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ABSTRACT

This dissertation will investigate the concept of Divine Freedom within the philosophical Theology of St Thomas Aquinas by analysing in detail the arguments that St Thomas Aquinas makes in order to establish that God enjoys divine freedom – the ability for God to make choices, determinations, and decisions and so on, unconstrained by any sort of deterministic influences. To properly analyse these arguments, the thesis first establishes and then considers Aquinas's more general account of the divine, starting with how it might first be known, and progressing to encompass what claims about God Aquinas felt able to make. After this, the thesis will consider Aquinas's account of the will in light of his conception of God and of knowledge claims concerning God. It will then continue with a rigorous comparison of the divine and human wills, and how Aquinas considers the concept of 'freedom' as applying to each. Finally, the thesis will conclude with an analysis of one of the most striking and exhaustive critiques of Aquinas's own conception of divine freedom by one Norman Kretzmann. It will be found through careful examination of Aquinas's understanding of divine freedom in light of Norman Kretzmann's critique that Aquinas's arguments for that same divine freedom were ultimately lacking. Mainly, they will be found to be insufficient with respect to God's lacking a suitable motive for choosing to will creation into being if one considers the divine will as free from the divine goodness in the sense that Aquinas does. Thus, the thesis will ultimately be forced to conclude that Aquinas's conception of divine freedom cannot surmount a critique concerning divine motive.

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis represents my own work and has not been submitted, in whole or part, by me or another person, for the purpose of obtaining any other qualification.

Signed: *Michael O'Gorman*

Date: 07/09/2018

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INTRODUCTION

GENERAL AIM

This dissertation will investigate the concept of divine freedom within the philosophical Theology of St Thomas Aquinas by analysing in detail the arguments that St Thomas Aquinas makes in order to establish that God enjoys divine freedom by presenting an analysis of St. Thomas Aquinas's (1224/5-1274) conception of divine freedom as that concept is dealt with in his works.

By divine freedom we refer to whether or not Aquinas's conception of God possesses some kind of freedom of will or decision. This freedom might take any number of forms – freedom of action, freedom in will, freedom in simply being, and so on. Yet though the concept of a free God is one presumed upon by most religions and theologies, I would argue with due reference to Aquinas that the issue is not without the possibility of debate or even rejection. Ultimately, however, the thesis will conclude on a positive note, insofar as it presents Aquinas' conception of divine freedom as being wholly reasonable and entirely coherent with his overall understanding of God. I will demonstrate this within my thesis; and it is through the writings of St Thomas Aquinas that I intend to explore this notion.

BACKGROUND

Before beginning it might suffice to offer some basic biographic details of the thinker whose work prompted the writing of this thesis: St Thomas Aquinas. St. Thomas was born in Roccasecca, near Aquino, Terra di Lavoro, in the Kingdom of Sicily in Italy in the year 1224. He passed away at the age of 50 on the 7th of March in 1274 in Fossanova, near Terracina, Latium, leaving behind him a great body of work and an

influence which would endure in Christian theology and philosophy for many centuries. Perhaps the most influential of these are his wonderful Summa Contra Gentiles written between 1261 and 1264 and his exquisite Summa Theologiae, written over an eight-year period from 1265 to 1273. Finally, Aquinas was canonized St. Thomas on the 18th of July, 1323, and his feast day is celebrated on January 28. An image of the man may be found in Appendix one of this text.[1]

DIVINE FREEDOM: IMPORTANT?

It is a natural question to ask: why the topic of divine freedom itself *important* enough to warrant a detailed study? For instance, I would offer that the Christian depiction of God, along with those of the other Abrahamic faiths, seem to run on the notion that God's omnipotence and transcendence of creation are sufficient barriers to any sort of external influence acting upon God. After all, if God is, in a word, God, surely God is beyond the influence and reach of anything else which might possibly exist. Thus, it can be asked: why might the question of divine freedom need to be considered? As stated, however, I would argue that the very idea of a free God is itself central to many religious and philosophical depictions of God and is thus important regardless. Why is this the case? I would offer that there are two main reasons one might suggest; the first consists in man's relationship with God, and the second consists in the relationship between freedom and goodness.

As Te Velde notes in his text *Aquinas On God: The Divine Science of the Summa Theologiae*, man is said to *mirror* God in that we, like God, are *rational agents*. As rational agents, we can act in a way that mirrors 'the free and intelligent way God acts in

[1] Appendix one is located on page 182 of this dissertation.

his creation'.[2] Here is the first reason that we consider God to be free – because, certain deterministic philosophies aside, we consider *man* to be free, and Christian doctrine suggests that man is made in the image of God. In being in the image of God, man is different from all other parts of creation – he can act, reason, and so on. If we assume ourselves to be free, as we are within Christian doctrine, then surely God, too, must be free. Thus, the question of divine freedom suddenly becomes important – if God is not free, and we are made in the image of God, how might we possibly be free ourselves?

The second major reason the issue of divine freedom is an important one has to do with our conception of God being *truly good*. We consider it good and generous when one freely chooses to act in a good way, and terrible and appalling when one freely chooses to act in an evil way. What is crucial here is that, whether one acts in a manner which is truly good or truly evil, we expect that person to have acted *freely*. Otherwise, that person is not responsible for their actions, and cannot be regarded as being either truly good or truly evil.

The Christian God is held to be the greatest possible good, and one who has been recorded as having performed many actions which are themselves *good*.[3] Logically, then, we must assume that God acts *freely* – for if not, how could God be genuinely good, as per our hasty definition of 'true goodness' above? After all, if an action is coerced, and one had no choice to act in one way or another, one can imagine a situation in which a *greater* good could have been performed – one in which that good action need not have been performed at all, but was regardless. Building upon this, when we consider something good, we also consider it worthy of *praise* and perhaps even *thanksgiving*. Again, we

[2] Rudi Te Velde, *Aquinas On God: The Divine Science of the Summa Theologiae* (Surrey, Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006), 16.
[3] Brian Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 84.

assume that both of these qualities apply to God – we do not say only that God is good, but that God is worthy of thanks and praise on account of his being good.

Yet what happens then if the freedom of God comes into question? Obviously, God's being truly good by being *responsible* for his good activities comes into question, and with that, our capacity to offer God praise or thanksgiving. If God is not truly good, then God does not fit the definition of Christian God, and if God is not worthy of praise and thanksgiving, who precisely is?

THE LOSS OF A PERSONAL GOD

I would offer one more reason that the issue of divine freedom is important, and this is to do with what an unfree God might be for a Christian in particular. One of the most damning consequences of a lack of divine freedom is the resultant loss of a personal God for the Christian faith. We generally associate will, and free-will, at that, with *personhood*. We view people as *free agents*, generally able to choose and to act in whatever fashion they like. A lack of free will we consider as emblematic of something non-personal or sentient. We expect a man to be free, and to an extent, an animal to be also. We do not expect a trampoline to be free, however; nor do we consider the laws of time and gravity to be free.

The Christian God is a personal one – for God is said to have become man in the person of the Son, Jesus Christ. We do not consider Christ to be some aspect of some great and impersonal *force*, running away madly in the background of the universe without thought or agency or freedom of its own. Just as we view Christ as being rational and free, we view God to be rational and free- not the 'god' of Spinoza, or Aristotle's earth, which unconsciously seeks to remain at the centre of the cosmos. If God is unfree, and lacks any sort of rational thought or agency, then that God is not personal, and the Incarnation of

Christ comes to look less like an act of thinking love and more the slightly more personal manifestation of an impersonal force of goodness – if the incarnation even works with this sort of God.

These are some of the many reasons for which the issue of divine freedom is an important one. In the modern sense, freedom instils in moral actions a truth or legitimacy not there otherwise. We consider God to be truly moral, and therefore deserving of adulation. If God is not free, as we have said, both of these tenets of the Christian faith are called into serious question. Thus, I would argue that if the issue of divine freedom comes into question, so too do foundational elements of the Christian faith, and God's very status *as* God.

WHY ST. THOMAS AQUINAS?

One might wonder why this thesis deals with Aquinas's depiction of God, and what particular quality or feature of Aquinas and his thinking suggests he be the best lens through which to explore the issue of divine freedom. To this I would answer that Aquinas is among the most seminal and celebrated of all Christian philosophers – and even of philosophers in general.[4] Anthony Kenny, a philosopher whose work we will see proves to be extraordinarily useful in investigating all aspects of Aquinas's thought, goes so far as to place Aquinas alongside philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Leibniz, Kant, and many others – each of whom are themselves giants within the field of philosophy – thus making Aquinas, in his estimation, equal with some of the most influential philosophers in history.[5]

[4] Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, Preface, viii.
[5] Anthony Kenny (ed.), *Aquinas, A Collection of Critical Essays* (London, Anchor Books, 1969), 1.

Yet it is not only within philosophical circles that Aquinas is so highly regarded. He is also one of the most eminent Christian theologians, having been a constant fixture of Christian thinking and doctrine since even before his canonisation as a saint in 1323, and he remains as such to this very day. Indeed, Aquinas is held by some to be among the very most important Christian thinkers, preceded only by St Paul and St Augustine themselves.[6]

Why has Aquinas' thought endured for so many centuries? Why has he remained so prominent in two fields increasingly held to be at odds with one another? The answer to these questions lays in Aquinas's methods, his arguments, and finally, the sheer scale of his inquiry. Brian Davies, another diligent commentator on Aquinas, describes Aquinas's as a 'systematic' approach to his subjects. He embraces not scattered philosophical and theological concepts, but a grand, organised scheme, in which everything ties into something else. As Davies rightly notes, whatever Aquinas argues or says about one particular topic or subject will almost always require justification and elaboration upon from some *other* topic or subject he has addressed elsewhere.[7]

Aquinas's work therefore operates as a kind of grand opera or structure, all of which he attempts to reconcile through generous investigation of the Christian and non-Christian with ancient philosophical tools. While it is true that he is a Medieval scholar, and thus has not the benefit of the philosophical and intellectual developments of later centuries, his work remains elegant, thorough, and coherent, particularly that of his work on the philosophy of mind, his metaphysics, his moral philosophy, and in his philosophical theology.[8]

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[6] Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, Preface, viii.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Kenny (ed.), *Aquinas, A Collection of Critical Essays*, 1.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the following thesis I will present an account of St Thomas' Aquinas' conception of divine freedom, with reference to two relevant pieces of Aquinas' works: his *Summa Contra Gentiles* (1259-1269), and his *Summa Theologiae* (1265-1272). Of the texts which Aquinas wrote, these are perhaps his finest– the *Summa Theologiae* in particular is often cited as being Aquinas's greatest achievement.[9] Moreover, both of these works are broad in the range and subject matter – they present not merely a well ordered and very detailed account of God in God's own self, but how God fits into the rest of creation, such as through the Incarnation, the Trinity, divine grace, and so on.

I believe that it is the combination of this detailed study of the divine and its being situated, as it were, in relation to the rest of creation, that make the *Summa Theologiae* and the *Summa Contra Gentiles* as the most relevant to consider within the context of this work. The question of divine freedom does not reside only with God, after all – we must see how the concept works in relation to the created world, and the actions God has taken with regard to it. As shall become clear, the relationship between act and will is a crucial one; thus, we must examine not only God, but also God's actions.

Naturally, of course, I do not mean to confine myself to St Thomas's own works for the purposes of this study. I have in my work encountered a number of texts which have, in their own way, shone a light on Aquinas's writings – made him clearer, or contextualised his reasoning, or even having critiqued his arguments. Obviously, Aquinas is a celebrated figure – and justly so, as we have said. Yet it is folly to consider him beyond reproach, or having never made lapses in his arguments – and it is here that the great wealth of secondary literature has come to bear. A great many have written on Aquinas, and in

[9] Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, Preface, viii.

reading what they have written, one can come to a much more nuanced view of Aquinas's own works.

Among the most helpful and detailed analyses of Aquinas and his works came from a number of academics and scholars who all seem familiar with each other. These are thinkers such as Eleonore Stump, Brian Davies, Rudi Te Velde, Norman Kretzmann, Eric Dean Rapaglia, and many others. Of these, I would offer particular praise to Davies, for his work is among the most approachable of these figures. In texts such as *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, and his translation of the *Summa Theologiae,* Davies succeeds in making Aquinas and his occasionally esoteric writings clear and explicit without losing their nuance or subtly. I will grant his work is generally considered to be more for the purposes of overview or general introduction, and that these were the functions in which his work was most useful for me with regard to this dissertation. Yet, such work as this is vital – Aquinas's writings are alien enough to the modern parlance and style of writing that they in effect *demand* introduction and the occasional distillation, and it is for these purposes that Davies' works were most useful. I would also single out Rapaglia, whose works provide a succinct and convincing set of responses to some the most challenging critiques made of Aquinas' conception of divine freedom.

Yet one cannot remain with general overviews and gentle introductions. Of the other writers, I feel Kretzmann, Te Velde and David Burrell – whose works on Aquinas provided me with another wonderful resource from which to draw - were among the most useful, in that they provided detailed and rigorous analyses of some of Aquinas's most complex passages and most difficult problems. While Burrell and Te Velde provide excellent analyses of various aspects of Aquinas's writings – from his depiction of God to the structure and importance of the *Summa Theologiae* in Te Velde's case, and

Aquinas's God on mind and action in Burrell's, it is Kretzmann whose work is of primary importance for this work. A scan of the English literature available for Aquinas reveals that the issue of divine freedom is not one so frequently attempted as it deserves, which is of course regrettable, considering how impactful that topic is. Kretzmann is one of the few philosophers who has dealt with the topic of divine freedom within Aquinas's writings explicitly, and his deconstructions of Aquinas's arguments for God's being free are exemplary – even if I feel there are grounds for challenging them.

Finally, there were other writers whose work I investigated and made use of in perhaps less extensive fashion – writers such as Harm J.M.J Goris, and his work *Free Creatures Of An Eternal God*, Eleonore Stump for her various articles in both the Cambridge and Oxford *Companions to Aquinas*, and John F. Wippel on Aquinas's metaphysics in that same *Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*.

THEOLOGIAN OR PHILOSOPHER?

The previous section of this introduction may well have raised an interesting point: most of those writers whose work I explored, if not all of them, are *philosophers.* Aquinas, Saint and Doctor of the Catholic Church, is generally seen in contemporary philosophy to be a *theologian*. There are some, I would expect, who would consider this correct and proper, for they might consider the work of theologian as considering a higher truth than that offered by philosophy. Equally there are those of the opposite conviction, considering philosophy as leading one to an ultimate truth which theology either cannot or can no longer offer.

The question remains, however: whether one believes philosophy or theology to be the 'higher' field – if such a distinction makes sense – is Aquinas to be considered

philosopher, or theologian? If we call Aquinas 'theologian', does this make him more 'qualified' to speak on matters of God and Christianity? And if we call him 'philosopher', does he somehow *lose* that qualification?

The debate as to whether Aquinas' is either a theologian or a philosopher – and what this sort of distinction might mean – has a considerable history to it. Yet I feel that it is worth noting that Aquinas himself deals with a variety of topics from both disciplines in his works. He is not explicitly dealing 'only' with topics of Christian theology, or, indeed, philosophical concepts. He seems very much to have embraced the questions and problems of both fields, having written on topics as varied as commentaries on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*- a work of great philosophical pedigree - to treatise on the inner complexities of the Incarnation of Christ and of the issues surrounding Trinitarian theology .

THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY IN AQUINAS: TRULY DIVIDED?

The question then that remains is as such: is Aquinas generally doing philosophy, or theology? If he is doing *both*, does this constitute a hard division that must be overcome? Finally, does this distinction truly make sense, given we are applying modern day distinctions to a medieval philosopher?

Whether or not the division of theology and philosophy makes sense, Aquinas himself may provide an answer. Certain commentators cite passages from Book II of his *Summa Contra Gentiles* as revealing that Aquinas was quite aware of his supposed 'conflicting loyalties'. It is difficult to argue with this assessment; in Book II of that same text, one will find a piece written by Aquinas entitled 'That the Philosopher and the Theologian

Consider Creatures in Different Ways'.[10] It is here that Aquinas considers the issue of philosopher and theologian.[11] As Aquinas writes himself:

> Now, from what has been said it is evident that the teaching of the Christian faith deals with creatures so far as they reflect a certain likeness of God, and so far as error concerning them leads to error about God. And so they are viewed in a different light by that doctrine and by human philosophy. For human philosophy considers them as they are, so that the different parts of philosophy are found to correspond to the different genera of things. The Christian faith, however, does not consider them as such; thus, it regards fire not as fire, but as representing the sublimity of God, and as being directed to Him in any way at all. For as it is said: "Full of the glory of the Lord is His work. Did the Lord not make the saints declare all His wonderful works?" (Sirach 42: 16-17).[12]

What is interesting to note that Aquinas himself *does* support a sort of 'philosopher/theologian' distinction – he considers the subjects distinct insofar as they approach the same research material as it were. As Aquinas notes above, the teachings of the Christian faith deals with creatures not simply in and of themselves, but in so far as they possess some likeness or reflection of God. This is because, Aquinas continues, any error which concerns one's understanding of *creatures* will lead one to error about God, for in Aquinas's theology, one must look to the created world to see God, for God is beyond the human capacity to know fully. [13]

In contrast, human philosophy *also* considers creatures, though not in the same manner.[14] Whereas the Christian approaches the created world and its creatures through the lens of their relationship with the divine, human philosophy, Aquinas declares, simply aims to consider these things *as they are*. This distinction is great, and seems to enforce a

[10] *ScG* II, 4.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.

relatively harsh distinction between the two fields; in effect, one deals with the world as it relates to God, and another deals with that world almost upon its own merits.[15]

THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY: THE DISTINCTION

What does Aquinas do with this distinction, then? Is this really simply a question of vantage point from which to view the created world? Aquinas seems willing to endorse this sort of interpretation, though he has some caveats.[16] He notes, for instance, in paragraph two of the same section, that while the philosopher and the theologian both consider creatures, each considers *different* matters relating to them.[17]

One might consider this issue of division between philosophy and theology solved, then, with Aquinas clearly demarcating the different areas of jurisdiction for both fields. Theology, as we have said, considers the world with regard to God, and philosophy the world in itself. However, this is not so; Aquinas clarifies that though the philosopher does consider things as they are according to their natures, it is not only the theologian that investigates things according to their relationship to God; so too does the philosopher; the philosopher simply begins with what is known about the world, and moves to God from there.[18]

The real difference does not come from the respective areas of *jurisdiction* of theology and philosophy, then; instead it arises from the principles of things, which is to say their starting points.[19] As Aquinas writes in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*:

> …but any things concerning creatures that are considered in common by the philosopher and the believer are conveyed through different principles in each case. For the philosopher takes his argument from the proper causes of things; the

[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aquinas/#accessed 26/6/2016
[19] *ScG* II, 4.

> believer, from the first cause – for such reasons as that a thing has been handed down in this manner by God, or that this conduces to God's glory, or that God's power is infinite'.[20]

Note that both philosopher and theologian are fully able to consider the same created world and creatures; yet each does so with respect to 'different principles' in doing so. The believer begins with the first cause, which is God, and moves to consider creatures with respect to God- why something might have been created by God, or how such a thing might relate to God's actions or attributes, or precisely how God is infinite. The philosopher starts from an altogether different place; he instead begins not with God but with the created world. Thus, Aquinas declares that unlike the theologian, the philosopher begins with the 'consideration of creatures' - and only moves to knowledge of God subsequently.[21]

THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY IN HIERARCHY

Are we to say, that owing to certain similarities in approach and subject matter, that Aquinas considers philosophy and theology as equal lines of inquiry into the mysteries of God and the created universe? The answer is blunt: no. Of the two fields, related though they are, it is the approach of the theologian which Aquinas declares as the superior one. As he writes:

> Hence, also, [the doctrine of the faith] ought to be called the highest wisdom, since it treats of the highest Cause; as we read in Deuteronomy (4:6): "For this is your wisdom and understanding in the sight of nations." And, therefore, human philosophy serves her as the first wisdom. Accordingly, divine wisdom sometimes argues from principles of human philosophy. For among philosophers, too, the first philosophy utilizes the teachings of all the sciences in order to realize its objectives.[22]

[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.

For Aquinas, theology, and the study of such is to be considered 'the highest wisdom' because it begins not with created things, but the highest cause: God.[23] The doctrine of faith is more like the knowledge of God himself; God knows himself and in doing so immediately knows other things. There is a not inconsiderable similarity here between this and how the doctrine of faith operates; believers are sometimes said to begin with God and coming to consider other things afterwards.[24] It is worth noting, however, that for all of his work to establish the superiority of the theologian's approach over the philosophers, Aquinas does not ever seek to denigrate a philosopher's work in general; he seeks simply to place it properly in the hierarchy of human knowing.[25] Philosophy for Aquinas is a worthwhile, informative, even necessary endeavour; indeed, the divine wisdom itself, he notes, 'sometimes argues from the principles of human philosophy.[26]

AQUINAS AS A CHRISTIAN

There is perhaps one more issue which we must grapple with before we can begin properly our consideration of divine freedom. Like that section immediately preceding this one, we are concerned again with *allegiances* – we know that Aquinas regards theologian as a higher position than philosopher – though not in a manner so as to make philosophy worthless. Quite the contrary, as we said, because philosophy is for Aquinas an entirely worthwhile field in and of itself, and one in which Aquinas works.

Our next issue is to address how it is that Aquinas's Christian faith has affected his thinking. Aquinas certainly approaches all questions relating to God from a certain

[23] *ScG* II, 4, 5-7
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.

vantage point; this is, rather obviously, from the perspective of a believer in the Christian faith.[27] Some might suggest that Aquinas' status as a Christina believer could be said to undermine his ability to answer certain questions about the nature of God and his attributes 'objectively' and 'free' from Christian presuppositions and prejudices. Certainly the modern reader might prefer someone seemingly more objective; someone who can look at any questions of God and divinity without the interference of a religious conviction or other 'interferences'.

That one's Christian convictions might intrude into one's more rigorous, impartial philosophical investigation is something which writers such as Te Velde have dismissed.[28] Te Velde offers that this sort of understanding – one of conflict between two seemingly distinct fields – depends very much so on a particular misunderstanding of the philosopher as someone who ought to be 'above the world', rather than in it.[29] One might be tempted to see the philosopher as someone lacking in history, context, presuppositions, and so on, who can somehow answer philosophical questions without prejudice or presupposition – perhaps as someone entrenched in a particular belief system such as Christianity like Aquinas may not.[30] Te Velde very reasonably dismisses this conception of the philosopher as an impossibility.[31] As he notes:

> In this sense, God is never to be approached without presuppositions and on neutral ground, but is always the focus of a complex whole of thoughts, feelings, attitudes of hope and fear, of longing and love, and so on, and thus an object of the highest human aspirations, and at the same time the object of dogmatic regulations and stipulations by which the religious community attempts to establish a normative consensus of orthodox truth.[32]

[27] Te Velde, *Aquinas on God: The Divine Science of the Summa Theologiae*, 1-2.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.

In other words, according to Te Velde, any questions relating to God – be those metaphysical, theological, or whatever else – are inherently bound into a complicated overall context which necessarily incorporates the questioner's prior convictions, assumptions, beliefs, and so on.[33] Everyone therefore approaches these philosophical questions of all kinds with antecedents; the nature of these may differ for the believer and the non-believer, but both are necessary aspects of the philosopher being 'in the world' and thus very reasonable – even necessary.[34] As Te Velde continues:

> One cannot think about God without being in some way related to and engaged in a particular context of human behaviour in which 'God' enjoys a certain objectivity in religious beliefs and practices of worship, in ecclesiastical institutions, in ethical regulations of human behaviour, or even in the form of an existing philosophical tradition of searching for wisdom and truth, leading to God along the way of speculative knowledge.[35]

Te Velde further describes these 'particular contexts of human behaviour' as being 'inescapable'.[36] Yet he clarifies that though Aquinas cannot *escape* the cultural or religious contexts of human behaviour, neither Aquinas nor his works can be said to be simply *confined* to them. The 'God of faith' – this is the God spoken of and worshipped by Christians, and to whom Christian acts of worship are directed – is not the only aspect of God which Aquinas considers.[37] Rather, Aquinas is instead engaged in what Te Velde terms 'an ontological depth inquiry': Aquinas is looking to see what conditions this God of faith must fulfil in order to be understood *as* God, rather than simply examining the God of faith as that God appears in religious texts and tradition.[38]

[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.

Additionally, it would be erroneous to presume that any questions relating to God might be answered without some reference to how people actually conceive of God as they might within the confines of some religious tradition.[39] Therefore we can accept Aquinas' status as a Christian, as it provides him with a basis upon which to explore God; for all peoples consider philosophical questions within the context of the world, with their own particular antecedents and presuppositions and the like.[40] Furthermore, as Te Velde notes above, Aquinas himself is not limited by his religiosity; he considers what it is that the God of the Christian faith must be in order for that God to be understood as God.[41]

Therefore, we can say that Aquinas' status as a Christian believer and a philosopher at the same time is absolutely a tenable position to hold to, whatever of the distinctions in approach and subject matter there may be between philosophy and theology.[42] On this basis, we may feel free, and even justified, in examining in detail Aquinas' conception of divine freedom irrespective of his status as Christian, as theologian, or as philosopher.

CONCLUSION

We have over the course of this introduction defined our issue (whether God has free will), justified and explained the agent through which we will explore that issue (the writings of St Thomas Aquinas, celebrated theologian and philosopher of the Christian faith), and given a survey of the literature around the issue of divine freedom which already exists (which is not a terribly great amount). With all of this finished, we can finally begin this dissertation in earnest.

[39] Ibid.
[40] http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aquinas/# , accessed 27/7/2016
[41] Te Velde, *Aquinas on God,* 1-2.
[42] Ibid.

CHAPTER ONE: FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS

INTRODUCTION

Before any detailed study of divine freedom within the philosophy and theology of Aquinas is attempted, we must first look to the divine itself. How does Aquinas conceive of God? What attributes does God possess? How does God interact with the world? These questions – and many others – will be examined herein. This chapter will be divided into two main sections; both address the technical points we must work through before one is in a position to understand Aquinas on God. First, it considers what theory of knowledge Aquinas advances, in order to determine by what manner he thinks things can be known. Next, the chapter will examine Aquinas' view on knowledge of God in particular, demonstrating how knowledge of the divine is inherently unlike knowledge of things in the world. Finally, to conclude section one the chapter will move to investigate Aquinas' thoughts on language – specifically, how human language can possibly be used to describe the divine, if at all.

The second section of chapter one will examine how Aquinas views God and God's attributes and so forth. To that end, the chapter will then consider, in order, (1) understanding God's essence, that is, how God is in himself, and (2), how God relates to the world. Understanding these facets of Aquinas' conception of God is essential to any work on divine freedom; obviously, one cannot know what it might mean for God to be free, without a conception of what God *is*, or how it is that God actually relates to the world.

SECTION ONE: AQUINAS ON KNOWLEDGE

There is a major technical point to be addressed before we might come to look at how Aquinas conceives of God. This is to investigate the very way in which Aquinas held that truths about God can be known. To help us further conceptualise this problem of knowledge of the divine, we must turn to Aquinas' views on knowledge itself. For Aquinas, what does it mean for one to 'know' something? Davies suggests that Aquinas' status as a 'kind of empiricist' means he considers knowledge as being derived from (and even dependent on) man's status as a 'sensing being' who looks to material objects.[43] According to MacDonald, Aquinas' philosophical system is not actually built around a theory of knowledge.[44] Instead, Aquinas builds his epistemology atop a basis established by other parts of his system – his metaphysics and psychology most noticeably, MacDonald notes.[45]

One can say, therefore, that Aquinas' theory of knowledge is embedded within his metaphysics and psychology – though MacDonald holds that one can in fact 'extract' the 'strictly epistemological claims' which Aquinas makes from these other sections of his philosophical systems so as to examine them without reference to either of these.

AQUINAS'S DEFINITION OF KNOWLEDGE

It is certainly worth noting also that Aquinas does not actually have within his philosophy a concept which aligns directly with 'knowledge' as that term is understood and made use of in modern contexts, according to critics such as MacDonald and

[43] Brian Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 43.
[44] Scott MacDonald, "Theory of Knowledge", in *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas* (eds), Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump, 160.
[45] Scott MacDonald, *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, 160.

Pickavé.[46] This is apparently a problem which occurs for medieval philosophers in general.[47] Aquinas's *scientia*, which can be defined as 'a mental state directed at truth', is often looked to as the concept in his epistemology which most closely corresponds to the modern day conception of knowledge, but both MacDonald and Pickavé dispute that comparison. Instead, they each claim that *scientia* is in fact 'narrower' category than knowledge in general and thus that *scientia* (which they identify as a 'species of cognition') should not be read as a theory of general knowledge.[48]

Instead, MacDonald and Pickavé declare separately that *scientia* for Aquinas should be read as a theory of what it means to have a *scientific* knowledge of or understanding of something in particular, rather than knowledge of any kind in general.[49] Regardless, according to MacDonald, it is more accurate to say that one can identify *spaces* within Aquinas's epistemology that correspond to our modern notion of knowledge, rather than to claim any of his epistemological concepts is identical with our contemporary concept of 'knowledge'.[50]

HUMAN COGNITION AND HUMAN KNOWLEDGE

In order that we might proceed to a nuanced conception of Aquinas's theory of knowledge, there is one more technical point which we must first address. We must be clear in the distinction Aquinas makes between *cognition* and *knowledge*. MacDonald points out that Aquinas does not view these two things as identical; this is because one

[46] Martin Pickavé, "Human Knowledge," in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, ed. Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump, 311.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Scott MacDonald, in *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, 162.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.

can have *false* or incorrect cognition within Aquinas' view.[51] Yet, Aquinas does see the two concepts as linked, in a certain, round-about fashion.[52] Cognition is for Aquinas the fundamental epistemic category.[53] It involves for him a certain kind of relationship between the one cognizing, and the thing cognized: that of the assimilation of the one cognizing *to* the object cognized.[54]

The view that the soul be assimilated *to* things can be explained as meaning that the soul is 'potentially all things' – and cognition occurs when the soul actually becomes one of these things.[55] According to MacDonald, Aquinas inherits this view from Aristotle's own theory of knowledge.[56] The act of cognition is complete when the form which is particularised in the object being cognised comes to exist in the cognisor's soul – thus meaning the soul has in some way *become* that object, or at least been assimilated to it in some fashion.[57]

SENSORY COGNITION AND INTELLECTIVE COGNITION

What are the objects of cognition, then, to which the human soul is assimilated? MacDonald defines these as 'the particular corporeal substances to which we have access through sense perception – in other words, objects external to the mind which the mind receives data about from the senses: touch, sight, smell, auditory, and so on.[58] This is not to imply however that cognition only concerns external, material objects from which the soul can receive sense-data. For Aquinas, there are in effect two different sorts of

[51] MacDonald, "Theory of Knowledge", in *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, (ed.) Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump, 162.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid, 160.
[54] Ibid, 161.
[55] Ibid, 162.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid, 161.

cognition: sensory, and intellective.[59] The *sensory* cognitive power humanity possesses by virtue of being animals is the sort of cognition which gives humanity access to the particular corporeal substances and accidents which can be found in the external world, as we have said.[60]

By contrast, the *intellective* cognitive power gives human beings the ability to cognise universals (in which they are able to 'transform the enmattered, particularised forms' which exist in sensible objects into what Aquinas calls 'intelligible species'.)[61] As Aquinas writes in *ST* 1 q.85 a.1:

> Likewise, the things which belong to the species of a material thing, such as a stone, or a man, or a horse, can be thought of apart from the individualizing principles which do not belong to the notion of the species. This is what we mean by abstracting the universal from the particular, or the intelligible species from the phantasm; that is, by considering the nature of the species apart from its individual qualities represented by the phantasms.[62]

In other words, it is through the intellective cognitive power that humanity is able to abstract, or to extrapolate, the notion of species from particular objects in the world. For instance, thanks to the intellect one can consider the nature of all stones, men, or horses, without losing oneself to the particular aspects or attributes of *this* stone, *this* man, or *this* horse.[63] This is in effect to take the general, or the universal, out of the particular; to look at a thing's essential qualities rather than the accidental ones unique to any particular instance of one, and conceive of the thing *in general*, rather than *this thing here before me*.

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[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Scott MacDonald, "Theory of Knowledge", in *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas* (eds), Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump, 161.
[62] *ST* 1 q.85 a.1.
[63] Anthony Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind* (London: Routledge, 1993), 102.

COGNITION: A SUMMARY

Cognition for humanity thus has two distinct dimensions, as it were – the sensory cognitive power, which humanity shares with animals, and the intellective cognitive power, which is unique to humanity. MacDonald cautions against assuming that all instances of cognition for Aquinas are related to the *intake* of information through sense perception and understanding, however.[64] In other words, for Aquinas not every act of cognition revolves around the accumulation of the human soul of data from the senses, or, indeed, from the information and understanding of the world which the intellect provides (such as the intelligible species).[65] For Aquinas, human beings are also able to acquire cognition of things not already cognised through discursive reasoning carried out in light of things which the soul has already cognized.[66]

In other words, MacDonald summarises, thanks to intellect, human beings are able to 'infer certain propositions from other propositions' which the human being has already cognised within itself.[67] Indeed, we might say that the intellect allows human beings the ability to extrapolate to new conclusions on the basis of conclusions already reached previously – to make use of cognitions which have already affected the soul by *reasoning* from those cognitions and reaching *new* conclusions.

GOD AND HUMAN KNOWLEDGE

Having looked at how Aquinas thinks humanity can know by virtue of examining human cognition, we can now come to see how Aquinas thinks humans can know *God*. We have remarked already on Davies' claim that Aquinas is a 'kind of empiricist', in that

[64] MacDonald, "Theory of Knowledge", in *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, 161.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid., 161 – 162.
[67] MacDonald, "Theory of Knowledge", in *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, 162.

it is his view that 'knowledge derives from and is dependent on the fact that we are sensing beings'.[68] This, Davies claims, is a consequence of the fact that human beings are acquainted with material objects.[69] The problem with this approach to knowledge is that it cannot, according to Aquinas' understanding, bring us to knowledge or understanding of God.[70] This is because for Aquinas God is not a material object – and thus, his essence is unknowable to man.[71] If God is not a material object, and if his essence truly exceeds the grasp of creation, how is it that Aquinas can possibly say anything about God? How can God, who Aquinas defines as being *beyond* the created intellect ever be defined and categorised by human beings in any manner, let alone a meaningful one?

Davies claims that this is a 'presiding thesis' of Aquinas: that though one might know that God exists, one cannot know what God is.[72] Just after concluding his writings on the *Five Ways* (Aquinas's five proofs for the existence of God) does Aquinas clarify this very important point as regards knowledge of God? He writes: "Now we cannot know what God is, but only what he is not; we must therefore consider the ways in which God does not exist, rather than the ways in which he does".[73]

Aquinas also writes the same in Book 1, chapter 13 of the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, and again in chapter 14 of that same text.[74] Here he writes that 'the divine substance surpasses every form that our intellect reaches. Thus we are unable to apprehend it by knowing *what it is'*.[75] Thus for Aquinas, the divine in its totality far outstrips the abilities of the created intellect to know and to learn. Humanity, for Aquinas, cannot know God as it

[68] Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 43.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid, 40.
[73] *ST* 1 q.3.
[74] Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 40.
[75] *ScG* I, 14.

might other things, with the essence of God being so beyond and above the created intellect as to be unknowable and unreachable by it.

As we have seen, then, Aquinas views God as being inherently incomprehensible.[76] Rocca notes that one can summarise Aquinas' views on this inherent incomprehensibility of God with two axioms: these are that first, no created intellect naturally possesses a total, 'quidditative' knowledge of God's essence; and that second, no created intellect can ever possess, in principle, a comprehensive knowledge of God's essence.[77] Aquinas does not ignore the challenges his definitions of God produce for the intellect of man. However, Aquinas does present a solution to this problem – an approach to God from an apophatic theology.[78]

AN APOPHATIC ANSWER

What might we say an 'apophatic theology' actually consists of? Additionally, how does Aquinas make practical use of it in his works on God? The first of these questions we shall deal with presently. According to Franck, a negative or apophatic theology is

> the doctrine that no affirmative or positive attributes of any kind are predicable of God, that God is completely unknown and unknowable, that we can meaningfully say about God only what he is not (to speak of Him in negative attributes); the doctrine that man's highest knowledge of God is to know that we are unable to know Him.[79]

[76] Gregory Rocca, *Speaking the Incomprehensible God: Thomas Aquinas on the Interplay of Positive and Negative Theology* (Washington: CUA Press, 2004), 28.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Joseph. A Buijs, "The Negative Theology of Maimonides and Aquinas," in *The Review of Metaphysics,* 41, no. 4, 723.

In other words, a negative theology is that which permits one to speak about God through *negative* terms – that because one cannot by definition say what God *is*, all one can do is speak about what God *isn't*. Aquinas says as much in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*:

> Now, in considering the divine substance, we should especially make use of the method of remotion. For, by its immensity, the divine substance surpasses every form that our intellect reaches. Thus we are unable to apprehend it by knowing what it is. Yet we are able to have some knowledge of it by knowing what it is not. [80]

Our 'being able to have some knowledge' of God by looking to what God is not is, in effect, what allows us to study God's attributes and qualities, in Aquinas' view.

We might put the entire matter in another way. We can say, for instance, that an apophatic theology is one in which one accepts, as Aquinas does, that God is a 'supereminent darkness', a total unknown to the created intellect.[81] As a consequence, therefore, the only knowledge of God that the created intellect might ever come to possess is that which comes through our *ignorance*.[82] This means, essentially, that for Aquinas, we truly know God 'only when we know that we are ignorant of God's essence.[83] Rocca aptly refers to this method of knowing God a 'knowing unknowing'; a knowing based on the admission that one can know nothing of the true nature of God, and an acceptance of that fact.[84]

MAKING USE OF AN APOPHATIC THEOLOGY

How is it that Aquinas makes *practical* use of his negative theology, then? Are there any truths about God one might be able to come to know even with this 'knowing unknowing' in place? It is perhaps tempting to conclude from these points that Aquinas

[80] ScG I, 14.
[81] Buijs, "The Negative Theology of Maimonides and Aquinas," 723.
[82] Rocca, *Speaking the Incomprehensible God*, 29.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid, 28.

thinks that the limits of the created intellect prevent any actual truths about the divine substance from ever being known. Davies cautions against this view, however, clarifying that Aquinas' approach, though perhaps 'agnostic', is not entirely negative.[85]

One can make positive claims about God – and Aquinas himself does so, making declarations at various points about God's goodness and attributes– but one can never come to what can be called a 'quidditative knowledge of God' while in this life, owing to God's inherent incomprehensibility to the created intellect, as we have said.[86]

Stump goes further in relating positive knowledge of God to negative knowledge of God, claiming that Aquinas' explaining God negatively actually rests heavily on a number of positive claims. She writes in her essay on God's simplicity in the *Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*:

> But caution is warranted here. It is true that Aquinas explains divine simplicity in terms of what God is not – not a body, not composed of matter and form, and so on. On the other hand, however, in the course of showing what God is not, Aquinas relies heavily on positive claims about God. So, for example, he argues that God is not a body on the basis of these claims among others: God is the first mover, God is pure actuality; God is the first being; God is the most noble of beings. In arguing that God is not composed of matter and form, Aquinas in fact makes a huge, substantial, positive metaphysical claim about the nature of God.[87]

Stump presents Aquinas' denial of God possessing a material body as an example of these positive claims. So, we might therefore claim that Aquinas' theology, while certainly primarily apophatic in nature, is not entirely negative, and that it instead features a complex melding of certain positive claims which underlie his *via negative.* This melding does not in itself contradict Aquinas' depiction of God as the 'super-eminent darkness',

[85] Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 40-41.
[86] Ibid, 41.
[87] Eleonore Stump, "God's Simplicity," in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, (ed.) Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 136-137.

about whom nothing can be known positively. It does, however, make clear that Aquinas's is not a *universally* negative theology, in so far as it rests on positive theological claims, as Stump has claimed.

SECTION TWO: GOD AND HUMAN LANGUAGE

Tying into Aquinas's apophatic theology is his conception of the relationship between God and human language. As we have established above, for Aquinas God is beyond the human ability to comprehend; moreover, for Aquinas, the height of human knowledge of God occurs 'when one knows that one does not know him'[88]. Certainly this raises quite the problem for Aquinas; if God transcends the human intellect's capacity to know, how can humanity say anything about God? How can Aquinas himself seek to make positive truth claims about God's essence, abilities, attributes, and so on, if he, like the rest of humanity, is constrained by an intellect which is unable to apprehend God as God actually is? Does this mean, as Davies notes, that for Aquinas one can never have a positive notion of God at all? [89]

The answer which Aquinas embraces follows from his negative theology, which we have already established as being not entirely negative. While Aquinas concedes that one must look to God via the negative way, one's speaking *about* God need not be entirely negative itself.[90] Davies explains Aquinas' position as being that while one cannot know what God *is*, this does not mean that whenever we speak about God we do so by saying what God *is not.*[91] To speak about God is not simply to deny things of God like a body, an act/potency distinction, and other such creaturely qualities; in actuality, when man speaks

[88] Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 58.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid.

of God he frequently ascribes certain positive, indeed noble, qualities to God.[92] One says more than that God is immutable, omnipotent, omniscient, and so on– one also says that God is good, loving, just, and many other things besides . Christian faith is predicated on God being *good*, and Christians say that goodness is actually a quality which God positively has. The same is true of Aquinas: he too realises that one cannot speak of God entirely in negative terms, even though knowing God must be so.[93]

SPEAKING OF GOD IN CAUSAL TERMS

An objection to this sort of view is to assume that when one claims that God is good, as the Christian does, that one is not saying something about *God* himself - instead, one is simply saying that God causes good things.[94] To speak of God in these terms - this is to say that to speak about God is to speak about the fruit of God's actions, and not God himself – is to attempt to ground everything one says about God in causal terms.[95] According to Davies, Aquinas has two answers for this sort of approach which render that position untenable. The first is to attack the difficulties inherent in saying that God *causes* good rather than that God *is* good; for in Aquinas' view, if one makes this distinction, one suddenly has no reason to apply any one term to God rather than another.[96] As Aquinas writes:

> First because in neither of them can a reason be assigned why some names more than others are applied to God. For He is assuredly the cause of bodies in the same way as He is the cause of good things; therefore if the words "God is good," signified no more than, "God is the cause of good things," it might in like manner be said that God is a body, inasmuch as He is the cause of bodies.[97]

[92] Ibid.
[93] Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 58.
[94] Ibid, 59.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid.
[97] *ST* I, q.13, a.2.

Thus for Aquinas, if saying that God is good merely means that God causes goodness, either term is acceptable for usage – thus one could write 'God is a body', and merely mean to say that God 'causes bodies' – but God obviously has no body, as we will come to see in section two of this chapter.

The second reason that this sort of 'God-talk', as Davies calls it, is insufficient for use once more centres on the different problems inherent in speaking about God as merely a cause of things rather than God's actually *being* those things.[98] According to Aquinas, if one speaks only of God being the *cause* of things, mankind is bound therefore to only ever speak of God in a secondary sense.[99] Aquinas uses the example of diet to illustrate this; one calls a diet healthy, he writes, because it causes health in the one who consumes it. It is however only the body of the person who takes that diet who is truly healthy in a *primary* sense; not the diet itself.[100] Alas, as we have said, Christianity ascribes many positive qualities to God, such as goodness, wisdom, mercy, and so forth; are these to be spoken of only in a secondary sense, like Aquinas' example of a healthy diet?

The third and primary difficulty which Aquinas presents against the notion that to speak of God one must speak of the things which God causes in the world – such as goodness – comes from what is essentially an issue of creaturely finitude. God has always existed, as God is infinite and uncreated. Creatures, obviously, are finite and created, and therefore there was a time before they existed.[101] By speaking of God only in terms of the effects of God's actions, one would therefore be unable to call God wise or good before the existence of creatures – for what effects would one have to judge and base this assumption upon? Thus for Aquinas, speaking about God as humanity does cannot simply refer to

[98] Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 58.
[99] Ibid, 59.
[100] Ibid, 60.
[101] Ibid.

things which God has brought about.[102] Ultimately, Aquinas writes, God would possess certain attributes such as wisdom and goodness whether or not God chose to cause anything other than himself to be – and thus one cannot simply speak of God in causal terms.[103]

SPEAKING ABOUT GOD: ANALOGY

If we cannot speak of God in causal terms, then, in what manner might we speak of God at all, bearing in mind the limits of Aquinas' not-entirely negative theology? Aquinas does hold that God can be spoken of in a positive sense (speaking in such a way that we say that God *is* x, rather than God is *not x*) while still respecting God's transcendence over the ability of the created intellect to know God properly. By this Aquinas means that we can and do speak positively about God, for our statements about him can in fact 'signify the divine nature', as Davies puts it.[104] Human language and intellect may not encapsulate God fully, but this does not mean that they are completely devoid of truth.[105] We can apply words such as 'wise' and 'good' to God – and these words will truly characterise God.[106] The 'full reality' inherent in these words will continue to defy our intellect as per Aquinas' negative theology, naturally – but still there is truth in them.[107]

Rooted in this idea is Aquinas' understanding of language and analogy; that the language of humanity, while not capturing the fullness of the divine, does at least speak truthfully about the divine nature.[108] According to Davies, Aquinas' concept of analogy is one of

[102] Ibid, 61.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Brian Davies, "The Limits of Language and the Notion of Analogy," in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas* (eds), Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 395.
[106] Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 62.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid.

the things for which he is best known.[109] In fact, in light of it, we might summarise Aquinas' thoughts on God and language by noting that terms which are applied to God, and terms which are applied to things in the world, are never to be considered univocally - this is to say that one understands the language applied to God as having the *exact* same meaning it would have if applied to creatures.[110] The terms applied to God cannot be understood equivocally, however and this in contrast is to imply that language acquires radically new meanings when applied to God.[111] Thus good for God and good for a creature might not overlap in any fashion whatsoever. Clearly, both of these approaches to language relating to the divine are insufficient; with this in mind, Aquinas suggests that terms and language applied to God only be understood analogically.[112]

What does an analogical approach to language about God actually entail, then? Analogy essentially accomplishes a median between the equivocal and univocal approaches, allowing language to retain its given meaning, while allowing for the 'space' necessary for the divine to transcend human understanding.[113] Davies summarises Aquinas views most succinctly in the *Oxford Handbook of Thomas Aquinas*, entitled 'The Limits of Language and the Analogical Notion'.[114] According to Davies, Aquinas's 'basic thought' as regards analogy is as follows:

> …when we apply words signifying perfections to God (words that we learn in the first place when taught to speak about creatures), the words in question (a) are truly applicable to God, and (b) do not mean exactly what they do when used to talk about creatures.[115]

[109] Ibid, 70.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Brian Davies, "The Limits of Language and the Notion of Analogy," in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas* (eds) Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 394.
[113] Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 71.
[114] Davies, "The Limits of Language and the Notion of Analogy," 394.
[115] Ibid.

Thus we might say that analogical words are those which must satisfy two criteria: they must first be 'truly applicable to God', in that they speak positively and accurately of God and God's attributes. Moreover, they must properly belong to God, and must not be attributes or perfections which only a creature might have (Davies suggests 'purring' as an example – one cannot consider 'purring' as an attribute or perfection of God because purring is a perfection in the feline world specifically.)[116] Next, as is noted in (b), words used in an analogical sense are words which are *not* to be applied both to creatures and to God without some kind of modification or difference.[117] This is not to imply that these words would then have to be understood to have *radically new* meanings either, as in an equivocal understanding.[118] Instead, these words retain something of the meaning they had when applied to creatures – which makes analogy something of a median between the univocal and equivocal approaches, as noted.

To better illustrate the actual mechanics inherent in an analogical use of language, Davies suggests one consider the word 'love' in various different contexts.[119] To that end, he presents three sentences, each making use of the word 'love': these are 'I love my job', 'I love my family', and 'I love chicken curry'.[120] As Davies astutely notes, the word 'love' in this context would never be understood to mean exactly the same thing in each sentence; one does not love chicken curry as one might a spouse or relative, and so forth. Yet, as Davies clarifies, the word 'love' does not acquire three radically distinct meanings in each of these sentences either.[121] Instead, love of curry, family and employment are not completely un-alike, despite differing in intensity, duration, value, and so on.

[116] Davies, "The Limits of Language and the Notion of Analogy," 394.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Ibid.
[119] Ibid, 395.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid.

This is of course the sense in which Aquinas claims one must speak about God – though we might call God just and man just, neither word is to be understood as being equivalent – the justice of God far exceeds the justice of man, for instance. Yet by this same token, there is something inherently similar in the concepts of justice applied both to man and God.[122] Thus, Aquinas can be said to be quite legitimate in his approach to God through use of analogical language – it respects the transcendence of the divine attributes, and at the same time it reconciles Aquinas' negative, apophatic theology with the positive qualities God is said to have in sources of Christian revelation (such as love, mercy, and wisdom).

SECTION THREE: DIVINE SIMPLICITY AND GOD'S ATTRIBUTES

Now that we have established what Aquinas might actually say about God, we can move to look at those claims he makes – be they positive or negative. The first part of the *Summa Theologiae*, which features one of Aquinas most thorough accounts of the divine essence, contains a detailed section entitled 'the One God'; it is here that Aquinas considers God and God's various aspects; his existence, his attributes, his actions and powers, and so forth.[123] Aquinas begins his section on God with a detailed examination of God's existence.[124] From here, he moves to consider God's essence, and it is now that his apophatic theology becomes evident. Aquinas spends the next section of the *Prima Pars* dealing with God's various attributes. These are God's simplicity, God's perfection, God's goodness, God's infinity, God's omnipresence, God's immutability, God's eternity, God's unity, and finally the ways in which God is known and what Aquinas

[122] Ibid, 396.
[123] *ST* I, q.3.
[124] Ibid.

terms 'the names of God'.[125] Each of these shall now be examined in turn, in order to explore in some detail what one might call Aquinas' conception of God.

Aquinas' format for examining the divine attributes in the *Summa Theologiae* might merit some explanation before we proceed. The Prima Pars is divided into a number of questions, and these are then further divided into a number of articles. These articles typically open with a suggestion that God might or might not possess some feature or component, much as a creature would. However, he then affirms or denies that God possesses that feature in short order.[126] After this he justifies his claims with ample reference to whatever sources he deems a suitable one to draw from, from Biblical ones to the works of philosophers and theologians.

DIVINE SIMPLICITY

One of the most striking claims Aquinas makes about God is his insistence on divine simplicity as a feature of God's essence despite the difficulties certain commentators have identified in it. This is the doctrine that God is, unlike creation, 'altogether simple'. This is to say, in other words, that God for Aquinas is devoid of any interior parts or composition – God is therefore complete, singular, and entirely perfect in God's own self – and thus in no need of any external thing.[127] I would argue that any understanding of Aquinas' conception of God – especially one aiming to explore Aquinas' understanding of divine freedom – must pay a great deal of attention to the doctrine of divine simplicity. Commentators such as Stump label it 'central' to both

[125] Ibid.
[126] Eleonore Stump, "God's Simplicity," in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, ed. Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 136-137.
[127] Christopher Hughes, *On a Complex Theory of A Simple God: An Investigation in Aquinas' Philosophical Theology* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1989), 3.

Aquinas' philosophy and his theology.[128] It is a view with some theological precedent; Aquinas is certainly not the first to propose it, inheriting it as he does from figures such as St Augustine and St Anselm, amongst others.[129] Despite the doctrine's status as one with historical precedent, it is still one which enjoys considerable controversy when considered alongside Aquinas' other claims about the nature of God, as we shall see.

What is it that the doctrine of divine simplicity actually contains then? Stump argues that one can broadly summarise the doctrine with three propositions:

1. It is impossible that God have any spatial or temporal parts that could be distinguished from one another as here rather than there or as now rather than then.[130]
2. It is impossible that God have any intrinsic accidental properties.[131]
3. Whatever can be intrinsically attributed to God must in reality just be the unity that is his essence.[132]

The first claim makes clear God's distinction from material objects. The second of these three claims make it clear that the standard distinction between a being's extrinsic and intrinsic properties cannot apply to God. Finally, the third claim, according to Stump, 'rules out the possibility of components of any kind in the essence that is the divine nature'.[133]

The exact relationship between God and his attributes in the face of divine simplicity is an interesting one to explore. As regards God's attributes, Hughes claims that one can

[128] Stump, "God's Simplicity," 136-137.
[129] Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 45.
[130] Stump, "God's Simplicity," 136-137.
[131] Ibid, 135.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Ibid.

sort God's attributes into one of two categories: the first is that of attributes which are *ampliative*; the second category is attributes which are *limitative*.[134] The *ampliative* attributes include God's power, knowledge and goodness. Hughes claims that these attributes of God are the 'positive perfections of God' – and in being so are relatively familiar to us. We define God as possessing limitless power, infinite knowledge, a perfect moral goodness, and so on. More difficult to deal with, Hughes claims, are the limitative attributes: these, he writes, are in fact occasionally problematic.[135] These are those properties which God is said to possess by virtue of not possessing the imperfections inherent in created things – even in instances, Hughes writes, where those imperfections seem essential to any possible being.[136] As we shall see, however, Aquinas's account of God manages to incorporate both the ampliative attributes, and also limitative attributes relatively ably. We shall turn to Aquinas's own account of God's divine simplicity now.

GOD'S BODY, AND GOD AND THE MATTER AND FORM DISTINCTION

The first question about God's mode of being which Aquinas tackles is the question of the body. Aquinas, wonders if it might be said that God possesses a material body of some kind. He answers this in the negative, however, claiming that three things prevent God from possessing a material body. The first is that nobody can be in motion unless that body was itself put into motion by something else. Aquinas, however, holds that God is the First Mover in his Five Proofs, and therefore concludes that God cannot have a body – for what could pre-exist God to put his body into motion?[137] The second

[134] Hughes, *On a Complex Theory of a Simple God*, 3.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Ibid.

thing which prevents God from having a body is that the first being must necessarily be pure act and 'in no way in potentiality'.[138] This is because actuality is ultimately prior to potentiality.[139] Bodies are all in potentiality – but God, being pure act has none. Therefore, Aquinas concludes that God lacks a body.[140]

Finally, the third reason Aquinas dismisses the possibility that God might have a body rests on the basis that God must be what he calls the most noble of beings. Bodies, however, cannot be the most noble of things, for Aquinas claims that bodies must either be animate or inanimate, the latter of which is the more noble.[141] However, Aquinas then makes it clear that bodies are not 'animate precisely as bodies' – they receive their animation from elsewhere.[142] Therefore the animation of bodies depends upon something which is external to them, and more noble than them; God, as the most noble of beings, cannot have a being which is nobler than he; therefore Aquinas concludes that God possesses no body.[143] Hughes summarises this point in relation to divine simplicity when he notes simply that Aquinas believes that God is not composed of extended parts; from this one can conclude that God does not have a body.[144]

Burrell cautions that these three arguments of Aquinas do not actually 'prove that God is not bodily'.[145] God may well have a body, Burrell notes; however, to embrace this point of view is 'to miss the point of this inquiry'.[146] Instead, Burrell claims that Aquinas is, in line with his apophatic theology, deliberately eschewing 'any attempt to tell us what God

[138] Ibid.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Ibid.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Ibid.
[143] Ibid.
[144] Hughes, *On a Complex Theory of a Simple God,* 2.
[145] David B. Burrell, *Aquinas: God and Action* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul LTD, 1979), 20.
[146] Burrell, *Aquinas: God and Action,* 20.

is like'; rather, Aquinas here seeks to 'underscore what God is not'.[147] Burrell goes on to claim that in this Aquinas is attempting to 'map out the logic of divine matters' by restricting what one can and cannot appropriately say about God.[148]

After having argued that God lacks a body, Aquinas spends the rest of Question 3 dealing with those other things God can be said not to have. Article 2 of Question 3 deals with matter and form in God, with Aquinas concluding that God is not composed of matter.[149] This is because of Aquinas' understanding of matter as being potentiality, and his understanding that God is pure actual being. God being pure act means he can have no potentiality, and therefore no matter.[150] This further means that God cannot be any kind of composite of matter and form; instead, Aquinas concludes that God is pure form only.[151] Davies notes that in defining God in this way, Aquinas is explicitly denying the possibility that God might in some way be an individual in the world; Davies also then claims that in 'the language of Aquinas', this very point is expressed in Aquinas' teaching on God's essence being identical to God's own existence.[152] This will be examined below.

GOD'S ESSENCE AND EXISTENCE

Articles 3 and 4 of Question 3 deal with the complex questions surrounding God's essence, and its relationship to God's own existence.[153] In Article 3, Aquinas asks whether it might be said that God is in fact 'the same' as his essence. Aquinas answers this question in the positive.[154] To explain how God might be the same as his own essence, Aquinas

[147] Ibid.
[148] Ibid.
[149] *ST* I, q.3, a.2.
[150] Ibid.
[151] Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 51.
[152] Ibid, 52.
[153] *ST* I, q.3, a.3.
[154] Ibid.

first makes clear that in things which are composed of matter and form (which God is not, as seen above), the essence of the thing in question must differ from what Aquinas calls the 'suppositum'.[155] This is because, Aquinas says, the essence of a thing 'connotes only what is included in the definition of a species' – accidental qualities are not.[156] To illustrate this point, Aquinas presents an example: humanity connotes all that is included in the definition of 'man'. However, this definition of humanity does not extend to the 'individual matter' of any particular man, with all of its individuating accidental qualities – and so one might say that 'the thing which is a man' has 'something more in it than that thing which is humanity.'[157]

From this Aquinas concludes that 'man' and 'humanity' are not actually identical – 'humanity' is taken to refer to the 'formal part' of the man, and men are individuated and distinguished by particular matter.[158] As noted, however, God for Aquinas is very much not composed of matter and form, as a man might be. For God, individualisation cannot come from matter which God might possess and which another might not; God possesses no matter. As such, the forms are individualised of themselves and are therefore required to be subsisting 'supposita' themselves.[159] Aquinas finally concludes that God 'must be His own Godhead, His own life, and whatever else is thus predicated of Him'.[160] Davies summarises this last point as follows:

> As we have seen, according to Aquinas things in the world are constituted as individuals by virtue of matter. So, since he has argued that God is not a body, and is form without matter, he naturally concludes that God is not an individual as something in the world can be. He is not an instance of a class whose members share a common nature. He is indistinguishable from his nature.[161]

[155] Ibid.
[156] Ibid.
[157] Ibid.
[158] Ibid.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Ibid.
[161] Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 52.

Having established that God is the same as his own essence, in Article 4 Aquinas moves to consider whether God's essence and existence specifically are in fact identical with one another.[162]

Once more, Aquinas answers this question in the affirmative, declaring that 'God is not only His own essence, as shown in the preceding article, but also His own existence.'[163]Aquinas proposes to prove this declaration of his in a number of ways. To begin with, he returns to objects whose existences actually differ to their essences, noting that anything which a thing might possess which is 'besides its essence' must be caused 'either by the constituent principles of that essence' – such as a property that necessarily accompanies a species (such as laughter in a man, Aquinas says) – or by some exterior agent.[164] The example he employs here is that of heat being caused within water by fire.[165]

What Aquinas means by all of this is, essentially, that if the existence of a thing differs from that thing's essence, the existence of this thing must depend on one of two things. These are either (1) some external agent which can cause its existence, or (2) some interior essential principle or quality of the thing being discussed. Naturally, (1) cannot apply to God, who for Aquinas is perfect in himself and who accrues nothing from anything external to him. [166] As for (2), Aquinas notes that it is 'impossible for a thing's existence to be caused by its own essential constituent principles' if that thing's own existence is caused.[167] This is because Aquinas claims that nothing can be the sufficient cause of its

[162] ST I, q.3. a.4.
[163] Ibid.
[164] Ibid.
[165] Ibid.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Ibid.

own existence if its existence is in some way caused.[168] Therefore, Aquinas says, this thing whose essence differs from its existence must have its existence caused by another. Obviously, Aquinas then notes that this cannot apply to God, for God is for him 'the first efficient cause'.[169] Aquinas declares then that it is impossible that God's existence might differ from his essence.[170]

Aquinas then presents two other reasons that God's essence and existence must be identical with one another. The first of these is that for Aquinas, 'existence is that which makes every form or nature actual'.[171] Therefore, Aquinas writes, existence must be 'compared' to essence as actuality is to potentiality.[172] However, as we have seen, Aquinas has already demonstrated that in God there can be no potentiality. Aquinas therefore declares once more that God's essence doesn't differ from his existence.[173]

Finally, Aquinas considers the question as regards participation; he notes that something which 'has fire' but which is not itself fire is 'fire by participation'.[174] Similarly, anything which has existence, but which is not existence itself is a being by participation.[175] Aquinas, however, has already demonstrated that God is his own essence, as we have seen above. Therefore, Aquinas concludes, if God is not his own existence, he would then be a 'participated being' – which is something that Aquinas dismisses as 'absurd', on the grounds that God would then be precluded from being the first being.[176]

[168] Ibid.
[169] Ibid.
[170] Ibid.
[171] Ibid.
[172] Ibid.
[173] ST I, q.3. a.4.
[174] Ibid.
[175] Ibid.
[176] Ibid.

What one can conclude from these three claims is as follows: God, for Aquinas, is his own essence or nature.[177] All other things contain some division between **what** they are and **that** they are, which is to say, between their essence and their existence.[178] With the doctrine of simplicity, however, God's essence differs in no way from God's own existence.[179] Aquinas claims as such in both the *Summa Theologiae* and the *Summa Contra Gentiles*.[180] As he notes himself in the latter:

> …there is some being that must be through itself, and this is God. If, then, this being which must be belongs to an essence that is not that which it is, either it is incompatible with that essence or repugnant to it, as to exist through itself is repugnant to the quiddity of whiteness, or it is compatible with it and appropriate to it, as to be in another is in whiteness. If the first alternative be the case, the being that is through itself necessary will not befit that quiddity, just as it does not befit whiteness to exist through itself. If the second alternative be the case, either such being must depend on the essence, or both must depend on another cause, or the essence must depend on the being. The first two alternatives are contrary to the nature of that which is through itself a necessary being; for if it depends on another, it is no longer a necessary being.[181]

To put this more succinctly, Aquinas holds that there must necessarily exist some being whose existence is not contingent on some external cause to be, and this being which is 'through itself' is God.[182] God's existence is therefore in actuality the same as his essence; the alternative propositions which Aquinas offers (namely that God might depend on some external thing, and so on) being ultimately unsuitable to Aquinas' divine being.

[177] Eleonore Stump, "God's Simplicity," in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, ed. Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 135.
[178] Ibid., 135.
[179] Ibid.
[180] *ST* I, q.3. a.4.
[181] *ScG* I, 22.
[182] Ibid.

GENUS AND SPECIES

Article 5 of Question 3 deals with the question of genus, as that concept relates to God. Elders notes that Aquinas has already excluded from God any possibility of real composition, whether physical or metaphysical; according to Elders, he will now argue that 'the logical composition of specific difference and generic nature' must also be denied to God.[183] To do this, Aquinas begins by presenting the very possibility that God might be 'contained within a genus' itself. He lists a number of things which support this possibility; for instance, Aquinas presents the fact that a substance is a being which 'subsists of itself' – therefore making this 'especially true of God', for God's essence is the same as God's existence. As a consequence, Aquinas wonders if one might say that God is 'in a genus of substance.'[184]

However, Aquinas rejects these notions as being unsuitable for God.[185] He claims simply that in the mind, a given genus precedes what that genus contains; God as first being can have nothing prior to him, however, and therefore Aquinas claims that God is not 'in any genus'.[186] To help justify this particular point, Aquinas then launches into a much deeper exploration of the nature of genus. He writes:

> A thing can be in a genus in two ways; either absolutely and properly, as a species contained under a genus; or as being reducible to it, as principles and privations. For example, a point and unity are reduced to the genus of quantity, as its principles; while blindness and all other privations are reduced to the genus of habit. But in neither way is God in a genus. That He cannot be a species of any genus may be shown in three ways.[187]

[183] Leo Elders, *The Philosophical Theology of St Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, Brill Archive, 1990), 154.
[184] *ST* I, q.3. a.5.
[185] Ibid.
[186] Ibid.
[187] Ibid.

The first of these three ways is to be in a genus absolutely, such as a species under a genus might be.[188] The second way is for that thing to be reducible to that genus 'as principles and privations'.[189] To better explain himself here, as elsewhere, Aquinas provides an excellent example; he notes that 'a point and unity' are reducible to the genus of quantity, as that genus' principles. Similarly, he writes, blindness and 'all other privations' are reduced to the genus of habit.[190]

However, Aquinas clarifies, in neither of these ways is God himself in a genus; Aquinas presents three reasons to demonstrate this.[191] The first of these is that if God were a species with a genus, this would have to be the genus 'being', as Aquinas himself noted above.[192] If God were in this genus, he would necessarily have to be differentiated from other things in that genus by way of his 'own particular way of being', which is to say, infinity.[193] However, Aquinas dismisses this possibility on the basis that it would suppose for God some potentiality, and this is something we have seen Aquinas condemn as impossible for God by virtue of his being pure act.[194]

The second of these three reasons which preclude God from being contained within a genus is for the fact that God, were He in a genus, He would be in the genus of being, as we have said. This is the case Aquinas writes, 'because [when] genus is predicated as an essential it refers to the essence of a thing'.[195] However, Aquinas cites Aristotle's reasoning that being cannot itself be genus, because every genus has within it 'differences distinct from its generic essence'.[196] Aquinas notes that no difference can exist which is

[188] Ibid.
[189] Ibid.
[190] Ibid.
[191] *ST* I, q.3. a.5.
[192] Elders, *The Philosophical Theology of St Thomas Aquinas,* 154.
[193] Ibid.
[194] Ibid.
[195] *ST* I, q.3. a.5.
[196] Ibid.

distinct from being, for 'non-being cannot be a difference'.[197] Elders clarifies this further, writing that what Aquinas means by this is that formal differences are not conceivable outside being because these differences must themselves *be real*.[198] Therefore Aquinas concludes once more that God cannot be contained within a genus.[199]

Finally, the third of these three reasons is due to that fact that for Aquinas, 'all in one genus agree in the quiddity or essence of the genus which is predicated of them as essential, but they differ in their existence'.[200] Aquinas clarifies that the existence of men and the existence of horses are not in fact the same; thus he writes that in 'every member of a genus', the essence of and existence of a thing must differ.[201] Naturally, however, Aquinas has already claimed that for God these two things cannot actually differ, and so concludes that God is not in a genus as if he were a species.[202]

DIVINE SIMPLICITY AND DIVINE ACTIVITY

On the topic of how divine simplicity relates to operations of the divine will, Aquinas notes that God's willing of 'other things' and God's willing of himself occur in 'one act of will'.[203] This is so for several reasons, Aquinas informs us: first, because every power is directed to the *object* of that power *by one operation or act*, as when one through sight sees both light and colour together, and not in two acts of will.[204] Secondly, because whatever is *perfectly* known and desired by anything is done so according to the *whole power* of the thing being known and desired.[205] The power of the end, however, consists

[197] Ibid.
[198] Elders, *The Philosophical Theology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 154.
[199] *ST* I, q.3. a.5.
[200] Ibid.
[201] Ibid.
[202] *ST* I, q.3.a.5.
[203] *ScG* I, 76.
[204] *ScG* I, 76, 2.
[205] *ScG* I, 76, 3.

not in one but in *two* manners – the end in *itself*, and the end *insofar as it makes other things desirable*.[206]

To desire an end perfectly is therefore to desire it in both manners – both in itself, and how it relates to other things. God is perfect, and therefore cannot but will himself perfectly. Aquinas concludes from this that when God wills himself perfectly, by that same act, God wills other things for his sake (or as Wippel notes in other translations 'on account of [God's] self') owing to God's status as the ultimate end. Finally, Aquinas reminds us that as he has shown in question 75 of the *SCG*, God only wills other things than himself insofar as he wills himself; in light of this, he concludes that God therefore wills both himself and other things 'by one and the same act of will'.[207]

Aquinas actually presents several more reasons as to why God's willing himself and willing of other things occur in the very same act; we shall look at these only briefly. The third reason Aquinas suggests is that were God's act of willing himself and God's act of willing other things be separate, there would be a resulting 'discursiveness' or movement within God's act of will, which is an impossible conclusion because Aquinas defines God as being beyond motion.[208] Next, Aquinas claims that because God wills himself 'always', were God to will himself and other things by separate acts it would necessarily follow that God would possess *two* acts of will, which Aquinas considers impossible on the basis that 'one simple power does not have at once two operations'. After this, Aquinas dismisses the idea that God might have more than one act of will because in an object-to-willer relationship, the willer is the mover and the object is the moved. Were

[206] Ibid.
[207] Wippel, "Norman Kretzmann on Aquinas's Attribution of Will and of Freedom to Create to God," *Religious Studies* 39, no. 3 (2003): 292.
[208] *ScG* I, 76, 4.

God to indulge in any more than one single act of will than the one in which God wills himself, Aquinas claims, this would lead to their being within him some other mover of the divine will. Therefore Aquinas concludes that God must necessarily possess only one act of will.

The second to last reason that Aquinas holds the God wills both himself and other things in one single act of will consists fairly simply in the idea that because God's willing is his being, and because God is only *one* being, there can therefore be in him only one act of will. The last reason, meanwhile, appeals to God's being intelligent, and how God's willing 'belongs' to God according to how intelligent God is. In one activity God understands himself and all other things in so far as God's essence contains the perfections of all things. Therefore, Aquinas concludes, it is by one act that God wills himself and other things 'in so far as His goodness is the likeness of all goodness'.[209]

GOD'S PERFECTION

It is in question 4 of the *Prima Pars* of the *Summa Theologiae* that Aquinas comes to deal with the question of God's perfection.[210] Elders notes that this is certainly what could be called an 'abrupt' change in focus, especially after his exhaustive study of God's divine simplicity just preceding it.[211] Elders also notes that Aquinas makes use of exactly this format in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*; after a series of chapters which demonstrate God's lack of composition, the issue of God's perfection is considered, followed by a treatise on the divine names and then six chapters on matters relating to God's goodness.[212]

[209] *ScG* I, 76, 5 – 8.
[210] *ST* I, q.4. a.1.
[211] Elders, *The Philosophical Theology of St Thomas Aquinas,* 161.
[212] Ibid.

Whatever about Aquinas' chosen format, it is only fitting that after considering God's simplicity that we come to consider God's perfection. Naturally, in line with his own Christian convictions, Aquinas claims that God surely is perfect – citing Matthew 5:48 with its passage "Be you perfect as also your Heavenly Father is perfect."[213] As with all other areas of the Summa, however, Aquinas then acts to demonstrate the validity of this claim. He immediately presents himself in contrast to the ancient philosophers; they, he claimed, were apt to consider only a 'material' first principle, which is of course insufficient for God, for matter is 'most imperfect' owing to matter's status as 'merely potential' and God's needing to be fully actual.[214]

Aquinas considers God not as a material first principle, but instead 'in the order of efficient cause', which must be perfect.[215] This Aquinas explains is the case because as matter is potential, an efficient cause must be actual – and the origin of all activity must be the most actual of things.[216] Furthermore, anything which is most actual, Aquinas claims, is also therefore the most perfect of all things, because a thing's perfection is in proportion to its actuality.[217]

So God is perfect for Aquinas, then; but Aquinas' next question is whether the perfections of all things are in God.[218] Once more he answers this positively, citing Dionysius' claim that "God in His one existence prepossesses all things".[219] Aquinas himself repeats this claim explicitly, writing that 'All created perfections are in God. Hence, He is spoken of

[213] *ST* I, q.4. a.1.
[214] Ibid.
[215] Ibid.
[216] Ibid.
[217] Brian Davies & Leftow, Brian, *Aquinas: Summa Theologiae, Questions on God* (2006), 45.
[218] *ST* I, q.4. a.2.
[219] Ibid.

as universally perfect, because He lacks not any excellence which may be found in any genus'.[220]

Aquinas sets out to prove this in two ways. He first appeals to the fact that whatever perfection can be said to exist in an effect must necessarily be found in that effect's effective cause.[221] This differs depending on whether the cause and effect of any given thing are either univocal or equivocal.[222] Man begetting man is an example of the former, Aquinas claims, and the sun with its power producing things which are like the sun is an example of the latter – which Aquinas also considers the 'more perfect' of the two types.[223] Having established that effects pre-exist potentially in the cause of a thing, Aquinas then considers these types of causes against each other.[224] He claims that any effect which pre-exists in a material cause does so 'imperfectly', while those effects which pre-exist in an efficient cause do so perfectly.[225] Aquinas has already defined God as the 'first effective cause of all things'; therefore, Aquinas says, the perfections of all things must pre-exist in God.[226] This they do, Aquinas claims, in a 'more eminent way'.[227]

The second reason as to why God contains within him the perfection of all things Aquinas takes from his prior declaration that God is existence itself.[228] If God is existence itself subsisting through itself, Aquinas writes, he must necessarily contain within him the full perfection of existing.[229] All created perfections, Aquinas notes, are included in the perfection of being; this is because things are perfect in so far as they have existence in

[220] Ibid.
[221] Ibid.
[222] Ibid.
[223] Brian Davies and Brian Leftow (eds), *Summa Theologiae, Questions on God* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 46.
[224] Ibid.
[225] Ibid, 46-47.
[226] Ibid.
[227] Ibid.
[228] *ST* I, q.4. a.2.
[229] Davies and Leftow, *Summa Theologiae, Questions on God*, 47.

some way.[230] God as existence itself must therefore contain within him the perfection of all things, Aquinas finishes.[231] Aquinas uses the example of something hot in an effort to make this point clearer; he notes that if something which is hot falls short of the 'full perfection of heat', this is because that thing does not participate fully in the nature of heat.[232] By that same token, Aquinas claims, if heat were to subsist through itself – as God subsists through himself, 'nothing of the power of heat could be lacking in it'.[233] Aquinas finally concludes that God possesses within him the perfections of all things, owing to his being existence itself subsisting.[234]

GOD'S GOODNESS

Having defined God as perfect, then, and containing within him the perfections of all created things, Aquinas next attempts to deal with the question of God's actual goodness.[235] Integral to understanding how Aquinas will ultimately come to conclude that God is good is to realise that Aquinas first considers the predicate 'good' to be a common one.[236] This he determines in question five of the *Prima Pars*; it is in question six that Aquinas considers goodness as it relates specifically to God.[237] Within this question he reaches three conclusions as to the nature of God's goodness which matter in our attempting to encapsulate his conception of God. The first is that to be good pre-eminently belongs to God; the second, that God is the supreme good; finally, third is that only God alone is good essentially.[238]

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[230] Ibid, 47.
[231] *ST* I, q.4. a.2.
[232] Brian Davies and Brian Leftow (eds), *Summa Theologiae, Questions on God*, 47.
[233] Ibid.
[234] Ibid.
[235] *ST* I, q.6. a.1.
[236] Ludger Honnefelder, "God's Goodness," *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas (*ed.) Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 147.
[237] *ST* I, q.6. a.1.
[238] Ibid.

Aquinas characterises God as being good on the basis that for him, a being is good insofar as that thing is desirable.[239] Beings desire their own perfection, Aquinas continues, and this perfection (or form) which they desire is 'a similitude of the agent that causes perfection by actualising a thing's form'.[240] Certainly this point requires expansion. According to Davies, what Aquinas means by 'desire' is not so much a conscious sort of yearning towards something; instead, Aquinas is speaking of a tendency or inclination towards the good which is inherent in every being.[241] This desire towards the good manifests in the way that beings are naturally drawn to their own perfection, whatever that perfection may consist of.[242]

Davies summarises this with the claim that for Aquinas, everything naturally tends to be itself – meaning that they are attempting to realise their natures.[243] The question might then be put as this: is the perfection each being is seeking something internal, or something external to that being? For Aquinas, the answer is complex.[244] Created beings are intended by God to be a certain way; they will generally seek to be in this way if not lead astray, and in doing so attempt to seek their own good – the good resultant from living in accordance with their natures.[245] Created things follow from the intention of their creator to be as that creator intended them to be. In seeking to fulfil this intention of their creator, these things are by definition seeking to be themselves - and since what they seek to be is something defined by God, the ultimate benevolent creator, their seeking to be themselves is for them to seek the good.[246]

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[239] Ibid.
[240] Ludger Honnefelder, "God's Goodness," *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas,* 147.
[241] Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 87.
[242] Ibid.
[243] Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 87.
[244] Ibid, 88.
[245] Ibid.
[246] Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 87.

According to Davies, the second conclusion which Aquinas reaches as regards God's goodness is that not only is God good, God is the supreme good.[247] To justify this, Aquinas likens God to created things as the sun is to fire.[248] God possesses all of the perfections of created things, as we have said; however, these perfections which flow from God as the first cause do so in a manner which is unequal. For God is greater than created things, and possesses 'more excellently' the desired perfections found in created things than those things themselves – much as the sun, Aquinas explains, has heat 'more excellently' than fire does.[249] If God is the cause of all created things and possesses within him the perfections of these created things but 'more excellently' than they could ever, Aquinas claims that one can only conclude that God is 'the supreme good'.[250]

Finally, the third conclusion which Aquinas comes to regarding God's goodness is that God alone is good essentially.[251] He explains that the perfection of a thing is 'threefold' – a thing is perfect with regard to the constitution of its own being, a thing is perfect with respect to the accidents it must necessarily possess for 'perfect operation', and finally, a thing is perfect in so far as it can attain something else as its end.[252] Aquinas claims that this 'triple perfection' belongs to no creature essentially; it does, however, belong to God.[253] This is because God is identical with his essence, because God possesses no accidents, and because rather than being directed towards an end, God is himself 'the last end of all things'.[254] As he has proved that God satisfies the demands of 'triple perfection', Aquinas proclaims that God alone is good essentially.[255]

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[247] *ST* I, q.6. a.2.
[248] Ibid.
[249] Ibid.
[250] Ibid.
[251] *ST* I, q.6. a.3.
[252] Ibid.
[253] Ibid.
[254] Ibid.
[255] Ibid.

GOD'S INFINITY, GOD'S IMMUTABILITY, AND GOD'S UNITY

Te Velde claims that each of these three attributes of God's (God's infinity, God's immutability, and God's unity) contain a 'specific synthesis of the negative aspect of simplicity, and the positive aspect of perfection'.[256] For this reason they are grouped together here. It has been noted above that divine simplicity is a key facet of Aquinas' conception of God; it is with regard to attributes like these that this claim might bear out.

So God for Aquinas is both divinely simple and perfect; in question seven of the *Prima Pars* of the *Summa Theologiae,* Aquinas asks whether God is infinite or not.[257] Aquinas begins his arguments for God's being infinite with reference to the fact that 'all the ancient philosophers attribute infinitude to the first principle'.[258] Aquinas declares this a reasonable claim, despite the various missteps some of those ancient philosophers may have taken.[259]Infinity for Aquinas can be considered to be the 'negation of being finite'.[260] In other words, a thing for Aquinas is infinite so long as it is not finite.[261]

How does Aquinas define God as being infinite? He begins first by explaining that a thing can be finite in one of two ways: either as matter is made finite by form, or form is made finite by being received into matter.[262] Of these two, Aquinas defines the latter as possessing more of the quality of perfection; this is because unlike matter, which is perfected by form, form is limited by matter.[263] Therefore form which is not limited to matter 'has the nature of something which is perfect'.[264] Aquinas then claims that being

[256] Rudi Te Velde, *Aquinas on God: The Divine Science of the Summa Theologiae* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2006), 82.
[257] *ST* I, q.7. a.1.
[258] Ibid.
[259] Ibid.
[260] Te Velde, *Aquinas on God,* 82.
[261] *ST* I, q.7. a.1.
[262] Te Velde, *Aquinas on God,* 82.
[263] *ST* I, q.7. a.1.
[264] Ibid.

is the most formal of all things, and as God is his own subsistent being, God can only be infinite and perfect.[265]

As regards God's immutability, Aquinas claims that God can only be immutable; God is a being of pure act who possesses no potentiality, and potentiality is in everything which is in some way changed. If there is no potentiality in God, then there can be no capacity for God to be other than he is, whether accidently or substantially.[266] Thus Aquinas considers it impossible that God might be changeable.[267] He also argues that God's simplicity prevents him from changing, as things which change lose parts of themselves while gaining others – but God lacks any internal composition, thanks to his divine simplicity.[268]

According to Davies, for Aquinas, simplicity is the opposite of compositeness; a divinely simple God can therefore contain no composite parts.[269] Therefore Aquinas claims he cannot be changed.[270] Finally, Aquinas considers it impossible that God might change because everything which is 'moved' acquires something by that movement which it did not have previously.[271] God, however, for Aquinas, is infinite, possessing in himself the perfections of all created beings; he therefore cannot acquire anything new; thus Aquinas says movement does not belong to him, and he cannot change.[272]

Finally, Aquinas declares God's unity can be proven in three ways, again with ample references to his views on God's divine simplicity and God's perfection.[273] He begins by

[265] Ibid.
[266] Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 51.
[267] *ST* I, q.9.a.1.
[268] Ibid.
[269] Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 51.
[270] *ST* I, q.7.a.1.
[271] Ibid.
[272] Ibid.
[273] *ST* I, q.11.a.3.

noting that God's simplicity means there cannot be a multiplicity of Gods, for what makes a thing a particular thing is that it possesses something which Aquinas claims 'cannot be communicated to many'.[274] God, Aquinas says, is his own nature; Socrates is a man not by the way he is Socrates in particular, but in contrast, God is God in the way that he is this particular God – for unlike Socrates God is identical with his nature.[275] Therefore, Aquinas claims that God can only be one, and that no multiplicity of Gods can exist.

The second and third reasons have to do with God's perfection and the unity of the world, respectively. As Aquinas has already proved that God possesses the whole perfection of being, he can dismiss the possibility of other gods existing; for if other gods existed, they would each possess something which the other gods did not – be that thing privation or perfection. Therefore Aquinas concludes that there is only one God.[276] Finally, Aquinas notes that the unity of world makes it clear that God is one, insofar as everything which exists is 'seen to be ordered to each other since some serve others'.[277]

However, Aquinas notes that things which are diverse do not harmonise 'in the same order' unless they are ordered by only one thing.[278] Things can be ordered into harmony better by one being than by a multitude, Aquinas claims – for one he says is the 'per se cause of one', and many are ' 'only the accidental cause of one insomuch as those things are in some way one'.[279] Aquinas considers the first of all things the most perfect (and is so 'per se') and lacking in accident; he concludes therefore that it must be the first which reduces all into one order – and this first he says is God. Therefore God is one.[280]

[274] Ibid.
[275] Ibid.
[276] Ibid.
[277] Ibid.
[278] Ibid.
[279] Ibid.
[280] Ibid.

Aquinas clarifies that God is not merely one, but 'supremely' one. This is because if anything is to be 'supremely one', it must itself be 'supremely being, and supremely undivided'.[281] Both of these are things Aquinas has already said of God, by virtue of God possessing the full perfection of being and possessing no internal composition; Aquinas considers God 'supremely one'.[282]

Before we might conclude, Aquinas claims that God possesses two other chief characteristics which are important to consider if we are to understand divine free will. These are God's omnipresence, and God's eternity. The eternity of God, Aquinas notes, follows on from his being immutable; time, he says, follows movement; God does not move, and therefore is supremely immutable, and thus eternal.[283] As always we must consider God's divine simplicity; Aquinas clarifies that God is not simply 'eternal only', but actually is his own eternity, unlike all created beings who are not themselves identical with their duration.[284] God, as divine simple, is his own 'uniform being', and thus is his own essence. Therefore Aquinas declares that he is also his own eternity.[285]

God's omnipresence is defined in this fashion: Aquinas sets out that God is in all things not as part of the essences of those things, nor as an accident, but 'as an agent is present to that upon which it works'.[286] In other words, Aquinas says, the mover and the moved 'must be joined together'.[287] God, thanks to his divine simplicity, is very being by his own essence; created being, Aquinas concludes, must be God's own proper effect.[288] However, God does not only 'ignite' things into being, but instead supports their being

[281] Ibid.
[282] Ibid.
[283] *ST* I, q.10.a.2.
[284] Ibid.
[285] Ibid.
[286] *ST* I, q.8.a.1.
[287] Ibid.
[288] Ibid.

as long as they are preserved in being. Therefore, Aquinas claims that as long as a thing is in being, God must be present to that thing according to its mode of being.[289] Being is fundamentally inherent in all things; therefore, God must be in all things – and not only that, but 'innermostly'.[290] It is from these points that Aquinas considers God as being omnipresent; God is in everything which has being, sustaining that being; thus God is in everything in every place, as there are things that fill every place whose being he must support.[291]

This concludes a detailed overview of Aquinas's conception of God; his views on God's attributes, his views on God's modes of being, and the way in which God acts in concert with created things. From here we shall go to look at whether God possesses a will, and if that will is free or not.

CONCLUSION

The first part of this chapter dealt with several key concepts needed in order to make sense of Aquinas' conception of God – a necessary first step before approaching any question of divine freedom. The chapter opened with a detailed accounting of Aquinas' conception of knowledge – how things could be known, and so forth. From here the chapter explored the precise relationships between human cognition and knowledge, and from here the areas of jurisdiction divided between sensory and intellective cognition.

Following this the chapter dealt with another great issue – human knowledge of God, according to Aquinas. After making this clear as possible, the chapter began an examination of Aquinas' apophatic theology, and the many ways in which it is not purely

[289] *ST* I, q.8.a.1.
[290] Ibid.
[291] Ibid.

negative. Finally, section one of the chapter concluded with discussions of Aquinas' conception of language, and how he thought human language could describe a transcendent God, before culminating in a detailed exploration of Aquinas recourse to analogical language about God.

From here the chapter moved to consider Aquinas' characterisation of God as found within one of his most seminal texts, the *Summa Theologiae*. It began with a detailed analysis of God's simplicity, that is, his lack of composition, distinguishable internal component parts, or any sort of division between any of God's various acts of will. Understanding divine simplicity first was crucial, as it informs in some manner each of the other of God's attributes for Aquinas.

The next facet of God the chapter examined was that of the interplay of God's essence and God's existence; the conclusion reached was in line with the doctrine of divine simplicity, in that God's essence and existence are in fact one in the same. From here the chapter examined how God fits into Aquinas understanding genus and species, with the ultimate conclusion that God cannot be contained in a genus. An analysis of divine perfection followed, containing within it a summary of how Aquinas concluded God to be perfect, and if his being perfect made it that God contained all of the perfections of created beings. With this finished, God's ultimate goodness was examined; here Aquinas establishes that God is good, the supreme good, in fact, and that God alone is good essentially. Finally, the chapter concluded with a brief overview of three of God's attributes best examined together; these were God's infinity, God's immutability, and God's unity. For each of these, the reasoning through which Aquinas came to conclude that God was infinite, immutable, and unified into one single being were examined.

CHAPTER TWO: AQUINAS AND THE DIVINE WILL

Before we can inquire as to whether God possesses any measure of freedom of will, we need to first see if God can be said to have a will at all – be that will free or not. This chapter will examine Aquinas's notion of the will of God. The chapter will begin with a brief definition of divine goodness. From here, the chapter will examine the relationships between will, appetite, and goodness.

Following this, the chapter will, in succession, deal with will in inanimate objects, and then will in animals (and thus in human beings). This we do so in line with Aquinas's apophatic theology – one does not know *God* positively, but by what God is *not*, and so on. We also do it in the understanding that for Aquinas, causes and effects exist within a special relationship – the latter reveals some of the former, as we have said.

From here the chapter will move to consider the interactions between will and intellect, before defining in detail the differences between the sensory and intellectual appetites. After this the chapter will deal with how sensory appetite works with human reason in particular, and with that completed the divine will itself will finally be considered. To conclude, the chapter will then compare the divine will to the creaturely one, keeping in mind the ways in which these two concepts have been elucidated on throughout the chapter.

The notion or idea that God possesses a will is central to all theistic understandings of God – Christianity, Judaism, and Islam most obviously.[292] 'Will' in this context is often understood as being related to voluntary *action* and *activity* – if one possesses a will, one has the potential to act in certain ways, and to follow through on that potential however

[292] Brian Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 140.

often or not – but always in a manner which is voluntary.[293] The man who picks from the ground some dropped item or other - that is an action which could be considered as 'willed', for the man can choose – choose to act, or choose to refrain from acting.

Either choice is an operation of the will – it is conscious, voluntary or *deliberate.* Obviously, man is not God; God must surely be scrutinised under different standards and regulations. Can we speak of the will of God in anything like the way we can with created human beings? Human will concerns voluntary action and activity. Does God's will – should God have one – concern actions of a voluntary nature?

The answer in Christian theism is assuredly 'yes' – God is thought to act freely, to make choices and determinations about humanity and the created world, all so as to bring about salvation and beatitude for all mankind. Obviously, for God to partake in such voluntary actions, God must assuredly possess a will, then – though the exact character and nature of that will we can only speculate about, at least in Aquinas' view, with his doctrine of divine simplicity and his apophatic theology.[294] Yet before coming to speculate on the attributes of God's will, it is prudent first to consider exactly how Aquinas thinks God *possesses* that will, as we have said. How can we ask if God's will is free, if it emerges that Aquinas does not think God possesses a will at all? As is obvious, therefore, for Aquinas, any study of the concept of freedom – divine or not – must take into account the concept of the will.

It is interesting to note that Aquinas' insistence on the existence of the divine will actually represents a significant break with Aristotle, or 'the Philosopher' as Aquinas calls him. Whereas Aquinas – in line with Christian theism – ascribes something of a will to God,

[293] Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas, pp* 140 – 142.
[294] David B. Burrell, *Aquinas: God and Action* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1979), 53-55.

Aristotle did not. Instead, Aristotle considered God as 'chiefly a knower whose object of knowledge is Himself'.[295] This is not to say that Aristotle considered God as ineffectual, or as eternally within some state of non-activity; for Aristotle God is still the unmoved mover, the source of the changes and movements which we identify in the world.[296]

Aristotle's God, however, can only accomplish these changes and movements by being the 'final cause' of all other things – the ultimate object at which all things aim and to which they are drawn, in order to achieve.[297] As the final object, Aristotle's God causes movement – the movement and changing of created things towards God.[298] Much of this is certainly true of Aquinas' God also; the difference between Aquinas' God and Aristotle's comes from each God's respective status as 'final cause' – whereas Aquinas argues that God possesses a will of some kind, Aristotle's God can be said to function more as a kind of static destination, to which other things are drawn. This God does not will the changes and movements which occur in things as they move towards that God; instead, Aristotle's God looms above and away from them, inactive, much as a magnet which attracts to it metal things.[299]

WILL, APPETITE, AND GOODNESS

It is prudent to clarify first what we mean by 'will', within this context. For Aquinas, will can be defined as a particular form of wanting, and wanting itself is a particular instance of the more general phenomenon of what Aquinas calls *appetitus* or tendency.[300] In other words, will for Aquinas refers to an appetite; an appetite a thing

[295] Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas,* 140.
[296] Ibid.
[297] Ibid.
[298] Ibid.
[299] Ibid., 140 – 141.
[300] Anthony Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind* (London: Routledge, 1993), 59 – 60.

possesses for something for which it does not already have.[301]What these things lack is the ultimate quality or goodness to which Aquinas thinks all things are drawn. This concept of being 'drawn' to something implies the presence of intellect, however, as we shall see.

Kenny claims that for Aquinas, 'the intellect and the will are the two great powers of the mind'.[302] The intellect for Aquinas is one of the mind's powers of knowing (and kind of knowing specific to human beings). The will, meanwhile, is for Aquinas a particularly human power of wanting.[303] According to Kenny: "the sensory appetite is the capacity for those desires and revulsions which human beings and animals have in common; the intellectual appetite, which is more commonly called 'the will', is the capacity for the kind of wanting that, in this world at least, is peculiar to language users".[304] One might say, as Kenny does, that for Aquinas, the will is specifically human power of 'having wants which only the intellect can frame'.[305] Both animals and humans alike have wants, appetites – but only a human being might have the desire or want to 'worship God', or to 'square a circle', as Kenny notes.[306]

The concept of will for Aquinas is not merely bound up and connected to intellect, however – for Aquinas, any understanding of will (and intellect, for that matter) is also inexorably tied to Aquinas' concept of goodness. For Aquinas, a good thing, as McCabe writes, is that it is itself desirable; it is a thing that 'gives purpose to activity and is that in which satisfaction is attained'.[307] White illustrates Aquinas' point here in *ST* 1 q.19 a. 1

[301] *ST* I, q.19, a.1.
[302] Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind,* 59.
[303] Ibid.
[304] Ibid., 60
[305] Ibid. 59.
[306] Ibid. 59.
[307] Brian Davies (ed.), *God and Evil: In the Theology of St Thomas Aquinas* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010), 40.

with some clarity; he asserts that for Aquinas, *appetite* follows *cognition* – will follows intellect.[308] One must know a good before one can want that good to attempt to will that good. The soul must 'take things in' before it can itself 'go out' to other things which it seeks.[309] This, of course, leads us back to the intellect; one must know the good in some manner before going out to achieve it. That willing requires intellect in both the human and the divine does not, as we shall see, preclude Aquinas from extending the concept of appetite to incorporate animals and inanimate objects also.

WILL IN INANIMATE OBJECTS

The fact that will is a particular instance of wanting, and that wanting is itself a particular instance of appetite is important to note. For Aquinas, the concept of appetite is not a quality found solely in the divine – it is found also in humans, in animals and even inanimate objects. Each of these categories of things possesses a certain quality of tendency at the very least – in the case of inanimate objects for instance, Aquinas would say that heavy objects have a natural tendency to fall, while fire has a natural tendency to spread and propagate. For Aquinas, this notion of tendency is inherently linked to his understanding of the teleological aspect inherent in all actions – even in those carried out by inanimate bodies.[310]

Thus, heavy bodies fall and fire spreads because these things have natural tendency to do so, and these tendencies are teleological in nature – they are to bring about some final good or end, either for the agent itself or for the universe as a whole.[311] In other words, fire has a natural tendency to spread, and heavy bodies the natural tendency to fall, all in

[308] Kevin White, "Wanting Something for Someone: Aquinas on Complex Motions of Appetite," *The Review of Metaphysics* 61, no. 1 (2007), 4.

[310] Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind,* 59 – 60.
[311] Ibid.

pursuit of some goal – namely, arriving 'at the place where it is natural for them to be in a fully ordered cosmos'.[312]

From this definition of the teleological tendencies found in natural objects it may seem Aquinas is in some manner attributing aims and ends to inanimate objects – and this might tempt us to see Aquinas as indulging in anthropomorphism, as Kenny notes.[313] Such a view is in error, however; as Kenny writes, Aquinas does not mean to attribute 'ghostly half-conscious purposes' to inanimate objects; he considers them as inanimate and unconscious.[314] Kenny thinks, however, that Aquinas is accurate in thinking that inanimate objects can undertake activities of a teleological nature - even without consciousness. He also proclaims that Aquinas' notion of tendency is accurate – that objects have tendencies, and that they exhibit these tendencies in their natural agency.[315]

What is not so suitable are the 'archaic physics' which are behind Aquinas' understanding of teleology within created things.[316] Kenny claims that the main problem this antiquated, outdated physics presents is that it allows Aquinas to claim that all action – even including the elemental actions of completely inanimate objects – are fundamentally teleological in nature, as we have said.[317] Kenny declares that we must discard this notion, because Aquinas is incorrect in thinking it. While Kenny concedes that Aquinas would be correct in defining certain natural actions of inanimate objects as being teleological in nature, he is not correct to consider the spreading of fire and the falling of heavy bodies as such. This is because these actions are 'just things that happen to those substances', Kenny claims – in the case of heavy objects falling, it is not the natural tendency of these objects

[312] Ibid.
[313] Ibid.
[314] Ibid, 60.
[315] Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind*, 61.
[316] Ibid.
[317] Ibid.

to fall in some move *towards a teleological destination*, but the normal operation of the laws of inertia and gravity that compels them to fall.[318]

Where Aquinas might be allowed to speak about the teleological aspect of the natural tendencies of inanimate creatures, Kenny says, is in the case of plant life – because while the natural tendencies expressed in the natural agency of heavy objects and fire are not teleological in nature, the activities of plant life are.[319] 'The vital actions of all plants', Kenny notes, 'are for the good of all plants, whether as individual or as a species'.[320] This would remain true even if one could identify 'a further, non-teleological, evolutionary explanation of the existence and development of species of teleological agents'.[321]

To conclude, for Aquinas, the activities of certain inanimate objects are teleological in nature, and the purpose of each of these objects is achieved thanks to the 'natural tendencies' of the objects in question. However, certain critics such as Kenny claim Aquinas is incorrect in assigning a teleological explanation for the natural tendencies of *all* objects – some, like the actions of plant life, are in fact fully teleological in nature – even in the absence of consciousness. Others, however, such as the tendency of heavy objects to fall, are simply the 'normal operation of the laws of inertia and gravity', rather than some set of teleological activities carried out by inanimate objects.

WILL IN ANIMAL AND HUMAN LIFE

Wanting, for Aquinas, is a more general form of willing. It can properly be considered as a 'higher analogue' of the aforementioned natural tendencies of plant life, and is found only in animals and humans because wanting depends on the presence of

[318] Ibid.
[319] Ibid.
[320] Ibid.
[321] Ibid.

consciousness.[322] As a higher analogue of natural tendencies, we might say that wanting is itself a tendency – a tendency which is, as we have said, contingent on the presence of consciousness.[323]

Why is this the case? The answer to this question has to do with the relationship between conscious beings and forms. The primary difference between unconscious objects such as plant life and animal or human life is related to the concept of form, and how form relates to consciousness.[324] In things which lack consciousness, there is in that thing one form only – and this is the form that makes that thing 'the thing it is in accordance with its nature'.[325] Things which possess consciousness, however, possess more than their 'natural forms' – they can *also* receive the forms of other things other than themselves.[326] As Aquinas writes in *ST* I, q.80, a.1:

For in those which lack knowledge, the form is found to determine each thing only to its own being--that is, to its nature. Therefore this natural form is followed by a natural inclination, which is called the natural appetite. But in those things which have knowledge, each one is determined to its own natural being by its natural form, in such a manner that it is nevertheless receptive of the species of other things: for example, sense receives the species of all things sensible, and the intellect, of all things intelligible, so that the soul of man is, in a way, all things by sense and intellect: and thereby, those things that have knowledge, in a way, approach to a likeness to God, "in Whom all things pre-exist," as Dionysius says (Div. Nom. v).

[322] Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind*, 59 – 60.
[323] Ibid. 60.
[324] Ibid.
[325] Ibid.
[326] Ibid.

Certain translations of this passage, such as that used by Kenny, substitute the word 'consciousness' for 'knowledge'. Here, Aquinas makes clear what was said above: that things which have 'knowledge' or consciousness possess not only their own natural forms; they are also 'receptive of the species of other things' – they are open to receiving the forms of other things in some manner.[327] What does it mean, then, for animals and humans to possess, in whatever fashion, the forms of other things? Simply put, it means that these animals and humans possess not only their own natural tendencies, but tendencies associated with the forms of these other objects they possess.[328]

In the above quotation from *ST* I, q.80, a.1, Aquinas claims that 'sense receives the species of all things sensible, and the intellect of all things intelligible'.[329] This is so Aquinas says that 'the soul of man is, in a way, all things by sense and intellect'.[330] The distinction between the sensible and the intelligible is important – human beings are not pure intelligences; thus, for Aquinas they possess two different appetitive powers. These appetitive powers correspond to the differences between sensory awareness and intellectual understanding.[331] According to Kenny, for Aquinas, the sensory appetite is the capacity by which human beings and animals possess those desires and revulsions they have in common. The intellectual appetite is in contrast 'the capacity for wanting that, in this world at least, is peculiar to language-users.[332] The intellectual appetite is of course more commonly referred to as the will.[333]

[327] Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind,* 60.
[328] Ibid.
[329] *ST* I, q.80, a.1.
[330] Ibid.
[331] Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind,* 60.
[332] Ibid.
[333] Ibid.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WILL AND INTELLECT

In what manner specifically do these two great powers of the mind interact, then? According to Kretzmann, will depends upon the intellect in acts of choice; however, it does so in a manner which preserves the freedom of choice.[334] This is so because the will can be moved by the intellect in much the same way as an agent is moved by an end.[335] The intellect might present any particular end to the will; the only necessity involved in this process is that of the necessity of the end – this is the requirement that any action or goal presented by the intellect must be a suitable means to bring one to the ultimate end.[336] In other words, the intellect can present to the will any number of subordinate goods, the willing of which will bring a person to the ultimate good or end. The will can freely reject each of these subordinate goods for whatever reason – even if that subordinate good is perceived by the intellect as something which contributes to achieving or enjoying the ultimate end.[337] The only necessity in place is that the subordinate good being presented by the intellect before the will is itself something which invariably lead to one achieving or enjoying in the final, ultimate end.[338]

According to Kretzmann, the ability of the will to 'veto' any subordinate goods presented by the intellect is borne of the fact that will moves intellect as 'an agent or efficient cause so that the intellect will present this particular subordinate good to the will rather than some other.'[339] One can say, then, that for Aquinas, will moves intellect 'as an efficient and moving cause', while intellect moves the will 'in the manner of the final cause'.[340]

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[334] Wippel, "Norman Kretzmann on Aquinas's Attribution of Will and of Freedom to Create to God," *Religious Studies* 39, no. 3 (2003): 290.
[335] Ibid.
[336] Ibid.
[337] Ibid.
[338] Ibid.
[339] Ibid.
[340] Ibid.

THE SENSORY APPETITE AND THE INTELLECTUAL APPETITE: FURTHER DEMARCATION

One of the difficulties which Aquinas identifies within his own account of appetition is that which he sets out in *ST* I, q.80, a.2. Fortunately this difficulty will prove useful in further defining the differences between the sensory and intellectual appetites. In that passage within *ST* I, q.80, a.1, Aquinas points out that intellectual awareness is something which is concerned with *universals*, and it is this which demarcates it from sensory awareness, which is instead concerned with individuals.[341] However, Aquinas claims, this distinction cannot itself be applied to the appetite power of the soul. Why so? As Aquinas makes explicit:

> But there is no place for this distinction in the appetitive part: for since the appetite is a movement of the soul to individual things, seemingly every act of the appetite regards an individual thing. Therefore the intellectual appetite is not distinguished from the sensitive.[342]

In other words, what Aquinas is saying is that one cannot distinguish the intellectual and sensory appetites in the soul, because the former is concerned only with universal things – and wanting for Aquinas is a tendency which moves from the soul towards *things* – particular, *individual* things. Therefore, Aquinas concludes, because each want is for an individual thing, and not for some universal, there cannot therefore be any distinction between the intellectual and sensory appetites.[343]

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[341] *ST* I, q.80, a.1.
[342] Ibid.
[343] Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind*, 62.

Aquinas' answer to this particular issue is in two parts; he first notes that the will is 'a power for wanting immaterial goods, such as science and virtue'.[344] However, the main portion of his answer is to make clear that even though the will is directed upon individual, extra-mental things, the will is directed at them 'as answering to some universal description'.[345] To make this point somewhat more accessible, Aquinas quotes Aristotle's *The Rhetoric* – specifically the notion that one 'hates the whole class of brigands' or thieves – not just those specific examples.[346]

Kenny explains this fairly complex dilemma through use of metaphor. He asks that the reader imagine themselves ordering a medium-rare steak from a waiter. Certainly, what satisfies this want is a single, individual thing: a medium-rare steak. Crucially, however, Kenny notes that the initial want in this case – the want for the steak – is *not* a want for the particular steak which is brought out to me. This want is instead universal – I wanted a steak of exactly the same kind as that which the waiter brought me, but not the *particular* steak I was given – no matter how closely this steak I was given matches my requests.[347] One cannot complain to the waiter that the medium-rare steak provided was insufficient, and that one instead wanted 'a different one exactly like it'.[348] In this way, a want for a particular *kind* of medium-rare steak is a universal want, which is satisfied by some particular thing – the steak we received.[349]Thus, Kenny says, 'a want expressed by language can be a universal one, even though it is satisfied by a particular thing'.[350]

[344] Ibid.
[345] Ibid.
[346] Ibid.
[347] Ibid.
[348] Ibid.
[349] Ibid.
[350] Ibid.

Kenny does have some misgivings about Aquinas' attempts to distinguish the sensory and intellectual appetites, however; in his text *Aquinas On Mind*, he analyses Aquinas' efforts and ultimately declares them to be incoherent.[351] This is because of the difficulties Kenny thinks are inherent in trying to rectify sensory appetite and sense-perception.[352] Kenny claims that one cannot simply claim that sensual desire might be defined as 'any tendency arising from sense-perception', as Aquinas claims in *ST* I, q.80, a.2.[353] To demonstrate why, he makes use of the example of an art-collector spotting a 'majolica bowl' at an auction and coveting it – the desire for the bowl arises from sense-perception, but that desire of the art collector may itself be 'a highly intellectual desire'.[354] The answer to this potential scenario that Kenny eventually settles upon is this:

> Not all tendencies arising from sense-perception count as operations of the sensory appetite, but only those which are tendencies to perform specific activities. The desire to eat, the desire to drink, the desire to couple with a perceived object: these are paradigm exercises of the animal appetite. But Aquinas also sees the flight of the sheep from the wolf, and the charge of the enraged bull, as manifestations of appetite. There are negative as well as positive appetitions. Indeed, Aquinas divides the sensory appetite into two sub-faculties: one which is the locus of affective drives, and another which is the locus of aggressive drives.[355]

That Aquinas divides the sensory appetite into two 'sub-faculties' (the locus of affective drives, and that of aggressive ones, Kenny calls them) is something which Kenny seems content to accept; they help to clarify that for Aquinas, there are both positive and negative appetitions.[356] This being said, he finds Aquinas's 'anatomising' of sensory appetite as something that comes from the 'forced assimilation of diverse classifications

[351] Ibid.
[352] Ibid.
[353] Ibid.
[354] Ibid.
[355] Ibid., 63.
[356] Ibid.

made by previous philosophers and theologians. – and thus something not relevant to the present discussion of the divine will'[357]

Regardless, the end result of all this 'anatomising' of the sensory appetite is something which Kenny claims is not terribly coherent; he notes that there seems to be a greatly different criteria involved in defining some particular want as 'sensory' in nature, and that Aquinas' 'official' definition – that sensory desire should be a want which arises from sense-perception – as insufficient a criterion to mark these things as sensory desires.[358] Kenny notes that this criteria *does* include his aforementioned art-collector, whose desire for a particular piece is intellectual.[359] Aquinas' criteria does *not*, however, include hunger, where hunger does not precede from the sight and smell of food in the vicinity but actually precedes that sensory data.[360] Kenny concludes by suggesting some possible alternative criterions by which one may judge a want as being sensory, rather than intellectual – he settles on the notion that sensory wants are also wants which are 'feelings'.[361] He suggests hunger, thirst, and sexual desires as examples of these, before finally admitting that this new criterion does not cohere with Aquinas' own.[362] On the whole, Kenny's critique of Aquinas' position has some legitimacy – it does seem as though Aquinas is unable to present a clear distinction between sensory and intellectual wants and appetites.

[357] Ibid.
[358] Ibid., 64
[359] Ibid.
[360] Ibid.
[361] Ibid.
[362] Ibid.

THE SENSORY APPETITE AND HUMAN REASON

The final question relating to will and appetite which Kenny analyses is that of *ST* I, q.81, a.3. In this section, Aquinas wonders whether or not the sensory appetite is obedient to reason; Kenny calls it 'the most interesting article of the question.'[363] In it, Aquinas declares that the sensory appetite is subjugated to the intellectual part of the soul in two distinct manners.[364] The first he identifies through comparison of human action with animal action: in animals, Aquinas notes, appetite follows instinct –and 'it is thus that the lamb fears the wolf'.[365] In human beings, however, things like desire and fear may be the result of experience or inductive reasoning; fear and anger, meanwhile, can be modified through reflection on general truths, either encouraging or diminishing these in turn.[366] This is only the first way in which human passions may be influenced by reason.

The second way in which human desires are subjected to reason is a tad more complex. This sort of 'subjection' of passion to reason is not simply the intellect deciding to cause or to restrain and control any particular desire. The subjection, Kenny notes, goes deeper – 'whether or not we act upon a felt desire is something which is under the command of the intellectual part of the soul; it is under the influence of the will'.[367] To make this explicit, Kenny cites *ST* I, q.81, a.3:

> For in other animals movement follows at once the concupiscible and irascible appetites: for instance, the sheep, fearing the wolf, flees at once, because it has no superior counteracting appetite. On the contrary, man is not moved at once, according to the irascible and concupiscible appetites: but he awaits the command of the will, which is the superior appetite. For wherever there is order among a number of motive powers, the second only moves by virtue of

[363] *ST* I, q.81, a.3.
[364] Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind,* 65.
[365] Ibid.
[366] Ibid.
[367] Ibid.

> the first: wherefore the lower appetite is not sufficient to cause movement, unless the higher appetite consents.[368]

Unlike the lamb, the shepherd who flees from the wolf is performing an action for which he may be called upon to give reasons. This is because the actions of the shepherd are, as Kenny notes, 'it is an action taken in awareness of the rational considerations for and against it'.[369] The lamb cannot be blamed or commended for its actions; the human being might be condemned as a bad shepherd, for making inappropriate considerations for and against his abandoning of the sheep, for instance.

Despite all of this, however, Aquinas allows that human beings are not 'pure intellect' – though the sensory appetite is subject to reason, it can still rebel and disobey that reason. Aquinas quotes Aristotle on the matter; Aristotle claims that living creatures can be observed to have 'both a tyrannical and constitutional rule'. They have a tyrannical rule insofar as the soul rules the body – and they have a constitutional rule with regard to how the intellect rules the appetites.[370] This is to say, in other words, that the intellect does not nearly rule the appetites with the same sort of authority as the soul can be said to rule the body. As a result, the appetites can rebel, or go unsatisfied – open only to partial control and authority from the intellect at certain times, and more control at others.

THE DIVINE WILL

We have seen now in detail how Aquinas' concept of the will manifests in inanimate objects, animals, and finally, human beings – and the relationship this concept of will has to that of appetite. With all of this in mind, we must turn to look at the divine;

[368] *ST* I, q.81, a.3.
[369] Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind,* 65.
[370] Ibid.

how does the will of God manifest? How does the will of the divine – should it have one – coexist alongside the concept of appetite? Is the will of God as bound up with the concepts of goodness and intellect as is the case for human will?

An answer to this last question must be supplied first; any discussion of the divine will must first begin with discussion of another of God's attributes, to which God's will is inexorably bound: God's intellect.[371] In *ST* 1 q.19 a. 1, Aquinas writes that God possesses will because God can already be said to possess intellect, and it is invariable that will follows on from intellect, because to will a good involves knowing that good in some small way at least.[372] Aquinas actually makes this point in several places; an extract from *ScG* I, 72 follows:

> From the fact that God is endowed with intellect it follows that He is endowed with will. For, since the understood good is the proper object of the will, the understood good is, as such, willed. Now that which is understood is by reference to one who understands. Hence, he who grasps the good by his intellect is, as such, endowed with will. But God grasps the good by His intellect, for, since the activity of His intellect is perfect, as appears from what has been said, He understands being together with the qualification of the good. He is, therefore, endowed with will.[373]

We have already said as much; that for humans, will follows on from intellect; the soul must 'go out' before it can come back in – knowledge of the good precedes willing of the good.[374] Note how the concept of goodness comes into play – we have already said also how will is a particular instance of appetite for goods which only the intellect can frame. Here in *ScG* I, 72, God is said to 'grasp the good by his intellect' – much as a human being might. However, this raises some interesting questions when we compare this with creaturely experience – particularly when the concept of appetite is introduced.

[371] *ST* 1 q.19 a. 1.
[372] Ibid.
[373] *ScG* I, 72.
[374] Kevin White, "Wanting Something for Someone: Aquinas on Complex Motions of Appetite," 4.

We have said that will is part of the general concept of 'appetite', for Aquinas. Creatures are just that – creatures. They are finite, incomplete, and seek the good to satisfy their appetites. However, this does not work terribly well with the divine. If will is appetite, as we have said, then surely God cannot have will, for God for Aquinas is perfect and lacks nothing – unlike his creation, which lack for certain things.[375] Aquinas actually writes exactly that in *ST* I, q.19, a.1, listing it as one of three possible objections to the proposition 'God possesses a will'.[376] It will in fact be helpful now to look at those three objections in turn – for in responding to each of them, Aquinas is of course making the case for the existence of the divine will. In *ST* I, q.19, a.1, Aquinas writes:

> Objection 1: It seems that there is not will in God. For the object of will is the end and the good. But we cannot assign to God any end. Therefore there is not will in God.
>
> Objection 2: Further, will is a kind of appetite. But appetite, as it is directed to things not possessed, implies imperfection, which cannot be imputed to God. Therefore there is not will in God.
>
> Objection 3: Further, according to the Philosopher (De Anima III, 54), the will moves, and is moved. But God is the first cause of movement, and Himself is unmoved, as proved in Phys. VIII, 49. Therefore there is not will in God.[377]

Putting these objections more concisely, we might say the first is concerned with any potential end or goal for God; however, God can be ascribed no aim or goal, and thus, God cannot be said to have a will.[378] We shall refer to this as the objection based on an end. The second objection concerns the difficulties Aquinas has in reconciling his understanding of will as an appetite when his conception of God is perfect. How can God have an appetite for something if God is already perfect? Surely, the perfect, divinely

[375] *ST* I, q.4, a.1.
[376] *ST* I, q.19, a.1.
[377] Ibid.
[378] Brian Davies and Brian Leftow (eds), *Summa Theologiae, Questions on God* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 218.

simple God of Aquinas' many works is not in need of anything else to become 'complete'? We shall therefore call this the objection based on appetite. Finally, the third objection deals with the Aristotelian understanding of God as the 'unmoved mover'; the will, however, changes and is changed.[379] God as unmoved mover is the very first origin of change. Difficulty arises in trying to explain how God possess a will that changes him and is itself changed.[380] We shall therefore refer to this as the objection based on mutability.

Though these three objections – the first based on an end, the second on appetite, and the third on mutability – may seem damning, Aquinas attempts to answer each one in turn.[381] He precedes his answers with a quote he takes from the Apostle St. Paul in *Romans 12:2*, in which Paul mentions the divine will of God.[382] In quoting scripture on the question of will, Aquinas is making his view clear: like Paul, he thinks God possesses a will.[383] Following his turn to scripture, Aquinas sets out each of his answers for the three objections posed above. We shall examine these in turn, starting with the objection based on an end.

THE OBJECTION BASED ON ENDS

The first objection to there being will in God of any kind is based on the notions Aquinas has about aims, goals, and ends, and how they relate to the divine and human wills. Aquinas claims that for God to have a will, he must first have an aim or an end to direct his will at.[384] This is because the object of any will is some good – whether it be

[379] Davies and Leftow (eds), *Summa Theologiae, Questions on God*, 218.
[380] *ST* 1 q.19 a. 1.
[381] Ibid.
[382] *ST* 1 q.19 a. 1.
[383] Davies and Leftow (eds), *Summa Theologiae, Questions on God*, 218.
[384] Ibid.

God or man who does the willing. However, the problem for Aquinas is that one cannot ascribe to God any particular aim or end. Therefore, the objection goes, there must not be any will in God.[385] Lurking at the tail end of *ST* 1 q.19 a. 1 is a response to this objection, as will be the case with the others which follow. As regards the difficulty in assigning to God an end, Aquinas says the following:

> Although nothing apart from God is His end, yet He Himself is the end with respect to all things made by Him. And this by His essence, for by His essence He is good, as shown above (I: 6: 3): for the end has the aspect of good.

One might say that the essential point of Aquinas' response to the objection based on ends is that it is God's essence to be goodness itself, for goodness is related heavily to being, and God is the most actual of all things. What Aquinas is saying here, then, is that to begin with, God cannot will an end which is 'outside himself'.[386] Being is itself essentially good, and God is the greatest good, for God's essence is existence itself. As the greatest possible good, God can have no other end aside from God's own self. Thus, no proper aim for anything besides God can ever exist.

Additionally, everything which God makes is actually directed towards God himself as their ultimate end; this is something which Aquinas thinks he has already demonstrated sufficiently elsewhere.[387] Certainly these things may have subordinate ends of their own – but all of these tend towards the ultimate end, as noted previously. Finally, as God is the ultimate good it follows very reasonable that as an aim, God's own self is not simply *a* good, but *the* good.[388]

[385] Ibid.
[386] Ibid.
[387] Ibid.
[388] Ibid.

THE OBJECTION BASED ON APPETITE

The objection based on appetite is the second of Aquinas' three objections to the possibility that God might contain will. The objection can be explained in the following manner: for a creature to will is also for that creature to want something it perceives as both 'good' and which it currently lacks, among other things.[389] While Aquinas certainly ascribes this quality to created things, he admits that it cannot be the case with the God of Christian tradition. To do so would be to admit to God having an appetite of some kind – a longing for the good or an aim that God has not yet achieved.[390] Even a casual reader of Aquinas would realise the difficulties inherent in this sort of position; it would, among other things, condemn God to a state of imperfection, like the rest of His creation. After all, if God has an appetite for something which he lacks, then God is not fully and completely self-sufficient – and this is certainly not something Aquinas has been saying.[391]

Aquinas has already commented on God's perfection and state of totality in other places within the *Summa Theologiae*. In *ST* I. q.4 a. 1, for instance, Aquinas declares God to be perfect due to God's being the first principle of all things, and therefore the most actual – and with that the most perfect.[392] A perfect thing lacks nothing; it needs nothing else to be, and is complete in and of itself – God as perfect therefore can lack for nothing. Thus, one might conclude that understanding will within God as some kind of appetite for an end is inherently problematic – it conflicts rather harshly with divine perfection.[393] *ST* I q. 11 a. 3 and 4 and *ST* I q.3 a. 7 poses additional problems for this conception of God's

[389] James Brent, "God's Knowledge and Will," in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas* (eds), Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 164.
[390] *ST* 1 q.19 a. 1.
[391] *ST* 1 q.4 a. 1.
[392] Ibid.
[393] Ibid.

will as appetitive – in these articles and questions Aquinas defines God as 'one', 'supremely one', and 'wholly simple', respectively. Again, here Aquinas presents the reader with a God who is complete and total in Himself – possessing no interior divisions, and lacking no essential or even non-essential components (were God to ever need non-essential components).

Yet Aquinas does not turn away from the notion that will, even for God, is appetitive in nature.[394] As he writes in *ST* 1 q.19 a. 1:

> Will in us belongs to the appetitive part, which, although named from appetite, has not for its only act the seeking what it does not possess; but also the loving and the delighting in what it does possess. In this respect will is said to be in God, as having always good which is its object, since, as already said, it is not distinct from His essence.[395]

In this passage, Aquinas makes clear that for humanity, 'will is an appetitive part of our soul' – but that one must not be confused by an incorrect conception of the relationship between appetite and desire.[396] Obviously, Aquinas admits, the word for 'appetite' gets its name from the concept of 'wanting' – however, he continues, it is a mistake to presume that this means 'appetite' refers only to the action of wanting. Instead, Aquinas cautions the reader to realise that appetite or desire is active within a person both within the acts of *desiring* something, and in 'loving and delighting in that which is *already possessed*' (emphasis mine).[397] In other words, one has appetite both in seeking that which they do not already have, and also in rejoicing over and enjoying those things which a person already possesses. It is in the latter sense that we are to ascribe the concept of 'appetite' to God, Aquinas writes.[398] God has appetite in the way in which God rejoices in what

[394] Ibid.
[395] *ST* 1 q.4 a.1.
[396] Brian Davies and Brian Leftow (eds), *Summa Theologiae, Questions on God*, 218.
[397] Ibid, 218 -219.
[398] *ST* 1 q.19 a.1.

God has – and what God has is of course the good, which is its objective.[399] It is in this way that Aquinas reconciles his concepts of divine perfection and the will as appetitive.

THE OBJECTION BASED ON MUTABILITY

Finally, the argument based on mutability against the possibility that God has will runs as follows: according to the precepts of Aristotelian philosophy, 'will' both changes and is itself changed.[400] Aquinas has already defined God as 'the changeless first source of change' – something which Aristotle agrees with in his *Physics*. How can God therefore possess a will, if God is inherently changeless and will is that which changes itself and other things?

Aquinas' response to this objection is to examine the relationship between a will which is changed or modified by something, and the thing to which that will is directed.[401] In short, Aquinas says, a will is changed by another when the main objective of that will lies *outside the person who is willing.*[402] In other words, someone's will is changed or modified by something extrinsic to that will only when the person who is willing is seeking something which they do not already possess. In this is the key for Aquinas' response to the objection based on mutability: God's will, which Aquinas writes cannot be changed by anything which is extrinsic to it.[403] This is so because the sole object of God's will is God's own goodness – and this goodness of God's is also God's essence.[404] God's own will is also, of course, God's own essence.[405]

[399] Davies and Leftow, *Summa Theologiae, Questions on God*, 218 -219.
[400] Ibid, 219.
[401] Ibid.
[402] Ibid.
[403] Davies and Leftow, *Summa Theologiae, Questions on God*, 218-219.
[404] Ibid.
[405] Ibid.

This all being said, Aquinas does hold that God's will can be changed, if not by something extrinsic to God, but by God himself.[406] By this Aquinas does not mean the 'traditional' sort of change that occurs in the wills and willing of creatures, for this would entail a recourse to composition and temporal sequencing, neither of which a transcendent God can possibly have.

Aquinas claims instead that changes in the will of God are to be understood as Plato understood them.[407] This is to say that God's will changes through God's own acts of understanding and willing – which are of course entirely *intrinsic* to God's own self.[408] It is in this way, then, that Aquinas can have a changeless, immutable God who simultaneously has a will which can 'change' – God's own internal, intrinsic acts of understanding and willing can be said to be 'changes' to the divine will, in a partial sense.[409] This is because the objective of God's will from God's understanding is God's *own goodness* – which is *also* his will. Thus, Aquinas says, the divine will features no change visited upon it by an extrinsic source – only interior ones whereby God understands and wills God's own goodness.[410]

In light of these three objections, what can we say about the divine will? Taking Aquinas' responses to each of these objections, we can conclude that God (1) possesses a will, and (2), that this will does not conflict with the divine attributes: God can still have a will despite wills requiring some ultimate aim or goal; God can have a will despite possessing no appetite in the traditional sense. Finally, (3): God can possess a will despite the fact that Aquinas considers him to be immutable.

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[406] *ST* 1 q.19 a. 1.
[407] Davies and Leftow, *Summa Theologiae, Questions on God*, 219.
[408] Ibid.
[409] Ibid.
[410] Ibid.

We seem to be pursuing a line of investigation very much in keeping with Aquinas' apophatic theology – we aren't looking at what the will of God *is*; instead, with these objections, we are exploring what the will of God *is not*. Yet even with this apophatic theology we can say certain, determinate things about the divine will – such as the fact that it exists.

CREATURELY WILL AND THE DIVINE WILL: BRENT'S SUB ACTS

We have examined now the divine will by itself, and how it relates to some of God's attributes, like immutability, omnipotence, and so on. Yet, perhaps the best way to make sense of the divine will is through comparison; we might consider first creaturely will once more, and then see if that in any way coincides with the divine one. From this we can begin to understand the differences between the two, and those particular aspects which are peculiar to the divine one. Brent claims that for creatures, the concept of 'will' refers to several things: it refers to both the *power* of appetite and the *act* of that appetite.[411] Brent goes further, however; he claims that the very *act* of willing for creatures can itself be reduced into three different 'sub-acts' – each of which the creature carries out implicitly when committing acts of will.[412]

The first of these three 'sub-acts' consists in the relation between willing and wanting – Brent claims that for Aquinas, when a creature wills something, that will is also to *want* something else.[413] What the creature wants, when willing, is invariably that which the creature already perceives as good, but which thinks itself as lacking.[414] We have already

[411] James Brent, "God's Knowledge and Will," in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas* (eds), Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump, 158.
[412] Ibid., 164.
[413] Ibid.
[414] Ibid.

spoken about the different sense in which the divine will can be said to deal with the concept of appetite – that God has appetite in the sense that God rejoices over and enjoys those things which God already possesses.[415] Obviously, this is not quite the case for the creature, as we have said – the creature wants something which it *does not* already possess. As we have seen above, however, this cannot be the case for God – God for Aquinas is perfect, complete, needs nothing else to be. He therefore can require nothing. Brent notes that were God said to require something, God would need to be in state of (passive) potentiality; God would also require an outside mover. As we have seen earlier in this chapter and in chapter one, there can be no potentiality in God, and God cannot be moved by another.[416] Thus, Brent concludes that God does not take part in the first of the three-sub acts of creaturely will.[417]As we have noted, however, this does not preclude God from having appetite, and resting in his own goodness; Brent's second sub-act actually references this fact.[418]

The second of the three 'sub-acts' which Brent identifies as inherent in the creaturely act of willing that Brent identifies is an essential one. According to Brent, for Aquinas, for a creature to will is also for that creature to *possess* or *rest* in something that that creature perceives as 'good'.[419] Certainly again this is something which Aquinas thinks is true of God – if we look once more to *ST* 1 q.19 a. 1, we see that God is said by Aquinas to possess appetite in rejoicing over that which God already has. Brent writes on this matter as such: "In God there is will as possessing something that one perceives as good. In God there is will as "loving and delighting in what he possesses". In this sense, God wills

[415] Davies and Leftow, *Summa Theologiae, Questions on God*, 218-219.
[416] Brent, "God's Knowledge and Will", 164.
[417] Ibid.
[418] Brent, "God's Knowledge and Will", 165.
[419] Ibid.

himself."[420] Brent claims that Aquinas puts this particular proposition in a number of ways. For instance, at times Aquinas says that God 'loves and delights in himself'; at other times, Aquinas simply says that 'God possesses and rests in himself'.[421] No matter which way Aquinas states it, Brent makes the observation that what Aquinas really has in mind is his own account of God's self-knowledge and goodness.[422]

Finally, the third sub-act which Brent sees in in the creaturely act of willing is that of 'giving' - for a creature to will something is also for that creature to give a good to another.[423] Brent uses the example of a parent willing their wealth to their children, so as to help them.[424] In God, there is also will as giving in so far as God wills things other than himself.[425] Aquinas notes as much in *ST* 1 q.19 a. 2.[426] Here he is technically building upon the arguments he has already made in *ST* 1 q.19 a. 2– that things tend towards their own good when they lack it, rest in it when they get it, and attempt to spread that good to others in so far as they are able.[427] It is the third point that concerns us here; the notion that things, both creaturely and divine, attempt to communicate as far as is possible the good they possess.[428]

This obviously includes God; according to Brent, for Aquinas, God 'gives to other things a share in his own goodness, which is being (esse)'.[429] Once again Brent likens this to parents seeking to share their wealth with their children – the difference being that while the wealth of a parent might rest in their possessions or items or what have you, the wealth

[420] Ibid., 165.
[421] Ibid.
[422] Ibid.
[423] Ibid., 164
[424] Ibid.
[425] Ibid., 165
[426] *ST* 1 q.19 a.2.
[427] Davies and Leftow, *Summa Theologiae, Questions on God*, 219.
[428] Brent, "God's Knowledge and Will," 165.
[429] Ibid.

which God shares is his being itself.[430] Brent claims that this is how God wills created things – God wills them in the sense that God endows them with being.[431] Once more we have recourse to keep in mind Aquinas' overall understanding of God; for Aquinas, God is divinely simple, and thus identical with each of those things he possesses. God, for Aquinas, is not 'some being' – he is being *itself*, and it is this that he seeks to share through his acts of will.[432]

Of these three 'sub-acts' present in each creaturely act of willing, the divine will can be said to involve at least the latter two – that acts of will involve *possessing* or *resting* in something which a creature perceives as good, and that acts of will involve *giving* good to another. God, for Aquinas, certainly does the former – except that he rests in himself, as the supreme goodness.[433] God also does the second, for God is goodness, and it belongs to goodness itself to be self-diffusive – as we have said. Brent likens this to a parent willing a share of wealth to their children; God, in Aquinas' understanding, does much the same, giving to other things a share in God's own goodness.[434]

Thus, of the three sub-acts which Brent identifies as inherent within creaturely acts of willing, we find the divine will of God involving the second and third. Moreover, though the divine will may not bear any true analogical equivalent for the first sub-act, this does not preclude God from having access to the concept of the appetite. As should be clear, these three sub-acts don't mean the same thing when applied to the divine as they might when applied to the creaturely acts of will. Creatures and God are radically different from one another, as we have seen in chapter one, and Aquinas is always careful to make this

[430] Ibid.
[431] Ibid.
[432] Ibid.
[433] Ibid.
[434] Ibid.

clear. Yet even still, the comparison of the two makes certain aspects of God's will clear, in so far as truths about God can be known, for Aquinas.

CONCLUSION

This chapter set out to explore in detail Aquinas' account of the divine will. It began with section one, which contained a general definition of the concept of the will, relating it to voluntary action and activity. After this, the chapter dealt with the importance of the concept of the will in theistic conceptions of God – Aquinas' own conception among them. The Christian God, as we have said, is one who is capable of acting, and refraining from acting – thus making the concept of will vital in making sense of aspects of Christian faith – such as in creation theology, and salvation theology. Finally, the first section of the chapter concluded by placing Aquinas' understanding of the divine will into context with Aquinas' own relationship with Aristotle – showing how Aquinas' insistence on the divine will actually represented a significant break with the earlier philosopher.

Section two of the chapter was concerned with making clear the many connections between will, appetite, and goodness. Will was here revealed to be a particular manifestation of Aquinas' broader notion of appetite, or tendency. Moreover, will's being bound up in Aquinas' conception of goodness was explored – good things being for Aquinas desirable. Section three of the chapter contained an exploration of Aquinas' understanding of the will as applied to inanimate objects, demonstrating both the link between will and appetite even in inanimate objects, as well as the teleological nature of all acts of will inanimate objects carry out, in line with their natural tendencies. Section three also contained a brief discussion of Aquinas' status as a thinker dealing with a pre-

Newtonian understanding of the natural processes of the world, and what ramifications this had on his understanding of actions of inanimate objects.

The fourth section of the chapter moved from a discussion on inanimate objects and will to one about will in human and animal life. It began with looking at one of the chief differences between actions of will in inanimate objects and those in animals and humans – the presence of form, and how animals and humans are able to receive – in some small manner – the forms of other objects, and how inanimate objects are not. Section four also began to present the divide between sensory appetite, and intellectual appetite, and how this divide separated humans from other creatures. Section five, meanwhile, was concerned with the relationship between the intellect and the will; here, the fact that will depends on intellect, all the while preserving the free will of the agent was made clear. Section six returns to the issue of demarcating the sensory and intellectual appetites once more. Here it was revealed that for Aquinas, will is concerned with particular things, while the intellect is concerned with immaterial ones – despite the difficulties this seemed to present for Aquinas' own account of the will as appetite for particular things.

The seventh section of the chapter dealt with the relationship between sensory appetite and human reason; it demonstrated the manner in which Aquinas thought the sensory appetite was subjugated by human reason, and the ways in which human desires were sometimes able to betray or disobey the reason of the person. Section eight of the chapter finally returned to the issue of the divine will itself; it began with a brief account of how the divine will works with the divine intellect, and how this affects Aquinas' conception of appetite. The section then moved to consider Aquinas' own objections to the possibility that the divine possessed a will – the objections based on ends, appetite, and mutability –

before revealing how Aquinas answered them. The value these objections held in defining the divine will were also mentioned.

Finally, section nine concluded with a detailed comparison of the divine and creaturely wills, all so as to make the divine will – its actions, operations, functions, and so on – all the more obvious. This was done with care and due deference to the divine mystery – not to mention Aquinas' own preference for an apophatic theology, in which truths about the divine are communicated through example and analogy, as noted in chapter one.

With the divine will now considered, we can turn to the central question of this work: now that we know that God *has* a will, we may begin to explore whether or not that will is *free.*

CHAPTER THREE: DIVINE FREEDOM AND HUMAN FREEDOM

In chapters one we discussed God's attributes in light of those basic, foundational concepts inherent in Aquinas' philosophical theology (i.e. how things can be known, how God can be known specifically, and so on). We explored the ramifications of the notion that Aquinas considered God as utterly simple, and how God was ultimately known best by humanity. In chapter two we also explored whether Aquinas' God possessed a will, how that will could be known, how that will interacted with God's other traits and attributes, and so on. Here it was established that *yes,* Aquinas's God possesses a will and that he has the ability to make choices between various alternatives. It is now possible, in light of these previous chapters, to consider the first part of the central question of this thesis; namely: what *divine freedom* might consist of. How does Aquinas define it? How does he integrate it into his broader understanding of will and intellect? How does divine freedom work alongside evil? These, and other questions, shall be asked and answers provided.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS CHAPTER

Within chapter three, I intend to establish and explore several key issues we must explore in order to allow us to analyse Aquinas's arguments for divine freedom properly. To that end, this chapter begins with an exploration of *human* freedom; this we will then compare with divine freedom, so as to learn about the latter through illumination of the former. It is also here that we will tackle the question of evil, insofar as that question relates to human freedom and God's goodness. Having looked over human freedom, we will then begin to unravel Aquinas's various arguments for divine freedom by exploring both *ST* I, q.19, a.1 and *ScG* I, 75, 1-8 – the two primary sources of information as regards Aquinas's conception of divine freedom. Looking over these particular passages will both

ground us and bring us back to the question of *divine* freedom, before we can offer a final analysis of the effectiveness and coherence of Aquinas's arguments in chapter four.

An important caveat (and one which runs throughout Aquinas' work) is to be borne in mind at all times, however. As we saw in chapter two, the divine will is not like the creaturely will. Obviously, one must keep in mind the divine attributes – that God is wholly simple, complete in and of himself, and so on – which are all things which contrast radically with the composite, incomplete creatures of this world. In chapter two we confirmed the following: first, we came to realise that God possesses a will of his own, henceforth referred to as 'the divine will'. Secondly, we found that this will does *not* conflict with any of God's own divine attributes. God can possess a will despite wills being concerned with goals, aims and appetites, for instance – even though God is, for Aquinas, perfect and complete in and of himself. We also discussed how God might have a will in light of God's being immutable – a problem which required particular attention. Thus, despite God being perfect, immutable and infinite, God can possess a will – which we have already noted is inexorably bound up with Aquinas' notions of appetition and desire. Yet, can we say that the divine will is free? More to the point, what might divine freedom consist of, for Aquinas? We have already compared the divine will with the human one in chapter two; that comparison will be of use in defining precisely what divine freedom is here, also. Thus what follows is a detailed examination of human freedom, all to help us more easily understand the divine will, insofar as we can.

DIVINE FREEDOM AND HUMAN FREEDOM: LANGUAGE

Before we might properly explore Aquinas' understanding of human freedom, it is important to allow for the fact that Aquinas did not, obviously, use English when creating his seminal texts. He instead made use of Latin, and he did so with great care and

precision.[435] Latin and English do not line up exactly, and the differences between these are only exacerbated by Aquinas' complex writings; it is only proper, therefore, that we keep in mind the differences in language – particularly with regard to Aquinas' writings on free will specifically.[436] As Kenny points out, when we discuss the concept of 'free-will' in English, it is 'natural' that we should phrase the question as being something like 'do human beings have free will?'[437] However, there is no expression in Latin which directly corresponds to the English term 'free-will' – which means, rather obviously, that when we discuss 'free-will' and when Aquinas does, we may well be referring to slightly different concepts.

To help rectify this mismatch, Kenny offers a very useful summary of the matter. He begins with the admission that there is no Latin-equivalent for 'free-will', as that term is used in English, as we have said.[438] Aquinas, he continues, does *not* therefore speak of 'free will' (or '*Iibera voluntas'*).[439] Nor does Aquinas speak of 'freedom of will' (or '*libertas voluntatis*'), either.[440] Why so? The answer is, according to Kenny, rooted in the structure of Latin, in which the noun which accompanies 'free' is *not* 'will' but *'decision*' (or '*arbitrium'*).[441] Thus, for Aquinas, the question of free-will – which we will see he addresses in his *Summa Theologiae* – is not a question which refers to either 'free-will' or even 'freedom of will'. It instead refers to '*free decision*'.[442] For Aquinas, then, the question of free will, as that is understood in English, might perhaps be better phrased as that of man's ability to make decisions free of external influence.

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[435] Davies and Leftow, *Summa Theologiae, Questions on God* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), xxxix, Translator's Note.
[436] Anthony Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind* (London: Routledge, 1993), 75.
[437] Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind*, 75.
[438] Ibid.
[439] Ibid.
[440] Ibid.
[441] Ibid.
[442] Ibid.

SECTION ONE: HUMAN FREEDOM

HUMAN FREEDOM AND FREE DECISION

It is this very topic of 'free decision' which Aquinas addresses in question eighty-three of his *Summa Theologiae*.[443] Here, Aquinas concludes that mankind is free, in that that it has been left by God 'in the hand of his own counsel'.[444] Why so? For Aquinas, one of the most integral reasons for human freedom consists in the relationship between agency and accountability.[445] He notes that man *must* be free, or one is left in a position where the 'counsels, exhortations, commands, prohibitions, rewards, and punishments' levied against mankind are 'in vain'.[446] It is, after all, difficult to praise or to punish one for some action that person could not help but perform.

To better make this evident, Aquinas asks that one consider the relationship between actions, judgements, and freedom.[447] He begins by making clear that some things in the world act 'without judgement' – stones, for instance, which when dropped move downwards.[448] Other things in the world *do* in fact act from judgement, Aquinas continues, but this may not be a free sort.[449] 'Brute animals', he continues, are examples of these, for a sheep which sights a wolf judges a wolf to be 'something to be shunned' not on the basis of *reason*, but of *natural instinct*.[450] This is of course different for mankind, who unlike brute animals does not act purely from this natural instinct and can make use of reason.[451] It is in this which Aquinas claims man can be said to act from

[443] *ST* I, q.83, a.1.
[444] Ibid.
[445] Ibid.
[446] Ibid.
[447] Ibid.
[448] Ibid.
[449] Ibid.
[450] Ibid.
[451] Ibid.

judgement – it is through reason or man's 'apprehensive powers', after all, that we (that is, man) can judge whether something should be either sought or avoided.[452] Finally, Aquinas claims, it is because this judgement arises not from any sort of natural instinct but from the 'act of comparison of reason' that man's judgement is *free*.[453] Rationality is here linked with freedom, then – human beings can choose between various alternatives thanks to reason, and freely judge whichever act they judge they must perform.[454]

According to Kenny, it is in question eighty-three that Aquinas links the concept of *liberum arbitrium* with his conception of will as 'intellectual appetite' (something we have discussed previously).[455] *Liberum Arbitrium* in this context refers to 'free decision', as opposed to *libera voluntas*, which is 'free will'.[456] Aquinas does not generally refer to the latter; will for him, as we have said, is intellectual appetite.[457] Thus, he is not so concerned with the *freedom* of this appetite as he is with man's free *decisions*.[458] As Kenny notes himself: 'If the will is a rational appetite, an ability to have reasons for acting and to act for reasons, then the nature of the will must depend on the nature of practical reasoning.'[459] It is in this that Aquinas' two understandings of will as appetite and our being able to make free decisions are linked. Will is a *rational appetite* – it therefore involves a considered choice of action in pursuing that appetite. A rational thing is able to make choices or determinations in pursuing that appetite.[460]

[452] Ibid.
[453] Ibid.
[454] Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind*, 76.
[455] Ibid.
[456] Ibid.
[457] Ibid.
[458] Ibid.
[459] Ibid.
[460] Ibid.

HUMAN FREEDOM AND THE BOUNDS OF REASON

Pasnau makes an interesting series of observations in light of the notion that man is a rational creature, and that therefore the decisions he makes depend upon rational reasoning, or, indeed, any sort of reason at all.[461] In his opinion, the ultimate dependence of man's free decisions upon reason ultimately results in the complete subordination of the will to reason and intellect.[462] According to Pasnau, for Aquinas, as we have noted in chapter two, the will *follows* intellect in order for it to make choices.[463] This is because the will's freedom of decision is for Aquinas explained in terms of the intellect's ability to examine an issue from 'all sides'.[464] Apprehension of an issue, Pasnau notes, *must* precede any movement of the will for Aquinas.[465] After apprehending something, the intellect acts upon the will, giving it a sort of causal determination that allows it to act.[466] That this determination comes from the intellect can lead one to conclude the will as being ultimately unimportant, Pasnau notes; after all, it acts entirely *within* the confines of the intellect.[467]

Thus, man seems fairly ruled by reason, and the deliberations of the intellect; the will seems necessarily bound to whatever the intellect reasons about the world.[468] Man seems unfree in this regard, then – unable to act against reason itself.[469] After all, all of his actions come from deliberations of the same.[470] Pasnau refers to this sort of view as *intellectualism*, and notes that it rather seems at odds with regular human reality, in which

[461] Robert Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 226.
[462] Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, 226.
[463] Ibid, 225.
[464] Ibid.
[465] Ibid.
[466] Ibid.
[467] Ibid.
[468] Ibid, 226.
[469] Ibid.
[470] Ibid

our choices are certainly *guided* by reason, but not always entirely *determined* by it.[471] It is on this basis that Pasnau recommends we *not* ascribe to Aquinas an intellectualist conviction.[472] Whether this is a fair and reasonable summation of Aquinas's own views on the particular relationship between will and intellect is certainly worth exploring, however. Does Pasnau really mean to imply that Aquinas considers the intellect, and reason, as always *inherently* triumphing over the will in such a fundamental manner? Aquinas himself, for instance, makes clear that the will can very easily vary from the rule of reason (and of reason, conscience in particular) in the second part of the Summa.[473]

Regardless, the will for Aquinas possesses a particular causal relationship with the intellect, as we have said; the will for Aquinas is the efficient cause which moves the intellect (and many of the human soul's other powers, for that matter).[474] That the will is the intellect's efficient cause means, Pasnau concludes, that for Aquinas the intellect essentially considers whatever it is the will wishes it to consider.[475] Naturally, this is in part balanced by the fact that the intellect *also* moves the will in its own way; yet this is in a manner entirely distinct from the way in which the will moves the intellect.[476] The will is the efficient cause which moves the intellect; the intellect, however, is *not* the efficient cause of the will's activities.[477] The intellect instead supplies the will with information *about the will's own final cause*, which we have noted already as being God, the most desirable good.[478] This last point is significant, Pasnau claims; the intellect does *not* exercise final causality upon the will; the object of the will (which is God) is still its

[471] Ibid.
[472] Ibid.
[473] ST II, q. 19, a. 6
[474] Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, 226.
[475] Ibid.
[476] Ibid.
[477] Ibid.
[478] Ibid.

final cause.[479] In supplying only *information* about the will's final end, the intellect might best be considered as a *formal* cause of the will, rather than a final one; in providing information about the will's final object, the intellect is in effect providing what Aquinas apparently calls the 'formal principle that determines the act of the will'.[480]

In summary, then, one must never consider the human will as entirely subservient to the human intellect; the intellect does not compel the will towards this and that.[481] Rather the intellect rules the will insofar as it shows the will where it ought to go (its final cause, in other words, which for Aquinas is God.)[482] Thus we can say that the intellect is unable to necessitate any sort of choice on the will; and in saying *this*, Aquinas can, in Pasnau's opinion, escape the notion that man is ruled completely by reason.[483] For Aquinas, our free decisions are not *ruled* by reason, but *guided* by it.[484]

HUMAN FREEDOM AND DIVINE INTERFERENCE

We have established that human freedom is not limited by rationality, or the will's relationship with the intellect or reason as a whole. Neither is the human will made unfree by the presence of an ultimate end. Yet we have another issue: can we sincerely call human beings 'free' for Aquinas when we consider human action in light of divine grace? 'Free' in this context refers once again to *Liberum Arbitrium* – that is, freedom of decision. In light of divine grace, can we say that man is free in making the decisions he makes? According to Kenny, the answer is *yes* – for Aquinas, divine grace does not take away from human agency.[485] In fact, Kenny notes, for Aquinas the very opposite is the

[479] Ibid.
[480] Ibid.
[481] Ibid.
[482] Ibid.
[483] Ibid.
[484] Ibid.
[485] Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind*, 77.

case: the presence of divine grace in the world is in fact *necessary* for human conduct.[486] This is because for Aquinas, though freedom may consist in someone being capable of self-determination, that self-determination is 'not actually incompatible with determination by God'.[487] To illustrate this particular point, Kenny suggests one look Aquinas' response to objection three in *ST* I, q.83, a.1:

> Free-will is the cause of its own movement, because by his free-will man moves himself to act. But it does not of necessity belong to liberty that what is free should be the first cause of itself, as neither for one thing to be cause of another need it be the first cause. God, therefore, is the first cause, Who moves causes both natural and voluntary. And just as by moving natural causes He does not prevent their acts being natural, so by moving voluntary causes He does not deprive their actions of being voluntary: but rather is He the cause of this very thing in them; for He operates in each thing according to its own nature.[488]

Put another way, what Aquinas is saying here relates the free-will of man and the genesis of man's actions to the first cause of all things: God. He begins by noting that 'free-will is the cause of its own movement', for it is by free-will that a man can move himself to act.[489] However, Aquinas continues, it is not a necessary feature of liberty that 'what is free should be the first cause of itself.'[490] In other words, Aquinas here claims that any action which is free does *not* necessarily have to be its own first cause – meaning, in other words, that actions, even free ones, can be caused by other things than themselves.[491] The implications of this are great – for it seems then that even a free-action can be, in a certain sense, *entailed* by something other than itself.[492] Aquinas justifies his assertion that a freely willed action need not be its own first cause by noting that if anything is to be the cause of something else, that thing need not itself be the *first* cause of that other thing.[493]

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[486] Ibid.
[487] Ibid.
[488] *ST* I, q.83, a.1.
[489] Ibid.
[490] Ibid.
[491] Ibid.
[492] Ibid.
[493] *ST* I, q.83, a.1.

For ‘X’ to cause something, in other words, ‘X’ doesn’t have to be the *first* cause of that thing. It can simply be one cause among that causal chain. Thus, we cannot say that a kick to the face is the *first* cause of one’s being dizzy and unable to walk; a person’s *deciding* to kick us in the face *is*, however. That our being dizzy and unable to walk *originated* from that person’s decision to kick us does not somehow mean that the kick to the face is *not* itself a cause of being dizzy and unable to walk *at all*.[494]

God is of course the first cause of all things; in our example above, God would be the origin not only of the person who decided to kick me, but of kicking and people and creation in general. He is also, more crucially for Aquinas, therefore the cause of causes both natural and voluntary.[495] God’s action on natural causes does *not* prevent natural causes from being *natural*, and it is by this very same logic that Aquinas concludes that God’s actions on *voluntary* causes does not make those causes any less voluntary themselves.[496] On the contrary, it is precisely God who makes those causes voluntary in the first place, by operating in each thing according to that thing’s own nature.[497] Thus, because God is the ultimate first cause of everything to do with a kick to face, and the resultant dizziness, does not mean that that action was *unfree*; actions can be free and yet not their own first causes, as we have said. However, there is the additional point that for Aquinas, God is the *very condition* of possibility for our actions – that God exists makes our actions *voluntary*, so to speak.

[494] Ibid.
[495] Ibid.
[496] Ibid.
[497] Ibid.

HUMAN FREEDOM, APPETITE, AND THE ULTIMATE END

Human reason and divine intervention do not compromise human freedom, then. Yet, what of the necessity of the end, and man's appetite for it? In chapter two, we explored the concept of the human will, and how it related to Aquinas' concepts of intellect and appetite. We have noted already how will for Aquinas is a form of *wanting*, and how *wanting* is itself for Aquinas a particular instance of the more general concept of '*appetitus*' or tendency.[498] Will, therefore, can be considered to be a kind of appetite.[499] Having made this clear, Chapter Two was next spent defining what this appetite longed for; this is of course the good, as we have said, for Aquinas considers good things as being as desirable as they are good.[500] The greatest good is therefore also that which is the most desirable, and in Aquinas' theological philosophy, this means that God – the supreme good – is *the ultimate object* of man's appetite.[501]

Man is drawn to God, the ultimate goodness, as the ultimate object of our appetite. One seeks that which is desirable for oneself, and a thing is desirable according to how good it is; thus God, as the greatest good, is that which is most desired by mankind.[502] This makes God the 'ultimate good' – the final object after which all men seek.[503] We might wonder if this comprises an assault on human agency, however. Has man any *choice* with respect to this final end? Can he, for instance, *not* desire God as the ultimate goal of his appetite? This leads us directly to the question of *necessity* and how it relates to will.

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[498] Anthony Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind* (London: Routledge, 1993), 59 – 60.
[499] Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind*, 59 – 60.
[500] Ibid, 59.
[501] Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind*, 59.
[502] James Brent, "God's Knowledge and Will," in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas* (ed.) Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump, 158.
[503] Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind*, 59.

AQUINAS, THE WILL, AND NECESSITY

In *ST* I, q.82, a.1, Aquinas wonders whether there is anything man is distinctly *not* free in willing, despite his free will.[504] This he expresses in terms of necessity; he wonders, essentially, whether there is anything man must will *necessarily*.[505] To this he offers that there are many kinds of necessity, and many ways in which a thing can *be* necessary.[506] The types of necessity which he identifies link rather well with Aristotle's four causes; they are, in short, material necessity, formal necessity, the necessity of an end, and the necessity of the agent.[507] In short, Aquinas divides these four causes into two groups: necessity by way of intrinsic principle (material necessity and formal necessity) and extrinsic principle (necessity of the end and necessity of the agent).[508] Of these, the former sorts of necessity are 'natural' or 'absolute' necessitation – they are inescapable, much as for a triangle to be a triangle, it must have three sides.[509] Aquinas considers the necessity of the end and that of the agent differently, however.[510] The necessity of the agent, Aquinas notes, is what one might also call the necessity of coercion, for it involves a necessity which is *imposed* by an agent on something – thus in this sort of necessity, something becomes necessary because another agent coerces another into doing something.[511] The necessity of the end, meanwhile, is just that – something is necessary by virtue of end, if to accomplish that end one must do something – thus, for one to live as an end, one has no choice but to eat; the necessity of living entails that one eat, for food is essential to life.[512]

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[504] *ST* I, q.82, a.1
[505] Ibid.
[506] Ibid.
[507] Ibid.
[508] Ibid.
[509] Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind*, 66.
[510] Ibid.
[511] *ST* I, q.82, a.1
[512] Ibid.

There is a distinction between the necessity of an agent and the necessity of an end, naturally; only one of these Aquinas considers as compatible with free will.[513] Necessity of coercion, he concludes, can only ever be 'altogether repugnant to the will'.[514] A coerced act is not a free one, and can therefore not be voluntary, for it has no origin in the will of the person being coerced; otherwise, it would not be *coercion*.[515] In contrast, Aquinas notes, the necessity of the end can never fail but to be quite proper and natural to the will.[516] The will is inherently directed or inclined towards an end; for us human beings, that end is happiness.[517] We will our own happiness necessarily, then, for that is our last end.[518] Yet though we must will our own happiness, we have choice with regard to *how* we will that happiness – the necessity is in the *end*, which is God, the source of our happiness, in other words, and not in the means; we have not free will with regard to the end our will is directed at, but we often have control over how we attempt to reach that end.[519]

Man cannot help but will the ultimate end, then – which is God, the most desirable thing, as we have said. Man is instead free in another fashion – not in choosing his ultimate end, but in choosing a variety of *means and lesser ends* with respect *to* that ultimate end – something we have already said in Chapter Two.[520] The only actual *necessity* in place on these lesser goods and ends is that they *must* in some way lead to the final end; yet even if they do, man is free to reject them or accept them as he should like.[521] The only

[513] Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind*, 66.
[514] *ST* I, q.82, a.1
[515] Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind*, 66.
[516] Ibid.
[517] *ST* I, q.82, a.1
[518] Ibid.
[519] Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind*, 66.
[520] Wippel, "Norman Kretzmann on Aquinas's Attribution of Will and of Freedom to Create to God," 290.
[521] Wippel, "Norman Kretzmann on Aquinas's Attribution of Will and of Freedom to Create to God," 290.

necessity, is, again, the ultimate end to which man is drawn; he is free in how he wills that end, but not in willing it itself.[522] It will emerge, as we continue, that man's being in a sense 'locked' into willing this ultimate end is a very fitting point to make in our comparing of the divine will to the human one. For much as man must necessarily will the ultimate end, which is God, God must himself necessarily will God's own goodness.[523] Aquinas himself will actually make this comparison in *ST* I, q.19, a. 3, in which he notes that every faculty – including the will – possesses a 'necessary relation to its proper and principal object'.[524] Sight, he claims, has colour as its principal object; man has happiness as his. Finally, God has God's own goodness.[525] All three of these maintain what is at heart the same sort of relationship with the principal object to which they tend; one of necessity.[526]

HUMAN FREEDOM: A SUMMARY

As shall hopefully be clear, Aquinas ultimately views the human person as being *free*. This is in spite of the many influences exerted upon the human soul from a variety of vantage points. The divine, for instance, was seen as having been able to affect human will; yet as we found, for Aquinas, divine determination does not in any way take from the self-determination of humanity. In fact, it seems to be a condition for human actions being voluntary in the first place. Nor does the necessity of the end take away from human freedom – while we may have no choice in willing the *ultimate* end, for instance, we have every control over *how* we will ends which are subservient *to* that ultimate end. This also applies to reason and the intellect; the will is not ruled by rationality, either; we can choose

[522] Ibid.
[523] *ST* I, q.19, a.3.
[524] Ibid.
[525] Davies and Leftow, *Summa Theologiae, Questions on God*, 222.
[526] *ST* I, q.19, a.3.

the irrational, and are more *guided* by reason – and our own intellects – than *ruled* by these.[527]

We also saw how physical determinism – that is, the determining influences of the body – was of no threat to human free will. For Aquinas, man is not simply body plus soul; he is a complex melding or unity of both. Yet the 'lower appetites' are not in complete power; man is possessed with reason by virtue of his intellect. Moreover, the body's physical determinations cannot *completely* take from man's ability to make free choices. This is because, as we have said, for Aquinas the intellect and the body are not the same; the physicality of the body cannot affect the intellect, which transcends it ultimately. Having examined in detail how human beings are free for Aquinas, we can look at his concept of divine freedom. Except we do so now in line with his negative, apophatic theology – we are looking at divine freedom through the context of what we know and can know of creation, and reasoning how God must necessarily differ from these. Obviously, divine freedom is not the same as human freedom – God is not governed by the deterministic influences of the body, for instance – but we have now a frame of reference for coming to some greater understanding of divine freedom than previously.

With that, we conclude section two of this chapter. We have considered human freedom from a variety of perspectives and vantage points; it is now time to consider *divine* freedom in itself before we might ultimately compare the two.

[527] Robert Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, 225 -226.

SECTION TWO: AQUINAS ON THE QUESTION OF DIVINE FREEDOM

As with so many other issues relating to God, Aquinas addresses the issue of divine freedom himself in his *Summa Theologiae* in *ST* I, q.19, a.1.[528] This chapter shall continue with a detailed examination of Aquinas' account of the divine freedom as presented here. An analysis of its coherence and suitability, in light of the findings of chapters one and two, will be carried out, before some final conclusions are offered. The question as to whether God might actually be *free* is something we shall examine in chapter four; once again, it is how Aquinas defines divine freedom that we are interested in here. As with those other questions relating to God and God's attributes which he addresses in that text, Aquinas begins by offering some objections to the possibility that God might possess free will – thus indicating from the outset that he ultimately intends to conclude that his God *does* actually possess free will. The objections which Aquinas presents are as follows:

> Objection 1. It seems that God has not free-will. For Jerome says, in a homily on the prodigal son [Ep. 146, ad Damas.]; "God alone is He who is not liable to sin, nor can be liable: all others, as having free-will, can be inclined to either side."
>
> Objection 2**.** Further, free-will is the faculty of the reason and will, by which good and evil are chosen. But God does not will evil, as has been said (Article 9). Therefore there is not free-will in God.[529]

Both of these objections shall now be analysed in turn; they reveal much about how Aquinas conceives of will in God, even if only by way of contrast to what Aquinas actually thinks is the case.

[528] *ST* I, q.19, a.1.
[529] *ST* I, q.19, a.10.

THE FIRST OBJECTION

The first objection which Aquinas marshals against God's having free will is taken from the writings of St Jerome. Aquinas specifically cites St Jerome's homily on the prodigal son, in which Jerome claims that God alone is 'not liable to sin'. Moreover, St Jerome notes, God *cannot* be liable to sin.[530] This distinguishes God from other beings, St Jerome concludes, for these beings have free will, and thus 'can be inclined to either side'.[531] This is the first of Aquinas' objections to God's having free will in its entirety – here he cites another respected figure, whom he interprets as having argued the opposite of what Aquinas himself intends to prove. According to Aquinas, for St Jerome it is impossible that God should have a free will, for God is not liable to commit sins – all other beings are free, insofar as they can choose either to sin or not to sin. Therefore, God cannot be free.

Aquinas' response to St Jerome is brief and pointed: "Jerome seems to deny free-will to God not simply, but only as regards the inclination to sin."[532] In other words, Aquinas claims that Jerome denies God not necessarily free *will*, but instead the freedom to commit *sin.*[533] Aquinas does not consider freedom to commit sin, or a lack thereof, to be indicative of God's being unfree. In *ST* I, q.6, a.1-2, Aquinas defines God as the 'supreme good', and in *ScG* I, 39 Aquinas clarifies that God's being this supreme goodness – in fact, God's being goodness itself – means God cannot have any evil within him.[534] Thus for Aquinas, like Jerome, God is incapable of *choosing* to sin – though this not because God lacks the free will necessary to do so; rather, it is matter that God is

[530] *ST* I, q.19, a.10.
[531] Ibid.
[532] Ibid.
[533] Ibid.
[534] *ScG* I, 39.

simply *incapable* of choosing to sin - sin and evil are privations of goodness, and God for Aquinas is the supreme good, as we have noted.[535]

THE SECOND OBJECTION

Thus one might say that Jerome's argument *against* the free will of God is flawed, because it identifies freedom of choice with freedom to sin – but to sin for Aquinas is any 'word, deed, or desire against God's law'.[536] Aquinas considers 'voluntariness' as 'essential to sin', for sins involve acts of will in order to be; something is considered a sin only in so far as the cause of one's sinful action can be attributed to the sinner.[537] We might put this more succinctly as 'sins must be voluntary'. Yet as we have noted God is for Aquinas supremely good; can Aquinas' God, therefore, voluntarily violate his own law, all the while being goodness itself? The second objection which Aquinas presents to the notion that God possesses free will addresses this point.

> Objection 2. Further, free-will is the faculty of the reason and will, by which good and evil are chosen. But God does not will evil, as has been said (Article 9). Therefore there is not free-will in God.[538]

Here Aquinas begins by noting that 'free-will is the faculty of the reason and will', and it is through use of this faculty that one can choose either good or evil. God, however, as Aquinas claims he has noted in '*ST* I, q.19, a.10, does not will evil. Once more, then, and in line with Jerome, this rather suggests that God possesses no free-will.[539]

Aquinas' response to this second objection helps in turn to make clear his response to St. Jerome's first objection.[540] His reply is as follows:

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[535] *ST* I, q.6, a.2.
[536] *ST* I, q.72, a.1.
[537] *ST* I, q.71, a. 5.
[538] *ST* I, q.19, a.10.
[539] Ibid.
[540] Ibid.

> Reply to Objection 2. Since the evil of sin consists in turning away from the divine goodness, by which God wills all things, as above shown (De Fide ii, 3), it is manifestly impossible for Him to will the evil of sin; yet He can make choice of one of two opposites, inasmuch as He can will a thing to be, or not to be. In the same way we ourselves, without sin, can will to sit down, and not will to sit down.[541]

Aquinas begins by defining the parameters of sin; here, he refers to sin as consisting of 'turning away from the divine goodness, by which God wills all things[542] From this Aquinas concludes that it is impossible that God might 'will the evil of sin' – evil for Aquinas is opposed to good, and is not a thing desired in and of itself.[543] Evil is, of course, attached to certain goods accidently, as Aquinas notes in *ST* I, q.19, a.9. The lion, for instance, wills the good of food, but that good involves the evil of violence.[544] In the same way, the fornicator wants pleasure – a pleasure which is accompanied by the 'ugliness of sin'.[545] God, however, can never wish for anything more than God's own goodness, for this is the greatest goodness of all.

FREEDOM AND DESIRABILITY OF THE GOOD

By these examples Aquinas means to present a certain 'hierarchy of the desirability goods' which emerges when one considers an action which may involve sin – in the examples of the lion and the fornicator above, both lion and fornicator desire the goods they seek *more so* than 'the good of which the evil is a deprivation' – thus, the lion seeks the good of food more so than the good of allowing the stag to live, and the fornicator desires the good of pleasure more so than the good of not giving in to sin.[546] It is precisely this 'ordering of goods by desirability' through which Aquinas concludes that

[541] *ST* I, q.19, a.10.
[542] Ibid.
[543] Davies and Leftow, *Summa Theologiae, Questions on God*, 234.
[544] *ST* I, q.19, a.9.
[545] Davies and Leftow, *Summa Theologiae, Questions on God*, 234.
[546] Ibid.

God cannot commit sin, as we have said – God can never seek anything other than God's own goodness, which is the greatest goodness of all, much as human beings must also seek their own goodness, as we have said.[547] In *ST* I, q.19, a.9., Aquinas makes it clear that to sin is to turn away from the divine goodness in pursuit of some other good we think we might prefer. God, however, 'wills no good more than He wills His own goodness' for Aquinas.[548] God therefore cannot sin – for the sin would require God turning away from his own divine goodness in pursuit of some other good.[549] This is something man might do; it is not, however, something which God can do.

All of this refers specifically to *moral* evil, however – that is, the intentional performance of some evil act with full knowledge and commitment. Aquinas allows that God certainly does in some way will the evil of 'natural defect' or 'punishment' insofar as God wills the good to which these sorts of evils are themselves attached.[550] Consider the construction of a fence. In willing the being of the fence, we will an absence to which this good is necessarily attached – the gaps between the planks of wood along the fencing. Thus, it seems that for Aquinas, the particular composition of created things entails some necessary balance between being and absence – and thus to will something entails the simultaneous willing of a 'natural defect' or corresponding absence. The case of punishment follows along these lines – Noah and the Great Flood, for instance, entails God will a punishment upon man in the form of a flood - so that God might *also* will the subsequent saving and reconciliation of man.[551]

[547] *ST* I, q.19, a.9.
[548] *ST* I, q.19, a.9.
[549] Davies and Leftow (eds), *Summa Theologiae, Questions on God*, 234.
[550] *ST* I, q.19, a.9.
[551] Genesis 5:25 – 9:29

Returning, then, to Aquinas' own reply to his second objection that God may possess free-will, we now see that for Aquinas, God cannot commit the 'evil of sin', as per the above section.[552] However, though God may not have the choice to commit sin, this does not mean, as Aquinas will explain, that God is unable to make *choices* of any sort.[553] As he writes himself: 'yet He can make choice of one of two opposites, inasmuch as He can will a thing to be, or not to be. In the same way we ourselves, without sin, can will to sit down, and not will to sit down.'[554] In other words, for Aquinas, God is able to make choices – not choices such as 'to sin or to refrain from sinning', but choices such as 'to will this thing, or to refrain from willing this thing'.[555] Aquinas considers this an answer to the objections begun by St Jerome, which hold that the freedom consists in ability either to sin or not to – for though God cannot sin, Aquinas notes, God *can* choose either to will something or not to will something, much as human beings can choose either to sit or stand (a choice quite irrespective of their ability to choose either to sin or to refrain from sinning itself).[556]

AQUINAS' DEFINITION OF DIVINE FREEDOM

In answering the objections to divine freedom which he himself offered, Aquinas offers an overview of his thoughts on the possibility of God possessing free-will. He concludes that the ability either to sin or to refrain from sinning is not in itself a freedom which God possesses, owing to God's own divine goodness and God's willing of the same.[557] However, Aquinas does suggest that God is free in the sense that God might

[552] Ibid.
[553] *ST* I, q.19, a.10
[554] Ibid.
[555] Ibid.
[556] Ibid.
[557] *ST* I, q.19, a.9.

choose either to will something or not to will something, as we shall see. Aquinas' primary reply to the question 'whether God has free will' is as follows:

> We have free-will with respect to what we will not of necessity, nor by natural instinct. For our will to be happy does not appertain to free-will, but to natural instinct. Hence other animals, that are moved to act by natural instinct, are not said to be moved by free-will. Since then God necessarily wills His own goodness, but other things not necessarily, as shown above (Article 3), He has free will with respect to what He does not necessarily will.[558]

The most obvious interpretation of this passage is to conclude that Aquinas' God is one who cannot help but will certain things necessarily – things like God's own goodness, which, as Aquinas notes, is the proper object of God's own divine will.[559] Thus, we can say that for Aquinas, God *is* constrained to will certain things – things which are necessary for God to be. 'Necessity' in this instance Aquinas explains as being of two sorts: something can be a necessity either *absolutely*, or by *supposition*.[560] The distinction between these two types of necessity Aquinas explains in the following manner:

> We judge a thing to be absolutely necessary from the relation of the terms, as when the predicate forms part of the definition of the subject: thus it is absolutely necessary that man is an animal. It is the same when the subject forms part of the notion of the predicate; thus it is absolutely necessary that a number must be odd or even. In this way it is not necessary that Socrates sits: wherefore it is not necessary absolutely, though it may be so by supposition; for, granted that he is sitting, he must necessarily sit, as long as he is sitting.[561]

In other words, for Aquinas, the necessity of something correlates with how that given something might be judged to be essential to the definition of a subject. Man, Aquinas notes, is an animal; this is because the word or concept of man includes 'animal'. So too must a number be either odd or even – it cannot be neither, and it cannot be both.

[558] *ST* I, q.19, a.10
[559] *ST* I, q.19, a.3.
[560] *ST* I, q.19, a.3.
[561] Ibid.

Moreover, if that number was either neither or both, it would cease to be, for numbers must be *either* odd or even – it cannot be *neither* and still be a number. Therefore we might say that something is necessary when it is part of the definition of a subject – animal is part of the definition of man, and it is therefore necessary to call man 'animal'. Similarly, Aquinas notes that the same is true when the *subject* is part of the meaning of the predicate (such as with numbers, as we have mentioned; they must be either odd or even, and so on).[562]

In contrast, we might say that something is *not* necessary when that thing is neither part of the definition of the subject, or if the subject is part of the meaning of the predicate.[563] The example Aquinas uses is that of Socrates sitting – that Socrates is sitting is certainly not necessary for Socrates to be, for Socrates is perfectly capable of not sitting; indeed, he can stand, crouch, lie, or back-flip. Yet, we can still say that Socrates is sitting is at least 'hypothetically necessary', in so far as for Socrates to sit, he must actually be sitting; Socrates is *not* sitting if he is, for instance, performing back-flips – if this were the case Socrates would be performing back-flips, and *that* would therefore be at least hypothetically necessary instead of him sitting. In short, we might say that x is necessary for y insofar as in order for y to *have* or be *doing* x, y must necessarily *have* or be *doing* x.[564]

Having defined how it is that an action might or might not be necessary, Aquinas turns to consider which of God's acts of will are themselves necessary, in light of the above

[562] *ST* I, q.19, a.3.
[563] Davies and Leftow, *Summa Theologiae, Questions on God*, 222.
[564] Ibid.

criteria later on in the *Prima Pars* of the *Summa Theologiae*, in *ST* I, q.19, a.3.[565] Here he writes that:

> Accordingly as to things willed by God, we must observe that He wills something of absolute necessity: but this is not true of all that He wills. For the divine will has a necessary relation to the divine goodness, since that is its proper object. Hence God wills His own goodness necessarily, even as we will our own happiness necessarily, and as any other faculty has necessary relation to its proper and principal object, for instance the sight to colour, since it tends to it by its own nature. But God wills things apart from Himself in so far as they are ordered to His own goodness as their end.[566]

As Aquinas makes clear in the above quotation: God wills only certain things necessarily, and these things are concerned with the divine goodness – God must will his own goodness necessarily, Aquinas notes, much as humanity must will its own happiness necessarily.[567] Thus we might say, then, that for Aquinas the divine will and the divine goodness are linked together.[568] The precise form of that link Aquinas makes clear above: God's divine goodness is the 'proper object' of God's divine will.[569] Aquinas claims that this 'proper relation' of the divine goodness and divine will is something which other faculties share – sight, for instance, is related to colour because sight tends towards it just as the divine will relates to the divine goodness.[570] That sight 'tends towards' colour does not make sight 'unfree' – we cannot say that sight is unfree because it can only tend towards colour, and not towards, say, left-handed Popes or back-flipping professors. This is because colour and sight are related by virtue of *nature* – sight does not tend towards left-handed Popes or back-flipping professors in the same way as it does toward colour. The former are non-essential to sight; the latter is essential, by virtue of nature.

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[565] *ST* I, q.19, a.3.
[566] Ibid.
[567] Ibid.
[568] Davies and Leftow, *Summa Theologiae, Questions on God*, 222.
[569] *ST* I, q.19, a.3.
[570] Davies and Leftow, *Summa Theologiae, Questions on God*, 222.

GOD'S WILLING OF OTHER THINGS AND THE QUESTION OF NECESSITY IN THE *SUMMA CONTRA GENTILES*

Something which emerges when one reads Aquinas' writings on the topic of free will is quite how much of Aquinas' arguments for God's freedom depend upon the topic of *necessity.* This issue of God's necessarily willing other things beyond himself – or not doing so, as the case may be – is something which Aquinas touches upon not only in the *Summa Theologiae*, but also in his *Summa Contra Gentiles*.[571] Here Aquinas notes that because God can be said to will God's own goodness necessarily, it might therefore seem that God is *required* to will *other* things than himself also.[572] Aquinas here refers to a concept explored in *ScG* I, 75, 1-8; this is, namely, that when God wills himself, God also wills other things in one single act of will.[573] Aquinas is quite explicit, however: though it is true that God *does*, in fact, will other things than himself, he does not will these other things *necessarily*.[574] These 'extras' are just that – they are not constituent parts of God (for God is divinely simple, as we have said); they are extraneous and thus purely contingent on God *choosing* to will them.[575]

To make this explicit, Aquinas first makes it clear that God 'wills other things as ordered to the end of His goodness.'[576] By this Aquinas simply means that everything which God wills is in accordance with God's own goodness – God will only will things which are good and which serve his goodness, obviously.[577] Having made this apparent, Aquinas moves to address the question of necessity with regard to ends. He notes that God will

[571] *ScG* I, 81, 1-2
[572] Ibid.
[573] *ScG* I, 75, 1-8
[574] *ScG* I, 81, 1-2
[575] Ibid.
[576] Ibid.
[577] Ibid.

not will anything which is for the sake of the end, if that end might be accomplished without those extra things.[578] To better illustrate this here Aquinas suggests one consider a doctor administering medicine to a patient.[579] Aquinas notes that the doctor's aim is to heal the patient; his end, therefore, is to bring health to one who is sick. Obviously for the doctor to heal the patient, he *must* give the patient the medicine he needs. The doctor is, however, under no obligation to give the patient medicine 'without which the sick person can nevertheless be healed' – this is to say, medicine which the patient does not *need* to be healed.[580] Aquinas likens the doctor of his analogy to God, explicitly comparing the doctor and his actions to God's own divine goodness.[581] Just as with the doctor, who does not need to give a patient medicine that patient doesn't actually need to be made healthy, the divine goodness can be without other things, for it can achieve its own end perfectly without anything additional or external to it.[582]

It is here the analogy might seem to fall short; obviously, the divine goodness is not quite like a doctor. The divine goodness, Aquinas reminds us, cannot be increased by anything else; it is entirely complete in and of itself.[583] It is unlike the doctor, then, who may be flawed or limited. He may, for instance, fail to give the patient the medicine he needs *properly*. He may give it in the wrong time or in the wrong fashion, or even the wrong amount – too much medicine or too few might well cease to make that medicine useful, for instance. The divine goodness can never fail but to give exactly what is required of it to everything which needs it; I would also argue that for Aquinas goodness from the divine is a constituent element of human beings, rather than an *addition*, as medicine

[578] *ScG* I, 75, 1-8
[579] Ibid.
[580] *ScG* I, 81, 1-2
[581] Ibid.
[582] Ibid.
[583] Ibid.

might be. For one can be healthy and never require medicine; the same is not true of the divine goodness, or God as a whole – for Aquinas, God is being and what gives being to others. Thus he is rather unlike the doctor and his medicine.

THE GOOD, THE INTELLECT, AND THE WILL

Returning now to Aquinas' account of the divine will in his *Summa Contra Gentiles*, after having concluded his argument that God need will nothing beyond himself except by choice, Aquinas starts to consider the relationship between the good, the intellect, and the will.[584] As he writes:

> Furthermore, since the understood good is the object of the will, the will can will anything conceived by the intellect in which the nature of the good is present. Hence, although the being of any given thing is as such a good and its non-being an evil, the non-being of something can fall under the will (though not by necessity) because of some adjoined good that is preserved; since it is a good that something be, even though something else does not exist. Therefore, according to its own nature, the will cannot not will that good whose non-existence causes the nature of the good entirely to be lost. But there is no such good apart from God.[585]

Leading on from paragraph two, Aquinas begins by outlining how it is that the will relates to the good.[586] He begins by noting, as we have said in previously, that the understood good is the object of one's will.[587] From this, Aquinas claims it follows that one's will can will anything conceived of by the intellect – so long as what is conceived has within it 'the nature of the good'.[588] In other words, we might simply say that for Aquinas, one can will anything which has the nature of the good within it, for that is the will's principle object.[589]

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[584] *ScG* I, 81, 3.
[585] Ibid.
[586] Ibid.
[587] Ibid.
[588] Ibid.
[589] Ibid.

Aquinas next reminds us that being and goodness are related, such that 'the being of any given thing is as such a good and its non-being an evil…'[590] Obviously one can only will good things, for only good things can have being – yet it is possible that one might will an evil, insofar as the non-being of something willed is 'adjoined to some good'.[591] To illustrate this particular point more readily, we need simply say that Aquinas thinks one can only will things which are good; yet there is the possibility that the non-being of something might *also* fall under the will only because that non-being is connected to some good.[592] Thus, what Aquinas makes clear here is that the one can will the non-being of something if in doing so that brings about the *preservation* of some other good.[593] This is because for Aquinas, it is ultimately *good* that something *be*, even if in being that thing may well prevent the existence of something else.[594]

A fitting example which illustrates all of the above once more comes to us from the created world. Consider, for instance, the doughnut; to will the doughnut one obviously wills that the doughnut be, with its particular shape and mass and form and the jam and the sprinkles. Yet this willing of the doughnut includes with it the willing of the non-being of something else – say, for instance, the hole at the centre of the doughnut. The hole at the centre is necessary for the doughnut to be; thus, the willing of a non-being is bound up in the willing of something. It is in this way, then, that Aquinas thinks one might will something and yet still will the non-being of something else, even though the latter is a necessary absence of being.[595] In willing particular configurations of being and non-

[590] Ibid.
[591] Ibid.
[592] Ibid.
[593] Ibid.
[594] Ibid.
[595] *ScG* I, 81, 3.

being, God is willing created things according to how those things *have to be* in order to exist.

After all of this, Aquinas concludes paragraph three by noting that according to the nature of the will, the will is unable to will any good the non-existence of which would cause the 'nature' of the good to be lost entirely.[596] However, Aquinas finishes, there is no good of this kind which exists – apart, of course, from God.[597] What are we to conclude from this? Aquinas answers this as follows:

According to its nature, therefore, the will can will the non-existence of anything whatever apart from God. But in God will is present according to its whole range, since all things in Him are universally perfect. God, therefore, can will the non-existence of anything whatever apart from Himself. Hence, it is not of necessity that things other than Himself exist.[598]

In other words: thanks to what we established above, it follows for Aquinas that the will can will the non-existence of anything it should like to – except the divine, for God is the only good whose non-existence would, as we have said, cause the nature of the good to be lost entirely.[599] Will in God, meanwhile, is 'present according to its whole range', as everything that God has, God has *perfectly*.[600] Thus, Aquinas finishes, God can will the non-existence of anything apart from himself – and this, Aquinas says, makes it clear that God does not will other things beside himself necessarily.[601] Were these things necessary,

[596] Ibid.
[597] Ibid.
[598] Ibid.
[599] Ibid.
[600] Ibid.
[601] Ibid.

surely God would not be able to will their non-existence; yet as we have said, only the divine itself must be willed by God necessarily.

GOD'S GOODNESS AND GOD'S INFINITY

Paragraph four of *ScG* I, 81 concerns God's goodness and how it relates to God's infinity.[602] Here Aquinas notes that because God is infinitely good, and because God wills things other than himself in so far as those things participate in God's own divine goodness, God's goodness can be participated in an infinite number of ways.[603] Aquinas notes that if it were necessary that God wills things other than himself, and his goodness is infinite, it follows that God would will an infinity of creatures in proportion to that infinity of goodness.[604] Obviously this is not the case - the world is not (and could not) be filled with an infinity of different creatures each participating in God's own goodness in an infinity of ways.[605] We know that God did not will that such an infinity of creatures might exist; obviously, were God to have willed them, Aquinas notes, then those creatures *would be*.[606] Thus, because they do not exist, we can therefore conclude that God is *not* obligated to will things beyond himself.[607] Indeed, Aquinas concludes, it can be taken from all of this that God need not will anything at all beyond himself – not even those things which currently exist.[608]

I am not certain that Aquinas' comparisons and arguments here are sound. Paragraph four seems to exist as an additional reason as to why God need not will things besides himself necessarily. I can only express some difficulty in accepting the lattermost proposition he

[602] *ScG* I, 81, 4.
[603] Ibid.
[604] Ibid.
[605] Ibid.
[606] Ibid.
[607] Ibid.
[608] Ibid.

offers; this is, namely, that because God has not willed an infinity of creatures to participate in God's infinite goodness, God is therefore also not obligated to will the existence of things which *do* exist.[609] Aquinas here seems to take God's not creating an infinity of creatures as proof that God has some agency over his creative powers – for in Aquinas' view, it follows that if God need not create an infinity of creatures, he must also not need to create any creatures at all.[610]

I find this comparison unreasonable insofar as the creation of an infinity of creatures would present some difficulty for a material and quite possibly finite universe. To fill something finite with an infinity of things is surely a contradiction; that God does not do something which leads to a contradiction does not seem to me – on its own – as adequate grounds to conclude that God might not do something *else*, such as not necessarily willing all that he wills.

This latter suggestion, I think, is not in itself a contradiction; it does not violate the terms of God's own existence as the creation of an infinity of creatures might, and it certainly does not compromise the status of creation as a whole. This is but one critique one might make of Aquinas' account of God's will here in his *Summa Contra Gentiles*, however, as we shall see.

GOD'S UNNECESSARY WILLING OF THINGS

Paragraphs five and six of chapter 81 are brief in comparison with the preceding paragraphs three and four, and in particular with the extensive paragraph seven.[611] Here,

[609] Ibid.
[610] Ibid.
[611] *ScG* I, 81, 5-6.

Aquinas attempts to provide yet another reason as to why God does not will other things than himself necessarily.[612] He asks that one consider a wise man:

> Again, the will of a wise man, by the fact of dealing with a cause, deals also with the effect that necessarily follows from the cause. For it would be foolish to wish the sun to be overhead and yet that it should not be daylight. But, as to an effect that does not follow of necessity from a cause, it is not necessary that someone will it because he wills the cause. Now, other things proceed from God without necessity, as will be shown later on. It is not necessary, therefore, that God will other things from the fact of willing Himself.[613]

In short, here Aquinas likens God's willing of creatures to a wise man dealing with a cause of something.[614] This wise man, Aquinas notes, must deal both with a cause and an effect of something, provided of course that that effect necessarily follows from the cause in question – the sun being overhead naturally makes it daylight, for instance.[615] However, not all effects follow from a cause necessarily; that the sun is overhead does not mean that one will *necessarily* get sunburned, or attacked by bees.[616] These effects do not necessarily follow on from the sun being overhead; they do not always occur when the sun is overhead, and one is free to wish that the sun might hang in the sky without getting burnt or attacked by bees. Thus, Aquinas concludes, one does not will an effect which does *not* necessarily follow from a cause; that cause may well exist without producing that effect.[617] Aquinas says the same is true of God – that is, that things proceed from God without them being necessary; thus, he thinks he can conclude that God need not will other things in willing himself.[618]

[612] Ibid, 81, 5.
[613] Ibid.
[614] Ibid.
[615] Ibid.
[616] Ibid.
[617] Ibid.
[618] Ibid.

Paragraph six features a succinct comparison of its own; here Aquinas likens God and God's acts of creation to an artisan who creates 'artefacts'.[619] Aquinas notes simply that though any particular artisan might well like to have his or her art that does not mean the artisan might wish to produce the artefacts *of* that art.[620] The same is true of God, Aquinas claims: though things come from God as artefacts might come from an artisan, it does not follow that God *wishes* that these things might come. God is like the artisan, therefore; skilled with his craft, certainly, but free to enjoy that craft without willing to produce anything from it.[621] I would argue that this seems to reflect Aquinas' notion of will as appetite for God, in that appetite is not always about *seeking*, but *resting in* and *enjoying* what one has.[622] That same point might well be what Aquinas is attempting to express here.

DIVINE KNOWLEDGE

Finally, paragraph seven concerns God's divine knowledge and how it relates to the divine will.[623]Aquinas suggests that it is important to consider precisely why it is that God, with his infinite knowledge, might know things other than himself, but choose not to will them.[624] The reason for this, Aquinas declares, is best explained by means of comparison. As he writes:

> That he who understands should understand something arises from the fact that he is disposed in a certain way, since something is understood in act in so far as its likeness is in the one understanding. But that he who wills should will something arises from the fact that what is willed is disposed in a certain way. For we will something either because it is the end or because it is ordered to the end. Now, that all things be in God, so that they can be understood in Him, is

[619] *ScG* I, 81, 6.
[620] Ibid.
[621] Ibid.
[622] James Brent, "God's Knowledge and Will," in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas* (eds), Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump, 165.
[623] *ScG* I, 81, 7.
[624] Ibid.

> necessarily required by the divine perfection; but the divine goodness does not necessarily require that other things exist, which are ordered to it as to the end. That is why it is necessary that God know other things, but not necessary that he will them [625]

In other words, Aquinas says, acts of willing are like acts of understanding; one *understands* firstly because one is 'determined in a certain way'.[626] Understanding is an *act*, and something is only understood insofar as the 'likeness' of that thing being understood is present within the one who is doing the understanding.[627] The same is true of willing – one who wills something only does so because what is willed *by* that person is 'disposed' in a certain way.[628] This is because one only wills something either because it is the end they seek, or because what they will is in some way *ordered* towards that end.[629] Divine perfection, Aquinas continues, means that the perfections of all things are present in God, and this allows God to understand all things as Aquinas has said above. However, Aquinas finishes, the divine goodness does not itself require that anything other than God exist, even those things which would exist would be inclined towards the divine goodness as an end.[630] Thus, Aquinas concludes, it is necessary that God know other things, but not that he wills them – to understand those other things, God needs to possess their perfections. Yet the perfections of these created things do not add to the divine perfection in anyway; they are in God so as to allow God perfect understanding only. They do not necessitate that these things in the divine intellect be willed.[631]

[625] Ibid.
[626] Ibid.
[627] Ibid.
[628] *ScG* I, 81, 7.
[629] Ibid.
[630] Ibid.
[631] Ibid.

IN SUMMARY OF SCG I, 81, 7

In *ScG* I, 81, 7, we have come to see a number of truths about the divine will and its relationship to necessity.[632] In paragraphs one, for instance, we found that first, God does not will things aside from himself necessarily, even though he wills all the things he wills in a single act of will.[633] In paragraph two, we saw that because the divine goodness accrues nothing from created things, God is under no necessity to will other things besides himself in willing God's own divine goodness.[634] In paragraph three we found that God is fully able to will the non-existence of anything besides himself, by virtue of the fact that God's is the only good the non-existence of which would 'cause the nature of the good entirely to be lost'.[635] In paragraph four it was established that God does not necessarily will anything besides himself because his goodness is infinite and can be interacted with in an infinite number of ways; for Aquinas, were God to will these other things than himself necessarily, it would follow that God would then have to will an infinity of creatures to interact with his goodness in an infinity of ways.[636] Such an infinity of creatures does not exist, however, and therefore God does not necessarily will anything which exists aside from himself.[637] In paragraph five and paragraph six we discovered that just because God wills certain causes, it does not follow that God necessarily wills the *effects* of these various causes, once again exonerating God from needing to will anything beyond his own attributes necessarily. [638] Finally, in paragraph seven we saw that it is only necessary that God *know* everything for his perfect understanding, and not to *will* everything, because divine knowledge requires all perfections of things other than

[632] Ibid.
[633] *ScG* I, 81, 1.
[634] *ScG* I, 81, 2.
[635] *ScG* I, 81, 3.
[636] *ScG* I, 81, 4.
[637] Ibid.
[638] *ScG* I, 81, 5-6.

God in it for understanding, but the divine goodness requires nothing beyond itself, for nothing can add to it.[639] Therefore, Aquinas concludes, God does not necessarily will anything other than himself, and is required only to will himself.

SECTION THREE: THE HUMAN AND DIVINE WILLS: A COMPARISON

THE DIVINE AND HUMAN WILLS: ON NECESSITY

In both chapter two and in section three of this current chapter we have spoken of how the will of both humanity and of God seem centred around the concept of *necessity*. I would argue that this concept is of vital and foundational importance in any comparison of the divine will and the human will. As regards necessity, we said, in other words, that for both God and man, there were things *must* be willed regardless of one's particular likes or wants or wishes. For man, we said this was his happiness – man seeks the good in all that he does, for the good is his ultimate end; all other ends are subordinated to this ultimate end.[640] Thus, man cannot help but to will his own happiness, if an *ultimate*, perhaps far-off sense.

The obvious question to be asked with reference to this is whether this constitutes an assault or attack on human freedom. We found in chapter two that the necessity of the end was *not* something which took away from man's free-will and agency, however. Instead, Aquinas manages to explain that man is free in the sense that he can choose in what manner he should *like* to attain his ultimate end – and is free in that choice, if not the choice of his ultimate destination. This is to say that man is free with respect to *how*

[639] Ibid., 7.
[640] Wippel, "Norman Kretzmann on Aquinas's Attribution of Will and of Freedom to Create to God," *Religious Studies* 39, no. 3 (2003), 290.

he might make a journey, though his ultimate destination – the good, his happiness, and so on – is fixed and definite. Not so much freedom upon an infinite plain, then, but freedom in a wide corridor: man is *funnelled*, in a sense, to a point he cannot escape, but which is the basis for the free decisions he *does* make.

Is there anything which *God* must will necessarily, however? Is God as concerned with ultimate ends and far off goods, which draw God's willing to some final goal? This question, I think, is perhaps in need of some clarification. We are wondering about the relationship between the divine will and the concept of *necessity*. What is there that God could be compelled to will *necessarily*? Is there, indeed, something God must will necessarily? Some end to which God is drawn? The answer to this is in the positive, as we found – God's own end is God himself.[641] God wills God's own self as God's ultimate end; this we can prove with reference to the fact that what outside of an infinite, divinely simple and complete God, could God need? God is complete in and off himself, then, and in being so is thus his own ultimate destination or aim. [642] Finally, we must keep in mind what we also learned in chapter two: that to will is not always to seek what one does not have in *appetition* - to have an appetite for something is also to *delight* in what one already has – which God does in God's own goodness. [643] Thus, God does not so much as *seek* the good as he does *rest* in it.

SOMETHING IN COMMON?

The concept of necessity, is, then, something which can found embedded in the wills of both the creaturely human and the divine. Man must will his own happiness – his ultimate end – necessarily, much as God wills God's own self as God's own ultimate end.

[641] *ST* 1 q.19 a. 1.
[642] Brian Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 145.
[643] *ST* 1 q.19 a. 1.

Certainly we can say that man's ultimate end does not represent an assault on his freedom; we are still able to choose *how* to achieve that great end, which is itself the very grounding *for* the decisions we might make. God, similarly, seems unconstrained by God's willing of God's own self – and much as with humanity, I would argue that God's willing of himself is not an assault on God's ability to make free decisions, but the very ground upon which God can *make* free decisions. After all, if God did not will God's own self, how could God make decisions? To will is want, and for one to want (or to rest in what one has), one actually has to *be*. An absence of something cannot *want*. Thus God must be in order for God to will, and for God to be implies for Aquinas that God is necessarily willing his own being and existence.

Ultimately, God seeks the ultimate good of all things in willing himself; he is necessitated to make decisions which lead *towards* that good, much as humanity must will its own happiness. Once again, however, precisely *how* God might bring about that particular end is entirely up to God. He is free with respect to that which he does not will, just as humanity is. This is certainly a point of commonality which God and humanity both share, then. Both are, as we have said, not free in the sense that they may wander around aimlessly, but free in choosing how to accomplish that one central goal to which they are orientated. Again, the distinction is perhaps best explained with reference to both a wide, open plain, and a corridor. Neither God nor man are loosed on some grand, open plain which they can traverse at leisure, free from any notion of destination or origin point. Instead, they are directed down a corridor, in a sense, in that they are required to will a certain destination or reach a particular input. Yet a corridor need not be *narrow*; in fact, it might be drastically wide and grand in scope, offering all kinds of possible alternative choices of action and routes to take or to ignore. Unlike that grand plain, a corridor simply possesses a definite and final destination at one end, to which one cannot help but progress

towards. Freedom within a structure, as opposed to an unlimited sort. As we have said: in Aquinas's metaphysical system, both man and God are free with respect to what they do *not* will, and that which they will *necessarily* is actually the grounds upon which they can freely will or not will whatever is unnecessary. Both God and man cannot but move towards an ultimate end, but *can* will lesser ends in *relation* to that ultimate end.

Are Aquinas's views on will and desirability and goodness truly coherent, however? Do they work with the infinite God he has defined, and upon which rests so much of his philosophical theology? There can be no doubt one at least *one* point: Aquinas's notion of freedom *within* a system or structure, is, I think, an excellent one, which coheres very well with his views on goodness and desirability. As we shall see in chapter four, however, this does not in itself mean it works with Aquinas's conception of *God* so well as they work with his conception of *man.*

CHAPTER FOUR: IS THE QUESTION OF DIVINE FREEDOM ANSWERED, THEREFORE?

SECTION ONE: AN INTRODUCTION

We might wonder if we have found Aquinas' main answer to the question of divine freedom in light of the preceding chapter. There, we explored Aquinas's approach to the question of divine freedom in light of *ST* I, q.19, a.9 –a. 10, and the relationship between divinity and necessity in *ScG* I, 81 and *ScG* I, 88. Throughout these sections, Aquinas makes it clear that God is incapable of choosing between alternatives such as 'doing the good or committing evil', or 'willing himself or not willing himself'. However, in contrast, God *is* perfectly capable of choosing between other sorts of alternatives – namely, whether any given thing need be or not be.[644] We also spoke of the necessary connection between the divine will and the divine goodness, with the latter serving as the principal object of the former – the divine will tends towards the divine good just as sight tends towards colour, in Aquinas' own words.[645]

As we noted, that the divine will tends towards the divine goodness is not to say that the divine will is unfree – only that it has a proper object, and that they are fundamentally related by their natures. This is a crucial point. No one would call the divine will unfree because it tended only to the divine good and not to wet newspapers – the latter has no place in the former; wet newspapers are not related to the divine will as the divine goodness is.[646] God's will has a proper object (the good, which is God himself) and God's will cannot help but tend towards it necessarily.

[644] *ST* I, q.19, a.10.
[645] Davies and Leftow (eds), *Summa Theologia, Questions on God*, 222.
[646] Ibid.

The divine goodness functions to make God's will free within a wide corridor or a grand structure, rather than upon some, infinite open plain of possibilities, as we noted previously. Freedom within structure, then, and a structure that does not impugn upon that freedom but rather provides the foundation *for* that free decision – the 'walls' and 'ground' of this wide corridor providing God's will the basis to choose between various alternatives while safely within the structure of and eternally flowing *towards* the good, which lingers at the end of that corridor. Somewhat overextended metaphor aside, then, we have already established that a God who follows his own divine will is *not* unfree because he cannot pursue something which is not conducive to the ultimate good. Instead, God is free in the ways in which he can *bring about* that ultimate good.

These are the various conclusions Aquinas reaches with regard to the divine will and its freedom. Our question now is to ascertain how coherent and suitable these conclusions are, both in themselves and with relation to God's other divine attributes, such as the divine goodness and divine simplicity. We might also ask whether Aquinas's God is as free as Aquinas wishes to say he is. Does Aquinas do God a disservice, by perhaps presenting an overly-limited and narrow conception of God's abilities to will whatever God might like? Does Aquinas's account of divine freedom do justice to the transcendent God of all creation? Is it compatible with the Christian theological understanding of God? Finally, how well does Aquinas's conception of divine freedom work with respect to the divine simplicity and Aquinas's apophatic theology?

The answers to each of these questions really rather depend upon the strength of Aquinas's arguments for the presence of divine freedom within his conception of God in both his *Summa Contra Gentiles* and in his *Summa Theologiae*. In this chapter we will explore Aquinas's conception of the divine freedom from many of these vantage points,

all in order to make finally clear if it simply coheres with the rest of his philosophical theology. This we will accomplish through detailed analysis of the some of the works of Norman Kretzmann, whose critique of Aquinas's position on divine freedom is both illuminating and extensive.

To this end, the chapter will start with a comparison of the treatment of the issue of divine freedom in both Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae*, and his *Summa Contra Gentiles*. With section one completed the chapter will move to consider Kretzmann's two critiques of Aquinas's positions in detail. To that end, in section two it will deal with Kretzmann's critique based on *motive*, and in section three Kretzmann's critique based on *divine simplicity*. Each section also contains my own direct response to Kretzmann's charges.

The chapter will end with a final summary of the validity of Aquinas's arguments for divine freedom in light of Kretzmann's critiques, my responses to those critiques, and one final argument disputing Kretzmann's overall conception of Aquinas as appropriate. An ultimate pronouncement on the possibility of Aquinas's conception of God possessing any measure of divine freedom will be found therein.

SECTION TWO: AQUINAS ON DIVINE FREEDOM

Before we might come to Kretzmann's critiques, it is necessary now to clarify precisely how Aquinas himself addressed the question of divine freedom. In the last chapter we have explored in detail precisely how it is that Aquinas defines and proves the *existence* of divine freedom in both Question 88 of his *Summa Contra Gentiles*, and in Question 19 of his *Summa Theologiae*.[647] That these are two distinct works is significant. Aquinas wrote many works, and being that he was human, finite, and by his own

[647] *ScG* I, 88, 1 – 7.

admission attempting to define something entirely beyond the human capacity to know fully, it is entirely possible that he came to change his mind after having written questions 88 and 81 of his *Summa Contra Gentiles*.[648] Can we say, then, that the account of the divine freedom which he presents in his *Summa Contra Gentiles* is identical to that which he espouses in his *Summa Theologiae*? This, naturally, is a question very much worth exploring. Ultimately, it is in his *Summa Theologiae* and *Summa Contra Gentiles* that Aquinas most explicitly deals with the question of divine freedom. Thus, it will be these two treatments of this same subject which we shall now compare.

In *ScG I,* 88 the question of divine freedom is asked explicitly; yet, in line with Aquinas' general views on God, goodness, being, appetite, and so on, I argue that the question of divine freedom asked here is centred upon the issue of *necessity* specifically.[649] In *ScG I,* 88, Aquinas asks if God is free, and in answering that question attempts to show that there are things in the world other than God, and that God does not necessarily will those things. Thus, Aquinas here is defining God as being free with respect to those things which God does not will necessarily.[650] He writes, for instance, that though God wills God's own goodness and being *necessarily*¸ God does not will anything else because God *must*. Indeed, Aquinas concludes, there is nothing in creation beyond God's own being and attributes which God is required to will:

> Free choice is said in relation to the things that one wills, not of necessity, but of his own accord. Thus, there is in us free choice in relation to our willing to run or to walk. But God wills things other than Himself without necessity, as was shown above. Therefore, to have free choice befits God.[651]

[648] *ScG* I, 88, 2.
[649] *ScG* I, 88, 1 – 6; ST I, q.19, a.10.
[650] *ScG* I, 88, 2 – 3; ST I, q.19, a.10.
[651] *ScG* I, 88, 2.

The answer which Aquinas presents is as we have said above: God is not obligated to will anything aside from God's own being and goodness and other essential attributes. God is freely able to will or not to will anything else God should like to; these other things are not *necessary* for God to be, and thus, can be willed by God or not willed by God according to God's leisure, essentially.

Compare the above passage from *ScG* I, 88, 1 to that found in *ST* I, q.19, a.10. In answering this same question of divine freedom, Aquinas once again considers the matter through the lens of *necessity*, just as he did in *ScG I, 88*. The first line of his reply to the charge that 'It seems that God has not free-will' is to note that:

> We have free-will with respect to what we will not of necessity, nor be natural instinct. For our will to be happy does not appertain to free-will, but to natural instinct. Hence other animals, that are moved to act by natural instinct, are not said to be moved by free-will. Since then God necessarily wills His own goodness, but other things not necessarily, as shown above (Article 3), He has free will with respect to what He does not necessarily will.[652]

In fact, as one will note in reading the above paragraph fully, the issue of necessity is once again key to Aquinas's attempts to define God as being free.[653] Everything which Aquinas writes here in *ST* I, q.19, a.10 depends on what he has already written in article three of this same question, which was, of course, the issue of God's willing things necessarily.[654] In *ST* I, q.19, a.3, Aquinas asks whether God wills everything he wills necessarily; he concludes that no, this is not the case – God is free to will or not to will anything aside from God's own divine essence, which God wills necessarily, as we have said.[655]

[652] *ST* I, q.19, a.10.
[653] Ibid.
[654] *ST* I, q.19, a. 3, 10.
[655] *ST* I, q.19, a. 3.

Thus in both instances it is quite fair to say that Aquinas very much focuses the question of divine freedom around that of necessity; he holds in both his *Summa Contra Gentiles* and in his *Summa Theologiae* that God is only free with respect to what God is not obligated to will, which is everything other than God's own attributes and being. With regard to the rest of creation, then, for Aquinas God is free with respect what to will and what not to will; God can choose, for instance, whether to will that animals of the type 'X' will be or not. God cannot, however, choose whether or not to will his own divine goodness because his divine will necessarily tends towards it as its proper object.[656]

Kretzmann, who in my opinion provides a particularly coherent and critical account of Aquinas's conception of divine freedom, seems very much to favour Aquinas's *Summa Contra Gentiles* over Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae*. The reasons for this seem to do with Kretzmann's views on natural theology, for he considers the *Summa Contra Gentiles* as the 'most fully accomplished and most promising natural theology that I know of'.[657] Kretzmann's interesting views on natural and revealed theology will be dealt with more explicitly in due course. For now I will only concentrate on natural theology even as Kretzmann does.

Interestingly, even on the basis of natural theology I would argue that Aquinas's conception of divine freedom and necessity in both the *Summa Theologiae* and his *Summa Contra Gentiles* do not radically change. Yet even in admitting this I will aim to make more use of the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, if only in order to better explain and respond to Kretzmann (whose points on the issue of divine freedom I find to be very helpful for the purposes of this thesis).

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[656] *ScG* I, 88, 1; ST I, q.19, a.10.
[657] Norman Kretzmann, *The Metaphysics of Theism*: *Aquinas's Natural Theology in Summa Contra Gentiles I* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1997), Introduction, 2.

AQUINAS' DIVINE FREEDOM IN THE *SUMMA CONTRA GENTILES* SPECIFICALLY

In his text *The Metaphysics of Theism: Aquinas' Natural Theology In Summa Contra Gentiles I*, Kretzmann analyses in detail the arguments Aquinas presents in support of the notion that God has some measure of divine freedom.[658] Kretzmann begins by making clear in what manner he considers God worthy of being called 'a personal God' rather than simply as 'first being'.[659] For God to be personal rather than impersonal requires the presence of personifying characteristics, then. Extrapolating from this he then concludes that for one to be either person or personal God, one must be 'fully conscious, self-directed, responsible free agents that are capable of certain personifying attitudes toward and relationships with other entities of this sort, relationships such as wronging and loving.'[660]

Why precisely Kretzmann suggests that a personal God should be capable of 'wronging' someone is a mystery, for surely to 'wrong' someone is to treat them unjustly, and thus immorally. For Aquinas, God, goodness and being are all inherently inter-related – God is being itself, and for something to be is good – this for God to be being *itself* God is the greatest possible good. That Kretzmann considers 'wronging someone' as among those characteristics a personal God must possess – even though for Aquinas God is the *greatest possible good itself* – is, I think, a fundamental inconsistency on his part.

Regardless, Aquinas' God, Kretzmann continues, is worthy of the moniker 'personal God' only so long as God possesses all of these personifying characteristics; the

[658] Kretzmann, *The Metaphysics of Theism*: *Aquinas's Natural Theology in Summa Contra Gentiles I*, 217-218.
[659] Ibid, 217.
[660] Ibid, 218.

difficulty, however, is that in Kretzmann's view, Aquinas actually *fails* to provide his account of God with a sufficient ground to possess each and every one of these traits.[661] The two aspects of personhood which Kretzmann thinks Aquinas' God lacks sufficient ground to be said to possess are firstly an interpersonal relationship with creatures, and secondly, and more crucially for our purposes, *choice*.[662] Both of these, Kretzmann thinks, are linked, and the reason that neither can be found in Aquinas' God is because his God ultimately seems to lack free will.[663]

This is certainly an ambitious claim; we might wonder how reasonable Kretzmann is being when he claims that somehow Aquinas's God lacks any capacity for choice. This is all the more pressing a matter when we recall that so much of Aquinas's understanding of God seems dependent on a freely acting God who acts not out of obligation or coercion, but out of a freely-given love. As we will see, however, Kretzmann's claims about God's lacking freedom will ultimately rest on his ability to demonstrate what flaws he thinks are present in Aquinas's account of God's willing and being. We shall now examine these in turn. Section two of this chapter will start with a detailed analysis of Kretzmann's *motive* critique of Aquinas' account of divine freedom; this will be followed immediately by a response to this critique. Section three will then deal with Kretzmann's critique of Aquinas's conception of divine freedom based on *divine simplicity*. As with section two, it will conclude with my response to Kretzmann.

[661] Ibid.
[662] Kretzmann, *The Metaphysics of Theism*: *Aquinas's Natural Theology in Summa Contra Gentiles I*, 218.
[663] Ibid.

SECTION THREE: KRETZMANN'S FIRST CRITIQUE OF AQUINAS'S DIVINE FREEDOM

KRETZMANN'S CRITICAL CONCEPTION

Kretzmann starts his critique with an expression of agreement for one of Aquinas's key ideas relating to divine freedom: that God's freedom revolves around the concept of *necessity*, something which we have concluded here previously in the chapter. Aquinas's God, Kretzmann notes, is free with respect to what God does not have to will *necessarily*.[664] God has no choice in willing God's own essence; God does, however, have choice with regard to willing or not willing that which must not *necessarily* be, and it is in *this* rather than in willing God's own essence that God can said to be *free*.[665] On this, Kretzmann writes:

> Of course, there's nothing unexpected in that much of the account: it clearly does follow from all that's been developed in Aquinas' natural theology up to this point. But it leaves the divine will looking not much like the will of a human person, and rather more like the earth's naturally necessitated, utterly non-personal, static appetite for remaining at the centre of the Aristotelian cosmos.[666]

Kretzmann's main charge here is that God's necessary willing of his own essence makes God's will radically unlike the will of a human person, and more like that of the large and choice-less appetite of something as large and as unconscious as the earth's own appetite to remain at the centre of Aristotle's cosmos.[667] God here has no real agency, no real choice – just a grand, static need to make God's own self simply *be*. Naturally, this likening of God to something so utterly *non-personal* constitutes a radical departure from

[664] Ibid.
[665] Ibid.
[666] Ibid.
[667] Ibid.

the Christian God that Aquinas is carefully attempting to encapsulate, insofar as can be done within the limits of his apophatic theology.

Kretzmann is himself open to reproach here, of course. One might find it difficult to critique Aquinas for making God unfree in God's willing himself as his own ultimate good, all the while merrily accepting that Aquinas *simultaneously* describes man as similarly predisposed towards willing man's own ultimate good. For Aquinas, the wills of man and God, for all their differences, both to some extent revolve around the concept of necessity. Both God and man must necessarily will that which is each one's ultimate end. Is Kretzmann here forgetting this particular aspect of Aquinas's account of human will? Or does he instead mean to suggest that for Aquinas, man is as unfree as God in willing this ultimate end? On this point, Kretzmann seems to remain silent.

Regardless, Kretzmann concludes that if one is to find 'personifying choice' in the divine volition, that choice must necessarily be not in God's willing of God's own essence, but in God's willing of other, and therefore created, things.[668] This particular point actually coheres with Aquinas' own views; that the freedom of the divine is entangled with the concept of necessity, and that God is free in willing or not willing that which is *not* necessary. Kretzmann offers, however, that Aquinas's attempts to introduce this sort of non-necessary willing into his account of God in *ScG I, 88* are all ultimately unsatisfactory.[669]

[668] Kretzmann, *The Metaphysics of Theism*: *Aquinas's Natural Theology in Summa Contra Gentiles I*, 218.
[669] Ibid.

GOD AND THE NECESSITY OF WILLING OF CREATED THINGS

Kretzmann points to the views Aquinas espouses in *ScG I, 74* and75 as being representative of a less than ideal beginning for the arguments to follow. According to Kretzmann, in these two passages Aquinas declares that when God wills God's own self, God *also* wills other things (and again in a single act of will, in light of God's divine simplicity).[670] It is important to remember here that in willing God's own self, God is in fact willing an end; moreover, Aquinas claims, if one wills an end, one wills things which are directed towards that end.[671] One only wills these things *towards* that end because the things willed help one in *reaching* that end – I would, for instance, walk to a chipper because I wanted chips from a chipper, or I would pull a trampoline down from a tree in order to remove the trampolines from my tree.[672]

The difference between these two examples and that of God's own acts of will is to remember that for Aquinas, God is not *an* end, as moving a trampoline or going to the chipper might be, but the *ultimate* end of all things which are. All other ends are in effect in deference to God, then.

Moreover, when considering the divine will we must take the above section within the greater context of Aquinas' writings on the necessity, or lack thereof, of certain acts of creation. Aquinas, as we have already seen, does not think that God wills anything besides God's own self necessarily. Certainly it is true that Aquinas writes that we must will that good 'whose non-existence causes the nature of the good entirely to be lost'.[673] However,

[670] S*cG* I, 74.
[671] *ScG* I, 75.
[672] *ScG* I, 75.
[673] *ScG* I, 81.

Aquinas qualifies this assertion with the declaration that no good of this sort aside from God actually exists.[674] Thus for Aquinas no other good besides God cannot fail but to be willed; all other goods are superfluous to demand for these are inessential insofar as the divine cannot accrue anything from them whatsoever. Consider Aquinas's own words:

> For we will something either because it is the end or because it is ordered to the end. Now, that all things be in God, so that they can be understood in Him, is necessarily required by the divine perfection; but the divine goodness does not necessarily require that other things exist, which are ordered to it as to the end. That is why it is necessary that God know other things, but not necessary that He will them. Hence, neither does God will all the things that can have an order to His goodness; but He knows all things that have any order whatever to His essence, by which He understands.[675]

Ultimately, then, for Aquinas all things will their end – and in willing that end, will those things which are necessary *for* that end, as in the above examples provided. God wills God as God's own end – and because God is being and goodness itself that is *all* God need will towards his own ultimate end. Thus: God need only will God's own self as God's end; anything and everything else is superfluous. In effect this accomplishes a sort of closed circuit, wherein God wills God as his end, and nothing more is necessary.

Kretzmann honours Aquinas' distinction between that which cannot not be willed, and that which need not be willed in his own work – he makes explicit mention of Aquinas' own dismissal of created things as contributing nothing to the divine, for instance.[676] His issue with Aquinas' account actually seems concerned with Aquinas's reasoning behind *why* God chooses to will these non-essential, superfluous-to-the-divine things.[677]

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[674] Ibid.
[675] Ibid.
[676] Kretzmann, *The Metaphysics of Theism*: *Aquinas's Natural Theology in Summa Contra Gentiles I*, 221 - 222
[677] Ibid.

GOD AND MOTIVE

Regardless, Kretzmann seems certain that the entire libertarian explanation of God's creating creatures hinges here on this point – that no motive or reason for which God might *freely* create creatures can be ascertained.[678] Kretzmann will ultimately move to suggest the Dionysian Principle – the natural diffusion of goodness – as a much more suitable explanation for God's creating of things other than God's own self – if an inherently necessitarian one.[679] It is for this reason that this 'solution' is not one I think Aquinas would ever accept in the way that Kretzmann characterises it. Kretzmann admits that God is identical with being, and that being and goodness are fundamentally the same.[680] Yet, the diffusion of this good as 'necessary', and thus unfree, in that God is essentially prohibited from *choosing* what to create and instead free only with respect to choosing *what* God should *like* to make. The viability of that notion we will address in due course; for now we will consider Kretzmann's views on the relationship between God's unnecessary acts of creation and the motivation and reasoning that might be said to underlie them – or the necessity which may entail these acts if no free motive can be found.

Kretzmann, once he has finished outlining his thoughts on the necessity of God's acts of will, notes that there is still a great deal more to say – much of it critical – about Aquinas's conception of divine freedom within his *Summa Contra Gentiles*. Indeed, Kretzmann continues, as one looks into God's willing of creatures, the difficulties which arise for Aquinas in attributing free-choice to God only *increase.*[681] He does concede, however,

[678] Ibid.
[679] Ibid.
[680] ST 1 q. 5, a. 1
[681] Kretzmann, *The Metaphysics of Theism*: *Aquinas's Natural Theology in Summa Contra Gentiles I*, 220.

that Aquinas himself was aware of at least some of these difficulties, and cites *ScG I, 81, 1* to make this clear. Here Aquinas notes that one might well arrive at the conclusion that the divine volition is somehow given to the divine goodness and divine being, in such a way that it must necessarily act in ways ordained by these other divine attributes and concepts.[682]

Aquinas, naturally, advises that one *reject* that conclusion, offering once again that 'if one considers the matter correctly, it appears that He does not will other things necessarily'.[683]The correct manner in which to consider the question of God's free will is, of course, to realise that God is limited to willing God's own self necessarily, but that for all other things God has the power of 'election'.[684] Election, however, depends upon *choice*; thus, Aquinas concludes once more, free-will is something which befits God.[685]

The problem which Kretzmann identifies as resulting from this is one of *motive*, as we have said, which constitutes the first criticism he makes of Aquinas's conception of divine freedom. As Kretzmann writes:

> Very well, then, what motivates God to choose not the world consisting solely of himself, the absolutely perfect being, but, instead, a world consisting of the absolutely perfect being accompanied by a universe swarming with countless other beings, none of which—not even any that is perfect of its kind—is or could be absolutely perfect? I find Aquinas's attempts to answer this question unconvincing.[686]

If God's creation of the world is not necessitated by either the divine goodness or divine being, then *why* might God have possibly have created anything other than himself? For

[682] *ScG* I, 81, 1
[683] Ibid.
[684] *ScG* I, 88, 4.
[685] Kretzmann, *The Metaphysics of Theism*: *Aquinas's Natural Theology in Summa Contra Gentiles I*, 220.
[686] Ibid, 222.

what possible reason might God have decided to will alongside his own perfect self a world of imperfect creatures which take after him, but only partially? Kretzmann himself asserts that there are but two answers to this question – that God creates other things because of either utility, or because of God's goodness and love. Kretzmann analyses Aquinas's respective justifications for. We will then critique Kretzmann's own assessment of these.

GOD'S VOLITION AND UTILITY

The central problem with using *utility* as a motive for God's creating the world is something which both Kretzmann and Aquinas concur upon: how can anything possibly serve the divine as a *means*? Obviously, if something is to a means for P to accomplish some aim, P must lack something which the former can provide it with in order to accomplish whatever P's aim is. Yet for Aquinas, as we have said in chapter one, God is infinite and fully complete in and of himself; he therefore lacks for nothing. God can receive nothing from other things, and does not need other things to be or to accomplish God's aims. Things in the created world are, in a word, *useless* to God, then, at least from the vantage point of *utility*.[687]

It is on this basis that Kretzmann's concludes that 'utility, conceived of as widely as possible, seems entirely unavailable as the motivation for God's volition that there be things other than himself'.[688] Certainly this is not unexpected. In fact, as Kretzmann points out, Aquinas himself makes mention of this point in order to justify the lack of necessity the divine has with regard to willing those things.[689]

[687] Ibid 221.
[688] Ibid.
[689] Ibid.

However, once one dismisses *utility* as a possible reason for God having created what Aquinas thinks he does not necessarily create, what is one left with? Kretzmann points to the divine goodness, naturally, as being the only other source of some justification for God's willing of things other than God's own self.[690] If these things do not aid God, perhaps Aquinas thinks that God freely creates these things simply out virtue of God's divine goodness and love. Kretzmann even quotes Aquinas to this effect, citing chapters 76 and 80 as places within the *Summa Contra Gentiles* where Aquinas declares that God wills other things thanks to God's own being and goodness.[691]

Kretzmann's declaration that nothing can serve the omnipotent as a means for accomplishing something are quite sound.[692] Here he is in agreement with Aquinas in principle, in that both realise God's motive for the creation of the world cannot be rooted in *utility* as a reason. God can gain nothing from the created world, as we have said in chapters two and three. Thus, having dismissed utility as a suitable reason for God's having willed an unnecessary creation into being, we can consider the other potential answer or motive behind God's having created the world: for reasons of love and divine goodness.

GOD'S VOLITION AND LOVE

Once one dismisses *utility* as a possible reason for God having created what Aquinas thinks he does not necessarily create, what is one left with? Kretzmann points to the divine goodness, naturally, as being the only other source of some *justification* for God's willing of things other than God's own self freely.[693] If these things do not aid God,

[690] Ibid, 222
[691] Ibid.
[692] Ibid.
[693] Kretzmann, *The Metaphysics of Theism*, 221.

perhaps it is that God creates these things freely by virtue of God's divine goodness and divine love. Kretzmann even quotes Aquinas to this effect, citing chapters 76 and 80 as places within the *Summa Contra Gentiles* where Aquinas declares that God wills other things thanks to God's own being and goodness – things we have covered in previous chapters.[694]

However, Kretzmann asserts, Aquinas himself never explicitly endorses such an explanation for God's having created the world, despite his seeming agreement with that point in those passages mentioned. Kretzmann claims that this is because Aquinas is reluctant to imply that the divine goodness might 'entail a volition for other things just as participants in goodness itself' – for in doing so God would lose the power of *election* with regard to what goods God may and may not will.[695] Thus, Kretzmann says, Aquinas always manages to distance himself from that potential consequence by returning once again to his insistence that God's freedom depends upon God having the power of *election*, and thus his not being necessitated to create the world by virtue of his divine goodness. For Aquinas, as we have said, God's freedom consists in what God must not will *necessarily*, and any suggestion that God's being maximally good might *entail* him willing creation into being makes that a *necessary* action. If that action is necessary, it is therefore for Aquinas unfree, as we have said – and Aquinas is very much in favour of a God with divine freedom.

Yet even in dismissing this possibility – that the divine goodness might in some way trump divine agency and necessitate the creation of finite creatures – Kretzmann considers Aquinas as at least open to the possibility, at first.[696] In chapter 81 of his *Summa*

[694] Ibid.
[695] Ibid.
[696] Ibid, 222.

Contra Gentiles, for instance, Aquinas notes that intellectually cognized goods are the proper object of the will, and that therefore there can be a volition for anything in which the essential nature of the good is preserved.[697] This is to say the goods one can identify in the world are what the will is drawn towards seeking out. On the basis of this it seems then that there can be a 'volition' for God to will *anything* which preserves the essential nature of the good in creation, then. From this Aquinas moves to say, and plausibly, in Kretzmann's opinion, that in willing God's own self God "wills things other than Himself to be in so far as they participate in His goodness".[698] In willing potentially *anything* in which the essential nature of the good is present, God might therefore be necessitated by divine goodness to will into being everything in creation, insofar as these things possess the essential nature of the good within them.[699] The implication here is obvious; were God to *fail* to perform the greatest goodness, God would be less than maximally good. Thus God could never fail but to will anything which preserves the essential nature of the good within it.

DISAGREEMENT?

Yet Aquinas never explicitly says the above, as Kretzmann notes; he merely instead leaves a space for that point *to be* expressed.[700] This is a very crucial distinction; that Aquinas simply leaves a gap in which one can extrapolate to these sorts of conclusions is not at all the same as saying that Aquinas was fully committed to those conclusions – and Kretzmann does seem to realise this point. Regardless, Kretzmann notes that Aquinas does not leave that space open for long; instead, Aquinas quickly

[697] *ScG* I, 81, 3
[698] Ibid., 4
[699] Ibid.
[700] Kretzmann, *The Metaphysics of Theism*, 221.

makes any conclusion in which the divine will is overruled by the divine goodness into willing the existence of creatures impossible. This is because once again he issues that 'familiar disclaimer' that the divine goodness need only will itself necessarily, and all other things freely.[701]

In other words, once Aquinas seems to have found a possible justification for God's having created the world – that being maximally good might *entail* that volition or motive to create, he undoes that solution by always suggesting that God never wills creation necessarily.[702] Kretzmann cites Aquinas's insistence on this point to be most damaging, in his opinion, in so far as it continually keeps him from making use of God's goodness to explain the existence of creatures.[703]

Obviously, we are here struck with the difficulty Aquinas is in – if God's being maximally good necessarily includes God's creating of the world, this means that God's willing of things other than himself is *necessary*, rather than unnecessary, because God can never fail to do the *highest* possible good. Moreover, in being necessary, Aquinas's one place to give God *freedom* becomes inaccessible.

This is really the issue that Kretzmann wishes to present: Aquinas would conclude that if the divine goodness *necessitated* the creation of things other than God in order for God to be perfectly good, then God has no power of election with respect to things he need not necessarily will. If God lacks this power of election, then God wills everything which he wills necessarily. Finally, as we have said, if God wills all things necessarily God has no free will, for God has freedom for Aquinas with respect to what God does not will necessarily.

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[701] Ibid, 222.
[702] Ibid, 221.
[703] Ibid, 222.

As Kretzmann points out: without refuge in either utility or love, both of which would seem to be the only motive behind his doing so , God has *no* motive to create the world freely. Kretzmann goes so far as to suggest that without some sort of imposed necessity upon God, God has no reason to create anything other than himself, and that God's singular existence – without the existence of the imperfect, flawed creatures of the created world – is the best possible scenario for the universe.[704] Whether that particular suggestion is a reasonable one shall be considered in due course.

For now, we must ask: *if goodness provides no necessitarian explanation for it, why does God choose to create anything besides himself at all?* God's creation of the world may well *not* be necessitated by his goodness, as Aquinas suggests – but then we are left with a lack of a motive for God's having created it to begin with.

KRETZMANN ON AQUINAS'S OWN SOLUTION TO THE MOTIVE QUESTION

Kretzmann has some words for Aquinas' *own* solution to the question of motive behind those acts of creation which are unnecessary for God. Ultimately, the answers which he finds Aquinas providing for this issue in *ScG* I, 84 and 85 Kretzmann dismisses as 'deeply unsatisfactory'.[705] Here, Kretzmann claims Aquinas asserts that God wills other things into being insofar as these things possess his likeness ("… in willing His own being, which is His own goodness, God wills all other things in so far as they bear His likeness").[706] On the basis of this, Aquinas then declares that this is why God wills the good *of the universe* (emphasis Kretzmann's) more fundamentally than any other

[704] Kretzmann, *The Metaphysics of Theism*, 221.
[705] Ibid, 223.
[706] *ScG* I, 84, 3.

particular good – because in doing so, a more complete likeness of God might be found *within* that universe.[707]

Kretzmann interprets these passages as leading one towards a particular understanding of God and the universe, one in which one finds it to be '*suitable* to God's eternal, perfect pleasure in, and love of, perfect goodness' that this same perfect goodness might be surrounded by 'uncountably many variously incomplete *likenesses* of itself' (emphasis once again Kretzmann's own).[708] In other words, Kretzmann is here implying that it is Aquinas' understanding that God wishes to be surrounded by many imperfect copies of God's own infinite perfection. In fact, his is why God wills the universe *in the first place* – so as to *make* these imperfect likenesses of God's own self. Kretzmann remains unconvinced, however, dismissing this idea as 'repugnant'.[709] As he writes:

> Even if we leave out of account the fact that creatures are frequently, lamentably *defective*, morally and otherwise, what could it be about finite, temporal beings, none of which at its best could be absolutely perfect, that might make them *suitable* companions in existence for the absolutely perfect being?[710]

Kretzmann's point here is fairly evident: that a divine and perfect God would probably not choose to perform an unnecessary act of creation for the sole reason of surrounding that God with inherently imperfect likeness and reflections of God's own self. From the emotionally charged nature of the words, Kretzmann seems to wish to imply that the existence of these latter finite beings constitutes a state of affairs wherein a perfect God exists alone along with grotesque parodies of itself. Ultimately, from my reading of Kretzmann, I am unsure as to whether he thinks Aquinas was aware of this issue or not.[711]

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[707] Kretzmann, *The Metaphysics of Theism*, 223.
[708] Ibid.
[709] Ibid.
[710] Ibid.
[711] Ibid.

Regardless, as I will make clear in my response to Kretzmann's motive-based critique, I do not think this is a reasonable or coherent characterisation of Aquinas's point of view.

MY RESPONSE TO KRETZMANN'S MOTIVE-BASED CRITICISM

Kretzmann's presentation of the problem of *motive* for God is an interesting one. His argument runs like this: that if the divine will is not necessitated by something – either utility, or the divine goodness, for what reason would God have created the world at all? Kretzmann's final analysis exposes the two answers he thinks are open to Aquinas – utility, or love. Of these, utility remains an impossibility – Aquinas's God cannot receive anything from creation, and one cannot therefore appeal to utility as a reason or motive for God's having created the world. Aquinas also wishes to dismiss God's goodness and love as a motive for God's having the created world, however, for he views the necessity of the divine goodness to be maximally good as incompatible with the non-necessity of the act of creation.

I will now address Kretzmann's motive-based criticism along several lines of argument. The first of these will take the form of a defense of Aquinas's own position on the motive question; I will argue that Kretzmann's criticisms of Aquinas's solution do *not* invalidate it as a sufficient answer to the motive question itself, and thus one *can* find in Aquinas a reasonable, non-necessitarian answer as to what could motivate God to create a universe of imperfect creatures.

My second line of argument will then address a criticism of Kretzmann's own necessitarian answer to the motive question, on the basis of points raised in the writings of Eric Dean Rapaglia. This section of the chapter will then conclude with a final

summary of the ways in which Kretzmann's motive-based critique fails to succeed, partly because it fails to invalidate Aquinas' own stated solution to the problem, and partly because the solution Kretzmann *himself* presents only raises problems of its own for which there as of yet exists no defense at all.

A DEFENSE OF AQUINAS' SOLUTION TO THE MOTIVE QUESTION

Of Aquinas's own attempts (of which Kretzmann mentions one only) to answer the question of the motive behind God's having created things other than himself, Kretzmann cites the notion of creatures possessing some notion of 'divine likeness' as being 'deeply unsatisfactory' at one point, 'repugnant' at another, and ultimately 'just plain unbelievable'.[712] Kretzmann seems to draw Aquinas' answer to the motive question from a number of sources, including both the *Summa Contra Gentiles* and the *Summa Theologica*.[713] For instance, he cites a passage from the former as being a near-explicit attempt by Aquinas to answer the motive question as follows: that God, 'in willing his own being, which is his own goodness, God wills all other things insofar as they bear his likeness.'[714] Another more complete answer can be found in *ScG* I, 82, 8:

> For the divine intellect apprehends not only the divine being, which is God's goodness, but also other goods, as was shown above. These goods it apprehends as certain likenesses of the divine goodness and essence, not as its principles. And thus, the divine will tends to them as befitting its goodness, not as necessary to it.[715]

[712] Ibid, 222 - 223
[713] Ibid.
[714] *ScG* I, 84, 1.
[715] *ScG* I, 82, 8.

Here Aquinas defines created goods as 'befitting' the divine goodness, but very distinctly as unnecessary for it. What 'befitting' the divine goodness means in this context is an interesting question. Kretzmann seems to take the 'befittingness' (as Aquinas calls it) of a thing as referring to the status of that thing as a *companion* to something else. It is precisely on these grounds that Kretzmann *critiques* this motive solution of Aquinas', however.[716] According to Kretzmann, the idea that God might surround himself with creatures which are 'frequently, lamentably *defective*, morally and otherwise' is fundamentally unsound, because no imperfect thing might ever serve as a particularly suitable companion for the absolutely perfect God.[717]

GOD, CREATURES, AND REPUGNANCE

To begin with, I think Kretzmann's is an interesting point – that the only motive Aquinas can find for the creation of the existence of imperfect creatures is a 'repugnant one' because it features God freely willing a large assortment of inherently bizarre and distorted reflections of God's own perfection. However, I think Kretzmann is guilty of anthropomorphising the divine throughout his (not terribly extensive) arguments in support of this assertion. Does he really mean to suggest, for instance, that a divine, perfect being would be affected, either positively or negatively, by an 'unsuitable' companion of some sort? This is the main point of his argument – that the poor reflections and likenesses of God found within created things would make them unsuitable as companions for the divine and would thus lead to a repugnant state of affairs.

That Kretzmann may find that situation repugnant is perfectly fair. What is not so fair is to imply that Kretzmann's creaturely repugnance at that situation is a sufficient reason

[716] Kretzmann, *The Metaphysics of Theism*, 222.
[717] Ibid, 221-223.

for God himself not to freely will the existence of those imperfect, finite creatures which possess only a likeness of God. Kretzmann at various points mentions Aquinas' own understanding of the uselessness of creatures to God as one of the reasons that utility cannot serve as a motive for creating them; yet he seems to imply that these creatures somehow *can* have some influence on God, if only because their accompanying God would lead to a 'repugnant' state of affairs which the divine could not tolerate. [718]

This latter point is presumed on my part, for Kretzmann does not make himself explicitly clear, but surely this repugnance cannot apply to creatures only. After all, why should the repugnance of creatures at the actions of the divine affect the divine will? I can only conclude, therefore, that the repugnance at this state of affairs is to be held on God's side – something Kretzmann would rightly dismiss as a challenge to God's perfection, the fact that God cannot accrue anything from creation, and God's ultimate transcendence *of* creation. Ultimately, then, I am not sure if God's willing of the universe for the purpose of divine likeness is so repugnant that it cannot be the motive God has for freely choosing to will creation.

Additionally, the notion that God would be in some way affected or lessened by God's own freely chosen willing of flawed things is arguably just as repugnant as the answers Aquinas presents are. This I argue on the basis that at least the creation of many reams of creatures, all imperfect but containing some likeness of the divine within them, is markedly less *exclusionary* of the less-than-divine-and-perfect from being. Kretzmann would claim that only a necessary outpouring of the good in line with Dionysian Principle could ever serve as a sufficient motive for the existence of these flawed creatures.

[718] Ibid.

On the subject of the Dionysian Principle as an adequate solution to the 'motive' question, I would turn to one of the central conclusions of the final chapter of Christopher Hartung's thesis *Thomas Aquinas on Free Will*.[719] Hartung makes the valuable point that though Aquinas himself makes use of the Dionysian Principle to better elucidate certain aspects of God, that elucidation is *analogical*.[720] The Dionysian Principle was never intended by Aquinas to be used *literally* as an explanation for the diffusion of God's goodness, and the relationship between that goodness and the act of creation.

In place of that principle, which should never be applied to God univocally, I would argue that God's *freely willing them*, as Aquinas suggests God does, is a more open and just situation, in line with the God of revealed theology. Thus, I would suggest that God freely choosing to will the imperfect along with the perfect is evidence of a more loving and just God who would not *exclude* the finite and imperfect in favour of the perfect. It also does not reek of a certain subtle metaphysically-imposed narcissism wherein all God might find suitable for God is more of God, which is surely something which Kretzmann might metaphysically reasonable, but also distasteful, even if the goods found in the created world are but reflections of the divine good. I will grant that the notion that God indulges in a narcissism is perhaps senstationalist – for as Leftow makes clear in a response to William Rowe on the topic of divine freedom, Aquinas' God does not love himself *because* it is him that he is loving. Instead, God loves himself because God is so good God cannot *but* love himself.[721] Regardless, charges of narcissism aside: who is more praise-worthy and good in a theological sense: the God who can tolerate nought but perfection, i.e. himself, or a God who extends being to the imperfect freely?

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[719] Christopher Hartung, *Thomas Aquinas On Free Will*, (Delaware, University of Delaware, 2013), 93.
[720] Ibid.
[721] Brian Leftow, "Rowe, Aquinas and God's Freedom", in *Philosophical Books*, Vol. 48, No. 3, (2007), 196

KRETZMANN'S ANALYSIS OF AQUINAS' MOTIVE SOLUTION: UNFAIRLY NEGATIVE?

Secondly, I would add that Kretzmann's view of these 'defective' creatures who contain only likenesses of the divine is unfairly negative. Why, for instance, does he characterise a state of affairs wherein a perfect God is accompanied by reflections and likenesses of that perfection as a *poorer* state of affairs than one merely of that divine and perfect God existing alone? Does he mean to imply that the evils and absences entailed by the existence of these imperfect creatures somehow cancels out the goodness in the divine likeness within them? Does he mean to say that the absences entailed by the existence of these finite creatures is somehow able to overwhelm being itself, which Aquinas characterises as fundamentally good?

Surely Kretzmann would admit that at some base level, a state of affairs which features the existence of a perfect God *and* additional reflections *of* the perfection of that divine God leads to a net increase in the amount of good in that state of affairs. Indeed, this understanding of Aquinas' suggestion is strengthened by his aforementioned view of the relationship between being and goodness and evil and absence, wherein the latter are not equivalent to the former, but the *very lack of the former.*[722] I would argue that Kretzmann's is therefore an incoherent picture of the relationship between the divine and created, and, indeed, the relationship between good and evil (as being and absence, respectively).

[722] ST I, q.48, a.1.

KRETZMANN ON CREATION AS AN UNSUITABLE COMPANION FOR THE DIVINE

That Aquinas' solution to the motive question is apparently a 'repugnant' one is but the first issues I take with Kretzmann's dismissal of it. My next is that within that dismissal, Kretzmann seems to imply that as creatures are inherently defective, God should never have chosen to create them, on account of their lacking those qualities that make them 'suitable companions' for the divine.[723] As with the aforementioned repugnant state of affairs that it seems to imply, the status of these creatures as 'unsuitable companions' for the divine is another key point in Kretzmann's dismissal of Aquinas's motive solution. It is also one I intend to draw Kretzmann on.

As we have just said above, surely nothing but that which is itself perfect would be a 'suitable' companion for Aquinas' God, whether God was necessitated into creating the 'lamentably defective' finite things or did so freely. Fundamentally, as I am sure Kretzmann will agree, any sort of created being is going to be finite, and thus 'defective' in every manner insofar as it lacks perfection in them. Only another infinite, perfect, transcendent being could ever possibly serve as the sort of 'suitable companion' that Kretzmann seems to think God would ever only freely create – which of course God cannot, for as Aquinas points out, for nothing but God can be properly infinite.[724]

I am not sure, then, how this counts as a sincere or reasonable argument against Aquinas's own solution to the 'motive question' - God having come to create these things which inherently possess God's likeness. In fact, I would argue that Kretzmann's is a non-challenge to Aquinas' own position, insofar as it depends upon the inherent unsuitability

[723] Ibid, 223
[724] ST I, q.7, a.2, 4.

of all created things to be companions of God, but fails to realise this encompasses *all* created things no matter *how* or *why* God willed them to be. Once more I refer to the fact that Aquinas' motive question does *not* lead to a repugnant state of affairs; for the goodness entailed by the presence of beings other than God is fundamentally *not* undone by the absences and imperfections that the existence of those creatures necessarily entails. Consider Aquinas' words in *ScG* I, 81, 3:

> Hence, although the being of any given thing is as such a good and its non-being an evil, the non-being of something can fall under the will (though not by necessity) because of some adjoined good that is preserved; since it is a good that something be, even though something else does not exist. [725]

Here Aquinas establishes being as good – *even when in being, the good question entails that something else does not exist.*[726] Thus the good of the being of imperfect creatures is for Aquinas *good* even as it entails necessary privations in the universe (holes in doughnuts and gaps in fences, and so on). Aquinas' motive solution is not so repugnant, then -for the 'companions' which exist alongside God according to God's unnecessary act of will are distinctly *not* unsuitable – at least on the basis of their being *imperfect*. As we have established, then, the imperfection of creatures does *not* mean the goodness of creatures fails to befit the divine, because the imperfection of creatures does not cancel out the good of those creatures being in the first place. We can conclude, then, that Kretzmann's critique of Aquinas' solution to the motive question fails when it depends on creatures being 'unsuitable companions' for the divine – because the imperfection of creatures does *not* keep them from befitting the divine as good companions to it.

[725] *ScG* I, 81, 3
[726] *ScG* I, 81, 3

Granted, this leaves us with a difficulty – having established that the unsuitability of creatures is no reason for God not to have willed them freely, for God gains and loses nothing from creation, Aquinas' solution to the motive question becomes problematic. This is because Aquinas seems to present God's motive for creating the universe within freely creating goods which *befit* the divine goodness. If the *imperfection* of creatures is no reason for God *not* to will creation, owing to God's indifference to created things, then how does the goodness of creatures function as a motive *for* God to create them?

No properly suitable companions for the divine can be, for the imperfection in them affects God just as much the goodness in creatures might: in no way whatsoever. So why *does* God will creation into being freely? In answer to this, Aquinas seems only to have recourse to the fact that being is fundamentally *good* – even if the good of a being is unnecessary. Yet that leads us to *other* questions – if being is good, why has God chosen the particular collection of beings God has? Could God will a collection of beings who collectively present a *greater* good than the ones he has willed? Here we seem to tend towards questions relating to God and the best of all possible worlds, as elucidated upon by writers such as William Rowe.[727] While Aquinas would consider the present world as distinctly *not* the greatest possible one (something he makes clear in *ST* 1a. 19, 10), Rowe does present some reasonable arguments along the Leibnizian line – that a maximally good God, as Aquinas' is defined as, is morally obliged to create the best of all possible worlds.[728] In contrast, Aquinas would assert that no created world could ever be so good as to *force* or *compel* God to create it – for as we have seen, Aquinas treats God's power

[727] William Rowe, "Divine Perfection and Freedom", in *Evidence and Religious Belief*, (eds) Kelly James Clark and Raymond J. Vanarragon, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 181-182.
[728] Ibid, pg. 175- 178

of election with what God can create, and God's transcendence of the created world, with the utmost importance.[729]

Regardless of this, however, I can only conclude that just as Kretzmann's critique *fails* to make God's willing of creatures something God would refrain from (on the basis that the imperfection of creatures would not affect God), Aquinas' own motive *for* God to will creation does not succeed entirely either. Both seem dependent on creatures as 'companions' to God, even though Aquinas has firmly defined God as transcending creation to the degree that no creature good or imperfection can affect him. Wippel does make the very reasonable point, however, that in considering creatures as 'companions' to God one should *not* consider the good of their being as entirely without merit.[730] Creatures may not *contribute* to the divine, but they *are* good in and of themselves – even if only to a finite degree.[731]

Ultimately, I must side with Aquinas on this matter, for Kretzmann is guilty of presenting an overly negative image of the divine as accompanied by creatures. The imperfections of creatures do not prevent God's willing of them. On the other, while their goodness does contribute to God, being for Aquinas is fundamentally *good*, even if unnecessary. This seems to be the best explanation for Aquinas' resorting to the befittingness of creatures as an adequate motive for God to have freely willed them. Yet, even though I will agree with Aquinas on this, it is not without some hesitation – nor without some respect for Kretzmann, who seems to have unearthed a weak point in Aquinas' arguments for divine freedom.

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[729] *ST* 1a. 19, 10
[730] John F. Wippel, "Norman Kretzmann on Aquinas's Attribution of Will and of Freedom to Create to God," *Religious Studies* 39, no. 3 (2003): 295.
[731] Ibid.

KRETZMANN'S SOLUTION AND GOD'S TRANSCENDENCE:

The next problem I would present with Kretzmann's 'creation is necessary' argument is best elucidated upon by Eric Dean Rapaglia. Rapaglia makes the excellent point that if Kretzmann is in fact correct, and that creation is necessitated, much of the *rest* of Aquinas' account of God collapses.[732] This happens because what Kretzmann's necessitarian explanation for creation compromises is God's transcendence *of* creation itself.[733]

God's transcendence of creation is something which we explored with reference to God's relation with the created world in chapters two and three, but those points bear mentioning now. For Aquinas, God and creation exist in a very particular relationship, wherein the latter is wholly dependent on the former, and the former can be wholly without the latter. The idea that Kretzmann seems to advance is that creation is a *necessary* act by the divine will, because no motive can be found otherwise.[734]

Rapaglia makes the point, however, that the non-necessity of creation is *integral* for God's *transcending* creation as perfect and complete in and of himself.[735]If creation becomes necessary for God, then several consequences would inevitably follow. At the centre of these is, that necessity would work to make God less than perfect, for God would require the existence of something other than God's own self to *fully* be (for a perfect God is necessarily complete in and of itself). How might God truly transcend creation if God necessarily *must* will creation into being? Rapaglia likens this to the 'breaking' of the

[732] Eric Dean Rapaglia, *Must God Create a World? Aquinas's Answer and Kretzmann's Critique*, (Fordham University, New York, 2015), 10.
[733] Ibid.
[734] Kretzmann, *The Metaphysics of Theism*, 221-223.
[735] Eric Dean Rapaglia, *Must God Create a World? Aquinas's Answer and Kretzmann's Critique*, 9-10.

metaphysical 'chasm' that exists between God and his creation; I find this to be a very well-considered point.[736]

Any tether which links the perfect God to something imperfect is necessarily a challenge to divine transcendence, for in that relationship is implied a dependence of God upon the existence of something else in order to *fully be*. By this I mean God, in simply being God, would *necessarily* will something finite and external to the divine substance. Tethering an infinite God's being to a necessarily-existing finite creation seems therefore to impact God's supposed transcendence of these. I would assert that on these grounds, Kretzmann's own solution to the motive question fails. A transcendent God is only compromised by a necessitarian explanation for creation; can Kretzmann therefore advocate one without inherently compromising Aquinas' necessary distinction between an infinite God and that God's finite creation?

SECTION FOUR: KRETZMANN'S SECOND CRITIQUE

It would be too soon were we to consider Kretzmann's critique of Aquinas's position dealt with, however. The above constitutes only the first of his critiques. The next problem which Kretzmann identifies with Aquinas's account of divine freedom consists of the charge the latter's understanding that God wills the 'uncountably many other things there are' – and God *also* wills God's own self *in a single act of will.*[737] What results is that God's divine simplicity is compromised – for how can one strictly *unnecessary* act of will be *identical* by virtue of divine simplicity to a *necessary* one?[738]

[736] Ibid, 10 - 11
[737] Norman Kretzmann, *The Metaphysics of Theism*: *Aquinas's Natural Theology in Summa Contra Gentiles I*, 219.
[738] Ibid.

One might conceive of this latter point as being merely a challenge towards divine simplicity, and something wholly unrelated to any notion of divine freedom. Kretzmann suggests that this is only somewhat true – as he will make clear, divine simplicity actually has a very important role to play in any consideration of divine activity, and divine freedom as a whole. In Kretzmann's own words:

> First, since God's willing of other things is presented as occurring *in* his necessary, choiceless willing of himself, there's still no sign of divine choice even in God's willing of other things, the only other kind of divine willing there could be.[739]

Here Kretzmann makes it clear that because we are to understand God as divinely simple, and because God wills everything in one singular act of will, there can be *no real division* between God's necessary willing of God's own self, and God's own unnecessary willing of creation. If these acts of will are to be understood as one singular act of will, then how can part of this act be necessary, and another portion of this will be unnecessary, and yet remain as the same act of will?

Thus we are left once again in a situation where God's freedom is compromised, because an act of will Aquinas has previously defined as 'unnecessary' and therefore 'free' becomes 'necessary'. This is because the unnecessary action seems to take place *within* the necessary one. As Aquinas himself puts it:

> For to whom it belongs to win the end principally, to him it belongs to will the things that are ordered to the end for the sake of the end. Now, God Himself is the ultimate end of things, as appears somewhat from what has been said. Hence, because He wills Himself to be, He likewise wills other things, which are ordered to Him as to the end.[740]

[739] Ibid.
[740] *ScG* I, 75, 2

Here we see the strict identification of God's willing himself with God's willing of other things. As a 'perfect willer', God cannot but will all that is directed towards the ultimate end – for there can be no 'perverse dereliction of willing' on God's account, Kretzmann claims.[741] Finally, for Aquinas this entails that God wills *all* those things which pre-exist in him – which accounts for all of creation, for God necessarily contains 'the nobilities of all beings' according to what Aquinas calls the 'mode of perfection'.[742]

To put this matter in another way, it is almost as if it is an issue of *proximity* – that God's unnecessary act of will and God's necessary act of will both take place in one singular act of will, both essentially become choice-less. God *must* will God's own self in seeking God's ultimate end, and God *need not* will creation, as we have said. Yet for Kretzmann, no true distinction in necessity can exist within God's single act of will because of divine simplicity.[743]

KRETZMANN'S DIVINE SIMPLICITY-BASED CRITIQUE AND DIVINE FREEDOM

As should be fairly apparent, Kretzmann is here basing much of this second critique of Aquinas's conception of divine freedom upon a particular understanding of divine simplicity, and how that simplicity relates to the divine activity. The astute reader will no doubt wonder here as to the validity of the foundation that Kretzmann's divine simplicity-based critique of God's being free resides on, however. Does Kretzmann correctly present Aquinas's conception of divine simplicity? Or is his critique to be done

[741] Norman Kretzmann, *The Metaphysics of Theism*: *Aquinas's Natural Theology in Summa Contra Gentiles I*, 218-219
[742] *ScG* I, 54, 4.
[743] Norman Kretzmann, *The Metaphysics of Theism*: *Aquinas's Natural Theology in Summa Contra Gentiles I*, 219.

away with on the basis that it is ill-founded? In order to answer this we will have to return to what we said in section two of chapter one, to the paragraphs under the heading of 'Divine Simplicity'.

Briefly put, there we examined Aquinas's divine simplicity, and found it concerned with Aquinas's God lacking in certain qualities or features which created things are said to have. Aquinas himself handily lists these qualities in article seven of question three of the Prima Pars of his *Summa Theologiae*;

> For there is neither composition of quantitative parts in God, since He is not a body; nor composition of matter and form; nor does His nature differ from His "suppositum"; nor His essence from His existence; neither is there in Him composition of genus and difference, nor of subject and accident. Therefore, it is clear that God is nowise composite, but is altogether simple.[744]

Whereas creatures have bodies, a matter/form and essence/existence distinction, and a composition of genus and difference and subject and accident, God has none of these things. In practical terms, this is to deny God any sort of internal divisions or partitions; God is not divided in matter from form, nature from suppositum, essence from existence, and so on and so forth. Lacking in these divisions and interior partitions as he is, Aquinas's God is therefore not *different* from anything which he has, precisely *because* he has no divisions within himself. After all, if one is not divided from one's existence, for example, one must therefore be the same as it.

This is how Aquinas explains God within the doctrine of divine simplicity - God is instead the *same* as his nature, the *same* as his existence, the *same* as his attributes. God cannot be composite of anything for those reasons Aquinas gives in ST I, q.3, a.7: a composite thing is subsequent to its constituent parts, which God cannot be; a composite thing

[744] ST I, q.3, a.7.

inherently offers a 'realisation of potentialities', which the fully actual God simply cannot; and finally, God as pure form can contain nothing but that pure form itself (something which Aquinas explains by reference to a white object containing something which does not belong to the essence of white, all the while that same essence contains 'nothing besides itself').[745]

Most importantly of all, it was in chapter two that we dealt with how divine simplicity relates to the divine activity; we found that according to Aquinas, all operations of the divine will take place in one single act.[746] What all of this ought to make clear is that for Aquinas, God is wholly, singularly *complete*; he is not composite, and contains nothing, to the point where he is by necessity *identical* with his own being, nature, and existence. All of his activities take place in one single act of will – God's willing of creation, and God's willing of God's own self, then.

It is in light of this conception of divine simplicity that we must consider Kretzmann and his claims about God's creation of the world being unfree. Kretzmann, as we have said, suggests that because God is divinely simple, God's choiceless willing of God's own self must therefore be *identical* with God's non-necessary, freely chosen willing of creation. It is because of this close association of God's willing himself to God's willing the world (an association we might feel justified in being beyond 'close') that Kretzmann feels justified in calling God unfree.[747] Yet is he correct in doing so?

[745] *ST* I, q.3, a.7.
[746] *ScG* I, 76, 2.
[747] Norman Kretzmann, *The Metaphysics of Theism*: *Aquinas's Natural Theology in Summa Contra Gentiles I*, 220.

DIVINE SIMPLICITY AND DIVINE ACTIVITY

What emerges from Kretzmann's criticism of Aquinas is a revealing of his reliance on the notion that Aquinas's divine simplicity also accounts for the activities of the divine will. Can we reasonably say that God's act of willing himself is identical with God's willing of creation? Does Aquinas's conception of divine simplicity truly run this way, such that every activity of the divine will is truly *identical*, even when dealing with distinct operations of differing levels of necessity?

Ultimately any answer to this question must be found within Aquinas's own writings on divine simplicity. Though all of the arguments offered in *ScG* I, 76, 2 and other such places may seem like adequately sensible reasons for concluding that God wills both himself and all other things in but one act of will, it is section three of question 76 in which Kretzmann finds Aquinas's most compelling and effective argument (which was, that what is known and desired perfectly is known and desired to the full extent of that things power).[748] It is precisely this argument that Kretzmann uses to justify his own claims that God's willing of himself is *identical* with God's willing of all other things, including the non-necessary creation.

Once more Kretzmann invites us to ask: if these two acts of will are identical, how can they be both necessary and unnecessary, such that God's freedom is preserved? I offer that there is a way in which Kretzmann's conception of divine freedom can be demonstrated to be faulty, for in Aquinas's conception of God, Aquinas explains God as indulging in *several* different acts in God's one act of will which accomplish distinct and different results – all without compromising the divine simplicity.

[748] Ibid.

A RESPONSE TO KRETZMANN'S DIVINE SIMPLICITY CRITIQUE

In an article written in response to Kretzmann's own critiques of Aquinas's arguments for God's freedom, Wippel makes a number of salient points relating to what lines of argument which Kretzmann may have omitted, or how his particular translations may have coloured his reading.[749] Wippel admits that he is here focusing on the 'textual' rather than the philosophical, and I feel that while his points on the texts and translations used and not used have merit, it is the latter – the philosophical – upon which we should focus.

When Wippel *does* approach his philosophical concerns with Kretzmann's arguments, he seems simply to restate what he considers to be Aquinas's 'most fundamental and most metaphysical argument', which he finds to be more than sufficient to deal with Kretzmann. The argument he turns to is one rooted in God's infinity – that as God is infinite and perfect, no increase in the divine perfection is possible – whether creatures exist or not.[750] Wippel seems content to take this as sufficient to present God as free – for in being metaphysically perfect, God is able to achieve his end (which Wippel takes as the 'manifestation of His goodness) with or without creatures, and is thus freely able to choose whether or not to will them.

I would argue that in responding to Kretzmann in this manner, Wippel seems not to properly address the most pressing of Kretzmann's charges – that because of divine simplicity, God's necessary willing of himself and God's non-necessary willing of

[749] Wippel, "Norman Kretzmann on Aquinas's Attribution of Will and of Freedom to Create to God," *Religious Studies* 39, no. 3, 297-298.
[750] Ibid.

creation and other things are by virtue of divine simplicity *to be taken as identical*. It is in light of this that Kretzmann asks whether an act that is ostensibly unnecessary can be *identical* with an action which *is*, and yet remain unnecessary itself. I will now suggest a response to Kretzmann's critique, wherein his attempts to make necessity incompatible with divine simplicity ultimately makes divine simplicity itself unworkable for Aquinas.

Ultimately, I think that Kretzmann's appeal to divine simplicity as something which invalidates God's acting freely is not entirely air-tight; despite what Aquinas broadly says in *ScG* I, 76, 2 (that God wills himself and other things in one singular act of will). I will therefore challenge Kretzmann on the grounds that divine simplicity does not constrain divine action as it apparently does with regard to the necessity of certain divine actions and not others.[751]

One can easily call to mind examples from scripture and broader Thomistic theology in which God is said to act in various and conflicting ways, all the while completely honouring divine simplicity. I will present two examples to demonstrate this; the first deals with division and distinction in the divine will on the basis of logical necessity, and the second deals with division in the divine will in light of Aquinas's trinitarian theology. It is important to emphasise how both of these sorts of divisions are apparently *not* in conflict with divine simplicity, and then to consider why Kretzmann thinks that necessary and unnecessary activities *are.*

DIVINE SIMPLICITY AND LOGICAL SEQUENCING

In her article "Divine Freedom and Creation" Laura Garcia suggests, in line with other thinkers such as Helm and Leibniz, that *logical sequencing* is something which God

[751] *ScG* I, 76, 2

must account for. The example Garcia cites is that of the creation of a best of all possible worlds; she notes that it is logically coherent that God's contemplation of a variety of worlds to create, and God's actualisation *of* one of these worlds, are activities in which one activity must be *logically prior* to the other.[752] By this I mean that certain activities and events are the necessary ground for others – not simply due to the temporal sequence of events from past to present to future, but because in many cases one thing can *only* obtain if there is a necessary 'ground' to do so. Otherwise, one has a contradiction, such as might occur when one moves from sitting to running without first ceasing to sit.

While there are many particular examples that best illustrate the necessity of logical sequencing even in God (such as, for instance, God's creation of the universe entailing God's having decided what universe to make, and so on) I feel an example from revelation is perhaps most appropriate here – for Aquinas was not solely devoted to *natural* theology; as we have made clear, he had clear and reasonable deference to revealed theology also.[753]

With this in mind, we might call to mind two recorded events from Biblical scripture. The Nativity of Christ, as we surely know, takes place in Bethlehem, and the Death and Resurrection of Christ take place in and around Jerusalem some decades later. The Nativity of Christ did not take place in the same time and at the same place as the Death and Resurrection of Christ, obviously. One preceded the other, and neither event can possibly to be understood as occurring at the same time. More crucially, whether temporally sequenced or not, that Christ is alive necessarily must come before Christ's

[752] Laura L. Garcia, "Divine Freedom and Creation", in *The Philosophical Quarterly,* 42 No. 167 (1992), 194-195.
[753] Leo Elders, *The Philosophical Theology of St Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, Brill Archive, 1990), 7

death and resurrection, for otherwise a contradiction is entailed – for how can Christ be venerated as having risen from the dead if his resurrection preceded his birth in the first place?

We have here in short order, then, two logically distinct actions which a metaphysically simple God is accepted as having performed at in some sort of sequence, such that no contradiction is implied. The Nativity of Christ is not identical to the Resurrection of Christ, surely. One could never reasonably conclude that both these actions are identical insofar as they result from that one singular act of God's will. They are distinct and ordered, *relating* to each other in distinct ways – one is the necessary ground for the other.

I would argue that Kretzmann's understanding of divine simplicity – wherein all actions within the divine will are without distinctions in necessity - leads to an erroneous conclusion: a God who is wholly without distinctions of *any* kind within divine activity, such that God does not seem able to act in different and distinct ways at different times.

In short: the collapsing of necessary and non-necessary activities necessitates the collapsing of all of the other attributes of the divine activity also. Consider: if God is identical to what God does and what God wills, and all that God does and all that God wills are also identical to God, how can we have a God who performs activity 'X' at time 'Y' (Christ's being born in Bethlehem) and activity 'Z' at time 'W' (Christ's rising from the dead to new life everlasting)? Leaving aside the question of necessity: with this understanding of divine simplicity, how can the divine activity be distinguished on the basis of *time* and *place* when clearly these activities *must* be?

Ultimately, one can only reasonably say that both activity 'Z' and activity 'Y' are in pursuit of the ultimate end to which all things are directed – the good, and that they are

different manifestations of this same act of will at various points in *time*, in accordance with divine simplicity. Some actions necessarily takes place *before* others, even in the divine will – and very much *do*, if Biblical testimony is to be admitted. In that recording of events there exists a certain logic; after all, for Christ to die, Christ must first be born.

Thus, I would argue that there is a distinction with *how* God's singular act of will interacts with creation at different times and in different places – and that God's will is open to distinctions like *logic*. This leads us to the possibility of the interaction of the divine will and a sequencing of its actions – all with respect, of course, to the doctrine of divine simplicity.

Under the doctrine of divine simplicity, one is to understand both of these separate instances of God's speaking as being *part of one singular divine act of will*. Yet, that these activities occur at *different* times and in *different* places and in a logically reasonable order do serve to make these activities distinct from each other *in a certain sense*. Is there not space, then, for distinctions within divine activity? In time and place, and also necessity? If not, how can act in the divine will differ from any other *at all*?

SPACE FOR DISTINCTION WITHIN DIVINE ACTIVITY?

Here, then, we have two examples of God's activity being differentiated on the basis of their relative positions in space, time and most crucially *logically*. Yet these distinctions do not amount to a state of affairs such that Christ's birth and Christ's resurrection are seen to be two *different* activities. After all, God cannot be partitioned

such that he performs different actions, for then divine simplicity is compromised, something which Kretzmann rightly notes Aquinas is very keen on defending).[754]

One can coherently understand the act of *creating* a world and *considering* what world to make as being *logically* sequenced activities which are nevertheless 'one eternal act of the divine nature'.[755] The same is much the case for the Nativity and Resurrection of Christ - both are instances of God's one willing of the single, ultimate good at different times and in a logically sequenced order (birth must precede death, and death must precede resurrection). The difference between these two examples and that which Kretzmann takes issue with – God's willing of God's own self, and God's willing of other things – is that Kretzmann seems content to accept different acts of God in created history as distinct, insofar as they are logically prior to one another and logically succeed one another (Christ must be born before Christ can die and be resurrected). He does not appear to afford God's willing of God's own self and God's willing of the world that same distinction, however (for surely God must will God before God can will a world).

In other words, Kretzmann can understand God's *other* activities in light of divine simplicity, no matter how many and varied they are, from creating the world to speaking to Noah about the animals or to sending the Holy Spirit down upon the Apostles. Yet he cannot see how God's act of willing God's own self, and God's act of willing the rest of creation can be in any manner distinct.[756]

I would offer that one of these two acts of will ought to be at least *logically* prior to the other – God must will God's own self before God can will other things, whether

[754] Norman Kretzmann, *The Metaphysics of Theism*, 219.
[755] Laura L. Garcia, *Divine Freedom and Creation*", in *The Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 42, No. 167, 194-195
[756] Kretzmann, *The Metaphysics of Theism*, 220.

necessarily or unnecessarily. Both of these remain as part of God's singular act of will, in line with the divine simplicity, yet in realising that one must logically precede the other, if not temporally, one might be able to see how God's willing of God's own self and God's willing of creation might be at least *logically* distinct.

This, I think, goes somewhat towards addressing Kretzmann's first charge that both of God's acts of will are *identical* and therefore both consequently necessary. Yes, they are both examples of the same divine activity, but I would argue that God's willing of himself and God's willing of other things are to be understood as at least *logically* sequenced, and therefore distinct. Finally, in being distinct I suggest that there are sufficient grounds as to differentiate God's act of willing God's own self and God's act of willing of the world such that one can remain necessary, and one can remain unnecessary, as Aquinas has suggested.

DIVINE ACTIVITY, DIVINE SIMPLICITY, AND THE TRINITY

Yet there are still other distinctions within the divine essence which Aquinas seems content to accept, and which Kretzmann seems not to mention – and none more famous than that of the Trinity. In truth, I believe that the trinitarian understanding of God is perhaps the strongest answer to Kretzmann's divine simplicity-based critique. One might dispute the possibility of logical sequencing within the divine will on the basis that it relies on God's interacting with something external to the divine substance – Christ's death and resurrection are temporally bound, and in light of that involve consideration of and interaction with the *created world*.

The created world entails a necessary distinction in *tim*e. It might be argued that we cannot truly use temporally bound examples of divine activity to demonstrate that God's

willing of himself and God's willing of the world are logically distinct. This is because they depend on God interacting with something other than the divine substance, where differences in time and space are permitted and necessary. On these points, I concede. In these sorts of considerations, we are not considering God *in God's own self.* We are very explicitly considering God with regard to something external to him, where distinctions of various kinds can take place which can never obtain in the divine.

Is there some way we can argue for distinction within the divine essence while speaking purely in terms of the divine substance, then? The answer to this question I believe lies with the Trinity – with the Three Persons in one essence, Aquinas manages to *not* compromise the divine simplicity while allowing for distinction of a kind within God, as we shall see.[757] The three persons of the Trinity – Father, Son, and Spirit – do not for Aquinas lead to a 'multiplication' of God's essence into three.

Rather, Aquinas is content to accept that each member of the Trinity is identical with God's essence, all the while being 'really distinguished from each other'.[758] How does he justify these sorts of distinctions between the Father, Son, and Spirit while simultaneously honouring the divine simplicity? The answer to this question entails a foray into Aquinas's Trinitarian theology, and central to that are three issues: what constitutes a divine person, how the divine persons *relate* to one another, and how the divine persons *proceed* from one another.

In explaining how there can be a multiplicity of divine persons within the divine essence, Aquinas declares that the word 'person' in this context 'signifies in God a relation as

[757] *ST* I, q.39, a.2.
[758] Ibid.

subsisting in the divine nature'.[759] In truth, Aquinas suggests that there are a number of these sorts of relations within the divine essence. Yet what can cause these sorts of relations within God? As Emery notes, in this point Aquinas is very much indebted to Aristotle; he concludes, just as Aristotle did, that two things or 'bases' can cause a real relation in something.[760] These are *quantity* and *action-passion* – because God cannot have quantity thanks to his divine simplicity, only 'action-passion' (or 'action and procession', as Emery calls it) can serve as a base to cause real relation in God.

ACTION, PROCESSION AND THE TRINITY

Action and procession are for Aquinas very much related here; it is action which gives rise to procession, and it is procession by which a person consubstantial to the Father of the Trinity can 'come to be', for lack of a better term.[761] Any action like this which takes place in God can only be of the immanent sort (which is to say that they can only occur *within* God and not *externally* to him). For Aquinas there are precisely two immanent actions which take place within God (or, indeed, within any sort of intellectual nature): the immanent actions of the intellect and of the will.[762]

In God, the first procession is that of the Word, which proceeds by way of immanent action by way of God's intellect. The second procession is then of course that of the Spirit, which proceeds by way of love or will.[763] These two processions are then further distinguished by virtue of the fact that the procession of intellect (which is more properly called a 'generation', we are reminded) takes place 'through the mode of *similitude*' while

[759] ST I, q.30, a.1.
[760] Gilles Emery, "The Trinity," in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas* (eds), Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump, 420.
[761] Ibid.
[762] Ibid.
[763] Gilles Emery, *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, 420.

the procession of love takes place in what Emery terms 'the dynamic mode of a *principle of impulsion*' toward whatever being is being loved.[764]

Regardless, what is important to consider here is how Aquinas justifies the simultaneous distinctiveness and sameness of each of the persons of the Trinity on the basis of their relations and of their sharing of the same divine essence, respectively.[765] As Emery notes:

> The reality of these relations flows from their foundation (immanent action) and arises from the fact that those who are related share in the same divine nature and are thus of the same order. In every real relation, Aquinas distinguishes two aspects: the proper essence or "*ratio*" of the relation and the being or "*esse*" of the relation. Under the aspect of its' *ratio*," the divine relation consists of a pure relationship to the other according to origin. But under the aspect of its being, the divine relation is formally identical with the divine essence and thus possess the "*esse*" of the divine essence.[766]

As regards origins, the Son and Father relate to each other through filiation and paternity, respectively, while the Spirit relates to the Father and Son by procession and they to the Spirit by spiration. All of these relations come to be through immanent action within the divine essence, and in doing so all three share in that same divine nature and are thus to be understood as part of the same divine essence.[767]

KRETZMANN, THE TRINITY, AND DIVINE ACTIVITY

Here we have three distinctions within the divine essence, then – yet also three distinctions which do not in any manner harm the divine simplicity. All three distinct persons relate to each other differently, but all share a common foundation in the divine essence. It is in *relation* to one another that three persons of the Trinity are distinguished

[764] Ibid.
[765] Ibid.
[766] Ibid.
[767] Ibid.

from one another and even constituted as persons.[768] The substance of the three persons consists in their relating to one another, and these relations do not compromise the divine simplicity because these relations are to be considered the *same* as God's essence, distinct with regard to each relation's mode of intelligibility only and not in the essence itself.[769]

I would argue, then, that the same sort of distinction can apply to the divine activity – that as the divine essence remains uncompromised by distinctions between the divine persons, so too is the singular divine activity uncompromised by interior distinctions between necessity by virtue of *relation*. This is because relation is indeed the basis for any sort of sequencing within divine activity without compromising divine simplicity. It is how the various divine activities *relate* to one another that they can be logically coherent, for some must logically precede others, even as they are all part of the same divine activity. Both the necessary and unnecessary divine activities are related to each other, insofar as necessary willing must *logically precede* unnecessary willing. Yet aside from this *relation* between the two forms of willing, each is formally identical with the divine essence.

I would offer that this is a very reasonable response to Kretzmann's divine-simplicity based critique of divine freedom. If Kretzmann is to permit these *other* distinctions within the divine will, then I am not certain how he aims to argue that a distinction in *necessity* an impossible one to rectify with divine simplicity.

[768] Ibid, 421.
[769] *ST* I, q.30, a.2.

SECTION FIVE: IN CONCLUSION

AQUINAS' DIVINE FREEDOM: REASONABLE AFTER ALL?

We have in this chapter discussed two very varied responses to Aquinas's attempts to prove that God has free will. Both had at their core the understanding that for Aquinas, God's freedom comes not with respect to what God must do necessarily, but what God must do *unnecessarily*. To begin with, God *must* will himself as his own end, but God for Aquinas is *not* required to will the world into being, making that action unnecessary and thus allowing God freedom insofar as God was able to choose whether or not to create the world. This was the critique based on *motive.* Secondly, Aquinas's own insistence on divine simplicity seems to make it clear that all divine activity must be necessary, because anything which God does unnecessarily occurs in that one single necessary activity which God carries out. This was the critique based on *simplicity.* We shall now summarise the conclusions of each critique, and the responses offered to them in turn.

The first critique of Aquinas's arguments for divine freedom which Kretzmann offered were centred on upon the *motives* God might have had in creating the world. Here Kretzmann offered that try as Aquinas might, the creation of the world cannot be explained as anything other than the natural self-diffusion of goodness, and not in any other way (such as through an appeal to the utility of creation, or God's love for it). Yet if one is to admit that the world is resultant not from free activity but instead from this diffusion of goodness, God's one place to carry out something unnecessary seemingly becomes inaccessible.

Aquinas, of course, will never say that God's creating of the world was necessitated – by Kretzmann's account, Aquinas therefore seems to choose divine

freedom over the possibility of ascribing a motive to God's having created the world in the first place. Of Kretzmann's two critiques, it was this which one might find as irreparably damaging to Aquinas's attempts to ascribe divine freedom to his conception of God. Yet I presented a number of points against Kretzmann which I feel prove first that Kretzmann's own approach is not without its own shortcomings, some of them devastating. These applied, as we saw, to *both* Kretzmann's account of Aquinas' God and Aquinas' philosophical theology as a whole.

A RESPONSE TO KRETZMANN ON MOTIVE: IN SUMMARY

It is on the basis of these criticisms that I do not feel Kretzmann's challenge to Aquinas is ultimately successful; I would characterise these failings on two vectors. The first is that Kretzmann's challenge to Aquinas's views are not sufficient to make them incoherent; and the second is that Kretzmann's own solution to the motive problem results in an unfree God when Aquinas' original account preserves it.

As noted above, Kretzmann's rejection of Aquinas' own solution to the motive problem depends on the unsuitability of creatures as fitting or suitable companions for the divine, and on the less-than-ideal state of affairs which would obtain if God really was motivated solely by the will to preserve the divine likeness in the created universe.

On these points I noted two things: first, that Kretzmann is here open to the charge of anthropomorphising the divine, which is wholly unreasonable. God cannot feel repugnance, and creaturely repugnance at that. Secondly, the charge that created things are unsuitable companions for the divine is not, I would argue, a reasonable objection to God's having freely willed them. Even if God willed creatures as a necessary consequence of the diffusion of goodness, creatures of all kinds would *remain* as

inherently unsuitable companions for the divine regardless. The only suitable companion for the divine is, then, the divine.

We also found here that while the *goodness* of creatures was as unable to affect God as the *imperfection* of creatures, Aquinas' insistence on the former as a sufficient motive for God to freely will creatures into being works. This is because of Aquinas' understanding of being as a fundamental good, evil as an absence, and the fact that creatures as companions need *not* contribute to the divine – they only need *befit* it.

Additionally, I disagreed with Kretzmann's assertion that a universe consisting of solely a divine perfect being is an inherently *superior* to one in which the divine is surrounded by likenesses of itself. This I argued because that faulty conclusion relies on the strange assumption that a divine and perfect God along with *reflections of* that divine and perfect God leads to a net *loss* of good in Kretzmann's eyes.

Instead I argued that this in fact, leads to a net *gain* in good – the good of God is not cancelled out by creaturely absence and imperfection. Nor is that likeness of the divine within created things inconsequential – for when one has God *and* reflections of God, one has *more* good than one might have with just God alone (insofar as a finite good might exist in relation to an infinite one, of course.)

Finally, I disputed Kretzmann's own solution to the motive issue on the grounds that it only compromises the divine transcendence, tethering, as it were, an infinite God to a finite creation wherein the former has *no choice* but to will the former. Surely Kretzmann would allow that making creation a *necessary* output of the divine will is in some manner to lessen God as perfect and complete in and of himself?

Thus, to conclude, I would argue that for the above reasons that Kretzmann's attempts to dismiss Aquinas's solution to the motive question falter, and do not invalidate Aquinas' own answer to the motive question. I would also assert that Kretzmann's motive question *is* properly answered by Aquinas – and that Aquinas' answer, which consist in the divine freely willing created things so as to ensure the universe has a more complete likeness of God's own infinite goodness in it, does not compromise God's transcendence as Kretzmann's own solution does. Neither does it lead to a repugnant state of affairs for the divine, as Kretzmann claim. In fact, it leads to a net *gain* in the amount of good which exists, rather than a net loss.

A RESPONSE TO KRETZMANN ON DIVINE SIMPLICITY

Kretzmann's second critique, based on Aquinas' *divine simplicity*, was focused upon how Aquinas's continual reliance on divine simplicity made divine freedom an impossibility. This was ostensibly because in Aquinas' making God's willing of himself identical with God's willing of other things, the unnecessary action (God's willing the world) becomes identical with the necessary (God's willing of himself) and ultimately no distinction between the necessity of each can be found.

In response to this, I offered the suggestion that Kretzmann's understanding of Aquinas's divine simplicity was flawed, in that it failed to account for the possibility of logical sequencing of divine activity *within* the divine will, and that in realising that certain divine actions must *logically* (though of course not *chronologically*) precede others, one could argue that God's willing of himself *can* precede God's willing of other things *without violating Aquinas's all-important divine simplicity.* This I demonstrated with reference to two distinct examples of divine activity: God's willing of the Nativity of Christ and

subsequent willing of the Resurrection was the first, and God's being for Aquinas distinctly *trinitarian* was the second.

As regards the first example, here I referred to examples of divine activity as these are recorded in scripture – a terrifically important source of revelation for a Christian theologian-and-philosopher like Aquinas.[770] As I argued above, distinction *does* exist between the various activities of the divine, yet not in such a way as to violate divine simplicity. For instance, with reference to the Nativity and the Resurrection, it was found that these, as individual instances of the activity of the single divine will, were distinct on several grounds – space and time most obviously, but also on grounds of *logic*. This is because one of these events must precede the other as its ground. After all, a Christ who is not born cannot die and be resurrected. So I would argue that there *can* be distinctions in divine activity, and that Kretzmann is mistaken in dismissing a distinction of necessity as unreasonable. At the very least, the manner in which be presents the issue makes *any* sort of distinction within the divine will just as impossible as a difference in necessity.

This was not the only sort of distinction that was established as being present in divine activity, however. In case the above scriptural examples were to be dismissed on grounds of being purely drawn from revelation (as Kretzmann does) or because they concern God dealing with creation (which necessarily entails distinctions like time and place), I also offered another example of distinction within God from Aquinas' own theological philosophy. This was of course the Trinity of Divine Persons.

Here it was found that the divine essence and simplicity was not at all compromised by the Three Persons, for Aquinas ably explains these as existing as part of the same divine

[770] *ST* I, q.1, a.10.

essence, but in distinctly different *relationships* to one another. Ultimately, however, these relations are *also* the same as the divine essence. Here we have distinctions and relations between the Divine Persons ably reconciled with God's overall divine simplicity.

Thus, I concluded that one *can* allow for distinctions between various sorts of divine activity – distinctions such as time and place, logic and relationship, and finally also necessity. Kretzmann fails to explain why necessity is distinct from these others, and so I would argue that here his points falter. Aquinas *can* reasonably allow for distinctions between necessary and unnecessary divine activity, because he allows for distinctions of logic and relationship – and so God retains that one place in which God can be free: in choosing whether or not to will the unnecessary, for there is nothing beyond God's own self which God must will necessarily.

ONE FINAL NOTE: KRETZMANN AND NATURAL THEOLOGY

One may very easily ask why when attempting to do away with examples of distinctions within divine activity that Kretzmann did not resort to examples from scripture and revelation. The answer is illuminating, and ably shows where and why Kretzmann's conception of Aquinas is flawed. This because ultimately, one crucial point Kretzmann seems remarkably quiet with regard to is Aquinas' status as philosopher *and theologian*.[771] As Eric Dean Rapaglia makes clear, for Kretzmann evidently *none* of Aquinas' works which depend upon revelation are for use or discussion within the context of Aquinas' natural theology – only the latter sort instead.[772] As we shall see, this is a

[771] Eric Dean Rapaglia, *Must God Create a World? Aquinas's Answer and Kretzmann's Critique*, 9.
[772] Ibid, 9.

glaring error on Kretzmann's part, and perhaps goes even further to answering his arguments than the above two direct responses to his assertions do.

While the significance of this distinction – 'natural' theology from 'revealed' theology – might not be immediately apparent, it is of great consequence. Natural theology is described by the resoundingly unsympathetic Gareth B. Matthews as 'theology that appeals only to reason and to general experience and not at all to revelation for the basis for its conclusions'.[773] That is relatively self-explanatory; natural theology starts and ends with reason and experience, things which are available to all human beings regardless of their exposure to revelation. Natural theology is then the sort which human beings can frame in terms of their reason and experiences of the created world, and which can be held to or discarded solely on these basis.[774]

Revealed theology, on the other hand, is that which starts and ends with *revelation* - that is, the revealed words and actions of the divine. Bowman L. Clarke claims that for Aquinas, doctrines of revealed theology are those which, like the doctrines of natural theology, human beings can *know* and *formulate*. However, while known by us, the truth conditions of revealed doctrines of theology are distinctly *not* 'in within the power of human beings to determine whether the truth condition do in fact hold'.[775] This owes not to logical problems inherent in our linguistic frameworks, Clarke points out; instead, we as human beings simply *lack a technique to verify the truth of these statements.*[776]

Clarke claims that for Aquinas, revealed doctrines of theology consist entirely of this latter sort of statements – those we can formulate and conceive of within the limits of

[773] Gareth B. Matthews, 'Theology and Natural Theology', *The Journal of Philosophy,* Vol. 61, No. 3, 99.
[774] Bowman L Clarke, 'The Language of Revealed Theology', *Journal Of Bible and Religion,* Vol. 32, No. 4, 336.
[775] Ibid, 336.
[776] Ibid.

human language, but which are distinctly *non-rational* and can only be accepted on the *basis of faith alone*.[777] This is not make these sorts of statements and truths sound as though they are irrational – rather, they are *non-rational* on the basis that truths of God cannot be proved by reason and observation because God is not a created thing in the world to be examined by human senses.[778]

CONSEQUNCES FOR KRETZMANN

The above distinction between the natural and the revealed is certainly very great, then. At the very least, as Rapaglia points out, working under the terms of this distinction puts Kretzmann at a radically different vantage point than Aquinas himself.[779] This is because Aquinas explicitly *never* looks upon matters of the divine strictly from the vantage point of purely natural theology; he always regards matters relating to God from a perspective that whole-heartedly embraces *revealed theology*.[780] It is on this basis that Rapaglia argues that Kretzmann's negative analysis of Aquinas' conception of divine freedom is at least partly in bad faith.[781] As he writes:

> As a professional theologian. Aquinas understood that one of his primary tasks was to comment upon sacred doctrine, and hence he wrote extensively on the Scriptures. Thomas does not treat the statement "God creates freely" as a conclusion to which one can come by a deductive argument that does not include premises derived from the Scriptures. His project is not to "prove" a free creation by natural reason alone.[782]

Here Rapaglia highlights the great divergence at hand for Kretzmann, then – Aquinas himself was distinctly *not only* a philosopher, whose conclusions about God were to be arrived at only through deductive argument of a rational sort alone. Instead, for certain

[777] Ibid, 336.
[778] Ibid, 337.
[779] Eric Dean Rapaglia, *Must God Create a World? Aquinas's Answer and Kretzmann's Critique*, 9.
[780] Ibid, 9.
[781] Ibid, 124.
[782] Ibid, 124.

issues concerning God, Aquinas takes the basis *for* his philosophical arguments *from revelation*.[783] Crucially for our purposes, Rapaglia specifically cites God's having freely willed the cosmos into being as an example of this.[784] Rapaglia maintains that Aquinas started with a premise derived from Scripture ('that God did create the cosmos freely'), and thereafter proceeded to show, through 'philosophical argumentation' how that premise drawn from faith is not logically inconsistent with the rest of Aquinas' philosophical theology by reconciling it with the Dionysian Principle.[785]

Rapaglia's points bring this thesis right back to those issues discussed in the introduction: Aquinas' status as both theologian and philosopher. We have discussed this in detail before, and in response to Kretzmann must once again refer to the fact that theology and philosophy are heavily related, but each approaches God and creation from a markedly different vantage point.[786] As Rapaglia reminds us:

> Like many other thinkers of his epoch, Aquinas engaged in a philosophical theology that respected the basic harmony between philosophy and theology while admitting that they have different guiding forces. Philosophy is led by the light of natural reason, while theology is conducted under the guidance of the light of faith. For him, it is impossible that truth that is known through the proper use of the methods of sacred theology will ever contradict a truth known through the proper use of sound philosophical method.[787]

This is a crucial set of points. Philosophy and theology, despite those distinct 'guiding forces' are in harmony with one another, such that done properly, neither comes into conflict with the other.[788] Aquinas does allow for lapses in reason or in one's particular understanding of revelation – something Rapaglia is quick to make clear – but he views the latter sort of lapse as something undone by careful reflection and 'proper'

[783] Ibid, 124.
[784] Ibid, 124 – 125.
[785] Ibid.
[786] *ScG* II, 4.
[787] Eric Dean Rapaglia, *Must God Create a World? Aquinas's Answer and Kretzmann's Critique*, 125.
[788] Ibid.

interpretation of Sacred Scripture. It is here that the notion of divine freedom is introduced – for it is, according to Rapaglia, firmly in accordance with revelation that God *freely* wills creation into being, and it from this point that Aquinas proceeds to philosophically reconcile this point with his overall conception of God.[789]

Ultimately, then, Rapaglia presents a conception of Aquinas that places a great – possibly even greater – value on divine revelation as a source of information about God than those conclusions reached by mere human reason.[790] Rapaglia explicitly characterises Aquinas as standing 'within a tradition that denied that reason alone could come to a satisfactory understanding of various points with regard to creation' owing to the 'feebleness and fallibility of human reason apart from divine grace.'[791] That Kretzmann entirely *neglects* revelation as a source of philosophical truth about God is wholly unreasonable by Rapaglia's account, then – and I am inclined to agree.

Kretzmann strives to demonstrate on the basis of natural theology alone that God cannot be free, and that creation results wholly from the Dionysian Principle. Yet this is not a fair conception of Aquinas, who as Rapaglia points out works from the basis of revelation that God *is* in fact free in willing the unnecessary world into being.[792]

On the other hand, however, it must be admitted that certain other authors – among them Leo Elders – allege that revelation was more a *guiding* force for Aquinas.[793] Elders makes revelation seems like some distant principle to which Aquinas paid allegiance generally. By Elders account, then, while certainly *open* to revelation, Aquinas seemingly dedicating

[789] Ibid.
[790] Ibid.
[791] Ibid.
[792] Ibid.
[793] Leo Elders, *The Philosophical Theology of St Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, Brill Archive, 1990), 3.

himself more actively to a natural theology in which 'autonomous philosophy obtains where arguments by reason alone demonstrate the conclusions.'[794]

Regardless of the exact *ratio* of natural theology to revealed theology, however, I would argue that Kretzmann's failure to admit any measure of the latter into his discussions is, as Rapaglia makes clear, a point worth drawing him on.[795] Kretzmann's strange refusal and denigration for one of Aquinas' most reliable and extensive sources of knowledge about God and the world means that Kretzmann is open to conflict, compromises, and conclusions which would present no difficulty whatsoever for Aquinas – such as that tension between divine freedom, creation, and the inherent diffusion of the good.

[794] Ibid, 3.
[795] Eric Dean Rapaglia, *Must God Create a World? Aquinas's Answer and Kretzmann's Critique*, 124.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

The goal of this thesis was to present an analysis of St. Thomas Aquinas's (1224/5-1274) conception of divine freedom as that concept is dealt with in his works. It ultimately found that though the challenges against it were great – particularly those raised by Norman Kretzmann – that Aquinas' conception of divine freedom is both reasonable, coherent, and in line with Christian revelation. In each of these issues, Kretzmann's challenges to Aquinas' position were summarily dealt with, as we shall see. Before a final summation of the thesis' findings will come a detailed synopsis of its main sections.

The thesis dealt first with how Aquinas conceived of knowledge, and more specifically knowledge of the divine. Any detailed study of Aquinas's conception of God must account for the manner in which Aquinas thought God could be considered and understood by humanity; thus it was only suitable this thesis began not with God, but how Aquinas considered God as being *known*.

We found that Aquinas emphasises an apophatic theology, one which seeks to approach God via the negative way, turning to creation to consider God in what God is *not* rather than what God is *in God's own self.* Yet we also found that Aquinas's theology was not wholly negative in and itself but was rather dependent on a number of *positive* claims relating to God's being the first mover, being fully actual, the greatest of all beings, and so on and so forth. What we are left with is a conception of God which is mainly negative, but which itself relies on some very carefully curated positive claims about God's mode of being and attributes.

With these preliminary matters attended to, we moved to consider God's attributes such as they could be known – and most crucially among these, God's divine simplicity. That

God is for Aquinas wholly simple, devoid of any sort of distinction within his essence, and able to carry one single act only would all prove to be of great and unyielding importance – for in divine simplicity, we find the collapsing of the divine activities into one single act, and in that, the very basis for one of Kretzmann's two arguments against divine freedom in chapter four.

The next issue to demand exploration was that of Aquinas's concept of the will. We first described the will in terms of voluntary action and activity, and how these two elements were important not only for human beings, but more crucially for our purposes, for God. God, as we said, is taken by Aquinas to be free – capable of making choices, determinations, of acting or choosing not to act, and so on. In light of this we next explored how Aquinas's concept of the will related to his intertwined concepts of appetite and goodness. Will came to be known to us as a manifestation of appetite or tendency towards the good – and not simply in seeking these things out, but in *resting* in them once they were attained. God and man both we found are concerned with appetition and will – how each desired what was each one's ultimate good. For man, this was ultimate happiness, as found within God; for God, this ultimate end was God himself. This comparison between the human and divine – such as one could make it – would also reveal itself to be of prime importance in chapter four.

In chapter three we addressed the question of divine freedom through the lens of human freedom, as was established as prudent and necessary in chapter one. Ultimately, we found that divine freedom and human freedom both revolved very much around the concept of *necessity* – that what is necessarily willed is inherently *unfree*, and what is unnecessarily willed is inherently *free*. Finally, it was here that we came to realise that freedom for Aquinas is not with regard to willing or not willing the good. Indeed,

Aquinas's concept of will depends *upon* ultimate goods and appetites for those ultimate goods. Ultimately as we noted in chapter three, willing these ultimate goods was not at all a constraint to human or divine freedom. They were instead *the very grounds* upon which truly free acts of will could be made. Freedom is within a structure of necessity and end – one has choice not with ultimate destination, but with means of *reaching* that destination. One can only make choices within the structure of attaining these ultimate ends.

Ultimately, we concluded here that truly free acts of will for Aquinas consist in an agent being able to will or not will something which is *not necessary*. We may have many paths open to us which might bring him to the ultimate end – but we are free in which paths and means we choose to will, if not the tendency towards the good which all of our acts of will enjoy.

Divine freedom was found to be similar insofar as it revolved around God's willing of things other than God's own self as God's own end, which was of course unavoidable. God's freedom was then manifest in his choosing or not choosing to will the universe into being; as chapter two made clear, God was sufficient in and of himself, and needed nothing else to be. Hence, Aquinas was able to conclude that the creation of the universe was an unnecessary act, and was the one place where divine freedom could be found – the universe did not *need* to be; why might it have been willed aside from some divine act of free will? For Aquinas, God is free – with respect to the creation of the universe.

It was finally in chapter four where we uncovered the repercussions of this particular conception of divine freedom. With Kretzmann, one of the few authors to have addressed Aquinas's arguments concerning divine freedom explicitly, we found a legitimate challenge to Aquinas's arguments. This centred on two central arguments against

Aquinas' divine freedom. The first was drawn from the possibility of divine *motive*. It consisted of the charge that God's divine goodness made divine freedom an impossibility, for if the creation of world was truly *unnecessary*, the only possible motive for its creation was *God's own goodness*. Yet, as Kretzmann pointed out, if we are to admit that God's goodness served as the motive for his creating the world, Aquinas is then tied to a necessitarian explanation for the creation of the world as resultant from the *diffusing* of God's goodness in accordance with the Dionysian Principle. In making God's creation of the world *necessary* it therefore cannot be unnecessary, and as such can only be unfree.

Aquinas' own solution to motive problem was to insist that God's motive behind his freely creating of the universe was to make a more complete divine likeness of God's own self within it. In advancing his motive and simplicity-based critiques, however, Kretzmann explicitly dismisses Aquinas' solution on two grounds: first, that Aquinas' solution is *repugnant*, for it involves the divine being accompanied by what are essentially imperfect, distorted caricatures of itself. The second ground was connected to the first – the repugnance of that universe primarily arising from the fact that no creature might ever be anything like a suitable companion for the divine in God's perfect existence if willed to freely solely in an attempt to create a 'more perfect likeness of the divine' within the universe.

In response to Kretzmann's motive critique, I offered three lines of argument: the first was to make clear that Aquinas' solution is *not* to be discarded on those grounds Kretzmann thinks it should. That Aquinas's solution lead to a 'repugnant' state of affairs was challenged first, on the grounds that Kretzmann's *creaturely* repugnance to that situation is (possibly) justified, but that repugnance is certainly *not* to be applied to the divine. In line with this, it was pointed out that Kretzmann's argument actually seemed

to depend on an anthropomorphising of the divine, insofar as it made God exposed to feeling a state of repugnance at something. This is of course a grievous challenge to God's perfection and infinity. Finally, it was asserted in response to Kretzmann's repugnance argument that Aquinas' non-necessitarian explanation for God's willing of creatures lead to a *less* 'repugnant' state of affairs than Kretzmann seems to realise, for Aquinas allows for a God who is open to the imperfect, and does not dismiss them on grounds that created things are not gods themselves. This was because for Aquinas, being is fundamentally *good*.

My second line of argument against Kretzmann's motive question was to critically analysis *why* Kretzmann presents God being accompanied by imperfect likenesses of himself as a *negative* state of affairs, rather than a *positive* one. First it was pointed out that inherent in Kretzmann's dismissal of creatures as 'unsuitable companions' for the divine is the notion that *some* sort of creature might well *be* a suitable companion for the divine. I did not accuse Kretzmann of this particularly erroneous conclusion, however; instead it was asserted that the unsuitability of creatures as companions of the divine would remain, whether God willed them necessarily or not.

Thus the suitability or unsuitability of creatures as companions to God does not seem to be a fair ground to reproach Aquinas' conception of divine freedom on – God can *only* will 'unsuitable companions' in either case, freely or unfreely. For Aquinas, however, the being of creatures is fundamentally a good, despite their creaturely imperfections. Indeed this is to extent that the good of creatures befits the divine good – not as *contributing* to it, but as being in good in themselves even though finite and imperfect.

Next it was argued that the existence of God, along with creatures containing the reflected good of God, leads to a net *gain* in the amount of good in the universe in a certain sense,

for good and reflections of good means there is more with good than simply God on God's own. It was also pointed out here that Kretzmann's seeming refuge in the imperfections, evils and absences entailed by the existence of creatures was not a reasonable defense against God's freely willing them, or indeed willing them at all. This was concluded with reference to Aquinas' understanding of good as presence and evil as absence, and the assertion that those absences are not sufficient to overwhelm or outweigh the reflected goodness of God in created things.

Finally, the third line of argument against Kretzmann's motive question was centred on the necessitarian solution he suggests in place of Aquinas' own. Kretzmann presents a solution in accordance to the Dionysian principle, wherein God wills creation into being as part of the natural diffusion of goodness, and not through some act of free will. Against this the arguments of Eric Dean Rapaglia were offered, in which it was pointed out that God's transcendence of creation was negatively affected by Kretzmann's solution. For if God *necessarily* wills creation into being, then God is in fact 'tethered' to the finite and the created in order to exist fully as the perfect and infinite God. Obviously, such a depiction of God is something which neither Aquinas or Kretzmann would never accept – but nevertheless this did appear to be the logically resulting conclusion of Kretzmann's necessitarian argument for the existence of creation. On the basis of this the thesis concluded that not only was Kretzmann's analysis of Aquinas' solution to the motive question ultimately lacking – so too was the solution Kretzmann offered instead of it.

After responding in detail to Kretzmann's arguments on motive and finding those wanting, the thesis next turned to focus on Kretzmann's *other* main critique of Aquinas' conception of divine freedom. This was of course the aforementioned argument based on divine simplicity. Against Kretzmann's divine simplicity-based critique, it was argued

that distinction within the divine essence – specifically within divine activity – are in fact quite possible, and in a certain sense, logically necessitated. This was argued on the basis that for God to will 'X', God must first will 'Y', regardless of divine simplicity, if 'Y' depends upon 'X' to take place (as the resurrection of Christ necessitates that Christ first be born, or for God to will God's own self at least *logically* prior to willing creation.)

Obviously, the mode of argument used to demonstrate this allowed for the fact that it entailed resorting to the interplay of God's will and *temporality* and *space* - that God's will can manifest at various times and in various places, and in ways which are unique to those times and places. That God might be temporally bound (which is to say limited by time) is obviously something Aquinas would disavow, citing the eternity of God.[796] God for Aquinas exists independently of time in a state of eternity, free from change and motion, and is thus immutable.[797]

Thus, in order to placate those who might suggest that God's acting with regard to the *created* world does little to address how it is that there can be divisions and distinctions between examples of divine activity, the thesis next presented an example of distinction within God *himself.* This was with reference to the Trinity of three Divine Persons, each of whom share the same divine essence, but maintain a distinction based on *relationship*- Father is not Son, but begets Son; Son is not Father, but it is from Father and Son that the Holy Spirit proceeds, and so on. Here in Aquinas' theological philosophy is found a number of internal distinctions within the divine, but not in such a way that these distinctions compromise divine simplicity. It was on the basis of this that Kretzmann's insistence that no distinction in the necessity of various actions can be found was

[796] *ST* I, q.10, a.2.
[797] Brian Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 106-107.

challenged -for if in the divine will and activity there is space for distinctions of space, time, logic, and relationship, why not also necessity?

As if these responses to Kretzmann were not sufficient enough to defend Aquinas' conception of divine freedom from his challenging critiques, one final point was made, this time with reference to Kretzmann's treatment of Aquinas as a whole. As Rapaglia pointed out, Kretzmann is to be reasonably criticised on the basis that he *only* looks to Aquinas' natural theology when considering the latter's treatment of all issues concerning the divine – including divine freedom. For Kretzmann, Aquinas can be considered solely as philosopher, and not as theologian.

In light of this, it was argued that Kretzmann's treatment of Aquinas was neither suitable nor complete, ignoring as it does the crucial fact that for Aquinas the revealed Word of God is a source of truth, philosophical and otherwise, about God. Kretzmann's analysis of and arguments against Aquinas' conception of divine freedom thusly suffers for this lapse. This is particularly the case with regard to Kretzmann's divine simplicity-based critique – for without revealed theology, Kretzmann was unable to consider God's revealed attributes and qualities when considering the possibility of distinction between individual instances of the divine will acting in one way or another.

Without revelation, Kretzmann's analysis suffers insofar as it cannot truly analyse Aquinas' philosophical theology in an appropriate manner. Not everything which Aquinas sought to say about God is rooted in the conclusions of a purely natural theology – for Aquinas there is always the light of revelation, of the Word of God, to enlighten man in his interactions with the divine.

ULTIMATELY

I am lead to one particular conclusion in light of these particular analysis of Aquinas' philosophical theology, and Kretzmann's arguments against his conception of divine freedom. This is that Aquinas' account is *not* sufficiently challenged by Kretzmann's points so as to make divine freedom something Aquinas cannot ascribe to God. Instead, Aquinas' centring God's freedom on the concept of necessity, and specifically unnecessitated acts of will, was found to be reasonably justified. For in this is found a suitable means to demonstrate that God possess a will which is free – with regard to those acts of will God *need not* have performed, but has performed regardless.

APPENDIX

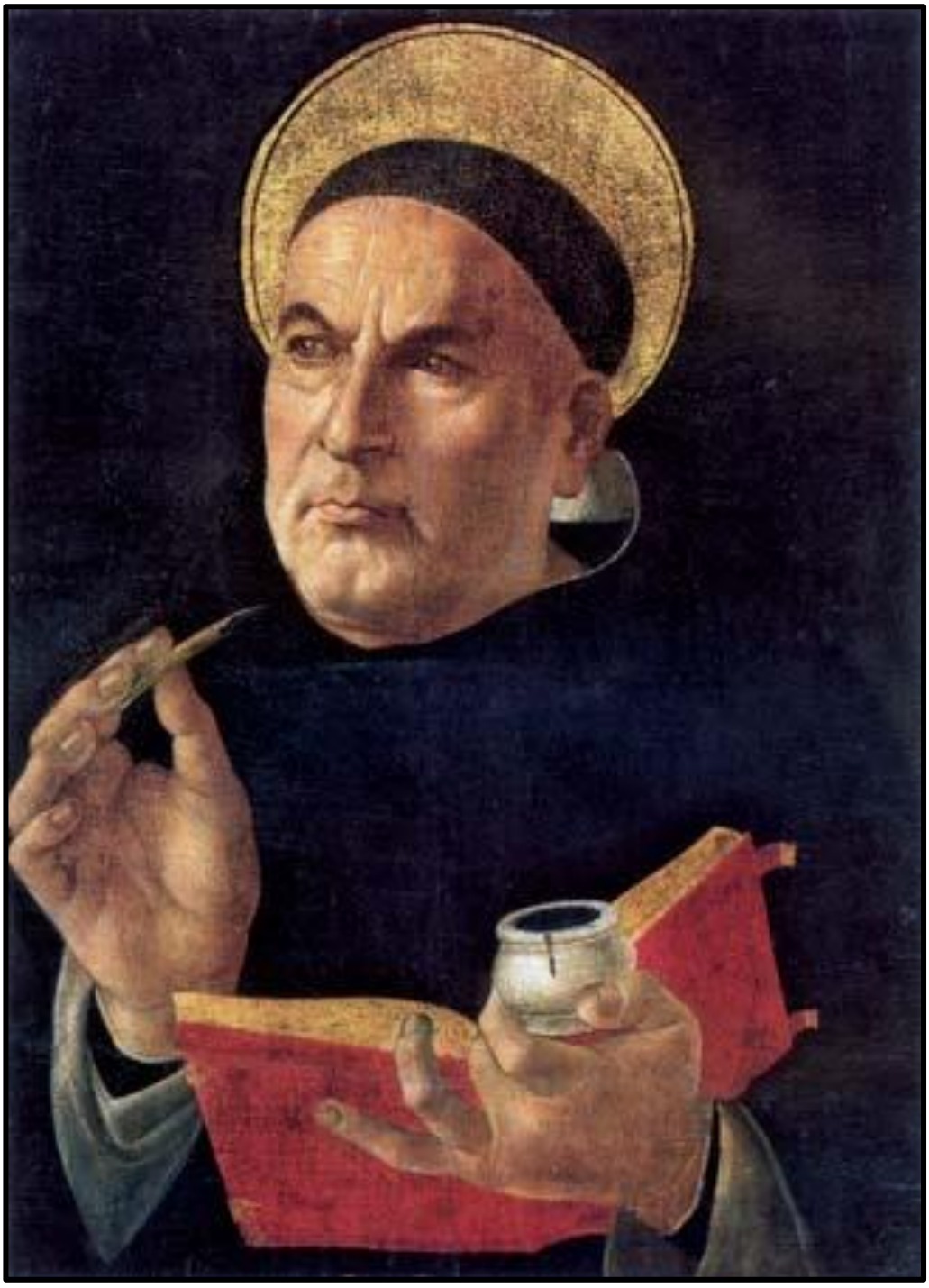

Figure 1: Sandro Botticelli's Painting of St Thomas Aquinas [798]

[798] Oil painting of St Thomas Aquinas by Sandro Botticelli in the 15th century. http://www.aquinasinstitute.ie/, accessed 12/8/2016.

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