

*Happiness and Freedom in Aquinas's Theory of Action**

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Thomas Aquinas is commonly thought to hold that human beings will happiness and do so necessarily. This is taken to mean first that human beings are not able to will misery for the sake of misery and therefore not capable of pursuing misery for its own sake. Secondly, everything that human beings do will they will for the sake of happiness, and since human beings are moved to act on the basis of what they will, all of their actions are performed for the sake of happiness. This claim is subject to doubt because it seems to many to be false on empirical grounds. Often, people choose things that they know and are willing to admit do not make them happy. Often, people choose things without even thinking about their happiness. Aquinas's theory must deal adequately with such apparent counterexamples. But his account faces an objection of a different nature, an objection raised by John Duns Scotus.

Scotus argues that a view of happiness such as Aquinas's is contradictory. In this article, I examine Scotus's reasons for this claim. Although I believe that his arguments ultimately fail, I also believe that Aquinas must address the underlying worries that motivate Scotus to raise the objection. Scotus is concerned that if we will happiness necessarily, we would never act freely. This is because Scotus believes that such a view entails a lack of choice on our part. According to Scotus, if we were faced with a choice between what would contribute (or what we think would contribute) to our happiness and what would not so contribute, on Aquinas's view, we would be moved necessarily to choose the former, and the subsequent action would not be free. But without freedom of action, there can be no morality or moral responsibility. I argue that Aquinas can address these worries although his answer will not satisfy Scotus. First, I will explain Aquinas's

*I am grateful to Eleonore Stump, James Bohman, Jeffrey Hause, and Jose Medina for their many helpful comments on different versions of this paper. I read versions of this paper at a philosophy colloquium at St. Louis University, at Emory University as the 1998 Aquinas Lecture in Philosophy, and at the 1999 Pacific Division Meetings of the American Philosophical Association. I wish to thank my audiences at those events, and especially my commentator at the Pacific APA, David P. Hunt, for their engaging discussion.

account of action and the role of happiness in his account. Next, I present Scotus's objections and show how Aquinas can reply to them. Finally, I discuss Scotus's underlying concerns and examine how Aquinas can address them.

I. AQUINAS'S ACCOUNT OF HAPPINESS¹

In order to understand Aquinas's position on happiness, we must begin with his theory of action.² Aquinas distinguishes what he calls human actions from the so-called acts of a human being. He argues that all human actions, insofar as they are *human* actions and not simply aimless motions, such as twirling one's hair or scratching one's face, result from the interaction between intellect and will.³ The will is an appetite for the good, moving the agent to pursue the good as her goal or end.⁴ The agent gives content to her conception of the good in virtue of her intellect. The intellect enables the agent to evaluate various goods in the light of their merits and demerits and to determine what is needed in order to achieve a given end or good.⁵ The intellect considers various courses of action, appraising their merits and drawbacks, and judging

1. In this article, I am not concerned with Aquinas's theory of happiness *per se*; rather, my concern lies with the sorts of problems that Aquinas's commitments to his notion of happiness bring about for his theory of human freedom. As a result, I provide only a bare outline of his position and omit many of the details. For fuller discussions of his views on happiness, see Anthony Kenny, "Aquinas on Aristotelian Happiness," in *Aquinas's Moral Theory: Essays in Honor of Norman Kretzmann*, ed. Scott MacDonald and Eleonore Stump (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), pp.15–27; and Denis J.M. Bradley, *Aquinas on the Two-fold Human Good: Reason and Human Happiness in Aquinas's Moral Science* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1997), esp. chap. 8.

2. Citations of Aquinas's work are taken from the Leonine edition (*Opera omnia, Issu impensaue Leonis XIII, P.M. edita*, Vatican Polyglot Press, 1882). I discuss only those aspects of Aquinas's theory of action that are pertinent to my examination of Aquinas's theory of happiness. For fuller treatments of his theory of action, see Alan Donagan, "Thomas Aquinas on Human Action," in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, ed. Norman Kretzmann et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 642–54; David Gallagher, "Thomas Aquinas on the Will as Rational Appetite," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 29 (1991): 559–84; Ralph McNerny, *Aquinas on Human Action* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1992); Daniel Westberg, *Right Practical Reason* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994). Many of the papers to which I refer later in my discussion of Aquinas's theory of freedom also contain useful descriptions of his theory of action.

3. *ST I–II*, q.1, a.1. This is not to say that Aquinas ignores the influence of emotions or passions on our actions, but he focuses on the interaction between intellect and will.

4. Aquinas makes his claim frequently; see, for example, *ST I–II*, q.1, a.1, a.3; q.8, a.1, a.2; q.9, a.1, a.2; q.13, a.6.

5. *ST I–II*, q.13, a.1, a.3, a.6, and q.14.

them in light of the agent's aims and desires. Agents are also capable of evaluating their goals and aims in virtue of the intellect, taking into account how they fit into their conceptions of a good life. Thus, human actions are performed in light of a goal or end as the result of some sort of activity taking place in the intellect. Human actions are done deliberately, as a result of deliberation or at least the result of some sort of judgment. By contrast, acts of a human being are unconsidered acts: absently scratching one's face, for example, or twirling one's hair, acts which involve no judgment of the intellect.⁶ For the purposes of this article, we can ignore acts of a human being and concentrate on human actions.

Aquinas recognizes that human beings often do things that we would want to consider to be human actions without explicit deliberation or a conscious goal in mind. He holds that in these cases, activity still goes on in the intellect, for the production of an action requires that the intellect make a judgment about what to do in the light of the agent's presupposed goals.⁷ Aquinas cites two sorts of typical cases: situations where it does not matter how the goal is accomplished and situations where the manner of proceeding has been established earlier. In either case, one fails to deliberate because deliberation is unnecessary. This is easy to see in the first case, for if it does not matter how the goal is accomplished, then we need not consider what to do. The second case is more complex. Aquinas gives the example of a scribe who does not deliberate over how to form individual letters in carrying out his duties as a scribe. Since there is a previously prescribed procedure for forming the letters, a procedure of which the scribe has knowledge, deliberation is not needed. The scribe has internalized the procedure and need no longer consider it explicitly when carrying out his tasks as a scribe. These examples show that in many situations, we do not engage in an act of deliberation because we have been in the situation before and as a result of our experience now know what to do. Perhaps the first time (or first few times) we found ourselves in a given situation, we had to think about how to proceed. But if the steps we took earlier were successful in achieving our aims, then we simply recognize what we need to do, making deliberation unnecessary. However, the fact that the agent recognizes what to do in a given situation is evidence of intellectual activity. A recognition of this sort is a type of judgment about what to do. Moreover, if someone were to ask us why we did what we did, we could give a reason for it even if we did not explicitly deliberate over that reason when we made a decision to perform a particular course of action. Aquinas would also take that as evidence that intellectual activity took place at some level and that we had a goal or purpose in mind for acting as we did.

Aquinas argues that in the performance of human actions, not only do human beings always act in virtue of some end, they act in virtue of some

6. *STI-II*, q.1, a.1, *ad* 3.

7. *STI-II*, q.14, a.4, esp. *ad* 1.

ultimate end.⁸ And according to Aquinas, everything we desire, we desire for the sake of this ultimate end, either directly or as an intermediate goal eventually directed toward the ultimate end.⁹ The ultimate end must be perfectly good; only what is perfect in every respect will satisfy completely the human desire for the good. If an object of pursuit is not perfectly good, then it will have some aspect that leaves the human hunger for the good unsatisfied, and the agent will continue to seek satisfaction. Thus, anything that is not perfectly good cannot be a genuine ultimate end.¹⁰ According to Aquinas, the fact that we are not always aware of acting for the sake of an ultimate end provides no evidence that his claim is false.¹¹ Just as on a journey, one does not think constantly of her ultimate destination, so too, ordinarily, one need not always be considering one's ultimate end. Yet under normal circumstances, no one would accuse the traveler of wandering about aimlessly. Similarly, the fact that one is not always cognizant of an ultimate end does not show that one does not pursue an ultimate end when one acts.

When it comes to human ends, Aquinas thinks that there is only one candidate for the ultimate end because only one thing is perfect in every respect, and that is happiness.¹² Now of course, Aquinas thinks that God is perfectly good so it is not surprising that on his account, God has an essential connection to our happiness. Authentic and perfect happiness is found in the vision of the divine essence in the next life, a vision that is unobtainable in this life.¹³ Not surprisingly Aquinas excludes wealth, honors, fame, power, and pleasure as candidates for happiness.¹⁴ True happiness is not of this world. But Aquinas does think that one can achieve what he calls imperfect happiness here and now. He has in mind Aristotle's conception of happiness in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, to be found primarily in a life of contemplation and secondarily in conjunction with practical wisdom.¹⁵ There are connections between perfect and imperfect happiness. Perfect happiness involves the activity of the speculative intellect rather

8. *ST I-II*, q.1, a.4. Of course, here Aquinas is talking only about human actions, not actions of the human being. This position has struck many philosophers as false, most notably, G. E. M. Anscombe in her book, *Intention* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1957). For a defense of the position, see Scott MacDonald, "Ultimate Ends in Practical Reasoning: Aquinas's Aristotelian Moral Psychology and Anscombe's Fallacy," *Philosophical Review* 100 (1991): 31–66.

9. *ST I-II*, q.1, a.6. Aquinas also argues that there is only one ultimate end for human beings; cf., *ST I-II*, q.1, a.5 and a.7.

10. Of course, human beings can make mistakes about the ultimate end and desire things that they think are ultimate ends, but which will not truly satisfy all of their desires.

11. *ST I-II*, q.1, a.6.

12. *ST I-II*, q.82, a.1. See also *ST I-II*, q.10, a.2, and *De malo* 6.

13. *ST I-II*, q.3, a.8.

14. *ST I-II*, q.2, a.1–4 and a.6.

15. *ST I-II*, q.3, a.3 and a.5.

than the practical intellect.¹⁶ But the contemplation that brings with it imperfect happiness also involves the activity of the speculative intellect. Furthermore, Aquinas describes the beatific vision as a single, continuous, everlasting activity and argues that the contemplative life resembles this aspect of the beatific vision in several respects. First, it involves a single activity, the contemplation of truth. Secondly, even though contemplation in this life is periodically interrupted (by sleep and other natural activities), still it resembles a continuous activity more than what Aquinas calls the active life. To that extent then, it participates in a particular respect in perfect happiness.¹⁷

Of course, Aquinas is aware that the interpretation of happiness is a controversial matter.¹⁸ He recognizes that people understand happiness in different ways. However, he does not doubt that all human beings desire and pursue happiness, regardless of their understanding.

Happiness can be considered in two ways. It can be considered in one way, with respect to the common notion of happiness. In this respect, it is necessary that all human beings will happiness. But the common notion of happiness is the notion of a perfect good, as I have said. Since the object of the will is the good, the perfect good for an individual is whatever satisfies his will completely. Thus, desiring happiness is nothing other than desiring that one's will be satisfied, which everyone wills. We can speak about happiness in another way, that is, in the sense of what it is as a particular, referring to what happiness consists of. And not everyone understands happiness in this way, because they do not know what the common notion of happiness consists of. And consequently, in line with this, not everyone wills it.¹⁹

Here, Aquinas distinguishes between what Scotus calls happiness in general and happiness in particular. Happiness, considered in the general sense, is the complete and perfect good, the obtaining of which will satisfy all human longings fully and still all human dissatisfactions. That all human beings have a desire for this complete and perfect good, Aquinas

16. *STI-II*, q.3, a.5.

17. *STI-II*, q.1, a.2, *ad* 4. See also *STI-II*, q.3, a.6.

18. See, for example, *STI-II*, q.1, a.7.

19. *STI-II*, q.5, a.8. "Respondeo dicendum quod beatitudo dupliciter potest considerari. Uno modo, secundum communem rationem beatitudinis. Et sic necesse est quod omnis homo beatitudinem velit. Ratio autem beatitudinis communis est ut sit bonum perfectum, sicut dictum est. Cum autem bonum sit obiectum voluntatis, perfectum bonum est alicuius, quod totaliter eius voluntati satisfacit. Unde appetere beatitudinem nihil aliud est quam appetere ut voluntas satietur. Quod quilibet vult.

"Alio modo possumus loqui de beatitudine secundum specialem rationem, quantum ad id in quo beatitudo consistit. Et sic non omnes cognoscunt beatitudinem: quia nesciunt cui rei communis ratio beatitudinis conveniat. Et per consequens, quantum ad hoc, non omnes eam volunt."

takes as uncontroversial. Happiness considered in the particular is the specification of that complete and perfect good, that is, what will (or what we think will) satisfy those longings. What particular thing or things will in fact satisfy the desire for the complete and perfect good is of course a controversial matter. Thus, in response to the objection that not all human beings desire happiness, Aquinas would reply that the critic's claim contains an important ambiguity. If one is talking about happiness in general, Aquinas would deny the critic's position, for in this sense, the desire for happiness is simply the desire for the satisfaction of all of our desires, something that Aquinas thinks we in fact want. If one is talking about happiness in particular, then Aquinas would agree with the critic. For not everyone thinks (or recognizes, Aquinas would say) that the vision of the divine essence is the perfect and complete good, the attainment of which will satisfy all human longings. Therefore, not everyone in fact desires or pursues this vision. Thus, on Aquinas's account, not everyone desires happiness only if happiness is considered as a particular specification.

The claim that all human beings desire happiness raises a worry about necessitation in the will. As we saw above, Aquinas characterizes the will as an appetite for the good as the good is conceived of by the intellect. Thus, a thing's being conceived of as good is a necessary condition for the will's willing it; the will does not will anything that is not characterized as a good in some respect.²⁰ But is something's being characterized as good, at least in some respect, a sufficient condition for the will's willing it? If the intellect judges that something is good, is it the case that the will wills it or even the case that the will must will it? In other words, is the will ever necessitated? Aquinas gives an elaborate answer to this question. He distinguishes between two ways in which a power can be necessitated: it can be necessitated with respect to the exercise of its act or with respect to the specification of its act.²¹ The exercise of a power's act has to do with whether the power, in this case, the will, is activated or engages in its characteristic activity. Aquinas holds that the will is never necessitated with respect to the exercise of its act. The will depends upon the intellect to present it with an object to be willed; if the intellect does not do so, the will does not engage in an act of willing. Aquinas holds that it is always within the power of an agent not to think of any particular object and therefore, always open to the agent not to will any particular object.²² This includes happiness. With respect to the specification of the will's act, Aquinas concedes that one set of conditions necessitates the will. This is the case where the will is presented with an object judged to be perfectly good, good in every respect. Since the will is an appetite for the good, if the will is presented with an object judged by the intellect not to have any bad aspect, then the will is drawn irresistibly to that

20. *ST I-II*, q.8, a.1.

21. *ST I-II*, q.10, a.2. See also *De malo* 6.

22. *ST I-II*, q.10, a.2.

object and necessarily wills it. This means that if an agent judges that a particular object is perfectly good, good in every respect, then she wills to pursue that object. Not only does she will to pursue that object, but she wills any and all means deemed essential for pursuing that object.²³ Aquinas claims that only one thing meets these qualifications and that is happiness.²⁴

Aquinas's distinction between the exercise and the specification of the will's act raises worries over the consistency of his account. The position that the will is necessitated with respect to the specification of its act in one instance (the instance where an object is judged to be perfectly good) seems to be a counterexample to the position that the will is never necessitated with respect to the exercise of its act. In this case, while the intellect is in the process of conceiving of the perfect good, surely the will wills that good and the will's act of willing that good is necessitated. If in this case the will wills necessarily the object judged to be perfectly good, then how can Aquinas say that the will is not necessitated either with respect to willing or not willing (that is, the exercise of its act)?

In answering this concern, we can think of the necessity here as a type of contingent necessity. The will's act in this case is necessitated because the intellect has specified an object to be a perfect good. But it is contingent in the sense that the intellect need not have considered that particular object at all or in the sense that the intellect is able to reconsider the object and find an undesirable aspect of it. Therefore, even when we are considering what the will wills (the specification of its acts), Aquinas would say that the necessity in question is not worrisome since with respect to any particular act of the will, it is the case that the will need not have willed anything at all since it is the case (according to Aquinas) that the intellect need not have considered anything at all.

This position raises an objection, which I will call the motivation objection.²⁵ As we have seen, on Aquinas's account, all human action is oriented toward some end and in the final analysis toward the ultimate end. Therefore, if the intellect turns away from considering happiness, there must be some end for the sake of which the intellect does this. What is the motivation for its turning away from considering happiness? Since on Aquinas's account, all actions are performed ultimately for the sake of the final end, it must be the case that the intellect turned its attention away from happiness because doing so appears to be a good to the intellect and in the final analysis because doing so must have some connection to the ultimate end. But the ultimate end is happiness, so paradoxically, it follows from this that the intellect does not consider happiness for the sake of happiness. More significantly, the motivation objection raises additional worries over necessitation in the will. Aquinas holds that there is no necessitation in the will

23. *STI-II*, q.83, a.2. See also *STI-II*, q.10, a.2, *ad 3*.

24. *STI*, q.83, a.1.

25. I wish to thank Jeffrey Hause for bringing this objection to my attention.

because the intellect is not necessitated with respect to its operations. But if it turns out that the intellect turns away from considering happiness in virtue of the ultimate end, which is happiness, questions are raised about necessitation in the intellect with respect to happiness. For it appears that whatever the intellect considers or does not consider, it does so in virtue of happiness. Thus, it looks as if the intellect is necessitated by happiness. And if there is necessitation in the intellect with respect to happiness, then there is necessitation in the will.

In answering the motivation objection, first we need to distinguish between two ways in which the intellect might not consider happiness. The intellect might fail to consider happiness or the intellect might make a decision not to consider happiness. The former case poses no problems for if the intellect fails to make a judgment about a given object, there is no act of the intellect with respect to that object and the issue of necessitation does not arise.²⁶ So we need only consider the latter case, the case in which the intellect does not consider happiness because the intellect has made a decision not to consider happiness. Second, we need to keep in mind the two concepts of happiness. Happiness in the general sense is the abstract concept of a perfect good devoid of all content or specification; call this H_g . Happiness in the particular sense is the instantiation of the general concept; call this H_p . Now we can ask to which sense of happiness does the objection refer, both with respect to the intellect's judgment and with respect to the end in virtue of which the intellect makes that judgment. There are four possibilities: (1) the agent's intellect, call it I_a makes a decision not to think of H_g for the sake of H_g ; (2) I_a makes a decision not to think of H_p for the sake of H_g ; (3) I_a makes a decision not to think of H_g for the sake of H_p ; and (4) I_a makes a decision not to think of H_p for the sake of H_p . I argue that none of these possibilities create problems for Aquinas's account.

First, we can resolve the paradox noted above that the intellect makes a decision not to consider happiness for the sake of happiness. In order to keep the argument simple, let us suppose that H_p is pleasure, while it follows from Aquinas's theory that H_g is the complete satisfaction of an agent's desires. Thus the first of the four possibilities listed above means that an agent's intellect makes a decision not to think about the complete satisfaction of the agent's own desires because her intellect judges that not doing so contributes to the complete satisfaction of her desires. This appears contradictory, but the contradiction is merely apparent. The first occurrence of H_g in the claim above forms part of the content of I_a 's judgment, that is, the decision not to think of H_g , while the second occurrence of H_g

26. At least not the sort of necessitation that Aquinas would be worried about. One might worry that an agent could be necessitated in such a way that whether or not an act of consideration even occurs is causally determined. I take it that Aquinas is a libertarian and so would deny that there is causal necessitation in this sense. It is of course controversial whether Aquinas is a libertarian and if he is, what sort of libertarian he is, but those are issues I need not consider here.

forms the content of the agent's goal. That is, the agent decides not to consider H_g because she judges that not doing so contributes to the complete satisfaction of her desires (that is, H_g). This is perfectly understandable because it is not obvious that considering one's concept of happiness *qua* concept of happiness really does contribute to the satisfaction of one's desires. Similarly, the second claim means that the agent decides not to consider pleasure because she judges that not considering pleasure contributes to the complete satisfaction of her desires. Once again this is understandable as it is unlikely that considering pleasure *qua* pleasure will bring about the complete satisfaction of her desires. A similar move can be made in response to claim number three. It is unlikely that considering H_g will bring about H_p . So the agent decides not to consider H_p . And finally in the fourth claim, the agent decides not to consider H_p for the sake of H_p . Once again considering pleasure *qua* pleasure is not likely to bring pleasure to the agent.

Now one might respond that even though considering these things does not bring about H_g or H_p , it does not follow that not considering them does bring about or contribute to H_g or H_p . The quick and easy answer to this is that it does not matter whether considering them does bring about happiness; what matters is what the agent judges will bring about happiness, regardless of whether the agent is correct. Nevertheless there are a number of plausible stories one could tell here. Athletes sometimes tell themselves that they will not call to mind how to perform a particular athletic move in order to insure that they perform that move. Perhaps telling oneself that he will not consider pleasure is actually a good way to insure that one will experience pleasure. One might also tell herself that she will not consider H_g or H_p in order to concentrate on thinking up ways to achieve H_g or H_p . Finally most of these cases will be failures to think explicitly about happiness because most of the time agents take their desires for H_g or H_p for granted and concentrate on thinking of ways to satisfy their desires for H_g or H_p . And as I pointed out earlier, failures to consider happiness pose no problems for Aquinas's theory.

We can resolve the worries over necessitation in the intellect (and consequently in the will) in the following way. According to Aquinas, human beings are constructed with a general desire for happiness, that is, a desire for H_g . In turn this general desire triggers desires for those things which we think will bring about H_g , that is, desires for H_p . Whether the intellect decides to think of H_g or H_p will depend upon whether the intellect judges that thinking about H_g or H_p will satisfy any of these desires. But nothing determines antecedently the judgment the intellect will make with regard to either H_g or H_p . Moreover, on Aquinas's account, the intellect is free to reconsider whatever judgment the intellect makes about H_g or H_p . It will be true that the intellect undergoes such considerations in light of H_g or H_p , but H_g or H_p are only necessary conditions for the intellect's judgment, not sufficient conditions. Thus, while it is true that the intellect

is moved to judge in light of either H_g or H_p , neither H_g nor H_p determines which way the intellect judges. The human desire for the good does not necessitate the intellect's judgment.

Moreover, the motivation objection presupposes an overly simplistic notion of the human orientation toward happiness. On this interpretation, all of our properly human actions point directly toward our ultimate goal of happiness. Each individual action has a direct link to the ultimate goal of happiness. Obviously, this conception of happiness is too strong. Aquinas advocates a weaker orientation toward happiness, a more complex and plausible notion. Although human beings are orientated toward an ultimate end, each human action need not be directly linked to that final end. Human beings can have intermediate goals that explain at least some of their actions. These intermediate goals themselves may form direct links to the ultimate end, or they may be a part of a longer chain or perhaps even a web of other ends that eventually connect up to the ultimate end.²⁷ But it does not follow from this that agents perform every action explicitly in the light of their ultimate goals. Recall Aquinas's earlier analogy with a journey. One wants to arrive at a given destination and wills to do so. But the fact that one stops for lunch along the way or calls home to chat with family does not mean that she is not being guided by her goal of reaching the destination. So too with happiness.

Of course, additional questions about the intellect's ability to consider and make judgments about objects remain; I address these questions below. For the present, it suffices to point out that Aquinas guards against problematic necessitation in the will by an appeal to the abilities of the intellect, thus making the intellect a key player in his theory of action.

In discussing necessitation in the will due to happiness, Aquinas leaves open whether the happiness in question is H_g or H_p . He holds the general position that if the intellect apprehends anything as a perfect good, then the will wills it and is unable to will against it. This condition applies to H_g since H_g is simply the concept of a perfect good. Thus, Aquinas holds that we are unable to will against our own happiness. This also means that we are unable to will misery for its own sake, since in doing so, we would be willing against our own happiness.²⁸ But surely the same condition applies to any particular object or objects apprehended as perfectly good. According to Aquinas, only the vision of the divine essence is a perfect good that truly satisfies all our longings and desires.²⁹ Everything else falls short. This is because everything else has at least one undesirable aspect and it is at least in principle possible for

27. For a development and defense of this view in Aquinas, see MacDonald, "Ultimate Ends in Practical Reasoning," 33–66.

28. Surely there are people who will to be miserable, but Aquinas would say that in such cases, misery is somehow attractive and desirable to them. Thus, they are not willing misery for its own sake but for the sake of happiness.

29. *STI-II*, q.5, a.4.

the intellect to discover that undesirable aspect. Furthermore, the vision of the divine essence cannot be obtained in this life; it is to be found only in the next life. Since it is the only particular that is perfectly good in all respects, everything that we encounter in this life will be less than perfectly good and therefore need not be willed.³⁰

Of course if we become convinced that a given object is perfectly good or is an essential means to a perfect good, we then will it. It would appear from this that we *are* necessitated in these cases. But once again this is only a contingent necessity. Aquinas holds that we are always free to reconsider any given object and examine it in a different light. Since for Aquinas, it is a matter of empirical fact that every object we encounter will have some defect, we always have, at least in theory, the opportunity for discovering that defect. Once the defect has been discovered, then we need not will the object.³¹ Thus, with respect to the specification of the will's act, other than the desire for our own happiness, nothing in this life necessitates us.

In summary then, Aquinas holds that human beings always act for the sake of an ultimate end, which is happiness. Although they are not able to will against happiness, they are able to fail to will happiness because they are able not to think about happiness. If confronted with an object they recognize to be a perfect good, they will that object necessarily. But such necessity is only contingent since it remains that even in this case, the intellect is free to reconsider the perfection of that object. With these points in mind, I shall now go on to consider Scotus's charge of inconsistency.

II. SCOTUS'S OBJECTION

Scotus argues that a view such as Aquinas's falls into contradiction. Although Scotus does not mention Aquinas by name when he raises this objection, nevertheless, as we shall see, the objection clearly applies to Aquinas's account. Scotus presents two separate but related arguments supporting his charge of inconsistency.³² I will present each argument and discuss them in turn. Here is Scotus's first argument:

It seems to me that this view implies a contradiction, that is, the view that everyone desires necessarily happiness in general, but not happi-

30. *STI-II*, q.5, a.4.

31. This position may strike one as unattractive since it implies a rather weak sense of freedom. I address this worry briefly in the final section below.

32. In *Ordinatio* 4.49.10, Scotus presents four arguments against Aquinas's view. Scotus draws the conclusion that the view in question is contradictory in two of the four arguments. I use what Scotus says in one of the other arguments to explain a rather puzzling claim in the first argument, but Scotus presents it as a separate argument.

ness in particular, because if happiness apprehended in general is desired necessarily on account of the fact that there is in it every element of good and no element of evil, nor defect of good, then since this is found more fully in happiness in particular than in happiness in general, it follows that everyone would desire necessarily happiness or the end apprehended in particular.³³

Scotus makes the rather obscure claim that goodness is more abundant in happiness in particular than in happiness in general. It follows from this that if happiness apprehended in general is desired necessarily because of the goodness it contains, then since happiness apprehended in particular has more goodness than happiness in general, happiness apprehended in particular will also be desired necessarily, generating the contradiction. But the claim that goodness is more abundant in happiness in particular is rather puzzling. What could Scotus mean? The following argument helps to shed light upon it:

No universal includes more perfection than its particular; rather, it includes less. This is because every particular adds a perfection over and above the universal. Therefore, happiness in general is not more perfect than happiness in particular. Therefore, if it is impossible not to desire happiness apprehended in general, because no aspect of evil nor defect of good is apparent in it, much more will it be so for happiness in particular.³⁴

Scotus does not explain here what sort of perfection the particular adds to the universal, nor does he explain the sense in which one thing could be more perfect than another. Elsewhere, he argues that individuals

33. *Ord.* 4.49.10 (Wadding-Vives, 21:330). “Quantum ad praesens tamen videtur mihi quod contradictionem implicat, scilicet quod omnes necessario beatitudinem appetant in universali, et non in particulari, quia si beatitudo in universali apprehensa necessario appetitur propter hoc quod est in ea omnis ratio boni, et nulla ratio mali, nec defectus boni, cum hoc in beatitudine particulari plenius inveniatur quam in beatitudine universali; sequitur ergo quod tunc beatitudinem, sive finem apprehensum in particulari, omnes appeterent necessario, quod falsum est.”

For Scotus’s texts, I have consulted the critical edition when available, and both the Wadding-Vives edition (1891–1895) and the texts included by Allan Wolter in *Duns Scotus on the Will and Morality* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1986). In the citations, I have indicated the edition used.

34. *Ord.* 4.49.10 (Wadding-Vives, 21:330–31). “Praeterea, nullum universale includit majorem perfectionem, quam aliquod particulare suum, imo minorem, quia omne particulare addit perfectionem super universali; ergo beatitudo in universali non est perfectior quam in particulari. Si ergo est impossibile non appetere beatitudinem in universali apprehensam, quia non apparet ratio mali, nec defectus boni, multo magis erit hic de ea ut in particulari.”

have more perfection than universals because they have a greater unity.³⁵ Presumably this would apply to happiness in general and happiness in particular as well. I am willing to grant the position that H_p is more perfect than H_g because the success or failure of Scotus's main argument does not depend upon its success. This is because the main argument as it stands right now is invalid for it commits a fallacious slide. Scotus wants to show that if H_g is desired necessarily, then H_p is desired necessarily. He needs this claim in order to show that Aquinas's position that H_g but not H_p is desired necessarily is contradictory. But he tries to reach this conclusion from premises that describe happiness as *apprehended*. It may be true that if H_g is desired necessarily when apprehended, then H_p will be desired necessarily when apprehended, but it does not follow from this that therefore H_p in and of itself is desired necessarily. Keep in mind that H_p is simply a particular object that is perfect in every respect. Suppose that there is a particular object out there in the world, perfect in every respect, thereby instantiating the general concept of happiness. It does not follow that this object is desired necessarily because it may be the case that no one ever apprehends it. If no one apprehends it, it will not be desired; furthermore, it certainly will not be desired necessarily. Thus, Scotus cannot move from descriptions of what is desired if apprehended to a conclusion about what is desired *simpliciter*. To do so is to commit the converse fallacy of the accident. All that follows from what Scotus has stated in the body of the argument is the claim that if a particular object perfect in every respect is apprehended (and no mistakes are made by the intellect in its judgment about the object), then that particular object will be desired necessarily. Scotus cannot reach the conclusion he wants, a conclusion about objects being desired not insofar as they are apprehended but rather as they are in and of themselves. Thus, his conclusion does not follow from his premises.

We could allow Scotus to modify his conclusion to indicate happiness as apprehended rather than happiness in and of itself. In all fairness to Scotus, I suspect that this is the point he intended to make. Scotus would argue that once the intellect apprehends or judges that a given good is perfect, then it would follow that the will wills that good necessarily. And

35. Cf. *Quaestiones super libros metaphysicorum Aristoteles*, bk.VII, q.13, eds. Robert Andrews et al., esp. p. 124 and p. 178 (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 1997), p. 261 and p. 278 and *Rep.* 1.36.4 (Wadding-Vives, 22:457). I wish to thank Timothy Noone for his help on this matter. For more information on this issue, see Jorge J. E. Gracia, "Individuality and the Individuating Entity in Scotus's *Ordinatio*: an Ontological Characterization," in *John Duns Scotus: Metaphysics and Ethics*, ed. Ludger Honnefelder, Rega Wood, and Mechthild Dreyer (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), pp. 229–49; J. R. Cresswell, "Duns Scotus on the *Common Nature*," in *John Duns Scotus, 1265–1965*, ed. John K. Ryan and Bernardine M. Bonansea (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1965), pp. 122–32; Efre Bettoni, *Duns Scotus: the Basic Principles of his Philosophy*, ed. and trans. Bernardine Bonansea (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1961), esp. p. 61.

that of course contradicts Aquinas's claim that no particular object is willed necessarily. Therefore, we need to look more closely at this claim of Aquinas.

Recall Aquinas's discussion of the two ways in which happiness can be considered, which we examined in section I. There, Aquinas argued that not all human beings will H_p because not all human beings agree that H_p is the beatific vision. This implies that if there were such agreement, all human beings would in fact desire H_p . Given that H_p is the instantiation of H_g , then since, according to Aquinas, human beings desire H_g necessarily, then surely they would desire H_p necessarily once they became aware of it. Thus, Aquinas would agree that if the intellect apprehends or judges that a given good is perfect, the will wills that good necessarily. In this case, there is no contradiction. However, from Scotus's point of view, this creates a more severe problem; there is no freedom with respect to willing that particular object. But Aquinas would insist that the necessity involved is innocuous. For he would argue that it is always open to the intellect to reconsider its judgment and arrive at a different judgment. If the intellect did so, the will would will differently. In this respect (the exercise of the will's act), the will's willings are contingent because the intellect's judgments are contingent and not necessitated. If so, then even in the case where the will wills necessarily, that is, in the event that the intellect judges that some object x is a perfect good (that is, with respect to the specification of the will's act), as long as it is the case that the intellect's judgment is not necessitated, the necessity in the will with respect to its specification does not produce necessity in the agent. Since (as we shall see in section III) ultimately Scotus's concern is with necessity in the agent, his criticism of Aquinas's position misses the mark.

But Scotus has a second argument for the conclusion that Aquinas's position is inconsistent. Let us turn now to this second argument:

How can [the following two claims] hold at the same time, [namely] that [1] the will desires necessarily happiness conceived in general and the intellect has no doubt but claims that happiness is only in this particular end, and nevertheless, that [2] the will does not will necessarily that end in particular? This is to say nothing other than that the will desires the same thing both necessarily and not necessarily.³⁶

From this argument, it is apparent that Scotus thinks that Aquinas is committed to the following claims:

36. *Ord.* 4.49.10 (Wolter, p. 188). "Item quomodo stant simul quod voluntas necessario appetat beatitudinem in universali conceptam et intellectus non dubitat, sed dictat quod beatitudo non sit nisi in isto fine particulari, et tamen quod voluntas non necessario velit finem illum in particulari? Hoc non est aliud quam dicere quod voluntas idem appetat necessario et non necessario."

The corresponding passage is on p. 331 of vol. 21 in the Wadding-Vives edition, but the text is more detailed and its meaning clearer in Wolter's edition.

- (1) The will desires necessarily happiness apprehended in general.
- (2) If the intellect apprehends that happiness in general is instantiated only by this particular end, nevertheless, the will does not desire necessarily that particular end.

Scotus also thinks that one cannot accept (1) and deny

- (3) The will desires necessarily a particular end if the intellect apprehends that happiness in general is instantiated by that particular end.

But these three claims are inconsistent and Aquinas would be committed to holding that the will wills the same object both necessarily and not necessarily, to use Scotus's own words.

Aquinas would agree that one could not consistently accept these three statements, but he would deny that he in fact accepts all three. He would agree that if the intellect judges that a given object instantiates the concept of happiness, the will desires necessarily that object. For according to Aquinas, once one beholds the vision of the divine essence, one recognizes that here lies the satisfaction of one's will and one will be unable not to desire it. But then Aquinas would deny (2) for Aquinas grants that if an agent recognizes the perfection of H_p , the agent desires necessarily H_p . This is because H_p by definition is a perfect good. Aquinas thinks that in this life, we are unable to realize the particular object that would in fact satisfy all of our desires completely. This is because in this life, we encounter no particular object that does in fact instantiate perfectly our conception of happiness. God of course is that perfect object, but we encounter God directly only in the beatific vision in the next life. If Aquinas is right about this, then at least in this life, only if the intellect makes a mistake will the intellect present the will with an object necessitating the will's desire. Therefore, barring any errors on the part of the intellect, then (at least in this life) there will be no particular objects that the will desires necessarily. But this is a matter of empirical fact (if it is a fact at all). Aquinas would not deny the logical point that given (1), (3) follows, not (2).

Thus, neither of Scotus's arguments works against Aquinas's position. The first one as it stands is fallacious. We can rework the argument, but Aquinas has a reply to it. Scotus's second argument avoids the fallacy but attributes to Aquinas a claim that he would deny. Thus, whatever other problems might affect Aquinas's account, at the very least, we can say that Scotus has not shown his account to be inconsistent. But there is an underlying worry that moves Scotus to raise these arguments in the first place, a worry that so far, my defense of Aquinas has not addressed explicitly. I now turn my attention to this worry.

III. SCOTUS'S WORRY

Scotus is concerned with safeguarding human freedom in order to preserve morality and moral responsibility.³⁷ He thinks that if human beings will happiness necessarily, then they do not act freely and as a result, their actions will not be moral actions, for which praise or blame is appropriate. Because according to Aquinas, *all* human actions are done ultimately for the sake of happiness, then it would appear as if we could not be held responsible for anything we do.

Aquinas can deflect this worry once again by appeal to the notions of the exercise and specification of the will's act. Human beings will happiness (whether general or particular) necessarily only if they think about happiness (whether general or particular). Moreover, human beings are able to look at the particular courses of action they are considering in different lights to see their relative merits. If something is not a perfect good, one need not pursue it. Thus, Aquinas holds that it is in the agent's power not to consider happiness or to reconsider his judgments about what to pursue.

With respect to the exercise of the will's act and its dependence upon the exercise of the intellect's act, Aquinas presupposes that the agent has control over whether she thinks about happiness. He suggests that since we control our thoughts about happiness, we control our volitions with respect to happiness and therefore, we are free with respect to the exercise of the will's act. Thus, freedom presupposes control. But the idea that we control our thoughts may be too strong of a claim. Suppose the agent is tired or distracted and as a result does not consider her happiness.³⁸ Becoming tired or distracted are states that simply happen to individuals and seem to be beyond their control. Thus, one may be suspicious about the claim that we do in fact have control over whether we consider happiness. In these situations, we do not think about happiness necessarily as it is not a matter of necessity that we become tired or distracted yet the fact that we seem to lack control over these situations suggests that we lack corresponding control and therefore freedom over the activity of the will with respect to happiness.

Aquinas could make two responses to this objection. First, he could concede that human beings lack the right sort of control in these particular cases and accept the claim that they do not have freedom with respect to the exercise of the will's act in these situations. But the fact that there are particular situations in which we lack the requisite control does not establish the global claim that we lack control over our thinking of happiness. It remains open to Aquinas to maintain that in our ordinary

37. For an interesting discussion of this issue, see Thomas Williams, "How Scotus Separates Morality from Happiness," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 69 (1995): 425–45.

38. I would like to thank Jeffrey Hause for raising this objection.

lives, we can control whether or not we think about happiness. We can make an effort to think about something else. I could say to myself that I will not think about happiness in general or about the beatific vision (assuming here for the sake of the argument that I agree with Aquinas about the specification of the ultimate end); instead I will think about famine in India. Thus, I am not thinking about happiness, either in particular or in general, and so need not will happiness, either in particular or in general. Secondly, Aquinas might very well believe that even in cases of fatigue or distraction, we maintain the ability to assert control. Even if we are very tired, we can exert the effort to change the direction of our thoughts. Aquinas need not maintain that we actually do this, but only that we retain the ability to do so. Nevertheless, he could concede these cases to the objector yet maintain that under ordinary or more optimal conditions, we retain control over our thoughts and therefore over the exercise of the will's act. Such limited cases do not demonstrate that Aquinas's entire point is wrong.

Scotus would not be impressed with these answers, and this, I suggest, is the fundamental source of his disagreements with Aquinas. The abilities involved in safeguarding freedom on Aquinas's account have to do with the intellect, and so for Aquinas, the intellect plays a far heavier role in human freedom than Scotus is willing to accept.³⁹ Scotus would agree that a properly functioning intellect is a necessary condition for an agent to act freely. Even for Scotus, the will depends upon the intellect to identify possible objects of pursuit; one cannot make choices without having alternatives from which to choose and the intellect is the power by which alternatives are identified and considered. In fact, later in his career, Scotus argued that the intellect was a (partial) efficient cause in the bringing about of an

39. How to understand the roles played by intellect and will in Aquinas's theory of action and theory of freedom is a matter of some controversy, with an extensive literature on the subject. See, for example, Patrick Lee, "The Relation Between Intellect and Will in Free Choice According to Aquinas and Scotus," *Thomist* 49 (1985): 321–42; Jeffrey Hause, "Thomas Aquinas and the Voluntarists," *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 6 (1997): 167–82; David M. Gallagher, "Free Choice and Free Judgment in Thomas Aquinas," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 76 (1994): 247–77; Thomas J. Loughran, "Aquinas, Compatibilist," in *Human and Divine Agency: Anglican, Catholic, and Lutheran Perspectives*, ed. F. Michael McLain and W. Mark Richardson (Lanham: University Press of America, Inc., 1999), pp. 1–39; Eleonore Stump, "Aquinas's Account of Freedom: Intellect and Will," *Monist* 80 (1997): 576–97; Daniel Westberg, *Right Practical Reason* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994). For a comparison and critique of both Aquinas's and Scotus's views on freedom, see Thomas Williams, "The Libertarian Foundations of Scotus's Moral Philosophy," *The Thomist* 62 (1998): 193–215. Although I will not defend it here, my own view is that the intellect plays the major role in bringing about a free action; see for example *De veritate*, q.24, a.1; *STI-II*, q.6, a.2; *STI-II*, q.13, a.6; *STI-II*, q.17, a.1, *ad 2*. For a defense of Aquinas's views along these lines, see Scott MacDonald, "Aquinas's Libertarian Account of Free Choice," *Revue internationale de philosophie* 52 (1998): 309–28.

action.⁴⁰ However, for Scotus, the intellect never determines the will's act, and the will remains the most important element in determining the particular course of action brought about, as well as the action's sole source of freedom. Scotus thinks that the intellect has a rather limited role in the production of an action and contributes nothing to the freedom of that action. This is because for Scotus, the intellect is determined by its nature. Therefore, if the intellect played a stronger part in the production of an action, that action would not be performed freely. First, I will consider Scotus's reasons for this position and then I will reply on Aquinas's behalf.

Scotus distinguishes between two kinds of active powers.⁴¹ He calls the one a natural power and the other he calls a will:

Either [1] a power in and of itself is determined for the sake of acting in such a way that insofar as it is in and of itself, it is not able not to act when it is not impeded by something external [to it] or [2] it is not determined in and of itself but is able to do this act or the opposite act, even to act or not to act. The first power is commonly called a nature while the second one is called a will.⁴²

When a natural power is put into motion, it is not able not to move as long as nothing impedes its movement. For example, unless I use earplugs or the radio is blaring away, I will hear the sirens as the fire engine comes speeding toward me. Normally functioning ears, due to their nature, cannot help but

40. *Ord.* 4.49.q. ex lat. (Wadding-Vives, 21:151): "Respondeo, nec actus intellectus est totalis causa actus voluntatis, sed partialis causa." For more information on the evolution of Scotus's views on free action, see Lawrence D. Roberts, "John Duns Scotus and the Concept of Human Freedom," in *Deus et homo ad mentem I: Duns Scoti, Acta tertii congressus scotistici internationalis, Vindebonae, 28 sept.-2 oct. 1970* (Rome: Societas internationalis scotistica, 1972), pp. 317-25. Roberts makes similar points in two other pages: "The Contemporary Relevance of Duns Scotus's Doctrine of Human Freedom," in *Regnum hominis et regnum Dei: Acta quarti congressus scotistici internationalis, Padua, 1976* (Rome: Societas internationalis scotistica, 1978), pp. 535-44; and "A Comparison of Duns Scotus and Thomas Aquinas on Human Freedom of Choice," in *Homo et mundus: Acta quinti congressus scotistici internationalis, Salmanticae, 21-26 septembris 1981* (Rome: Societas internationalis scotistica, 1984), pp. 265-72. See also Robert Prentice, O.F.M., "The Voluntarism of Duns Scotus, as Seen in his Comparison of the Intellect and the Will," *Franciscan Studies* 28 (1968): 63-103.

41. For a detailed discussion of this distinction and its relationship to the notions of determinism and indeterminism, see Lawrence D. Roberts, "Indeterminism in Duns Scotus's Doctrine of Human Freedom," *Modern Schoolman* 51 (1973): 1-16. I do not share Roberts' optimistic assessment of Scotus's indeterminism, but the issue is beyond the scope of this paper.

42. *Quaestiones in Metaphysicam IX*, q.15 (Wolter, p. 150). "Aut enim potentia ex se est determinata ad agendum, ita quod quantum est ex se, non potest non agere quando non impeditur ab extrinseco; aut non est ex se determinata, sed potest agere hunc actum vel oppositum actum, agere etiam vel non agere. Prima potentia communiter dicitur natura, secunda dicitur voluntas."

hear sounds produced by things outside of them, unless something impedes their function, such as my fingers or competing ambient noise. Moreover, natural powers have particular effects that they are constrained to produce, if they produce any effect at all. Thus, because of its nature, fire produces heat, not cold. But wills are self-movers and are able to produce opposing effects under the very same circumstances. Of course, strictly speaking, wills produce volitions, but there can be a volition for either a given course of action or its opposite.⁴³ Because ordinarily (that is, when no impediments are present in the natural powers which the will moves in response to its volition) the ultimate effect of a volition is to produce an action, then by changing its volition, the will produces opposite effects.

Scotus argues that the intellect is a natural power and as a result is determined:

The intellect is classified under nature. For in and of itself, it is determined with respect to understanding and it does not have it in its own power to understand and not to understand. Even in the case of complex things, where something can have contrary acts, it does not have it in its power either to assent or to dissent to the extent that, if some one piece of knowledge has to do with opposing cognitions, as Aristotle seems to say, then with respect to those cognitions, in and of itself, the intellect is not indeterminate. Rather, in that case, it elicits an understanding necessarily, like something that has to do with only one cognition.⁴⁴

But the will does not suffer from any sort of determination:

The will is said to be free insofar as it has it in its power to elicit opposite acts, because it is in its power to elicit or not to elicit an act in conformance with a given inclination.⁴⁵

The will is able to will freely in opposition to what is desired by the natural appetite.⁴⁶ Even if the intellect dictates that fornication is not

43. *Quaestiones in Metaphysicam IX*, q.15 (Wolter, p. 150).

44. *Quaestiones in Metaphysicam IX*, q.15 (Wolter, p. 154). "Et sic intellectus continetur sub natura. Est enim ex se determinatus ad intelligendum et non habet in potestate sua intelligere et non intelligere, sive circa complexa, ubi potest habere contrarios actus, et non habet etiam illos in potestate sua assentire et dissentire in tantum quod, si etiam aliqua una notitia sit oppositorum cognitorum, ut videtur Aristoteles dicere, adhuc respectu illius cognitionis non est intellectus ex se indeterminatus. Immo necessario tunc elicit intellectionem sicut aliam quae esset tantum unius cogniti."

45. *Ord.* 3.17 (Wolter, p. 182). "[Voluntas] dicitur autem libera in quantum in potestate eius est ita elicere actum oppositum, quia in potentia eius est elicere actum conformem [inclinationi] vel non elicere . . ."

46. *Ord.* 4.49.10 (Wolter, p. 184). "Voluntas potest libere velle oppositum illius quod appetitus appetitu naturali."

ordered to that end which is happiness, but rather is contrary to it, nevertheless, the will chooses fornication.⁴⁷

Thus, Scotus contrasts the intellect on the one hand with the will on the other. The intellect is determined while the will is free. If an agent in virtue of her intellect comes to see that something is the case, then she is not in a position to deny that it is the case. But the will is not determined in this manner. An agent in virtue of her will is free to act in accordance with her considered judgment, or with her inclinations, or in opposition to either. No such freedom exists for the intellect.

Given Scotus's view of the intellect, we can see why he would not find Aquinas's attempts to safeguard freedom plausible. If the intellect is determined, then Scotus would argue that it cannot be the case that human beings act freely in virtue of an intellectual ability. But the determinism that Scotus identifies in the intellect is innocuous for it does not interfere with the sort of reflexive activity Aquinas has in mind. It does not interfere with the ability to take another look at the circumstances in which we find ourselves and review our alternatives, looking at them in a different light. Take a rather mundane example. Suppose I am trying to decide whether to eat a chocolate chip cookie. I have reasons for not eating the cookie; they're not conducive to my long-term goals of healthy eating. On the other hand, I do not believe that eating just one chocolate chip cookie will truly ruin my health; furthermore, chocolate chip cookies taste good. Therefore, I have reasons for eating the cookie. Let us say that these are facts that I accept about chocolate chip cookies. Suppose I then eat the cookie. On Aquinas's account, I eat the cookie freely because it is also true that I could have reconsidered my decision to eat the cookie. I could have reexamined and reevaluated my previous reasons or brought up new considerations such as the additional fact that the cookies are supposed to be sent to school with my daughter the next day. All of these things I am considering are facts (let us say) about my situation, facts that given my cognizance of them, I am not in a position to deny. Yet the fact that they are facts to which I must assent does not prevent me from exercising my ability to reconsider my decision to eat the cookie. Thus, Aquinas could accept the claim that the intellect is determined in the way in which Scotus says that it is, yet deny such determinism interferes with the intellect's abilities in any way that threatens my freedom of action.

Unfortunately, this does not settle the matter, for there is a further question. Aquinas locates freedom in an ability of the intellect, the ability for reflexive thought. I eat the cookie freely because I could have reconsidered my reasons for eating the cookie and, on the basis of that reflection,

47. *Ord.* 4.49.10 (Wadding-Vives, 21:382). "Dictante intellectu quod fornicatio non est ordinabilis ad illum finem qui est beatitudo, imo est contraria fini, et tamen voluntas eligit fornicationem."

decided not to eat the cookie. The facts are set, but what I do with the facts is up to me. But this raises the worry about motivation all over again. For why would I reconsider the facts?

Ultimately, such reconsiderations are tied to one's ultimate goal of happiness. But this poses no problems for Aquinas. For nothing determines antecedently the intellect's judgment. Happiness is merely a necessary condition for the intellect's judgment, not a sufficient condition. It is a factor in the intellect's judgment, but it does not determine which way the intellect will judge. The necessity of willing happiness does not interfere with the intellect's ability. We can compare our situation with respect to happiness to the necessity involved in the case of the traveler. One cannot avoid willing a destination, whether one explicitly considers it or not. Even if one wills only to stay home, to will to stay home is to will a destination. And the fact that one might change one's destination or decide to stay put at an intermediate stop along the way to somewhere else does not nullify the claim that one must will a destination. Changing one's mind about one's destination is to will a destination. Nor does the necessity of willing a destination mean that agents are not free to choose their destinations. We can make an analogous point with respect to happiness. Human beings will happiness generally and cannot avoid doing so even if they do not do so explicitly. But this does not remove their freedom as they are free to adopt whatever conception of happiness they see fit or to change their conception or to reconsider what sorts of actions or goals fit into their conception. Lacking control over the fact that we will happiness does not interfere with our freedom in any significant way, for we retain control over what things we think will bring us happiness. We retain control over the extent to which we mull over our alternatives for actions or the extent to which we consider potential objects of choice. We retain control over our judgments, which in turn specify what we will. Since we retain this control, we retain our freedom.

Even if Scotus grants this particular point, he will remain dissatisfied with Aquinas's theory of freedom. For it seems to follow from Aquinas's position that we are free only because in this life, we will encounter no perfect goods or because given our limitations, we need to reconsider and reevaluate our judgments about the things in this world.⁴⁸ Now this seems to be a rather wimpy notion of freedom and not at all attractive. We tend to think of ourselves in a rather exalted manner, superior to other animals, at least in part, because we take ourselves to act freely. It is rather deflating to think that the only reason we are free is because we are limited types of creature living in an imperfect world. Furthermore, two additional conclusions that medieval philosophers are quick to deny seem to follow from

48. Thomas Williams raises these sorts of considerations in "How Scotus Separates Morality from Happiness," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 69 (1995), esp. pp. 425–26.

Aquinas's view. It would seem to follow that any perfect being is not free; thus, God would not be free, a claim that Aquinas rejects albeit with some qualifications.⁴⁹ It would also follow that once we (along with the good angels and the saints who have gone before us) behold the vision of the divine essence in the next life, we would lose our freedom.⁵⁰

I think that Aquinas can address these concerns, but to discuss this matter here would extend this project well beyond its natural scope.⁵¹ Here, I shall conclude by saying that Aquinas has the resources to resolve Scotus's objections and to alleviate any worries over the demise of freedom and morality.

49. *De veritate* q.24, a.3; *STI*, q.19, a.3, a.11; *SCG I*, 80–83, 88; *In II sent.*, d.25.

50. For Aquinas's discussion of this issue, see *De veritate* q.22, a.7; *STI*, q.59, a.1 and a.3; *In II sent.*, d.25. An analogous claim can be made about the bad angels and their freedom.

51. For further discussion of these issues, see Eleonore Stump, "Intellect, Will, and the Principle of Alternate Possibilities," in *Christian Theism and the Problems of Philosophy*, ed. Michael D. Beaty (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), pp. 254–85; Norman Kretzmann, "A General Problem of Creation: Why Would God Create Anything at All?" in *Being and Goodness: the Concept of the Good in Metaphysics and Philosophical Theology*, ed. Scott MacDonald (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 208–28.