an indication of the kind of voluntary thought which might be in mind here:

"On the other hand Damascene notes that it is in our power to attend or not attend to whatever discipline we wish. Now it is through our will that a thing is in our power, while it is through our understanding that we attend to a branch of learning. So the will affects the understanding."[96]

The kind of situation this would seem to cover is, for example, one where I sit down to think about how I shall prepare a paper I have already agreed to give, or, having started such a train of thought I find my mind wandering and deliberately force my thoughts back to the paper. This is not however the situation

at issue in DV24 and 25, where a thought suddenly appears in my head, "taking me more or less by surprise."

One then seems forced to conclude that such 'surprise' thoughts are involuntary. But if so, how can they be sinful?

A possible approach to this dilemma lies in the line Aquinas takes in STIa IIae.74.8, where he is considering whether consent to delight can be a mortal sin. He takes the view that mere thinking of a sinful object is not necessarily a sin; what makes it sinful is the attitude taken to the object of the thought:

"A man thinking about fornication can delight in two ways: either in the thinking itself or in the fornication thought of. However delight in the thinking itself follows an affective inclination towards the thinking as such. Mere thinking is not a mortal sin; sometimes it is only a venial sin e.g. idle thoughts on the subject, and sometimes it is no sin at all e.g. thoughts on the subject useful for preaching or teaching.
Consequently affection for and delight in thinking about fornication is not categorically a mortal sin; sometimes it is venial and sometimes it is no sin at all."[97]

This passage seems to distinguish between the thought itself and the continuation of it, and between reasons for continuation. A similar division between the thought and its continuation is found in the consideration of the sin of 'lingering delight', in STIa llae.74.6. In replying to Objection 3, Aquinas says that "Delight is described as lingering not simply because of the passage of time but because judgment is not prompt in inhibiting, deliberately holding and turning over what should have been cast aside as soon as it touched the mind, as St Augustine says."[98]

It is not difficult to see how a distinction might be made between the occurrence of the thought and its continuation, and to argue that only continuation (for the wrong reasons) is sinful. If one took that approach, there would be no need to worry about whether the thought itself were voluntary or not. But the thought itself is supposed also to be sinful, for Aquinas, as we have seen, maintained that the thought, the delight and the consent to that delight are three different things, all of which are sinful.

Even in relation to the thinking of the thought, however, a distinction could be drawn between the origination of the thought, when it first touched the mind, and the continuation of it in existence. Then

the origination of the thought might be involuntary, because lack of prior cognition of it made it impossible for it to be willed, but its continuation voluntary and hence possibly sinful. The continuation of the thought would be voluntary because I have become aware of it lurking at the edge of my mind and so I am in a position to assess it as good to focus on - or not.

It now becomes possible to see how A might be held responsible for a passionate thought. At the very first inkling that the thought was forming at the edge of his mind, he could turn his mind to scientific speculation , as STIa llae.74.3 suggests, or he can focus on the partially formed thought, allowing it to develop fully. At that point, if the intellect does develop it fully, it has become a willed thought. And it has become a chosen thought, because the will could have acted otherwise: it might have willed thoughts of scientific speculation or at least it might not have prompted the intellect to develop the passionate thought further.

It is therefore possible to see how a sudden thought can, consistently with the analysis of voluntary in STIa llae, be said to be voluntary and so potentially sinful. The very first appearance of the thought, whether arising suddenly from passion or otherwise,

must be involuntary since voluntariness requires prior cognition, but the development of the thought can be voluntary because there is knowledge, albeit partial, of it. Such an approach to the problem of how a thought might be voluntary is taken by Scotus, who considers that thoughts might first appear "indistinctly and imperfectly" and then be strengthened by the will if the will takes pleasure in them:

" I say therefore that for one intellection that exists perfectly in the intellect, many confused and imperfect intellections can also be there, unless one is so perfect and actual that it suffers no other to co-exist with it. Hence, by means of those confused and imperfect intellections present there, the will....can take complacency in any one of them, even though that intellection was not known actually as a [distinct] object, and by taking pleasure in one, the will confirms and intends that intellection. Hence that which was imperfect and disregarded becomes perfect and intense through this complacency, and thus the will can command thought and turn the intellect towards it. But by not willing some other intellection or taking no pleasure in it, that intellection diminishes in intensity and ceases to exist."[99]

Such perfected thoughts are, then, willed and as such may be sinful, depending on their subject.[100]

Although a similar approach to sinful thought might be constructed from Aquinas' own resources in the ST, it is a considerable way from the face of the argument in DV24.12. Nevertheless, it is difficult to see how, without some such construction of partially-formed and fully-formed thoughts, Aquinas can explain satisfactorily how a sudden thought can be voluntary while also maintaining that there can be no act of will without a preceding act of knowledge.[101] There does therefore seem to be a tension between what Aquinas says about sudden or sinful thoughts and his analysis of fully voluntary, human action in STIa IIae.6-17.

It is doubtful however that what is said in DV24.12 is sufficient to support an argument that choice is not an element of fully voluntary, human, action, for what this lengthy examination of the various texts does seem to show is that in Aquinas' account reason must always operate. And that when reason operates, the interaction of intellect and will ensures that there is always a point when a thought can develop in different directions, depending on the aspects which will instructs intellect to focus on. There is therefore always the prospect of choice. If that is so, the ability

to do otherwise would seem to be an essential feature of Aquinas' concept of freedom. Before coming to a conclusion on this point however, it is necessary to return to Aquinas' treatment of God's knowledge of future contingents to look at an issue which could have a major bearing on what Aquinas' concept of freedom is thought to be.

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[1] STla llae.12.1 ad 4: "Intentio est actus voluntatis respectu finis. Sed voluntas respicit finem tripliciter:....tertio modo consideratur finis secundum quod est terminus alicujus quod in ipsum ordinatur; et sic *intentio* respicit finem. Non enim solum ex hoc intendere decimur sanitatem, quia volumus eam, sed quia volumus ad eam per aliquid aliud pervenire."

[2] See, for example Anscombe [2000]; Kenny [1975]. See also Lang v Lang 1955 AC p.402 and R v Hyam 1974 1QBD p.99

[3] STla llae.13 – Introduction: "Considerandum est de actibus voluntatis qui sunt in comparatione ad ea quae sunt ad finem; et sunt tres *eligere, consentire* et *uti..*" I consider consent in the context of choice, but do not deal with usus since it does not feature in that aspect of an action which relates to its freedom.

[4] STla llae.13 Introduction: "Electionem autem praecedit consilium. Primo ergo considerandum est de electione; secundo, de consilio."

[5] Westberg [1994] p.147

[6] The etymology of 'electio' would indeed seem to suggest a combination of reason and will, given its connection with 'eligere', ex+legere, whose uses are given by the Oxford Latin Dictionary as equivalent to the English "to pick out"; "to choose"; "to select". Such usage would seem to imply a rationally informed discrimination or preference rather than, say, picking out with a pin.

[7] STla llae.13.1c: "Dicendum quod in nomine electionis importatur aliquid pertinens ad rationem sive ad intellectum et aliquid pertinens ad voluntatem. Dicit enim Philosophus in Ethic., quod *electio est appetitivus intellectus, vel appetitus intellectivus.*Quandocumque autem duo

concurrunt ad aliquid unum constituendem, unum eorum est ut formale respectu alterius. Unde Gregorianus Nyssenus vel Nemesius dicit quod *electio neque est appetitus secundum seipsam, neque consilium solum, sed ex his aliquod compositum.* Sicut enim dicimus animal ex anima et corpore compositum esse, neque vero corpus esse secundum seipsum neque animam solam sed utrumque, ita et electionem."

[8] STIa.83.2 Obj.2: "liberum arbitrium dicitur esse facultas voluntatis et rationis."

[9] STIa.83.3c: "Dicendum quod proprium liberi arbitrii est electio. Ex hoc enim liberi arbitrii esse dicimur, quod possumus unum recipere alio recusato, quod est eligere. Et ideo naturam liberi arbitrii ex electione considerare oportet. Ad electionem autem concurrit aliquid ex parte cognitivae virtutis et aliquid ex parte appetitivae."

[10] DV22.15c: "electio habet in se aliquid voluntatis et aliquid rationis. Utrum autem sit actus proprie voluntatis vel rationis, philosophus videtur relinquere sub dubio in *vi* ethicorum ubi dicit, quod 'electio vel est appetitus intellectivi, idest appetitus in ordine ad intellectum, vel intellectus appetivi, idest intellectus in ordine ad appetitum'. Primum autem verius est scilicet quod sit actus voluntatis in ordine ad rationem quod enim sit directe actus voluntatis, patet ex duobus. Primo ex ratione objecti.....secundo ex ratione ipsius actus. Electio enim est ultima acceptio qua aliquid accipitur ad prosequendum..."

[11] STIa.83.3 ad 1: "Ad primo ergo dicendum quod potentiae appetitivae concomitantur apprehensivas." Ad 2: "Determinatur autem consilium primo quidem per sententiam rationis, et secundo per acceptationem appetitus;... Et hoc modo ipsa electio dicitur quoddam judicium..." Ad 3: "Appetitus enim, quamvis non sit collativus, tamen inquantum a vi cognitiva conferente movetur, habet quandam collationis similitudinem dum unum alteri praeoptat."

[12] STIa.83.3c "Hoc autem, inquantum hujusmodi, habet rationem boni quod dicitur utile. Unde cum bonum, inquantum hujusmodi, sit objectum appetitus, sequitur quod electio sit principaliter actus appetitivae virtutis."

[13] STIa llae.13.1c: " perficitur enim electio in motu quodam animae ad bonum quod eligitur. Unde manifeste actus est appetitivae potentiae."

[14] See, for example, Lottin [1942] p.216: "Saint Thomas notait quelque hésitation dans la pensée d'Aristote. Mais dès le Commentaire des Sentences il prend position: le choix est un acte de volonté, mais cependant pénétré de raison. Et sur ce point, le saint Docteur ne s'est jamais démenti."

[15] STla llae.8.2c: "Omnis enim actus denominatus a potentia nominat simplicem actum illius potentiae, sicut intelligere nominat simplicem actum intellectus. Simplex autem actus potentiae est in id quod est secundum se objectum potentiae. Id autem quod est propter se bonum et volitum est finis, unde voluntas proprie est ipsius finis." Trans. Oesterle

[16] In Ethics iii, 2

[17] STla llae.13.3c: "Unde finis, inquantum est hujusmodi, non cadit sub electione."

[18] The implications of this kind of practical reasoning are considered further below, in Sections B and C

[19] STla.llae.13.3c: "But just as with speculative argument, nothing prevents the principle of one demonstration or of one science from being the conclusion of another – though a first indemonstrable principle cannot be the conclusion of any demonstration or science – so also what is the end of one operation may be the means for something else. And in that way it is an object of choice.... But the ultimate end in no way falls to be a matter of choice."

"Sed sicut in speculativis nihil prohibet id quod est unius demonstrationis vel scientiae principium esse conclusionem alterius demonstrationis vel scientiae – primum tamen principium indemonstrabile non potest esse conclusio alicujus demonstrationis vel scientiae- ita etiam contingit id quod est in una operatione ut finis ordinari ab aliquid ut ad finem. Et hoc modo sub electione cadit.....Sed ultimus finis nullo modo sub electione cadit." Trans. Oesterle.

[20] STla llae. 13.2 ad 2: "Ad secundum dicendum quod brutum animal accipit unum prae alio, quia appetitus ejus est naturaliter determinatus ad ipsum; unde statim quando per sensum, vel per imaginationem repraesentatur ei aliquid ad quod naturaliter inclinatur ejus appetitus, absque electione movetur ad ipsum; sicut etiam absque electione ignis movetur sursum et non deorsum."

[21] STla llae.14.1c: "Dicendum quod electio, sicut dictum est, [STla llae.13.1 ad 2] consequitur judicium rationis de rebus agendis."

[22] STla llae.14.1c: "In rebus autem dubiis et incertis ratio non profert judicium absque inquisitione praecedente; et ideo necessaria est inquisitio rationis ante judicium de eligendis. Et haec inquisitio *consilium* vocatur."

[23] STla llae.14.2

[24] STla llae.14.1 ad 1: "..in consilio quod est actus rationis apparet aliquid voluntatis, sicut materia, quia consilium est de his quae homo vult facere,

et etiam sicut motivum, quia ex hoc quod homo vult finem, movetur ad consilium de his quae sunt ad finem."

[25] Ethics vi, 2.1139b4

[26] STla llae.14.1.ad 1: "ita Damascenus dicit quod *consilium est appetitus inquisitivus,* ut consilium aliquomodo pertinere ostendat et ad voluntatem, circa quam et ex qua fit inquisitio et ad rationem inquirentem."

[27] Or perhaps instead of, where only one possible means is identified: STla llae.15.3 ad 3

[28] Finnis [1998] p.66

[29] STla llae.15.3 ad 3: "Potest enim contingere quod per consilium inveniantur plura ducentia ad finem, quorum dum quodlibet placet in quodlibet eorum consentitur, sed ex multis quae placent praeaccipimus unum eligendo."

[30] Westberg [1994] pp.147-174

[31] Westberg op.cit. at p.168

[32] Westberg op.cit. at p.149

[33] STla llae.14.2c "..id quod accipitur ut finis in una inquisitione, potest accipi ut ad finem in alia inquisitione."

[34] STla llae.14.6c: "Terminus autem inquisitionis est id quod statim est in potestate nostra ut faciamus. Sicut enim finis habet rationem principii, ita id quod agitur propter finem habet rationem conclusionis. Unde id quod primo agendum occurrit, habet rationem ultimae conclusionis, ad quam inquisitio terminatur."

[35] The process of practical reasoning is, however, considered further below, in Section C.

[36] Westberg [1994] p.165

[37] STllla.18.4 ad 2: "Ad secundum dicendum quod electio praesupponit consilium, non tamen sequitur ex consilio, nisi jam determinato per judicium; illud enim quod judicamus agendum post inquisitionem consilii, eligimus, ut in Ethic.dicitur. Et ideo si aliquid judicetur ut agendum absque dubitatione et inquisitione praecedente, hoc sufficit ad electionem. Et sic patet quod dubitatio sive inquisitio non per se pertinet ad electionem, sed solum secundum quod est in natura ignorante."

[38] Assuming, for the sake of this argument, that there is no question of which alphabet to use, or whether upper or lower case is appropriate. If there were, how 'a' was to be written would then be 'a matter open to doubt'.

[39] STla llae.6.2c: "Perfectam igitur cognitionem finis sequitur voluntarium secundum rationem perfectam, prout scilicet apprehenso fine aliquis potest

deliberans de fine et de his quae sunt ad finem, moveri in finem vel non moveri."

[40] STla llae.14.1 "Philosophus dicit in Ethic., quod electio est appetitus praeconsiliati." [Ethics iii, 3.1113a11]

[41] MacDonald [1991a] p.38

[42] STla llae.1.6 ad 3: "Ad tertium dicendum quod non oportet ut semper aliquis cogitet de ultimo fine quandocumque aliquid appetit vel operatur: sed virtus primae intentionis, quae est respectu ultimi finis, manet in quolibet appetitu cujuscumque rei, etiam si de ultimo fine actu non cogitetur. Sicut non oportet quod qui vadit per viam, in quolibet passu cogitet de fine."

[43] STla llae.14.4 ad 1: "Unde quando judicium vel sententia manifesta est absque inquisitione non requiritur consilii inquisitio." Trans Oesterle

[44] See STla llae.14.4 ad 2: "ratio in rebus manifestis non inquirit, sed statim judicat."

[45] STla llae.13.6c: "Dicendum quod homo non ex necessitate eligit; et hoc ideo, quia quod possibile est non esse non necesse est esse. Quod autem possibile sit non eligere vel eligere, hujus ratio ex duplici hominis potestate accipi potest. Potest enim homo velle et non velle, agere et non agere; potest etiam velle hoc aut illud, et agere hoc aut illud. Cujus ratio ex ipsa virtute rationis accipitur. Quidquid enim ratio potest apprehendere ut bonum in hoc voluntas tendere potest. Potest autem ratio apprehendere ut bonum, non solum hoc quod est velle aut agere, sed hoc etiam quod est non velle et non agere. Et rursum in omnibus particularibus bonis potest considerare rationem boni alicujus, et defectum alicujus boni quod habet rationem mali; et secundum hoc potest unumquodque hujusmodi bonorum apprehendere ut eligibile vel fugibile. Solum autem perfectum bonum, quod est beatitudo, non potest ratio apprehendere sub ratione mali aut alicujus defectus. .... Electio autem, cum non sit de fine, sed de his quae sunt ad finem.... non est perfecti boni, quod est beatitudo, sed aliorum particularium bonorum. Et ideo homo non ex necessitate, sed libere, eligit."

[46] STla.83.1c: "Ratio enim circa contingentia habet viam ad opposita, ut patet in dialecticis syllogismis et rhetoricis persuasionibus."

[47] STla.83.1c: "Et ideo circa ea judicium rationis ad diversa se habet, et non est determinatum ad unum." See also Scott MacDonald [1999] pp.148-153

[48] STla llae.13.6 ad1: "Et similiter non oportet quod semper ex fine insit homini necessitas ad eligendum ea quae sunt ad finem, quia non omne

quod est ad finem tale est quod sine eo finis haberi non possit; aut si tale sit, non semper sub tali ratione consideratur."

[49] STla llae.10.2

[50] STla llae.13.6 ad 2: "...conclusiones non ex necessitate sequuntur ex principiis necessariis absoluta necessitate, sed necessariis solum ex conditione: ut, si currit, movetur."

[51] STla llae.13.3

[52] DV24.2

[53] STla llae.13.6 ad 3: "Ad tertiam dicendum quod nihil prohibet, si aliqua duo aequalia proponantur secundum unam considerationem, quin circa alterum consideretur aliqua conditio per quam emineat, et magis flectatur voluntas in ipsum quam in aliud."

[54] Aquinas' requirement that the will give consent to identified means in the process of deliberation covers this point. See above.

[55] For the logic which applies to practical reasoning to ensure that satisfactoriness, as opposed to truth, is achieved, see Kenny [1975] pp.70-96. Consideration of this logical aspect is peripheral to the issues I wish to take up here, and is not pursued further.

[56] Kenny [1992] p.44

[57] Wiggins [1980] p.228

[58] DV22.15c: "Nam quantumcumque ratio unum alteri praefert, nondum est unum alteri praeacceptatum ad operandum, quousque voluntas inclinetur in unus magis quam in aliud; non enim voluntas de necessitate sequitur rationem."

[59] DV24.1c: "Homo vero per virtutem rationis iudicans de agendis, potest de suo arbitrio iudicare, in quantum cognoscit rationem finis et eius quod est ad finem, et habitudinem et ordinem unius ad alterum: et ideo non est solum causa sui ipsius in movendo, sed in iudicando; et ideo est liberi arbitrii, ac si diceretur liberi iudicii de agendo vel non agendo."

[60] DV24.2c: "et ideo si iudicium cognitivae non sit in potestate alicuius, sed sit aliunde determinatum, nec appetitus erit in potestate eius, et per consequens nec motus vel operatio absolute. Iudicium autem est in potestate iudicantis secundum quod potest de suo iudicio iudicare: de eo enim quod est in nostra potestate, possumus iudicare. Iudicare autem de iudicio suo est solius rationis, quae super actum suum reflectitur, et cognoscit habitudines rerum de quibus iudicat, et per quas iudicat; unde totius libertatis radix est in ratione constituta."

[61] Gallagher [1994] p.248

[62] Gallagher [1994] p.276

[63] STIa IIae.9.2c: "Quod autem aliquid videatur bonum et conveniens, ex duobus contingit, scilicet ex conditione ejus quod proponitur, et ejus cui proponitur; conveniens enim secundum relationem dicitur, unde ex utroque extremorum dependet. Et inde est quod gustus diversimode dispositus non eodem modo accipit aliquid ut conveniens, et ut non conveniens. Unde Philosophus, *Qualis unusquisque est, talis videtur ei.* [Ethics iii,5. 1114a32] Manifestum est autem quod secundum passionem appetitus sensitivi immutatur homo ad aliquam dispositionem: unde secundum quod homo est in passione aliqua videtur ipsi aliquid conveniens quod non videtur ei extra passionem existenti, sicut irato videtur bonum quod non videtur quieto."

[64] STIa.82.4c: "in omnibus potentiis activis ordinatis illa potentia quae respicit finem universalem movet potentias quae respiciunt fines particulares....Et ideo voluntas per modum agentis movet omnes animae potentias ad suos actus praeter vires naturales vegetativae partis..."

[65] STIa.82.4 ad 1: "Quia intellectus intelligit voluntatem velle et voluntas vult intellectum intelligere."

[66] STIa.16.4 ad 1: "Ad primum ergo dicendum quod voluntas et intellectus se mutuo includunt; nam intellectus intelligit voluntatem, et voluntas vult intellectum intelligere."

[67] Brock [1998] p.170

[68] STIa.82.4 Obj 3: "nihil velle possumus nisi sit intellectum. Si igitur ad intelligendum movet voluntas volendo intelligere, oportebit quod etiam illud velle praecedat aliud intelligere, et illud intelligere aliud velle, et sic in infinitum."

Ad 3: "Ad tertium dicendum quod non oportet procedere in infinitum sed statur in intellectu sicut in primo. Omnem enim voluntatis motum necesse est quod praecedat apprehensio, sed non omnem apprehensionem praecedit motus voluntatis. Sed principium consiliandi et intelligendi est aliquod intellectivum principium altius intellectu nostro, quod est Deus."

[69] DV22.12 ad 2: " non est procedere in infinitum; statur enim in appetitu naturali, quo inclinatur intellectus in suum actum."

[70] DV24.12c: "cum liberum arbitrium sit quaedam potentia constituta infra rationem, et supra motivam exequentem, dupliciter aliquid extra potestam liberi arbitrii invenitur. Uno modo ex hoc quod excedit efficaciam motivae exequentis, quae ad imperium liberi arbitrii operatur....Alio modo aliquid est extra potestatem liberi arbitrii, quia ad ipsum rationis actus non se extendit. Cum enim actus liberi arbitrii sit electio, quae consilium, id est deliberationem rationis, sequitur, ad illud se liberum arbitrium extendere

non potest quod deliberationem rationis subterfugit, sicut sunt ea quae impraemeditate occurrunt."

[71] DV24.12c: "Sed secondo modo peccatum vel eius vitatio potest excedere liberi arbitrii potestatem. Eo scilicet quod aliquod peccatum subito et quasi repente occurrit, et sic electionem liberi arbitrii subterfugit, quamvis liberum arbitrium hoc possit facere vel vitare si ad hoc suam attentionem vel conatum dirigeret. Dupliciter autem aliquid in nobis quasi repentine accidit. Uno modo ex impetu passionis: motus enim irae et concupiscentiae interdum deliberationem rationis praevenit. Qui quidem motus in illicitum tendens ex corruptione naturae, peccatum veniale est. Et ideo post statum naturae corruptae non est in potestate liberi arbitrii omnia huiusmodi peccata vitare quia eius actum effugiunt, quamvis possit impedire aliquem istorum motuum, si contra conetur."

[72] Stump [1997] p.589

[73] STIa.19.10 ad 2: "Ad secundum dicendum quod cum malum culpae dicatur per aversionem a bonitate divina, per quam Deus omnia vult, ... manifestum est quod impossibile est eum malum culpae velle; et tamen ad opposita se habet inquantum velle potest hoc esse vel non esse;" Trans., my own.

[74] STIa IIae.76.3c: "But ignorance which is responsible for an act of its very nature excuses from sin because it causes a thing to be involuntary, and a sin must always be voluntary."

"Sed ignorantia quae est causa actus, quia causat involuntarium, de se habet quod excuset a peccato: eo quod voluntarium est de ratione peccati."

[75] STIIa IIae.189.5c: " ..duplex est religionis votum. Unum simplex, quod consistit in sola promissione Deo facta, quae ex interiori mentis deliberatione procedit. Et hoc votum habet efficaciam ex jure divino. Quae tamen dupliciter tolli potest. Uno modo, per defectum deliberationis: ut patet in furiosis, quorum vota non sunt obligatoria....Et eadem est ratio de pueris qui nondum habent debitum usum rationis, per quem sunt doli capaces...."

[76] STIa IIae.6.2 ad 3: "...Laus et vituperium consequuntur actum voluntarium secundum perfectam voluntarii rationem...."

[77] STIa IIae.1.1c: "Illae ergo actiones proprie humanae dicuntur quae ex voluntate deliberata procedunt. Si quae autem aliae actiones homini conveniant, possunt dici quidem *hominis* actiones; sed non proprie humanae, cum non sint hominis inquantum est homo."

[78] STla llae.6.7 ad 3: "Ad tertium dicendum quod si concupiscentia totaliter cognitionem auferrit, sicut contingit in illis qui propter concupiscentiam fiunt amentes, sequeretur quod concupiscentia voluntarium tolleret."

[79] 'Non-voluntary' rather than 'involuntary', since Aquinas points out in STla llae.6.7 ad 3 that the terms 'voluntary' and 'involuntary' apply only to things having the use of reason and, crucially, the man maddened by lust has not the use of reason.

[80] STla llae.6.7 ad 3: "Sed quandoque in his quae per concupiscentiam aguntur, non totaliter tollitur cognitio, quia non tollitur potestas cognoscendi, sed solum consideratio actualis in particulari agibili; et tamen hoc ipsum est voluntarium, secundum quod voluntarium dicitur quod est in potestate voluntatis, ut non agere et non velle; similiter autem et non considerare."

[81] STla llae.10.3c: "Hujusmodi autem immutatio hominis per passionem duobus modis contingit. Uno modo sic quod totaliter ratio ligatur, ita quod homo usum rationis non habet; sicut contingit in iis qui propter vehementem iram vel concupiscentiam furiosi vel amentes fiunt, sicut et propter aliquam perturbationem corporalem: hujusmodi enim passiones non sine corporali transmutatione accidunt. Et de talibus eadem est ratio sicut et de animalibus brutis, quae ex necessitate sequuntur impetum passionis; in his enim non est aliquis rationis motus, et per consequens nec voluntatis. Aliquando autem ratio non totaliter absorbetur a passione sed remanet quantum ad aliquid judicium rationis liberum; et secundum hoc remanet aliquid de motu voluntatis. Inquantum ergo ratio manet libera et passioni non subjecta, intantum voluntatis motus, qui manet, non ex necessitate tendit ad hoc ad quod passio inclinat. Et sic aut motus voluntatis non est in homine, sed sola passio dominatur, aut, si motus voluntatis sit, non ex necessitate sequitur passionem."

[82] DV24.8c: "Sed ex aliquo extrinseco ratio deficit, cum propter vires inferiores quae intense moventur in aliquid, intercipitur actus rationis, ut non limpide et firmiter suum iudicium de bono voluntati proponat; sicut cum aliquis habens rectam existimationem de castitate servanda, per concupiscentiam delectabilis appetit contrarium castitati, 'propter hoc quod iudicium rationis aliqualiter a concupiscentia ligatur, ut philosophus dicit in vii ethic.."

[83] DV24.10c: "in qua quidem aestimatione tria pensanda sunt, quorum primum est ipse impetus passionis, puta concupiscentiae vel irae per quam intercipitur iudicium rationis, ne actu iudicet in particulari quod in

universali habitu tenet, sed sequatur passionis inclinationem, ut consentiat in illud in quod passio tendit quasi per se bonum."

[84] STla llae.10.3 ad 2

[85] DV24.12

[86] DV25.5 ad 5: "quando enim motus sensualitatis praevenit iudicium rationis, non est consensus nec interpretatus nec expressus; sed ex hoc ipso quod sensualitas est subiicibilis rationi, actus eius quamvis rationem praeveniat, habet rationem peccati."

[87] Weisheipl [1974] p.74

[88] Weisheipl op.cit. p.74

[89] STla llae.74.3 ad 2: "Sed talis corruptio fomitis non impedit quin homo rationabili voluntate possit reprimere singulos motus inordinatos sensualitatis, si praesentiat: puta divertendo cogitationem ad alia.....Et ideo non potest homo vitare omnes hujusmodi motus, propter corruptionem praedictam: sed hoc solum sufficit ad rationem peccati voluntarii quod possit vitare singulos." Trans., my own.

[90] STla llae.76.4c: "quia omne peccatum est voluntarium, intantum ignorantia potest diminuere peccatum inquantum diminuit voluntarium: si autem voluntarium non diminuat, nullo modo diminuet peccatum."

[91] Chapman [1994] pp.410, 411

[92] STla llae.6.8c: "non potest esse actu volitum quod ignorantum est."

[93] STla llae.76.1 Obj 3: "Praeterea, omne peccatum in voluntate consistit... Sed voluntas non fertur nisi in aliquod cognitum: quia bonum apprehensum est objectum voluntatis. Ergo ignorantia non potest esse causa peccati."

Ad 3: "Ad tertium dicendum quod in illud quod est quantum ad omnia ignotum non potest ferri voluntas, sed si aliquid est secundum aliquid notum et secundum aliquid ignotum, potest voluntas illud velle."

[94] STla llae.72.7 ad 1: "..omne peccatum cordis convenit in ratione occulti: et secundum hoc ponitur unus gradus. Qui tamen per tres gradus distinguitur, scilicet cogitationis, delectationis et consensus."

[95] STla.82.4, above.

[96] STla.82.4 s.c: "Sed contra est quod Damascenus dicit quod in nobis est percipere quamcumque volumus artem, et non percipere. In nobis autem est aliquid per voluntatem; percipimus autem artes per intellectum. Voluntas ergo movet intellectum."

[97] STla llae.74.8c: "Sic igitur aliquis de fornicatione cogitans, de duobus potest delectari: uno modo, de ipsa cogitatione, alio modo de fornicatione cogitata. Delectatio autem de cogitatione ipsa sequitur inclinationem

affectus in cogitationem ipsam. Cogitatio autem ipsa secundum se non est peccatum mortale: immo quandoque est veniale tantum, puta cum aliquis inutiliter cogitat; quandoque autem sine peccato omnino, puta cum aliquis utiliter de ea cogitat, sicut cum vult de ea praedicare vel disputare."

[98] STIa IIae.74.6 ad 3: "Ad tertium dicendum quod delectatio dicitur morosa non ex mora temporis, sed ex eo quod ratio deliberans circa eam immoratur, nec tamen eam repellit, tenens et volvens libenter quae statim ut attigerunt animum respui debuerunt, ut Augustinus dicit."

[99] Opus oxonienseii dist.42 qq1-4, in Wolter [1997] p.151

[100] See Broadie [1996]

[101] Some support to the idea of partially and fully formed thoughts may be thought to be given by Aquinas' approach to the compulsion exercised by the totally good. We considered in Chapter 3 Aquinas' argument that the exercise of the will cannot be compelled even by a totally good object, because a man may always think of something else, and concluded that that argument was difficult to defend because it seemed that as soon as the totally good was recognized as such, the will would be compelled to will it. But if the thought is not allowed to develop even as far as recognizing *x* as totally good, it is easier to see how the will might move to think of something else.

Chapter 5

GOD'S KNOWLEDGE AS THE CAUSE OF THINGS

"So boundless an ocean of doubt uncertainty and contradiction!"

David Hume, on the difficulties arising from God's being "the mediate cause of all the actions of men."

Introduction

From the analysis so far of voluntary human action, the picture of freedom painted by Aquinas seems to be one in which I, by means of my intellect and will working together, decide what to do to achieve what I consider to be good. Although I am naturally inclined towards the good, and cannot choose other than what appears good, my natural inclination - however strong - is towards only the good in general. It is up to me to decide what particular goods form part of, or will lead to, the ultimate good. Since everything can be seen as good in some respect or other, it seems that I always have a choice in deciding what to do, for it is possible for me to see x and/or y as good in the particular circumstances of my choosing. This comes about because the process of deliberation which precedes choice may result in a number of different

conclusions depending on my specification of the premisses. Further, even something completely good does not compel me to choose it, for I can always switch my mind to other things.

This picture seems to convey a wide-ranging freedom, including not just a negative element of lack of constraint (no one has compelled me) and a positive attribution (it is my decision because made by my intellect and will) but also a third factor: being able to make a different choice from the one in fact made and to do so in the very same circumstances. This concept of freedom might be characterized as liberty of indifference rather than liberty of spontaneity. 'Liberty of indifference' may be thought a somewhat misleading term however, for it seems to imply that the will is impartial between alternatives or among options. On Aquinas' account, the will is naturally drawn towards that which seems in all the circumstances at the time to be the good; the only impartiality is that all things may appear good. Characterizing Aquinas' concept of freedom as 'wide' or 'narrow' would therefore seem more appropriate, a 'wide' concept being one which includes the possibility of being able, in the same circumstances, to make a different choice.

Such a wide concept of freedom could arguably be the

one which is assumed in Aquinas' consideration of the problem of God's knowledge of future contingents. As we saw in Chapter 1, Aquinas argues that since God's knowledge is eternal, it is outside time; therefore, it is incorrect to say that God knows before I sit that I shall sit. Rather, one must say, in human temporal terms, that he knows at the time I sit that I sit. His knowledge of this event is as though it were present in human terms (Present* perhaps, since eternity no more has an equivalent of the temporal present than it has of past or future). Knowledge that I am sitting when I am sitting does not of course mean that I could not have chosen to remain standing. If I am sitting, clearly I must be sitting, otherwise there is a contradiction – but at the point when I was offered a seat I could have refused it. As we saw, Aquinas makes this point in *In Peri Hermeneias* 1.14:

" God's knowing, however, is altogether outside time, as if he stands on the summit of eternity where everything exists together, looking down in a single simple glance on the whole course of time. So in his one glance he sees everything going on throughout time, and each as it is in itself, not as something future to himself and his seeing and visible only as it exists within its causal situation (although he sees that causal situation). But he sees things altogether

eternally, each as it exists in its own time, just as our own human eye sees John sitting there himself, not just as something determined by causes. Nor does our seeing John sitting there stop it being an event that might not have been when regarded just in relation to its causes. And yet while he is sitting there, we see him sitting there with certainty and without doubt, since when a thing exists in itself it is already determined. In this way then God knows everything that happens in time with certainty and without doubt, and yet the things that happen in time are not things that must exist or must come to exist, but things that might be or might not be."[1]

As we have also seen, there are difficulties with this solution. But even if one accepts that God's knowing that I <u>am</u> doing *x* rather than that I <u>shall</u> do *x* solves the problem of the temporal necessity of what I do and so makes room for the possibility of my choosing to do *x* or not, there is still a problem arising from God's knowledge that I am doing *x*. That problem will be considered in this chapter. Although it seems to be resolvable, the solution raises doubts about whether Aquinas' concept of freedom is indeed the wide one. That issue is therefore given further consideration. The conclusion reached is that Aquinas' concept <u>is</u> the wide one, but it is recognized that such a concept leaves unresolved tensions with his views in other

areas.

A. Cause of God's knowledge

In dealing with God's knowledge in both DV and STIa, Aquinas makes the point that God's knowledge is the cause of things whereas for humans, things are the cause of the knowledge of these things. In both DV2.14 and STIa.14.8, he starts the discussion by raising an objection based on Origen's text "A thing will not happen in the future because God knows it will happen, but because it is going to happen therefore it is known by God before it does happen."[2] - a particularly relevant point in relation to God's knowledge of future contingents. In both works, Aquinas denies that this authoritative text means that things are the cause of God's knowledge of them. Somewhat charitably perhaps, he says in DV2.14 ad 1 that Origen's words 'Because it is going to happen therefore it is known by God before it does happen' are meant to give the reason for concluding that God knows it, and are not intended to say that it is the cause of God's knowledge. This is expressed in STIa.14.8 in terms of logical causality and 'the causality which produces existence':

"Origen in the passage quoted is taking knowledge in the sense in which it is not formally a cause except in conjunction with the will, as we have said [in the

body of the article]. His saying that God foreknows certain things because they are going to happen, is to be understood of the causality of logical consequence, not of the causality which produces existence. For it follows logically that if certain things are going to happen God foreknows them; but the things that are going to happen are not themselves the cause of God's knowledge."[3]

The reasons Aquinas gives in DV2.14 for concluding that God's knowledge is the cause of things are, first, that things are temporal but God's knowledge is eternal and what is temporal cannot be the cause of something eternal. Second, it cannot be the case that some third thing causes both *x* and God's knowledge of *x*, for nothing can be caused in God since there is no potentiality in him.

Aquinas simply states without explanation that something temporal cannot be the cause of God's eternal knowledge. This is perhaps puzzling since, as Craig points out,[4] all temporal things are present to God in eternity and so could arguably be the cause of eternal knowledge. But in any event, the argument that things cannot be caused in God because there is no potency in God would, in Aquinas' view, be sufficient in itself to prevent *x*'s being the cause of God's knowledge of *x*, even if *x* were also eternal.

Whatever the strength of his arguments, Aquinas' conclusion is nevertheless clear: God's knowledge is the cause of things: "there is left only one possibility: his knowledge is the cause of things. Conversely our knowledge is caused by things inasmuch as we receive it from things."[5]

In STIa.14.8, Aquinas' conclusion is the same but the reasoning different. He opens his response with the positive statement that "God's knowledge is the cause of things." The reason now given is not that nothing can be caused in God, but the argument from God as creator - God's knowledge is the cause of all the things he has created just as a craftsman's knowledge is the cause of what he produces.[6] So, the thought of the bowl in the potter's head is the cause of what takes shape on the wheel. In this sense the potter knows the bowl before he makes it, and it is this knowledge which is the efficient cause of the finished article. And just as the potter's knowledge precedes and causes his making of the bowl, so God's knowledge precedes[7] and causes what he makes. Which is, of course, everything.

Aquinas goes on to qualify his statement that God's knowledge is the cause of things by pointing out that intellect by itself does not lead to activity: activity

results only where there is also will. The potter's knowledge of the bowl will not by itself cause the bowl to be made - that needs the potter to want to make the bowl. So God's knowledge by itself is not the cause of things: it is his knowledge together with his will:

"Now it is clear that God causes things through his intellect, since his existence is his act of knowing. His knowledge therefore must be the cause of things when regarded in conjunction with his will. Hence God's knowledge as the cause of things has come to be called the knowledge of approbation."[8]

This combination of intellect and will is expanded on in STIa.19.4, where Aquinas is considering whether God's will is the cause of things. His opening statement is that God's will is indeed the cause of things - and, further, that it is through his will rather than any necessity of his nature that he causes things. To the Objection that he has already said that it is God's knowledge which is the cause of things, Aquinas responds that both mind and will are involved in any activity. This is true of both humans and God, though in God's case intellect and will are, of course, one:

"Even with us one and the same effect has both mind

and will as shaping causes, the first as conceiving the meaning of what we do, the second as executively commanding it. Whether an idea conceived in the mind is or is not realized in fact depends on the will. Theoretical understanding is not committed to doing something."[9]

Aquinas therefore holds that God's knowing and willing *x* is the cause of *x* . He thus seems to be saying that it is not my sitting down which causes God to know that I am sitting down, but quite the reverse: it seems that I am sitting down because he knows and wills that I should do so. Of course, Aquinas' argument in STIa.14.13 about the non-temporal nature of God's knowledge, considered in Chapter 1, also applies to his willing. His willing me to sit down is eternal, not 'before' I do so. Unfortunately, however, the consequence of God's eternally willing me to sit down seems less likely to allow a wide sense of freedom than did the consequences of his eternally knowing that I sit when one considered his knowing without considering its source. God's knowing that I sit when I sit does not make it absolutely necessary that I should sit and I could have decided to do otherwise. But God's knowing that I sit because he causes my sitting seems to give me no choice about whether to sit or not, given that his will is irresistible and cannot be

impeded. It is true that it is not absolutely necessary that I sit, in the sense that God could have willed other than he did, since his will is free.[10] Given, however, that he does will that I sit, my freedom seems very limited indeed, for the necessity or otherwise depends on whether God wills it, not on whether I decided to do it.

Nevertheless, Aquinas does maintain that I am free despite the causal nature of God's knowledge. The arguments he uses in seeking to establish this are therefore important in showing what his concept of freedom is, and in particular whether it is possible to sustain the wider concept when the causal aspect is taken into account.

B. Primary and secondary causes

We have already seen in Chapter 3 that Aquinas addresses the issue of God's being an external, first cause of the will's movement, and that he concludes that God's movement of my will does not prevent its being a self-mover, since God moves it only as he designed it to be moved i.e. freely. God's movement of my will does not therefore determine it to any particular good. We also noted, however, that Aquinas' position raised a difficulty about the relationship between God's will as primary cause and mine as secondary cause, in particular how my will

as secondary cause can produce a contingent effect when the primary cause, God, produces necessary effects.

The question of necessary and contingent effects, and primary and secondary causes, arises in relation to God's knowledge as the cause of things in DV2.14. In that discussion, two difficulties are raised which suggest that if God's knowledge is the cause of things, everything will be necessary. Aquinas answers these difficulties by arguing first that an effect follows the necessity of its proximate cause. It need not follow the necessity of the first cause, for the effect can be impeded by a secondary cause.[11] The second argument concerns the relative power of the two causes. Aquinas' response is that:

"Although the first cause influences an effect more powerfully than a secondary cause does, the effect does not take place without the operation of the secondary cause. Hence if it is possible for the secondary cause to fail in its operation, it is possible for the effect not to take place, even though the first cause itself cannot fail.....Since both causes are required for the existence of an effect a failure of either will result in a failure of the effect. Hence if contingency is affirmed of either cause, the effect will be contingent."[12]

What is being said here is that while God's knowledge is the cause of things, these things are not always necessary, because God's knowledge is only the primary cause. Things are also brought about by secondary causes, and secondary causes may impede the effects of primary causes.

Now, while this argument about primary and secondary causes may hold in general, it surely cannot be true if God is the primary cause. This point is put in DV23.5, at Objection 3:

"When the effect is contingent because of the contingency of the second cause, given a necessary first cause, the non-existence of the effect is compatible with the existence of the first cause. Thus the non-blossoming of a tree in spring is compatible with the motion of the sun. But the non-existence of what is willed by God is not compatible with the divine will. For these two things, God's willing something to be and its not being, are irreconcilable. Consequently the contingency of second causes does not prevent the things willed by God from being necessary because of the necessity of the divine will."[13]

Aquinas' response is that God's will does not impose

necessity on everything. Although what God wills to happen does indeed happen, God's will is so powerful that it can make things come about

"in the manner in which God wants it to come about - necessarily or contingently, quickly or slowly....The divine will determines this manner for things beforehand in the order of God's wisdom.....We accordingly say that some of the divine effects are contingent not merely because of the contingency of secondary causes but rather because of the appointment of the divine will, which saw to such an order for things."[14]

This line is developed further in an important passage in *In Peri Hermeneias* 1.14. Dealing with the point that if God's providence is the cause of everything that happens (or at least of all good things) then it seems that everything must happen as it does, Aquinas says that this point is based on a misconception of how God's knowledge and will operate:

"...God's will is to be thought of as existing outside the realm of existents, as a cause from which pours forth everything that exists in all its variant forms. Now *what can be* and *what must be* are variants of being, so that it is from God's will itself that things

derive whether they must be or may or may not be and the distinction of the two according to the nature of their immediate causes. For he prepares causes that must cause for those effects that he wills must be, and causes that might cause but might fail to cause for those effects that he wills might or might not be."[15]

Aquinas goes on to say that whether things are necessary or contingent depends on the nature of their immediate causes, though all causes depend on God's will as the primary cause - and this cause transcends the distinction between necessary and contingent: "But the same cannot be said of human will or of any other cause, since every other cause exists within the realm of must and might not. So of every other cause it must be said either that it can fail to cause or that its effect must be and cannot not be; God's will however cannot fail and yet not all his effects must be, but some can be or not be."[16]

What Aquinas seems to be saying here is that causes other than God (for example, me or the sun) can have either necessary or contingent effects; if the effect is necessary, it cannot fail, and only if it is contingent can it be in the category 'maybe/maybe not'. But *I* cannot determine whether my effect will be necessary or contingent. God, however, can will that *x* must

happen or he can will that *x* may or may not happen. This is because 'necessary' and 'contingent' are modes of being, and only God can give being as such. Since whatever he wills necessarily happens, if he wills '(*x* or not-*x*)' *x*'s being will then, necessarily, be contingent. Whether *x* actually comes about or not would therefore seem to be up to me as the secondary cause, and so I determine whether *x* happens or not. And so my freedom has been preserved.

C. Craig's arguments

This might seem a satisfactory solution, for it preserves the idea of God's irresistible will but seems also to leave room for some kind of human freedom. William Lane Craig, however, denies that Aquinas has solved the problem. In *Divine Knowledge and Future Contingents*, he argues, citing SCG3.2.89, that since God knows the movements of the human will and must therefore be the cause of these movements, it cannot be the case that the will's choices are contingent.[17] His argument is worth quoting at length because of the importance of the points raised. On Aquinas' account, Craig says, God does not "simply foreknow an event to take place as it does [i.e. contingently]. It is God in His eternity who determines which possible motion of the will shall be actualized, and in so knowing it He causes it. .. The event is, indeed causally determined with regard to God; to say

it is contingent means that it is not causally determined by its *proximate* causes in the temporal series. But this seems entirely irrelevant; for the event, whatever its relation to its proximate causes, is still causally determined to occur by the divine scientia approbationis. Worse still, Thomas seems to have forgotten that those secondary causes are themselves also similarly determined, so that even on this level contingency seems squeezed out. Thus it is futile for him to contend that God's knowledge does not necessitate an effect because the effect may be impeded by its secondary cause, for this secondary cause is itself determined causally by God." From this, Craig concludes that there is no human freedom at all: "In maintaining that God's knowledge is the cause of everything God knows, Thomas transforms the universe into a nexus which, though freely chosen by God, is causally determined from above, thus eliminating human freedom."[18]

Craig's arguments raise two issues about Aquinas' account - first, whether he has indeed 'transformed the universe into a nexus causally determined from above' and, second, whether if God does so causally determine human actions, freedom is eliminated. To deal first with the causal element, Craig's argument seems to be that even if God has willed that some things should come about contingently, the fact that

God knows eternally that I decide *x* (or not-*x*) when faced with the choice means that it is God who causes *x*, through his knowledge and his will. There can therefore be no contingency about *x*, and it is irrelevant to say that I have brought it about contingently as a secondary cause.

Now, it seems clear that Aquinas does not believe that God's knowledge of the motion of my will automatically makes him the cause of what I then will to do: God knows that Cain wills to kill Abel, but it is not God who causes Abel's death. It is unlikely that, as Craig seems to suggest, Aquinas failed to see the supposed implication that the causal nature of God's knowledge eliminated human freedom; it is even more unlikely that he did not realise that such knowledge would also make God solely accountable for evil.

The issue of God as the cause of sinful action is a complex one, and detailed consideration of it is beyond the scope of this thesis. It is clear however that Aquinas recognized the difficulty which could arise from holding that God is the first cause of human actions and he deals with this specifically (though not perhaps entirely satisfactorily) in DM3.2. There he takes the view, for two reasons, that sinful actions <u>qua actions</u> are caused by God. First, because

he is the source of everything which exists: “Clearly then, since a sinful action exists in some sense and belongs in one of the categories of being, it comes from God.”[19] His second reason is particularly important in the present context:

“Secondly, this [i.e. that God is the cause of sinful actions] is also true for a special reason. All movements of secondary causes must be caused by a primary cause....so God is the first source of all movement whatever, bodily and spiritual. Since then sinful actions are certain freely chosen movements, we have to say that sinful actions, as actions, come from God."[20]

Aquinas goes on to say, however, that God is not the cause of the sinfulness of the action, because the defect in the action which renders it sinful results from my failure to act properly. He draws a parallel with an injured animal - its walking with a limp comes in some sense from its ability to walk, but the limping walk is not caused by that ability but by the injury which prevents the ability's being used properly:

"What we must say then is that God is the first source of all movements, and that some things are so moved by him that they also move themselves, having

free choice. If such things are rightly disposed and ordered in the way needed to receive God's movements there will result good actions that can be totally traced back to God's causality; but if they are not properly ordered then there will result a disordered or sinful action, in which what there is of action can be traced back to God's causality but what there is of disorder and deformity does not have God as cause but our free choice."[21]

Now, this passage raises difficulties relating to the need for God's grace to avoid sin, an issue which is also outside the scope of this thesis. The passage's importance for present purposes is however that it shows that Aquinas <u>is</u> alive to the problems raised by God's being the cause of things, and that he is still, some 12 years or so after the date of the DV passages[22] of the view that effects of human secondary causes are not necessitated by the first cause, God - that human causes are, somehow, contingent.

As we have seen from *In Peri Hermeneias* 1.14, Aquinas' explanation of how secondary causes can be said to be contingent is that God's will is so powerful that it can determine whether things come about necessarily or contingently. In the case of contingent effects, God has willed only (*x* or not-*x*); if *x* is to

happen therefore there must be something else which brings it into effect i.e. there must be another cause. This, Aquinas' account says, is 'me' when *x* is a human action rather than a natural event; by my intellect and will, I cause *x* to happen or not. Craig argues, however, that since God knows and determines eternally that I decide '*x*' (or 'not-*x*') when faced with the choice, it is God who causes *x*. In Craig's argument, it seems that God's causing *x* simply leaves no room for me to be a cause of *x* in any way which allows a meaningful concept of freedom, for what determines the outcome (i.e. that *x* will happen) is obviously God's irresistible will rather than my will. In Aquinas' argument, on the other hand, as we have seen in Chapter 3 in relation to God's movement of my will, it is clear that he believes that there is room for me to be a cause as well as God. In SCG 3.69, Aquinas gives a detailed rebuttal of the Mutakallimum arguments that 'no creature has an active role in the production of natural effects', concluding: "Therefore we do not take away their proper actions from created things, though we attribute all the effects of created things to God, as an agent working in all things."[23] The gist of these arguments appears also in STIa.105.5, where Aquinas says:

"There are some who have taken God's working in

everything that acts to mean that no created power effects anything in the world, but that God alone does everything without intermediaries. For example, it would not be the fire giving heat, but God in the fire and similarly in other instances. But this is impossible" ...[because creation's pattern of cause and effect would be taken away, and because there would be no point in creatures' having the power they obviously do have if these powers did nothing]...."God's acting in creatures, therefore, must be understood in such a way that they themselves still exercise their own operations."[24]

Similarly in *de Potentia* 3.7, Aquinas states that God is at work in all activity, but that this does not mean that things do nothing by their own power. He explains at some length why the view that things do nothing by their own power would be wrong, and concludes: "So one must not understand the statement that God is at work in everything in nature as if that meant the thing itself did nothing; rather it means that God is at work in the very activity of nature and free will."[25] Having explained how God is at work in nature and free will, he finishes: "it follows that [God] is at work without intermediary in everything that is active, but without excluding the activity of nature or of free will."[26]

So, Aquinas holds that there is room for me to be a cause, albeit a secondary one. But this of course merely raises again the problem of how a secondary cause can be said to be a free cause when the first cause is God - how can the effects of that secondary cause be contingent when the actions of that secondary cause are known to, and so caused by, God?

Aquinas' answer seem to depend on how God is said to cause x.

D. God's causation

The problem, as Craig sees it, is that God knows I do x because he causes x; Aquinas says he causes x as the primary cause and I also cause x, as the secondary cause, and my nature is such that I can cause x freely and contingently. But, Craig argues, the primary cause in this case is so powerful that it seems to leave no room for the secondary cause to have any effect other than that willed by the primary cause, whose effects cannot be impeded. Such an analysis, however, assumes that God's causation is just like mine only much more powerful - in other words, that the term 'causes' is being used univocally of God and of man.

But God's way of causing would seem to be

significantly different from that of humans.

In *de Potentia* 3.7, God's way of causing another's activity is summarized as follows: "God then causes everything's activity inasmuch as he gives the power to act, maintains it in existence, applies it to its activity and inasmuch as it is by his power that every other power acts."[27] Up to a point, one might apply Aquinas' description of God's causation to human causation: one might say that *A* causes the axe to cut because he has given it the power to do so, by making an appropriate blade and shaft; he maintains these in the sort of condition necessary to enable the axe to cut efficiently; he applies it to the cutting of wood; and it is by *A*'s power to wield the axe that it is able to perform its function. And here both *A* and the axe are said to cut the wood - not *A* doing one part of the job and the axe another, but both causing the cutting together, though in a different way. The same thing is said of God's causation: "the same effect is not attributed to a natural cause and to divine power in such a way that it is partly done by God and partly by the natural agent; rather it is wholly done by both, according to a different way, just as the same effect is wholly attributed to the instrument and also wholly to the principal agent."[28]

When *A* makes the axe, however, he creates this new

thing from pre-existing materials: he does not create the wood and the iron but merely gives them a new form. The same is true of more abstract things than an axe - in 'The Will' John Donne has created something new, a poem, by giving different form to pre-existing words; Gand's portrait of Saint Thomas Aquinas gives new form to pre-existing shapes and colours. And the paint and canvas are previously existing matter. God, on the other hand, creates the matter and gives it form. The significant difference between God's causing and the craftsman's causing is therefore that the artist and the manufacturer can only modify in some way or other what has previously existed; God gives existence itself. So, God's knowledge and the craftsman's knowledge may both be the cause of things, but how they cause is different: "God's knowledge is like the artist's insofar as the artist knows his work prior to his creation, the effect in its cause. But the artist's knowledge of his product extends only to its form - God is the cause of both the matter and the form of the individual."[29]

Further, both the axe's power to cut and *A*'s power to cause the axe to cut are derivative, on Aquinas' description of man's and God's causation: *A* can cause something only because he has been given the power to do so. But God's power to cause is, obviously, not derivative. And my being given power

to cause by God is not the same as my giving the axe the power to cut. My power to cause is part of my being, which can be given only by God. Just as I depend on him for my bėing (and maintenance of that being) so I depend on him for my ability to cause. If I am by participating in God's being, as Aquinas holds, then I cause by participating in God's causation. And without God's being and causation there is no being and causation at all.

The way God causes therefore goes far beyond the way man causes - just as the being of God is like, but more perfect than, the being of humans. The significant difference in how God and humans cause means however that 'cause' cannot be used univocally of God and man.[30] Goris makes this point in his discussion of God's causation: "In short, the unique mode of causation which is proper to the First cause, indicates that the term 'cause' is used analogically when said of God."[31]

Now, if Aquinas is indeed using 'cause' analogically of God and man, it follows that God's causation and human causation cannot just be different grades in one and the same hierarchy of causes. Since God's causing is outside the realm of human causing, the different causes cannot be compared or ranked, or considered as being in competition with each other. It

thus makes no sense to ask how I can cause *x* contingently when God causes it necessarily. Such a comparison of causes would be legitimate only in relation to, say, two human causes, where like is properly compared with like. The important point is, therefore, not to try to provide an explanation of how human effects can be contingent when God's effects are necessary, but to recognise that God's causation is a different kind of thing from human causation and so cannot be compared, or compete, with it. This point is made by Goris in relation to God's will as the cause of being: "Because God's will is the cause of being as such, His causation does not compete with the causation of creatures, but rather supports and grounds it."[32] God's particular way of causing enables me continuously to cause, just as he enables me continuously to be, and because he gives being as such to the thing I am trying to cause, namely *x* . God's way of causing *x* therefore does not over-ride my causing *x*, or determine that I shall cause *x* and so I can still be a real cause of *x*. As Goris summarises the argument: "The notion of 'cause' means that 'being' (esse) is given to the effect. As no created being can give being as such, but only (substantial or accidental) determinations of being, creaturely causation depends on divine causation. Without the efficacy of the latter, there would be no creaturely causation, including its modality. In this

way, the irresistibility of the efficacy of the divine cause does not jeopardize the contingency of creaturely causation."[33] Such a conclusion is consistent with the point made in *In Peri Hermeneias* 1.14, considered above, that God's knowledge and will, the cause of things, operate fundamentally differently from human knowledge and will.

There are therefore, I believe, good grounds for saying that the term 'causes' has to be used analogically of God and man. That being so, God's causation would not bar human causation from being contingent. So God's knowing *x* because he causes *x* need not causally determine my doing *x* and I can still act contingently and freely. The analogical use of 'cause', with its consequence that God's and man's causation are not in a competing hierarchy, is not considered by Craig, however. This seems to me to be an important defect in his case for the irresistibility of God's causation.

If this analysis is accepted, Aquinas still has - despite Craig's arguments - a coherent concept of freedom wide enough to include the possibility of doing otherwise, for God causes in such a way that I also am a cause and I determine whether *x* happens. On this account, God knows eternally that at time *t* I do *x* because at *t* I actually choose to do *x*. Until *t*,

however, I was still free to choose between x and y - I could have sat down or continued to stand. Had I chosen to stand, then God would of course have known eternally that at t I choose y. Although he causes my choice between x and y, his peculiar way of doing so means that it can be said that I choose.

There is, however, a problem with such an account, for it seems to imply that God's knowledge is somehow dependent on what I choose to do. For if God wills only (x or not-x) and causes x in such a way that I determine whether x happens or not, what is it that grounds God's knowledge that x actually does happen? It would seem to be that this is my doing x. So, the problem now seems to be:

(i) God causes x in such a way that he does not determine that x happens;

(ii) I determine whether or not x happens; until I do, x is indeterminate;

(iii) God knows that I do x;

(iv) Only determinate things can be known with certainty;

(v) Therefore God's knowledge that x happens depends on my making x determinate.

Now, the cause of x's being made determinate, and thus knowable by God, is not just me but God in his

particular way of causing. It seems therefore that it can be said that God himself causes his knowledge that I do x, and so Aquinas' view that knowledge is not caused in God by created things can be preserved. Nevertheless, there seems to be some kind of dependency, for God's causation would not bring about my determination to do x without my also making the determination. This seems to point to some kind of potentiality in God, and so be inconsistent with Aquinas' views on the simplicity and unchangeableness of God.[34]

There are several possible ways of resolving this difficulty of identifying precisely what it is that grounds God's knowledge that I do x. It is possible, for example, to argue that God knows I choose and do x because his knowledge of the nature of all his creatures enables him to know what they do in all circumstances, a sort of perfect prediction as it were. One might simply concede that God knows what I determine in some other unique but inexplicable way. One might widen the search and try to tailor the concept of God's omniscience to exclude the detailed outcome of contingencies, though this certainly seems not to be an option for Aquinas. It seems clear, for example, that he sees God's knowledge and his providence as extending far wider than simply the broad outlines of his creation. God knows individuals,

he knows the motion of the human will, he knows that "even one sparrow falls". A further possibility is that one might even consider whether such dependence really is fatal to the concept of a simple God.[35]

While there undoubtedly is a difficulty with Aquinas' account here, my concern now is not with the possible ways of resolving it, but with what happens if it is conceded that Aquinas' arguments taken together force one to the conclusion that it must be the case that God determines whether I do *x* or *y* even if I can be said to be a cause in some respect. This leads to the second of the issues raised by Craig's arguments.

Craig says that since God knows that I do *x* and not *y* in bringing *x* about, and so determines that I do *x*, Aquinas has left no room for freedom. Now, it is possible, as Craig suggests - though unlikely - that Aquinas may not have realised that a consequence of his views on the causal nature of God's knowledge was that there was no room for human freedom. But since Aquinas so obviously believes that there <u>is</u> human freedom, it is at least equally possible that his line of argument shows that he has a concept of freedom consistent with God's determining that I do *x*.

I have considered in earlier chapters how Aquinas has described how nothing, including God or my own nature, compels me to will *x*. Even more importantly, he has described how even my strong inclinations to do *x* can in different circumstances be followed or not. I am not constrained therefore by my nature or compelled by any other source to do as I do. Further, Aquinas has argued that I am a cause of what I do even though there is another cause - I move my will, even though there is also a First Mover; I choose to do *x*, having deliberated about my ends and means, even if I do not actually consider what I am doing in quite these terms. These things go to make what might otherwise be random movements into a human voluntary act. Further, it is my human act, for it can be explained by reference to my will and intellect.

I have also argued that Aquinas' primary concern with freedom is in the context of personal responsibility, legal and/or moral: in what circumstances am I to be held responsible for what has happened? In such a context, it is arguably sufficient that an act can be shown to be mine and not that of any other creature, done without compulsion, as described above. Such a concept of a free act is compatible with God's knowing and

determining that I do *x* if the act can also be said to be mine in some way. The question is, is it Aquinas' concept of freedom?

E. Possibility of doing otherwise

A concept of freedom which included God's determining that I do *x* would seem to rule out the possibility of my being able to do *y* - a 'narrow' concept of freedom. If that is indeed Aquinas' concept, he would therefore seem to deny that the ability to do otherwise is a necessary ingredient of freedom. That he does so deny is the conclusion Eleonore Stump comes to (though not on the grounds that God determines that I do *x*) in her article on Aquinas' account of freedom, considered in Chapter 4.

She bases her conclusion on the premisses that (i) sinful thoughts may be free voluntary actions even though they may involve no possibility of deliberation and hence of choosing to do otherwise; and (ii) Aquinas recognises a natural necessity which does not take away freedom of the will. She therefore concludes: "Clearly, then, Aquinas doesn't suppose that human freedom even as regards willing consists in or depends on the ability to do otherwise." Further, she says, Aquinas would reject the principle of alternative possibilities [that a person has free will

with regard to doing an action *x* only if he could have done otherwise than *x*] "not only for bodily actions but even for acts of will."[36]

A similar conclusion is reached, on different grounds, by Normore in *The Cambridge History of Later Mediaeval Philosophy*.[37] There he says: "Like Anselm [Aquinas] denies that being able not to choose A is a necessary condition for choosing A freely, and so he can hold that a particular outcome is freely chosen by me even if God's activity guarantees its coming to pass." In support of this view, Normore cites STIa.62.8, saying that "Aquinas argues that the good angels have free will though they cannot sin."

Stump points out, as does Linda Trinkhaus Zagzebski,[38] that there is modern support for the view that alternative possibilities are not necessary for freedom. The standard support often invoked is the 'Frankfurt counter-examples', as elaborated by, for example, Fischer.[39] Fischer's example suggests a case where Black inserts a mechanism into Jones's brain, which mechanism allows Black to monitor and control Jones's brain activity. If Jones is, for example, subsequently going to vote for Carter (a then current choice) in the presidential elections, Black can intervene via the mechanism and make him vote for Reagan instead; but if Jones is going to vote for

Reagan, Black does nothing. In the event, Jones decides without any interference from the Black mechanism to vote for Reagan. Both Frankfurt and Fischer claim that in these circumstances Jones acts "responsibly and freely" - even though he had, in fact, no other possible course of action (although he no doubt believed that he had). Both Stump and Zagzebski support the Frankfurt/Fischer conclusion that Jones's action is a free one.[40]

A concept of freedom which does not include the possibility of doing otherwise therefore seems to be at least plausible, and there is support from Stump and from Normore that that was Aquinas' concept.

One further point can be drawn from the Frankfurt/Fischer examples. It is arguable that Black, in implanting the mechanism, is determining that Jones will vote for Reagan, for that inevitably will be the outcome.[41] It is therefore possible to draw a parallel (albeit a limited one) with God's eternally determining that I do x. The crucial point about the argument that Jones acts freely when he can in fact do no other than vote for Reagan and even when that outcome is determined by Black, seems to be that that determination was not the cause of Jones's decision. The cause of Jones's decision is Jones. Jones's voting for Reagan can be said to be his action,

not Black's, because he, Jones, thought about the relevant factors then decided to cast his vote that way. At least, if asked why he had voted for Reagan, he could explain it that way. Now, on Aquinas' account, the cause of my doing x is not that God willed in creating the world that I should do x at t but that I had thought about the relevant factors etc. If therefore it is accepted that God causes x in such a way that there is at least room for me also to be a cause of x, it is possible, by analogy with the Jones example, to see how God could determine that I do x but I could still be said to do it freely.

F. The argument so far

The position now reached can be summarised in the following steps:

(i) God knows all future things as Present* to him;

(ii) God's knowledge, together with his will, is the cause of what he knows;

(iii) God's will is irresistible;

(iv) But this does not mean that everything happens necessarily, because God can will that things happen contingently;

(v) Where God wills that x happens contingently, what brings about x's happening must be me;

(vi) However, God also knows eternally that I do in fact bring about x; therefore God must know

that *x* happens and so must be the cause of *x*, again making *x* necessary;

(vii) But even this does not prevent my bringing about *x* freely on Aquinas' account, for his concept of God's causation as being significantly different from human causation means that I also am a real, and contingent, cause of *x*;

(viii) This seems to imply however that *x* is not determined, and so cannot be known by God, until I bring it about. But God's knowledge cannot depend on what I do, and so it must be the case that God determines that I do *x*;

(ix) It is therefore arguable that if Aquinas is to be consistent in saying (a) that God is omniscient and his knowledge/will is the cause of what he knows, and (b) that man acts freely, Aquinas' concept of freedom must be compatible with God's determining that I do *x*;

(x) If God determines that I do *x*, I cannot do otherwise. It is arguable that Aquinas' concept of freedom does not require that I should be able to do otherwise, and that such a concept is sustainable.

However, I believe that Aquinas' concept of freedom is wider than this, and does include the possibility of being able to do otherwise.

G. A wider concept of freedom

Eleonore Stump and Calvin Normore both argue that Aquinas' concept of freedom does not include the possibility of doing otherwise. I believe that the arguments they put forward for their respective conclusions are open to question and do not justify that conclusion. Further, I believe that what Aquinas says about deliberation and reflection indicates that he believes that free actions always include the possibility of doing otherwise.

To deal first with the arguments put forward by Eleonore Stump as evidence that, for Aquinas, human freedom neither consists in nor depends on the ability to do otherwise. Her argument that Aquinas' view (in DV24.12) that actions done under the sudden impulse of passion can be sinful shows that he considers such actions to be free, despite the fact that "the agent in acting on such a passion is...unable to do otherwise on that occasion", was considered in Chapter 4 above.

Her second argument is that Aquinas believes that the will can be free even when acting under the necessity of natural inclination. Here she cites DV22.5: "Freedom is opposed to the necessity of force, according to Augustine, but not to the necessity of natural inclination."[42] and STIa.82.1: "natural

necessity doesn't take away the freedom of the will."[43] Her assumption therefore seems to be that if natural necessity is compatible with free will, choice cannot be a necessary element of free will.

In STIa.82.1, Aquinas takes the view that the necessity of the end is not contrary to freedom and that necessity of natural inclination is similar to necessity of the end. But the reason why necessity of the end is not contrary to freedom is that necessity of the end is only conditional: if I wish to cross the sea, I must take a ship, but I could reject the end of crossing the sea and so could do other than board the ship. So that even when acting under the necessity of the end, I could in fact have done something else. Now it is arguable that the necessity of natural inclination is also compatible with freedom because that necessity is likewise not an absolute necessity. Natural inclinations - even the strongest, to maintain life - can be rejected, because something other than that inclination can be seen as the greater good in the circumstances. In other words, there is still the possibility of doing other than what is proposed by the 'natural inclination'. And so in following that inclination, or natural necessity, I act freely because I could have done something else.

This seems to be the case even of the natural

inclination towards the ultimate end of the 'totally good', for, as we have already seen, Aquinas holds that even here the will can 'act or not act', since a man always has the power not to think about the 'totally good' and so not to will it.[44] Aquinas does seem to say in DV24.1 ad 20 that there is no choice but that there is nevertheless free will in relation to the object of the will:

"...when there is the question of the objects of appetite, we do not judge about the last end by any judgment involving discussion and examination, but we naturally approve of it. Concerning it there is accordingly no choice, but there is will, since according to Augustine the necessity of natural inclination is not repugnant to freedom; but not a free judgment, properly speaking, since it does not fall under our choice."[45]

But of course, before an object of appetite is entertained, the will has to exercise itself - and we have seen that here there <u>is</u> the possibility of something else being thought of. And it seems clear from what Aquinas says in the ST and DM that what freedom there is in relation to the final end lies in the possibility of choice of those things which are 'for the sake of the end'. These are the only things over which we have control, and therefore the only things in

which there really is freedom. This seems to be the implication of what Aquinas says in STIa.82.1 ad 3: "We are master of our acts in that we can choose this or that. But we choose, not the end, but things for the sake of the end....Hence our desire for ultimate fulfilment is not one of the things we are master of."[46]

It seems doubtful therefore that what Aquinas says about natural necessity's being compatible with freedom justifies the conclusion that his concept of free action does not include the possibility of doing otherwise.

The argument put forward by Normore is that Aquinas argues that angels have free will although they cannot sin and so must hold that being able to choose not-*x* is not essential to choosing *x* freely. (Stump also draws support from Aquinas' view that the redeemed in heaven are unable to sin.)

In my view, the Article cited by Normore seems rather to emphasise the importance of alternatives (whilst also reiterating the compulsion of the wholly good). In STIa.62.8, Aquinas says that angels cannot sin, because they see God's essence which is goodness itself; since one cannot reject goodness itself, angels can "only will or do anything for God's sake" and that means they cannot sin. Aquinas also says in response

to Objection 2:

"Thus the mind cannot not assent to principles that it apprehends of its very nature; and similarly the will cannot help cleaving to the good qua good, for this is what it tends to of its nature. The will then of an angel stands between opposites in doing a number of things, but not in respect of loving God himself whom he sees to be very goodness itself. Whatever alternatives he may choose, God is always the motive; and to act thus is to be without sin."[47]

This Article seems to me to say that angels do have a choice in everything they do, except in loving God – who is the complete good, to which everything necessarily tends. I do not wish to argue that Aquinas' concept of freedom must include the ability to sin (and indeed that would seem an unlikely stance for Aquinas to take), only the ability to do otherwise than one does in any particular circumstance. That ability may have the consequence for humans, if not for angels, that they are able to sin.

For the reasons set out above, I believe that there is some doubt over the justification of Stump's and Normore's conclusions about Aquinas' concept of freedom. More importantly, however, I believe that what Aquinas says about deliberation and reflection

shows that his concept must include alternative possibilities.

I have argued in Chapter 4 that, for Aquinas, for an act to be free it must be deliberated and chosen, in a wide sense of those terms which include post-hoc explanation ("I put the car into 2nd gear without thinking, but now that you ask, I did it because I wanted to turn left and I know I can't get round that corner in 3rd."). Aquinas is insistent that deliberation is a process which can produce more than one result, and Chapter 4 also considers how this comes about. But if there is no possibility of my doing other than *x*, how could my deliberation produce any other outcome than "Do *x*"? In the Fischer example, the point is precisely that although the conclusion is bound to be "Vote for Reagan", the action is said to be free because Jones decided this for himself. But could the process which Jones underwent properly be described as a 'deliberation and decision' as Aquinas understands these terms? In my view, this must be doubtful, just because there was no possibility of Jones's thinking process having any other outcome, for any time he appeared to be about to consider the merits of Carter, Black's mechanism would move his thoughts back to Reagan. Deliberation must surely admit of at least the possibility that more than one course of action can be considered. It seems to me

therefore that if it is accepted - *pace* Stump - that on Aquinas' account deliberation and decision are essential elements of a free act, it must always be possible, on his account, for me to do otherwise than I do, given the interaction of will and intellect, considered in Chapter 4.

It might of course be argued that Aquinas' statement that deliberation can reach different conclusions means no more than that God might have determined that I do *y* rather than *x* and so my deliberation could have had the different conclusion "Do *y* ". One might think that this makes deliberation a pointless process, if the outcome is fixed, and so contrary to Aquinas' view that God would not give creatures powers they obviously do have if the powers did nothing.[48] Against that, it could be argued that deliberation does indeed have a point – but its point is not to determine the outcome, but to internalise the action and make it my action for the purpose of deciding responsibility. Be that as it may, I do not think it is what Aquinas wishes to say, particularly in view of what he says in DV24.1 about man's ability to reflect on his judgments. In that passage, which has already been considered in other contexts, he says:

"But man, judging about his course of action by the power of reason, can also judge about his own

decision inasmuch as he knows the meaning of an end and of a means to an end, and the relationship of the one with reference to the other. Thus he is his own cause not only in moving but also in judging. He is therefore endowed with free choice - that is to say, with a free judgment about acting or not acting."[49]

And in DV24.2:

"..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."[50]

So, I do *x* because I judge it good or as a satisfactory way of achieving my end. I come to this conclusion freely because I am able to understand what my end is (and that it is an end) and the relationship between what I do and that end. Further, I can judge whether what I propose to do really does achieve that end, by reflecting on both my decision and on the process

which produced it. Now, one of the important things about being able to reflect on one's judgments is that one can reconsider them - and change one's mind. I can come to the conclusion that after all it would not be a good thing to do *x*, and so do not do *x*, even at the point when I am making preparations to do *x*. Reflection also increases the uncertainty of the deliberation process, and ensures that it may turn out in more than one way, for not only may the deliberation process result in my choosing *x* or *y* , my reflection on that process itself, before I have activated my choice, may produce yet another result. Aquinas' emphasis on this uniquely human ability to reflect on one's judgment therefore seems to me to imply that an essential element in a free act is the ability to come to different conclusions and hence to have the possibility of acting in different ways. If there is an intuition that, contrary to what Frankfurt and Fischer say, Jones is not acting freely, it is surely because he could not change his mind.

There is one further important aspect of Aquinas' account which distinguishes it from the Frankfurt/Fischer examples and contributes to the view of his holding a 'wide' concept of freedom. Jones, in Fischer's example, has the apparent choice of voting for Carter or Reagan, but it seems that he has no choice because Black will ensure that he votes for

Reagan; but this account does not allow for the possibility of Jones's deciding to abstain, or of simply not getting round to making a decision. Yet Aquinas, as we have seen, lays emphasis on the will's ability not to will, as well as to will *x* or *y*. Aquinas' account, with its distinction between exercise and specification of the will, would therefore seem to give him the resources to say that Jones did indeed act freely – because there was another possibility open to him, namely not voting at all.[51]

Even if Aquinas' account of free human action does make the possibility of an alternative course of action an essential element, however, it would seem that that possibility is not by itself sufficient for freedom. In the article considered above, Eleonore Stump produces an example, based on *The Puppetmaster*, designed to show that the ability to do otherwise does not of itself produce freedom. She sets a scene where part of an alien plan to take over the earth is the undetected 'hi-jacking' of human beings. Each human is taken over by an alien, who, wishing to remain undetected, ensures that his human host behaves just as he would have done without the alien presence. The human has within himself both his own and the alien's consciousness. So, when one human, say Sam, "does some action A, it is also true that if there had been some reason sufficient for Sam

in his unfettered state to do not-A, the alien would have brought it about that Sam in his infected state did not-A. In this case, then, there is a possible world in which Sam does otherwise than A. Sam has the ability to do otherwise then; nonetheless, Sam isn't free with respect to his doing A."[52]

The conclusion that Sam does not act freely would seem to be a correct reflection of Aquinas' account of free actions, for on that account the actions are not Sam's at all, for they are not the product of his will and intellect. The alien has produced them because it knows that if Sam's intellect and will had been acting that is what they would have done. Stump concludes: "In order to determine whether or not an agent is free, it is important to determine whether the intellect and will on which he acts are his own, not whether alternative possibilities are present or absent for him."[53]

My reading of Aquinas' concept of freedom would agree with the first part of Stump's conclusion; I do not, however, see 'alternative possibilities' as a different way of determining whether or not an agent is free. In my view, the way in which Aquinas shows that an act is the product of my will and intellect ensures that there will always be the possibility of my being able to do other than I do, for I shall always be

able to will *x* or *y* - or neither. I may not always in fact be able to put my willed choice into action, for example because something I had believed possible turns out to be impossible, but on the assumption that there is no such impediment, I shall always have the possibility of doing otherwise than I in fact do.

If Aquinas' concept of free action does indeed include the possibility of doing otherwise, it would seem that my doing *x* must be determined by me and not by God. It would also seem then, however, that there is the problem that God's knowledge of *x*'s happening is dependent on my bringing it about. That problem may be resolvable, but it must be conceded that there is at least some tension between this wide sense of human freedom of action and Aquinas' views on the omniscience and simplicity of God.

Notes

[1] In Peri Hermeneias 1.14: "Sed deus est omnino extra ordinem temporis quasi in arce aeternitatis constitutus, quae est tota simul, cui subiacet totus temporis decursus secundum unum et simplicem eius intuitum; et ideo uno intuitu videt omnia quae aguntur secundum temporis decursum, et unumquodque secundum quod est in seipso existens, non quasi sibi futurum quantum ad eius intuitum prout est in solo ordine suarum

causarum (quamvis et ipsum ordinem causarum videat), sed omnino aeternaliter sic videt unumquodque eorum quae sunt in quocumque tempore, sicut oculus humanus videt socratem sedere in seipso, non in causa sua. Ex hoc autem quod homo videt socratem sedere, non tollitur eius contingentia quae respicit ordinem causae ad effectum; tamen certissime et infallibiliter videt oculus hominis socratem sedere dum sedet, quia unumquodque prout est in seipso iam determinatum est. Sic igitur relinquitur, quod deus certissime et infallibiliter cognoscat omnia quae fiunt in tempore; et tamen ea quae in tempore eveniunt non sunt vel fiunt ex necessitate, sed contingenter."

[2] Origen, Commentarii in Epistolam ad Romanos, vii,8

[3] STIa.14.8 Obj 1: "Videtur quod scientia Dei non sit causa rerum. Dicit enim Origenes: *non propterea aliquid erit quia id scit Deus futurum; sed quia futurum est, ideo scitur a Deo antequam fiat."* Ad 1: "Ad primum ergo dicendum quod Origenes locutus est attendens rationem scientiae cui non competit ratio causalitatis nisi adjuncta voluntate, ut dictum est. Sed quod dicit ideo praescire Deum aliqua quia futura sunt, intelligendum est secundum causam consequentiae, et non secundum causam essendi. Sequitur enim, si aliqua sunt futura, quod Deus ea praescierit; non tamen res futurae sunt causa quod Deus sciat." Note that at this point in the ST, Aquinas has not yet dealt with the issue of God's knowledge of future contingents, so 'God foreknows x' is simply stated without the eternity of God's knowledge or the issue of necessity being considered. It is otherwise in DV2.14, where the issue of God's knowledge of future contingents has already been addressed. This perhaps explains why, as will be seen, DV2.14 lays an emphasis which STIa.14.8 does not on the question of whether necessity arises from God's act of knowledge being the cause of things. The problem arising from the causal nature of God's knowledge occurs however whether God's knowledge is eternal or not.

[4] Craig [1993] p.122

[5] DV2.14c: "Unde relinquitur quod scientia eius sit causa rerum. Sed e converso scientia nostra causata est a rebus, inquantum, scilicet, eam a rebus accipimus."

[6] STIa.14.8c: "scientia Dei est causa rerum. Sic enim scientia Dei se habet ad omnes res creatas, sicut scientia artificis se habet ad artificiata. Scientia autem artificis est causa artificiatorum, eo quod artifex operatur per suum intellectum; unde oportet quod forma intellectus sit principium operationis, sicut calor est principium calefactionis."

[7] In a logical sense only, since there is no before or after in Aquinas' eternal

God.

[8] STIa.14.8c: "Manifestum est autem quod Deus per suum intellectum causat res, cum suum esse sit suum intelligere. Unde necesse est quod sua scientia sit causa rerum, secundum quod habet voluntatem conjunctam.Unde scientia Dei, secundum quod est causa rerum, consuevit nominari *scientia approbationis.*"

[9] STIa.19.4 ad 4: "Ad quartum dicendum quod unius et ejusdem effectus etiam in nobis est causa scientia ut dirigens, qua concipitur forma operis, et voluntas ut imperans; quia forma ut est in intellectu tantum non determinatur ad hoc quod sit vel non sit in effectu, nisi per voluntatem. Unde intellectus speculativus nihil dicit de operando."

[10] See for example STIa.19.3c: "Hence since God's goodness subsists and is complete independently of other things, and they add no fulfilment to him, there is no absolute need for him to will them."

"Unde cum bonitas Dei sit perfecta et esse possit sine aliis, cum nihil ei perfectionis ex aliis accrescat, sequitur quod alia a se eum velle non sit necessarium absolute."

[11] DV2.14 ad 3: "Effectus sequitur necessitatem causae proximae, quae etiam potest esse medium ad demonstrandum effectum: non autem oportet quod sequatur necessitatem causae primae quia potest impediri effectus ex causa secunda si sit contingens;"

[12] DV2.14 ad 5: "quamvis causa prima vehementius influat quam secunda tamen effectus non completur nisi adveniente operatione secundae; et ideo, si sit possibilitas ad deficiendum in causa secunda, est etiam eadem possibilitas deficiendi in effectu, quamvis causa prima deficere non possit....Quia ergo ad esse effectus requiritur utraque causa, utrisque defectus inducit defectum in effectu; et ideo quaecumque earum ponatur contingens, sequitur effectum esse contingentem."

[13] DV23.5 Obj 3: "Quando effectus est contingens propter contingentiam causae secundae, prima causa necessaria existente, non esse effectus potest simul stare cum esse primae causae; sicut arborem non florere in vere, potest stare cum motu solis. Sed eius non esse, quod est volitum a deo, non potest stare cum divina voluntate. Haec enim duo sunt incompossibilia, quod deus velit aliquid esse, et illud non sit. Ergo contingentia causarum secundarum non impedit quin volita a deo sint necessaria propter necessitatem divinae voluntatis."

[14] DV23.5c: "ut non solum fiat id quod deus vult fieri, quod est quasi assimilari secundum speciem; sed ut fiat eo modo quo deus vult illud fieri, ut necessario vel contingenter, cito vel tarde, quod est quasi quaedam

assimilatio secundum accidentia. Et hunc quidem modum rebus divina voluntas praefinit ex ordine suae sapientiae. Secundum autem quod disponit aliquas res sic vel sic fieri, adaptat eis causas illo modo quem disponit; quem tamen modum posset rebus inducere etiam illis causis non mediantibus. Et sic non dicimus quod aliqui divinorum effectuum sint contingentes solummodo propter contingentiam causarum secundarum, sed magis propter dispositionem divinae voluntatis, quae talem ordinem rebus providit."

[15] In Peri Hermeneias 1.14: "Similiter ex parte voluntatis divinae differentia est attendenda. Nam voluntas divina est intelligenda ut extra ordinem entium existens, velut causa quaedam profundens totum ens et omnes eius differentias. Sunt autem differentiae entis possibile et necessarium; et ideo ex ipsa voluntate divina originantur necessitas et contingentia in rebus et distinctio utriusque secundum rationem proximarum causarum: ad effectus enim, quos voluit necessarios esse, disposuit causas necessarias; ad effectus autem, quos voluit esse contingentes, ordinavit causas contingenter agentes."

[16] In Peri Hermeneias 1.14: "Hoc autem non potest dici de voluntate humana, nec de aliqua alia causa: quia omnis alia causa cadit iam sub ordine necessitatis vel contigentiae: et ideo oportet quod vel ipsa causa possit deficere vel effectus eius non sit contingens, sed necessarius. Voluntas autem divina indeficiens est; tamen non omnes effectus eius sunt necessarii, sed quidam contingentes."

[17] Craig [1988] p.125

[18] Craig, op. cit. pp.125-6

[19] DM3.2c: "Manifestum est autem quod actio peccati est quoddam ens et in praedicamento entis positum; unde necesse est dicere quod sit a deo."

[20] DM3.2c: "Secundo autem idem patet ratione speciali. Necesse est enim omnes motus secundarum causarum causari a primo movente, sicut omnes motus inferiorum corporum causantur a motu caeli. Deus autem est primum movens respectu omnium motuum et spiritualium et corporalium, sicut corpus caeleste est principium omnium motuum inferiorum corporum. Unde cum actus peccati sit quidam motus liberi arbitrii necesse est dicere quod actus peccati, in quantum est actus, sit a deo."

[21] DM3.2c: "Sic ergo dicendum quod cum deus sit primum principium motionis omnium, quaedam sic moventur ab ipso quod etiam ipsa seipsa movent, sicut quae habent liberum arbitrium : quae si fuerint in debita dispositione et ordine debito ad recipiendum motionem qua moventur a

deo, sequentur bonae actiones, quae totaliter reducuntur in deum sicut in causam; si autem deficiant a debito ordine, sequetur actio inordinata quae est actio peccati; et sic id quod est ibi de actione, reducetur in deum sicut in causam; quod autem est ibi de inordinatione vel deformitate, non habet deum causam sed solum liberum arbitrium. Et propter hoc dicitur, quod actio peccati est a deo sed peccatum non est a deo."

[22] See Appendix

[23] SCG3.69.29: "Non igitur auferimus proprias actiones rebus creatis, quamvis omnes effectus rerum creatarum deo attribuamus quasi in omnibus operanti."

[24] STIa.105.5c: "Dicendum quod Deum operari in quolibet operante aliqui sic intellexerunt quod nulla virtus creata aliquid operaretur in rebus, sed solus Deus immediate omnia operaretur; puta quod ignis non calefaceret sed Deus in igne, et similiter de omnibus aliis. Hoc autem est impossibile. ... Sic igitur intelligendum est Deum operari in rebus, quod tamen ipsae res propriam habeant operationem."

[25] de Potentia 3.7: "non ergo sic est intelligendum quod deus in omni re naturali operetur, quasi res naturalis nihil operetur, sed quia in ipsa natura vel voluntate operante deus operatur." See also Chapter 3 above.

[26] de Potentia 3.7: "sequetur quod ipse in quolibet operante immediate operetur, non exclusa operatione voluntatis et naturae."

[27] de Potentia 3.7: "Sic ergo deus est causa actionis cuiuslibet in quantum dat virtutem agendi, et in quantum conservat eam, et in quantum applicat actioni, et in quantum eius virtute omnis alia virtus agit."

[28] SCG3.70.7: "Patet etiam quod non sic idem effectus causae naturali et divinae virtuti attribuitur quasi partim a deo, et partim a naturali agente fiat, sed totus ab utroque secundum alium modum: sicut idem effectus totus attribuitur instrumento, et principali agenti etiam totus."

[29] Allan [1997] p.22

[30] On analogical existence, see, for example STIa.4.3c: "If now there be an agent outside even genus, its effects will bear an even remoter resemblance to the agent. The likeness borne will not now be of the same specific or generic type as the form of the agent, but will present the sort of analogy that holds between all things because they have existence in common. And this is how things receiving existence from God resemble him." And ad 3: "Creatures are said to resemble God, not by sharing a form of the same specific or generic type, but only analogically, inasmuch as God exists by nature, and other things partake existence."

"Si igitur sit aliquod agens quod non in genere contineatur, effectus ejus

adhuc magis accedent remote ad similitudinem agentis, non tamen ita quod participent similitudinem formae agentis secundum eamdem rationem speciei aut generis sed secundum aliqualem analogiam sicut ipsum esse est commune omnibus. Et hoc modo illa quae sunt a Deo assimilantur ei inquantum sunt entia, ut primo et universali principio totius esse." "Ad tertium dicendum quod non dicitur esse similitudo creaturae ad Deum propter communicantiam in forma secundum eamdem rationem generis et speciei, sed secundum analogiam tantum, prout scilicet Deus est ens per essentiam et alia per participationem."

On analogical use of words for God and creatures, see STIa.13.5c: "It is impossible to predicate anything univocally of God and creatures. Every effect that falls short of what is typical of the power of its cause represents it inadequately, for it is not the same kind of thing as the cause... Whatever is said both of God and of creatures is said in virtue of the order that creatures have to God as to their source and cause in which all the perfections of things pre-exist transcendentally. This way of using words [sci. analogically] lies somewhere between pure equivocation and simple univocity, for the word is neither used in the same sense, as with univocal usage, nor in totally different senses, as with equivocation. The several senses of a word used analogically signify different relations to some one thing as 'health' in a complexion means a symptom of health in a man and in a diet means a cause of that health."
"impossibile est aliquid praedicari de Deo et creaturis univoce. Quia omnis effectus non adaequans virtutem causae agentis recipit similitudinem agentis, non secundum eamdem rationem, sed deficienter..... Et sic quidquid dicitur de Deo et creaturis, dicitur secundum quod est aliquis ordo creaturae ad Deum ut ad principium et causam, in qua praeexistunt excellenter omnes reum perfectiones. Et iste modus communitatis medius est inter puram aequivocationem et simplicem univocationem. Neque enim in iis quae analogice dicuntur est una ratio, sicut est in univocis, nec totaliter diversa, sicut in aequivocis; sed nomen quod sic multipliciter dicitur significat diversas proportiones ad aliquid unum; sicut *sanum* de urina dictum significat signum sanitatis animalis, de medicina vero dictum significat causam ejusdem sanitatis."

[31] Goris [1996] p.302

[32] Goris, op. cit. p.299

[33] At p.304

[34] See STIa.3 and STIa.9. In STIa.3.1, Aquinas maintains that "in the first

existent thing everything must be actual; there can be no potentiality whatsoever." ("vero modo quia necesse est id quod est primum ens esse in actu et nullo modo in potentia."). Since God has been shown to be the first existent [in STIa.2.3] there can be no potentiality in God. Further, Aquinas maintains that God is absolutely simple, without any composition [STIa.3.7]. He uses these two points to establish, in STIa.9.1, that there can be no change of any sort in God.

Since I am not seeking here to resolve the inconsistency identified, a detailed exposition, or evaluation, of Aquinas' well-known general position on the complex issue of the simplicity of God would be peripheral to my argument. This unresolved inconsistency does however merit further examination, possibly along the lines sketched here.

[35] Similar lines of approach are taken by Gerard Hughes, in Hughes [1995] pp.107-113

[36] Stump [1997]

[37] Normore [1982] pp.358-381

[38] Zagzebski [1996] pp.154-162

[39] See Frankfurt [1969] and Fischer [1982] in Fischer [1986]

[40] That the Frankfurt/Fischer examples successfully demonstrate that 'alternative possibilities' are not necessary for freedom is not universally accepted – see, for example, Widerker [1995]. I do not wish to pursue here the merits of Frankfurt's position, only to say that it is at least a plausible and sustainable one.

[41] The examples give no possibility of abstaining. On the question of whether Jones's act is determined, see however Stump's response to Widerker [1995], in Jordan [1996] pp.73-88. Stump argues, against Widerker, that Jones's response is not causally determined. Nevertheless, it is arguable, I believe, that the outcome of the election is determined in some sense by Black, because he is the person who has decided what the result will be, and that is what it <u>will</u> be, irrespective of Jones's decision.

[42] DV22.5 ad 3 in contrarium: " 'libertas' secundum augustinum, 'opponitur necessitati coactionis non autem naturalis inclinationis.'"

[43] STIa.82.1c: " Similiter etiam nec necessitas naturalis repugnat voluntati." Stump's translation. See also Obj 1 and response at ad 1: "Augustine's statement [that if a thing is necessary it is not voluntary, in *de Civitate Dei* v, 10] refers to necessity of coercion. Whereas natural necessity *does not take the will's liberty away*, as he says himself in the same work." "Ad primum ergo dicendum quod verbum Augustini est intelligendum de necessario necessitate coactionis. Necessitas autem naturalis *non aufert*

libertatem voluntatis, ut ipsemet in eodem libro dicit."

[44] See for example STIa IIae.10.2c : "As to [the exercise of its activity] no object necessitates the will: whatever it is a man always has the power not to think about it, and consequently not actually to will it."

"Primo ergo modo [ad exercitum actus] voluntas a nullo objecto ex necessitate movetur; potest enim aliquis de quocumque objecto non cogitare, et per consequens neque actu velle illud." See Chapter 3 above.

[45] DV24.1 ad 20: "ita et in appetibilibus, de fine ultimo non iudicamus iudicio discussionis vel examinationis, sed naturaliter approbamus, propter quod de eo non est electio, sed voluntas. Habemus ergo respectu eius liberam voluntatem, 'cum necessitas naturalis inclinationis libertati non repugnet' secundum augustinum, v de civitate dei; non autem liberum iudicium, proprie loquendo, cum non cadat sub electione."

[46] STIa.82.1 ad 3: "sumus domini nostrorum actuum secundum quod possumus hoc vel illud eligere. Electio autem non est de fine sed de his quae sunt ad finem.....Unde appetitus ultimi finis non est de his quorum domini sumus."

[47] STIa.62.8 ad 2: "Intellectus enim non potest non assentire principiis naturaliter notis; et similiter voluntas non potest non adhaerere bono, inquantum est bonum, quia in bonum naturaliter ordinatur sicut in suum objectum. Voluntas igitur in angelis se habet ad opposita, quantum ad multa facienda vel non facienda; sed quantum ad ipsum Deum, quem vident esse ipsam essentiam bonitatis, non se habent ad opposita. Sed secundum ipsum ad omnia diriguntur, quodcumque oppositorum eligant, quod sine peccato est."

[48] See STIa.105.5, considered above.

[49] DV24.1c: "Homo vero per virtutem rationis iudicans de agendis, potest de suo arbitrio iudicare, in quantum cognoscit rationem finis et eius quod est ad finem et habitudinem et ordinem unius ad alterum: et ideo non est solum causa sui ipsius in movendo, sed in iudicando; et ideo est liberi arbitrii, ac si diceretur liberi iudicii de agendo vel non agendo."

[50] DV24.2c: "et ideo si iudicium cognitivae non sit in potestate alicuius, sed sit aliunde determinatum, nec appetitus erit in potestate eius, et per consequens nec motus vel operatio absolute. Iudicium autem est in potestate iudicantis secundum quod potest de suo iudicio iudicare: de eo enim quod est in nostra potestate, possumus iudicare. Iudicare autem de iudicio suo est solius rationis quae super actum suum reflectitur, et cognoscit habitudines rerum de quibus iudicat, et per quas iudicat..."

[51] It is interesting to consider what Aquinas' position might be if the

Fischer example were extended so that Jones could neither vote for Carter nor abstain i.e. the mechanism comes into play if Jones appears to be going to vote for Carter or if he appears to be deciding not to vote at all. In such an example, Jones would definitely seem to have no choice but vote for Reagan. I think that in these circumstances Aquinas would be likely to say that Jones's action in voting for Reagan was not free, on the grounds that Jones could not be said to have 'decided' to vote for Reagan. 'Decided' seems to have little content if there is no possibility of considering any other alternative, a point made above. Jones might perhaps be said to have 'decided' because he had in the past always voted for the Republican candidate and so 'automatically' did so again. But it was argued in Chapter 4 that, on Aquinas' account, such an 'automatic' reaction does in fact disguise a reasoning process in which there is always the possibility – denied to Jones- of coming to a different conclusion. And even habit can be broken. In my view therefore Aquinas would conclude that Jones's voting for Reagan was not free if he were unable to decide instead to vote for Carter or to abstain.

[52] Stump [1997] pp.592-3

[53] Stump [1997] p.593

Chapter 6

CONCLUSIONS

> So without least impulse or shadow of fate,
> Or aught by me immutably foreseen,
> They trespass, authors to themselves in all
> Both what they judge and what they choose; for so I
> formed them free.
>
> Milton: Paradise Lost

In Chapter 1, we noted that Aquinas sought to resolve the problem of temporal fatalism raised by God's knowledge of future contingent events by appealing to the eternity of God's knowledge. Since God's knowledge was outside time, it was not before, but Present* to, a temporal event and so imposed no absolute necessity on that event. It was noted that there were difficulties with this solution. It was also noted that an equally interesting, but less often considered, aspect of Aquinas' treatment of God's knowledge of future contingent events was that his statement of the dilemma, in particular as set out in DV2.12, seemed to assume that if all future events took place necessarily there would be no human freedom. In DV2.12, he says: "...others have said that God has knowledge of all future events, but that

all take place necessarily, otherwise his knowledge of them would be subject to error. But neither can this opinion stand, for it would destroy free choice and there would be no need to ask advice."[1] This in turn seemed to imply that Aquinas had a concept of freedom which included the possibility of real choice, of doing otherwise, one where I am said to do *x* freely if in the same circumstances I could have done (or at least could have chosen to do) not-*x*.

We noted too, however, that Aquinas held that whereas human knowledge of a thing was caused by that thing, God's knowledge, together with his will, was the cause of the things he knew. This implied that God's knowing that I do *x* is the cause of my doing *x*. But since Aquinas also held that I do *x* freely despite the causal nature of God's knowledge, there was some doubt whether his concept of freedom could be one wide enough to include the possibility of doing otherwise. That uncertainty was illustrated in the widely differing views of modern commentators on Aquinas' concept of freedom.

Given this uncertainty over a major underlying assumption in Aquinas' treatment of God's knowledge, the following chapters examined Aquinas' idea of contingency and his concept of voluntary action, since it seemed that this held the key to what

he understood by free action. The implications of the causal nature of God's knowledge for the concept of freedom emerging from that examination were also considered.

In the light of the issues which have been considered in these preceding chapters, what can now be said about the nature of the freedom which Aquinas was so anxious to preserve in dealing with the problems arising from God's knowledge of future contingent events?

In my view, there are three key characteristics of human freedom in Aquinas' account: self-direction, the combination of intellect and will which produces it, and choice. These characteristics together form a picture of a free act as one which is truly mine, chosen by me to serve my purpose, and one which I could equally have chosen not to do. And this picture of human freedom is consistent with God's knowledge being the cause of things.

(i) Self-direction

First, for Aquinas, freedom is tied to the notion of voluntary action, through the idea of 'human' action.

The two important features in Aquinas' account of voluntary action, considered in Chapter 3, are that it arises from an internal source of motion – in humans, the will – and that it is directed to an end, the good. What human action adds to simple voluntary action, of which other animals are capable, is recognition of that end as an end, and of the relationship between the end and the means of achieving it. Human action is action done for a recognisable and explainable purpose. This additional feature reflects the rationality of the human, as opposed to brute, animal. Human, or fully voluntary, action is that to which praise or blame attaches and therefore that to which the concept of freedom applies. It is in the nature of human action, therefore, that the nature of free action can be found.

An essential difference between human and animal action, and so an essential feature of free action, is that human action is truly self-directed towards an end. This is shown by:

(a) Aquinas' distinction between the respective ways in which animal and human action are directed towards the good. The good to which animal action is directed consists of a limited number of particular things determined for the animal by its nature. Human nature is also determined to the good, but only to the good as a universal; what

that good consists in is not determined and there is no natural determination to any particular good. Animal reaction to a particular good is determined by instinct – presented with food, a hungry dog will always eat unless in danger. Human reaction is determined by intellectual judgment of what is apprehended as good in the circumstances – food can be refused by a hungry, but fasting, man;

and

(b) Aquinas' insistence that the will as the internal source of human action may be moved, but cannot be compelled, by any external source or object short of something completely good. Although Aquinas' arguments for asserting that the <u>exercise</u> of the will cannot be compelled at all are open to criticism in relation to the totally good, it is clear from his account that no created (and so not totally good) thing can compel either the exercise or the specification of the will.

The particular end to which an individual human action is directed is therefore neither one which has been naturally determined nor one to which the agent has been compelled. Instead, humans determine for themselves what is good, and their action is motivated by their judgment that a particular thing is, or is not, good.

(ii) Intellect and will

Second, a human voluntary act involves both intellect and will in a dynamic, indissoluble, relationship.

Aquinas holds that nothing can be willed which is not first known, and also that knowledge by itself does not produce action: the thing known must also be wanted. At the very minimum, therefore, action requires the use of both powers.

It is clear from Aquinas' analysis of the various stages of a human act that the acts of intellect and will involved are neither sequential nor independent of each other, though they may be treated as such for the purpose of philosophical analysis. On the contrary, intellect and will are influenced by, and operate on, each other. The will moves the intellect and the intellect moves the will. What the intellect recognises as good is influenced by what it understands of the will. More accurately, perhaps, I see something as good because it is the kind of thing I incline towards, at least in some circumstances. This reciprocity and close relationship of intellect and will is seen most clearly in the discussion, considered in Chapter 4, of choice and deliberation, where Aquinas quotes Aristotle's description of choice as

"appetitivus intellectus vel appetitus intellectivus"[2] and himself describes choice as consisting of both will and intellect as the material and formal causes respectively.

In the light of the closely inter-twined relationship Aquinas describes, I would conclude that he is neither a voluntarist nor an intellectualist about freedom. For him, freedom does not reside, even ultimately, in either the will or the intellect, but is ineluctably a product of both. This is clearly and succinctly expressed is STIa IIae.17.1: "The will is the root of freedom, for that is where freedom lies, yet the reason is its cause."[3]

(iii) Choice

Third, choice is an essential feature of a human, fully voluntary, act in Aquinas' account.

This is implicit in the distinction he draws between humans and animals in relation to choice. In STIa IIae.13.2, he argues that choice does not apply to animal activity (which is not fully voluntary) since that is determined to one course.[4] Further, that Aquinas believes that choice exists in every human action can be drawn, I believe, from what he says about the will's movement, the complex 'good/not good' nature of everything that exists, and the

description of a human act as one which is 'deliberately willed'.[5]

Aquinas holds, as we have seen, that the will can be moved or not moved, and if moved, moved to *x* or to *y* – but nothing, not even the wholly good, can compel the movement of the will. Although there may be grounds for not accepting Aquinas' argument that even the wholly good cannot compel the exercise of the will, his position that the 'less-than-wholly-good' *cannot compel* the exercise of the will is clear. Any movement towards *x* is neither *determined nor* compelled – and need not be made at all. That the movement is made must therefore be the outcome of some decision to make it rather than do nothing.

Further, since every thing that exists is good insofar as it exists, every thing may be seen as good in some respect. Conversely, since no created thing exists perfectly, it is also not-good in some respect. All human action arises from a 'deliberate willing', where the willing has been preceded by some thinking process or other – whether that is termed 'deliberation' or not and whether consciously undertaken or identified retrospectively. The intellectual process which identifies, and then concentrates on, the good aspects of *x* may equally well, depending on the will's input, identify and

concentrate on the not-good aspects, leading to rejection of *x*. Since this rational input is a feature of every human act, there is always the possibility of choice.

Although Eleonore Stump's argument, considered in Chapter 4, that choice is not an essential feature of Aquinas' concept of freedom is eloquent, it is not, ultimately, convincing. It must be admitted, however, that the view that there is always the possibility of choice sits uneasily with what Aquinas says about sinful actions done in a fit of passion, and in particular what seems to be said in DV24.12 and DV25.5 about sinful thoughts. In these passages, it seems that Aquinas is taking the line that a thought may be sinful, and so voluntary and free at least to some extent, even where there is no choice. As argued in Chapter 4, however, it is difficult to see how Aquinas can consistently describe such supposedly sinful thoughts as voluntary at all. Some of this argument hinges on how a thought may be regarded as developing from an 'inkling' to a fully fledged thought, as it were, and it may be that work on Aquinas' specific views in this area – outside the scope of this thesis – would clarify his position on sinful thoughts. Here, I would say that it is at best ambiguous.

Despite this apparent ambiguity, what he says about the specifically human ability to reflect on one's judgments seems to re-inforce the possibility of choice, of being able to do other than one does. For the ability to reflect on one's judgments is important only if one can then change the judgment, and so act differently.

I would therefore conclude that for Aquinas choice is an essential element of a human act and so of freedom.

(iv) God's causation

Fourth, despite Craig's arguments to the contrary, there are good grounds for saying that Aquinas' view that God's knowledge is the cause of things is consistent with there being human freedom.

Craig's arguments are based on a univocal use of the term 'cause' in relation to the causation of God and of man, but it seems that Aquinas is using 'cause' analogically, for God's way of causing is significantly different from that of man: God gives existence, man does not; God creates from nothing, man modifies existing things. Because God causes in this fundamentally different way, it is possible for men's actions to be genuinely contingent despite the

"irresistible efficacy", as Goris puts it,[6] of God's causation.

However, interpreting 'cause' in a way which permits such contingency seems to imply a potentiality in God, for his knowledge of what I do would depend on my determining to do it. This is inconsistent with Aquinas' views on the simplicity and unchangeableness of God.

This inconsistency could be avoided if one took the view that Aquinas held a concept of freedom compatible with God's determining human actions. God's determining human actions would, however, rule out my actions' being truly self-directed or the possibility of my choosing to do *x* or not-*x*, *x* or *y*. For the reasons set out in the preceding sections, I believe that these are essential elements of Aquinas' concept of freedom. It must be recognized, therefore, that there remains some tension between that wide concept of freedom and Aquinas' views on God's simplicity and unchangeableness, important issues for him. This unresolved tension is another area where further work could usefully be done.

The picture of freedom painted is therefore not without its problems in relation to some of Aquinas'

other views; there is nevertheless, I believe, sufficient evidence to say that it was Aquinas' picture.

Notes

[1] DV2.12c: "et ideo alii dixerunt quod deus omnium futurorum scientiam habet; sed cuncta ex necessitate eveniunt, alias scientia dei falleretur de eis. Sed hoc etiam esse non potest, quia secundum hoc periret liberum arbitrium nec esset necessarium consilium quaerere."

[2] STIa IIae.13.1c

[3] STIa IIae.17.1 ad 2: "...radix libertatis est voluntas sicut subjectum; sed sicut causa est ratio."

[4] STIa IIae.13.2c: "Since choice is the taking of one thing in preference to another, the will has to be faced with several courses open to it. In those situations where a determination to one course is effectually at work there is no place for choice."

"Dicendum quod cum electio sit praeacceptio unius respectu alterius, necesse est quod electio sit respectu plurium quae eligi possunt; et ideo in his quae sunt penitus determinata ad unum electio locum non habet."

[5] STIa IIae.1.1c: "Illae ergo actiones proprie humanae dicuntur quae ex voluntate deliberata procedunt."

[6] Goris [1996] p.306

APPENDIX

The following chronology of Aquinas' works has been used, based on McDermott [1993] and Kretzmann [1997]:

1253 - 56	Scriptum super libros Sententiarum
1256 – 59	Quaestiones disputatae de veritate
1259 – 65	Summa Contra Gentiles
1265 – 68	Quaestiones disputatae de potentia
	Summa Theologiae Ia
1268 – 72	Quaestiones disputatae de malo
	Summa Theologiae Ia IIae
	In Peri Hermeneias
	Sententia libri Ethicorum
	Summa Theologiae IIa IIae
1272 –73	Summa Theologiae IIIa

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