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I. Introduction

Discussions in analytic metaphysics during the 1960s brought to light the debate over whether or not Thomas Aquinas is a compatibilist. That he is a libertarian incompatibilist has been the leading interpretation in recent literature.[1] This claim has been undisputed for too long. This paper will show that Thomas has a compatibilist position on the freedom of the will, where compatibilism is understood as the doctrine that determinism does not preclude freedom. I will argue that Thomas' position concerning free will is compatibilist regarding both the divine and human wills. The evidence for his compatibilist stance on divine freedom emerges from *Summa Contra Gentiles* (*SCG*) I.74-91, whereas the strongest evidence for Thomas' compatibilist position about human freedom derives from the *Summa Theologiae* (*ST*) and *Quaestiones Disputatae De Malo* (*QDM*) 6.[2] This paper will establish a compatibilist reading of Thomas's

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[1] See, for instance, Eleonore Stump ~~'s articles "Libertarian Freedom and the Principle of Alternative Possibilities," in *Faith, Freedom, and Rationality*, ed. Jeff Jordan and Daniel Howard-Snyder (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield,~~ (1990, 1996~~.), 73-88;~~ ~~"Intellect, Will, and the Principle of Alternate Possibilities," in *Christian Theism and the Problems of Philosophy*, ed. Michael D. Beaty (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), 254-285; "Aquinas's Account of Freedom: Intellect and Will," *Monist* 80~~ (1997~~), 576-597; and "Aquinas's Account of the Mechanisms of Intellective Cognition,"~~ and ~~*Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 204 (~~1998)~~, 287-307~~, Alvin Plantinga (~~, "Advice to Christian Philosophers," in *Christian Theism and the Problems of Philosophy*, 14-37;~~1990), and Scott MacDonald~~, "Aquinas's Libertarian Account of Free Choice," *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 204~~ (1990 and 1998)~~, 309-328; and "Egoistic~~309-328; and "Egoistic ~~Rationalism: Aquinas's Basis for Christian Morality" in *Christian Theism and the Problems of Philosophy*~~.

[2] All references to *Summa Theologiae* and *Quaestiones Disputatae De Malo* are my own translations of the Leonine edition (Sancti Thomae Aquinatis. . . Opera iussu impensaque Leonis XIII P. M. edita [Rome: ex Typographia Polyglotta, 1886 & 1982], vols. 5, 6, & 23).

account of the freedom of the divine will and show that Thomas' theory of human freedom is modeled upon his treatment of divine freedom. Finally, I will argue that the position maintained in *QDM* 6 does not abandon the theory presented in *ST* but instead is a clarification of it. Thus, Thomas presents a theory of freedom that is uniformly compatibilist.

II. Thomas on the freedom of the divine will

In the *ST* Thomas wants to place the human being in the order of creation. The divisions of the *ST* themselves reflect the way Thomas conceives of the human will as modeled upon the divine will, since the *prima pars* takes up God as exemplar and the second canvasses the motion of rational creatures back towards God.[3] Thomas envisions a hierarchy of God, angels, and human beings in which God is the supreme being and the angels (with many gradations among them) are higher ranking than human beings (*ST* Ia.77.2). Human beings have something in common with higher beings insofar as they have a contemplative aspect to their lives (*ST* Ia-IIae.3.5). However, human beings have weaker intellects because of their dependence on sensation (*ST* Ia.78.4). Within this hierarchy, once it is established that the freedom of God's will is compatible with determinism, it is much easier to understand why it is natural that determinism does not preclude freedom of the human will.

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[3] The prologue to *prima secundae* of the *ST* reads: "Since, as Damascene says (*De Fide Orth.*, ii.12), man is said to be made in the image of God, so far as by 'image' is signified the intellect and free will and possessing power *per se* (*per se potestativum*); after what has been said about the exemplar, namely God, and about those which proceed from the divine power according to his will, it remains that we should consider his image, namely man, insofar as he himself is the principle of his actions, as (*quasi*) having free will and power over his acts (*suorum operum potestatem*)." This passage expresses Thomas' commitment to the notion that human beings are modeled upon God.

In asserting the infinity of God's essence, Thomas claims that the power of God presupposes an absence of potency and that, as such, God's power is infinite (*SCG* I.43.14). Thomas asserts that it is impossible for God not to will anything at all, reasoning that otherwise God would be pure potency (*SCG* I.80.1). In order not to include potency within God's will, Thomas asserts that God must will his own being and goodness (*SCG* I.80.1).[4] Furthermore, whatever God wills must actually exist (*SCG* I.80.2). There is an apparent tension between Thomas' claim that in order to avoid being in potency, God must will something, and his proof that God can exist without creating anything (*SCG* I.81.2). Thomas explains that "the divine essence is most perfect as goodness and as end. It will, therefore, *supremely diffuse* its causality to many, so that many things may be willed for its sake" (*SCG* I.75.6; emphasis added). This passage indicates that, although it is not necessary that God create many things, it is *certain* that he will. As Thomas says, God *supremely* diffuses his causality, rather than *necessarily* diffusing it to many. The only thing that remains a necessity in God's willing is his willing of his being and goodness.

However, because of the infinity of God's goodness it must be the case that there are an infinite number of other possible worlds for God to imagine creating. Despite the necessity of imagining an infinite number of worlds, when it comes to creative activity God is merely obliged to will his own being and goodness. Yet, the power of the divine intellect to imagine more than one possible world presents God with freedom of choice. He can will any one of these possible worlds or none at all. Thomas holds that God wills for the sake of his goodness but that this is not a necessity, since God's goodness is

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[4] Thomas' use of gender specific terms referring to God does not reflect the author's convention.

preserved without willing anything. He compares God to a doctor with both the potential to heal and the lack of compulsion to do so and writes, "Since, then, the divine goodness can be without other things, and indeed, is in no way increased by other things, it is under no necessity to will other things from the fact of willing its own goodness" (*SCG* I.81.2). Therefore, creation is a free act because God could choose to create a possible world or none at all. However, on account of God's omnibenevolent nature, we can be certain that *if* God chooses to create at all, he will instantiate a world that is supremely good.

Are there any necessities that constrain God's will? As the prime mover God is necessary, but there are other things that are also necessary. We learn at *SCG* I.84.2-3 that God cannot will what is *per se* impossible: e.g., God cannot will that a man be an ass or that an affirmation and negation be true at the same time; nor can God will his own non-existence (*SCG* I.80.3). Although this strips God of unrestricted omnipotence, the choices God does make remain metaphysically contingent. Let us take up some examples. It seems that axiomatic propositions such as "All triangles have 180 degrees" and "No man is an ass" are metaphysically autonomous because, as Thomas says, a necessity is absolute only when it wills itself (*SCG* I.86.6). Do mathematical truths and other axiomatic concepts have this status? Thomas would say that they do ~~not.~~ ~~These~~not; these are instances of hypothetical necessity. God cannot will their opposite, but their truth is dependent on something else that God does will. For example, in order for it to be true always that a triangle must have 180 degrees, God must will the existence of triangles in a Euclidean universe. Thus, the status of axiomatic concepts turns out to be conditional necessity. If God wills a Euclidean universe, then the interior

angles of a triangle sum to 180 degrees. Likewise, the necessity of a man's being a rational animal stems from the order in which human beings are created. Thus, there are necessities that restrict the divine will, but they are contingent upon God's own choices.

Thomas introduces the necessity of supposition to account for other necessities. According to this principle, God wills what he wants to be eternal (and therefore, necessary) (*SCG* I.83.2-3). However, although these eternal truths already exist as parameters of God's eternal act of cognition, they are still conditionally necessary, since their metaphysical rather than merely logical existence is the result of God's willing. This distinction remains unclear in Thomas' discussion because ~~he~~he does not seem to be aware of it. Although Duns Scotus is certainly aware of different kinds of necessity, Thomas would not be terribly concerned with ~~non~~ non-metaphysical necessity had he known of Duns Scotus' distinctions, since, as this area of the text shows, he does not see God's inability to will what is *per se* impossible as an obstacle to his freedom. Perhaps we could think of what is impossible *per se* as logical impossibility, but to foist such a label on Thomas seems anachronistic and, more importantly, unnecessary.

What, then, is the status of future events? Thomas says that the completeness of our world requires that there be some contingent elements (*SCG* I.85.3; *SCG* III.72). Each element is contingent in its proximate cause (*SCG* I.85.4). Finally, he indicates that only what excludes contingency is absolutely necessary (*SCG* I.85.5-6). Divine omniscience entails that, from his atemporal vantage point, God has "foreknowledge" of events that are, for us, future. This foreknowledge seems to leave no room for human moral autonomy, but autonomy is preserved so long as the events of the world are contingent. Fortunately for Thomas, he had access to the compatibilist solution to this tension as

conceived by Augustine and Boethius with the influence of Stoicism.[5] As God is outside

of time, his knowledge is compatible with the contingency of the world. The world

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[5] In her work on the Stoic tradition, Marcia Colish is concerned that too often in an effort to trace the Stoic influence on other thinkers, we can become preoccupied with it and exaggerate the evidence we see for it (~~Marcia L.~~ Colish ~~, *The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages* [Leiden, The Netherlands: E.J. Brill,~~ 1985~~],~~, 4). However, I do not think that it is an exaggeration to say that some relics of Stoic compatibilism are buried within Thomas' position. It is so tempting to say that Thomas was influenced by this Stoic doctrine, but I prefer not to use the term 'influence' since it implies a transmission of ideas entirely too simplistic to capture the association between Thomas and Stoicism. Instead I would use the term 'absorption' in hopes of conveying the spirit of the impact that Stoic compatibilism had upon Thomas. For especially notable studies of the connection between Stoicism and Thomas, see ~~Mark D. Jordan, "Aquinas's Construction of a Moral Account of the Passions," *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 33 [1986]: 71-97~~Jordan (1986) and Bourke (1947).

The topic of Thomas' connection to the Stoics is so forbidding in part because in the *SCG* Thomas makes explicit reference to the Stoic stance on providence, but he rejects it as strictly necessitarian (III.73.7). There are five explicit references to the Stoics in Book III of the *SCG* (III.73.7, III.84.10, III.85.19, III.96.9, and III.96.14) and one in Book IV (IV.82.11). However, Thomas' rejection of Stoicism appears merely to be the result of misinformation about the actual Stoic position. It appears that the source of Thomas' misunderstanding is his inheritance of Stoic doctrines from Augustine. Verbeke identifies Augustine as one the Latin Christian writers who passed Stoic thinking on to future generations (~~Gerard~~ Verbeke ~~, *The Presence of Stoicism in Medieval Thought* [Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University Press,~~ 1983~~],~~ 5). It should be remembered that while Thomas did read Augustine on his own, he had also been brought up with an Augustine-in-extracts (e.g., in the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard) and could not be entirely independent of the interpretation of Augustine in his own day. It is not uncommon for Augustine to misconstrue Stoic doctrines in order to serve his own agenda. For examples, see Sorabji (2000) and ~~Sorabji's *Emotion and Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).~~ Sharples (1991).~~R.W. Sharples, *Cicero: On Fate and Boethius: The Consolation of Philosophy* [Warminster, England: Aris and Phillips, Ltd., 1991], 25).~~

Verbeke explains that "in many instances medieval authors themselves were unaware of their having anything to do with Stoicism. This philosophy had been gradually assimilated even from the first centuries of the Christian era, so that its legacy was passed on to later generations without being identified as Stoic" (Verbeke, vii). As a result, it is obvious that there can be no tracing of the specific transmissions of Stoicism to Thomas. For this reason it is easy to see how Thomas, like other medieval philosophers, did not recognize the absorption of Stoicism into his own thinking. Unfortunately, understanding Stoic compatibilism is complex because it was propagated through being commingled with other ideas. This commingling is due partly to the duration of the Stoic tradition, partly to the number of its main figures, and partly to the

unfolds according to providence, and God's knowledge of these events makes the future certain. However, this epistemic certainty does not entail absolute necessity. These events do not have to occur of necessity; rather, they simply happen to be the case. And God knows them because he atemporally watches them unfold.

Like Augustine and Boethius, Thomas' account of moral responsibility is also compatibilist. He says, "It is also apparent that the same effect is not attributed to a natural cause and to divine power in such a way that it is partly done by God, and partly by the natural agent; *rather it is wholly done by both, according to a different way*, just as the same effect is wholly attributed to the instrument and also wholly to the principal agent" (*SCG* III.70.8; emphasis added). This analogy makes clear that Thomas thinks of God as an efficient cause of everything. *Qua* efficient cause, God joins natural causal agents in a unique dual causality. He asserts that a natural cause and the divine power are jointly the entire cause of an effect. Moreover, he says that "contingency is not incompatible with providence, nor are chance or fortune or voluntary action...Therefore, nothing prohibits providence from also applying to these things" (*SCG* III.75.2). So, in Thomas' account, while the divine power is the *entire* cause of an effect insofar as it has been fated it to be thus (with providence), so too is the natural agent the entire cause of an effect insofar as it is the immediate efficient cause. Furthermore, he indicates that providence "does not exclude secondary causes, but, rather, is fulfilled by them, in so far as they act by God's power" (*SCG* III.72.2).

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lack of a single definitive author or text. As a result, there are some discrepancies even within Stoicism. My aim here is not to justify Stoicism but to point to it as a useful background against which Thomas' position can be understood. For a comprehensive discussion of Stoic compatibilism itself, see ~~Susanne Bobzien's~~ *~~Determinism and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy~~* ~~(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).~~ Bobzien (1998).

The debate over whether Thomas is a compatibilist or incompatibilist began in the 1960s, and as a result, classic secondary literature cannot be of as much assistance with this issue as one would hope. There is, however, a recent trend in the literature arguing that Thomas is in fact a libertarian incompatibilist. These scholars (Beaty, Kretzmann, MacDonald, Plantinga, Stump) base their reading on extreme interpretations of the two main features of Thomas' causal theory of action. They take up only his doctrines that an action is free if "it has its causal origins within the agent in an appropriate sense" and that "it is essential to choice that the agent who chooses chooses for a reason" (MacDonald 1998, 312-3). These notions are precisely the Aristotelian doctrine against which Thomas argues at *ST* Ia.83.1 (objection 3). According to these authors, Thomas' incompatibilism consists in his rejection of the determination of human action by God in favor of an absolutely unrestricted freedom. However, these scholars fail to supplement their reading of Thomas' causal theory of action with any treatment of his position concerning divine freedom. In *SCG* III, he indicates that divine providence does not exclude contingency, free choice, or chance from things. However, Thomas appeals to the principle of perfection in claiming that a world that does not include both necessary and contingent elements, both generable and corruptible things, is a less perfect world. He does not view the knowledge of our actions in the mind of God as incompatible with the contingency of those actions. Metaphysically, our choices are contingent; the way that God is able to know their outcome is through his omniscience, which is presumably not a coercive mode of knowing. Although in the case of the divine what is known depends on the knower for its existence, what exists does not exist because it is known, rather it is known because it exists. Therefore, what God

wills for creation is instantaneously known, so that God's knowing has no effect on the existence of what is known.[6]

What, then, is motivating God's selection of this world? Since the will is immediately connected with optimific striving, what guides God's choice is a wish of some sort. At *SCG* I.81.6, Thomas says that God does not *necessarily* wish for what he created. One might argue that it is some kind of moral necessity that motivates him to choose the best of all possible worlds according to his universal appetite for the good. Thomas' compatibilist view of the divine will relies on the notion that, while God's choice of which world to create is necessitated by his omnibenevolent nature, that choice is ultimately contingent upon God's choice to create a world in the first place. His perfection is neither increased by creation nor decreased by not creating a world, and as a result, God's creation of the best possible world is not a necessity. It is in this sense that his choice to create the world that is supremely good is metaphysically free.

III. Thomas' theory of the freedom of the human will

For Thomas, the moral accountability of human beings is sustained by freedom of choice, and, as we have seen, divine providence does not exclude freedom of choice. He writes, "the fact that the will is a contingent cause arises from its perfection, for it does not have power limited to one outcome but rather has the ability to produce this effect or that; for which reason it is contingent in regard to either one or the other" (*SCG* III.73.2). His argument for this multiplicity of outcomes is based on the idea that "the will acts through a form apprehended by the intellect, since the good moves the will as

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[6] This aspect of Thomas' position is taken directly from Boethius.

its object" and "the intellect does not have one form determined to an effect, rather, it is characteristic of it to comprehend a multitude of forms. And because of this the will can produce effects according to many forms" (*SCG* III.73.3). Hence the will is a contingent cause. Certainly, the intellectualist position requires that the will act at the behest of these particular forms, but this is not to say that the choice of *which* form to assent to is necessary. Moral freedom is based on metaphysical freedom just as the will is based on the intellect.

Thomas' theory of free will in *ST* revolves around the premise that in order to maximize their likenesses to God, human beings must have freedom of the will *just as* God does. From the *ST* one can initially get the impression that Thomas has a strict libertarian account of the human will. At *ST* Ia.80.2 and 81.3 he distinguishes a human being's intellectual appetite, namely, the will, from the sensory appetite, and argues that the sensory appetite is not in command of the human being. In contrast to brute animals, a person will not be immediately moved by the sensory appetite but will await the direction of reason. Sensory appetite is lower than the will (the intellectual appetite). As a result of this claim, Thomas' position seems to entail absolute freedom for human beings; for if one is not enslaved by one's sensory appetite, then it appears that nothing can be said to determine the will externally and thereby invalidate its absolute freedom. Yet, Thomas does become saddled with determinism. He argues that just as the intellect necessarily adheres to the first principles, so does the will adhere to the last end (*ST* Ia.82.2). There is a great deal of subtlety involved in this adherence which, if missed, can mislead an interpreter into thinking that violence is done to the will by desiring the last end of necessity.

Thomas, of course, does not want to abolish freedom by claiming that the will

desires the last end necessarily. As a result, he must account for the compatibility of the

will's freedom and its being determined by the last end. *ST* Ia.82.1 is a prime example of

this compatibilism. Thomas defines what is voluntary as what is done because it is

according to the inclination of the will. Meanwhile, he defines the necessity of coercion

as the inability to do the contrary; this necessity of coercion is said to be repugnant to the

will. For "it is impossible that something be coerced or violent *simpliciter*, and

voluntary" (*ST* Ia.82.1). Interpreted too hastily, this passage could be taken to support

incompatibilism, but in this very same passage he claims that natural necessity, or

necessity of the end, differs from the necessity of coercion because it is not repugnant to

the will. So it is that, as Augustine wrote, we all desire happiness necessarily rather than

contingently (*De Trinitate*, xiii.4, quoted by Thomas in *ST* I.82.1). In his reply to the third

objection in *ST* Ia.82.1 Thomas sympathizes with Aristotle's claim that choice does not

regard the end but the means to that end (*Nicomachean Ethics*, iii.5, 1113b2-5). As a result,

we can say that Thomas maintains the compatibility of the following two notions: (1) we

all desire the last end (happiness) necessarily, and (2) what is done by the will is done

because it is according to the inclination of the will, that is, what is done by the will is

voluntary.

At *ST* Ia.82.2, Thomas explains how the human will is determined by the last end

necessarily and yet still acts voluntarily. Thomas maintains that for human beings there

is a certain speculative activity in which the intellect naturally and necessarily adheres to

the truth of first principles. Corresponding to this activity there is a voluntary activity in

which the will naturally and necessarily adheres to the last end, which, for human

beings, is happiness. In both these activities there is a contingent aspect that is paired

with a necessary aspect. In the speculative activity the first principles are the necessary

aspect; however, a person draws contingent conclusions from the first principles.

Meanwhile, in the voluntary activity the intellect contingently chooses and presents the

means to the last end (*ST* Ia-IIae.9.1). Once the intellect recognizes (through

demonstration) a necessary connection between a given conclusion and the first

principles, it will necessarily assent to that conclusion. In like fashion, the will assents

necessarily to a given means when a necessary connection is demonstrated between it

and the last end. However, it must be well noted that it is only once this necessary

connection is demonstrated that the will assents necessarily to a given means. Thomas

maintains that this demonstration occurs in the case of God through the certitude of the

divine vision (*ST* Ia.82.2). However, human beings are not commonly afforded the

certitude of divine vision, and until they are, the necessary connection is not recognized.

Until that connection is demonstrated, the will does adheres to the means contingently

rather than necessarily. Furthermore, the act of the will is voluntary because this

adherence to the means can happen in many different ways. Thomas writes, "Good is

many sided (*multiplex*), on account of which the will is not determined of necessity to

one" (*ST* Ia.82.2).

The main problem that Thomas faces in positing his account of human free will

is that the Aristotelian model of causality leaves no room for the concept of dual causal

agency that Thomas has in mind. Thomas notes Aristotle's position in objection 3 of *ST*

Ia.83.1; he writes, "free is what is the cause of itself' as is said in *Metaphysics* i"

(*Metaphysics*, i.2, 982b25-6). Thomas wants to argue differently on this issue in order to

defend scripture (*Sirach* 15:14), where it is written, "From the beginning God made man,

and left him in the hand of his own counsel" (*ST* Ia.83.1). So, Thomas gives a detailed

account of why human beings must have free will. Thomas writes:

> Man has free will: otherwise counsels, exhortations, rules,
> prohibitions, rewards, and punishments would be in vain.
> In order to make this evident it must be considered that
> some things act without judgment, as a stone moves
> downwards, and in like manner all things lacking
> knowledge. However, some act from judgment (*agunt
> judicio*), but not from a free judgment (*libero*), as brute
> animals. For a sheep, seeing a wolf, judges by a natural
> and not a free judgment that the wolf is to be avoided: it
> judges, not from comparison, but from natural instinct.
> And the same thing is to be said of any judgment by brute
> animals. But man acts from judgment, because by his
> apprehensive power he judges that something should be
> avoided or sought. But because, in the case of a particular
> act, this judgment is not from a natural instinct, but from a
> certain comparison of reason (*ex collatione quadam rationis*),
> therefore he acts from free judgment, *being able to be led in
> different directions* (*potens in diversa ferri*) (*ST* Ia.83.1;
> emphasis added).

This passage calls to mind the standard doctrine, first seen in Aristotle's *Nicomachean

Ethics* III.1-5, that praise and blame presuppose moral responsibility. However, Aristotle

presents this doctrine as a reason to assume the core belief that we are responsible for

our actions and that they are not in any way fated. The Stoics were the first to challenge

Aristotle's approach, replacing it with the compatibilist position that we are responsible

for our actions even if our actions result directly from our nature. For example,

Alexander of Aphrodisias conveys the Stoic belief that "if right and wrong actions

remain and such natures and qualities are not done away with, praise too remains and

blame and punishments and rewards. For such is the sequence and order of these

things" (*De Fato*, 205.30-206.3). Alexander goes on to say for the Stoics that "if these

things are so, all the things that were mentioned remain even when all things come to be according to fate—right and wrong actions and rewards and punishments and deemings worthy of privilege and praise and blame" (207.19-21). Similarly, Thomas asserts that reward and punishment are not in vain (*frustra*) because human judgment is rational (and, therefore, properly human).

It seems unfair for such a position to punish or reward human beings if their actions are predetermined to happen. However, the Stoics maintain that we are responsible for our actions because they ensue from our nature. Thomas' account makes explicit what the Stoic position intends. Immediately after concluding that human activity is done from free judgment Thomas notes that we may be led in different directions, which implies the possibility of other courses of action. Thus, we are accountable for that choice. In addition to the consideration of alternative possible choices, human beings are accountable for their actions because, *qua* human, they are rational agents. By definition, a rational agent uses free judgment to decide between a given number of alternatives. So, moral activity is governed by one's character; this governance is the command of one's actions by one's nature. Although nature is chosen by God, we are nonetheless responsible for our actions because they spring from *our* nature, which is chosen *contingently* by God.

Thomas' answer to the Aristotelian notion of freedom continues.

> For about contingent matters reason has a course to the
> opposite, as is accessible in dialectical syllogisms and
> rhetorical arguments. Now certain particular actions are
> contingent: and therefore about these the judgment of
> reason has a course to the opposite judgment, and is not
> determined to one.[7] And forasmuch as it is necessary that

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[7] Cp. I.82.2.

> man be rational, it follows that man have free will (*ST* Ia.83.1).

When Thomas refers here to the contingency of particular operations, he is making a claim about our knowledge of the operations, not about the character of the events themselves. This must be the case in the light of Thomas' providential account of creation.[8] Events can be thought of as certain insofar as God chooses the best possible world because of his own goodness, but because God chooses his own goodness he is metaphysically free to choose whatever world he would like. In the latter respect the events of the world are contingent. As a result of the metaphysical contingency of the events of the world, it is possible for human beings to behave in different ways even if providence determines how they will act.

Aside from this metaphysical consideration, the human will is said to be free in virtue of the nature of its companion power, the intellect. Thomas writes, "What has some awareness (*notitiam*) of the end has in itself a principle of its action, by which it not only acts but also acts for the sake of an end." He goes on to say that "since man especially knows the end of his work and moves himself in his acts, the voluntary is especially to be found" (*ST* Ia-IIae.6.1). Thomas gives the following example of an entity moved by an intrinsic principle: "When a stone is moved upwards, the principle of its motion is outside the stone; but when it is moved downwards, the principle of its motion is inside the stone itself" (*ST* Ia-IIae.6.1). This example is suggestive of Chrysippus' simile which maintains that as a cylinder moves forward by rolling when nudged by an external force, so too do human beings move according to their own nature (Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights* 7.2.11 in Sharples [1991], 99). The salient point here is

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[8] See *SCG* Books I and III.

that the predictability of a stone's downward motion, a cylinder's rolling movement, and a human being's activity does not nullify the subject's acting from an *intrinsic* principle. To bring this point home, one compares the rolling motion of a cylinder to that of a cone when they are initiated by the same external force. Furthermore, in addition to the intrinsic principle which qualifies human action as voluntary, the judgment of the human intellect has a number of possibilities opened up to it by our own ignorance. As a result of this multiplicity of possibilities, the human will has a number of choices open to it. However, since God creates the human intellect, the freedom that is afforded to it is once again pushed back to God's causality. So, Thomas must still explicate his commitment to dual causality.

Thomas clearly accepts that the will is moved by an exterior principle. He maintains that the will is moved both by the object that is presented to it and by the exercise of its own act.[9] This latter motion is entailed because once the will wills the end, it actualizes itself to the act of willing a means to that end (*ST* Ia-IIae.9.4). However, although some act of willing a means to the end is entailed, the particular means is contingent. The will is aided in this motion by the intellect, which counsels the will concerning which means to the end should be chosen. However, Thomas takes care to say that the process of willing elicited by an object and the receipt of counsel from the intellect cannot proceed to infinity (*ST* Ia-IIae.9.4). As a result, he writes, "It is necessary to suppose that in the first motion of the will, the will advances from inspiration (*ex*

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[9] This dichotomy falls in line with the standard medieval distinction that Thomas makes concerning the acts of the will. He writes, "The movement of the will is twofold. One, which is its immediate movement, as elicited by it, namely, to wish (*velle*). The other, which is a movement of the will commanded by the will, is carried into effect by means of another power, such as to walk and to speak, which are commanded by the will; however, they are carried into effect by means of the motive power" (*ST* Ia-IIae.6.4).

instinctu) by some exterior mover, as Aristotle concludes in a chapter of the *Eudemian Ethics*" (*EE*, vii.14, 248a25-9 in *ST* Ia-IIae.9.4). The first act of the will (i.e., the elicited act) takes place internally, but is instigated by an exterior mover; Thomas takes this mover to be God (*ST* Ia-IIae.9.6 & 10.4).

The question, then, is how exactly does God make this happen? Too many problems regarding God's relation to time are involved in the hypothesis that God causes the elicited act of the will by making objects seem good as each is presented to the will by the intellect. The other possibility is that God makes the elicited act happen by imbuing each individual with a desire for the final good, which influences the individual each time the intellect presents the will with an object. This latter explanation is viable, especially insofar as it leaves room for human agency by allowing the choice to be made by the optimifically-willing human being. Furthermore, this possibility is the only one that matches Thomas' account of an object appearing good to the intellect. He writes, "Now, that something appears to be good and appropriate happens from two causes: namely, from the condition both of what is proposed and of the one to whom it is proposed. Appropriateness is spoken of according to relation; so it depends on both extremes" (*ST* Ia-IIae.9.2). If God were to intervene each time an object is presented to an individual, then the condition of the one to whom it is proposed would be irrelevant. So, it must be the case that God makes the elicited act of the will happen by inculcating each person with a desire for the final good.

Thomas reveals his commitment to the dual causality shared by God and human beings as well as to compatibilism in his replies to objections 2, 3, and 4 of *ST* Ia.83.1. Here Thomas says the following things: (1) "free will is not sufficient unless it be moved

and helped by God" (reply to objection 2); (2) "choices themselves, however, are in us: nevertheless they presuppose the help of God" (reply to objection 4); and finally (3) which reads:

> Free will is the cause of its own motion, because by his free will man moves himself for the sake of acting. Nevertheless, it does not of necessity belong to liberty that what is free should be the first cause of itself, as neither is it required for one thing to be the cause of another that it be the first cause. God, therefore, is the first cause, moving both natural and voluntary causes. And just as by moving natural causes he does not divert their acts from being natural, so by moving voluntary causes he does not divert their actions from being voluntary; but rather he produces this ability in them: for he operates in each thing according to its own nature (*proprietatem*). (Reply to objection 3)

Each of these responses stems from Thomas' belief that human beings and God are the joint causes of human actions. The reply to the third objection especially demonstrates Thomas' absorption of the Stoic notion that providence is present in each thing according to its own nature. Interestingly enough, this reply is his response to Aristotle, who says that "the man is free, we say, who exists for his own sake and not for the sake of another" (*Metaphysics*, i.2, 982b25-6).[10] Later, Thomas explicitly says that the will is moved by God in a manner that does not preclude free will. He writes:

> Through divine motion, from necessary causes effects follow of necessity; however, from contingent causes contingent effects follow. Since, therefore, the will is an active principle, not determinate to one thing, but being indifferent toward many things, God so moves it that he does not determine it of necessity to one thing, but its motion remains contingent and not necessary, except in those things to which it is moved naturally (*ST* Ia-IIae. 10.4).

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[10] This translation is my own. Of course, the context in which Aristotle says this is a discussion of slavery not determinism.

What seems counterintuitive about the theory of dual causality is that it allows for the compatibility of the will's freedom and the will's being determined by God. Thomas dismisses this worry quite neatly when he explains that in order for the human being to do anything the will must be determined to some particular effect (which is the end for which it acts) (*ST* Ia-IIae.1.2). The reader must then recall that the human will is naturally moved to the last end, but it is not naturally moved to the means to the last end. Therefore, while some movement of the will is necessary, the particular way in which it moves is contingent. Since Thomas has shown the will's determination to be a prerequisite for its activity, it is appropriate to maintain that the will is determined by its object, which is judged and presented by the intellect.

Thomas posits a single last end, which is what a person desires as his/her perfect good (*ST* Ia-IIae. 1.5). Furthermore, everything whatsoever that human beings desire is said to be desired for the last end, either as the end itself or as contributing to the perfect good which is the last end (*ST* Ia-IIae.1.6). This is in line with the Stoic formulation of the end as that "for the sake of which everything is done, but which is not itself done for the sake of anything" (Stobaeus 2.77, 16-27 [*SVF* 3.16] in Long and Sedley 1987, 63A). Of course, this end, for both Thomas and the Stoics, is the kind of happiness for which external goods are not necessary.[11] For human beings, there is both an aspect of the last end and a thing in which that aspect is realized (*ST* Ia-IIae.l.7). According to Thomas, the aspect of the last end is the same for all human beings (*ST* Ia-IIae.1.7 & 5.8). However, we differ in our opinions about the things in which the last end's aspect is realized (*ST*

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[11] Thomas' claim about this is at *ST* I-II.4.7; for the Stoic account see Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, 5.81--2. These passages reflect the dispute that both Thomas and the Stoics have with the Aristotelian doctrine that external goods are necessary for happiness.

Ia-IIae.1.7 &5.8).[12] There are two possible explanations for this: (1) the human intellect is subject to error and therefore can be mistaken about the things in which the last end may be realized; (2) there are many different things in which the last end for human beings may be realized. It is unclear what Thomas' stance on this matter is. He writes, "necessity of the end, however, is not repugnant to the will, when the end cannot be attained except in one way: as from the will to cross the sea, there arises in the will the necessity to wish for a ship" (*ST* Ia.82.1). Thomas gives this example of the desire to cross the sea as an instance in which there is only one possible means to an end. Of course, due to our progress in aviation this is no longer an example of a wish that can only be attained in one way. Nevertheless, the number of things in which the last end can be realized is still unknown. We could speculate that there should be many things in which the aspect of the last end is realized since Thomas posits choice as the proper act of free will (*ST* Ia.83.3). Ultimately these concerns are not crucial, since Thomas maintains that "perfect happiness cannot consist in anything except the vision of the divine essence" (*ST* Ia-IIae.3.8) "which is awaited in the life to come" (*ST* Ia-IIae.3.5).[13]

The final perfection of a human being comes from knowing "something which is above the human intellect" (*ST* Ia-IIae.3.6). However, we "cannot arrive through sensibles at knowledge of separate substances, which are above the human intellect" (*ST* Ia-IIae.3.6). Therefore, the things in which the aspect of the last end is realized, whether they be one or many, are merely derivative in comparison with the vision of the divine essence, which is above the human intellect. Thomas' account of perfect happiness

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[12] This is reminiscent of the Stoic theory of assent. See Cicero, *De Fato* 40-43 for Chrysippus' theory of action which, similar to Thomas, distinguishes perfect and primary causes from auxiliary and proximate causes.

[13] See also *ST* I-II.5.3.

asserts that once the perfect and sufficient good (vision of the divine essence) is possessed in the next life, it must "quiet man's desire and exclude every evil" (*ST* Ia-IIae.5.4). <u>Thomas' claim that "man's will can be changed so as to degenerate to vice from virtue" (*ST* Ia-IIae.5.4) does not mean that he thinks that perfect happiness can be lost after its attainment.</u> Furthermore, "it is impossible for anyone seeing the divine essence to wish not to see it" (*ST* Ia-IIae.5.4). Nor can a human being lose happiness by God's taking it back, since God would never take happiness away from someone who is without fault and cannot fall into fault (since "rectitude of the will necessarily follows that vision" (*ST* Ia-IIae.5.4)). Rectitude of the will is also a necessary condition for initially attaining happiness (*ST* Ia-IIae.4.4 & 5.7). Thomas declares that rectitude of the will is "nothing other than the obligatory (*debitus*) order of the will to the last end" (*ST* Ia-IIae.5.7).

IV. Clarification of the *ST* Position in *De Malo* 6

In 1270, Stephen Tempier, the Bishop of Paris, condemned among others the following two ideas: "that the will of man wills or chooses from necessity" and "that free will is a passive power, not active; and that it is moved necessarily by appetite" (*Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, I, 486-7). Someone carelessly reading the *ST* could misunderstand Thomas' compatibilist theory of human free will as including the former of these condemned claims. Such a person might suspect that *QDM* 6 was written as a revision of his earlier writings. These condemned ideas were never included in Thomas' thinking, and, as a result, I contend that Thomas wrote *QDM* 6 in order to clarify his

position in *ST* rather than to modify it.[14] Perhaps it was taken as a revision because

Objection 8 is only subtly different that the *ST* position. Objection 8 reads:

> But it should be said that the will has a necessary relation
> to the last end, since everybody necessarily wants to be
> happy; however, the will does not have a necessary
> relation to the things that are for this end. Against this
> objection, just as the end is an object of the will, so too is
> what is for the end, since they both have a concept
> (*rationem*) of the good. Therefore, if the will is moved
> towards its end of necessity, then it seems that it is also
> moved of necessity towards that which is for the end.

He answers this objection as follows: "The end is the reason for desiring that which is for

that end. So the will does not have a necessary relation to both things in the same way."

This is, of course, the same position that we see in *ST* at Ia.82.2 and Ia-IIae.9.4.

The way in which Thomas adheres most strictly to the *ST* account is in

upholding the central compatibilist notion in his answer, namely, that "not everything

that is necessary is violent, only that whose principle is outside. So, some natural

motions are found which are necessary; nevertheless they are not violent" (*QDM*, 6).

And Thomas returns once again to the claim that "if there is nothing free in us, but we

are moved of necessity to what is desired, then deliberation, exhortation, command, and

punishment are abolished along with praise and blame, of which moral philosophy

consists" (*QDM*, 6). This reflects his stance at *ST* Ia.83.1. He also reiterates the notion that

one can pursue a given end of necessity (natural necessity) and still pursue it by

contingent means. He gives the example of a craftsman who conceives of the universal

form of a house, which encompasses all the different kinds of houses. "His will can be

inclined towards making a square house or a round one, or of another shape" (*QDM*, 6).

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[14] Most of the argument for Thomas' compatibilism in the *ST* is contained in Ia, so it matters not that *QDM* was written just after *ST* Ia but before *ST* ~~IaIIae and *ST* IIaIIae.~~ IaIIae and *ST* IIaIIae.

He maintains that the human will operates in the same way. This reflects the crucial claim that Thomas makes at *ST* Ia-IIae. 1.7, namely, that human beings necessarily pursue happiness as the last end, but that not everyone agrees about the thing in which the last end's aspect is realized. We can say that a house builder necessarily pursues the universal form of a house as the aspect of his/her end, but the particular house that is built is contingently decided upon. As a result, Thomas concludes his answer as follows: "So the will is moved of necessity towards some things, from the side of the object, it is not, however, moved as much towards everything; but from the side of the exercise of the activity it is not moved of necessity" (*QDM*, 6). Because of the unmistakable coherence between them we can say that Thomas wrote *QDM* 6 as a clarification rather than a modification of the *ST* theory of human free will. Therefore, Thomas has presented us with a single coherent theory of the freedom of the human will.

V. Conclusion

With his treatment of the human will, Thomas is responding to traditional accounts given by his predecessors, most notably Aristotle, Anselm, and Augustine. These thinkers were all pioneers in working out the vocabulary that would henceforth be used to deal with the question of the will's freedom. Anselm and Augustine, like Aristotle, simply did not develop the issue of how human freedom is modeled on divine freedom. Thomas is the only one of these pioneers to take up this idea that human freedom is an image of divine freedom. It is on account of the notion that God is the exemplar towards which human beings proceed that it is much easier to understand why, if the freedom of God's will is compatible with the determinism of his benevolence,

it is acceptable that the freedom of the human will is compatible with the determinism

that ensues from what Thomas calls the "natural necessity" of the human will. The

evidence for Thomas' compatibilism tends to be ignored in the literature that labels him

a libertarian incompatibilist. We are therefore not reading Thomas responsibly when we

neglect his unique compatibilism.[15]

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