

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

An Innovative Approach to *Liberum Arbitrium* in the Thirteenth Century:
Philip the Chancellor, Albert the Great, and Thomas Aquinas

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Abstract

In this dissertation, I contrast the methods of approaching free decision (*liberum arbitrium*) that we see in the writings of Anselm of Canterbury and Peter Lombard with the methods of the thirteenth-century authors Philip the Chancellor, Albert the Great, and Thomas Aquinas. My goal is to show that, in the writings of Philip, Albert, and Thomas, we see an innovative way of approaching human free choice. A secondary goal is to offer reasons for these changes in philosophical method. The first four chapters of the dissertation prove that innovations took place in four areas and suggest reasons for these innovations. Anselm and Peter begin their discussions of free decision by asking whether freedom is the power to sin, but the other authors begin the discussion of human freedom from the perspective of a study of human nature. Again, the earlier authors analyze free decision as a given fact, while Philip, Albert, and Thomas show a new interest in accounting for the existence of human freedom. There was also a change in the components required for a complete account of free decision: each of our thirteenth-century authors insists on free decision's character as a power of the soul and specifies its relation to reason and will. Lastly, Philip, Albert, and Thomas made use of new characteristics of reason and will in the discussion of free decision. The fifth chapter of the dissertation discusses ideological continuity in these writings and its impact on philosophical method. The five authors share the insight that freedom involves a relation to God; they were also convinced that free decision was not the ability to do evil and could not be lost. These shared ideas provided unity and structure to the debate on *liberum arbitrium*, and the changes made by the thirteenth-century authors are in many ways motivated by the desire to preserve these insights.

This dissertation by Jamie Anne Spiering fulfills the dissertation requirement for the doctoral degree in Philosophy, approved by Tobias Hoffmann, Ph.D., as Director, and by John Wippel, Ph.D., and Kevin White, Ph.D., as Readers.

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Note on the citation of primary sources

I. Latin

Latin citations from Anselm, Peter, Philip, Albert, and Thomas are taken from the accepted critical or standard editions. In the citations, these editions will be identified by an initial, followed by the volume number and page number, and line numbers if applicable.

B = Borgnet edition of Albert's works

Br. = Brady's edition of Peter Lombard's *Sentences*

C = Cologne edition of Albert's works

L = Leonine edition of Thomas's works

M = Mandonnet and Moos edition of Thomas's *In Sententiarum*

S = Schmitt edition of Anselm's works

W = Wicki's edition of Philip's *Summa de Bono*

Thus, a reference to a certain passage from the Borgnet edition of Albert's *In Sententiarum* will read as follows:

Sentences commentary, II.24.5 (B 27, 402).

The full publishing information for these editions can be found in the bibliography.

II. English

I prefer to use existing English translations when they are accurate and reasonably easy to access. Several translations of Anselm and Thomas Aquinas fit these criteria, and I will make use of them when quoting in English unless otherwise noted:

1. Thomas Williams' translation of Anselm's *De veritate, De libertate arbitrii, and De casu diaboli*, entitled *Three Philosophical Dialogues*. (Cited as Williams.)
2. The English Dominican fathers' translation of Thomas's *Summa Theologiae*, from the edition originally published by Benziger brothers in 1948.
3. John and Jean Oesterle's translation of *De Malo*, entitled *On Evil*.
4. Robert W. Schmidt's translation of *De Veritate*, included in volume 3 of *On Truth*.

The full publishing information for these translations can be found in the bibliography. The translations of the works of Peter Lombard, of Philip, and of Albert, as well as any translation of Thomas's *Sentences Commentary*, are my own.

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is an investigation of philosophical method: it deals with the methods used to investigate a specific problem, the problem of free choice, during a specific time period, the Middle Ages. It would be wrong, then, for the reader to search these pages for a thorough historical survey of the idea of *liberum arbitrium* or a complete account of medieval doctrines on human choice. What I write here is not meant to explain what was said about questions of human free choice; it is rather meant to help us understand how these questions were approached by a particular group of thinkers. Since contrast is one way of making philosophical method especially clear, this dissertation is organized around the changes in the approach to human free choice that took place over the time period in question. Because an examination of philosophical method requires greater detail than a general survey, this dissertation focuses on a strictly defined, and quite short, list of authors. Philip the Chancellor, Albert the Great, and Thomas Aquinas are my representatives of thirteenth-century methods of treating human free choice; they are grouped together because their methods share certain important common features. Peter Lombard and Anselm of Canterbury, who were authorities and predecessors for the thirteenth-century authors, make use of methods which are distinctly different from those of Philip, Albert, and Thomas and are introduced by way of contrast. The goal of this dissertation, then, is to examine the works of these five authors for the purpose of showing that certain methods of approaching *liberum arbitrium* changed: in the writings of Philip, Albert, and Thomas we see an

innovative way of approaching human free choice. Once this has been done, it is also possible to ask about and examine reasons for these changes in philosophical method, and such questioning is the secondary goal of this dissertation.

A. The Purpose of the Work and the Selection of Authors

What exactly do I mean when I ask about “ways of approaching human free choice”? Perhaps an example or two will make the general nature of this project clearer. Thomas Hobbes, in his great work *Leviathan*, deals with the concept of “free-will” as a preliminary to discussing the liberty of subjects in a commonwealth. After establishing that the literal definition of the word *freedom* is “the absence of external impediments to motion,” Hobbes explains that, “from the use of the word *free-will*, no liberty can be inferred of the will, desire, or inclination, but the liberty of the man; which consisteth in this, that he finds no stop, in doing what he has the will, desire, or inclination to do.”¹ Human liberty, Hobbes says, can co-exist with both fear of punishment and necessity of inclination because it is merely the absence of physical constraint. So we see that Hobbes approaches questions of human freedom in a context of political theory, with a method of analysis that he uses throughout *Leviathan*: he defines terms in a way that dismisses any non-mechanical significance. His method allows him to *reduce* the meaning of the term “free-will” to a simple relation of physical bodies to one another.

Nowadays, of course, great treatises such as *Leviathan* are less common: it is more typical for authors to specialize. Those authors who do not turn aside from the free-will debate in horror and despair have their own methods. A quick scan of a few mainstream

¹ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chapter 21, 159.

articles reveals common questions (e.g. “Do freedom and responsibility depend on the principle of alternate possibilities?”), common terminology (for example, libertarian, determinist, and compatibilist) and common strategies, particularly the use of thought experiments. Unlike Hobbes, these authors approach questions of human free choice through the lens of a specific, continuing debate in which they are participants: their goal is to achieve some kind of consensus or at least recognition of their views, not to reduce the problem of human free-will to some other kind of problem.

When I ask about the medieval ways of approaching free choice, then, I am asking these questions, among others: Did these authors have common questions, terminologies, and strategies? What was the context of their discussions? What did they want to achieve by their discussions? What is the best way to describe, in basic terms, the task they viewed themselves as performing in their discussions of human free choice and the problems of human freedom?

This last question may be the easiest to answer. The most common way for medieval thinkers to address the problems of human free choice was by talking about a human capacity called *liberum arbitrium*. Perhaps their talk of a capacity was an act of reification that concealed as it simplified. The fact is, however, that a number of medieval authors presented their discussions of human free choice as discussions about the essence or nature of a certain human ability. Augustine, Anselm, Bernard of Clairvaux, Peter Lombard, Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas, and dozens of other thinkers asked about human choice by asking: “What is *liberum arbitrium*?” This formulation offers us one way of characterizing their discussions of human free choice: the medieval authors joined themselves to the Platonic and Aristotelian

philosophical tradition that sought essences through the task of defining, and their method for understanding freedom was to attempt to define an ability called *liberum arbitrium*.

The *liberum arbitrium* tradition was fairly short-lived: the term came into common use among Christian thinkers slightly before the time of Augustine,² and began to lose its popularity slightly after the time of Thomas Aquinas.³ Even in Thomas's day interest in this terminology seems to have been fading: Thomas's last treatment of human freedom, in the disputed question *De malo*, asks about freedom of choice (*electio*) instead of *liberum arbitrium*. The debate on *liberum arbitrium* was not only limited by time but also by culture, since discussions of the *liberum arbitrium* concept were confined to Christian thinkers.

It is agreed that *liberum arbitrium* is a slippery concept and a difficult one to translate into English. (The lucky portion of the philosophical world which is French-speaking has the luxury of using "libre arbitre.") Both "free judgment" and "free choice" have positive and negative qualities as translations; I myself will follow the example of several authors by rendering *liberum arbitrium* into English as "free decision."

Despite the transitory character of the notion, and despite the awkwardness of rendering it in English, we must look at *liberum arbitrium* if we are serious in asking how questions of human freedom were approached in the middle ages. In what context did medieval authors introduce this capacity? What were their questions, terminologies, and common methods? What were their goals – and did any of these factors change?

² The *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* notes several uses by pagan authors (Livy and Seneca, for example) but the term does not seem to have any strong significance as a specific principle of action. The first use made by a Christian author seems to be in Tertullian's *De anima*, written between the 2nd and 3rd centuries. (TLL volume 2, 412-413).

³ For a brief but very clear discussion of this transition, see Bonnie Kent, *Virtues of the Will*, 99-110. It is worth noting, however, that both Godfrey of Fontaines and Siger of Brabant used the term "liberum arbitrium."

In this dissertation I will argue that there was a change in the way that *liberum arbitrium* was approached. The change can be seen by comparing Anselm and Peter Lombard with Philip the Chancellor, Albert the Great, and Thomas Aquinas. Just as Hobbes had his context of political liberty, Anselm and Peter Lombard opened their discussion of *liberum arbitrium* in the context of the sin of Adam. Philip, however, despite his obvious intent to abide by their authority, placed his discussion in the context of human nature, and Albert and Thomas followed suit. Hobbes had his goal of reducing free-will to a mechanical relation; so too Anselm and Peter had a goal of explaining free decision's compatibility with God's creative action. In the writings of Philip, Albert, and Thomas, however, we see a different goal emerging: they try to give the causes of free decision that are within the natural order. Contemporary authors have introduced precise terminology and questions proper to that terminology; so, too, we see Philip, Albert, and Thomas bringing new terminology and carefully formulated questions into the discussion of *liberum arbitrium*. All of these things – context, goal, and terminology – can change the content of a discussion, and so we see that what was included in the discussion, especially in the areas of reason and will, also changed.

Why did I choose to write about these five authors, in particular? I first became interested in this question of philosophical methods of approaching human freedom while studying the small tradition of writings on *liberum arbitrium* formed by Philip, Albert, and Thomas. The dialogue between the three is fascinating: it is easy to tell that Thomas is responding to Albert in some of his objections and replies, and even easier to tell that Albert

is responding to Philip.⁴ In addition, these authors are clearly responding to ideas known to all three of them. Many of their preliminary *argumenta*, article questions, and quotations from authorities are the same, as are many of their basic solutions to the preliminary difficulties posed. Given these similarities, it is especially interesting that a strong contrast developed on what, exactly, *liberum arbitrium* was: Philip claimed that free decision is the same power (*potentia*) as reason and will, Albert claimed that it is a separate power from reason and will, and Thomas claimed that it is the same power as will but *not* the same power as reason.

At first, it seems that considering treatments of free decision by these three authors would be an easy way to achieve a view of contrasting methods, and indeed, many authors have been drawn to comment and dwell on this fundamental disagreement in definition.⁵ But, in fact, from the perspective of method the similarities between these authors are much stronger than the differences. Certain approaches, particularly in treating free decision as a natural phenomenon, that at first seem unique to Thomas turn out to have reflections in the works of his interlocutors. In order to achieve a stronger, more revealing contrast of method, it was necessary to go further afield. For that reason, I considered the medieval authors whose accounts of *liberum arbitrium* were quoted as authorities: Peter Lombard, Anselm of Canterbury, Bernard of Clairvaux, and John Damascene. In Anselm's *De libertate arbitrii*, I saw a method of approach that was really different from those of the three thirteenth-century authors: Anselm's account is different in its context, different in its terminology, and

⁴ Odon Lottin started my investigations along these lines: he remarks that Albert uses the same objections as Philip in an early treatise on free decision and is clearly responding to the Chancellor's views. (Lottin, *Psychologie*, I, 1st edition, 120-121; see also *Psychologie*, VI, 164-167.)

⁵ See, for instance, Odon Lottin, *Psychologie*, I, 119-127, 207-225; and Colleen McCluskey, "Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas on the Freedom of Human Action."

different in its goal. Surprisingly enough, Peter Lombard's treatise on *liberum arbitrium* in the *Sentences*,⁶ although it belongs to a completely different kind of work, seemed to display the key characteristics of the Anselmian method. Bernard and John Damascene, however, though they were clearly very influential in shaping thirteenth-century views, seemed less feasible for setting up a methodological contrast. Their works do not exemplify the lively philosophical dialogue that we see in the other authors – neither John nor Bernard bases his treatment on objections and replies, or on implied or explicit give and take between two parties. John Damascene, who wrote in Greek, did not use the term *liberum arbitrium* or seek a definition of some analogous phrase; the passages most often quoted from his writings deal more with man's freedom in a number of activities (free judging, free willing, free acting) than with the power by which man chooses. Bernard's account of *liberum arbitrium* is based around the concept of consent, and his definitions of free decision seem to have been viewed by the other authors as more problematic than helpful. For this reason, then, I decided to deal only with Anselm and Peter Lombard as representatives of an older approach to free decision. Their context, goals, and terminology helped achieve the most revealing contrast of philosophical method.

⁶ A note on my use of the term "treatise": Peter Lombard, like Philip, Albert, and Thomas, talks about free decision in numerous places in a large compendium of theology. Still, the place to find his definition of *liberum arbitrium* and the discourse about it is in book II, distinctions 24 and 25, where Peter makes *liberum arbitrium* a distinct theme and goes through a set of questions strictly on this topic. I will call this passage his "treatise" on free decision – meaning nothing more by the term than "a section of a larger work dedicated to a specific topic and relatively distinct from other sections." I do not mean to imply that Peter wrote a separate work or "tractatus" on this topic, or that distinctions 24 and 25 can stand on their own – I simply need a term which is shorthand for "the formal discussion of free decision in book II, distinctions 24 and 25." Similarly, I will refer to the collections of questions in which Philip, Albert, and Thomas Aquinas make free decision a distinct theme as "treatises." The term is, again, meant merely as shorthand for "distinct group of questions on a specific topic."

B. The State of the Question and the Method Used in this Work

There have been several surveys of the various positions on *liberum arbitrium* in the period between Anselm and Aquinas, most notably that of Odon Lottin in *Psychologie et morale aux XII^e et XIII^e siècles*. Colleen McCluskey has written a Ph.D. dissertation surveying the works of several authors in more depth, and compared the work of Albert and Aquinas on free choice in several articles. J.B. Korolec, also, has written a brief survey of different teachings on free choice included in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*. All of these writings, however, focus on the differences between authors' *conclusions* about free decision. For instance, Lottin points out that Albert views *liberum arbitrium* as a third power, distinct from reason and will, while Thomas does not. Although all of these authors provide brief summaries of the medieval writers' argumentation, none of these surveys was intended as a treatment of the philosophical methods that the authors used to reach their conclusions.

In contrast, the goal of this dissertation is to explore the methods used in dealing with free decision, asking how certain medieval authors engaged the subject and noting the characteristics of their approaches. This exploration is made possible by concentration on a smaller number of authors: I intend to show that the writings of Philip, Albert, and Thomas reveal methods of approaching *liberum arbitrium* that have a common and distinct character, and I will argue that these methods are significantly different from those employed by Anselm and Peter Lombard. Having argued for a certain change in method in each chapter, I will then discuss possible reasons for that change.

Two more notes of clarification may be in order. I do not intend to prove that Philip, Albert, or Thomas introduced the changes in method that I will point to, nor that they were the only ones to make these changes. The goal here is to view examples of a certain method of approaching free decision and show that it differs, significantly, from the method used by two earlier and highly respected authors. It is no part of my project, then, to make claims about the originality or uniqueness of these methods. A second clarification regards the reasons given for the changes in method. In many cases, there are what I have called exterior reasons for change – for instance, the introduction of various works by Aristotle or the response to a new theological controversy – as well as interior ones, such as the ambiguity or perceived inadequacy of an earlier account of free decision. Though I will make some mention of the exterior motivations provided by forces and ideologies that were in play, I will tend to focus on reasons for change that evolved from within the debate on *liberum arbitrium*. These discussions of reasons for the methodological changes noted cannot be as rigorously argued as the claims that these changes do, in fact, exist: the reader should not expect absolute proof for the theories advanced in the second part of each chapter, though it is hoped that he will find them convincing explanations of the changes that occurred.

C. Historical Background and Chapter Summary

It is perhaps appropriate to say a few words, in a more historical vein, about these authors and their works. This brief survey also provides an opportunity for discussing which works are most useful for the purpose of this dissertation.

Anselm of Canterbury was born in Italy around 1033. He entered a monastery at Bec in Normandy, eventually becoming abbot, and was then ordained bishop of Canterbury in 1093. His treatise *De libertate arbitrii*, the second in a set of three dialogues, is thought to have been written between 1080 and 1086, while he was still at Bec, but after he had written his famous *Proslogion*. Anselm also wrote a work on the harmony of grace, predestination, and free decision, known as *De concordia*, which he finished shortly before his death in 1109.⁷

Anselm's writings reveal a very strong Platonic and Augustinian influence. Nevertheless, his absorption in these authorities did nothing to hinder the originality of his ideas, which he expresses clearly and with a characteristic emphasis on grammar and logic. To attain a complete picture of Anselm's ideas about freedom and choice, most authors focus on three of his works: *De libertate arbitrii*, the dialogue that follows it, *De casu diaboli*, and *De concordia*. For my purposes, however, I found it best to focus on the *De libertate arbitrii*. This is, after all, the work that is specifically dedicated to human free decision; it is also the work that was most authoritative for our medieval authors.⁸ *De libertate arbitrii* is

⁷ "Chronology," (xii) and G.R. Evans, "Anselm's Life, Works, and Immediate Influence," (5-31) in *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm* (ed. Davies and Leftow).

⁸ If we can trust the work of those who indexed the critical editions, Philip does not quote *De concordia* at all in the *Summa de bono*; and while he refers to *De casu* three times, none of these references are in his treatment of *liberum arbitrium*. Albert quotes the *De casu* only four times in the *De homine*, none of them in his discussion of *liberum arbitrium*, and he refers to *De concordia* only once, in an article about reincarnation. Thomas never cites *De concordia* while discussing free decision, and he cites *De casu* only once in such a context. In contrast,

an imitation of a Platonic dialogue in the Augustinian style, and while it has the somewhat grating style of all such imitations – the characters are a falsely humble teacher and a student who displays an apparently random mixture of submissiveness and stubbornness – it draws out a number of serious questions. While the style imitates Augustine’s *De libero arbitrio voluntatis*, the content most surely does not. Anselm does not follow Augustine in offering wide-ranging discussions of the problem of evil and a proof for the existence of God: he sticks to the point of finding and explaining a concrete definition of *liberum arbitrium*.

Peter Lombard is thought to have been born between 1095 and 1100, in Lombardy. He “arrived at Paris” Marcia Colish tells us, in 1136, and became a writer, teacher, and canon at Notre Dame, achieving a reputation for great learning; he was appointed bishop of Paris in 1159 but died shortly after in 1160.⁹

Peter’s *Sentences* is thought to have been last revised between 1155 and 1157.¹⁰ A systematic work of theology that emerged from over twenty years of work as a teacher, the *Sentences* is a thoroughly organized collection of writings on all topics relevant to Christian doctrine. The labor that went into the organization and detail was rewarded by almost instant popularity, and the *Sentences* was the standard theology textbook for generations of medieval students.¹¹ The distinctions whose subject is *liberum arbitrium* are in book 2: Lombard treats the subject with a characteristic use of authority, stress of Augustinian texts, concern for a clear definition, and desire for thoroughness.

De libertate arbitrii is universally popular, and Philip and Albert rely heavily on it in their *liberum arbitrium* discussions.

⁹ Marcia Colish, *Peter Lombard*, “Biography,” 15-23.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹¹ This genuine respect for the *Sentences* in the middle ages should discourage us from viewing it as a mere compilation, or “just” a collection of texts. As Aristotle says, “It belongs to the wise man to order.” See the introductions to Marcia Colish’s two-volume study, *Peter Lombard*, and Philip Rosemann’s shorter work, also entitled *Peter Lombard*, for more on the importance of Peter’s work.

We rely almost entirely on guesswork for a date of Philip the Chancellor's birth:

Nicholas Wicki, who undertook the critical edition of Philip's *Summa de bono*, suggests that he was born between 1165 and 1185. Philip became chancellor of Notre Dame de Paris most probably in 1217, continuing in that office until he died in 1236. His duties as chancellor included taking care of the books, acting as a lieutenant to the bishop, and exercising a certain amount of control over the activity of the masters and scholars in the University. It is possible that he was a master at the University of Paris at one point, since such a man would have been a likely choice for chancellor. Philip seems to have been on friendly terms with the mendicant orders, who arrived in Paris during his time as chancellor.¹²

The *Summa* Philip left is untitled; it was probably written between 1225 and 1228.¹³ In the preface, Philip quotes from the book of Ruth: "I will go out into the fields and collect the grain which falls from the hands of the workers, wherever I shall find grace from the head of a household having mercy toward me."¹⁴ As Philip explains, he too will go out into the fields of sacred scripture, examining the tradition which has been left behind for us by the ancient authorities, God's laborers. Philip's *Summa* is commonly called the *Summa de bono* because it is organized around the idea of goodness. It is divided into three major sections on the good of nature, the good in general, and the good of grace. Philip's specific treatment of *liberum arbitrium* is found in the section on the good of nature. The treatise is a clearly defined group of three questions, written in a style roughly equivalent to a scholastic

¹² Nicolas Wicki, "Vie de Philippe le Chancelier." (*Summa de bono*, Introduction, 16*-27*).

¹³ Ibid., "Date de la composition de la "Summa de bono," 63*-66*.

¹⁴ "Vadam in agrum et colligam spicas que fugerunt manus metentium, ubicumque clementis in me patris familias reperero gratiam." *Summa de bono*, Prologue (W I, 3, lines 1-2).

question: each sub-section has a number of preliminary *argumenta*, a response, and then replies to the arguments.

Albert the Great is thought to have been born around 1200. He joined the new Dominican order, probably in Padua around the year 1223, and began a lifetime of teaching and administrative duties. He seems to have been at the University of Paris from 1241-1248, first as a student and then as a master. Upon leaving Paris, he went to work and teach in Cologne, where he founded a *studium* and began to write commentaries on the works of Aristotle. Increasing duties – he was appointed provincial of the order in Germany and also, for a brief period, bishop of Regensburg – led him to travel around Germany and also to Paris and Rome. He eventually returned to Cologne, where he died and was buried in 1280.¹⁵ In Albert's enormous catalog of works we find three instances in which he deals with free decision through a series of questions: one in his commentary on the *Sentences*; one in the *De homine*, which forms the second part of the *Summa de creaturis*; and one in the work known as his *Summa theologiae* or *Summa de mirabili scientia Dei*.¹⁶ Albert also spends some time explaining free decision in several of his Aristotelian commentaries.¹⁷ These latter explanations, however, do not seem helpful in investigating questions of method. Since Aristotle does not use the term *liberum arbitrium* at all, Albert is always attempting to put a

¹⁵ Henryk Anzulewicz and Joachim Söder, "Einleitung" in *Über den Menschen*, xi-xv.

¹⁶ There has been some discussion about whether this last work was actually written by Albert. I myself was sufficiently convinced of its authenticity by the arguments made by D. Siedler and Paul Simon, in the introduction to the first volume of the critical edition of this *Summa* (C 34, Prolegomena, "De authenticitate *Summae theologiae*," v-xvi). Winfried Fauser, in *Die Werke des Albertus Magnus*, lists it as a genuine work (288-296). In any event, nothing I say in this dissertation is dependent solely on this *Summa*– I will cite it, for the most part, supportively.

¹⁷ Specifically, Albert discusses *liberum arbitrium* and its relation to choice in the following passages: *Super Ethica commentum et quaestiones* III. 4-5 (C 14.1, 154 and 159-161); *Ethica per modum scripti* II.1.16 (B 7, 218-219); *De anima* III.4.10 (C 7.1, 240-242). For a discussion of Albert's treatment of choice in commenting on the *Ethics*, see Tobias Hoffmann, "Voluntariness, Choice, and Will in the Ethics Commentaries of Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas."

discussion of this power where there is no natural place for it. His portrayal is not organized around the idea of free decision as such, but around Aristotelian ideas such as choice and the nature of the voluntary. There are, in addition, questions about whether Albert was presenting his own views or simply explaining those of Aristotle. In view of my goal of examining method, then, I found that it was better to turn to those texts where Albert introduced free decision naturally and treated it at length. The *De homine* treatise seems to be the best of the three texts from Albert's works. Not only is it the longest, the clearest, and the most detailed, it also seems to have the closest links to Philip and Thomas. The organization of the subject matter is not limited by Lombard's organization, as in the *Sentences* commentary, nor is the style abbreviated, as it is in the *Summa*. For these reasons, I will tend to give the *De homine* treatise preferential treatment.

Dating Albert's works has been a difficult business, but the editors of the critical edition of *De homine* are agreed that he wrote it before 1246.¹⁸ It is, then, an early work, prior to the other texts of Albert I have listed: it is probable that it was written before Albert had obtained a translation of the complete *Nicomachean Ethics*.¹⁹ There has been considerable discussion on whether Albert's views on free choice changed since the *De homine*, and if so, why.²⁰ This debate echoes similar concerns that have developed about

¹⁸ *De homine*, (C 27.2) *Prolegomena*, xiv-xv.

¹⁹ The translations of the *Nicomachean Ethics* by Robert Grosseteste (which covered all ten books) were not yet available when *De homine* was written. As a result, Albert depended on the older translations, which covered only the first three books of the *Ethics*, sometimes incompletely. See Lottin, "Saint Albert le Grand et l'Éthique à Nicomaque," in *Psychologie*, VI, chapter 15, 318-319, 328; and D.A. Callus, "The Date of Grosseteste's Translations and Commentaries on Pseudo Dionysius and the Nicomachean Ethics," 201-202.

²⁰ See Lottin, *Psychologie*, I, 119-127; McCluskey, "Worthy Constraints," section 2 (496-514); Michaud-Quantin, *La psychologie*, chapter 18 (205-216).

Thomas's treatments,²¹ so perhaps it is worth saying a word or two here on the general question of development. Questions about whether a medieval author's views have developed are controversial. The debates are heavily based on personal interpretation and often depend on purely speculative theories regarding an author's motivation or influences. Moreover, it is obvious that, in this dissertation, which is meant to set up a clear picture of method by contrasting *different* authors, a lengthy discussion of contrast in the works of *the same* author will be of no use – indeed, it will be positively harmful because it will blur the primary comparison. In my view, moreover, the sometimes bitter debate on development in Albert and Thomas has obscured one rather important fact. It is, in truth, perfectly possible to focus on features that are common to all of Albert's treatments of *liberum arbitrium* (and features which are common to all of Thomas's) making reference to their differences only as needed. This is what I intend to do.

There is no need for me to provide an extensive introduction of Thomas Aquinas, as a great deal has been said elsewhere on his life. Torrell notes that he studied with Albert, probably in Paris and most certainly in Cologne, between the years of 1245 and 1252, when he was in his twenties and early thirties. At that time, and again when he returned to Paris, he had an opportunity to absorb and respond to the current controversies surrounding *liberum arbitrium*.

There are four instances where we see Thomas writing at length on the particular topic of human *liberum arbitrium*: one in his *Sentences* commentary, on the relevant

²¹ Daniel Westberg, "Did Aquinas Change His Mind About the Will?" offers a very good overview of the debate on development in Aquinas. Lottin is well known for advocating a distinct and almost abrupt change in Thomas's thinking; see especially "La preuve de la liberté humaine chez saint Thomas d'Aquin." David Gallagher has also written on the topic: see his Ph.D. dissertation, "Thomas Aquinas on the Causes of Human Choice," particularly "Conclusions, on pages 291-307.

distinctions from Peter Lombard; one in the disputed question *De veritate*; one in the *Summa theologiae* as part of a treatise on man; and one in the disputed question *De malo* – this last, as I have already noted, asks about *liberam electionem* rather than *liberum arbitrium*. I have placed these treatises in what is thought to have been their chronological order: the dating Torrell suggests is 1252-1256 for the *Sentences*, 1256-1259 for the *De veritate*, 1265-1268 for the *prima pars* of the *Summa*, and roughly 1270 for the question on free choice (question six) in the *De malo*.²² Thomas writes very precise scholastic questions – his questions on *liberum arbitrium* are more formal than those of Philip and Albert. He also has a tendency to break larger questions into smaller ones. Even the single-article *De malo* treatment, with its twenty-four objections, is still less complex than Albert's definition-question in *De homine*, which has forty-two objections and deals, among other things, with four completely different definitions from authorities. Thomas's writing in these questions, as elsewhere, is notable for its clarity. Thomas shows the same concern for current dialogue and ancient tradition that we see in Philip and Albert, but he prefers simpler solutions and takes greater care to render his views consistent, largely by the careful use of an Aristotelian framework.

I will look primarily to these works, then, in establishing the change in methods of dealing with free decision. Anselm's dialogue *De libertate arbitrii*, the relevant distinctions from book II of Peter's *Sentences*, and the scholastic questions on free decision by our thirteenth-century authors will be treated in detail in the chapters to come.

This dissertation has five chapters: chapters 1-4 are divided into two parts. The first part argues that a change in the method of approaching free decision did, in fact, occur: in several distinct areas Philip, Albert and Thomas follow a different course of action than

²²Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 202. For the other dates, see the "Brief Catalogue," 330-361.

Anselm and Peter Lombard did. The second part of each chapter discusses reasons for that change. In Chapter 1, the change described is a change in context: Anselm and Peter Lombard began their discussions of free decision by asking about freedom as the power to sin, while the other authors tend to begin the discussion of human freedom from the perspective of a study of human nature. In the second part of Chapter 1, I argue that this change was caused, in part, by the realization that an accurate account of freedom cannot be achieved by a consideration of evil doing.

In Chapter 2, the change described is a change in the perceived goal of the investigation of free decision. Anselm and Peter Lombard analyze free decision as a given fact. Philip, Albert, and Thomas, however, offer accounts that have the character of proofs, showing a new interest in accounting for the existence of human freedom. I argue that this change was caused, in part, by the idea that freedom also belonged to angels and to God. Many authors crafted arguments deducing the freedom of God and the angels from the presence of intellect and will, and such arguments were then easily applied to man.

In Chapter 3, the change described is a change in the components required for a complete account of free decision. Anselm and Peter Lombard are content with ambiguous formulations of free decision's nature and relation to the other powers: free decision is said to be a "faculty" (a term whose meaning was disputed) and it is said to be "of" reason and will. Each of our thirteenth-century authors insists on discussing free decision as a power and on clearly specifying its relation to reason and will. I argue that this change was caused by a determination to maintain the unity of the rational soul. In addition, the new use of the

term “power” resulted in a clearer account of free decision’s relation to the soul, to the other powers of the soul, and to the objects of those powers.

In Chapter 4, two changes are described: the use of new characteristics of reason in the discussion of free decision, and the use of new characteristics of will in that discussion. When Anselm and Peter Lombard discuss reason’s role in free decision, they mainly speak of reason’s ability to recognize good and evil. Our thirteenth-century authors consider other abilities of reason. For example, all three authors discuss reason’s ability to conceive contraries as well as its “coercion” by truth. I argue that this wider consideration of reason’s abilities was encouraged by the new focus on causes of freedom, as well as by the new description of free decision as a power. With regard to will, the chief innovation to be noted is that Philip, Albert, and Thomas deal with will by considering its relation to its object, the good, as well as by considering its nature as a subject able to move itself. The reason for this change in method is that the new focus on the causes of freedom encourages the investigation of any characteristics of the will that may account for free actions. In addition, the new description of free decision as a power of the soul encourages discussion of its object, the object chosen, and its relation to the object desired by the will.

In Chapter 5, there is a shift from considering changes in method to a consideration of *continuity* in certain ideas and the impact of these ideas on philosophical method: several continuities are described. The five authors discussed all share the insight that freedom involves some kind of relation to God and sharing in the divine nature, just as they were also all convinced that free decision was not the ability to evil and could not be lost. These forms of continuity were partly motivated by Christian and Augustinian teachings: however, they

also provided unity and structure to the debate on *liberum arbitrium*. The changes made by the thirteenth-century authors are in many ways motivated by the desire to preserve these insights.

Chapter 1: A New Point of Entry: Where Does the Investigation of *Liberum Arbitrium* Begin?

A natural way to begin the proposed consideration of philosophical method is by asking how *liberum arbitrium* is introduced as a topic of discussion. In what context, and through which questions did these authors engage the subject of free decision?

Both Anselm and Peter Lombard began their treatments of *liberum arbitrium* in the context of sin: more particularly, in the context of the first human sin. The works of Philip, Albert, and Thomas reveal a different approach, since each author introduces free decision as part of a study of human nature. After establishing this as a fact (Part 1 of this chapter) I will discuss some possible reasons for the change (Part 2). When Peter and Anselm introduced the freedom of human choice in relation to sin, the context made it difficult to pursue a complete understanding of that freedom, and rendered the understanding that was gained extremely vague. The new context, the context of human nature, helped to resolve these particular difficulties.

Part I: The Change in How Free Decision is Introduced

There are two ways of considering how a topic is first introduced into a written philosophical discussion. First, we can consider its place in the organization of the work. What topics are treated before it? What topics come after it? What principle decides this order? Why and how, in other words, does a particular subject become part of the book? The answer to these questions tells us how the author begins and how he planned to put the

topic before his reader.¹ Such a consideration of structure and order is naturally suited to analyzing the kind of theological collections that Peter, Philip, Albert, and Thomas wrote. In their large works – the *Sentences*, the *Summa de bono*, the *Summa de homine*, and the *Summa theologiae* – these authors integrate free decision into a carefully chosen order. Discussing the place free decision holds in this structure is one way to learn whether the initial approach to free decision changed over the course of time.

The second way of considering how a philosophical topic is “introduced” is to consider which questions and controversies are used to open it up and bring it forward. Any work which searches for philosophical truth by means of argument can be examined in this way. For example, Plato introduces the topic of virtue by means of Meno’s query of whether it can be taught, and Kant introduces the topic of morality by asking what is absolutely good. This consideration of opening questions and controversies is also very appropriate in the case of the authors at hand: although only Anselm is writing an explicit dialogue, all of our authors begin their treatments with difficulties, questions, and problems. In examining them, we can see how free decision is introduced in philosophical dialogue and what changes took place in this introduction.

¹ In a general book on animals, for instance, we might find the chapter on elephants in the section on mammals: so the elephant is introduced as a large land mammal of a certain family. In a book on conservation, however, the elephant can form part of a chapter on species endangered by hunting: it is introduced as a threatened, ivory-bearing animal. The way in which the elephant is viewed, and the way in which it is introduced, are indicated by the structure of the work.

A. *The introduction of free decision by structure*

Order was of the greatest significance to the authors being considered in this dissertation. For a modern writer, good order is important, and it is a mark of good style, but it is not the chief reason for creating a work. But the medieval authors had their eyes firmly fixed upon the ideals of better teaching and careful preservation of the authorities of the past. Far from being a merely “stylistic” choice, an orderly presentation seems to have been one of the chief goals to be attained by a book, at least as far as these five authors were concerned.²

Anselm gave definite instructions about the order in which his trilogy of dialogues were to be read:

Although I did not compose these treatises one right after the other, their subject matter and their similarity of form require that they be written together as a unit, and in the order in which I have listed them. So even if certain overhasty persons have transcribed them in a different order before they were all finished, I want them to be arranged as I have instructed here.³

Peter Lombard writes of his goal of collecting and ordering in his prologue to the *Sentences*:

In this brief volume, we have brought together the sentences of the Fathers and the testimonies apposite to them, so that one who seeks them shall find it unnecessary to rifle through numerous books, when this brief collection effortlessly offers him what he seeks.... And in order that one may more easily find what one seeks, we have set forth in advance the titles under which the chapters of each book are distinguished.⁴

² Marie- Dominic Chenu, has commented on order as a sign of an author's greatness: “Ce n'est pas d'abord à la richesse de ses conclusions que se mesurent la grandeur et l'originalité d'une oeuvre philosophique ou théologique; c'est à l'ordre de sa construction, à la lumière de principes qui commandent, logiquement et spirituellement, la genèse et l'agencement de ses parties.” [We do not measure the greatness and originality of a philosophical or theological work by the richness of its conclusions, but by the order of its construction, and by the light of the principles which command, logically and spiritually, the genesis and arrangement of its parts.] “Le plan de la Somme théologique de S. Thomas,” 93.

³ “Qui videlicet tractatus quamvis nulla continuatione dictaminis cohaereant, materia tamen eorum et similitudo disputationis exigit, ut simul eo quo illos commemoravi ordine conscribantur. Licet itaque a quibusdam festinantibus alio sint ordine transcripti, antequam perfecti essent: sic tamen eos ut hic posui volo ordinari.” *De veritate*, Preface (S 1, 174; Williams 1-2).

⁴ “Brevi volumine complicans Patrum sententias, apposisis eorum testimoniis, ut non sit necesse quaerenti librorum numerositatem evolvere, cui brevitatis collecta quod quaeritur offert sine labore... Ut autem quod quaeritur facilius occurrat, titulos quibus singulorum librorum capitula distinguuntur praemisimus.” *Sentences*, prologue (Br. I, 4, lines 23-30)

What Peter hopes to offer is selection and presentation, “so that one may more easily find what one seeks.” Philip the Chancellor’s *Summa de bono* represents a determined attempt to organize all the elements of theology around one idea: that of goodness. The way in which this was done was obviously worked out with great care.

Albert and Thomas are equally serious about the order in which their material is presented. The very first question in Albert’s *De homine* is about order. In a discussion on “why the substance of the soul is treated before its parts, the body, or the conjunction of body and soul” Albert gives a thorough account of his reasons for ordering his presentation.⁵ The lengthy article shows us that Albert thought long and seriously about how to organize the questions that he asks. At the outset of his work, he took the opportunity to show the reader that his order is dictated by the principles of science, and that he is most certainly aware of the ordering decisions that he made. Thomas Aquinas also considered ordering as his chief task. As the prologue to the *Summa* has it:

We have considered that beginners in this science have not seldom been hampered by what they have found written by other authors, partly on account of the multiplication of useless questions, articles, and arguments; partly also because those things that are needful for them to know are not taught according to the order of instruction, but according as the plan of the book might require, or the occasion of the argument offer; partly, too, because frequent repetition brought weariness and confusion to the minds of those hearing them.⁶

⁵ “Quare prius disputandum est de substantia animae quam de partibus eius vel de corpore vel coniuncto,” first article of *De homine* (C 27.2, 1-5).

⁶ “Consideravimus namque huius doctrinae novitios, in his quae a diversis conscripta sunt, plurimum impediri, partim quidem propter multiplicationem inutilium quaestionum, articulorum et argumentorum; partim etiam quia ea quae sunt necessaria talibus ad sciendum, non traduntur secundum ordinem disciplinae, sed secundum quod requirebat librorum expositio, vel secundum quod se praebebat occasio disputandi; partim quidem quia eorundem frequens repetitio et fastidium et confusionem generabat in animis auditorum.” *Summa theologiae*, prologue (L 4, 5). For further discussion of order in the *Summa theologiae*, see M.D. Chenu, “Le plan de la Somme théologique de S. Thomas.” As Chenu puts it, “Le plan de la Somme de saint Thomas est une voie d’accès à son esprit.” (94)

These particular passages should serve as sharp reminders for us: *where* the discussion of free decision falls in a given text has been consciously chosen by the author, and thus a consideration of location is important for achieving our goal of understanding *how* free decision is approached.

So, where *does* free decision fall, structurally, in the works of our authors? What does this organization tell us about how it is introduced as a topic of philosophical discussion? I will first look at the order in its simplest manifestation by examining the chapter titles of the works in question; then I will consider the work of each author in more detail.

1. A first glimpse through chapter titles

Figure 1 shows the titles to Anselm's *De liberate arbitrii* and the two distinctions in which Peter Lombard discusses human free decision. Note, in these titles, the frequent use of the words "sin" and "temptation," and, in both Peter and Anselm, the references to the first fall of man. Looking at Anselm's organization, we see that his first and second chapters question the relation of freedom and sin. They are followed by a discussion which is aimed at explaining temptation and the fall. Peter Lombard's chapter titles show similar concerns: in distinction 24 the discussion centers around the fall, and in distinction 25 we see that Peter, also, questions the relation of freedom and sin. Sin and temptation in general, and the fall of man and the first temptation in particular, are the context for a treatment of the human ability to choose freely.

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Anselm of Canterbury, <i>De libertate arbitrii</i>²⁹</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 That the power to sin does not belong to freedom of choice 2 That nonetheless, angels and human beings sinned through this power and through free choice; and although they were able to be slaves to sin, sin was not able to master them 3 In what why they had free choice after they made themselves slaves to sin, and what free choice is 4 In what way those who do not have rectitude have the power to preserve rectitude. 5 That no temptation compels anyone to sin against his will. 6 In what way our will is powerful against temptations, even though it seems weak. 7 How the will is more powerful than temptation, even when it is overcome by temptation 8 That not even God can take away rectitude of will 9 That nothing is freer than an upright will 10 How someone who sins is a slave to sin; and that it is a greater miracle when God restores rectitude to someone who abandons it than when he restores life to a dead person 11 That this slavery does not take away freedom of choice 12 Why, when a human being does not have rectitude, we say that he is free, since rectitude cannot be taken away from him when he has it, rather than saying that one who has rectitude is a slave, since he cannot recover it by his own power when he does have it 13 That the power to preserve rectitude of will for the sake of rectitude itself is a perfect definition of freedom of choice 14 How this freedom is divided | <p>Peter Lombard, <i>Sentences</i>, bk II</p> <p>Distinction 24</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Of the grace and power of man before the fall 2 Of the help given to man in creation, by which he was able to stand 3 Of free decision 4 Of sensuality 5 Of reason and its parts 6-8 Of the similar order of sinning in us and in our first parents 9-12 How, through those three parts, temptation is completed in us 13 In what way <i>sensuality</i> is taken in Scripture <p>Distinction 25</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 The definition of free decision according to the philosophers 2 How free decision is taken in God 3 That the angels and the saints have free decision 4 That free decision will be more free when it is not able to sin 5 Of the differences of free decision according to diverse times 6 Of the four states of free decision 7 Of the corruption of free decision through sin 8 Of the three modes of freedom of free decision: from necessity, from sin, and from misery 9 Of the freedom which is from grace and that which is from nature <p>Distinction 26</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Of operating and co-operating grace 2 What is will 3 What is the grace prevenient to good will... |
|---|---|

Figure 1. Chapter Titles from Treatises on *Liberum Arbitrium* by Anselm and Peter Lombard

²⁹ Anselm of Canterbury, *De libertate arbitrii*, “Capitula.” (S 1, 205-206).

The works of our three thirteenth-century authors show a clear contrast in how free decision is introduced. These thinkers introduced free decision during their discussions of human nature, and they treated *liberum arbitrium* while enumerating the powers of the soul. The chapter titles of the relevant sections are given in Figure 2. In Thomas's case, the titles given are those from the *Summa theologiae*; this work allows us to view the material in the order Thomas thought it should be taught, rather than in the order dictated by Peter Lombard or by the particular controversy at hand.³⁰ In Albert's case, the chapter titles are from the *De homine* treatise, for similar reasons.

In each case, we see that the treatment of *liberum arbitrium* is found within a treatise on man, in a section on the soul and a subsection on the powers of the soul. The terms *sin* and *temptation* are notably absent, as are all references to the temptation of Adam and Eve. In their place, we see words that describe powers of the soul, such as *appetitive*, *motive*, and *cognitive*. Albert, Thomas, and Philip apparently found it more natural to introduce free decision apart from the question of man's first sin.³¹

³⁰ On the originality and significance of the order in the *Summa theologiae*, (particularly as opposed to the order of disputed questions such as *De veritate*), see Chenu, *Toward Understanding St. Thomas*, 283 and 300-301.

³¹ There is still considerable resemblance between the Lombard's organization and that of our three thirteenth-century authors. Each author treats of man, and his condition before the fall, after a treatise on the six days of creation and before dealing with the effects of original sin and the subject of grace. But this does not diminish our reasons for classifying Peter with Anselm: Peter Lombard did not create a treatise on human nature after his account of creation – he viewed *liberum arbitrium* while accounting for the fall, not while describing man as a creature of God.

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Philip the Chancellor, <i>Summa de bono</i>³²</p> <p>IV Of the good which is the corporeal and intellectual creature</p> <p>Q I What the soul is</p> <p>Q II Of the powers of the soul</p> <p>1 Of the differences of the cognitive and motive powers</p> <p>2 Of free decision</p> <p>a Of the definition of free decision</p> <p>b Of the act of judging and willing</p> <p>c What is freedom</p> <p>3 Of synderesis</p> <p>4 Of the four parts of reason, and of sensuality</p> <p>5 Of will</p> | <p>Albert the Great, <i>De homine</i>³³</p> <p>Of Man ...</p> <p>(I) Of the rational soul</p> <p>(A) Of the motive powers of the soul</p> <p>1. Of the processive motion of animals...</p> <p>2. Of the singular moving powers</p> <p>2.1 Of the practical intellect...</p> <p>2.2 Of moving phantasy ...</p> <p>2.3 Of the appetitive part</p> <p>2.3.1 Of will</p> <p>2.3.2 Of the concupiscible ...</p> <p>2.3.3 Of the irascible...</p> <p>2.3.4 Of the three in common...</p> <p>(B) Of those motive things which precede the other ones</p> <p>1 Of sensuality</p> <p>2 Of reason with its superior and inferior portion</p> <p>3 Of free decision</p> <p>3.1 Whether free decision is only in rational creatures</p> <p>3.2 What free decision is, in substance and definition</p> <p>3.3 Of the acts of free decision</p> <p>3.4 Of its freedom</p> <p>3.4.1 What freedom is</p> <p>3.4.2 What has freedom primarily</p> <p>3.4.3 Of the division of free decision</p> <p>3.5 Of the states of free decision</p> <p>3.6 Of the comparison of man's free decision to that of the angels and God</p> <p>4 Of synderesis...</p> <p>5 Of conscience...</p> | <p>Thomas Aquinas, <i>Summa theologiae</i>³⁴</p> <p>The nature of man</p> <p>(I) the soul</p> <p>(A) its powers</p> <p>(1) appetitive powers</p> <p>Q 80 Of the appetitive powers in general</p> <p>Q 81 Of the power of sensuality</p> <p>Q 82 Of the will</p> <p>Q 83 Of free decision</p> <p>1 Whether man has free decision</p> <p>2 Whether free decision is a power</p> <p>3 Whether free decision is an appetitive power</p> <p>4 Whether free decision is a power distinct from the will</p> <p>Q 84 How the soul united to the body understands corporeal things beneath it</p> |
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Figure 2. Thirteenth-Century Chapter Titles for Treatises on *Liberum Arbitrium*

³² Philip, *Summa de Bono*, "Index Quaestionum" (W II, 1203-1205).

³³ Albert, *De homine*, "Tabula eorum quae hoc opera continentur," (C 27.2, lxxiv-lxxvi).

³⁴ Thomas Aquinas, "Conspectus schematicus Summae Theologiae," (L 16, 294-301).

The shift in context which these chapter titles make clear has been noticed before.

Colleen McCluskey wrote, concerning a group of Paris authors, including Albert the Great:

“The discussion of freedom had shifted from a theological context to a psychological one.”³⁵

Daniel Westberg, too, makes note of the contextual shift in Thomas’s case:

Thomas placed his discussion of *liberum arbitrium* (ST I 83) after a general treatment of intellect, will, and other psychological powers. This removed it from the context of sin and grace where it had normally been discussed (in commentaries on the *Sentences*), placing in under the doctrine of creation and anthropology.³⁶

2. A broader consideration of the structure in which free decision is introduced

The difference that we see in this preliminary glance at the chapter titles – the difference between a context of the human soul and one of the first temptation of man – is corroborated by a more wide-ranging consideration of the organization of each work, a fact which is made clear by looking at each author in more detail.

a. Anselm

Anselm is very clear about the large-scale context he intends for his dialogue on free decision: the three dialogues *De veritate*, *De libertate arbitrii*, and *De casu diaboli* are to be read in that order. The basic reason for the order is obvious. Free decision is defined as “the ability to preserve rectitude for its own sake,” and so the discussion of “preserving rectitude for its own sake,” and of rectitude in general, must be read first, in the dialogue on truth. In *De concordia*, also, Anselm speaks specifically of the importance of discussing justice *before* talking about free decision: a process ensured if one reads *De veritate* before *De libertate arbitrii*.³⁷

³⁵ McCluskey, “Human Action and Human Freedom,” 9.

³⁶ Westberg, *Right Practical Reason*, 87.

³⁷ “Primum itaque ostendenda est iustitia, deinde ista libertas et istud arbitrium.” *De concordia* I.6 (S II, 256).

De veritate and *De libertate arbitrii* are, in fact, very closely linked. In *De veritate*, Anselm discusses truth, rectitude, and justice, and finds that these terms are interdefined. “Someone who knows one cannot fail to know the others.”³⁸ The definition of each term involves conformity to the will of God – a thing is just, true, and right when it acts according to its purpose, when it does what it ought to do. For Anselm, free decision, as the ability to preserve rectitude for its own sake, is closely related to this list of fundamental terms: the agent with free decision is the agent who has the ability to act justly, in accordance with the truth.

There is a definite pattern in the way Anselm searches for definitions in these two dialogues. First, he asks about the purpose of a thing, whether it be an affirmation, a stone, or the human will. Then, he discusses that thing’s “rectitude” – what it means for it to fulfill its purpose. As he follows this path toward definition, Anselm reflects first on God’s responsibility for his creation – why did God make the thing in question? – and then on creation’s responsibility toward God: what must the thing in question do in order to fulfill its purpose? *De veritate* begins by asking how God is responsible for truth, and Anselm responds by pointing out that truth in a thing is its responsibility towards God; truth is the “rectitude” by which a thing conforms to its God-given purpose. Similarly, *De libertate arbitrii* begins with a reflection on God’s responsibility for man’s freedom, and concludes that man’s freedom is, by definition, his responsibility towards God. The presence of free decision in this pattern tells us a great deal about how Anselm feels it ought to be introduced.

³⁸ “Invicem sese deffiniunt veritas et rectitudo et iustitia. Ut qui unam earum noverit et alias nescierit, per notam ad ignotarum scientiam pertingere possit; immo qui noverit unam, alias nescire non possit.” *De veritate*, ch. 12 (S 1, 192; Williams, 21)

Liberum arbitrium will be approached through a consideration of its God-given purpose, and defined by a consideration of the relation of creature to creator.

b. Peter Lombard

Peter Lombard's overall order in the four books of the *Sentences* is as follows: book 1 deals with God, book 2 with creation, book 3 discusses the Incarnation, and book 4 discusses the sacraments and the last things. Thus the official topic of the second book, in which we find the treatment of free decision and Adam's fall, is creation. However, the treatment of free decision in this book provided an excellent way of moving from the subject of creation to the issues of grace and original sin, and thus on to the Incarnation and redemption. It is reasonable to assert, as Marcia Colish suggests, that Peter Lombard followed up his treatment of the six days with the story of Adam's sin because this sin leads to the next big issues in salvation history: the Incarnation and the redemption of man.³⁹

Thus, Peter introduces man's free decision as the decisive point of change in salvation history – it marks the transition between creation and redemption. His structure shows an interest in choice as an event within a historical context. For Peter Lombard, the activity of free decision marked a turning point in the history of the world: Adam's response to God's command, the activity of his free choice, altered the way in which man relates to God.

Despite the differences in their works – Anselm is writing a Platonic-style dialogue on specific topics, Peter is collecting the sayings of the Fathers on all theological issues – there is a certain similarity in the ways Anselm and Peter introduce free decision. Both of them consider it as a gift from the creator to man, a gift that involves a certain response of man to his creator. While both authors offer definitions of free decision, their context

³⁹ Colish, "The Sentence Collection," in *The Climate of the Early University*, 10.

emphasizes the *significance* of this ability rather than its nature. In Anselm's writing, free decision is introduced as the principle by which man achieves what he was meant to be: by it, he preserves the "rectitude of will" which is his purpose. In Peter's writing, free decision is introduced as the principle which changed salvation history forever, and continues to change the salvific state of the individual soul. Both significances are primarily moral – there is an implied *ought* as Anselm describes man's preservation of rectitude and as Peter describes man's fall from grace.

c. Philip, Albert, Thomas

We can describe Philip, Albert, and Thomas's order in a single section. Each author dedicates a specific portion of his large-scale work to man. Each of them includes a section on the powers of the soul, and in each case, the treatise on *liberum arbitrium* falls in this section. For all three authors, we find free decision after the discussion of the distinction of cognitive and motive powers, and in close proximity to the treatment of synderesis and the higher and lower parts of reason.

The first conclusion that can be drawn from this organization is that these authors do not treat *liberum arbitrium* with the same gravity that Peter and Anselm do. Freedom is no longer given place as the pivot between creation and redemption or as the capacity which involves man in his only true way of existence. Instead, these authors deal with free decision as a single power within the human soul. The structure gives no clue that free decision is any more or less important than any other power of the soul. When Philip, Albert, and Thomas deal with *liberum arbitrium* in these works, they are in the process of writing a systematic natural philosophy about man. Although theological questions are never far from their

minds, Philip, Albert and Thomas no longer directly emphasize God's creation of free decision and man's responsibility to use this power for God's purpose. They assume that freedom can be discussed as part of man's nature without seeming to feel any need to make use of its moral and salvific significance.

The context in which Philip, Albert and Thomas place their discussions of free decision emphasizes both human nature and the nature of free decision. *Liberum arbitrium* has a place in a human nature, not simply in the divine plan: it is considered *as* a power, *of* a certain kind, *of* the soul, *in* a human being. A specific way in which the thirteenth-century interest in human nature makes itself felt is that man is treated as we know and experience him, post-fall. The hypothetical discussions of what Adam could have done and of what human nature used to be like are essential to Peter and Anselm's treatises because they consider free decision as a gift given in man's original creation and used in man's original response to the law of God. But the nature of pre-lapsarian man is not part of the thirteenth-century discussions of *liberum arbitrium*.⁴⁰

In some ways, of course, the context in which free decision is introduced has not changed. All five authors deal with man as a part of God's entire creation – human beings are creatures coming forth from God and essentially involved in his order. In addition, even in the thirteenth-century treatments, free decision remains surrounded by the trappings of sin. All our thirteenth-century authors have treatments of sensuality, synderesis, and conscience in near proximity to their treatments of free decision because they retain a theological interest

⁴⁰ Albert, Thomas, and Philip, as theologians, must and do discuss what man was like before the fall, but they do so in sections that are firmly separated from their discussions of man's nature, his soul, and its powers. Chenu notes that, in the *Summa theologiae*, Thomas removes original sin even from the broad context of creation (*Toward Understanding St. Thomas*, 274).

in explaining how man responds to temptation. A significant change is nevertheless plainly visible: the context of Anselm and Peter emphasizes the moral significance of free decision and its response to the divine law; the context of Philip, Albert, and Thomas emphasizes free decision's significance as part of the human soul and place it squarely in the realm of natural philosophy.

B. The introduction of free decision by preliminary argumentation

The previous section examined the change in initial approaches to free decision by taking a structural view of writings in which our authors used their own organization. Now, however, it is time to ask about free decision's introductory context by considering the various treatises on *liberum arbitrium* as philosophical dialogue. All of the works we are considering are written as conversations that have been formalized to some extent. None of our authors makes use of a dogmatic, lecturing style that simply conveys information, such as we see in Bernard of Clairvaux or John Damascene. Anselm consciously mimics a Platonic dialogue, but even the very formal "scholastic question" of Aquinas uses objections and replies to maintain the lively argumentative tone that readers of western philosophy are accustomed to hear in Plato and Aristotle. The authors proceed by drawing the reader into a discussion, and the ideas they examine are motivated and guided by questions and objections.

Because of this use of philosophical dialogue, our concern for uncovering the initial approach to free decision means that we must examine the introductory questions which each author uses. What is the first set of questions asked by each author? How does this set of questions define the discussion? And, more particularly, do these first questions echo the

change in context that was implied by the organization of the works in question? A careful look shows that Anselm and Peter did indeed begin with questions that show the same concern for moral significance and the first sin; while Philip, Albert, and Thomas began in such a way as to display the same focus on human nature (as opposed to theological significance) that we noted in their organization of information. Let us look at each author individually and test the questions with which they begin their discussions.

1. *Anselm*

In Anselm's *De libertate arbitrii*, the student sets the initial context by offering a preliminary definition of free decision and a dilemma that seems to follow from it. The preliminary definition is this: free decision is "the ability to sin and not to sin." The dilemma that follows is this: either

- a) we always have the ability to sin and not to sin (in which case we do not need grace, and free decision is incompatible with the grace of God) or
- b) we do not always have the ability to sin and not to sin (in which case we sin without free decision and yet sin is imputed to us)⁴¹

The dialogue begins: the teacher questions the validity of the definition of *liberum arbitrium* as the "ability to sin and not to sin."⁴² After Anselm's teacher reveals the inadequacy of this definition, an objection by the student in defense of the definition continues the first stage of the dialogue. The student, in objecting, points out two further dilemmas.

⁴¹ "Si enim libertas arbitrii est 'posse peccare et non peccare', sicut a quibusdam solet dici, et hoc semper habemus: quomodo aliquando gratia indigemus? Si autem hoc non semper habemus: cur nobis imputatur peccatum, quando sine libero arbitrio peccamus?" *De libertate arbitrii* chapter 1 (S I, 207; Williams, 32).

⁴² "Libertatem arbitrii non puto esse potentiam peccandi et non peccandi. Quippe si haec eius esset definitio: nec deus nec angeli qui peccare nequeunt liberum haberent arbitrium; quod nefas est dicere." Ibid.,

The first of these (the second dilemma in the dialogue as a whole) can be expressed as

follows: either

- a) man first sinned through free choice (in which case free choice *is* the power to sin) or
- b) he did not (in which case he sinned necessarily, and God was to blame for man's sin)⁴³

The third introductory dilemma is equally painful: either

- a) man was mastered by sin when he sinned (in which case his free choice was naturally weak, and God was to blame for his sin) or
- b) man was not mastered by sin when he sinned (in which case Scripture lies, for it says that "He who sins is a slave to sin.")⁴⁴

The student's overall concern in these latter *aporiae* is whether God is to blame for sin; as he would be if he had made man's free choice weak, or if he had denied man a free choice at all. His concern in the first dilemma is whether God contradicts himself – as he would if he had made free decision that is incompatible with his grace – or acts unjustly by punishing men for sinning even though they have no choice.

These introductory difficulties reveal an approach which clearly fits the context of temptation and the first sin that we saw evident in the chapter titles. The student's initial questions and difficulties give the discussion an impetus toward justifying God's creative act, emphasizing human morality as the "preservation of rectitude," and discussing free decision

⁴³ "Rationibus tuis nullatenus contradicere queo; sed non parum me movet quia et angelica et nostra natura in principio habuit potestatem peccandi, quam si non habuisset, non peccasset. Quare si per hanc potestatem quae sic est aliena a libero arbitrio, peccavit utraque praedicta natura: quomodo dicemus eam peccasse per liberum arbitrium? At si per liberum arbitrium non peccavit, ex necessitate peccasse videtur. Nempe aut sponte aut ex necessitate. Nam si sponte peccavit: quomodo non per liberum arbitrium? Quare si non per liberum arbitrium, utique ex necessitate peccasse videtur." Ibid., ch. 2, 209.

⁴⁴ "Est et aliud quod in hac potestate peccandi me movet. Qui enim peccare potest, servus potest esse peccati, quoniam "qui facit peccatum, servus est peccati". Qui autem potest servus esse peccati, huic potest dominari peccatum. Quomodo ergo libera facta fuit illa natura, aut cuiusmodi liberum arbitrium illud erat, cui peccatum dominari poterat?" Ibid.

in the context of temptation. In order to answer the student's difficulties, Anselm's teacher must establish his definition of *liberum arbitrium* ("the ability to preserve rectitude of will for its own sake") by discussing Adam's freedom at the time of his creation. Thus, "rectitude" is the original rectitude of man or of an angel, and the situation in which it can be "preserved" is the temptation to the first sin. We can see, then, that the first discussion decisively shaped the definition of *liberum arbitrium*: by directing the conversation along the lines of sin, salvation, and God's reasons for creating freedom, the questions used to introduce free decision continue the emphasis on free decision's moral and salvific significance that was indicated by the overall context in which Anselm placed *De libertate arbitrii*.

2. Peter Lombard

Peter Lombard introduces his definition of human free decision in two stages. First, he asks whether man, with the grace and powers which God gave him before the fall, was able to stand firm and resist temptation: "We must diligently investigate what grace or power man had before the fall, and whether through this he was able to stand, or not."⁴⁵ He concludes that man *was* able to "stand" – to resist evil, and not to decline from the good which he was given – otherwise, Peter says, "to have fallen would not be his fault."⁴⁶

The second stage in Peter's introduction asks *what* it was that enabled man, at creation, to resist sin. Peter has established the existence of such a principle; now he asks about the nature of that principle:

⁴⁵ "Nunc diligenter investigari oportet quam gratiam vel potentiam habuit homo ante casum, et utrum per eam potuerit stare vel non." *Sentences* II, d. 24. 1 (Br. I, 450, lines 15-17).

⁴⁶ "His testimoniis evidenter monstratur quod homo rectitudinem et bonam voluntatem in creatione accepit, atque auxilium quo stare poterat: alioquin non sua culpa videretur cecidisse." *Sentences* II, d. 24. 4 (Br. I, 451, lines 25-27)

Now we must consider what help was given to man in his creation, by which he was able to remain [sinless] if he had wished it. That help was freedom of decision, immune from all guilt and corruption, together with rectitude of will and sincerity and liveliness of all the natural powers of the soul.⁴⁷

Free decision is thus introduced as a principle of resisting sin and remaining firm during temptation. This introduction is remarkably similar to the introduction created by Anselmian student's second and third dilemmas; it reflects concern over whether man was able to resist temptation, or whether God, in creating man, left him no choice and is therefore in some way to blame for man's sin. Like Anselm, Peter introduces freedom by considering man's original ability to withstand temptation, arguing that he was given free decision in order to preserve his original state of righteousness. When Peter defines free decision, then, as "a faculty of reason and will which chooses the good when grace assists it, or the bad when grace is lacking,"⁴⁸ he does so in this context of moral and theological concerns.

When Lombard returns to the topic of free decision in distinction 25, he asks about the definition of free decision according to the philosophers, which is "free judgment of the will." As Peter interprets it, this definition means that the free agent is one who can choose either good or evil: "According to this definition, free decision seems to be only in those who are able to change and deflect their will to contraries; namely, those who have power to choose the good or the bad."⁴⁹ Exactly as Anselm's student did, Peter Lombard here lays down a preliminary definition of free decision as the "ability to sin or not sin." Like Anselm,

⁴⁷ "Hic considerandum est, quod fuerit illud adiutorium homini datum in creatione, quo poterat manere si vellet. Illud utique fuit libertas arbitrii ab omni labe et corruptela immunis, atque voluntatis rectitudo, et omnium naturalium potentiarum animae sinceritas atque vivacitas." *Sentences* II, d. 24. 2 (Br I, 452, lines 21-25).

⁴⁸ "Liberum vero arbitrium est facultas rationis et voluntatis, qua bonum eligitur gratia assisente, vel malum eadem desistente." *Sentences* II, d. 24 3.1 (Br I, 452, lines 26-27).

⁴⁹ "Et quidem secundum praedictam assignationem, in his tantum videtur esse liberum arbitrium, qui voluntatem mutare et in contraria possunt deflectere, in quorum videlicet potestate est eligere bonum vel malum." *Sentences* II, d. 25, 1.4 (Br I, 462, lines 5-8).

Peter thinks this definition is inadequate and must be refuted: the choice to do evil has no place in the true understanding of freedom. Peter accomplishes this refutation through a set of distinctions based on the salvific state of the agent, but the important fact, for our purposes, is that Peter's introductory dialogue turns his discussion in the same direction as Anselm's.⁵⁰ Within the context of Adam's first sin he considers freedom as God's gift to man, refuting the idea that God might have created man with some defect that would leave him no choice but to do evil. He also rejects the notion that free decision is indifference to good and evil choice by considering freedom as something that is essentially connected with righteousness and moral responsibility.

3. Philip

Philip's treatise on *liberum arbitrium* in the *Summa de bono* starts with an article on the definition of this power. He begins it with the following words:

Because free decision is the first principle, on our part, of meriting and de-meriting, we will now talk about it, seeking what free decision is, what its freedom is, and what its power is. Free decision has been defined thus: "Free decision is a faculty of will and reason which chooses good when grace assists it, and evil when grace is lacking."⁵¹ With regard to the first part of the definition, which is "faculty of will and reason" we ask whether "faculty," here, means power or habit.⁵²

⁵⁰ It is difficult to speak with absolute certainty, of course, but in my view Peter's treatise on free decision was not directly influenced by Anselm's *De libertate arbitrii*. Lombard does not use Anselm's definition-formula "the power of preserving rectitude of will" or any of his other formulations, some of which certainly would have been helpful. Some similarity in language is to be expected, since both rely on Augustine, but I was unable to see anything that implied direct reference to Anselm. Brady notes, however, that when Peter writes that "it seems to some that freedom towards evil is not free decision, but a certain bent toward sinning" he may be referring to Anselm's work. *Sentences* II. d. 25, 8.6 (Br I, 467, lines 18-20 and note).

⁵¹ This is, of course, Peter Lombard's definition. Many authors in the thirteenth century attributed it to Augustine, though Philip does not do so here.

⁵² "Quia liberum arbitrium est primum principium ex parte nostra merendi et demerendi loquimur de ipso querentes quid sit liberum arbitrium, quid libertas arbitrii, que potestas eius. Diffinitur autem liberum arbitrium sic: 'Liberum arbitrium est facultas voluntatis et rationis qua bonum eligitur gratia assistente, malum vero gratia desistente.' Ratione autem primae partis diffinitionis que est 'facultas voluntatis et rationis' queritur utrum facultas sonet in habitum aut in potentiam." *Summa de bono* (W I, 165, lines 3-9)

Contrast this initial questioning with Peter Lombard's introductory questioning, which asks about free decision as the God-given ability of Adam to stand firm in the face of temptation. Philip's first questions are not about whether God gave man genuine free decision or whether *liberum arbitrium* is the ability to sin, but about what free decision is and what qualities it has. The preliminary definition he offers is not a definition which implies indeterminacy with regard to good and evil, but, instead, Peter Lombard's definition – the part of the definition that interests him initially is the substantial element, “faculty of reason and will.” Thus, Philip's first questions are about the nature of *liberum arbitrium*, but not about its significance in the moral order.

There are other differences, too. Philip introduces the topic of *liberum arbitrium* by speaking about *our* free decision (he says that it is the first principle of merit *ex parte nostra*) not about free decision in the first man, as Peter Lombard describes it. Peter uses the past tense, referring to the help “given” to man “at creation” – *adiutorium homini datum in creatione* – and says that this power “enabled man to stand, if he had wanted to” – *quo poterat manere si vellet*.

The dilemmas or *aporiae* which Philip sets up are significantly different from those of Anselm and Peter. Philip's first question, as we see it in the opening set of *argumenta*, is whether free decision is a power or a habit.⁵³ This is closely followed by a second question: Does free decision belong to reason, will, or both?⁵⁴ Could it belong to *all* the powers of the soul?⁵⁵ Each conclusion would seem to bring about unfitting consequences: the aporetic apparatus involved in the course of some forty objections is far too lengthy to summarize

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., lines 9-15.

⁵⁵ Ibid., lines 25-29.

here, though I will discuss some of the specific difficulties later. One thing is immediately evident: the difficulties are not caused by concern for God's role in creation and his justice in holding human beings responsible for their actions, but by concern for the integrity of a philosophical portrait of the soul. The majority of Philip's objections point out that if free decision is characterized in a certain way, it will be out of harmony – either with the teachings of authorities, or with our philosophic knowledge of the soul and its powers.⁵⁶

Philip's introductory questions about free decision, asked in order to clarify a preliminary definition as "faculty of reason and will" show that, in his mind, the best introduction to *liberum arbitrium* is found by answering questions about the consistent arrangement of the human soul. He has abandoned the context of man's first sin, and he shows little concern for the question of whether God is to blame for the presence of sin in the world, or whether he punishes man justly for his sins and rewards him justly for his good deeds.

4. *Albert*

Albert's treatise on free decision in *De homine* has many elements in common with Philip's; like Philip, he uses a set of opening questions which are very different from those of Peter Lombard and Anselm. Albert does not begin by asking what free decision is, but whether it is present only in rational beings, or also in beasts.⁵⁷ At first the use of this particular introductory question seems methodologically unsound. How can Albert know whether animals have free decision when he does not yet know what free decision *is*? But Albert the Great does not make basic mistakes in ordering his work. His question allows him

⁵⁶ The objections I discuss here are found in the *Summa de bono*, Q 2, 2.a (W I, 165-170).

⁵⁷ "Utrum liberum arbitrium tantum insit rationalibus, vel etiam brutis." *De homine* 3.1 (C 27.2, 507, lines 6-7).

to give a necessary prelude to a formal definition by considering things that lie within our experience: animal judgment and human judgment. The qualities of human judgment which he will point out in this article are the qualities that explain why we attribute *liberum arbitrium* to humans. Thus Albert, in the style proper to scientific knowledge, will present the cause of free decision before he presents the effect. More about this emphasis on the cause of human free decision will be said in the second chapter of this dissertation.

When Albert does move to a question about definition which is more closely analogous to the introductions offered by Anselm, Peter, and Philip, his introductory work shows concerns that are similar to Philip's. Albert begins with a list of preliminary definitions to be expounded rather than rejected – he will spend the majority of his *argumenta* arguing about Lombard's phrase "faculty of reason and will." Albert follows Philip's line of questioning: he asks whether "faculty" means "power," or "habit," and then what the phrase "of reason and will" should be taken to mean. The difficulties he sets up are much like Philip's in their character – in fact, the majority of them *are* Philip's, as several authors have pointed out.⁵⁸ The "objectors" in Albert's preliminary arguments do not concern themselves with God's creative act, but ask whether a given account of the soul can be made rationally coherent while fitting with experience. Sin is brought up only in two rather shallow arguments which attempt to prove that free decision belongs to the will.⁵⁹

The difficulties which begin Albert's conversation on the topic of free decision represent a definite rejection of the approach favored by Peter and Anselm. Albert's introductory questions show that he prefers to approach free decision by considering its natural causes

⁵⁸ Michaud-Quantin, *Psychologie*, 214; D. Siedler, *Intellectualismus*, 66.

⁵⁹ *De homine*, 3.2 *argumenta* (C 27.2, 508-513).

rather than its supernatural causes, and its inherent nature rather than the purpose for which it was created. He treats free decision as an element in the fallen human nature that is the object of our experience instead of as a state in which the first man was created.

5. Thomas

Thomas opens the treatise on *liberum arbitrium* in his *Summa theologiae* with a bold and simple question: Does man have free decision, or not? Again, we might be tempted to question Thomas's methodology – why ask whether man has free decision before figuring out what it is? However, Thomas is not in the habit of making obvious mistakes any more than Albert is. His reply to this question, like Albert's response to the question about free decision in animals, explains *why* we attribute free decision to humans by considering the differences between human and animal judgment.⁶⁰ His objections, likewise, establish the basic qualities which lead us to attribute free decision to man: the ability to do what one wants, the power to will or not to will, the reality of being one's own cause and being the master of one's actions. Thomas's beginning approach to the topic shows a concern with humans as experience reveals them: his objections in this question do not ask whether God is somehow to blame for sin but whether there is room, philosophically speaking, for humans to cause their own actions.

If we search for the texts in which Thomas undertakes the task of giving a definition, we find that he did not write a formal definition-question. In the *Summa* three questions – on whether *liberum arbitrium* is a power, whether it is an appetitive power, and on whether it is a power distinct from the will – allow him to cover most of the same material Albert and

⁶⁰ Thomas also compares human and animal judgment to show that man has free decision in the *De veritate* (24.2) the *De malo* (6.1), and the *Sentences* commentary (II.25.1). For more on these particular arguments, see Chapter 4.

Philip do in their questions on its definition.⁶¹ The difficulties presented in his objections are similar to those of Albert and Philip. The question they imply, overall, is whether we can give an account of free decision that makes *sense* – one that is coherent with experience, with authority, and with itself.

Like Philip and Albert, Thomas does not begin with a critique of a definition which claims or implies that free decision is the power to sin; instead, he works to interpret the phrase “faculty of reason and will.” His introduction of *liberum arbitrium* does not belong to a narrative about Adam’s sin, nor does it ask about that sin as a historical fact; instead, it deals with the natural functioning of the soul. Lastly, Thomas’s approach is not based on a concern for God’s relation to mankind as creator and judge. Although the objections to his first question are theological in nature (unlike those of Philip and Anselm) they are based on properties of the free agent, such as “that is free which is the cause of itself” rather than assuming a definition of free decision as “the ability to sin and not sin.” While Thomas’s answer to these objections reconciles the existence of free decision with God’s power and causality, he does not seem to share Anselm and Peter’s concern for explaining that God is not to be blamed for man’s sin.

Short Summary of Part I

⁶¹ With regard to these “definition questions” the treatments of *liberum arbitrium* in the *Sentences* commentary and in *De veritate* are essentially the same. Thomas begins his comments on Lombard’s distinction 24 with a similar set of questions (whether free decision is a habit, whether it is one power or many, and whether it is distinct from will) *before* asking whether Adam was able to avoid sin by free decision (*Sentences* commentary II. 24.1.1). In the *De veritate*, questions about whether men, brute animals, and God have free decision are followed by a similar sequence: whether free decision is a power or not, whether it is one power or several, and whether it is will or a power other than will (*De veritate* 24.4-6).

Clearly, there has been a change in the way free decision is introduced. When Philip, Albert, and Thomas begin to discuss free decision, they are not in the process of answering the question “Is God to blame for man’s sin?” but the question “What is man?” The questions and difficulties through which they make their way to a definition are about the consistency of free decision with philosophical thinking, theological authorities, and experience of humans and animals; the questions and difficulties Anselm and Lombard use are based on knowledge about God’s actions as creator, redeemer, and judge.

The effects of this change are obvious. Philip, Albert, and Thomas deal with man as we experience him – not with man as he was first created. They still want to know “What kind of faculty is free choice?” but they no longer approach this question by asking “Why did God give man free choice?” The study of free decision has become part of the study of the soul, and questions of freedom are treated as questions of about human nature, questions that can be approached with the methods Aristotle used in his *De anima*. Free decision is considered in the light of its intrinsic nature as part of a human soul, rather than in the light of the divine purpose in creating it. In focusing on the nature of free decision as a power of the soul, the thirteenth-century authors leave theodicy behind; no longer do their questions reveal concern about whether God can be blamed for making man either determined in his actions or too weak to resist temptation.

This is not to say that the introductions of free decision are wholly alien to each other. All the authors define free decision as a fact in created human nature because they are interested in its relevance to theological questions, most particularly questions of merit and culpability. However, Anselm and Peter introduce free decision as an effect of God, while

Philip, Thomas, and Albert introduce it as an element in human nature and as the cause of human properties and activities.

Part II: Reasons for the Change in Introductory Context

In this section, I will comment briefly on external factors that helped cause this change in our authors' approach to free decision. My chief interest, however, does not lie in commenting extensively on these historical developments. No author's work is simply an automatic reaction to the ideological climate in which he finds himself. For this reason, I would like to put more emphasis on factors *within* the debate on free decision that could have given rise to the new approach. I will argue that there were certain inherent difficulties involved in the approach taken by Anselm and Lombard, and that the new context helped to solve a number of these difficulties.

A. *External reasons for change*

The external factors which caused this change in how free decision was introduced are, undoubtedly, numerous. I will point to only two of them here: the disappearance of certain pagan challenges and the introduction of Aristotle.

The world of ideas to which our authors responded had been changing. Augustine confronted the Manicheans when he talked about free choice. He also worked in a Christian tradition that was defined by the rejection of Gnosticism, while the Manicheans likewise had absorbed and built upon many Gnostic doctrines.⁶² In the face of Gnostic and Manichean

⁶² For evidence of the strong connection between the Manicheans and Gnostics in Africa, see W.H.C. Frend, "The Gnostic-Manichean Tradition in Roman North Africa." One passage especially shows the strong continuity in emphasis on the problem of evil and the doctrine of creation. Frend writes, "Apart from the historical continuity, the Manichees of Augustine's time were concerned with precisely the same problems as the Gnostics of two hundred years previously, and they answered in precisely the same way. The famous description given by Tertullian of Gnostic speculation in *De Praescriptione* vii is closely paralleled by Augustine's account of Manichee arguments in *De Duabus Animis* viii. 10. The Gnostics ask, 'whence is evil, why is it permitted? What is the origin of man? And in what way does he come? Besides the questions which Valentinus has lately proposed – whence comes God?' Augustine describes the Manichees as speculating,

attacks based on creation and the problem of evil, it was absolutely essential to establish that, although Christians did not posit a dual first principle, their God did not create evil and man's sin was not inevitable. Thus free decision was naturally part of a discussion of the problem of evil and became associated with creation and the first temptation of man.⁶³

Augustine's influence on Anselm and Peter was direct and serious: the controversy in which he was involved carried over to them. However, Philip, Albert, and Thomas were responding to controversy of a different kind: intellectual paganism was gone, but the enormous popularity of Peter's *Sentences* had led to bickering over the interpretation of his definition; the absence of pagans and the presence of Peter meant that the topic of what "faculty of reason and will" meant became more vividly real than the question of whether free decision was the power to sin.

The other significant change in the world of ideas is so well known that it is almost embarrassing to mention: Aristotle's ideas were already having a serious impact when Philip wrote, around 1230, and the influence of his writings increased during the years in which Albert and Thomas wrote. The introduction of Aristotle's treatise on the soul, and, more generally, his focus on understanding nature as an intrinsic principle, are probably the most serious external motivation for the changes we have noted in this chapter.⁶⁴ Even a brief

'Whence are the sins themselves, and whence is evil in general? If from man, whence is man, and if from an angel, whence is the angel? And, Augustine adds, by this question, they think themselves triumphant. So, relates Tertullian, did the Gnostics.' (Freund, 17).

⁶³ We especially see this perspective in Augustine's *De libero arbitrio voluntatis*, which begins with the question "Is God the cause of evil?" and ends with the question "What does the rational substance see which turns it away from God and toward evil?" Brandon Zimmerman has pointed out to me that Plotinus, also, treated issues of free choice in the context of theodicy – see *Enneads* II.9 and III.2-3.

⁶⁴ Aristotle is also considered to have contributed to the free-will debate by his discussion of contingency in chapter 9 of *On Interpretation*. However, none of our authors refer to this text during the discussion of *liberum arbitrium*. The *De anima*, certain passages from the *Nicomachean Ethics*, and the general principles of natural

survey of the references in Philip, Albert, and Thomas's treatises on the powers of the soul shows Aristotle's influence in inspiring and formulating the task of piecing together a portrait of the human soul, a portrait which became the new context for introducing free decision. The new introduction of free decision within the study of the human soul was fostered and encouraged by Aristotle's *De anima* – also, of course, by the ideas transmitted by Aristotle's Arabic-language commentators.

One last external factor in this change is also derived from the response to Aristotle. Thomas and Albert were both involved in confronting thinkers who had embraced the idea that man chooses necessarily on the basis of Aristotle's teachings about the necessity of causation.⁶⁵ This controversy could have inspired Thomas's decision to begin his treatises with the question of whether free decision exists at all;⁶⁶ perhaps similar thoughts led Albert to begin by his treatise in *De homine* by making the distinction between animal judgment and human judgment abundantly clear.

philosophy (such as form and matter) and method (definition and syllogistic process) are far more crucial to the *liberum arbitrium* treatises of these particular thirteenth-century authors than the famous sea-battle.

⁶⁵ Thomas mentions that "some" have posited that man's will is moved to choose of necessity. "Quidam posuerunt, quod voluntas hominis ex necessitate movetur ad aliquid eligendum." *De malo* 6, reply, 1st sentence. (L 23, 147, lines 238-240) Albert, similarly, writes that "they" say that man's will moves and chooses of necessity. "Dicunt quod voluntas hominis ex necessitate vult et eligit." *De XV problematibus*, III (C 17.1, 35, lines 60-61). One of the simplest ways in which we know that there were such thinkers among Albert and Thomas's contemporaries is through the 1270 Paris condemnations, which rejected a number of deterministic propositions: see John Wippel, "The Parisian Condemnations of 1270 and 1277," in *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*. Siger of Brabant was probably one of the thinkers indicated by these condemnations – see Christopher Ryan, "Man's Free Will in Siger of Brabant," as well as F.X. Putallaz, *Insolente Liberté: controverses et condamnations au XIIIe siècle*, for a more detailed study.

⁶⁶ I was interested to read, however, that Robert Grosseteste also begins his *liberum arbitrium* treatise by asking whether free decision can exist at all: see Long, "Richard Fishacre's Treatise *De libero arbitrio*," 879.

B. Difficulties in the old context

When Peter and Anselm made man's first sin the opening context for a discussion of human freedom, they acted in a way designed to preserve essential Christian doctrines. As Michael Frede points out, for Christian authors who faced Gnostic and Manichean critiques of creation:

It was crucial...to maintain that God had created the world, including human beings, and that he had created human beings in such a way that they were not bound by their very nature and constitution or their circumstances to do wrong.⁶⁷

In upholding tradition, Anselm and Peter retain Augustine's anti-Manichean orientation. However, when Anselm and Peter introduce free decision in the context of man's first sin, and take their first steps towards a definition by showing that freedom is *not* "the ability to sin and not sin," some problems arise. In order to see this, let us look at a rough outline of argument that develops from the introductory context that Peter Lombard and Anselm share:

1. A preliminary definition is offered: free decision is the ability to do either good or evil.
2. The preliminary definition is rejected: this definition is wrong, for it implies that God, the good angels, and the blessed in heaven are not free. Freedom is connected with goodness, and thus God, the angels, and the blessed are more free just as they are more good.
3. Further question: Did free decision make sin possible?
4. Answer: Free decision made *resistance* to sin possible, but not necessary.

These arguments justify free decision as a divine creation by pointing out that it is good in its purpose (choosing the good and resisting sin) as a result of its origin (as a gift of God).

The overwhelming difficulty that arises in this argument, however, is a tendency toward vagueness and ambiguity. Peter and Anselm's introduction of free decision requires a justification of God's creation of *liberum arbitrium*. In order to perform this theodicy, they

⁶⁷ Frede, "John of Damascus on Human Action, the Will, and Human Freedom," 72.

must connect free choice to good choice. They make this connection by arguing that there is a direct relation between the goodness of the agent and the freedom of that agent, so that as an agent increases in goodness he increases in freedom. This enables them to emphasize that the purpose of freedom is to choose the good. But this connection of freedom and goodness is made almost intuitively, based on a presumption of God's motives in creating. The result is necessarily without precision.

Consider Anselm's definition: "Free choice is the power to preserve rectitude of will for the sake of rectitude itself." If we consider this in plain terms, it means something like "free choice is the ability to stay good," or "free choice is the ability not to be bad." There are two problems with this formulation. First, it is blurry. What does "the ability to stay good" *mean*?⁶⁸ The second problem with this definition is more serious. Why should the ability to be good be called "free decision"? "Preservation of rectitude" has no essential connection with decision (whether we render *arbitrium* as "choice" or "judgment" here makes no difference), nor is "for its own sake" the same as "freely." To put this difficulty as clearly as possible, Anselm's definition seems largely unconnected to the *definiendum*.⁶⁹ Anselm's arguments are so influenced by the task of showing that free decision is good that his eventual definition is not supported by the ordinary sense of the term he is trying to define.

⁶⁸ If I had a student who offered me such a definition, I would probably write "too vague" in his margin, as I frequently do when a student defines virtue as "being good."

⁶⁹ Aristotle remarks on this as one of the chief problems in formulating definitions: "Even if there actually does exist something which is equidistant from the center...why ... should this be the formula defining circle? One might equally well call it the definition of mountain copper. For definitions do not carry a further guarantee that the thing defined can exist or that it is what they claim to define: one can always ask why." *Posterior Analytics* II. 7, 92b20-26.

We see a similar, though not identical, vagueness in Peter Lombard's results. Peter gives free decision a genus, "faculty," and an essential relation, "of reason and will." The lengthy discussion of the medieval authors, however, reveals this phrase's failure to refer. What does "faculty of reason and will" mean, and *how* is it connected with the judgment or choice known as *arbitrium*? There is a similar problem in connecting Peter's definition to the idea of freedom. Peter concluded that, insofar as it is free, free decision chooses what reason decrees – that is, a free decision is a good decision.⁷⁰ Here again, the formula meant to define *liberum arbitrium* has become nothing but a frustratingly vague phrase indicating some kind of moral capacity.

Does this vagueness really proceed inevitably from the introductory context of the two authors? I believe it does. Let us consider the elements of that context that were identified above. We said that these authors treat free decision in the context of the first sin of Adam. They begin their search for a definition by refuting the definition that free decision was the ability to sin or not sin, with the clear goal of justifying God's creation of freedom.

The context of the first sin leads naturally to the characterization of freedom by the moral alternatives of good and evil. However, the intuition which tells us that freedom belongs with good does not give a reason *why* freedom belongs with the good. Since it does not, the connection between the two terms is made only in a general way, as an identity, and the free becomes nothing other than the good. To choose freely begins to mean the same as to choose rightly.

⁷⁰ "Unde, si diligenter inspicatur, 'liberum' videtur dici arbitrium, quia sine coactione et necessitate valet appetere vel eligere quod ex ratione decreverit." *Sentences* II. 25.4.2 (Br I, 464, lines 2-4).

In rejecting the definition of free decision as “the ability to do good and evil” Peter and Anselm became unclear about how choice, decision, or judgment are relevant to free decision in any way at all. The substantive term in Peter and Anselm’s definitions is not “decision,” but the much more general “capacity to preserve rectitude” or “faculty of reason and will.” The ability to act with a pure motive is not the same as the ability to choose, yet Anselm must identify the two in order to reject the idea that an evil choice is a free choice. Similarly, the ability to act voluntarily and rationally is not the same as the ability to choose – or, at least, this identity not self-evident. However, Peter must identify the two in defense of the goodness of freedom.

Yet another aspect of Anselm and Peter’s context guarantees the same vagueness in their results. In the course of offering a justification for God’s creation of man’s free choice, these authors explain *liberum arbitrium* by explaining why God gave it to us. Thus they must discuss the power of free decision from God’s perspective. Yet a discussion of God’s perspective is beyond human abilities. We are driven to generalizations in our ignorance – driven to saying (truly) that what God wants is for us to be good, and what God does is good. Thus free decision becomes, once more, a vague “capacity for good.”

An additional difficulty lies in the consideration of pre-lapsarian man which is necessary in this context of the first sin. We have no experience of unfallen man, and only a slim scriptural narrative on which to base abundant speculation – speculation which there is no way of verifying. When we attempt to understand Adam’s abilities, we are attempting to understand an almost completely unknown phenomenon. To a large extent, we must do what Peter and Anselm do and trust that God gave Adam the power to resist temptation. However,

because this linkage is based on trust, it can be made only in the most general of ways, by generally identifying “free” with “able to resist temptation.”

The approach to free decision that Peter and Anselm took *guaranteed* that their definitions would be vague. The authors put themselves in situations where they had to connect free decision with the ability to do good, and yet the questions used to introduce their philosophical dialogue give only the most general grounds on which to make this connection.

C. Solutions in the new context

When our thirteenth-century authors decided to view problems of free decision as problems in the philosophy of human nature, their new perspective provided the solution to these difficulties. More importantly, their decision to introduce freedom in a context of natural inquiry (as opposed to a context which emphasizes theological relations) destroyed the cause of the vagueness inherent in the definitions of Peter and Anselm.

When free decision is evaluated with the goal of proving that God did no wrong in bestowing it, the main idea that will be reached about freedom is that it is “good,” and thus suitably a gift from God. A vague definition of free decision as “the ability to be good” is the inevitable result. But when free decision is evaluated specifically as a power of the soul, prescinding from any discussion of the moral quality of the choices made, the prospects are more hopeful in three ways.

First, the new context in which Philip, Albert, and Thomas write allows them to take up the question of the human power of judgment. The context of human nature and the human soul’s powers allowed them to consider the nature of human and animal judgment,

and the power of the soul responsible for the act of judging. Once they had done so, they could connect their accounts of *liberum arbitrium* to the *arbitrium* that is in the name.

Second, when the thirteenth-century authors ask whether free decision is a power or a habit, this question forces a definitive answer that will destroy the disturbing vagueness involved in viewing “free decision” as “good decision.” If free decision is a habit, it can indeed be present in the soul as a kind of moral goodness or capacity for that goodness. If it is not a habit, however, we must consider the *liberum* of *liberum arbitrium* in some other terms. Either way, this introductory question will add badly needed clarity.

Third, Philip, Albert, and Thomas also introduced their definitions by asking how free decision relates to human reason and will – a question facilitated by the perspective which emphasizes *liberum arbitrium* as a natural part of the human soul. Answers to this question will directly confront the ambiguity inherent in the old definitions, replacing or explaining phrases such as “power of preserving” and “faculty of reason and will.”

A more minor, but still significant benefit of the new context is that does not require speculation about pre-lapsarian man. Philosophy from a natural perspective looks towards human powers and behavior as they are experienced in man’s current state. One question, however, remains: in making these changes, have these authors abandoned the goals of defending God and connecting freedom with goodness? The answer to this question must be deferred until the final chapter of this dissertation.

D. Some points of controversy

I will conclude this chapter by discussing some objections to the thesis advanced. Perhaps my replies to these objections will also make clear some of the more obscure points in the discussion above.

1. What about De malo?

A very simple objection to my claim that the thirteenth-century authors removed their treatments of free decision from the context of sin and moral significance is the location of a famous text on free choice in Thomas Aquinas's writings. If the new context, which ignores the problem of evil and the consideration of the first human sin, was chosen for its advantages, why does Thomas Aquinas place his latest and (many would say) best discussion of free choice in the middle of a complex discussion of original sin, in a set of disputed questions entitled *On Evil*?

To see whether this is a valid objection, it is necessary to take a closer look at the organization of *De malo*. First of all, the article on free choice is the only article in question 6. Thomas probably felt this topic had no very close connection to the questions that surrounded it: hence, the organizational move of setting up a new question for the sake of a single article.⁷¹ We can see why the article on free choice is more or less an orphan when we look at the surrounding questions about original sin in the *De Malo*. These questions are not about man's first sin as a historical event, but about the definition of our inborn original sin, how it is transmitted, and what kind of presence it has in the soul. In *De malo*, Thomas treats man as we experience him, not as he was first created – he continues to use the context of

⁷¹ Some authors have even suggested that *De malo* 6.1 was inserted into the text of *De malo* at a later date: see the preface to the Leonine edition, however, for an argument against this claim. (L 23, 3*-5*).

human nature and the human soul, *not* the context of human historical events. His question on free choice is in close proximity to his account of original sin, but it is not, in fact, doing any of the work of justifying God's action in creating free choice that such a question does in Anselm's or Lombard's accounts.

2. *Is it even possible to pinpoint reasons for any such change in introductory context?*

A more basic objection might be made to my method of identifying the reasons for change. How can I assume that the change in argument was caused by the specific difficulties described? Couldn't the change have taken place gradually and unconsciously?

Perhaps some changes in philosophical method do take place without conscious thought. However, if a medieval author puts a discussion in a certain order, he chose that order and was aware of its implications. This is all the more true in this particular case, because the thirteenth-century authors were extremely familiar with Peter Lombard's *Sentences*. They wouldn't make casual changes to an order which was foundational to both their learning and their teaching; if their structure changed, it did so for a reason. It is even more the case that the "introductory questions" each author uses were not altered without careful thought. A philosopher who is proceeding through philosophical dialogue does not select his first questions and difficulties at random. He is well aware that the first objections will set the course of the entire discussion.

Philip, Albert, and Thomas must have made a conscious effort to change the starting point of their discussions of free decision. In doing so, they did not wrench free decision from its 'natural' context: they simply put it into a different context than their predecessors had. They changed the scenery that surrounded *liberum arbitrium*: laying aside the

consideration of God's creation of free decision, its disastrous role in the fall of man, its character as the foundation of moral guilt, and its purpose of acting rightly, they took their starting point from human nature, in particular the human soul, as it is experienced in daily life. One compelling reason for doing so was that this approach to free decision offered more opportunities for an unambiguous, rationally articulated view of the nature of human free decision.

Chapter 2: A New Goal for the Investigation: What Kind of Account of *Liberum Arbitrium* is Thought to be Necessary?

In the first chapter, we saw that there had been a change in how free decision was introduced as a topic of discussion. The thirteenth-century authors we are considering placed their discussions of free decision in treatises on human nature instead of trying to explain free decision within the context of the first human sin. The questions which Philip, Albert, and Thomas used to lead into the subject reflected this difference; they were questions about anthropology rather than theodicy and eschatology.

This chapter discusses a second change. In keeping with their focus on human nature, the thirteenth-century authors seem to have set themselves a different standard for their accounts of free decision. In their writings we see new efforts to account for free decision's existence, while Anselm and Peter show a tendency to take the existence of free decision as a given. As in the previous chapter, I will establish the fact of change first (Part I) then discuss what I believe are the reasons for that change (Part II).

This new interest in accounting for freedom's existence naturally involved a wider treatment of the causes of human freedom. Many of these causes will be taken up in later chapters – in particular, reason and will as causes of free decision merit a chapter of their own (Chapter 4).

Part I: Change in the Goal of the *Liberum Arbitrium* Discussion

“Man freely chooses his actions.” For all five of our authors, anyone who contradicts this statement, claiming that “The human will is necessarily moved to choose,” is professing an “extraneous opinion,” to use Thomas's expression: a piece of blind foolishness roughly

equivalent to denying the principle of non-contradiction or claiming that there is no motion.

Thomas Aquinas speaks for all of them when he says:

This opinion is heretical. For it takes away the reason for merit and demerit in human acts, since it does not seem meritorious or demeritorious if someone does necessarily what he could not avoid doing. It is also to be counted among extraneous opinions in philosophy, since it is not only contrary to the faith but also subverts all the principles of moral philosophy. For if there is nothing free in us, and we are necessarily moved to will things, deliberation, exhortation, precept, punishment, and praise and blame, of which moral philosophy consists, are destroyed.¹

Anselm,² Peter,³ and Albert⁴ all make similar claims, while Philip assumes tacitly throughout his discussion that free decision is the power of meriting and demeriting.⁵ Most of our experience would not make sense if human beings did not have free choice, just as most of

¹ “Hec autem opinio est heretica. Tollit enim rationem meriti et demeriti in humanis actibus: non enim uidetur esse meritorium uel demeritorium quod aliquis sic ex necessitate agit quod uitare non possit. Est etiam annumeranda inter extraneas philosophie opiniones: quia non solum contrariatur fidei, set subuertit omnia principia philosophie moralis. Si enim non sit aliquid in nobis, set ex necessitate mouemur ad uolendum, tollitur deliberatio, exhortatio, preceptum et punitio, et laus et uituperium, circa que moralis philosophia consistit. Huiusmodi autem opiniones que destruunt principia alicuius partis philosophie, dicuntur positiones extranee, sicut nihil moueri, quod destruit principia scientie naturalis.” *De malo* 6.1, body. (L 23, 148, 248-263).

² Anselm writes: “The fallen angel and the first human being sinned through free choice, since they sinned through their own choice, which was so free that it could not be compelled to sin by any other thing. And so they are justly reproached, since, having this freedom of choice, they sinned: not because any other thing compelled them, and not out of necessity, but spontaneously.” [Per liberum arbitrium peccavit apostata angelus siue primus homo, quia per suum arbitrium peccavit, quod sic liberum erat, ut nulla alia re cogi posset ad peccandum. Et ideo iuste reprehenditur, quia cum hanc haberet arbitrii sui libertatem, non aliqua re cogente, non aliqua necessitate sed sponte peccavit.] *De libertate arbitrii* 2 (S 1, 210; Williams, 34 – see also *De concordia* III. 1).

³ Peter Lombard writes: “Man’s decision is free from necessity, both before sin and after; and just as then he could not be forced, so also he cannot be forced in any way now. The will is judged by God according to merit, and it is always free from necessity and can never be forced. For where there is necessity, there is not liberty, where there is not liberty, neither is there will, and therefore, not merit either.” [A necessitate et ante peccatum et post aequae liberum est arbitrium. Sicut enim tunc cogi non poterat, ita nec modo. Ideoque voluntas merito apud Deum iudicatur, quae semper a necessitate libera est et nunquam cogi potest. Ubi necessitas, ibi non est libertas; ubi non est libertas, nec voluntas; et ideo nec meritum.] *Sentences* II. d. 25 8.2 (Br I, 466, lines 4-8).

⁴ Albert writes: “That the will of man wills and chooses of necessity – no one could say this but someone completely illiterate, because every reason, and every school of ethics, the Stoics as much as the Peripatetics, claims that we are masters of our actions and therefore praiseworthy or blamable....Therefore in every way what they say is ridiculous.” [Quod voluntas hominis ex necessitate vult et eligit, numquam potuit dicere nisi homo penitus illiteratus, quia omnis ratio et omnis ethicorum schola tam Stoicorum quam Peripateticorum clamat nos dominos esse actuum nostrorum et ideo laudabiles vel vituperabiles...Omni ergo modo ridiculosum est, quod dicunt.] *De XV problematibus* 3 (C 17.1, 35-36, lines 60-26).

⁵ For instance, see the introduction to Philip’s treatment: “Liberum arbitrium est primum principium ex parte nostra merendi et demerendi.” *Summa de bono*, Q 2 (Wicki I, 165, lines 3-4).

our experience would not make sense if there were no motion. Because of this, at least in the view of our authors, the existence of human free choice cannot really be “proved.” How could we demonstrate something that we already know better than we could know any premises of such a demonstration?⁶

Since all of our authors agree on this, why would any of them see a need to account for the existence of free decision, either as an activity or as a principle? It seems that the most they could do would be to provide arguments against those who deny man’s free choice, and resolutions to apparent contradictions.⁷

There is one reason, however, why our five authors may have begun looking to the causes of free decision: they had outlined their task in terms of providing a definition of *liberum arbitrium*. Unless a purely conventional or descriptive definition is sufficient, however, a search for a definition is simultaneously a search for the causes of the thing being defined. Aristotle describes this connection between definition and cause in the *Posterior Analytics*:

As often as we have accidental knowledge that the thing exists, we must be in a wholly negative state as regards its essential nature; for we have not got genuine knowledge even of its existence, and to search for a thing’s essential nature when we are unaware that it exists is to search for nothing... Thus it follows that the degree of our knowledge of a thing’s essential nature is determined by the sense in which we are aware that it exists.⁸

⁶ Thomas and Albert were, of course, familiar with Aristotle’s dictum: “The premises of demonstrated knowledge must be true, primary, immediate, better known than and prior to the conclusion.” *Posterior Analytics* 71b20. See also Aristotle’s following discussion in chapter 2.

⁷ This is, indeed, how many people see the free will debate – they take a jaded view of centuries in which scholars hurled arguments and counter-arguments at each other about something that is both obvious and inexplicable. One of the reasons I chose to write about the authors in this dissertation is that none of them thought we were limited in this way – they believed there was something positive to be achieved in discussing the question of free will.

⁸ Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* II. 8, 93a25-30.

The example Aristotle uses to explain this passage makes his meaning clearer and also applies particularly well to our case. Suppose we are trying to define what an “eclipse” is. We know that eclipses exist – we are well aware that the light that normally comes from a heavenly body may, at times, go dark. But this does not tell us “what an eclipse is.” The lack of light is only a symptom or an effect of an eclipse. A definition based on this awareness of symptoms, such as “An eclipse is what happens when a heavenly body is suddenly darkened,” is not a very good definition: it only describes what we experience. An improved definition, such as, “An eclipse is the obscuring of one heavenly body by another,” tells the *cause* of what we experience. To search for “what an eclipse is” is to search for the reason *why* it is. A good definition, one that includes the cause of the thing defined, is not a demonstration, but it has demonstration-like elements. It has what can be called a “proof-like quality” because it gives the reasons for the existence of the thing defined, just as a proof gives reasons for agreeing to the conclusion.⁹

The case of human free choice is, in its essentials, similar to that of the eclipse. We know that men have free choice, just as we are aware that eclipses exist. However, we are only aware of the existence of free choice through its “symptoms”: merit and demerit, praise and blame. A symptom-based definition, such as “free choice is the principle of merit and demerit” is not adequate from a philosophical perspective. As our authors search for a better definition, they must search for the cause that explains free choice as we experience it.

Because our authors view their task as a search for a definition, their task consists, at least partly, in the search for causes of *liberum arbitrium*. This is true for all five authors.

⁹ William Wallace, in *The Modeling of Nature*, gives a good description of this Aristotelian perspective on definition and the role of causes as “defining factors” (285-288). “The elements of an essential definition are the causes that make the thing be what it is, the factors that make its nature or essence intelligible” (286).

However, there was a distinct change in the kinds of causes of *liberum arbitrium* that were offered, and the way in which they were offered. Anselm and Lombard appeal to God's creative act as the cause of free decision, and for this reason they tend to view its existence as given. Philip, Albert, and Thomas begin to look for other causes of free decision, causes that lie within human nature and the nature of the soul. Their accounts take on a more proof-like character as they grow more confident in their ability to give natural causes for the existence of free decision. In order to see this, let us proceed to a more detailed discussion.

A. Anselm and Lombard: definitions based on theological awareness of freedom

Anselm and his student are completely certain that Adam and Eve had free decision.¹⁰ Why? They are aware of free decision's existence because it is the basis of salvation history. God would not punish the human race for a necessary disobedience, and so he must have given man whatever he needed in order to be free to obey. Anselm knows that free decision exists, then, because he knows that God must have given man the ability to persevere in obedience. His definition embodies this ground of awareness: For Anselm, free decision *is* the ability to persevere in obedience—“the ability to preserve rectitude of will for the sake of rectitude itself.”

Anselm's definition of free decision's essential nature fits perfectly with the sentence from Aristotle quoted above: “The degree of our knowledge of a thing's essential nature is determined by the sense in which we are aware that it exists.” Because Anselm is aware of free decision's existence through his knowledge of the justice of God, he looks to God when he discusses the causes of *liberum arbitrium*. The causes he finds are God, as creator of free

¹⁰ “Certum est eos liberum arbitrium habuisse.” *De libertate arbitrii*, ch. 3 (S I, 211).

decision, and righteousness, as the goal or final cause of free decision. For Anselm, free decision is, in essence, God's gift for God's purpose. *Liberum arbitrium* was given to men, by God, "in order to will what they ought to and what was expedient for them to will."¹¹

Peter Lombard's discussion of the causes of free decision is more complex than Anselm's. This seems to be because he is aware of free decision in two different ways. First, Peter follows Anselm in regarding free decision as one of the gifts which made it possible for man to resist sin. He knows that free decision exists because he knows that there must be a foundation for the grace which God gives in order for man to choose rightly. Thus, his definition begins by giving free decision this essence: *liberum arbitrium* is "the faculty which chooses the good when grace assists it."¹²

So, like Anselm, Peter takes part of his definition from a consideration of the divine purpose. However, he is also aware of free decision as the explanation for the evil choices men make. In order for a choice to be morally wrong, the agent must know the difference between right and wrong, choose wrong anyway, and not be aided by divine guidance. Thus, Peter's definition of free decision has a second element. Free decision is the principle of evil choice, and evil must be identified by reason and chosen by will – with no intervention by grace – and so he writes: "Free decision is the faculty of reason and will... which chooses the bad when grace is lacking."¹³

¹¹ Visser and Williams, in "Anselm's Account of Freedom," remark on the importance of final cause in Anselm's understanding of freedom: "He [Anselm] thinks of freedom as teleological. Freedom is a power *for* something...beings have freedom for the purpose of having what is fitting and expedient." (183) They call this a "normative definition." (184-185). As we shall see later, Philip and Albert also noted that Anselm's definition is teleological in character.

¹² "Liberum vero arbitrium est facultas rationis et voluntatis, qua bonum eligitur gratia assisente, vel malum eadem desistente." *Sentences* II. d. 24 3.1 (Br I, 452, lines 26-27).

¹³ Ibid.

Peter is aware of free decision's existence in two ways: as the gift of God for a good purpose and as the principle of evil choice. This seems to be why his definition has a dual character. Because he is aware that free decision can choose in either direction, he brings in reason, which can judge whether things are good or evil, and will, which can have both the desire for good and the desire for evil. Thus, two ways of being aware of the existence of free decision combine to form Peter Lombard's complete definition: one awareness is a basic understanding of the purpose of free decision; the other is a realization of free decision as the source of a wrong choice.

Both Anselm and Peter base their definitions on the fact that free decision must exist in order to make sense of salvation history: it is the explanation for man's sin and God's punishment. As a result, they never ask *whether* man has free choice, but only whether he *always* has it. They take special care to show how man has this power at different stages in his own personal salvation history.

B. Philip, Albert, and Thomas: definitions that seek the cause

Anselm and Peter Lombard's answer to the question "Why does man have free decision?" can be roughly summarized by saying "Because otherwise human moral life and salvation history wouldn't make sense." The awareness of freedom's existence that goes to form their definitions is one of free decision's "symptoms": free decision is the basis of merit and demerit, and so meritorious choices (or demeriting choices, in Peter's case) become part of their definitions. Philip and Albert, however, begin to change how the question "Why does man have free decision?" is answered. They can account for its existence in different

ways, and these ways are reflected in their definitions, so that they give causes for the existence of *liberum arbitrium* which are not based on freedom's God-given purpose.

Thomas Aquinas made use of ideas offered by Philip and Albert, but he made even greater changes in giving a new treatment of the causes of free decision.

1. Philip

Compare the following passages, taken from Peter Lombard (on the left) and Philip the Chancellor (on the right):

Therefore free decision is a faculty of reason and will, which chooses the good when grace assists it, or the bad when grace is lacking; and it is called free with regard to the will, which can turn to either – however, it is called decision with regard to reason, of which it is a faculty (or power) and to which it belongs to discern good and evil.¹⁴

Freedom ... principally belongs to will, and derivatively it belongs to reason.... And yet both reason and will can be called free. For each one (namely reason and will) looks toward what is to be done, and on account of its immateriality it has its freedom of doing what it wants. And the more immaterial each is, the more free it is, so that it can be called more and less free.¹⁵

Peter and Philip agree that *liberum arbitrium* involves both reason and will. They also agree in saying that freedom is primarily from the will. What, then, does Philip offer by way of innovation? The answer is found in two words, *propter immaterialitatem*. He gives a cause for the freedom of will and reason – they are free because they are not bound to matter. Peter Lombard's account rests on the awareness of freedom that we have from its "symptom" of praise and blame: if moral responsibility is to be genuine, the will must be able to turn either

¹⁴ "Liberum vero arbitrium est facultas rationis et voluntatis, qua bonum eligitur gratia assistente, vel malum eadem desistente. Et dicitur 'liberum' quantum ad voluntatem, quae ad utrumlibet flecti potest; 'arbitrium' vero quantum ad rationem, cuius est facultas vel potentia illa, cuius etiam est discernere inter bonum et malum." *Sentences* II d. 24. 3.1 (Br I, 452-453, lines 26-3).

¹⁵ "Libertas communiter respiciat omnes actus praedeterminatos rationis et voluntatis ... tamen principaliter respicit voluntatem, ex consequenti rationem... Dicitur tamen libertas commune quid utrique. Propter quod cum utraque, scilicet ratio et voluntas, respiciat faciendum, propter immaterialitatem eius libertatem habet faciendi quod vult et quanto fuerit magis immaterialis, tanto habet ampliorem libertatem, sicut contingit eam dici secundum magis et minus." *Summa de bono* (W I, 173, lines 252-259).

to the good or to the bad, and reason must be able to judge what the good and bad *are*.

Philip, however, has another explanation for freedom. Will and reason are free, not because they *must* be free so that we can explain the experience of praise and blame, but because they are not determined by matter – “on account of its immateriality each has its freedom of doing what it wants.”

Both authors would say that we have free decision because we have reason and will, and that reason and will are principles of free decision because man uses these powers to decide between two options. However, Philip explains that the two options really exist because there is no material component of reason and will that could be forced toward a single option, while Peter only knows that the two options must be possible in order to explain our experience of moral accountability.

Philip believes that he can provide a causal account of the power of free decision. This is most strongly indicated by his willingness to question whether free decision has an independent existence within the soul. He decides that it does not, arguing that free decision is only one of the several names that we give to the human rational power: we name rationality *liberum arbitrium* when it is performing a certain kind of action. Neither Peter nor Anselm would be able to make such an argument, because their awareness of free decision is as a principle for explaining our experience and the truths of the Catholic faith, not as a principle that could be *essentially* identified with, or separated from, reason and will.

2. Albert

Let us begin the discussion of Albert’s innovation with another comparison. Here are two passages, taken from Peter Lombard and Albert the Great, respectively:

Therefore, that power of the rational soul which is able to will good or evil, discerning both, is named free decision. And brute animals do not have it, because they lack reason. They only have sense and sensual appetite.¹⁶

Free decision takes its name from the freedom of judging the good and the bad in an unqualified sense. And judgment in these matters is based on the inherent notion [*rationem*] of the noble and the base¹⁷ rather than on the notion of the pleasant or the unpleasant. Similarly, we can prove that free decision is judgment about the noble and the base by considering that all the authorities posit free decision as a principle in morals. Moreover, freedom of appetite consists in having a faculty of inclining to what is thus judged, or declining from it. And this faculty is not in brute animals. For judgment in brutes is only of the pleasant and is not elevated to judging the noble, and because of this it is not absolutely free. For because it is bound to the matter of the organ in which it is present, the judgment of brute animals is restrained to a particular and sensible good. Similarly, the appetite, because it is in an organ, is restricted, now to the good and now to the bad, and because of this it is not in every way free.¹⁸

¹⁶ “Illa igitur rationalis animae potentia, qua velle malum vel bonum potest, utrumque discernens, liberum arbitrium nuncupatur. Quod bruta animalia non habent, quia ratione carent; habent sensum et appetitum sensualitas.” *Sentences* II d. 24. 3 (Br I, 453, lines 9-14).

¹⁷ Here, “noble” translates the Latin *honestum*. There is some important philosophical history involved in Albert’s use of this term. Aristotle spoke about three kinds of goods: the pleasant, the useful, and the “noble.” The Greek for this last is *ta kalon*, and one passage in which he makes the distinction is in book 2 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, “There are three objects of choice and three of avoidance, the noble, the advantageous, the pleasant, and their contraries, the base, the injurious, and the painful.” (*Nicomachean Ethics* II.3, 1104b30-32). Cicero continued to make use of this distinction and gave the words the Latin translation which Albert uses. See McCluskey, “Worthy Constraints,” section 4.1 “The concept of *honestum*,” (pages 518-524) for more complete account of the history of the term and of Albert’s use of it.

¹⁸ “Liberum enim arbitrium dicitur a libertate arbitrandi de bono simpliciter et malo simpliciter, magis arbitrando in ipsis secundum rationem honesti vel inhonesti quam secundum rationem delectantis vel non delectantis. Similiter iudicium liberum arbitrium est de honesto vel inhonesto, quod probatur ex hoc quod ab omnibus auctoribus liberum arbitrium ponitur principium in moribus. Libertas etiam appetitus consistit in eo quod facultatem habet inclinandi se in iudicatum, vel declinandi ab ipso. Et haec non sunt in brutis. Iudicium enim brutorum non est nisi de delectabili et non elevatur ad iudicium honesti, et propter hoc ipsum non est absolute liberum; ex obligatione enim materiae, in qua est sicut in organo, cogitur ad sistendum in particulari et sensibili bono. Similiter appetitus ex organo in quo est, obligatur ad bonum ut nunc vel malum un nunc, et propter hoc non est omnino liber.” *De homine* 3.1, solutio (C 27.2, 508, lines 5-23. Note that, in the Cologne edition, the questions are not continuously numbered. This is question 3 relative to a small number of

Peter and Albert agree that animals do not have free decision because they do not have reason. But Peter takes the connection between freedom and reason as a given, while Albert tries to explain exactly what it is about human reason that makes alternatives in action possible. As Albert sees it, it is because human reason can judge goods which are *honestas*, goods beyond the merely pleasant, that it is not determined to some one particular action.¹⁹

Pierre Michaud-Quantin gives an excellent summary of what this distinction means:

The spirituality of the soul permits abstraction, and this allows reason to know the “honest” good – not simply what is agreeable to sense, the only kind of good which beings deprived of intellect can apprehend. As a consequence, while the appetite of non-rational beings is limited to a particular immediate good, and seeks it of necessity, the will of rational beings has no proper and binding object other than the absolute good; it remains free to determine itself between the different partial goods which are presented to it.²⁰

Albert, like Philip, points to the fact that human judgment and appetite are not materially coerced by being joined to a physical organ. However, his account is even more causal than Philip’s: he sees not just immateriality, but also the ability to have abstract thought, as the source of man’s non-determination.

Albert’s belief that he can give a causal account of free decision is signaled by the question with which he begins his *De homine* treatise: *Utrum liberum arbitrium tantum insit*

surrounding questions.) It should be noted that Albert is here proving that brutes have “neither free decision, nor free judgment, nor free appetite.”

¹⁹ Those interested in reading further about the distinction between the noble good and the pleasant good can see Langlois, “Bien délectable et bien honnête.” Langlois bases his work on Aquinas but says many things that aid in understanding the distinction.

²⁰ “La spiritualité de l’âme lui permet l’abstraction; et celle-ci met la raison à même de connaître le bien honnête et non pas simplement l’agréable sensible, auquel se trouvent limités les êtres privés de vie intellectuelle. En conséquence, alors que l’appétit de ces derniers se borne à un bien particulier immédiat (*ut nunc*) qui les nécessite par son attirance même, la volonté des êtres rationnels n’a d’autre objet propre et obligatoire que le bien absolu (*simpliciter*); elle reste donc libre de se déterminer entre le divers biens partiels qui lui sont présentés.” Michaud-Quantin, *La psychologie*, 220.

rationalibus, vel etiam brutis. The fact that Albert is willing to ask such a question shows that he is not limiting himself to the awareness of free decision provided by experience of praise and blame.²¹ He is beginning to look at the psychological sources of free decision, and is confident of his ability to *prove* that beasts do not have free decision. He can go beyond a bare assertion that beings lacking reason cannot have free decision, thereby adding to the explanations that Peter Lombard can offer.

3. Thomas

Philip offered immateriality as a cause of freedom in the human powers of intellect and will. Albert explained more clearly how immateriality, since it made abstraction possible, made the human being's freedom of judgment, appetite, and decision possible. Thomas continues the trend: He shows even more thoroughly *how* the human capacity for the universal explains why man's choice is not determined to one thing.

The human capacity for the universal frees both judgment and desire. Thomas claims that judgment is not determined to one thing because "reason may follow opposite courses":

Man acts from judgment, because by his apprehensive power he judges that something should be avoided or sought. But because this judgment, in the case of some particular act, is not from a natural instinct, but from some act of comparison in the reason, therefore he acts from free judgment and retains the power of being inclined to various things. For reason in contingent matters may follow opposite courses, as we see in dialectic syllogisms and rhetorical arguments. Now particular operations are contingent, and therefore in such matters the judgment of reason may follow opposite courses, and is not determined to one. And forasmuch as man is rational is it necessary that man have free decision.²²

²¹ If he were limiting himself this way, the article would be very short. "Free decision is the principle of moral accountability. We do not hold animals morally accountable. Therefore, they do not have free decision."

²² "Sed homo agit iudicio: quia per vim cognoscitivam iudicat aliquid esse fugiendum vel prosequendum. Sed quia iudicium istud non est ex naturali instinctu in particulari operabili, sed ex collatione quadam rationis; ideo agit libero iudicio, potens in diversa ferri. Ratio enim circa contingentia habet viam ad opposita; ut patet in dialecticis syllogismis, et rhetoricis persuasionibus. Particularia autem operabilia sunt quaedam contingentia, et ideo circa ea iudicium rationis ad diversa se habet, et non est determinatum ad unum. Et pro tanto necesse est quod homo sit liberi arbitrii, ex hoc ipso quod rationalis est." *Summa theologiae* I.83.1 (L 5, 307). In his other

For Thomas, reason helps explain what free decision is, just as it does for Peter Lombard. There is an important difference between the two, however. Peter Lombard seems to have called free decision a faculty of reason because an act of reason is necessary for the moral accountability that is the main symptom of human freedom. In order for us to rightly praise or blame an agent, he must *know* what he is doing and *judge* whether the proposed action is right or wrong. Hence reason's presence in the Lombardian definition: reason needs to provide the judgment necessary in a moral choice.

In contrast to Peter Lombard, Thomas uses reason to explain the *freedom* of man rather than the moral accountability of man. For Thomas, reason's natural ability to follow opposite courses explains *why* human beings are not determined to one judgment; while for the Lombard, reason only explains how man can choose in a morally responsible way. Peter uses reason to explain moral accountability, the symptom or effect of free decision, while Thomas uses reason to explain the non-determination which he views as the essence of free decision, thus giving reason a place as one of the causes of *liberum arbitrium*.

Later in the *Summa theologiae*, after Thomas argues that *liberum arbitrium* is the same power as will, his account of choice describes how the will responds to the human capacity for the universal in a way that makes its desire free:

If the will be offered an object which is good universally and from every point of view, the will tends to it of necessity...if, on the other hand, the will is offered an object that is not good from every point of view, it will not tend to it of necessity.²³

treatments of free decision, Thomas also uses the characteristics of reason to show that free decision exists. I will treat of this more thoroughly in Chapter 4, below.

²³ "Unde si proponatur aliquod obiectum voluntati quod sit universaliter bonum et secundum omnem considerationem, ex necessitate voluntas in illud tendet, si aliquid velit, non enim poterit velle oppositum. Si autem proponatur sibi aliquod obiectum quod non secundum quamlibet considerationem sit bonum, non ex necessitate voluntas feretur in illud." *Summa theologiae* I-II. 10. 2 (L 6,86). The capacity of the will for the

Thomas is like Peter Lombard in indicating that will must be part of the explanation of a non-determined choice. Peter Lombard, however, only knows that will belongs in the definition of free decision because moral accountability involves the possibility of an alternative choice. Therefore, he can conclude that will belongs in the account of freedom, but not why it belongs. Thomas can go further. He can explain how will's natural capacity for the universal good makes it possible for man's choice to turn in either direction. Aquinas can give will as a cause of freedom: he is not limited to pointing out that desire is a necessary factor in the act of choosing one alternative over another.

By talking about the factors of both reason and will in his account of free decision, Thomas completes the work that Philip and Albert began. He shows how immateriality and the capacity for the universal – the factors that mark the human rational soul – cause the freedom we attribute to it.

4. A Note on the Rejection of Anselm's Definition

I have been comparing the thirteenth-century accounts of free decision to that of Peter Lombard. But how do their accounts compare to the Anselmian definition? Anselm based his definition on awareness of freedom's symptoms – particularly on justice. However, his account *was* a causal account, since he defined free decision by its final cause, or purpose, of preserving rectitude. Why did the thirteenth-century authors look for causes other than the one he offered?

Philip and Albert cite Anselm's definition with respect, and they both view it as one accurate account of free decision. But they give the same reason for moving in a different

highest good is a point Thomas makes in each of his treatises. See Chapter 4, below, for more discussion of this.

direction in their own definitions. Anselm's definition tells the final cause of free decision, they explain, but it does not tell what man is free *from*, nor what he is free to *do*. Philip writes:

Freedom of decision, with regard to that on account of which it is, (that is, with regard to the act for whose sake it is) is rightly defined by Anselm as "The power of conserving rectitude of will for rectitude's own sake." However, with regard to that *to* which it is, it is defined thus, "Freedom of decision is the power of turning, by its own consent, to that which it wills" and this is the power of doing what it wills. And with regard to the principle *from* which it is, it can be defined thus: "Freedom of decision is the power of not being under any defect except from itself" or the power of not being subjected to any being other than the First Being, in acting or in receiving, except according to will; for to be under the First is nothing other than freedom, as will be made clear below.²⁴

Albert says something similar:

Freedom of decision can be defined in many ways. For if it is defined with regard to its act, in those things it is able to do from its own nature as such, then it is ability to bend to opposite acts. If, however, it is defined according to the name of *free*, then it is a power of doing what it wills. ...If it is defined in comparison to the end to which it habitually tends, then free judgment is the power of preserving rectitude of will for its own sake, as Anselm says.²⁵

Thomas Aquinas does not mention and then lay aside Anselm's definition as Philip and Albert do: indeed, his silence on the subject of Anselm's definition of free decision is fascinating. We know that he was aware of it, as it is quoted in the Thomistic corpus, but he does not discuss it at all in the *Summa theologiae*'s treatise on free decision, while in both the

²⁴ "Et dicendum est quod libertas arbitrii quantum ad illud propter quod est, id est quantum ad actum propter quem est, recte diffinitur ab Anselmo potestas conservandi rectitudinem voluntatis propter ipsam rectitudinem." Quantum autem ad illud ad quod est diffinitur istas: 'Libertas arbitrii est potestas convertendi ex se consensum ad id quod vult', et hoc est potestas faciendi quod vult. Quantum autem ad principium a quo potest ita diffiniri: 'Libertas arbitrii est potestas non subesse alicui defectui nisi ex se' vel potestas non subesse alteri a Primo in agendo aut recipiendo nisi secundum voluntatem; nam subesse Primo non nisi libertas est, ut infra." *Summa de bono* (W I, 186, lines 93-100).

²⁵ "Libertas arbitrii multipliciter determinatur. Si enim determinatur ad actus, in quod potest per se ex natura sui, tunc est flexibilitas ad oppositos actus. Si vero determinatur secundum nomen libertatis, tunc est potestas faciendi quod vult....Si vero determinatur in comparatione ad finem ad quem est per habitum, tunc libertas arbitrii est potestas conservandi rectitudinem voluntatis propter se, sicut dixit Anselmus." *De homine* 3.4.1, corpus. (C 27.2, 520, lines 58-72). There are parallel passages in Albert's *Summa*: II. 91.3,4 (B 33,191-192) and *Sentences* commentary: II. 25. 3, solutio. (B 27, 428-429).

De veritate and the *De malo* he uses it only once for a *sed contra* and a few times to make objections about purely theological issues. It is impossible to know for sure why Thomas makes so little use of the definition itself. My suspicion is that he had the same criticism that Philip and Albert have. In Thomas's view, most likely, explaining why God gave us something is not the same as telling what that something is, by its own essence and activity.

C. Some points of controversy

My description of the change that took place – the innovation of trying to explain the causes of free decision instead of taking it as a given – is rather technical, and so there are several questions that might be asked about the claims I have made. In particular, is it certain that Philip, Albert, and Thomas are searching for a definition through causes? Could some other epistemological model better describe what one or more of our authors are doing? In this section, I will propose three different models and discuss whether they are a better “fit” than the one I have been using.

1. The “elucidating” model

All philosophers must use common beliefs about free decision to set up their preliminary questions and to connect their definition with reality. So what is to be gained by claiming that Philip, Albert, and Thomas provide discussions that have a “proof-like” character? They, like the others, are assuming that free decision exists by making use of common notions about it. The best description of what all five authors are doing is that they are trying to clarify and formulate our common understanding of freedom.²⁶

²⁶ We see this thinking in G. Stanley Kane, who writes: “Proof is relevant when one begins with a speculative definition, for then one must face the task of showing that the definition applies to the world of our actual

This model has some truth to it. It would be senseless to deny that all our authors begin with common notions about free decision: in fact, it is fascinating to look at the common notions that they use. For example, Aquinas uses philosophical preliminary notions, such as “The free is that which is its own cause,” while Anselm’s student suggests the theological preliminary notion that “The free is that which is able to sin and not sin.” However, the fact that our authors begin with knowledge of what they are dealing with does not mean that they saw their task as solely descriptive and clarifying. Their task is to find the underlying nature which can explain our common notions.

An example may help us see the difference between the two models. Consider a plant scientist who is studying a disease such as dry bean blight. He must begin by describing the symptoms of the disease and identifying which plants have it. But his primary task is not to describe the disease but to discover its cause: he does not truly know “what it is” until he has found the bacteria which causes it. The thirteenth-century authors are acting as students of nature – this much is made clear by the context in which they introduce free decision, a context already discussed in Chapter 1. As students of nature, Philip, Albert, and Thomas are like the astronomer who wants to know the cause of the eclipse or the plant scientist who wants to know the cause of dry bean blight. Only when they reach the cause of what is commonly experienced will their work be done, and no amount of careful description or formulation will achieve that end unless it is directed toward finding a cause.

experience. Anselm’s approach, however, is different from this. His investigation is grounded in the recognition that the terms freedom and will do in fact designate realities in our world, for they are used in speaking about human beings and how they act. He sets out accordingly to explore the meaning of these terms by examining how they are used and to clarify the features of experience which they pick out. Freedom, in Anselm’s view, is thus a part of the data of experience, so it does not require proof; instead it requires elucidation. His investigations and his search for definitions are attempts at such elucidation.” *Anselm’s Doctrine of Freedom and the Will*, 5.

2. The “Psychology of the Human Act” Model

Another possible model could be described like this: Both Anselm and Peter Lombard are clear in claiming that the rational nature is responsible for free decision, and that reason and will are each involved – hence the name *liberum arbitrium*. Thus, they held a causal account already, pointing to the origins of free decision within the human soul. The task the thirteenth-century authors took up is simply to further clarify this and give a precise account of the action of reason and will.²⁷ If this model is correct, there was already a causal account, and no fundamental change, such as I have described above, took place.

Reason and will play a role in all five accounts of *liberum arbitrium* we see in this chapter. However, I maintain that there is a difference in what that role is. In Anselm and Lombard’s definition, reason and will belong in free decision’s account because without their activity a man could not be praised and blamed for his actions. We see this quite clearly in Anselm’s explanation of why agents without rectitude are free:

When rectitude of will is lacking in us, we nonetheless have within ourselves the aptitude for understanding and willing by which we can preserve it for its own sake when we have it.²⁸

Here Anselm talks about reason and will as causes of freedom, but they are causes only because they make meritorious action (choosing rectitude for its own sake) possible. We have already seen, in Peter Lombard’s account, that reason and will appear because they are

²⁷ Odon Lottin might have proposed this model. He writes, “Toute philosophie morale doit en effet débiter par l’analyse psychologique de l’acte humain, où interviennent deux facteurs, la raison et la volonté. Mais on désire de précisions sur le rôle respectif de ces deux facultés. Or il se fait que le libre arbitre, comme son nom même l’indique, ne peut se définir que par l’action conjuguée de la volonté *libre* et de la raison, l’*arbitre* de la conduite humaine.” Lottin, *Psychologie* I, 11.

²⁸ “Quando rectitudo voluntatis nobis deest, habemus tamen in nobis aptitudinem intelligendi et volendi, qua eam possumus servare propter se cum eam habemus.” *De libertate arbitrii*, 13 (S 1, 224; Williams, 49).

necessary in order to make *wrongdoing* possible. Peter's subsequent discussion of how the higher and lower parts of reason are involved in temptation supports this interpretation.

In Philip, Albert, and Thomas's accounts, reason and will play different roles. It is still true that these powers are required for choice to occur. We see this especially in Albert's account of choosing. However, to some extent, the thirteenth-century authors think that reason and will belong in free decision's account because they *provide* a freedom of indeterminacy – not simply because they are principles of praise and blame by being principles of action.

Suppose, however, that I grant that Anselm and Lombard are able to give a causal answer to the question "Why does man have free decision?" Presumably they would say "Because he has reason and will." The definition drawn from this awareness would be the following: "Free decision is a capacity of reason and will." This definition is inadequate, because it is not specific: this phrase, alone, doesn't pick out anything, since most human activities are results of reason and will. This is why both Anselm and Peter Lombard add qualifications drawn from the moral aspect of human choice. Once they do so, however, they tend to push reason and will back into moral roles rather than causative ones. Reason and will belong to the definition because of their role in causing the *symptoms* of free decision (praise and blame, merit and demerit), not because of their role in causing free decision as a principle of action.

3. The “Proving an Attribute” Model

Thomas’s work on human freedom could be described as a proof that an attribute, *freedom*, belongs to a subject, *the human will*.²⁹ It is also a fact that, during and after the time of Thomas Aquinas, the quest for a “definition” of free decision seems to have begun to gradually disappear, and speculation about human freedom took on a different character. Odon Lottin remarks on this: the question of the nature of free decision was not abandoned, he says, because it was always treated in commentaries on the *Sentences*. However, interest turned to the act of free decision rather than its nature.³⁰

There is additional support for the idea that Thomas viewed his works as proving an attribute (rather than providing a definition) in the chapter titles of Thomas’s various works. In the *Summa theologiae* and in *De veritate*, Thomas uses traditional terminology, asking *what free decision is*. Yet in *De Malo*, his latest treatment, he abandons this phrasing and the very term *liberum arbitrium*, asking instead whether man has free choice in his acts.

Perhaps, then, Thomas’s work is *not* an attempt to define a power but an attempt to show a quality or attribute of the human will. Thus, his work would be more like a Euclidean proof that a certain property belongs to a triangle than it is like an astronomer’s attempt to define the eclipse. By using the definition of the human will, Thomas can show that it must be free – just as a geometer, by using the definition of a square, can show that it is divided into two triangles. If this is true of Thomas, it may be true of the other thirteenth century authors as well. Perhaps the causes of freedom that Philip and Albert suggest would be

²⁹ This is the view Matthew Walz takes of Thomas’s work in his Ph.D. dissertation, *Thomas Aquinas on the Human Will and Freedom: Towards a Scientific Understanding* (The Catholic University of America, 2003).

³⁰ Lottin, *Psychologie I*, 225.

better described as demonstrations that the human will is free than as definitions of a special power called “free decision.”

This is a very compelling model, and it can take us a long way in understanding Thomas and the other authors. However, this model does not fit with the language and method of the texts themselves. Philip, Albert, and Thomas take great pains to show the exact relation of free decision to intellect and will, and also to argue that it is a power, rather than a habit. (I will talk more about the significance of these arguments in Chapter 3). They set up and characterize their discussions in these terms, and are clear about their particular claims: Thomas argues that free decision is the same power as the will, Philip that it is the same power as reason *and* will, and Albert claims that free decision is a separate power. If we do not understand these relations, we cannot understand the author’s theory of human freedom. However, these claims belong to a discussion that is characterized as a search for a definition – our thirteenth century authors use the language and structure of the search for a genus and a difference.

In addition, Philip, Albert, and Thomas connect their theories with the tradition by the use and interpretation of standard definitions from the past. Insofar as they viewed themselves as heirs of that tradition, they continued to treat the discussion as a search for a definition.

Some doubt remains about whether it is best to describe the action of these thirteenth century authors as proving an attribute or defining a power. A similar problem exists, to some extent, in the writings of all five of our authors: are they telling us how *arbitrium* has *libertas* or what *liberum arbitrium* is? Anselm seems to use the phrases *libertas arbitrii* and

liberum arbitrium interchangeably;³¹ all of our authors appear comfortable switching terminology in a somewhat similar way.³²

It may be true to say that Philip, Albert, and Thomas prove that the attribute of freedom belongs to one or more of the human powers of the soul. However, *if* this is the case, they use the methods and structure appropriate to defining a power to do so. For the purposes of this dissertation, I will continue to describe Thomas's arguments as the search for a definition: taking as my guide the writings in the *Summa theologiae* and the *De veritate*, rather than the streamlined account of freedom we see in *De malo*. (Even in *De malo*, however, we see Thomas's willingness to question the existence of free choice, which lies in marked contrast to Anselm's assumption of its existence.) I will also take Philip and Albert's work in the same light: as an attempt to show "what free decision is" rather than "how human choice (decision, will, etc) is free."

Short summary of Part I

It would not be accurate to claim that our thirteenth-century authors *prove* the existence of human free will. However, they give us a demonstrative discussion of its causes as they work out their definitions. In doing so, they depart from the method and standards set by Anselm and Peter Lombard, who took free decision as a given based on theological and moral insights.

³¹ For instance, the very first sentence shows the student using "free decision" and "freedom of decision" to refer to the same thing: "Quoniam liberum arbitrium videtur repugnare gratiae et praedestinationi et praescientiae dei: ipsa libertas arbitrii quid sit nosse desidero, et utrum semper illam habeamus." (S I, 207, lines 4-6).

³² Philip and Albert ask separate questions: "What is free decision?" and "What is the freedom of decision?" ("Quid sit liberum arbitrium," "Quid libertas arbitrii") but their answers overlap and seem meant to do so. Thomas also seems comfortable using the phrase "the freedom of decision" (*libertas arbitrii*) to refer to the same thing as "free decision" (*liberum arbitrium*).

A natural scientist comes to know *what* an eclipse is when he comes to know *why* an eclipse happens. In the same way, Philip, Albert, and Thomas come to know what free decision is by discussing *why* the principle of choice behaves in a certain way. They are not content, as Peter and Anselm are, to define free decision through the common awareness gained through its ethical manifestations. The great innovation of the thirteenth century authors is that they begin to add causes of free decision to their accounts of its essence.

Part II: Reasons for the Changed Goal of the *Liberum Arbitrium* Discussion

Why do the thirteenth-century accounts of *liberum arbitrium* have a more causal character than those of their predecessors? And why are Philip, Albert, and Thomas inclined to stop treating freedom as a given fact and question its very existence? There are several reasons for the change. On the external side of things, the introduction of Aristotle's writings is certainly one of the reasons for this innovation. It is fairly clear that Aristotle's account of the immateriality of the intellect provided a starting point for both Philip and Albert in their discussion of immateriality as a cause of freedom. In addition, the fact that Aristotle does not discuss anything like *liberum arbitrium*, and the ensuing attempt to fit a traditional theological power into a new philosophical system, were clearly fruitful sources of the new use of reason and will to explain freedom.

However, there were also certain questions which these authors asked, as theologians, that were conducive to a causal account. These questions came from *within* the dialogue on free decision as it was handed down by the tradition. All of our authors considered free decision as something that belonged to many kinds of being: God, the angels, and men. At the same time they believed that individuals in a species could achieve different levels of freedom: the sinner is less free than someone living a Christian life, for example – though, even as a sinner, he is more free than someone who is damned. These two doctrinal insights (the idea that free decision could be said to belong to God and the idea that there were different levels of freedom) also led the thirteenth-century authors to offer more proof-like accounts of free decision. In the next two sections, I will explore the influence of these two insights in more detail.

A. The problem of divine freedom

All our authors agree that God is free, and all five of them (Anselm,³³ Peter,³⁴ Philip,³⁵ Albert³⁶ and Thomas³⁷) claim that God has *liberum arbitrium* in some sense. While the theologian is aware of the existence of *human* free decision through the manifest evidence of praise and blame, he cannot know God's free decision in this way. It is not self-evident that divine free choice exists; a proof of this is that pagan thinkers such as Plotinus thought free choice was unfitting in the divine nature. Thus, some kind of reason had to be offered for God's *liberum arbitrium*. While Christian thinkers had the foundation (in the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*) for viewing God's creative act as freely chosen, they still needed to make a connection between the divine nature and freedom.

³³ In the first chapter of *De libertate arbitrii* Anselm writes: "If this were its definition, then neither God nor the angels, who cannot sin, would have free choice – which it is impious to say...even though human free choice differs from that of God and the good angels, the definition of the word 'freedom' should still be the same for both." ["Libertatem arbitrii non puto esse potentiam peccandi et non peccandi. Quippe si haec eius esset definitio: nec deus nec angeli qui peccare nequeunt liberum haberent arbitrium; quod nefas est dicere...Quamuis differat liberum arbitrium hominum a libero arbitrio dei et angelorum bonorum, definitio tamen huius libertatis in utrisque secundum hoc nomen eadem debet esse."] (S 1, 207-208; Williams, 32).

³⁴ Peter Lombard, in an addendum to his treatment of free decision, explains that God has free decision, although not in the same sense that men do: "For in God, free decision is said of his most wise and omnipotent will, which works all things, not by necessity but by free will, just as he wills." [Dei etenim liberum arbitrium dicitur eius sapientissima et omnipotens voluntas, quae non necessitate, sed libera bonitate omnia facit prout vult.] *Sentences* II d. 25. 2 (Br I, 462, lines 21-23).

³⁵ Philip the Chancellor, in his articles on both human and angelic free decision, regards it as one of his goals to explain what is common in the free decision that is said of God and creature. "Free decision is in God, according to the authority of the saints." ["Liberum arbitrium est in Deo secundum auctoritates sanctorum."] *Summa de bono*, Q 7 (W I, 93, line 15).

³⁶ Albert the Great writes: "God and the confirmed saints will freely what they do, and they are not able to will badly. But this is not from coercion, which takes away free decision, but from immobility in excellence, which is in God by nature, and in the saints by confirmed habit." ["Deus et confirmati sancti libere volunt quod faciunt; et quod non possunt male velle, non est ex coactione, quae tollat liberum arbitrium, set ex immobilitate honestatis, quae per naturam est in deo, in sanctis autem per confirmationem habitus."] *De homine* 3.6, ad 1-2 (C 27.2, 526, lines 25-29).

³⁷ A brief quotation from Aquinas shows us not only that he thinks God has free decision, but also why he has it: "Since God necessarily wills his own goodness, but other things not necessarily, as shown above, he has free decision with respect to what he does not necessarily will." ["Cum igitur Deus ex necessitate suam bonitatem velit, alia vero non ex necessitate, ut supra ostensum est; respectu illorum quae non ex necessitate vult, liberum arbitrium habet."] *Summa theologiae* I. 19. 10 (L 4, 248). I will discuss this consistent concept of divine freedom in more detail in chapter 5.

There seem to be two ways to show that God is free. One is to claim that a being who necessarily does the good *is* free. This mode of proof, unfortunately, leads to the problem of identifying and hopelessly confusing the good and the free. If “to be free” means the same thing as “to do good” what, really, is the difference between freedom and goodness? Furthermore, how can we sort freedom out from the other attributes which we apply to God because he always does what is good, such as generosity and justice?

The other way to account for God’s freedom is to use divine traits such as reason, will, and omnipotence to discuss a freedom of indeterminacy or lack of necessity, as opposed to a freedom that is equated with goodness. This is the route the medieval thinkers began to follow – an excellent example of such thinking is furnished by Bernard of Clairvaux, one of whose texts regarding divine freedom became a commonplace: “Freedom from necessity belongs equally and indifferently to God and to all rational creatures, whether good or bad.”³⁸

The result of this exploration of divine freedom is that thinkers began to investigate accounts of free decision that were not derived either from freedom’s final cause of acting rightly (as Anselm’s definition is) or from our experience of it as an ethical prerequisite (as Peter Lombard’s definition is). Although God acts for an end, his power of free decision does not exist for the sake of some end beyond itself – that is, there is no “final cause” of its existence. Since God’s power of free decision has no final cause, then, and since we do not consider him as blameworthy, definitions based on moral responsibility or the purpose for

³⁸ Bernard of Clairvaux, *De gratia et libero arbitrio*, ch. 4 (O’Donovan, 65). This text is quoted several times by Albert: see *De homine* 3.2 arg. 13 (C 27.2, 510, lines 1-7), *Sentences* commentary, II. 25.7 (B 27, 440). Thomas seems to be explicitly rejecting this saying of Bernard when he writes, “The intellective nature is not found equally in God, angels, and men. Whence neither is freedom from coercion found equally in all these.” [Natura intellectiva non invenitur aequaliter in Deo, angelo, et homine. Unde nec etiam libertas a coactione aequaliter in omnibus est.] *Sentences* II 25.1.4 ad 2 (M II, 654).

which freedom was given are not applicable in the case of divine free decision. An account of freedom as indeterminacy, however, which must consider the nature of objects outside an agent as well as the power of the agent, does apply to God. The thirteenth-century authors, like Peter and Anselm before them, were reluctant to assert that free decision is said of God and man equivocally. They wanted to find a core meaning to the term “freedom.” However, since they were working to derive God’s freedom from his intellectual nature, freedom in man became newly susceptible to being derived from the intellectual nature as well.

Broadly speaking, then, the decision to discuss divine freedom in terms of non-determination to a single course of action naturally encouraged a causal account of free decision. If God’s choice is undetermined, *why* is it undetermined? *What things* is it undetermined toward? Neither of these questions can be answered by an Anselm’s method of inquiring into a thing’s purpose, since God’s free decision has no (exteriorly ordained) purpose and no creator. However, attempts to answer these questions can yield an account of free decision which is characterized by its origin in the intellectual nature and the relation of that nature to objects that are desired and willed.

It would be wrong to claim that any account of divine freedom will *immediately* be transferred into an account of human freedom. We see Albert, for instance, arguing that God is free because of his omnipotence: this argument obviously will not help us understand human free decision. However, the general attempt to see God’s free choice as a result of his nature opened up ways of viewing free choice which could lead to new ways of viewing human freedom.

B. The problem of freedom in different states of human life on earth

Does free decision belong to all agents equally or are some more free than others?

There seem to be arguments on both sides. On the one hand, it seems that someone who leads a holy life is more free than a sinner: scripture tells us that “He who sins is a slave to sin,”³⁹ and “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”⁴⁰ A similar course of reasoning suggests that Adam was more free before he fell than he was afterwards. On the other hand, both the good man and the bad man can be praised and blamed for their choices, and both have reason and will which make them “masters of their own acts.”

Peter Lombard provided a happy solution to this problem by distinguishing three kinds of freedom, based on what the agent is free *from*: freedom from coercion, freedom from sin, and freedom from misery.⁴¹ All men are equally free from coercion, but not all men are equally free from sin and from misery. This helpful distinction showed how people could be *more* free and *equally* free at the same time, and our thirteenth-century authors were glad to repeat it.⁴² This division of freedom into three kinds, which solved so many problems

³⁹ John 8: 34

⁴⁰ John 8:32. For specifics on our authors’ uses of these passages from scripture, see chapter 5.

⁴¹ Peter took this distinction, directly or indirectly, from Bernard of Clairvaux, who originated the threefold division of freedom in chapter 3 of *De gratia et libero arbitrio*. Bernard McGinn has noted that the division is drawn from the texts of St. Paul, and also makes note of the reasons for thinking it is original to Bernard (*On Grace and Free Choice*, “Introduction,” 19-20).

⁴² As samples of their acceptance, see the following texts: Philip quotes St. Bernard on this subject in his objections (W I, 168-169; Bernard is cited in notes 107, 114, and 138); in his response he writes: “It is necessary, however, to know that the name of freedom is said in many ways, just as is had in the *Sentences* and many times in authorities, namely from coercion, from misery, and from sin.” [Oportet autem scire quod cum nomen libertatis dicatur multipliciter, sicut habetur in *Sententiis* et multotiens in auctoritatibus, scilicet a coactione, a miseria, a peccato.] (Ibid., 174, lines 269-271). His reply to the objections specifically discusses what something is free *from* as a principle of division (Ibid., 176). Albert, in *De homine*, devotes a separate article to the distinction of these three freedoms: see *De homine* 3.4.3 (C 27.2, 522-523). Thomas also quotes the threefold division: “Man is said to have lost free decision by falling into sin, not as to natural liberty, which is freedom from coercion, but as regards freedom from sin and from misery.” [Homo peccando liberum arbitrium dicitur perdidisse, non quantum ad libertatem naturalem, quae est a coactione; sed quantum ad libertatem quae est a culpa et a miseria.] *Summa theologiae* I.83.2. ad 3 (L 5, 309).

and prevented so much trouble, shifted the emphasis in defining freedom away from a consideration of its purpose and toward a consideration of causal indeterminacy, because it asks what the agent is free *from*, not what it is free *toward*. This is precisely the area in which Anselm's definition is lacking, according to both Albert and Philip: they say that Anselm only considers the *end* of free decision, not how it is constituted in itself. Once they began to ask about "that from which" free decision is free, our authors needed to more carefully consider the relation of free decision to other principles that might influence or cause choice.

Summary of Part II

We can find a partial explanation for the changes made by the thirteenth-century authors. The quest for a definition of free decision would never be achieved unless causes for it could be found. However, as Philip, Albert, and Thomas began to treat problems of human free decision as problems of human nature, they drifted away, contextually, from using God's creative action as the cause for human free decision, as well as from considering acting rightly as the final cause of free decision. At the same time, they had, as a pattern for their efforts, a discussion of a spiritual power taken from Aristotle, who showed that the intellect is an immaterial power solely by considering its proper object and its proper activity. Within the traditional dialogue on freedom, there were also considerations – the question of divine freedom and of different levels of human freedom – which made a treatment of freedom as indeterminacy seem especially attractive. A description of freedom as indeterminacy is guaranteed to be more causal because it must give the reasons for the

independence of the principle and clarify its relation toward other possible determinants.

Thus the concern for indeterminacy likewise manifested itself in an increased emphasis on the object and activity of free decision as a power of the soul, a topic which will be taken up in the following chapter.

Chapter 3: A New Lexicon: What are the Components in a Satisfactory Explanation of *Liberum Arbitrium*?

The changes in introductory context of *liberum arbitrium* and in the kinds of causes that were assigned to it are not the only methodological changes that a comparison of these particular authors reveals. This chapter deals with a third area of change: the use of a different and more precise terminology by the thirteenth-century authors we are discussing. This change is not simply a matter of terminology alone, however. The new terms reflected a new idea about what elements were necessary in a good account of free decision.

Philip, Albert, and Thomas begin their work of defining *liberum arbitrium* with a canonical set of questions.

- 1) Is free decision a power or a habit?
- 2) Is it
 - a) separate from reason and will?
 - b) composed of reason and will?
 - c) identical to reason, will, or both?

These formal, almost formulaic questions, which are asked in order to clarify Peter Lombard's phrase "Free decision is a faculty of reason and will," reveal new elements in a complete explanation of free decision. By the time Philip wrote his treatise in the *Summa de bono*, the term "power" had a technical meaning in many ways opposed to that of the term "habit," and it was considered a necessary part of a discussion of *liberum arbitrium* to identify its genus as either a power or a habit.¹ (The claim that free decision was a habit was

¹ It is, of course, impossible to pinpoint exactly when theologians began to discuss whether free decision was a power or a habit. Odon Lottin's survey of *liberum arbitrium* can furnish us with some general ideas on the subject. He describes a *Summa* of unknown authorship, apparently written late in the 12th century, which defines free decision as a natural power (*naturalis potentia*) rather than a "faculty" in the sense of ease of operation of some other power (*Psychologie* I, 47). The same author seems to have asked whether free decision

partly based on a certain interpretation of the Peter Lombard's term *facultas*. *Facultas*, it was often said, could mean the easy functioning of a power, *facilis potentia*.²) In close relation to the distinction newly made between power and habit, the question of how free decision relates to the powers of reason and will was given serious attention.

Why did these formal questions enter the discussion? Although some motivation was provided by a newly systematic study of the human soul, there were also reasons within the discussion of human freedom for changing the terms used to construct the definition of free decision. Chief among these reasons, in my view, was an attempt to secure the unity of the human soul.

In this chapter, I will discuss the change in the components that are put into the definition of free decision. The thirteenth-century authors take care to explain that free decision is a power, and are unsatisfied with any definition which does not clearly explain the relation of this power to reason and will. Their discussions are meant to clarify those of both Anselm and Peter Lombard, who defined free decision as an "ability" or "faculty" and were content to indicate its connection to reason and will in vague ways. I will give evidence for this change in Part I, and discuss the reasons for it in Part II. Some questions about the relation of free decision to reason and will, however, will be set aside to be taken up in Chapter 4.

was composed of reason and will. (48) Lottin also notes that Steven Langton, early in the thirteenth century, seems to have been the first to wonder to which genus the faculty of free decision belonged: "Étienne Langton, dans ses *Questiones*, pose une nouvelle question au sujet du libre arbitre...De quel genre relève le libre arbitre?" (57) Godfrey of Poitiers, a student of Steven's, introduced the distinction between *potentia*, *habilitas*, and *actus*: "On distinguera la faculté naturelle de marcher, *potentia naturalis*, dont l'effet est une aptitude à la marche, *habilitas ad gradiendum*, qui se traduit par l'acte même de marcher." (63) At all events, the discussion seems to have been fairly new, though widely accepted, at the time Philip wrote.

² See Lottin, *Psychologie*, 68, and note 1.

Part I: The Changes in the Components Used to Give an Account of *Liberum Arbitrium*

This part of the chapter can be brief: the change it discusses is obvious even to the casual reader, and our authors make it explicitly. Philip, Albert, and Thomas each quote Peter Lombard's definition and immediately set to work upon two specific areas of vagueness: the word *facultas*, which could indicate either a power or a habit, and the genitive phrase *rationis et voluntatis* which does not indicate *how* free decision is related to the powers of reason and will – is it composed of them, present in them, separate from them, or identical to them? A definition which does not clarify these two blurred areas is obviously regarded as incomplete.

Philip begins his discussion of the definition of free decision with these words: "With respect to the first part of the definition, which is *faculty of reason and will*, it is sought whether *faculty* means a habit or a power."³ The answer to this question, Philip continues, will tell us how free decision is related to reason and will. "If *faculty* means a power, then free decision is nothing but reason and will...if, however, it means a non-acquired habit, one that is innate or connatural, then freedom will be as some added perfection of the power that is reason or the power that is will."⁴

We can see the same demand for precision in all of Albert's works: in the commentary on the *Sentences*, the *Summa theologiae*, and the *De homine*, Albert asks specifically about *what* free decision is: is it a power, a habit, or a passion? "*Quid sit liberum arbitrium? Utrum habitus, vel potentia, vel passio?*" He always follows this query with

³ "Ratione autem prime partis diffinitionis que est 'facultas voluntatis et rationis' queritur utrum facultas sonet in habitum aut in potentiam." *Summa de bono* Q 2.2 (W I, 165, lines 8-9).

⁴ "Si vero sonet in habitum non acquisitum, sed innatum aut connaturalem, tunc erit libertas sicut quedam dignitas potentie que est ratio vel que est voluntas." Ibid. (W I, 165, lines 11-13).

questions about whether free decision is composed of reason and will or separate from them.⁵

Thomas Aquinas, in his turn, has the same set of concerns: his treatises on *liberum arbitrium* each ask whether these words indicate a power or a habit; he consistently follows up on this question by asking whether it is one power or many, and whether it is the same as reason or will.⁶

Anselm's definition is mentioned in the discussions which demand this new clarity, but none of our authors finds his definition entirely satisfactory. For one thing, the Anselmian definition does not clear up either of the questions raised by Peter's more popular definition of *liberum arbitrium*. Anselm's formula is of no use in solving the problem of whether free decision is a power or a habit, because even though Anselm uses the term *potestas*, his mode of description would still fit a habit. The "ability to preserve rectitude" could very well be a habit; after all, Plato once defined courage, which is a virtue and clearly a habit, as the "ability to preserve an opinion about which things are fearful and not fearful."⁷ Moreover, Anselm's definition does nothing to help clarify free decision's relation to reason

⁵ *Sentences* commentary II.24.5 "Quid sit liberum arbitrium? Utrum habitus, vel potentia, vel passio?"... "Item ulterius quaeritur, Qualiter dicatur *facultas rationis et voluntas*?" (B 27,401). *De homine* 3.2 "Quid sit liberum arbitrium secundum substantiam et diffinitionem?...quid supponat facultas?" (C 27.2, 508, lines 30-43). An especially striking example of the innovation this chapter discusses is found in the *Summa de mirabilis*. Under the chapter heading "Of the help man was given in creation, by which he was able to remain firm" (a title taken word for word from the *Sentences*) Albert introduces new questions. The "members" of question 91 are:

1. "Quid sit re sive genere liberum arbitrium, hoc est, utrum sit potentia, vel habitus, vel passio?"
2. "Utrum liberum arbitrium sit potentia una, vel plures?"
3. "Utrum liberum arbitrium sit potentia separata a ratione et voluntate, vel conjuncta istis?"
4. "Quid sit liberum arbitrium secundum definitionem et rationem?"

[*Summa de mirabilis* II. 91 (B 33, 183-187)].

⁶ The sequences of question in Thomas's *Sentences* commentary, d. 24, q 1, is as follows: Article 1 "Utrum liberum arbitrium est habitus," Article 2 "Utrum liberum arbitrium dicat plures potentias vel unam," Article 3, "Utrum liberum arbitrium sit potentia distincta a voluntate et ratione." In *De veritate*, q. 24, the analogous sequence of articles are titled thus: Article 4 "Utrum liberum arbitrium sit potentia, vel non," Article 5 "Utrum liberum arbitrium sit una potentia, vel plures," Article 6 "Utrum liberum arbitrium sit voluntas, vel alia potentia a voluntate." In the *Summa theologiae* I.83, Thomas lists the questions to be asked as follows: "Secundo, quid sit liberum arbitrium, utrum sit potentia, vel actus, vel habitus. Tertio si est potentia, utrum sit appetitiva, vel cognitiva. Quarto, si est appetitiva, utrum sit eadem potentia cum voluntate, vel alia." (L 5,307).

⁷ Plato, *Republic*, 428c-430c. "Courage is a certain kind of preserving..."

and will. Anselm says that freedom belongs “to the rational nature” and that it is an ability to conserve rectitude “of will,” but these phrases only indicate the same kind of loose connection found in Peter Lombard. A difficulty with Anselm’s definition more explicitly brought up in the texts we are considering is that it does not define free decision substantially but rather through its end or goal. Albert is especially clear in remarking on this limitation: “Anselm defines free decision and its freedom in relation to the end for which it is given, and not insofar as it is in itself.”⁸ An example might help make Albert’s criticism more clear: Suppose I define “music” by saying it is “something that lifts up the human spirit.” This may be a more intuitive definition than “a sequence of sounds ordered in certain numerical ratios,” but it does not reveal what music is in itself – it does not reveal the intrinsic features which make it *possible* for music to have its effect on the human spirit. In a similar way, Anselm’s definition, although it tells what free decision is *for*, does not tell about its essence.

Our thirteenth-century authors are not the first to search for a precise category in which to place free decision, or a precise account of its relation to reason and will; their *argumenta* alone make it evident that a debate already exists. Philip, Albert, and Thomas quote authorities for every side of the question, and they present a number of reasonings that are obviously already commonplaces. For example, the word *facultas*, since it is related to

⁸ *De homine*, 3.2 ad 19. “Anselmus diffinit liberum arbitrium et libertatem eius in comparatione ad finem ad quem datus est, et non secundum id quod est.” See also Albert’s *Summa*, II. 91.4.1 (B 33, 190-191) and *Sentences* commentary II. 25. 3 (B 27, 428-429). Philip writes: “Anselm, when he speaks of freedom, is speaking of the natural habit, as it is unto the good simply, and therefore gives such a definition...however, the blessed Bernard, when he defines free decision ...has given a definition through substance.” [Anselmus enim cum loquitur de libertate, loquitur de habitu naturali quantum ad hoc quod est in bonum simpliciter et ideo dat talem diffinitionem...Beatus autem Bernardus cum diffinit liberum arbitrium...data est diffinitio per substantiam.] (W I, 176, lines 333-339). Thomas Aquinas was definitely *aware* of Anselm’s definition (he quotes it several times – see, for instance, *De veritate* 24.10 ad 6 and the response) but he never discusses it systematically, and does not grant it equal status as a definition. This may be because he does not write the same kind of definition-questions that Philip and Albert do.

facile, suggests that free decision is something that facilitates action, thus lending support to a habit definition. Or, again, the term *arbitrium*, which seems to denote the rational activity of judgment, suggests that free decision is the rational power.

Although they did not originate the requirement for a more precise labeling of free decision as power or habit, however, Philip, Albert, and Thomas gladly fulfilled it. Likewise, although they did not originate the demand for a more precise account of free decision's relation to reason and will, they met this standard as well. Each author achieves the required precision by arguing that free decision is a power, although for reasons that vary from author to author and even within the same author's writings. Philip, for instance, argues that free decision is a power because he thinks it is the same as the power of reason and will; Albert argues that free decision is a power because it has a singular role to play in the act of human choice; Thomas most often argues that free decision is a power because it cannot be a habit.⁹ Each of our authors follows this statement of free decision's genus (*power*) with clear accounts of its relation to reason and will, though here there is no consensus between the three authors.

Two things are worth noting in the new demand for precision and the debate surrounding it. First of all, the questions of whether *liberum arbitrium* is a power and how it relates to reason and will seem to be necessarily tied together. There is no way to answer the question about how free decision is related to reason and will until one has a clear idea of whether it is in the soul as a habit or as a power. I will say more about this below: at the

⁹ I do not wish to convey the impression that *every* thirteenth-century author considered free decision to be a power. Bonaventure, for instance, argues that it is a habit – see his *Sentences* commentary, II.25, p.1, a.un, q 4: *Utrum liberum arbitrium sit nomen habitus, vel potentiae*. “Liberum arbitrium est nomen principaliter impositum habitui” (Quaracchi edition, II, 601).

moment, it is important to notice that the power/habit question is a *necessary* preliminary to the reason/will question. Habits cannot be identical to, or composed of, powers; but neither can powers be present in other powers.

A second interesting thing about this debate is the fact that it is specifically about the human soul. Our authors might ask whether God and the angels have free decision, but they do not ask whether free decision in angels is a power or a habit, nor whether divine free decision is identical to divine reason or divine will. The power/habit distinction, and the relation of free decision to reason and will which is consequent to it, is made for the purpose of discussing *human* free decision. The increased importance of distinctions which are relevant only in cases of human psychology shows more evidence of the change discussed in Chapter 1: there is new emphasis on the study of free decision in the context of the human soul rather than the context of salvation history and theodicy.

Part II: Reasons for Changed Components in the Account of Free Decision

The real work of this chapter is to discuss the reason for the change in the components of the definition of free decision. Why is there a new interest in clarifying whether free decision is a habit or a power – and why are our thirteenth-century authors so intent upon the question of whether it is identical to reason and/or will?

The importance of the second question is obvious, at least to some extent. It is fairly clear that, since our authors are attempting to provide a more causal account of free decision, they will need to look to reason and will as possible sources of this capacity. In addition, since reason and will play crucial roles in the activity of choosing, their relation to free decision is a very natural topic to pursue. Lastly, since each of our authors decides that free decision is a power, it makes sense for them to continue their investigation by considering its relation to the other powers of the soul.

The significance of the power/habit question, however, is not as clear. Why ask it at all? Anselm and Peter Lombard did not find it necessary to decide on this issue. In fact, any number of authors have felt comfortable discussing free choice without assigning it a precise genus. Couldn't this question be passed over – especially since what seems to matter most is the various *activities* of reason and will in the course of a freely made choice? There are two ways to explain the existence of the power/habit question. We might consider, in a straightforward way, the tensions or *aporiae* that would lead an author to ask this particular question: Is *liberum arbitrium* a habit or a power? In addition, however, we might consider what is at stake in the answer given. In the sections that follow, I will first a) look at reasons

for asking the power/habit question, and then b) consider the possible results of different answers to the question.

A. *Four reasons for the power/habit question*

Why did our authors ask whether free decision was a power or a habit? There seem to be four reasons. The most obvious ones are the difficulty of merging philosophical systems and a certain tension inherent in any discussion of freedom. However, the question also helped provide badly needed clarification in certain areas, and enabled the search for causes of *liberum arbitrium* to succeed.

1. *Meshing systems*

On one level, it is easy to give a reason for the attempt to classify free decision as either a power or a habit. A particular text from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* led directly to the distinction: "There are only three kinds of thing in the soul: passions, powers, and habits."¹⁰ Thus, Philip, Albert, and Thomas found that they needed to give the *liberum arbitrium* of the theologians a place in this threefold division.¹¹

This specific problem of categorization reflects the general situation in which these authors found themselves. The theological tradition had handed down a trio of elements relevant to moral choice: synderesis (a "higher reason" which always knows what is right),¹² sensuality (the "lower desires" of man which pull him down), and *liberum arbitrium*. Philip, Albert, and Thomas had the task of fitting these elements into new philosophical descriptions

¹⁰ *Nicomachean Ethics*, 2.5 1105b20.

¹¹ Albert makes Aristotle's threefold division explicitly in his *Sentences* commentary, asking if free decision is *habitus, potentia, or passio*. II.24.5 (B 27, 401).

¹² This "higher reason" (*ratio superior*) was sometimes also distinguished from "lower reason" (*ratio inferior*) which was thought to be more involved at the practical level.

of the soul derived from Aristotle and his Arabic commentators. Their *argumenta* reflect this attempt to reconcile psychological systems: in addition to the power/habit question, we see debate over whether free decision is in the rational, irascible, or concupiscible parts of the soul, as well as efforts to clarify whether free decision is appetitive, motive, or cognitive.¹³ Thus, the general attempt to provide a detailed, clear, and above all, consistent description of the soul dictates that free decision be given its proper place in the divisions being used to understand the soul.¹⁴

However, not all the reasons for asking about free decision as a power or habit were generated by external pressure. It seems that there were also reasons within the freedom discussion for this question about free decision's status.

2. *Pre-existing tension*

Some tension about this question seems to be part of the question of human freedom even in its broadest terms. There is no denying that the word "freedom" is used in the mode of signification that would be appropriate to a habit or fixed quality. Grammatically, the word "freedom" is the abstract form of a modifier "free," just as "whiteness" is an abstraction of "white." The way the word is used in common speech seems to indicate that freedom is something that can be added or taken away: for instance, the prisoner is deprived of

¹³ I should note that the categorization I am describing takes place at the level of psychology. Our authors do not articulate their task as an attempt to place free decision in one of the categories of *being* – substance, quality, quantity, etc. – discussed by Aristotle. Albert and Thomas were certainly interested in the metaphysical question of whether the soul's powers were identical to it (thus, in whether the powers were substances or accidents) but this question does not have a strong presence in the particular discussions of *liberum arbitrium* that I am considering here.

¹⁴ Michaud-Quantin explains the difficulties in combining the two sets of terminology very well ("Albert le Grand et les puissances d l'âme," 63). As further evidence of the pressure to categorize theological terms, we can see look at discussions of synderesis, which fall in close proximity to the treatises on *liberum arbitrium*. These discussions include the same, obviously standard, questions: Is synderesis a power or a habit? Is it a separate power from reason? For such a discussion in Philip, see *Summa de Bono* 3.a (W I, 192, lines 1-7) "Synderesi: Utrum sit potentia vel habitus." In Albert, see *De homine* 4.1: "De synderesi: Quid sit secundum substantiam et diffinitionem" (C 27.2, 527). For Thomas, see *Summa theologiae* I. 79.12.

freedom, the slave can be given his freedom, the people of the country may be losing their freedom. The same ordinary discourse also shows freedom as something that differs in degree, since a man or a nation is said to be more or less free. All this points to the idea that freedom is qualitative state.¹⁵

At the same time, however, again on the level of common speech, freedom seems to be connected to ability; one is free only if one is *able* to act. The reason we say that those who are imprisoned or bound are not free is that their activity has been hindered. If there is an innate capacity to act (one which cannot be hindered) this suggests an innate freedom in the sense of an innate ability. Since humans have more abilities than stones, plants, and animals, one might suspect they have more freedom and link freedom to the properly human capacities of reason and will. This way of thinking and speaking points to the idea that freedom is an ability.

The tradition in which Philip, Albert, and Thomas were working heightened this tension between freedom as a state and freedom as an ability or power.¹⁶ Tradition also provided terminology for expressing the tension formally by use of the power/habit dichotomy. Key passages from Augustine¹⁷ and from scripture¹⁸ re-inforced the common

¹⁵ For a modern author who has concluded that freedom is a habit – a “faculty” only in the sense that it makes activity easy – see Servais Pinckaers, *Sources of Christian Ethics*, 354-357. Pinckaers expressly compares freedom to musical knowledge, knowledge of a foreign language, and the virtue of courage – all habits – and uses the word *habitus* to describe it.

¹⁶ Perhaps I should note that abilities (such as the ability to run quickly) and fixed states (such as knowledge) were both considered members of the Aristotelian category of “quality.” (See Aristotle, *Categories*, ch. 8, and Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I-II 49.2.) However, the fact that power and habit are in the same highest genus does not mean that there is no natural tension between the two – quite the contrary, since they are distinct species of quality. This is, in fact, how Aristotle takes them in the passage from the *Ethics* quoted above.

¹⁷ A favorite text is from Augustine’s *Enchiridion*, “Man badly used free decision, and so lost both it and himself.” [Nam libero arbitrio male utens homo et se perdidit et ipsum.] *Enchiridion*, chapter 30 (CCL 46, 65, lines 37-38). It is also taken as a commonplace that there is more freedom in angels than in men while they are in this life, and more freedom in the just man than in the sinner, and more freedom in sinners than in the damned. Albert, with regard to this latter opinion, attributes it to Augustine, Anselm, and Bernard: “Secunda

view that freedom can be gained and lost, and that it can be present to a greater or lesser degree. At the same time, however, the writings of several authorities applied pressure to view free decision as a power. Albert remarks that “the saints” view *liberum arbitrium* as a power.¹⁹ Although only one text Albert cites specifically makes this claim (a passage from a work known to him as *The Journey of Clement*, which refers to “the power of free decision”),²⁰ his remark seems to reflect an interpretation gathered from years of reading. If we look through the writings of the Church Fathers, as well as those of Augustine and Peter Lombard, we do not see explicit proclamations that “free decision is a power”; but we do see a consistent treatment of *liberum arbitrium* as an active principle of choice given by God. The traditional theological writings on free decision do not treat it as a super-added quality of reason or of will but as an independent principle. Tertullian, for instance, who was among the first theologians to use the term *liberum arbitrium*, says that “the free power of decision [*liberam arbitrii potestatem*] is described as an independent authority...in whatsoever direction it turns, it inclines of its own nature.”²¹ Gregory of Nyssa speaks of free will as a

probatur ex dicto multorum sanctorum, et praecipue Augustini, Bernardi et Anselmi, qui dicunt quod liberius est in angelis quam in hominibus existentibus in via, et liberius in iustis quam in peccatoribus, et liberius in peccatoribus quam in damnatus.” *De homine* 3.2, arg 10 (C 27.2, 509, lines 45-50).

¹⁸ Philip cites Second Corinthians: “Where the spirit is, there is freedom,” Romans: “And the creature will be freed from the slavery of corruption,” and the gospel of John: “If the son has freed you, truly you will be free.” (W I, 169) Albert cites a passage from John that Anselm also used: “He who commits sin is a slave to sin.” *Summa*, II. 91.1 ad 3 (B 33, 185).

¹⁹ “Dicendum videtur, quod secundum dicta Sanctorum liberum arbitrium sit potentia specialis.” *Summa theologiae* II. 14.91.3, solutio (B 33, 187-188).

²⁰ The passage is from Pseudo-Clement, *Recognitiones*, and can be found in the edition edited by Rufini, I.3, ch. 23. Albert quotes it in *De homine* 3.2 arg. 30 (C 27.2, 512, lines 41-45). See also Albert, *Sentences* commentary, II. 25 article 3 arg. 3 (B 27, 428) and *Summa de mirabili* II.91.4.1 (B 33, 188).

²¹ Tertullian, *De anima*, ch. 21, 6. “Haec erit uis diuinae gratiae, potentior utique natura, habens in nobis subiacentem sibi liberam arbitrii potestatem quod *autekousion* αὐτεξουσίον dicitur, quae cum sit et ipsa naturalis atque mutabilis quoquo uertitur, natura conuertitur. (CCL 2, 814, 34-38; trans, 202).

power having authority within the soul, since it “uses” the passions.²² It seems fair to say, as Michaud-Quantin does, that “the notion of a special power, assuming and according with [man’s] freedom, was proper to patristic speculation and to those who were inspired by it.”²³

Peter and Anselm, the two authors we are considering more particularly as sources, added their own weight to this tension. We should not be misled into thinking that Peter or Anselm viewed free decision as a power by their use of words such as *potestas* and *potentia* in their definitions. There is no precise meaning attached to these terms in the given context: for this reason, translators seem to have chosen correctly to render the terms with general English words such as “capacity” or “ability.” A “capacity” can describe a habit that makes an activity possible: for instance, a mathematician has the capacity to explain what *pi* means, but this capacity is rooted in his habit of knowledge. As a matter of fact, the emphasis that Peter and Anselm placed on free decision as a *moral* capacity lent strength to the idea that free decision is a habit. When these authors define free decision as a capacity for goodness, they strengthen its likeness to virtue, which, though a habit, is a “capacity” for doing the correct action in a fitting way. At the same time, however, there are some respects in which each author treated it as a power. Anselm compares free decision to the power of sight, pointing out in particular that it has an object as well as an activity, and Peter Lombard takes care to point out the activity (choosing) and object (future contingents) of free decision.

²² Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Soul and on the Resurrection*, “Those phenomena within us that we call passions; have not been allotted to human nature for any bad purpose at all...but according to the use which our free will puts them to, these emotions of the soul become the instruments of virtue or of vice.” (Schaff, 442).

²³ “Comme les autres facultés de cette catégorie, le libre arbitre est un héritage de la pensée chrétienne; Albert pouvait sans doute rencontrer chez Aristote, nous avons vu dans quelle mesure, l’idée de la liberté humaine et de l’indépendance de la volonté, mais la notion d’une puissance spéciale, assurant et accordant cette liberté, était propre à la spéculation patristique et à ceux qui s’en étaient inspirés.” Michaud-Quantin, *La psychologie de l’activité*, 205. For a good summary of the general teaching of the Church fathers on human freedom, see Siewerth’s introduction to *Thomas von Aquin: Die menschliche Willensfreiheit*, pages 12-16.

Thus, the tension between free decision as a power and as a habit was already present, not only in the debate as the theological tradition presented it to our authors, but also in the nature of the very discussion of human freedom. Two more technical reasons for the power/habit question, however, can be discussed here.

3. The question helps clarify that free decision is a principle rather than an action

The question “Is free decision a power or a habit?” if put in that form, has one important advantage over other introductory questions. It is precise in demanding that free decision be discussed as a source or origin of action rather than as a certain kind of activity. To put it as simply as possible: the power/habit question clearly asks about free decision as the thing that makes choice happen and not the activity of choosing itself. The question “Is free decision a power or a habit?” cannot be answered by saying “It’s something people *do*.” In the first sentence of the article in which he determines that free decision is a power, Thomas puts clearly what each of our authors thinks: “Although *liberum arbitrium* in its strict sense denotes an act, in the common manner of speaking we call *liberum arbitrium* that which is the principle of the act by which man judges freely.”²⁴

Consideration of free decision as a principle of action is *not* an innovation for Philip, Albert, and Thomas. Anselm and Peter Lombard ask about free decision as a principle also. However, they asked about it as the God-given principle by which man was able to resist sin and choose the good. In this context, as long as it is made clear that man is *able* to choose

²⁴ “Quamvis liberum arbitrium nomet quendam actum secundum propriam significationem vocabuli; secundum tamen communem usum loquendi, liberum arbitrium dicimus id quod est huius actus principium, scilicet quo homo libere iudicat.” *Summa theologiae* I. 83. 2 (L 5, 309). See also *De veritate* 24.4, “Dicendum, quod liberum arbitrium, si vis vocabuli attendatur, nominat actum; sed ex usu loquendi tractum est ut significet id quod est principium actus” (L 22.3, 690, lines 138-141).

rightly, there is no pressing need to decide the specific nature of the principle *by which* man is able to choose freely.

In asking what kind of principle free decision is and trying to give its genus (that is, in trying to tell whether it was a power, a passion, or a habit), Philip, Albert, and Thomas took steps toward offering an account of *liberum arbitrium* which does not depend on the activity of a particular kind of agent. To see why this is so, let us consider the definitions that Peter and Anselm provided. Both authors specify free decision by referring to a particular kind of activity. Anselm's definition insists that the agent be able to preserve rectitude of will "for its own sake." Thus, free decision is defined partly through the agent's possession of a certain motive, and this motive is proper to an individual action. Peter's definition requires a reference to action in a similar way. Since free decision is the faculty that chooses the good when assisted by grace, and the bad when grace forsakes it, free decision is defined by particular kinds of actions, different in different individuals. It is not defined as a particular kind of principle, the same in all men.

It is important to be clear on a certain point of method. All the authors have to look at the actions that are called "free" in order to figure out what the principle of these actions is like – this is a philosophical necessity. However, those who ask whether the principle of action is a power or a habit have begun to ask a question about *how* the action is brought about. If they can succeed in answering the question, they will no longer need to connect free decision to actions performed by agents in a particular state at a particular time – they can talk about men in general, not about good men, bad men, saved men, or damned men.

4. *The question is needed in the search for a causal definition*

A related point which helps explain the power/habit question is the new search for a causal definition that we discussed in the previous chapter. Anselm and Peter Lombard introduce their treatises on free decision by considering it as a gift from God rather than as part of the soul – thus, they are not under the same pressure to tell what *kind* of part of the soul it is. They know that reason and will are involved in free decision because the activities of these powers are needed in order for an act of choice to take place, but – again, because they are *not* engaged in writing treatises on the soul – they do not need to indicate the relation of reason and will to the principle of free choice as it is present in the soul.

Philip, Albert, and Thomas, however, in the context of writing about the soul, were interested in dealing with a more proximate cause of the existence of *liberum arbitrium* than the divine, creative *fiat*. In this context, whether free decision is a habit or a power makes a significant difference. A habit, regardless of whether it is acquired or innate, has a different set of dependencies than a power does, and it is thus linked to its substrate in a different way than a power is. Habits depend on powers: there is no such thing as a free-floating habit that attaches itself to human nature as such. This is especially the case with the habits of the soul such as virtue and knowledge. Even if the habits of virtue or knowledge were innate and not acquired, the powers in which they are present would still be prior in *being*: a mind is needed in order to have the habit of knowledge, and both reason and appetites are needed in order to have the habit of virtue. Thus, if free decision is a habit, it will depend on some power or powers for its connection to human nature; if it is a power, it is the kind of thing that inheres in and flows from (or possibly constitutes) that nature without the need for an

intermediary. If our thirteenth-century authors wanted to be clear about how human nature gives rise to free decision, then, they needed to come to a clear conclusion on whether free decision is a habit or a power. Otherwise, they could not explain the connection of free decision to the essence of man. To the extent that they cannot do this, they cannot give a proximate cause of man's free decision and must fall back on God's creative action.

The need to decide whether free decision is a power or a habit is sharpened by a further consideration. The best way to discuss the principle of free decision as part of man's nature is to talk about the powers of reason and will. It seems that a being without these powers could never be free in the proper sense. However, each of our authors was convinced that without an answer to the power/habit question, he could not proceed to talk about free decision's relation to reason and will. If free decision is a habit, it might be present in both reason and will, or in only one of them. If it is a power, it might be composed of, or identical to, these powers. The possibilities for free decision's relation to reason and will are so manifold that there is no way forward without placing free decision in a clearly defined genus. At least, this seems to be how our three authors viewed the situation; it is difficult otherwise to understand why they think that they must answer the power/habit question before discussing free decision's relation to reason and will.

Our authors needed a clear account of the relation between free decision, reason, and will in order to give a definition with the proof-like quality that we discussed in Chapter 2: they also needed such an account in order to link free decision to human nature, a task whose importance was emphasized in Chapter 1. As they viewed it, then, their task of defining free

decision was largely dependent on their ability to find an answer for the power/habit question.

B. The unified account of the soul which the power specification made possible

I have discussed four reasons for the addition of the power/habit question to the debate on free decision: the question was involved in the need to find a consistent account of soul; the question is implied, at some level, in many of the questions commonly asked concerning human freedom; the power/habit question opened new ground by making a stronger distinction between the free act and the principle of free action; and it was crucial in the search for a quasi-demonstrative account of free decision. There is a different way to explain the reasons for asking the power/habit question, however, and that is to consider the possible consequences of the answer. Philip, Albert, and Thomas each answer the question of whether the words *liberum arbitrium* signify a habit or a power by saying that free decision is a power, at least in one respect.²⁵ What did they gain by answering as they did,

²⁵ For these claims, see the following references. Philip: "In this respect [that is, freedom from coercion] free decision ...is the name of a power perfected in nature, and not the name of a habit." [Et quantum ad hoc liberum arbitrium non intenditur neque remittitur et est nomen potentie perfecte in natura, non autem nomen habitus.] *Summa de bono* (W I, 174, lines 272-273) Albert: "It must be said that a faculty does not mean habit...instead, it means a power complete with regard to its innate act." [Facultas non supponit habitum...sed supponit potentiam completam ad actum ex sibi innatis.] *De homine* 3.2 (C 27.2, 514, lines 31-37); "In my judgment, it must be said that free decision is a special power, completed by a natural habit, which is its freedom." [Dicendum meo iudicio, quod liberum arbitrium est potentia specialis complete per habitum naturalem, quiescit libertas ejus.] *In Sententiis* II. 24. 5 (B 27, 401). Thomas is consistent in holding that free decision is a power. In his *Sentences* commentary, he writes: "Free decision, however, is that by which the act of choice is effected ...whence it does not seem to designate a habit, if habit is taken properly, but some power whose proper act is to choose." [Liberum autem arbitrium ad electionis actum se habet ut quo talis actus efficitur quandoque autem male, et indifferenter; unde non videtur habitum aliquem designare, si habitus proprie accipiatur, sed illam potentiam cuius proprie actus est eligere.] *Sentences* commentary, II 24.1. 1, *solutio* (M II, 591). In *De veritate*, he says: "Free decision accordingly does not designate a habit but the power of will or reason." [Liberum arbitrium habitum non nominat, sed potentiam voluntatis vel rationis.] 24.4 (L 22.3, 691, lines 169-171). In *Summa theologiae*, he writes: "Free decision is indifferent to good or evil choice: wherefore it is impossible for free decision to be a habit. Therefore it is a power." [Liberum autem arbitrium

and what would they have lost by declaring that free decision was a habit? My view is that the chief thing they gained was unity in the account of the human soul. It will take some time to see how this is so, but it is impossible to understand the significance of the innovative “power” terminology without understanding the consequences of that terminology.

1. Particular arguments that liberum arbitrium is a power

In order to see the exact consequences of different answers to the power/habit question, I will go over the particular arguments by which our authors solve this question in some depth. This presentation has some inherent interest as well; it gives us the opportunity to see each of our thirteenth-century authors at work on a specific psychological question, the first question each one asks when trying to give a definition of free decision.

a. Philip

Philip, although he believed that the term *liberum arbitrium* often indicated a habit,²⁶ is clear about the fact that in least *one* sense free decision is a power:

Free decision is in one way a habit and in another way a power. Insofar as it is a power, it is only one power; having regard to two acts of the same power, in an ordered fashion, upon the same matter. For nothing impedes one power from being, by diverse acts, upon the same matter.²⁷

indifferenter se habet ad bene eligendum vel male. Unde impossibile est quod liberum arbitrium sit habitus. Relinquitur ergo quod sit potentia.] I.83.2 (L 5, 309).

²⁶ Philip explains that when we look at what one is free *from* or what one is free *to*, we consider free decision as a habit: “In another way, however, it is the name of a habit, regarding either the principle *towards which* it is, principally, namely the good, or the principle *from which* it is made free, namely the evil of guilt or the coercion of punishment or something like that.” [Alio autem modo est nomen habitus, prout respicit vel principium in quod principaliter, scilicet bonum, vel principium a quo fit liberatio, scilicet malum culpe aut pene contractum aut illatum.] *Summa de bono* Q 2 (W I, 174, lines 273-276).

²⁷ “Est enim liberum arbitrium uno modo habitus et alio modo potentia. Secundum autem quod est potentia, est una sola potentia, duos actus eiusdem potentie secundum ordinem respiciens supra eandem materiam. Propter quod nichil impedit unam esse potentiam actibus diversificatis supra materiam eandem...” *Summa de bono*, (W I, 174, lines 279-282).

This rather cryptic description is cleared up in the discussion that follows. Free decision is “only one power” because it is the power known as both reason and will; Philip first claims, and then argues, that reason and will are not distinct. The “two acts of this power, in order,” are the actions of judging and willing; judging occurs first, and willing second, in any choice. The “matter” here is the action under consideration. In Philip’s account, then, a *free decision* happens when the rational power judges (we call it reason when it does this) and this action of judgment is completed by an act of willing (we call the rational power “will” when it performs this action.) The *principle* of the action of free decision is none other than this single rational power.

Why, exactly, can Philip say that free decision is a power? An act of free decision occurs when a *free* act of will complements an act of reason known as *decision*. These two actions flow from a single power – thus, if there is a principle responsible for the action of free decision, it is this “rational power.”

In passing, we might note that Philip concludes what we have already suggested: Anselm treats free decision like a habit when he gives his definition:

Anselm, when he speaks of freedom, is speaking of the natural habit, as it is directed unto the good simply, and therefore gives such a definition: “The power of preserving rectitude of will for its own sake.” For rectitude of will is unto the good.²⁸

b. Albert

Albert, like Philip, held that in one sense free decision is a power, and in another sense it is habit. He was very suspicious, however, of Philip’s identification of free decision, reason and will:

²⁸ “Anselmus enim cum loquitur de libertate, loquitur de habet naturali quantum ad hoc quod est in bonum simpliciter et ideo dat talem diffinitionem: ‘Potestas conservandi rectitudinem voluntatis propter se.’ Rectitudo enim voluntatis est in bonum.” *Summa de bono* (W I, 176, lines 333-336).

We do not agree with some who say that reason and will and free decision are the same power, different only in its acts. For the being of free decision is from a perfection of the power of decision, a perfection which is because the arbiter is not restricted so that he could not judge for both parties equally or judge in favor of one of them, to the burdening of the other.²⁹

The term *free decision*, is, then, for Albert, an indication of the fact that the power which arbitrates or decides has the perfection of being free. This arbitrating or deciding power, is, as far as Albert is concerned, separate from reason and will, and its act is its own: it is not compounded of acts of reason and will.³⁰

What reasoning supports Albert's hypothesis? In the *De homine*, Albert's thinking seems to be that decision must be a power because of its place in the sequence of choice. Reason judges, will desires, but then there must be a choice between the two – this is the act of the deciding power, and the fact that it is indeterminately related to the two other powers assures its existence as a separate power.³¹

While they both think that in some sense free decision is a habit, the theory that is important for both Philip and Albert as they proceed in their discussions is that free decision

²⁹ "Non enim consentimus quibusdam dicentibus eandem potentiam esse rationem et voluntatem et liberum arbitrium, sed differre per actus. Esse enim liberi arbitrii est a perfectione potestatis arbitrariae, quae est ex eo quod non ligatur arbiter quin possit arbitrari pro utraque parte aequaliter vel pro altera in gravamen reliquae." *De homine* 3.2 (C 27.2, 514, lines 11-17). Though Albert's treatments of *liberum arbitrium* show a great deal of variation, he is absolutely consistent in naming free decision a "special power" (*potentia specialis*). See Michaud-Quantin, *La psychologie*, 212.

³⁰ There has been some debate over whether Albert views *liberum arbitrium* as a power separate from reason and will in works other than *De homine*; one thing that is clear is that he is not explicit about this view in any other text. McCluskey argues that his view did not alter ("Worthy Constraints," 2.2, 505-514); Michaud-Quantin suggests that he made use of a more robust hypothesis in contexts which demanded it; (*La psychologie*, ch. 18, 205-212); Lottin argues that Albert's views changed over the course of time (*Psychologie*, 119-127). This discussion is a very interesting one: here, however, since I am concerned only with the discussion of free decision as a power, I pass over these details. In this passage, as is often the case, I make use of the *De homine* text because it is the clearest and most original exposition of *liberum arbitrium* in the Albertian corpus.

³¹ In his *Summa* and the *Sentences* commentary, Albert's arguments are somewhat different. He focuses on the idea that free decision must be a power in order for us to truly be the causes and masters of our actions. His reasons for thinking this, though, are rather vaguely expressed – these articles make no clear argument such as we see in *De homine*. *Summa theologiae* II. 91. m 1 (B 33,183-185); *Sentences* commentary II, d. 24 E. 5 (B 27, 401).

is a power. Thus, Albert follows up with questions on whether this is one power or many, while Philip follows up with questions about whether one power can be the principle of both judging and willing.

Both Philip and Albert draw conclusions from their description of the *action* of free decision and apply them to the nature of the *principle* of free decision. Since the act of choosing involves actions of reason and will in a certain sequence, they conclude that the principle of choosing must be related to the powers of reason and will in a certain way. (Philip and Albert disagree, of course, on what this way is, since Philip thinks that free decision is the same power as reason and will and Albert thinks that free decision is a power separate from both.) To some extent, both Albert and Philip only describe the act of choice and its principles within the soul; they do not truly prove that things work out as they say. But they also consider and refute a great many arguments for the idea that free decision is a habit, and reason dismissively against a number of arguments that try to show that free decision *cannot* be a power.

c. *Thomas*

Unlike Philip and Albert, Thomas Aquinas does not think that free decision is a habit in any way whatsoever. He argues that *liberum arbitrium*, “the principle of the act by which man decides freely” *cannot* be a habit – thus, it must be a power, since it is a principle of action within the soul.³² His reasoning varies slightly from work to work, but a common feature is the idea that a habit is an inclination to *one* course of action: for example, if a man has the habit of cowardliness, he is always inclined to flee in the face of injury or death. Free

³² For a detailed discussion of Aquinas’ view on what it means to be a power of the soul, and how these powers are to be investigated, see Matthew Walz, “What is a Power of the Soul?”

decision, however, is not a principle that determines the agent to one course of action, since it must regard opposites. Thus, it cannot be a habit.³³

Thomas's arguments are different from those of Philip and Albert because he does not consider the activities of reason and will in the act of choosing. Instead, he considers the *matter* of choice – the alternatives or opposites upon which it acts. Like Philip and Albert, however, he proceeds, after deciding that free decision is a power, to investigate the consequences of this doctrine, arguing that free decision is the same power as the will, though not the same as reason.

2. *Unity of soul in these arguments*

Now that we have gone through these arguments in some detail, we may be able to see the driving force behind them, as well as what they were able to accomplish. In the new context of discussing the human soul, it was absolutely crucial to maintain an account that presented the human soul as a unified principle of life, not as a random conglomeration of powers.³⁴ The fact that our authors were engaged, at least on the surface, in a struggle for classification should not make us lose sight of the fact that the goal of the classification was consistency and simplicity: an attempt was being made to show how all the elements

³³ See *Sentences* commentary II.24.1.1, *De veritate* 24.4, and *Summa theologiae* I.83.2.

³⁴ The thirteenth century saw a number of controversies on the unity of the soul. To begin with, there was the question about whether the human being was the result of a plurality of substantial forms: that is, whether he had distinct vegetable, animal, and rational souls. Nothing I say here is directly relevant to this controversy: see Lottin, *Psychologie* I, chapters 3 and 4; Wicki, *Die Philosophie Philipps des Kanzlers*, 4.4 “Die Einheit der Seele,” (119-123); and Pegis, *St. Thomas and the Problem of the Soul in the Thirteenth Century* for more on the topic. There was also an ongoing discussion on the relation of the soul and its powers: is the soul identical to reason, will, etc. or not? This controversy is of more interest to the discussion of *liberum arbitrium*, since it implies the question of whether free decision is the same *thing* as the soul. For more discussion of the views of our authors on the relation of the soul and its powers, see Lottin, “L’identité de l’âme et de ses facultés avant saint Thomas d’Aquin,” (chapter 5 in *Psychologie*, I) and Pius Künzle, *Das Verhältnis der Seele zu ihren Potenzen*: Philip on pages 108-110, Albert on pages 144-158, and Thomas on pages 171-215. For more on Aquinas in particular, see Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, “The Relationship between the Soul and Its Powers,” 275-294.

responsible for choice flow from the single rational soul of man. Although each of their arguments for the idea that free decision is a power is unique, the thirteenth-century authors showed a concern for achieving a unified account of the human soul that is common. Several kinds of unity were made possible by the designation of free decision as a power.

First of all, once *liberum arbitrium* had been established as a power, our authors were in a position to achieve a more unified account of soul in a very simple way – they could claim that free decision was the *same* power as either reason or will, or even the same power as both reason and will. As we have already seen, Philip took the latter option by saying that free decision, reason, and will were one power.³⁵ Thomas took an intermediate position, arguing that *liberum arbitrium* is the same power as the will, which, however, is not identical to reason. “It belongs also to the same power to will and to choose, and on this account the will and free decision are not two powers, but one.”³⁶ In making these identity claims, Philip and Thomas were able to pull the different capacities of the rational soul together. The power hypothesis enables free decision to belong to one or more parts of the soul by a unity of identity.

Why was this kind of unity desirable? Suppose that the term “free decision” means only that in every choice, the free judgment of reason is followed by the free desire of will. If this were the case, *liberum arbitrium* would not depend on any relation of these powers *as powers* but only on a relation of them in their activities. This would mean that, for all intents and purposes, free decision would be a capacity that is only potentially present: it would

³⁵ Extreme unity is a habit of Philip’s in matters of psychology: he claims that the soul and its powers have a unity of identity as well, unlike Albert and Thomas. See Künzle, *ibid.*

³⁶ “Unde etiam eiusdem potentiae est velle et eligere. Et propter hoc voluntas et liberum arbitrium non sunt duae potentiae, sed una.” *Summa theologiae* I.83.4 (L 5, 311).

appear and disappear as reason and will act and cease to act. If this were its meaning, free decision would be caused by the human essence, but not directly connected to it: the ability to choose freely would then be only a kind of side-effect made evident in action. Just as we indicate no connection or dependency between Hector and Achilles if we say that they are both brave and fight in the same battle, so we would indicate no connection or dependency between reason and will if they are both free and involved in the same activity of choice.

Because of the unity of identity they established, however, Philip and Thomas were able to show that free decision is connected to reason and will *as a principle* of action, not as a product of their activities. In doing so, they helped to make the soul, as a principle of action, more unified.

This unity of identity helped Philip and Thomas achieve another kind of unity: the connection of free decision to the essence of man. In Philip's case, it was very easy to achieve this result. Since free decision is the same as reason, it belongs to man's essence just as rationality belongs to his essence. In Thomas's case there is a similar linking of free decision to the traditional specific difference of rationality. Free decision is the will, and the will is an inclination that flows naturally from reason.³⁷ Thus man has free decision because of his essence, not only during the activity of choosing.

What are we to say about Albert in this context, though? In many of his writings he does not make clear whether the "special power" of free decision is the same as reason or

³⁷ Does the fact that Thomas makes a real distinction between reason and will weaken the unity of soul in his account? In my view, it does not, because there are other unities not based on identity. Often distinctions are the key to expressing these forms of unity. For instance, a father is distinct from a mother, but this does not make the family less of a unity – on the contrary, the distinction helps us understand the principles that make the family a single whole. I think that, in a similar way, the distinction Thomas makes between reason and will shows the principles that make the rational soul a single whole. For more on the distinction between reason and will in Thomas, see Lawrence Dewan, "The Real Distinction Between Intellect and Will."

will, but in *De homine* he clearly states that free decision is a third power, separate from reason and will. He does say that free decision is the same as reason and will “in substance and subject” but this unity seems to exist only by Albert’s *fiat*, and is unrelated to his theory that *liberum arbitrium* names a power. Does this mean that Albert is *not* in pursuit of unity of soul?

On closer inspection, however, Albert seems to share Philip and Thomas’s concern for unifying the soul. The unity Albert describes in *De homine* is not a unity of identity, but it is a unity of order: when free decision decides between what is desired by will and what is judged by reason, it makes the actions of these two powers part of the same process.

Without free decision, will and reason would never meet at all; in its arbitration free decision unifies the activities of two principles into one action.

In the *De homine*, Albert often speaks of free decision as being *between* reason and will.³⁸ It is not between them, however, as a barrier, but rather as a mediator. Of our three authors, it is Albert who makes most use of the metaphor of arbitration implied in the word *arbitrium*. This metaphor can also help us to see the unity he achieved: imagine two bitterly quarreling companies who agree to binding arbitration. In the resulting decision, they achieve consensus, and the result will be the unity of all the parties involved. There is unity in Albert’s account of the soul just as there is unity in a novel or in a dance: the powers of reason, will, and free decision are made one by being ordered to each other. This idea of

³⁸ For example, in the reply to the first objection Albert writes: “Facultas facilem et perfectam potestatem supponit, quae non est ita rationis et voluntatis tamquam in ipsis existat, sed tamquam inter quae, ut patet ex praedictis.” *De homine* 3.2 ad 1 (C 27.2, 514, lines 25-28). And again, a few lines later, “Non dicitur facultas rationis et voluntatis tamquam sit in illis, sed tamquam inter quae.” Ibid, ad 4. (C 27.2, 514, lines 43-45). He also says this in *Sentences* commentary (II. 25.1. ad 3, B 27, 424) “Liberum arbitrium est medium inter rationem et voluntatem.”

unity through order is something that Albert seems concerned to achieve in all his treatises on *liberum arbitrium*: in his *Sentences* commentary, for instance, he argues that free decision is “rooted in the essence of the soul” in its “order” to will and reason.³⁹

One way to think about the unity that all three authors have achieved by saying that free decision is a power is through the image of the mathematical middle term. Free decision, described as a power, lies between, and connects, the human soul and its activity of choosing. Philip describes free decision, insofar as it is a power, as being “a medium between the essence of the soul and its act.”⁴⁰ Thomas says something similar about all powers: the powers flow from the essence of the soul,⁴¹ and the activities come forth from the powers.⁴² The power hypothesis helps make the soul a single principle because it connects ability with essence at the same time as it connects ability with action.⁴³

This unity of reason, will, and free decision – the way they are unified both with each other and with the essence of man – would not have been possible if the power/habit question had remained unasked and unclear. The definitions of Anselm and Peter Lombard, since they lack the clear notion that free decision is a power of the soul like reason and will, cannot provide the same opportunities for giving a unified account of the rational soul. This fact

³⁹ “Free decision is named from reason and will: because it is rooted in the essence of the soul according to order: [it is ordered] to reason as preceding, and to will as following.” [*Liberum arbitrium est nominatum a ratione et voluntate: quia ipsum radicatur in essentia animae secundum ordinem ad rationem praecedentem, et voluntatem ut sequentem.*] *Sentences* II d. 25. 1 (B 27, 423).

⁴⁰ “Vel aliter: liberum arbitrium est medium inter essentiam anime et actum. Potest ergo accipi vel prout tenet se cum essentia immediate et secundum hoc non dicitur secundum magis et minus...” *Summa de bono* 2.a (W I, 175, lines 324-326).

⁴¹ See *Summa theologiae* I.77.7.

⁴² *Ibid*, article 3.

⁴³ To make the analogy explicit: in the continued proportion 4:12::12: 36, the middle term, 12, unites the extremes, 4 and 36. Similarly, in the continued proportion of essence: power:: power: action, the middle term, power, unites the extremes of essence and action.

gives us a fifth and final explanation for the introduction of the formal power/habit question by the thirteenth-century authors.

To summarize all the reasons for the change that we have discussed in this section, consider Anselm's account of how free decision is related to the nature of man. We have the capacity which is free decision, the teacher tells the student, "as long as we have reason, by which we can know rectitude, and will, by which we can retain it." Here, Anselm expresses only a general certainty that reason and will are necessary in order to make free decision possible. Philip, Albert, and Thomas are able to give a better account of free decision's relation to reason and will: their accounts show how the principles responsible for a choice are parts of the whole soul as powers rather than as prerequisites for activity. The question of the particular relations of free decision to reason and will, and specific changes that were brought about in this area, is a question which we will take up in Chapter 4.

Part III. Some Points of Controversy

I will end this chapter by considering a few points of controversy related to the claims made here. The first of these controversies is general: there is some question of whether identifying free decision as a power is a philosophically sound move. The second point of controversy is more particular; a number of students of medieval philosophy have concluded, explicitly or implicitly, that the identification of free decision as a power is not particularly significant in the quest to understand free decision.

A. *Is it a groundless act of reification to define free decision as a “power”?*

Why insist that free decision is a real thing, distinct from the acts of decision that we experience? The definition of free decision as a power seems to involve an unwarranted reification, for two reasons. First of all, human activities are obvious, but in discussing powers we speculate about the principles of these activities, which are hidden. It is easy to be skeptical of the move from what is experienced to what is only guessed at. What can a discussion of a “power” reveal that is not revealed by a discussion of an activity? A number of thinkers would not hesitate to answer, “nothing at all.” John Locke once gave a very clear-minded expression of his frustration with those who posit “powers” to explain phenomena:

For it being asked, what was it that digested the meat in our stomachs? It was a ready, and very satisfactory answer to say, that it was the *digestive faculty*Which ways of speaking, when put into more intelligible words, will, I think, amount to thus much; that digestion is performed by something that is able to digest; motion by something that is able to move; and understanding by something able to understand. And in truth it would be very strange, if it should be otherwise.⁴⁴

If Locke is right, to call free decision a power is to multiply words and explain nothing – “free decision is a power” means nothing other than “men are able to choose.” Worse yet, often this language of “powers” deludes or attempts to delude those who hear it, since it involves a pretense of understanding some causal agent while bringing us no nearer to the truth.

There is a second reason to fear a treatment of free decision as if it were an entity. If one defines free decision as a real thing within the soul, one runs the risk of falling into the “homunculus fallacy” – of seeming to posit a little being within man who makes choices (or

⁴⁴ Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, II. 221. 20, 243-244.

thinks or wills) in the same way that a man does. Once again, we can look to John Locke to see an eloquent indication of the difficulties involved in a “faculty psychology”:

The ordinary way of speaking is that the understanding and will are two *faculties* of the mind; a word proper enough, if it be used as all words should be, so as not to breed any confusion in men’s thoughts, by being supposed (as I suspect it has been) to stand for some real beings in the soul, that performed those actions of understanding and volition...I suspect, that this way of speaking of *faculties* has misled many into a confused notion of so many distinct agents in us, which had their several provinces and authorities, and did command, obey, and perform several actions, as so many distinct beings.⁴⁵

These “distinct agents” or “homunculi” represent a failure of philosophy because they are clearly untrue (no agent has other agents within him) and also because they explain nothing: reasoning is reasoning still, whether done by a man or his “reason” imagined as if it were a man. Once free decision has been put in the genus *power*, it has been given a status as an entity, as some sort of real being, and the “confused notion of many distinct agents,” is bound to arise. We find ourselves slipping into the problematic phrases such as, “Free decision chooses,” or “Will wills.” Is such a problematic method of approaching free choice worth preserving, or should it be laid aside as a medieval absurdity?

How could our thirteenth-century authors respond to these two criticisms? Are they pointlessly multiplying words by creating a “capacity” that is only a co-relative of activity? Have they created a homunculus by placing *liberum arbitrium* in the genus “power”?

The truth is that the identification of free decision as a power of the soul is designed to solve these problems, not raise them. Let us consider the homunculus problem first.

⁴⁵ Ibid., II.21.17, 236-237. Leibniz also offers us a striking description of the homunculus problem that attends the reification of any human faculty: “Certain philosophers...saved the appearances by fabricating faculties or occult qualities, just for the purpose, and fancying them to be like little demons or imps which can without ado perform whatever is wanted.” *New Essays on Human Understanding*, preface, 68.

Philip, Albert, and Thomas, in defining free decision as a power, give it a certain ontological status.⁴⁶ As an always-present principle of action, *liberum arbitrium* exists in a way that a mere activity does not. Any given activity, such as taking a walk, choosing, or drinking tea, flickers in and out of existence. However, a power of the soul goes on existing, before, during and after the activity. But a power, while it is an entity of a kind, is, by definition, *not* an independent entity. It needs something to be a power *of*; the term “power of the soul” only has meaning as a medium between the soul and an activity. Furthermore, in the view of these authors, in order for a human ability to be given the status of “power” it needs to have a certain relation to an object – that is, it needs something to be a power *toward*. A power of the soul, then, cannot be independent for the same reason that a merchant cannot be independent. An “independent merchant” would need no suppliers and no customers – but without them, he could not be a merchant at all. A properly defined *potentia*, in the same way, cannot exist if it has neither a soul to which it belongs nor an object on which to act. When our authors define free decision as a power, they are not viewing it as a little miniature agent, because all of our authors agree that a power depends, by definition, on at least two things that are not itself. When they claimed that free decision was a power, Philip, Albert, and Thomas put it in a context of relations to the soul, the other powers, and the object of those powers in such a way as to make it a very poor candidate for a homunculus. *Liberum arbitrium*, as they described it, is simply too dependent in its being to be the kind of “miniature agent” or “imp” whose creation would invalidate the definition.

⁴⁶ It is worth noting that they do not give it a status as a *substance* or independent being. Although their views on the relation of the soul and its powers differ, neither Philip, Albert, nor Thomas would agree that *liberum arbitrium* is an ontologically separate substance from reason, will, or the rational soul. It cannot exist without them.

What about the claim that asserting the existence of a “choosing faculty” is nothing but the verbal equivalent of saying that men choose? If this were all that “free decision,” defined as a power, could mean, then there would be an indefinite number of powers: the “singing power,” the “dancing power,” the power to hiccup, the power to snore, etc. However, Philip, Albert, and Thomas argue for the existence of free decision in such a way as to rule out the existence of an indefinite number of powers. Free decision is not only designated as a power, but its designation is used to create a closed system of rational powers. Philip and Thomas use their identification of free decision as a power to reduce the number of powers proper to the rational soul, since Philip reduces the number from three (reason, will, and *liberum arbitrium*) to one, and Thomas from three to two. Albert, also, includes a principle that reduces the number of principles of action. The essential ordering of reason, will, and free decision that he describes leaves no room for more players because these powers form a complete and closed whole. Free decision, then, is not on the same plane as “the power to cook macaroni” – unlike the latter, which is a mere verbal restatement of an activity, free decision, as our authors defined it, completes the account of the soul.

Philip, Thomas, and Albert developed their accounts of free decision as a power in such a way as to avoid both the homunculus fallacy and the problem of insignificant speech. They were able to accomplish this because of their methods: because they asked about free decision’s relation to reason and will and because they were concerned with the power/habit question.

B. Does the attempt to find a genus for free decision ignore the real problems of human freedom?

The question of whether free decision is a power or a habit, and the consequent question of how this power or habit is related to reason and will, can seem both unimportant and anachronistic. Many authors who discuss theories of free choice today believe they can explain free choice (and, in some measure, prove that it exists) only by giving a step-by-step account of a choice in which not all of the steps are necessitated. Why, then, make use of the archaic power/habit terminology, and the method based on this, when what is needed is a description of a *process*, the process of the human action? The general thinking about free choice is that the explanation should be made in terms of the process of choice, and that the primary question to be asked is whether reason determines will, or will determines reason, in this process.

Because of this general assumption that the best method for expounding human free choice is a description of the activity of choosing, there has been a strong tendency to believe that the medieval authors are also trying to describe a process in their discussions of *liberum arbitrium*. Colleen McCluskey, for instance, writes that thirteenth century authors were chiefly concerned “to specify the psychological mechanism (or mechanisms) that allows for the possibility of acting freely.”⁴⁷ Robert Pasnau says something very similar about Aquinas: “His interest is in the mechanisms that make free decision possible. In his view, the best argument for the existence of free decision is a clear understanding of these mechanisms.”⁴⁸ Odon Lottin, who has written the most comprehensive study of the idea of *liberum arbitrium*

⁴⁷ McCluskey, “Human Action and Human Freedom,” 9.

⁴⁸ Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, 220-221.

in the middle ages, shows a similar tendency. His view is that the concern to express free decision's relation to reason and will is, by nature, an attempt to clarify the process of human action. As Lottin sees it, the real issue in trying to understand *liberum arbitrium* is the need to uncover how reason and will function in any given human choice.⁴⁹ Whether free decision is a power or not, Lottin reasons, is a secondary concern, not only for us, but even for the authors themselves.⁵⁰

It may be convenient to describe the medieval treatments of free decision as progressively complex descriptions of human action, and to claim that the center of the debate was the exact relationship between reason and will in *bringing about* the human act, but to claim that Albert, Philip, and Thomas are offering action theories when they write about *liberum arbitrium* is to ignore their description of their own work. In their treatises on the definition of free decision, they do not ask themselves *how* the human act takes place but *what* free decision *is*. Thomas is very interested in the sequence of psychic events that form the human action – but he writes about this sequence in his treatise on moral acts, in the second part of the *Summa theologiae*; he does not touch on it at all in his treatise on *liberum arbitrium* in the first part. Even Albert, who does include a short description of the sequence of action in his definition-question, does not do so until he has completed an exhausting series of forty-one *argumenta*, all directed to the nature of free decision rather than to its activity.

⁴⁹ Lottin, *Psychologie*, 11.

⁵⁰ “L’importance de l’exposé de Philippe est non pas d’avoir déterminé si le libre arbitre est une puissance ou un habitus, car c’est là une question secondaire; mais d’avoir souligné la prépondérance de la volonté dans la nature du libre arbitre et l’unité de la faculté rationnelle.” Ibid., 79.

It is tempting for a modern reader to forget that the genus of free decision (power or habit?) must be identified before the species of free decision (reason, will, or neither?) is investigated. It is also tempting to forget that a power of the soul, in the medieval sense, is not a mere co-relative of an action – otherwise the soul would have an indefinitely large number of powers. To define a power is not the same philosophical work as to describe the activity of that power: the task of defining a power requires more careful ontology, and in particular a more formal structure of relations, both of the power to its object and of the power to other powers.

Are Lottin and Pasnau right, though, in saying that the *real* significance of discussion of *liberum arbitrium* lay in theorizing about the process of choice, however little this was recognized? Is it true that the *potentia* definitions are unimportant, and that we should instead focus on the activities of reason and will in the act of choice?

To answer, we should think about the significance of the power/habit question and ask whether something is lost when this distinction is rejected. The problem of human freedom has always involved the roles of reason and will in choice, but the thirteenth-century authors seem to have shown considerable insight when they realized that providing a formal description of human action is not the only significant task in dealing with human freedom.

Defining free decision as a power allows for a strong connection between the agent and his action. This connection is not given by any account of a sequence of events, such as “First Evelyn deliberated, and then she chose.” Consider the statement “Evelyn chooses.” If this statement is true, it connects choice to Evelyn, as an agent. But she is not always choosing, and her choice does not last over time. Thus, the truth is only “Evelyn sometimes

chooses.” And this statement says no more about Evelyn’s nature than any number of similar statements such as “Evelyn sometimes buys books,” or “Evelyn sometimes trims her toenails.” However, once the statement has been changed to “Evelyn has the power to choose,” (if “power” here means a certain actually existing mediator between the soul and a particular kind of object) the assertion makes a stronger connection of action to agent. Such a statement, an assertion of a power that exists outside the temporary activity of choosing, allows us to argue further, so that we might say “As a human being, I am by nature rational. And the rational nature gives rise to the power to choose.” Such a statement connects person and choice through a consideration of the person’s essence as well as through a consideration of the passing activity of choice. As long as free decision is carefully designated as a power, there is a way to connect it with what the agent is, not just with what the agent does or how the agent acts.

A second benefit of the power designation is that it allowed our thinkers to relate reason and will to free decision in other ways – not just by a consideration of their roles as preliminaries or participants in the activity of choosing. This is a theme that will be more fully developed in the next chapter, but here it can be said, in passing, that Philip, Thomas, and Albert are able to do *more* than give a process with numbered steps in which reason and will play certain defined roles (e.g. first Evelyn’s reason informed her will of the situation, then Evelyn’s will preferred one alternative, then Evelyn’s reason made a judgment of that preference...) They can show the relation of reason and will to one another *as powers*, rather than merely discussing the relation of their activities, and because they treat reason, will, and free decision as powers they can also look at their relations to their objects. In fact, not only

could they consider and compare the objects of reason, will, and free decision: they were required to, since as good Aristotelians they were convinced that a power was defined, and distinguished from other powers, by its object.⁵¹

Medieval thinkers after Thomas soon stopped asking the power/habit question, just as they soon stopped paying attention to the task of finding a definition of *liberum arbitrium* at all.⁵² However, though the method I have remarked upon here may have been transitory, is was nonetheless real. Philip, Albert, and Thomas thought it necessary to clarify the nature of reason, will, and free decision *before* they systematically discussed the activities of reason, will, and free decision in choice. This is made abundantly clear from the organization of the texts we have been considering. Philip's question "on the acts of judging and willing" is the second in his treatise, since his question on the definition of *liberum arbitrium* is first;⁵³ Albert also writes about the acts of free decision after he finished discussing its definition;⁵⁴ and Thomas's famous treatise on human acts in *Summa theologiae I-II* cannot take place until he has completed his treatment of human nature in the first part.⁵⁵

Summary of Chapter 3

Philip, Albert, and Thomas ask rather formulaic questions when they begin talking about free decision: they want to know if it is a power or a habit, then whether it is the same

⁵¹ Aristotle's discussion of how to define a power is in *De anima* II.4, 415a14-22.

⁵² For more on this trend, see Lottin, *Psychologie* I, 225.

⁵³ See *Summa de bono*, Q 2, 2 (W I, 165-182). The question on the definition of free decision begins on page 165; the question on the act of judging and willing begins on page 179.

⁵⁴ In the *De homine*, Albert's article *Quid sit liberum arbitrium secundum substantiam et diffinitionem* is the second in question 3; his article *De actibus liberi arbitrii* follows it. (C 27.2, pages 508 and 517). In his *Sentences* commentary on book II, distinction 24, Albert's article on whether free decision is a power is article 5, his article on the act of free decision is article 7 (B 27, 401 and following).

⁵⁵ Thomas's treatment of free decision in the *Summa theologiae* is located at I.83; his famous treatment of the human act is located at I-II 8-17.

as reason, will, or both. These questions should not be dismissed as a mere obsession with (now-outdated) terminology: their introduction indicates a genuine change in the method of approaching free decision. By asking these questions, the thirteenth-century authors more clearly identified the ground of their interest as the human soul rather than the human action. Free decision, as defined by these particular questions, became part of a unified vision of the human soul and formed a connection between human essence and human action. Since our authors viewed free decision as a power they began to deal with other ways of relating free decision to the reason and will as co-powers in the human soul. The innovations that took place in this realm are the subject of Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: A New Use for the Characteristics of Reason and Will in Accounting for Free Decision

The previous chapter showed that our three thirteenth-century authors took a new approach in considering the relation of free decision to reason and will. Anselm and Peter Lombard discussed reason and will while explaining free decision, but only because the activities of reasoning and willing are pre-requisites in a morally responsible choice. Philip, Albert, and Thomas, however, asked whether free decision could be identical to reason and will, and about the relation of these powers to one another *as powers*. In their accounts of free decision, they dealt with reason and will not merely as “deliberation and desire,” which are stages in the act of choosing, but as powers of the human soul in their own right. This new way of incorporating reason and will into the discussion of *liberum arbitrium* opened the door for further innovation: it became possible for our authors to consider new features of reason and will in investigating human freedom. Once reason and will had entered the discussion as powers, authors could draw on their characteristic immateriality and on their unique relations to their objects in accounting for free decision. This chapter explores several features of reason and will which were brought into the discussion in a new way, asking what they were and how they were used to provide the causal account of free decision that had become a goal for the thirteenth-century authors.

I should explain at the outset that this chapter must remain limited in scope. No one could explain and insightfully compare the teaching of all five of these authors regarding reason and will in a single chapter. (Actually, I suspect that no one could do it in a work of any length, but I may be wrong.) The question being asked, we must remember, is not about

the authors' accounts of reason and will but about their use of reason and will to give an account of *liberum arbitrium*. Similarly, it is not possible to compare the complete teaching of all five of these authors regarding the activity of choice, insofar as this activity is considered to be a result or gestalt of a series of psychic events or activities. It is true that each of our authors says or implies that a certain sequence of events takes place in the act of choosing (that is to say, all of them provide an "action theory") but it cannot be my task to detail the variations in the sequence of deliberation, desire, decision, and judgment as each of the five authors described it. Thus Chapter 4 is not about reason, about will, or about the sequence in which these powers perform their activities when a choice happens; instead, it deals with how reason and will make their appearance in texts whose defined subject matter is *liberum arbitrium*.¹ The focus, therefore, is on how our authors made use of certain characteristics of reason and will in their treatises on free decision – not on how reason and will interact to produce a free choice. Another way of phrasing this clarification is as follows: this chapter, like the others, is about a change in the *method* the authors used to define free decision – it is not intended as an exegesis of the nature or activities of reason and will. To some extent, of course, answering the question about method will involve dealing with such questions. But these must be brought in as needed, and cannot be exhaustively treated.

Chapter 4 is divided into two major sections: one on the way reason was used by our authors and one on the way will was used. Section 1 details the new characteristics of reason that were brought into the debate on *liberum arbitrium* by Philip, Albert, and Thomas, who

¹ Imagine a free decision treatise as a drama written by the medieval author as playwright. The question asked in this chapter is this: When reason and will come on stage, what roles are they playing?

discussed reason's immateriality, its ability to reach opposite conclusions, and its response to its object. Section 2 points to the new characteristics of will that were brought into the discussion of free decision. The characteristic that stands out most sharply in Philip, Albert, and Thomas is the response of the will to its object, the good.

Section I: New Characteristics of Reason Used to Explain Free Decision

If we think carefully about the activity of choice, it is easy to see that human reason must provide an awareness of what might be chosen, together with its salient characteristics and those of any alternatives. But can human rationality be of any use in understanding the *principle* of free choice – that is, does it have a place in accounting for *liberum arbitrium* as a power as well as an event? If we compare Anselm and Peter Lombard to Philip, Albert, and Thomas, we can see that there is a significant difference in the role reason plays in accounting for the power of free decision. In the first part of this section on reason, I establish that a change did indeed take place: Anselm and Peter Lombard made use of reason in defining free decision only by considering its activity as a moral judge, while Philip, Albert, and Thomas considered other facets of reason such as its immateriality and self-moving capacity in order to find out what exactly free decision was. In the second part of this section on reason, I will discuss some of the possible explanations for this change.

Part I: Changes in the characteristics of reason used to explain liberum arbitrium

Was there truly a change in how reason was used to account for *liberum arbitrium*? As before, it will be best to go through texts of each author in some detail as we search their

treatises on *liberum arbitrium* for alterations in the role given to reason. A preliminary *caveat* is necessary: Thomas Aquinas, following Aristotle, is careful to distinguish *intellect* from *reason*. Intellect deals with primary truths, while reason is responsible for syllogizing based on these truths.² Albert makes this distinction as well, though somewhat less carefully, and so, to a limited extent, does Philip. However, the other authors, especially Anselm, are not particularly careful in making this distinction, and thus, in this section, I will not be particular about it either. When I use the term “reason” I mean to indicate the rational faculty of man in general, not his particular ability to syllogize or to judge. Let us turn, then, to a consideration of how reason (or intellect) appears in five different accounts of *liberum arbitrium*.

A. Anselm and Peter: Reason as Moral Judge

1. The basics of Anselm and Peter’s treatment of reason

Anselm believes that reason enables free decision to exist: free decision belongs properly to the rational nature *because of reason*, regardless of the state of a creature’s will.³ In what way, however, does reason make free decision possible? Anselm describes reason as the power that provides awareness of the “rectitude” which is the key part of his definition.

What, therefore, is to prevent us from having the power to preserve rectitude of will for the sake of rectitude itself, even in the absence of rectitude, as long as we have

² To see this distinction in Thomas, see *De veritate* 17.1 or *In De Trinitate* 6.1. For secondary sources on this topic, see J. Peghaire, *Intellectus et ratio selon s. Thomas d’Aquin*; and John Wippel, *Metaphysical Themes in Thomas Aquinas*, pages 60-65.

³ “Etiam si absit rectitudo voluntatis, non tamen rationalis natura minus habet quod suum est.” *De liberate arbitrii* 3 (S 1, 212; Williams, 37).

reason, by which we can know rectitude, and will, by which we can retain it? For freedom of choice consists of reason and will.⁴

If man did not have reason (*per impossibile*) he could not recognize God's gift of rectitude of will, and thus he would be incapable of preserving it for its own sake. So free decision, as "the ability to preserve rectitude for its own sake," depends on reason to make the object of will present to it. Thus for Anselm reason's role in accounting for free decision is simple: it is that by which we know rectitude, or recognize what is righteous.⁵ Whether Anselm means that reason's role is to recognize the right course of action (the one the agent ought to perform) or the right ordering of ends and means to one another, or some third option, need not be decided here. The main fact with which we are concerned is that, in his treatise defining *liberum arbitrium*, Anselm makes use of reason solely as a "rectitude awareness power." He is not concerned with any other characteristics of human reason in accounting for free decision: the ability to know rectitude is the beginning and the end of his concern with reason.⁶

Peter Lombard also considers reason as a necessary condition for free decision – this is why he denies it to animals other than man. "Brute animals do not have it [*liberum*

⁴ "Quid prohibet nos habere potestatem servandi rectitudinem voluntatis propter ipsam rectitudinem, etiam ipsa absente rectitudine, quamdiu et ratio in nobis est qua eam valemus cognoscere, et voluntas qua illam tenere possumus? Ex his enim constat praefata libertas arbitrii." *De libertate arbitrii* 4 (S I, 214; Williams 38).

⁵ In *De concordia* I.6, when Anselm gives an example of a choice, he gives the same role to reason: "Reason, by means of which rectitude is understood, teaches that this rectitude ought always to be cherished for its own sake, and that whatever is extended in order to induce the forsaking of rectitude ought to be despised." [Ratio, qua intelligitur rectitude, docet rectitudinem illam eiusdem rectitudinis amore semper esse servandam, et quidquid obtinetur ut deseratur esse contemnendum, atque voluntatis est ut ipsa quoque reprobet ac eligat, quemadmodum rationis intellectus monstrat.] (S II, 257; trans 193, lines 13-17).

⁶ One way of showing that this is the only truth about reason which Anselm considers relevant is to use technology: an electronic search of *De libertate arbitrii* suggests that the passage quoted above is the only time the word *ratio* is used substantively (other than to refer to an argument or piece of reasoning). In other words, Anselm only refers to the power of reason once, to make this single point.

arbitrium], because they lack reason.”⁷ What is it about reason that makes free decision possible? It seems that Peter’s answer would be similar to Anselm’s. Reason is part of Peter’s account of free decision because of its role as judge of the moral value of an action. Peter tells us, in the sentence immediately following his definition, that

It [*liberum arbitrium*]...is called *arbitrium* with regard to reason, of which it is a faculty (or power) and to which it belongs to discern good and evil.⁸

“To discern good and evil” – for Peter, this is the activity of reason which helps to explain *liberum arbitrium*, and this judgment is the explanation for the term *arbitrium* in its name. Reason is needed for free choice because it presents the judgment or “sentence” that declares the moral value of each alternative.

Anselm’s use of reason as a defining element is extremely limited, and thus it is fairly easy to show that he was interested in reason only insofar as it acts in making moral judgments. Peter Lombard, however, provides a longer account of reason, its parts, and their role in choice. Even in this longer account, though, he does not make use of any new characteristics (that is, characteristics other than reason’s ability to judge the moral value of an action) of reason. A little more detail can help us see this.

2. *Peter’s discussion of superior and inferior reason*

After his definition of free decision in book II, distinction 24, Peter Lombard works his way through an Augustinian discussion of the powers involved in consent. In doing so, he talks about the higher and lower parts of reason: *superior pars rationis* and *inferior pars rationis*. He uses a number of passages from Augustine to discuss the nature of these parts

⁷ “Bruta animalia non habent, quia ratione carent.” *Sentences* II d. 24. 3.2 (Br. I, 453, line 13).

⁸ “Et dicitur liberum quantum ad voluntatem, quae ad utrumlibet flecti potest; arbitrium vero quantum ad rationem, cuius est facultas vel potentia illa, cuius etiam est discernere inter bonum et malum.” *Sentences* II. 24.3 (Br I, 453, lines 1-3).

and their role in times of temptation.⁹ The inferior part of reason is true reason – not sensuality – but it has been deputized for the purpose of dealing with bodily and temporal things, while the superior part of reason remains in contemplation of eternal truths.¹⁰ When superior reason consents to sin, the sin is more serious.

These two kinds of reason help explain the process of temptation. Temptation arises from sensuality, the “serpent” within our souls, and then is either accepted or rejected by inferior reason (the equivalent of Eve in the individual soul) and then ratified or rejected by superior reason (the “Adam” in the individual soul). In Augustine’s description, when reason consents, sin becomes real.

At times reason checks and suppresses, in many ways, even desire that has been aroused. When this happens, we do not fall into sin, but we are crowned for our modest struggle. But if reason consents and decides that what desire has stirred up should be carried out, man is expelled from the whole happy life as if from paradise.¹¹

It is fairly clear that, in the passages Peter quotes, Augustine is not writing in a context that requires him to make a division between reason and will. The two parts of reason are said to consent, restrain, desire, and do; but they also contemplate and have knowledge and wisdom.

Peter Lombard’s discussion of the two parts of reason is undertaken for the express purpose of discussing the process of temptation. Specifically, Peter has the goal of discussing how an agent consents to temptation and how he has the ability to resist

⁹ For more on this passage, and Peter’s sources for it, see Verveyn, *Das Problem*, 57-59. See also Robert Mulligan, “*Ratio superior* and *Ratio Inferior*: the Historical Background,” for a general discussion of these two parts of reason and the origin and development of the theory.

¹⁰ Among other texts used, Lombard quotes several passages from book 12 of Augustine’s *De trinitate*. The discussion of inferior and superior reason seems to show something of Augustine’s neo-Platonist heritage: like Plotinus, Augustine seems to envision both a “descended” and an “undescended” soul.

¹¹ “Aliquando ratio viriliter etiam commotam cupiditatem refrenat atque compescit; quod cum fit, non labimur in peccatum, sed cum aliquanta luctatione coronamur. Si autem ratio consentiat, et quod libido commoverit, faciendum esse decernat, ab omni beata vita tanquam de paradiso expellitur homo.” Augustine, *De Genesi contra Manichaeos*. II, c. 14; as quoted by Peter Lombard in *Sentences II*. d 24. 12 (Br I, 460, lines 4-8). For the actual passage from Augustine, see CSEL 91, 142-143, lines 8-13.

temptation. Although Peter mentions the activities of knowing, contemplating, and judging, he does not actually make use of these abilities of reason in his account of temptation. The abilities that interest him are the power to resist or consent to temptation: abilities that seem to belong to will rather than reason, and which we will look at in the section of this chapter on will.

3. Conclusion to the discussion of Peter and Anselm

Peter Lombard and Anselm include reason in their discussions of free decision because rational judgment is necessary for moral responsibility. If an agent is to be held responsible for consenting to temptation or for resisting it, he must be intellectually aware of the moral value of the available alternatives – thus, we do not praise and blame animals or the insane because they are incapable of forming the required judgment. When Anselm and Peter describe free decision as God’s gift enabling man to resist temptation, they include reason in their account because it is that by which man knows right from wrong, and without that knowledge temptation is not possible. Free decision is based, then, on a rational recognition of what is right, since only someone who recognizes what righteousness is can choose it, for its own sake, over against the alternative.

This rather limited consideration of reason is consistent with the context and goals that Peter and Anselm had. These authors discuss free decision in the context of Adam’s sin, as we saw in Chapter 1, and in such a context the moral judgment of reason is needed to explain the principles behind Adam’s choice. Furthermore, we should recall that Anselm and Peter were dealing with free decision as a given fact, one which is guaranteed by the facts of moral responsibility and divine justice. In this way of viewing free decision’s existence, the

act of reason by which a person becomes morally responsible is crucial, because moral responsibility is the foundation for our knowledge of free decision's existence.

However logical it may have been to consider reason's activity as moral judge, however, it remains striking that this is the *only* activity of reason which Peter and Anselm use. Implicitly, perhaps, they rely on reason to provide awareness of reality as well as a judgment of the moral qualities of a prospective action. But it is fair to say that, in their emphasis on moral judgment, Peter and Anselm ignored or avoided other aspects of human reason. While Peter does spend some time discussing superior and inferior reason, he does so because he is considering the act of resistance or consent, acts which most authors would not attribute to reason *per se*. Though both Anselm and Peter think that free decision "consists in" or "is composed of" reason and will, the "reason" that enters into their definition is solely the giver of a moral sentence.

B. Philip, Albert, and Thomas: Reason as a Cause of Freedom

Our thirteenth-century authors made a radical change to this way of using reason to define and understand *liberum arbitrium*. None of them denies that reason provides the moral judgment which is so crucial to Peter and Anselm's accounts. However, each of them insists that reason has its own freedom.¹² While explaining this freedom, our three thirteenth-century authors point to other characteristics of reason: its ability to conceive contraries, its immateriality, and its relation to its object, truth. This last relation, especially, seems to limit reason's freedom in one way while making its freedom possible in another.

¹² For a discussion of other thirteenth-century authors' views on the respective freedoms of reason and will, see Lottin, *Psychologie*, 224.

The freedom of reason is not a side issue: once they have argued that reason is free, Philip, Albert, and Thomas use this idea to account for the power of *liberum arbitrium* in a richer way. All three authors believe that reason contributes to *liberum arbitrium*, and it does so not only as a principle of judgment, *arbitrium*, but also as a principle of freedom, *liberum*. In the course of their explanations, Philip, Albert, and Thomas break away from the limited conception of reason as judge to look at a new realm of reason's characteristics and bring them to bear on the questions of human freedom. Let us look at some texts in detail to see how each of our authors achieved this.

1. Philip

Philip's first discussion of reason in his treatise on free decision involves the question of whether free decision is the same as reason, present in it, or composed of it as an element. We have already discussed Philip's conclusions in the previous chapter – he thinks that free decision is the same power as reason. However, the novelty of the questions asked about reason leads us to suspect that reason's role in accounting for *liberum arbitrium* has shifted. Our suspicion is verified when Philip in the body of his article directly opposes the Lombard's doctrine that free decision is called "free" because of will and "decision" because of reason. He says, rather pointedly, that reason can also be called free:

Freedom is said commonly of both. For each one (namely reason and will) looks at what is to be done, and on account of its immateriality it has its freedom of doing what it wants.¹³

This passage shows that Philip has begun to explore the role of reason in *liberum arbitrium* in a different way than his traditional authorities did. When he says that freedom belongs to

¹³ "Dicitur tamen libertas commune quid utrique. Propter quod cum utraque, scilicet ratio et voluntas, respiciat faciendum, propter immaterialitatem eius libertatem habet faciendi quod vult." *Summa de Bono* Q 2 (W I, 173, lines 255-257).

reason, not just to will, his words echo one of his preliminary arguments, with which he now seems to agree:

The Philosopher says that the possible intellect is able to understand contraries, because it is separate according to nature or separable from both. So also, in the same way, the practical intellect can be related to opposites, because it is freed from being bound to matter. Generally, therefore, every separable thing is free in its act. But both reason and will are of this kind.¹⁴

Here, Philip considers the practical reasoning that is involved in choice, but *not* by dwelling on its activity in providing a moral judgment. Instead, he emphasizes its participation in the essential characteristic of reason as Aristotle defines it in the *De anima*: reason has the ability to receive contraries, and consequently it is immaterial.¹⁵ Thus, in arguing that reason is free, Philip points to reason's essential immateriality, and its consequent essential ability to deal with contraries, as *sources* of freedom in practical reasoning.

Having discussed the freedom of reason, Philip compares it to the freedom of will – an innovation that naturally follows from the notion that both reason and will are free. He compares reason and will by considering their relations to their objects, and concludes that will is more free than reason.

Judgment, or the act of reason, although it is from a principle within us, nevertheless depends on the cognition of a thing which is received into us from the thing itself;

¹⁴“ Nam sicut dicit Philosophus quod intellectus possibilis potest intelligere contraria, quia est separatus secundum naturam aut separabilis ab utroque, ita erit in practico intellectu quod potest in opposita, quia liberatur ab obligatione materie. Generaliter ergo omne separabile est liberum in suo actu. Sed tam ratio quam voluntas sunt huiusmodi.” *Summa de bono* Q 2 (W I, 170, lines 157-162) Although this passage is in the *argumenta*, it seems to be made with Philip's own voice and not that of an objector – he begins the argument with the words “Ostensio, autem...”

¹⁵ “Since everything is a possible object of thought, mind in order, as Anaxagoras says, to dominate, that is, to know, must be pure from all admixture; for the co-presence of what is alien to its nature is a hindrance and a block...Thus that in the soul which is called mind (by mind I mean that whereby the soul thinks and judges) is, before it thinks, not actually any real thing. For this reason it cannot reasonably be regarded as blended with the body: if so, it would acquire some quality, e.g. warmth or cold, or even have an organ like the sensitive faculty: as it is, it has none.” *De anima* 3.4, 429a16-26.

will, however, simply is in us. And so there is not as much freedom with regard to reason, as far as its act is concerned.¹⁶

Reason is less free than will because it is less *independent* than will: it depends on its object, which comes from outside the soul. Philip will discuss this dependence more clearly later on, where he responds to an objection by showing that reason is “coerced” by truth; however, will is not “coerced” by the good. “Truth, however, is the principle of the truth which is in the soul and therefore forces reason to consent to it.”¹⁷

How does truth *coerce* reason? Philip takes it for granted that this is easy to understand, and, in fact, it is. Numerous examples of coercion by truth surround us. There are self-evident truths such as the principle of non-contradiction to which we must agree, if not in words, at least in fact. There is also a kind of coercion in proof: when an argument works, it necessarily produces conviction. Hence we say things like, “I’m forced to admit that you are right, and that I was wrong.” Even in matters that are not scientifically proven, judgments, such as the judgment that this man can’t be trusted, or that this potato is rotten, cannot be willed away. Reason responds to reality obediently and in a single fashion; it seems to have no alternatives in making this response.

Philip does not seem to regard this coercion by an exterior object as a bad thing. Nor does such coercion destroy the freedom of reason, which is rooted in immateriality. The coercion of reason by truth simply means that reason is less free than will is, because,

¹⁶“Iudicium enim aut ratio actus, licet sit a principio intra et ita in nobis est, tamen actus dependet a cognitione rei que ab ipsa re accipitur in nobis; voluntas autem simpliciter in nobis est et ita non tanta libertas secundum rationem quantum ad actus eius.” *Summa de bono*, Q 2, 2.a (W I, 175, lines 302-305).

¹⁷“Veritas autem principium est veritatis que est in anima et ideo cogit rationem ad suum consensum.” Ibid. (W I, 177, lines 384-385).

although reason is not bound to an organ, it is bound to respond to reality in a way that will is not.

To summarize Philip's innovations as succinctly as possible, let us say this: Philip does not limit himself to claiming that reason is the moral judge of a potential action. He deals with reason as able to conceive of contraries and as immaterial – thus Philip thinks, in opposition to Peter Lombard, that reason can truly be called “free.” He also compares the freedom of reason and will by discussing reason's relation to its object. Since, as we discussed in the previous chapter, Philip goes on to identify the power of free decision with *both* reason and will, the freedom of reason he discusses here is, in fact, part of his complete account of free decision.

2. Albert

Often Albert simply accepts Peter Lombard's characterization of reason as judge. Like Peter, he talks about reason's role of judging the moral quality of the proposed action before the choice is actually made:

The first [thing that happens] is the act of reason, which by considering shows the desirable things to the soul and discerns what the desirable is.¹⁸

Reason judges of the desirable, however, as would a judge who is required to follow laws and standards in order to determine good and evil:

¹⁸ “Notandum est quod quattuor succedunt sibi in opere rationalis animae. Quorum primum est actus rationis, qui considerando proponit animae appetibilia et decernit, quid appetibile sit.” *De homine* 3.2 (C 27.2, 513, lines 45-48). In the *Summa*, Albert describes reason as “judicante et arbitrante et determinate quid agendum sit et qualiter.” Q 91 m 2, ad 1 (B 33,186). See also *Summa* II. Q 94. m 1. In his *Sentences* commentary, Albert mentions “to inquire, to dispose and ordain, to judge and to sentence” as the acts of reason [Inquirere, disponere et ordinare, dijudicare et sententiare, actus sunt rationis.] (II. 25.5, *ad quest.* 1) These acts take place before choice: “Choosing takes place after judgment, and before willingvcompletely.” [Eligere (quod secundum Augustinum est liberi arbitrii) est post iudicium, et ante complete velle.] Ibid., *solution*, last sentence (B 27, 402).

It is one thing to decide [*arbitrari*] and another thing to judge [*iudicare*]. For the judge in judgment holds to the order of the law, and this properly belongs to reason, which is a judge of the desirable. Therefore reason, insofar as it is a judge, always rejects evil.¹⁹

Here, like Peter Lombard, Albert shows that reason always judges an act as good or evil before will consents to (or dissents from) that act.

However, although Albert emphasizes reason's activity as a moral judge (an activity which takes place prior to choice properly speaking), he does not follow Peter Lombard to the extent that he regards moral judgment as the *only* characteristic of reason that is relevant in a discussion of free decision. Instead, he follows Philip in claiming that reason has its own freedom; and, in his questions on whether animals have free decision, Albert draws out further aspects of reason that cause free decision to be what it is.

Albert considers reason to be free by virtue of its immateriality, and he compares its freedom with that of will, just as Philip does. In the *Sentences* commentary, as well as in *De homine*, Albert explains that reason is free from coercion by matter because it is not tied to an organ. Still, it is not as free as will is, because it must respond to the truth in a certain way. He makes this explanation much more clearly than Philip did – Albert was, after all, the better teacher of the two. The passage from the *Sentences* commentary, especially, is worth quoting in its entirety:

As the Philosopher says, “The free is that which is for its own sake, and not for the sake of another,”²⁰ and so that which is under some obligation to another is not free. But the

¹⁹ “Sciendum tamen quod aliud est arbitrari et aliud est iudicare. Iudex enim in iudicio ordinem iuris tenet, et hoc convenit proprie rationi, quae iudex est appetibilium, et ideo ratio secundum quod est iudex, semper dissentit malo.” *De homine*, 3.2 (C 27.2, 513, lines 58-62).

²⁰ The passage to which Albert refers is *Metaphysics* I.2, 982b25-28: “That man is free who exists for his own sake and not for another’s.” I should note that I am here translating Albert’s words, “Liber est qui est causa sui, et non causa alterius,” by taking *causa* in the ablative case, as meaning “on account of, for the sake of,” so that the translation fits with the meaning of Aristotle’s text. A more common translation by an English speaker

powers affixed to organs are bound to them, not being powerful in their acts beyond the nature of the receiving organ: just as the seeing power is bound to the pupil, and cannot receive anything beyond what the pupil is fitted to receive – and so it is also in the other powers. But all the powers of the rational soul (which are in no way affixed to an organ) are absolutely apart from any such bondage. Another kind of bondage comes from the object, when it makes the power consent to it – just as all the apprehensive powers of the rational soul, like intellect, and reason, and things of this kind, are convinced by reason to consent to the true: and therefore the rational powers are not for their own sake, but for the sake of something else.²¹

Thus reason is free in one way and not free in another – Albert agrees with Philip that reason has less freedom than will does because it is compelled or “convinced” to consent to the true.²² Philip’s thoughts on the freedom of reason were not idle speculation: they became directly relevant to his theory of free decision because he viewed reason and free decision as the same power. But what can we say of Albert’s account? Does reason’s freedom help to explain what free decision is? At first, it seems that it cannot, because according to Albert the power of *liberum arbitrium* has its own freedom, a freedom which does not need to be derived from elsewhere in the soul. In fact, Albert will sometimes say that free decision is

would read “The free is that which is the cause of itself, not the cause of another.” However, this rendering does not appear to fit Albert’s meaning in the passage. In other texts, however, Albert’s use of the phrase “causa sui” does seem best translated at “cause of itself.”

²¹ “Sicut dicit Philosophus, ‘liber est qui est causa sui, et non causa alterius: et quod est obligatum alteri, non est liberum.’ Unde potentiae affixae organo sunt obligatae illis, non potentes in actum ultra naturam receptibilis organi: sicut visiva potentia alligata pupillae, non potest ultra hoc quod pupilla nata est recipere, et sic est etiam de aliis. Sed a tali obligatione sunt absolutae omnes potentiae animae rationalis, quarum nulla est affixa organo. Altera obligatio alteri est ab objecto, quando convincit potentiam de consensu in ipsum, sicut omnes potentiae apprehensivae animae rationalis, ut intellectus, et ratio, et huiusmodi, convincuntur rationibus ad consentiendum in verum: et ideo non sunt causa sui, sed alterius.” *Sentences* commentary, II 25.5 (B 27, 401-2). Albert’s explanation in the *De homine* has some interesting minor differences – he does not make use of Aristotle’s definition of the free – but is substantially the same: “Potentiae enim organicae propter affixionem ad materiam obligationem habent ad immutationem corporis, et non sunt omnino libere. Qua obligatione non astringitur ratio, cum non sit potentia organica. Cogitur vero ab objecto exteriori consentire vero et dissentire falso, et hoc contingit rationi a proprietate illa qua iudex est. Iudicis enim est in inquirendo et discernendo sequi ordinem iuris et rei veritatem.” *De homine* 3.2, ad 23 (C 27.2, 515, lines 72-80).

²² McCluskey concludes that, since Albert believes that reason necessarily responds to truth, “the constraints present in intellect do not allow the intellect to play a role in the explanation of freedom.” (“Albertus Magnus,” 246.) I think this is a little too extreme: in the *Sentences* commentary, for instance, Albert notes that, without reason, there could be neither will nor free decision, quoting Damascene in support. (*Sentences* commentary, II.25.1 solutio (B 27,423).

itself the cause of the freedom of reason, because reason is free by participation in the freedom of free decision.²³ However, at least in *De homine*, Albert does present reason as part of the causal explanation of free decision. The exposition of this passage shows another innovation in Albert's use of reason.

Free decision and the Capacity for the bonum honestum

In his *De homine* question on whether animals have free choice, Albert shows that a specific ability of reason – its ability to conceive of the good absolutely – gives rise to *liberum arbitrium*. In other words, free decision depends on a certain activity of reason which animal judgment is not able to perform, since animals cannot judge what is good and bad *simpliciter*, but only what is good and bad to sense:

Free decision takes its name from the freedom of judging the good and the bad in an unqualified sense. And judgment in these matters is based on the inherent notion [*rationem*] of the noble and the base rather than on the notion of the pleasant or the unpleasant...The judgment of brute animals is only about the pleasant and is not elevated to judging the noble, and because of this it is not absolutely free.²⁴

This passage proves that Albert is indeed an innovator who goes farther than Peter Lombard did: although he considers the judgment of good and bad to be an essential element in free decision, he claims that this judgment is free, and then offers a source or cause of *liberum arbitrium* by pointing to reason's ability to conceive of the noble (*honestum*) good. Reason, unlike the judging faculties which animals have, judges the noble and the base: it reaches beyond what is pleasant or immediate to the senses and finds a higher good. Reason's ability

²³ "Primo enim convenit libertas libero arbitrio per se, voluntati autem et rationi per participationem libertatis liberi arbitrii." *Sentences* commentary, II.91.3 ad 2 (B 33, 188).

²⁴ "Liberum enim arbitrium dicitur a libertate arbitrandi de bono simpliciter et malo simpliciter, magis arbitrando in ipsis secundum rationem honesti vel inhonesti quam secundum rationem delectantis vel non delectantis. ...Iudicium enim brutorum non est nisi de delectabili et non elevatur ad iudicium honesti, and propter hoc ipsum non est absolute liberum." *De homine* 3.1 (C 27.2,508, lines 7-19). The treatment of this same question in the *Summa theologiae* is more in line with Peter Lombard's reasoning: Albert says that brutes cannot have free decision because they lack counsel, judgment, sentencing, and will. II. 94.1 (B 33, 210-11).

to provide a moral judgment rests on a more fundamental characteristic: its ability to conceive abstractly, providing an account of what is good that is not limited to the sensory. This passage is popular with secondary authors, and for good reason, since it is most illuminating in showing *why* free decision belongs to mankind. Although it has no close analogue in Albert's other works, it seems to have a strong kinship with Thomas's treatments of *liberum arbitrium*.²⁵

Albert gives reason a more complex and deep role in his explanation of free decision than either Peter or Anselm could have done. For him, reason's relevance does not lie only in its ability to offer alternative courses of action and judge them to be either good or bad. This moral judgment depends on a capacity for the *bonum honestum* which is only possessed by a rational being whose intellect is not bound within the confines of a physical organ. Albert not only continued in Philip's footsteps by showing that reason has a share in freedom due to its immateriality – he also emphasized that reason's ability to conceive abstractly helps explain the fact that *liberum arbitrium* exists in human beings.

3. Thomas Aquinas

Albert and Philip, in pursuing their goal of giving a causal account of *liberum arbitrium*, point out three new characteristics of reason that help to explain free decision. Philip points to its immateriality and also describes its consequent ability to conceive of contraries, while Albert, in addition to emphasizing reason's immateriality, makes use of its

²⁵ Colleen McCluskey translates *secundum rationem honesti* as "in accordance with the concept of what has worth" and interprets this passage as an appeal to the human ability to set up long-term goals and order other things to these goals (McCluskey, *Worthy Constraints*, 522-524). I think Albert's meaning goes deeper: he refers to an awareness of the good 'simply' which is only possible for an immaterial power, thereby pointing to the capacity for the universal. To my mind, Pierre Michaud-Quantin is more convincing in interpreting this passage: as he sees it, Albert is not merely referring to the human ability to deliberate and order one's activities, but the ability to perceive abstractly. See *La psychologie*, 220 (quoted in full in Chapter 2, above).

ability to conceive the good in an abstract way. In addition, both Philip and Albert take time to discuss a fourth characteristic of reason that seems to limit its freedom: its “coercion” by truth. Does Thomas also make use of these four characteristics in offering his account of *liberum arbitrium*? The simple answer is yes.

There seem to be three ways in which reason comes into Aquinas’s account of free decision as a power.²⁶ First, Thomas uses reason’s ability to follow opposite courses to prove the existence of free decision – we see this argumentation especially in the *Summa theologiae*. Second, Thomas uses reason’s ability to conceive of the universal good to show why human choice is not determined to a single object. Third, like Philip and Albert, Thomas compares the ways in which reason and will relate to their objects, and talks about reason’s “coercion” by truth, intending, by the comparison, to shed light on the meaning of *liberum arbitrium*. Let us look at the texts in which he does this in some detail.

a) Thomas’s use of reason’s characteristics to show that free decision exists

In the introduction to his treatise on free decision in the *De homine*, Albert used certain characteristics of human rational judgment to show that animals do *not* have free decision. Thomas consistently takes a roughly similar approach: he uses certain characteristics of intellect to show that rational beings *do* have free decision.

In his *Sentences* commentary, Thomas argues that all intellectual beings, and only intellectual beings, have free decision. The argument can be summarized as follows:

²⁶ Perhaps I should note, once more, that I cannot describe the role reason plays in the *activity* of choice as it is assigned in the various Thomistic texts, particularly those in *Summa theologiae* I-II. In this work, I am limiting myself to texts that deal with *liberum arbitrium* as a power, proving its existence and drawing out its nature. In doing this, I follow Thomas Aquinas’s own practice: he dealt with free decision’s relation to reason and will in a “general and theoretical way” first, and treated the details of the process of human action separately. A good source to begin with for the particular topic of reason’s role in the activity of choosing is Daniel Westberg’s *Right Practical Reason*, part 3.

All agents are determined to action by a cognition, which sets out the end of the action. Some agents set out the end of their actions for themselves. Only agents with the ability to grasp the nature of the end (to know its *ratio*) and grasp the order of the means leading up to that end can set out their own ends. Therefore, only agents with intellect can set out their own ends.

As a result, only an agent with intellect can be the judge of its own actions. This judgment means that it is somehow in an agent's power to choose this action or that action.²⁷ Those who have this ability are said to have dominion over their acts, and we say that they have free decision, though only in regard to actions they determine for themselves.²⁸

Much could be said about this argument – why, for instance, does Thomas introduce the notion of judgment, *iudicium*, instead of simply concluding that what sets its own end is lord of its own action? In addition, it is interesting to note that this argument is meant to show the existence of free decision in God and in angels as well as in human beings. However, in this context I only wish to point out that Thomas uses certain characteristics of reason to prove that free decision belongs to rational beings: free decision depends on the rational ability to understand the nature of the end (*rationem finis cognoscat*) and the ability to understand the order of means which achieve that end (*ordinem eius quod est ad finem ipsum*). Without an end, action of any kind cannot happen, and without the ability to cognize the end in his own

²⁷ “Dicendum, quod nihil agit nisi secundum quod est in actu; et inde est quod oportet omne agens esse determinatum ad alteram partem: quod enim ad utrumlibet est aequaliter se habens, est quodammodo potentia respectu utriusque: et inde est, quod, ut dicit Commentator in 2 Phys. ab eo quod est ad utrumlibet, nihil sequitur, nisi determinetur. Determinatio autem agentis ad aliquam actionem, oportet quod sit ab aliqua cognitione praestituente finem illi actioni. Sed cognitio determinans actionem et praestituens finem, in quibusdam quidem conjuncta est, sicut homo finem suae actionis sibi praestituit; in quibusdam vero separata est, sicut in his quae agunt per naturam: rerum enim naturalium actiones non sunt frustra, ut in *II Physic*. probatur, sed ad certos fines ordinatae ab intellectu naturam instituyente, ut sic totum opus naturae sit quodammodo opus intelligentiae, ut philosophus dicit. Sic ergo patet quod haec est differentia in agentibus quia quaedam determinant sibi finem et actum in finem illum, quaedam vero non: nec aliquod agens finem sibi praestituere potest nisi rationem finis cognoscat et ordinem ejus quod est ad finem ipsum, quod solum in habentibus intellectum est: et inde est quod iudicium de actione propria est solum in habentibus intellectum, quasi in potestate eorum constitutum sit eligere hanc actionem vel illam.” *Sentences commentary* II.25.1.1, body (M II, 645).

²⁸ “Unde et dominium sui actus habere dicuntur: et propter hoc in solis intellectum habentibus liberum arbitrium invenitur, non autem in illis quorum actiones non determinantur ab ipsis agentibus, sed a quibusdam aliis causis prioribus.” Ibid.

right, an agent cannot be said to be master of his actions.²⁹ Thomas uses the capacity for knowledge to show that rational agents can be self-movers and thus have the capacity called free decision.

Thomas's *De veritate* argument that man has free decision is similar to that in the *Sentences* commentary in many ways. However, he explains the role of judgment in more detail, perhaps because the *De veritate* article asks about free decision only in human beings, not in God. I summarize the argument as follows:

Beings who move themselves do so by virtue of judgment (*ex iudicio*).
 The judgment of animals is naturally implanted in them by God.
 So, the lower animals are the cause of their own *motion*, but they are not the cause of their own *judgment* or of their own decision.
 Since "the free is that which is the cause of itself," animals do not have free decision.³⁰

Man has judgment because of his reason (*per virtutem rationis*).
 Reason knows the end, the means, and their relation to each other.
 So man can judge his own decision (*potest de suo arbitrio iudicare*).³¹
 Therefore, man is the cause of himself in his act of judging.
 Since "the free is that which is the cause of itself," man has "free judging of acting or not acting," or free decision.³²

Again, a great many things could be said about this argument. As in the *Sentences* commentary, Thomas begins by going through the different ways in which anything at all

²⁹ It is fairly common to translate Thomas's statement that man has *dominium sui actus* by saying that man has "control over" his actions. I find this translation irritating and flawed, because "lordship" or "dominion" is an interpersonal relation, while "control" is a mechanical one. We have no right to assume that the mechanical overtones preferred in modern speech match the meaning Thomas intended – in fact, if metaphor must be used, it is more reasonable to speak of a man's actions as his children or his servants than as his machines.

³⁰ "Sicut gravia et levia non movent seipsa ut per hoc sint causa sui motus, ita nec bruta iudicant de suo iudicio sed sequuntur iudicium sibi ab alio inditum; et sic non sunt causa sui arbitrii nec libertatem arbitrii habent." *De veritate* 24.1 (L 22.3, 681, lines 283-288).

³¹ It is customary to assume that this phrase (*Homo...potest de suo arbitrio iudicare*) refers to man's ability for self-reflection; however, it seems to me that, in context, Thomas also means that man *causes* his own judgment, "judging for himself" in a way that an animal cannot.

³² "Homo vero per virtutem rationis iudicans de agendis potest etiam de suo arbitrio iudicare in quantum cognoscit rationem finis et eius quod est ad finem, et habitudinem et ordinem unius ad alterum: et ideo non est solum causa sui ipsius in movendo sed etiam in iudicando. Et ideo est liberi arbitrii, ac si diceretur liberi iudicii de agendo vel non agendo." *De veritate* 24.1 (L 22.3, 681, lines 288-295). This account is substantially the same as the briefer account given as the third argument in *Summa Contra Gentiles* II.48.

can be moved; he also makes use of the Aristotelian definition of “free” as that which is the cause of itself.³³ For our purposes, we should note that Thomas once more connects free decision with the ability to know the ends, the means, and their order. This knowledge is not merely a pre-requisite for free decision; man’s ability to judge for himself *constitutes* his free decision.³⁴ Thomas completes this line of thought in the following article of *De veritate*, where he writes:

If the judgment of the cognitive faculty is not in a person’s power, but is determined for him extrinsically, neither will his appetite be in his power; and consequently neither will his motion or operation be in his power absolutely. Now judgment is in the power of the one judging insofar as he can judge about his own judgment; for we can pass judgment upon things which are in our power. But to judge about one’s own judgment belongs only to reason, which reflects upon its own act and knows the relationships of the things about which it judges and of those by which it judges. Hence the whole root of freedom is located in reason.³⁵

In both of these arguments, Thomas’s focus is on judgment. Doesn’t this mean that he is concerned with the same rational activity that Peter and Anselm are concerned with – namely, the ability to judge whether an action should be performed or not? The difference between Thomas and his predecessors is one of scope as well as emphasis. Thomas is talking about the ability to know that makes any movement possible, and asking whether this

³³ Hermann Weidemann has written an article about Thomas’s uses of this maxim (“Freiheit als Selbstursächlichkeit. Ein fruchtbares Mißverständnis bei Thomas von Aquin?”) I cannot agree with Weidemann, however, that Thomas “misunderstood” Aristotle. The Aristotelian text in question is *Metaphysics* I.2; 982b26-28: “The man is free, we say, who exists for his own sake and not another’s.” Thomas’s use of this text is *always* intended to support the notion that the free is that which acts for its own sake, which is also the key idea in Aristotle’s remark about the free man. Stephen Brock has a fine discussion of how, in Thomas’s theory, the agent who acts *per se* acts “for his own sake” in *Action and Conduct*, 33-37. As he notes there, the phrase “the free is the cause of itself” *cannot* mean “that the agent is the cause of his own existence, since nothing is the agent-cause of its own existence.” (34)

³⁴ For more on this topic, and a further discussion of the way in which Thomas connects free decision to rational judgment throughout his corpus, see David Gallagher, “Free Choice and Free Judgment in Thomas Aquinas.”

³⁵ “Si iudicium cognitivae non sit in potestate alicuius, sed sit aliunde determinatum, nec appetitus erit in potestate eius, et per consequens nec motus vel operatio absolute. Iudicium autem est in potestate iudicantis secundum quod potest de suo iudicio iudicare: de eo enim quod est in nostra potestate, possumus iudicare. Iudicare autem de iudicio suo est solius rationis, quae super actum suum reflectitur, et cognoscit habitudines rerum de quibus iudicat, et per quas iudicat: unde totius libertatis radix est in ratione constituta.” *De veritate* 24.2 (L 22.3, 685, lines 88-100).

knowledge is truly “one’s own,” while Peter and Anselm are talking about the ability to know that makes sin or righteousness possible. So “judgment” as Thomas talks about it includes the judgments that make it possible for men to dig wells, plant crops, and build houses – in short, the judgments by which men do anything at all. Anselm and Peter’s description of judgment is limited to the judgments which dictate moral qualities, such as “Lying is wrong,” and “Giving alms is right.”³⁶ In addition, Thomas is viewing reason’s ability to grasp the end as a cause *of the freedom* of free decision, since this ability is what enables man to cause his own action. Peter Lombard, as we saw, regarded reason’s judgment only as a subject to which freedom was added by way of will. Anselm, too, since he thinks freedom lies in rectitude “of will,” displays a tendency to view will as the cause of free decision’s actual freedom.

In the parallel passage in the *Summa theologiae*, Thomas again compares human and animal judgment. But he has abandoned his use of the Aristotelian maxim that the free is the cause of itself. Instead, he argues that the judgment of man is free because it is not determined to one thing.

Man acts from judgment....Because this judgment, in the case of some particular act, is not from a natural instinct, but from some act of comparison in the reason, therefore he acts with free judgment and retains the power of being inclined to various things. For reason in contingent matters may follow opposite courses, as we see in dialectic syllogisms and rhetorical arguments. Now particular operations are contingent, and therefore in such matters the judgment of reason may follow opposite courses, and is not determined to one. And forasmuch as man is rational it is necessary that man have free decision.³⁷

³⁶ In *De veritate*, in fact, Thomas makes a specific argument pointing out that the “judgment of free choice” (*iudicium liberi arbitrii*), since it applies to action immediately, is not necessarily the same as the judgment of conscience, which consists in pure knowledge (*consistit in pura cognitione*) about whether a course of action is right or wrong. *De veritate* 17.1, ad 4 (L 22.2, 517-518, lines 326-354.)

³⁷ “Sed homo agit iudicio...quia iudicium istud non est ex naturali instinctu in particulari operabili, sed ex collatione quadam rationis; ideo agit libero iudicio, potens in diversa ferri. Ratio enim circa contingentia habet viam ad opposita; ut patet in dialecticis syllogismis, et rhetoricis persuasionibus. Particularia autem operabilia

Like Albert, Thomas emphasizes the difference between human reason and animal apprehension, but unlike Albert he is specific about the way in which human reason prevents choice from automatically fixing itself on a single course of action. Thomas's argument in the *Summa* hinges on the idea that reason, in practical matters, can follow opposite courses. Two men who are arguing dialectically can conclude both that virtue is knowledge and that virtue is not knowledge; likewise, the person in practical dialogue with himself can judge both that "Getting married next month is a good idea," and that "Getting married next month is a bad idea." This is a characteristic of reason that Thomas did not make use of in his earlier arguments. Here, he considers not only reason's activity of judgment but also reason's ability to conceive of contraries and to arrive at contraries.³⁸

Thomas certainly does not deny that reason has the ability that Peter and Anselm are concerned with – that is, the ability to present alternatives and judge their moral values. His discussions of deliberation and conscience make this clear enough. However, Thomas's discussion in the *Summa* represents a serious innovation, because he points to the role of reason in making alternatives possible at all.

Perhaps a comparison will make my meaning more clear. Reason, if we conceive of its activities as deliberating, judging, and presenting options to the will, is easily compared to

sunt quaedam contingentia, et ideo circa ea iudicium rationis ad diversa se habet, et non est determinatum ad unum. Et pro tanto necesse est quod homo sit liberi arbitrii, ex hoc ipso quod rationalis est." *Summa theologiae*, I.83.1 (L 5, 307).

³⁸ Robert Pasnau, in the section on *liberum arbitrium* in *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, concludes that, since free decision is based on the ability to arrive at opposite conclusions, and since we only arrive at opposite conclusions due to ignorance, free decision depends on ignorance (Pasnau, 216-217). This seemingly plausible argument misses some basic truths about dialectic. One could not arrive at a conclusion by reasoning unless there were some truth in it, and the assent is given because of the awareness of this truth. Thus alternatives are present, not because of the ignorance of the agent, but because of the presence of truth (in some measure) in more than one place. This fact about dialectical reasoning transfers very readily to a truth about choice: alternate choices are possible because of the presence of goodness in more than one place, not because of the agent's ignorance as to which choice is better.

a human counselor. Such a person, by means of speech, shares his reasoning with the one he advises. He might advise a king not to kill a rival, or to pass a certain law, or to avoid war. The counselor is, in fact, an extension of the king's own reason, and his acts of judgment and the king's own acts of judgment are not different in kind. The counseling activity of human reason, which judges which course of action ought to be followed, is consistently recognized by Anselm and Peter as well as by Philip, Albert, and Thomas. But it is *not* the activity that Thomas describes in the passage above, where he indicates that "in contingent matters reason may follow opposite courses."

Thomas does not view reason as merely a counselor who presents and discusses two pre-existing courses of action. Reason is also the explanation for the fact that there *are* two courses of action which are real for the agent. Without the power of reason, the human being would be like a fly that slams itself into a windowpane again and again. We might say that many other options exist for the fly – it could fly into another room, bash into a different window, check out the spider-web in the corner, etc. But really, these options do not exist *for the fly* because it has no intellectual capacity by which these options can be made real for it.³⁹ The role of counselor is not the only role reason plays in accounting for human freedom: more fundamental is its role of introducing alternatives into the realm of choice *at all*.

I have not yet spoken of the *De malo* treatise, but it, also, opens with a proof for the existence of free choice that depends on a certain aspect of reason. In the opening argument, as is his consistent practice, Thomas shows that man has free decision by comparing man's motion with the motions of other things. However, he does not here discuss reason's ability

³⁹ The fly may, eventually, pursue these courses of action. But it cannot be *aware* of their possible reality while it pursues the course of action of bumping into the window.

to arrive at opposite conclusions when reasoning things out. Instead, he describes reason's ability to conceive things universally, saying that this ability is the cause of non-determination in the will:

The form of a natural thing is a form individuated by matter, and therefore the inclination resulting from the form is determined to one thing, but the form intellectually grasped is universal, under which many things can be comprehended. And so since acts regard singular things, and none of them exhausts the capacity of the universal, the inclination of the will remains indeterminately related to many things. For example, if an architect should conceive the form of house in general, under which houses of different shapes are included, his will can be inclined to build a square house or a round house or a house of another shape.⁴⁰

"The understood form is universal and includes many individual things." It is because of *how* human reason understands that human will has alternatives. A man who wants to build a house does not need to build *this* house; a man who wants to marry does not need to marry *this* woman, nor does a man who wants to be happy need to choose *this* means of happiness. In general, as Thomas explains later in this article, because reason knows what the good is universally, a man who desires something good need not choose *this* good.⁴¹

This is only the beginning of the *De malo* explanation of free choice – in order to complete his explanation, Thomas must discuss will's freedom with respect to its object and its freedom as a subject. This is not the place to summarize this argument, which is well known in any case. It is worth noting, however, that much of what Thomas says about the relation of reason and will depends on the characteristic of reason which he notes first. The

⁴⁰ *De malo*, 6.1 "Sed in hoc est differentia, quia forma rei naturalis est forma indiuiduata per materiam; unde et inclinatio ipsam consequens est determinata ad unum, sed forma intellecta est uniuersalis sub qua multa possunt comprehendi; unde cum actus sint in singularibus, in quibus nullum est quod adequet potentiam uniuersalis, remanet inclinatio uoluntatis indeterminate se habens ad multa; sicut si artifex concipiat formam domus in uniuersali, sub qua comprehenduntur diuerse figure domus, potest uoluntas eius inclinari ad hoc quod facit domum quadratum uel rotundum uel alterius figure" (L 23, 148, lines 284-296).

⁴¹ David Gallagher has discussed this aspect of Thomas's teaching on will very thoroughly in "Thomas Aquinas on the Will as Rational Appetite."

universal way in which the human intellect apprehends makes possible most of what Thomas says about the way will responds to its object and the way reason and will interact.

It is certainly not easy to summarize the innovation we see in Thomas, and express its consistency with the innovations of Philip and Albert. Perhaps the clearest way to put it is to say that, just as Thomas is most explicit in offering a proof-like account of free decision by considering its proper causes, so also he is most explicit in his explanation of how the peculiar nature of human reason is the source of the capacity known as free decision. In the *Sentences* commentary and in *De veritate*, he emphasizes reason as the source of man's self-movement, since it is only by reason that an agent can know his own end and actively direct himself toward it. In the *Summa*, he emphasizes reason as the source of real alternatives in action, since reason can reach opposite conclusions. In the *De malo*, he emphasizes reason as the source of alternatives in desire, since reason includes awareness of many particulars under one universal conception. Philip and Albert seem to be interested in some of the same characteristics of reason – Philip mentions the ability of reason to conceive of contraries, and Albert discusses reason's ability to apprehend the good abstractly. But we see none of these characteristics of reason in the accounts of *liberum arbitrium* given by Anselm and Peter. For Peter Lombard, reason's only relevant capacity in accounting for free decision is its ability to "give a sentence" such as "Eating the apple is wrong." While Anselm's account is more nuanced, it still seems that reason's relevance to free decision lies largely in its ability to "recognize rectitude" by making a judgment such as "Refraining from eating the apple is right." Thomas, however, has made full use of the new goals he embraced and of his new freedom to consider choice without putting it in a context of temptation. He brings out new

characteristics of reason, not only in order to explain how free decision works in a case where a man faces a moral challenge, but in order to prove that free decision exists at all.

b) Thomas's analogy of reason and will with respect to their objects

We saw that Philip and Albert compare the freedoms of reason and will – a comparison which they achieved by considering the relations of the two powers to their respective objects, the true and the good. In making such comparisons, and in claiming that reason has a real freedom of its own, relevant to free decision, they contradicted the older idea that “free decision” is called “free” only because of its participation in will. They also emphasized, in an innovative way, the relation of powers to *objects* as a helpful consideration in the free decision debate.⁴² Thomas, like Philip and Albert, compared reason and will with respect to possible determination by their objects – though he did not use the language of comparing their relative “freedoms.”⁴³ This comparison allowed him to reach conclusions that were very fruitful for his account of free decision. Comparing reason and will made it possible for Thomas to explain more clearly how will behaved by comparing it to its nearest possible analogue. Since, for Thomas, free decision is the same power as will, the characteristics of reason which helped him to understand will better also helped him understand free decision better. The next few paragraphs will explore Thomas's use of the reason/will comparison in understanding three aspects of free decision: the fact that will is

⁴² As has been noted before, this emphasis on objects must ultimately be traced back to Aristotle's *De anima*.

⁴³ Does Thomas think that the intellect can be called “free” or “not determined to one” in any meaningful sense? Thomas Williams thinks that, for Thomas, “of course” intellect cannot be free in its activity of judging (Williams, “Libertarian Foundations,” 205). Several passages contradict him, however, as we will see below. For an argument against Williams' claim which takes several of these texts into account, see McCluskey, “Intellective Appetite,” 442–453. Stephen Brock points out that, for Aquinas, will *does not* differ from intellect because of its freedom (*Action and Conduct*, 170).

not compelled by any particular object, the relation of free decision to will, and the ability of will to move itself in choosing.

In his earliest treatise on *liberum arbitrium*, Thomas already compares how reason and will relate to their objects. In a passage from the *Sentences* commentary which bears a strong resemblance to the corresponding passage in Albert's *Sentences* commentary,⁴⁴ he points out that there are two kinds of coercion, that of subject and that of object. Since both intellect and will are immaterial powers, they are not determined by their subject since they are free from bodily organs. Intellect, however, can be forced by demonstration, while will is not forced in this way by its object.⁴⁵ However, Thomas adds a new idea to this by-now-familiar comparison. To some extent, he says, will and intellect are *alike* in being coerced by their objects. This is, because, just as a first principle compels the intellect, a perfect good compels⁴⁶ the will.

If a good which has the complete nature [*ratio*] of goodness (like the last end, in virtue of which all other things are desired) is proposed to the will, the will is not able not to will it.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ The passage from Albert was quoted in full above (note 156 on page 134).

⁴⁵ *Sentences* commentary, II. 25.2. "Some powers are not compelled by the subject, because they are not fixed to organs. Nevertheless, they are compelled by the object – like the intellect, for example. For it is not the act of any bodily part, as the Philosopher says (*De Anima* 3.4 and 6) and nevertheless, the power is forced by demonstration." [Quaedam vero sunt quae quidem subjecto non compelluntur, quia organo affixae non sunt; compelluntur tamen objecto, sicut intellectus: ipse enim non est actus alicuius partis corporis, ut Philosophus dicit in III *De anima*, text 4 et 6, et tamen demonstrationis vi cogitur.] (M II, 649).

⁴⁶ Truth and goodness do not, properly speaking, *coerce*, *force*, or *constrain* the intellect and the will, because their responses of the powers to their objects are natural and not violent. However, truth and goodness can accurately be said to "compel" reason and will in the sense that they bring about certain responses necessarily. In the *Sentences* commentary, Thomas uses the word *compellere* to describe this activity (e.g. "compelluntur tamen objecto," "quaedam sunt quae compelli possunt,") and I use the literal English equivalent here. In later works, Thomas will be more precise in his wording and say *movetur ex necessitate* instead of *compellitur*. (E.g. *De malo* 6.1, ad 10).

⁴⁷ "Similiter etiam si proponatur voluntati aliquod bonum quod completam boni rationem habeat, ut ultimus finis, propter quem omnia appetuntur, non potest voluntas hoc non velle; unde nullus non potest non velle esse felix, aut velle esse miser." *Sentences* commentary, *ibid*.

We see here that Thomas, unlike Philip and Albert, views the freedoms of reason and will as similar in *two* ways. First, both powers are free because they are immaterial and not situated in a physical organ. Second, both will and intellect will be compelled if they encounter an object which is “unmixed.” This idea of the similarity in how intellect and will relate to their objects was to remain with Thomas throughout his career: it helped him explain the non-determination of will that makes its choice free, as well as the ability of will to move itself and the relation of will to choice. All three of these explanations were crucial in understanding the power known as *liberum arbitrium*. These comparisons of reason and will are especially evident in the *Summa theologiae*, which I will use as my chief text in the next few paragraphs.

In question 82 of the *Summa*, when Thomas shows that the will does not “desire of necessity whatever it desires,” he uses the analogy between reason and will to show why the will is not determined by any particular object. Even though reason must assent to the first principles and whatever is clearly demonstrated from them, it need not assent to contingent propositions, since these are not necessarily connected to the first principles. In addition, the intellect need not assent to demonstrable propositions as long as it is unaware of a demonstration for them.⁴⁸ In the same way, Thomas says, even though will must desire happiness (its first principle) it need not desire individual goods which are not necessarily

⁴⁸ So, although I must admit (under all circumstances) that parallel lines in Euclidean space never meet, I need not admit that a line intersecting them creates equal and opposite angles until you prove it to me; and it is not necessary for me to admit (under all circumstances) that some contingent proposition such as “It is raining,” is true.

connected to happiness. Even if some things *are* necessarily connected to happiness, will need not desire them if the connection is not evident.⁴⁹

What does this freedom of desire have to do with *liberum arbitrium*? The answer is simple: if will desires all its objects of necessity, there is no room left for free decision because there is no room left for choice. Man would pursue his natural end by natural inclination, as bees and ants do. So it is of the highest importance that Thomas shows that will does not desire every object of necessity, *before* he introduces free decision, because if he does not there is no scope for this power.

While he argues that will does not desire all its objects of necessity, Thomas always emphasizes the fact that will *is* determined by one object: it naturally desires happiness. One is almost tempted to say that Thomas *over*-emphasizes this fact. In the *Summa* he points it out four times during questions 82 and 83 alone, and it is mentioned, and argued for, numerous times in his other treatises.⁵⁰ Why is he so insistent on this point? Certainly he wants to point out that free choice has its limitations: however, it also seems that he insists on this fundamental orientation because without such an unchanging stance, the will cannot move itself. Within the Aristotelian physics Thomas adopts, a thing cannot move itself because it would have to be in act and in potency at the same time. However, Thomas can explain the seemingly impossible self-movement of the will by comparing it to reason:

It is evident that the intellect, through its knowledge of the principle, reduces itself from potentiality to act, as to its knowledge of the conclusions; and thus it moves

⁴⁹ *Summa theologiae* I 82.2.

⁵⁰ In the course of a brief search, I found two mentions of this necessary desire for happiness in distinctions 24 and 25 of the *Sentences* commentary, two in *De veritate* question 24, and three in *De malo* 6.1.

itself. And, in like manner, the will, through its volition of the end, moves itself to will the means.⁵¹

This activity of “willing the means,” we must realize, is, for Thomas, the activity of choice – the act of the will which allows it to be called *liberum arbitrium*. So Thomas has once more used reason to explain what free decision is, by considering it as an analogous power.

Thinking is impossible without the first principles of thought; so, also, choosing is impossible without the desire for the last end of happiness. Intellect needs the first principles in order to be what it is – they are the “root and principle” of all else that pertains to reason, and the movement of reason arises from these principles. So too, Thomas says, will must of necessity adhere to its last end in order to exist at all, and most especially in order to move itself.⁵² So the comparison of reason to will is useful for Thomas once again. He compares will to intellect to explain the seemingly inexplicable phenomena of self-movement – the movement which is the activity of choice.

The comparison of reason and will seems almost endlessly fruitful. One last use of this analogy is worth mentioning in connection to the explication of free decision. In the second article of the *Summa* question on *liberum arbitrium*, Thomas is faced with the task of showing that free decision is not a power distinct from will: in claiming that the two are the same, he will disagree with his teacher Albert. Thomas uses the comparison of will and reason to make his point, showing that it is possible for will to both desire and choose:

⁵¹ “Manifestum est autem quod intellectus per hoc quod cognoscit principium, reducit seipsum de potentia in actum, quantum ad cognitionem conclusionem: et hoc modo movet seipsum. Et similiter voluntas per hoc quod vult finem, movet seipsam ad volendum ea quae sunt ad finem.” *Summa theologiae* I.II. 9.3 (L 6, 78).

⁵² *Summa theologiae* I. 82.1, last paragraph: “Sicut intellectus ex necessitate inhaeret primis principiis, ita voluntas ex necessitate inhaereat ultimo fini, qui est beatitudo, finis enim se habet in operativis sicut principium in speculativis, ut dicitur in *II Physic*. Oportet enim quod illud quod naturaliter alicui convenit et immobiliter, sit fundamentum et principium omnium aliorum, quia natura rei est primum in unoquoque, et omnis motus procedit ab aliquo immobili” (L 5,293).

As on the part of intellectual apprehension we have intellect and reason, so on the part of intellectual appetite we have will, and free decision. And this is clear from the relations to their respective acts and objects. For the act of *understanding* implies the simple acceptance of something...but to reason is to come from one thing to the knowledge of another...In like manner on the part of the appetite to *will* implies the simple appetite for something...but to choose is to desire something for the sake of obtaining something else.⁵³

Thomas argues that, since the end is related to the means in the same way that the first principles are related to conclusions, free decision belongs to the will in the same way that discursive reasoning belongs to the intellect.⁵⁴ This is not a good place to go into the details of this argument: for our purposes, it is sufficient to note that in the *Summa* the comparison of reason and will helps Thomas show that free decision is the same power as will, as well as helping him explain that the will can move itself, reducing itself from potency to act, in the act of choice.

Thus, we have several answers to our original question. How does Thomas use reason in his account of free decision? He uses the characteristics of human judgment – its relation to particular, contingent truths, its immateriality and capacity for the universal, and its role as the power that gives an agent his own end – to prove that free decision exists in

⁵³ *Summa theologiae* I.83.4, response. “Potentias appetitivas oportet esse proportionatas potentiis apprehensivis, ut supra dictum est. Sicut autem ex parte apprehensionis intellectivae se habent intellectus et ratio, ita ex parte appetitus intellectivi se habent voluntas et liberum arbitrium, quod nihil aliud est quam vis electiva. Et hoc patet ex habitudine obiectorum et actuum. Nam intelligere importat simplicem acceptionem alicuius rei, unde intelligi dicuntur proprie principia, quae sine collatione per seipsa cognoscuntur. Ratiocinari autem proprie est devenire ex uno in cognitionem alterius, unde proprie de conclusionibus ratiocinamur, quae ex principiis innotescunt. Similiter ex parte appetitus, velle importat simplicem appetitum alicuius rei, unde voluntas dicitur esse de fine, qui propter se appetitur. Eligere autem est appetere aliquid propter alterum consequendum, unde proprie est eorum quae sunt ad finem.” (L 5, 311).

⁵⁴ Ibid. “Sicut autem se habet in cognitivis principium ad conclusionem, cui propter principia assentimus; ita in appetitivis se habet finis ad ea quae sunt ad finem, quae propter finem appetuntur. Unde manifestum est quod sicut se habet intellectus ad rationem, ita se habet voluntas ad vim electivam, idest ad liberum arbitrium. Ostensum est autem supra quod eiusdem potentiae est intelligere et ratiocinari, sicut eiusdem virtutis est quiescere et moveri. Unde etiam eiusdem potentiae est velle et eligere. Et propter hoc voluntas et liberum arbitrium non sunt duae potentiae, sed una.” (L 5, 311).

human beings naturally.⁵⁵ He also uses intellect as the best possible analogue of will, making a comparison between the two rational powers in order to show how the act of choice can take place. He considers the way reason works *in itself*: its movement from premises to conclusions, its capacity to see “the one over the many,” its ability to reflect and compare, and its ability to make things real for the agent. His discussion of free decision relies on reason’s structure, motion, and relation to its object.

Thomas improves on the methods of Anselm and Peter Lombard, then, because he uses a number of aspects of reason which these earlier authors left untouched. He considers reason’s ability to follow opposite courses in contingent matters: an ability that Peter and Anselm do not admit, let alone use as a foundation. He also mentions reason’s ability to comprehend the universal: using the distinctive feature of intellect in a way that Peter and Anselm only hint at. He discusses reason’s ability to move itself in order to draw out his ideas about the will’s direction to an object, making use of a similarity between powers where Peter Lombard saw only a difference.

Summary of Part 1

What is the role of the power of reason in accounting for the power of *liberum arbitrium*? The overall strategy followed by the thirteenth-century authors has three original features. First, they discuss the *freedom* of reason and compare it to the freedom of will. Second, they discuss the *object* of reason, truth or existing things, and compare the way

⁵⁵ David Gallagher, in “Thomas Aquinas on the Will as Rational Appetite,” gives a useful summary of a number of texts in which Thomas shows how will participates in rationality. (560-582)

reason relates to truth with the way will relates to goodness.⁵⁶ Third, they use the properties of reason uncovered through these methods (immateriality, self-movement, and/or awareness of a nobler good, abstractly conceived) to explain the meaning and demonstrate the existence of *liberum arbitrium*.

These features reveal an obvious change from the way in which our earlier authors handle reason's role in free decision. While Peter and Anselm considered reason's role as simply one of moral judgment, the thirteenth-century authors have begun to consider reason's other activities, as well as the immaterial mode of these activities. These ideas helped them in considering free decision as a power rather than as an activity, and by these means they formed a more causal and more clear account of the power known as *liberum arbitrium*.

Part II: Reasons for change

Why did Philip, Albert, and Thomas consider so many new aspects of reason? Once more, we may begin by partially attributing this change to the impact of Aristotelian ideas. Aristotle's argument for the immateriality of the intellect in book 3 of *De anima* was taken very seriously indeed by medieval thinkers;⁵⁷ and his argument is based upon the ability of

⁵⁶ Daniel Westberg remarks, I think very insightfully, on the crucial significance of a human psychology that takes *objects* into account: "The refusal to allow the object a determining role in cognition and volition meant the rejection of a realist metaphysics and the setting of the stage for nominalism and voluntarism. Instead of an object activating the mind's power to understand reality by a process of judgments, the intellect simply grasps it; and instead of the value of an object being a function of the ability to understand its attractiveness, the human agent remains indifferent to the object until the will confers value. The successive steps to the dualism of Descartes were small and straightforward." (*Right Practical Reason*, 115)

⁵⁷ For the long list of Philip's references to book 3 of *De anima*, see "Auctores, Nomina et Scripta," in the *Summa de bono* (W II, 1135). In Albert's case, see "Auctores ab Alberto Ipso Allegati," in *De homine* (C 27.2, 602-603). For the extremely long list of Thomas's citations in the *Summa theologiae*, see "Auctoritates Citatae a S. Thoma," (L 16, 183-184).

the intellect to receive contraries. In addition, Aristotle also argued in *De anima* that powers should be defined and distinguished by their objects. Thus, a consideration of reason as immaterial, as receptive of an object, and as able to encompass opposites entered the discourse on reason and was sure to pass into the discussion of the rational faculty of *liberum arbitrium*.

Another Aristotelian text that became a commonplace in these discussions was a passage from the *Metaphysics IX*:

Some powers [of soul] will be non-rational and some will be accompanied by a rational formula...Each of those which are accompanied by a rational formula is alike capable of contrary effects, but a non-rational power produces one effect.⁵⁸

Just as the *De anima* emphasized the ability to receive contraries, so this passage from the *Metaphysics* emphasizes the ability to produce contraries. Thus, when Philip discusses the practical intellect's ability to reach opposite conclusions, and when Thomas claims that reason in contingent matters can arrive at different conclusions, they are basing these ideas on an Aristotelian foundation.

Together, these two Aristotelian *loci* provided the background for the new characteristics of reason that were then applied in the context of developing theories of free decision. The Aristotelian perspective on reason probably encouraged the authors' willingness to consider the idea that reason, as well as will, could be called "free," since it was both immaterial and capable of opposite results. Thus "arriving at opposites" which was once the exclusive province of will or choice, became, at least in some ways, attributable to

⁵⁸ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 9.2 1046b1-5. Thomas cites this line numerous times. Two passages of interest in the *Summa theologiae* are I.79.12, s.c. and I-II. 8. 1. arg 2. Albert cites this passage in *De homine* 3.2, arg 37 (C 27.2, 513, lines 14-19) and in the *Summa de mirabilis* II.91. (B 33, 190)

reason also. The Aristotelian understanding of the human intellect made it possible to show that it was not coerced (due to its immateriality) and had alternatives.

Are there reasons for this change that are *not* drawn from Aristotle, but found within the debate itself? If we keep in mind the changes we have already discussed, it is easy for us to summarize some further reasons for Philip, Albert, and Thomas's innovations with regard to reason.

First of all, the thirteenth-century authors had abandoned the context of sin and temptation. Within their new context of human nature, reason's activity as "judge" was no longer quite so crucial in explaining free decision and they could look at some of reason's other aspects and activities. Reason's activity as moral judge was essential in the definitions Peter and Anselm gave because their knowledge of the existence of *liberum arbitrium* stemmed from the facts of moral responsibility and the justice of God, concepts which are dependent on moral judgment. When Philip, Albert and Thomas began to uncover the causes of freedom in a new way, the terms of their inquiry encouraged them to look at reason in a new light. Reason is, after all, a defining element in human nature, and the new search for a causal account, insofar as it searches within man's nature, must therefore search the properties of reason for possible sources of *liberum arbitrium*.

The comparison of will's freedom to reason's freedom also has a source within the debate itself. The identification of free decision as a power, and the consequent clarity in depicting this power's relation to reason and will, helped our authors ask questions about whether there were such things as "freedom of reason" and "freedom of will." If free decision is considered to be a habit that subsists in reason and/or will, then "freedom of

reason” and “freedom of will” could very well be “free decision” also, and there is no meaningful way to compare the freedom of the two. Once free decision was given its own place as a power, however, the authors were able to look at the powers of reason and will in their own activities, rather than turning their gaze to some kind of poorly understood composite of will/reason/freedom.

The identification of free decision as a power facilitated the new approach to reason in another way. Philip, Albert, and Thomas made their innovative comparisons of the freedom of reason and will by considering their relations to their *objects* of truth and goodness. Such a point of view is encouraged by considering free decision, reason, and will as powers, since powers are defined by their objects. Thus, the move toward treating free decision as a power that we saw in Chapter 3 led directly to a consideration of reason’s relation to its object – whether that relation is seen as one of coercion or as one of non-determination.

At this point we can begin to see a unity in the changes this dissertation has been considering.

Short Summary of Chapter 4, Section 1

Reason’s role in accounting for *liberum arbitrium* changed over the course of time. When the thirteenth-century authors compared the freedom of reason to the freedom of will, they began to look at characteristics of reason other than those obviously necessary for a morally responsible choice. These characteristics – immateriality, ability to grasp the universal, and responsiveness to truth as an object – became part of the account of human

free decision, helping Philip, Albert, and Thomas achieve their goal of presenting a more causal account of *liberum arbitrium* in a context tied to a treatment of human nature.

Having seen that reason was treated in a new way, I will move on to ask about the way will is used in giving an explanatory account of the power known as free decision.

Section II: New Characteristics of Will Used to Explain Free Decision

Let us turn to the second power of the rational soul that is invoked in order to explain *liberum arbitrium* as a principle of action. Was there an innovation in treating of the will parallel to the innovation in treating reason? A comparison of Peter and Anselm to Philip, Albert, and Thomas reveals a definite shift in emphasis. Anselm and Peter were largely concerned with the will as a participant in temptation whose role is consent or dissent. The thirteenth-century authors move away from this perspective and put more emphasis on will's unique relation to its object – the good, or the apprehended good. By emphasizing will's relation to its object, Philip, Albert, and Thomas were able to find *reasons* for will's flexibility and self-determination and then connect these characteristics of will more completely to the power of choice known as *liberum arbitrium*.

This section will have the usual two parts. In the first part the fact of change will be established: Peter Lombard and Anselm discussed will by discussing its behavior during temptation, while Philip, Albert, and Thomas discussed will's response to an apprehended good *as such*, no longer considering this good as a right or wrong choice. They emphasized facets of will such as its immateriality, capacity, and self-movement and showed that will, because of these facets, is part of the causal account of human free decision: of the power or capacity to act freely, as well as the activity itself. In the second part of this section on the will I will discuss some possible reasons for this change: Why did the thirteenth-century authors stop considering will's activity in temptation and begin placing this new emphasis on will's object?

Part I: Changes in the characteristics of will that were used

What changes have taken place in how will is used to give an explanatory account of *liberum arbitrium*? It is beyond my ability to give a thorough explanation and comparison of the theories of will held by each of our authors: there are far too many texts involved.⁵⁹ Nor can I discuss the role played by will in the sequence of psychological events that make up a human choice, as each of the five describes it – again, this would involve an exploration of dozens of passages on will as well as passages on sin, grace and action – and, especially in the case of authors whose treatments are scattered, a huge task of compilation, extraction, reconciliation, and guesswork.⁶⁰ More relevant than the labor involved, however, is the fact that a complete account of will or of its role in choice lies outside the question that this dissertation is meant to answer. The question at hand is, as ever, about our authors' method in treating the particular subject of free decision. To answer this question, it is necessary to restrict ourselves as much as possible to a textual examination of the treatises that deal with

⁵⁹ For those interested in the authors' complete theories of will, the following resources may serve as starting points. For Anselm, see Stanley Kane, chapters 2 and 3 of *Anselm's Theory of Freedom and the Will*. There is a cursory summary of Peter Lombard's views on will in Tillman Ramelow's *Der Begriff des Willens von Boethius bis Kant* (34-35). For Albert, see Rolf Schönberger, "Rationale Spontaneität. Die Theorie des Willens bei Albertus Magnus," as well as chapter 12, "La volonté," in Michaud-Quantin's *La psychologie de l'activité chez Albert le Grand*. For Thomas, see David Gallagher, "Thomas Aquinas on the Will as a Rational Appetite," Kevin Flannery, "*Voluntas* Aristotelian and Thomistic," chapter 5 in *Acts Amid Precepts*, and Lawrence Dewan, "The Real Distinction Between Intellect and Will." A basic discussion of the history of the concept of will is Vernon Bourke, *Will in Western Thought*.

⁶⁰ For those interested in the authors' complete theories of the activity of choice (also known as "the psychology of the human act" or "action theory"), I would suggest the following resources as starting points. For Anselm, see Katherine Rogers, *Anselm on Freedom*, chapters 3 and 4, and Kane, *Anselm's Doctrine of Freedom and the Will*, chapters 4 and 5. For Albert, Michaud-Quantin's *La psychologie* is again an excellent resource. For Thomas, a good introduction is Daniel Westberg, *Right Practical Reason*, part III, "Analysing the Process of Human Action," as well as a fairly recent article, "Aquinas and the Process of Human Action." In my opinion, Westberg's writing best reflects Thomas's own ideas: his work has the additional advantage of covering a great deal of the debate on the topic in the secondary literature. Those who prefer a different perspective might start with David Gallagher's dissertation, "Thomas Aquinas on the Causes of Human Choice," for a very thorough treatment of all the texts in the Thomistic corpus. Stephen Brock, in *Action and Conduct*, gives a unique, detailed account of Thomas's action theory, as does Alan Donagan, in "Thomas Aquinas on Human Action."

liberum arbitrium as a power, and dismiss, at least for the time being, exhaustive inquiries into the activity of choosing and the nature of will in itself.

In the case of reason, the thirteenth-century authors considered *more* aspects of the power than their predecessors did. This is not true in the case of will. However, it is true that Philip, Albert, and Thomas began to consider *different* aspects of will, and, in general, it is true that there was a clear shift in which aspects of will were emphasized and brought forward. In order to see this, we must look more carefully at *how* will is part of the explanation of *liberum arbitrium* in Peter and in Anselm before taking a similarly careful look at Philip, Albert, and Thomas. Let us consider, especially, which characteristics of will are considered important in each account.

1. Peter and Anselm

Peter Lombard and Anselm's treatises on free decision do not say much about reason, but they say quite a lot about will.⁶¹ Both Peter and Anselm follow their definitions of *liberum arbitrium* with discussions of temptation in which the will's action is discussed at length. Why are they so interested in these cases of temptation? The answer is simple: both authors define free decision as the God-given ability to resist temptation; therefore, some discussion of the will's resistance to temptation is essential to the task of explaining what free decision is. The discussions of will's response to temptation are meant to clear up difficulties that remain once their definitions of *liberum arbitrium* have been offered, reinforcing the idea that man does have the ability to choose good rather than evil. Anselm's

⁶¹ Electronically searchable documents allow me to point out that Peter uses the word "will" roughly twice as often as he uses of the term "reason" in distinctions 24 and 25. Anselm, in *De libertate arbitrii*, uses the word "will" around one hundred times, and the word "reason" (when referring to the human ability, not to "the rational nature") only twice.

discussion of will's nature and activity is thorough and detailed. Peter uses a number of passages from Augustine to give an account of temptation analogous to Anselm's, but his account is not very precise, in part because the Augustinian passages do not use the word "will" at all. Peter's Augustinian account is supplemented by remarks scattered through his treatise that are of some use in clarifying which characteristics of will he uses to explain free decision.

a. Anselm

By the end of the fourth chapter of *De libertate arbitrii*, the student is convinced that free decision, which he calls "this power of preserving rectitude" is "always present in the rational nature." In chapter 5, a new problem begins: the student is puzzled because "quite often, a person whose will is right abandons that rectitude against his will because he is compelled by temptation."⁶² If one can, in fact, be compelled by temptation, the teacher's work of defending God's actions would have been in vain, since anyone forced against his will is not morally responsible for his actions and thus not justly punished by God. In response to the claim that a person can be "compelled" by temptation, the teacher and student discuss many properties of the will to see whether it can actually be forced. Their conclusion is that the will cannot be forced to consent to temptation, even by God. This discussion continues from chapter 5 until chapter 10, in which Anselm moves on to consider the freedom of the deviant or non-upright will.

A detailed summary of the discussion in these six chapters would be extremely lengthy – the more so since the dialogue between teacher and student answers questions that

⁶² "Saepe rectam habens homo voluntatem ipsam rectitudinem invitus cogente tentatione deserat?" *De libertate arbitrii* 5 (S 1, 214; Williams, 39).

lead in a multitude of directions. But such a summary is not necessary for our purpose of identifying how Anselm uses will in accounting for free decision. A brief list of the characteristics of will Anselm uses is sufficient. The teacher establishes the following points about will in his debate with the student:

1. Will has absolute power over itself: no one can “will against his will.”⁶³
2. The human will consents “not naturally or of necessity, like the horse, but through itself.”⁶⁴
3. There is a distinction between willing something as an end and willing it as a means: “A will by which we will a thing for its own sake...is different from a will by which we will a thing for the sake of something else.”⁶⁵
4. There is a distinction between the *instrument* of will and its *exercise*.
5. It is possible for will to operate at less than full strength – that is, there are different degrees in the forcefulness of will’s activity.
6. The will must have a reason for abandoning rectitude: the devil could not have tempted Eve “unless he promised something.”⁶⁶

These claims allow the teacher to prove his main point: will must *consent* to temptation and is not compelled by it. It is able to will rectitude with less power, or as a means rather than as an end, in order to make this consent possible. We could describe will as Anselm portrays it as a strong, stubborn child. No one can make it let go of what it clings to (its mother’s skirt, for instance) yet it can, if it chooses, let go in favor of something else – perhaps a piece of candy or a new toy.

Anselm thus includes a clear and detailed portrait of will in his account of free decision, but the elements in his treatment are dictated by its context. Since the issue is temptation, will’s activity is largely viewed as *consent* and *desire*, the latter of varying

⁶³ “Velle non potest nolens velle.” Ibid.

⁶⁴ “Quem consensum non naturaliter nec ex necessitate sicut equus, sed ex se aperte videtur habere.” (S I, 216; Williams, 41). It is worth noting that, while Albert and Thomas say that animals *judge* necessarily when they explain that animals do not have *liberum arbitrium*, Anselm here says that animals *consent* necessarily.

⁶⁵ “Aliam namque est voluntas qua volumus aliquid propter se, ut cum volumus salutem propter se; et alia cum aliquid volumus propter aliud, ut cum volumus bibere absinthium propter salutem.” Ibid. (S I, 215; Williams, 39).

⁶⁶ *De libertate arbitrii*, 8 (S I, 221; Williams, 46).

strengths and for varying reasons. Will does not *consent* to the good: there is no temptation toward it, and it is not considered as if it were offered to the soul as absent. Instead, goodness is present in the form of the gift of original righteousness. The ability of will most relevant to free decision is *perseverance* – the ability to “hang on” to this gift.

Two other characteristics of will that are given prominence in Anselm’s account of *liberum arbitrium* are its self-ordering of desires (the power by which it consents “through itself”) and its absolute power over itself (the power by which it resists exterior pressure).⁶⁷ Very little can be said about will’s absolute power over itself: it must simply be granted as a fact of experience that nothing can make a person want to do something without *his own* wanting to do it. Several famous texts in Anselm’s later works, *De casu diaboli* and *De concordia*, explain in more detail how will can order its own desires in order to consent “through itself.” Anselm’s explanation is centered around the idea that each will is given two inclinations: an agent has the will for happiness and the will for justice. Either of these wills can subordinate the other and make use of it, thereby making a choice happen.⁶⁸ This means that man’s choice comes from himself, and that the will moves itself to choose.⁶⁹ This

⁶⁷ Visser and Williams see Anselm’s emphasis on these themes as constituting a second definition of *liberum arbitrium*, what they call the “descriptive definition” as “a power for self-initiated action.” I do not think this particular interpretation can be correct: Anselm is explaining certain qualities of the will, not defining what free decision is.

⁶⁸ Here is one example of this argumentation, from *De casu*: “If he [a hypothetical angel] were given only the will for happiness his will would not be unjust even if he willed unfitting things, since he would not be able to refrain from willing them. So also if he were given only the will for justice, his will would not be just simply because he willed what is fitting, since he would have received that willing in such a way that he would not be able to will otherwise.” [Ergo ne iustam nec iniustam habere voluntatem. Sicut enim ibi non esset voluntas iniusta si vellet convenientia, quoniam hoc non posset non velle; ita hic si vellet convenientia non idcirco esset iusta voluntas, quoniam sic hoc accepisset ut non posset aliter velle.] *De casu diaboli*, ch. 14 (S I, 258; Williams 82).

⁶⁹ See *De casu diaboli* ch. 14 and *De concordia III*, ch. 11-13, in their entirety. Katherin Rogers has an excellent discussion of the connection between will’s two inclinations and its self-determination (which she calls “a-se-ity” from the Latin *a se*) in *Anselm on Freedom*, chapter 3. Also very helpful in this context is Calvin Normore, “Anselm’s Two Wills.”

particular explanation reveals Anselm's continued context of temptation – for him, choice happens because of a natural duality of the will revealed in moments when the agent is tempted to put the advantageous ahead of what is just.⁷⁰

Anselm does not only explain *choice* by considering a will which has two different directions: he also believes that these two orientations make it possible for choice to be *free*. In *De casu diaboli*, he argues that both an agent given “only the will for happiness” and an agent given “only the will for justice” would choose necessarily.⁷¹ Only an agent with both wills can make its choice without necessity. C.G. Normore explains Anselm's model of choice very clearly by contrasting it with Aristotle's notion that an agent is directed to a single goal:

Whereas the Aristotelian agent is directed toward a single end, happiness, the Anselmian agent has an innate direction to two ends, happiness and justice, which may appear to dictate different actions. Thus in a given choice problem the Anselmian agent may have to act on one ultimate end rather than on another. It is this feature of his model which Anselm is convinced saves free choice.⁷²

Anselm's treatment of will is meant to explain *why* choice can be free – that is, why will consents through itself and has absolute power over itself. The aspects of will that interest him, though, are aspects that are interesting in a context of temptation: the ability of will to have, and resolve, conflicting desires. Here we see, once again, that Anselm's explanation is affected by his choice to view free decision in the context of temptation and by the fact that

⁷⁰ An example that reveals this perspective can be found in *De concordia*, where Anselm reveals free decision's existence by considering someone who is threatened with death unless he tells a lie. The will's choice is explained as the choice between upholding rectitude or embracing some other good (I.6). Anselm also uses this example in *De libertate arbitrii*, though he does not explain it quite so clearly there (chapter 5). Another, similar, example of one choice proceeding from two inclinations of will is found in *De casu diaboli*, where Anselm discusses the miser who spends his coin in order to buy bread (chapter 3).

⁷¹ *De casu*, chapters 13 and 14.

⁷² Normore, “Anselm and Ockham on Choice,” 31.

he bases his definition on the awareness of freedom brought about by moral and theological considerations.

b. Peter Lombard

Peter Lombard, like Anselm, includes a full treatment of the psychology of temptation for the purpose of showing that will cannot be forced to consent to evil. Unlike Anselm, however, he remarks on will in various other ways throughout his treatise on free decision. Anselm would probably be rather frustrated with him for his careless usage of the term “will” in these remarks, but they are useful to us in seeing what characteristics of will Peter considered relevant to free decision.

Peter follows his initial definition of *liberum arbitrium* in distinction 24 with a discussion of temptation based heavily on Augustinian texts. Here, he makes the point that the promptings of sensuality alone are not sufficient to account for sin. Reason must consent to these promptings: either to contemplating them or to acting upon them. Like Anselm, then, Peter makes it a priority, after defining free decision and connecting it to the rational nature, to show that temptation does not exert a determinative force; consent must be freely given and remains firmly in the power of the agent.⁷³

After his account of temptation, Peter continues his treatise on *liberum arbitrium* with discussions of a number of confusing or controversial points. Both in his earlier definition and during these debates, he mentions a number of properties of will. Since there is no

⁷³ This discussion is found in chapters 5-12 of *Sentences* II. d. 24 (Br I, 453-460).

systematic treatment, these properties must be pulled out: if we were to summarize Peter's statements on the properties of will we might come to something like the following list:⁷⁴

1. Will can turn either to good or to evil; this ability is the reason why *liberum arbitrium* is called "free."⁷⁵
2. Although the soul has a natural will that wills the good, it does so weakly and ineffectively. On its own, will can only efficaciously will evil; it requires the grace of God in order to efficaciously will good.⁷⁶
3. At creation man's will was good and could desire good without difficulty.⁷⁷
4. There is a sense in which will is "perfected" when a desired action is actually brought about.⁷⁸
5. A will does not have to be able to desire evil to be free. Nor does it need to be able to desire good to be free.⁷⁹
6. Will can entertain desires which are against reason and dissent from it.⁸⁰

Peter's treatment is not as streamlined as Anselm's: there are a number of areas of confusion.

First of all, does will belong in the account of free decision because will *is* free decision?

Peter sometimes uses the word *velle* to describe the action of free decision; sometimes he says that will can choose good or evil, and other times that free decision can choose good or evil. The reason for the confusion seems to be that, although Peter uses the word "will" in quite a number of ways, he is more interested in the *activities* of will (turning to good or evil,

⁷⁴ Those interested in Peter's complete teaching on will, and on the sources for it, can find a short summary, with many useful textual references, in T.A. Ramelow, "Der Begriff des Willens von Boethius bis Kant," 35. Peter's sources and the views of his contemporaries regarding the human will before the fall are discussed by Colish in *Peter Lombard*, 363-365, 371.

⁷⁵ "Et dicitur liberum quantum ad voluntatem, quae ad utrumlibet flecti potest." *Sentences* II. d. 24. 3 (Br I, 453, lines 1-2).

⁷⁶ "Est enim in anima rationali voluntas naturalis, qua naturaliter vult bonum, licet tenuiter et exiliter nisi gratia iuvet; quae adveniēns iuvat eam et erigit ut efficaciter velit bonum. Per se autem potest velle malum efficaciter." Ibid. (Br I, 453, lines 6-9).

⁷⁷ "Ante peccatum... voluntas sine difficultate bonum appetere poterat." Ibid. d. 25. 6 (Br I, 464, lines 15-18).

⁷⁸ This distinction is made in Peter's discussion of how temptation is "consummated." He says that one can delight in thinking about an evil deed without this pleasure's being perfected by the will. Again, however, the will can be fully perfected so as to produce an effect. Ibid., d. 24 c. 10-11 (Br I, 457).

⁷⁹ Peter makes these points in long discussions about whether the damned and the blessed are free. He talks about *voluntas* instead of *liberum arbitrium* in these discussions, because, as we saw, it is will that is the reason for the actual *freedom* of free decision and so, in asking whether the damned and the blessed are free, we need to ask about their wills. Ibid., d. 25, chapters 3-7 (Br I, 463-465).

⁸⁰ "Ubi ratio dissentit a voluntate, iudicans non esse faciendum quod voluntas appetit." Ibid., d. 25.8.5 (Br I, 467, lines 4-5).

desiring, consenting, willing efficaciously or weakly) than in providing any account of its nature as a power of the soul.⁸¹ This is why the possible identity of will and free decision does not arise and is not made clear – Peter is more concerned with actions than with the principles of them.

Another source of confusion is the fact that Peter seems to hold two opposing views simultaneously. He says that will is free because it can turn to both good and evil.⁸² He also says, however, that the ability to turn to either good or evil is not required for the will to be free.⁸³ The most likely solution to this contradiction is the one Anselm uses: the will always *can* turn either to good or to evil, but this doesn't mean that the options are always there to turn to. In order to be in any way consistent, then, one must read something like Anselm's instrument/exercise distinction into Peter's account. The instrument of will is always able to turn to either good or evil, but circumstances can forbid the exercise of this ability.

On the whole, a broad survey shows us that will, for Peter, is part of the account of free decision for two reasons. First, because will's ability to turn toward either good or evil shows how an agent can make a morally significant choice. The indeterminacy of will introduces the needed indeterminacy into man's choice. Second, because will is the recipient of the grace of original rectitude and of the actual grace given to man after the Fall.

In some ways, Peter's treatment is quite different from Anselm's. He focuses on activities of will rather than on its orientation toward rectitude. Peter spends more time on

⁸¹ In at least one passage of the *Sentences* Peter does consider will as a power of the soul – when he discusses memory, intelligence and will as the powers that make the soul the image of God in Book I. d. 3.2. The discussion of these three powers in particular is, of course, based on Augustine's *De trinitate*, book 10.

⁸² “Et dicitur liberum quantum ad voluntatem, quae ad utrumlibet flecti potest.” *Sentences* II. d. 24. 3 (Br I, 453, lines 1-2).

⁸³ These claims are made in Peter's discussion of the blessed and the damned. *Ibid.*, d. 25, chapters 3-7 (Br I, 463-465).

will's flexibility, often discussing it as choosing either good *or* evil, while Anselm is more interested in the will's self-determination: its ability to cling to the good through its own act. What Anselm and Lombard have in common, however, is an emphasis on the will's activity as *perseverance* and *consent*. In their models of action, man has been given initial righteousness and awareness of what is right, and he must adhere to this, refusing to consent to alternative propositions. Both Anselm and Peter believe that will's flexibility in desiring and its ability to move itself have *something* to do with free decision, but, especially in Peter's case, they do not make the connection very clear.

While discussing free decision, Anselm and Peter Lombard do not emphasize the fact that the will's natural object is the good. Reasons for this are simple enough. They are interested in the self-determining will that either consents to temptation – as Eve's will does when she takes the fruit – or clings to the good – as Christ's will does when he rejects Satan's promises. Situations like these, in which an agent responds to temptation, are not so much about *seeking* good as they are about *being* good. The agent chooses to remain a certain kind of agent and maintain a certain ordering of desires. Anselm certainly thinks that the will's object is always at least the apparent good; Lombard's position on this is not as clear, since he sometimes says that we are able to will evil. However, because of the activities of will which these authors concentrate on, they make the connection between freedom and goodness by discussing freedom and the good agent – the agent who clings to goodness – not freedom and the good object toward which desire is directed.

2. *The Thirteenth-Century Authors*

Like Peter and Anselm, the thirteenth-century authors point to a great many characteristics of the will as they try to account for free decision. The difference which characterizes the thirteenth-century authors, as I see it, is their consideration of the object of will, rather than its morally characterized activities of clinging to the good or consenting to evil. Like Anselm and Peter, Philip, Albert, and Thomas think that it is essential to a treatment of free decision to show that the act of choice cannot be forced. But they do not show this resistance to coercion by considering the human will's ability to resist temptation: instead, they point out that the relation of will to its object, the good, is not the kind of relation that can be determinative. Philip, Albert, and Thomas discuss the will as moving toward an outside good, rather than as remaining in, or forsaking, a fundamental orientation toward righteousness. Let us look more thoroughly into the aspects of will that are brought forward in the various treatises on *liberum arbitrium*.

a. *Philip*

Anselm believed that, in explaining free decision, the crucial fact about will is that it moves "through itself" and therefore cannot be forced to consent: "No one wills against his will."⁸⁴ Peter Lombard believed that the crucial fact about will is its ability turn either to good or to evil: "[Free decision] is called free with regard to the will, which can turn to either."⁸⁵ The first question Philip asks about will in his treatise on *liberum arbitrium*, however, is not whether it is self-moving or flexible but whether the power of will is a component of, or the subject of, free decision. This radically different question already hints

⁸⁴ "Velle non potest nolens velle." *De liberate arbitrii* 5 (S 1, 214; Williams, 39).

⁸⁵ "Et dicitur liberum quantum ad voluntatem, quae ad utrumlibet flecti potest." *Sentences* II. d. 24. 3 (Br I, 453, lines 1-2).

at a changed perspective on will as part of the explanation for the principle of human free choice. Philip fulfills this promise of innovation by offering a very different treatment of will in his treatise. One aspect in particular stands out: he offers an explanation of will's resistance to coercion and of its flexibility instead of merely accepting these as facts of experience. He explains these properties by discussing two factors that he obviously thinks are prior: the will's immateriality and its relation to its object. Some more detailed discussion will be necessary to draw this out.

As a summary of Philip's statements about the will in his treatise on free decision, I offer the following list:

1. Will is not a component part of free decision.⁸⁶
2. Will is the same power as both free decision and reason.⁸⁷
3. Will cannot be coerced because it is immaterial.⁸⁸
4. The activity known as willing is an inclination to a thing under the aspect of the good.⁸⁹
5. Will is not necessarily formed by its object, the good, in the way that reason is formed by its object, the true.⁹⁰

⁸⁶“Unde non procedit prima obiectio que est supposito quod liberum arbitrium plures vires complectatur; voluntas enim est in rationali et non sunt plures vires.” *Summa de bono* Q 2, 2.a (W I, 174, lines 285-287).

⁸⁷ “Sciendum autem quod una et eadem potentia secundum substantiam est ratio et voluntas, sed ab altero et altero actu denominata.” Ibid. (W I, 173, lines 260-261).

⁸⁸ “For each one (namely reason and will) looks at what is to be done, and on account of its immateriality it has its freedom of doing what it wants.” [Propter quod cum utraque, scilicet ratio et voluntas, respiciat faciendum, propter immaterialitatem eius libertatem habet faciendi quod vult et quanto fuerit magis immaterialis, tanto habet ampliorem libertatem.] Ibid. (W I, 173, lines 256-258).

⁸⁹ “Will is the inclination toward something under the aspect of the good.” [Est rationis libere iudicare, voluntatis vero est velle, et est voluntas inclinatio in rem secundum rationem boni.] Ibid. (W I, 173, lines 263-264).

⁹⁰ Ibid. (W I, 177-178, lines 384-389). This text is quoted in full in note 93. One might wonder how Philip can say that free decision is the same power as reason and will, and yet still make these comparisons between the freedom of reason and will. Philip does not explain his distinctions as carefully as we might want him to, but a little thought is enough to convince us that his statements are not immediately contradictory. As an example, suppose that Alice is both a mother and a grandmother – she is one person with two different descriptions. We could truly say, however, that as a grandmother, she is more indulgent than she is as a mother. Thus, Alice under one description has a property to a greater degree than she has it under another description. Similarly, Philip can say that the rational power is more free under its description as will than it is under its description as reason. (Here is a second example: the road uphill can truly be called harder to travel than the road downhill, even if it is the same road, because it is considered under two different descriptions.)

6. As a result of (5), freedom is primarily said of will, and will's freedom is the source of free decision's freedom.⁹¹
7. However, since the act of reason is also done freely, freedom and will are not co-extensive terms.⁹²

The first two statements relate free decision to will in a novel way because they are involved in answering the power/habit question, but we have discussed the innovative character of that question already. The next statements show that Philip agrees with Anselm and Peter on three relevant aspects of will: it can turn to one thing or another, its movement comes from itself, and it cannot be forced. However, Philip will try to explain the reasons for these crucial properties of will by discussing will's immateriality and its relation to its object rather than by discussing the will's response to temptation within a context of divine justice.

The will's resistance to coercion and self-determination

Will's relation to its object became an issue for Philip because he embarked on the novel task of comparing will's freedom to reason's freedom. He points out that while truth coerces reason, will is not in a similar situation, because the good does not coerce it:

Truth is the principle of the truth which is in the soul, and therefore it forces reason to consent to it. But it is not so in the case of the good, because however good it might be, it belongs to the will that it wills it or does not will it. This happens because, if someone agrees, concerning some thing, that it is true, it does not follow that the will is directed toward the thing in reality. This is because it is not good to him. He cannot deny it to be true; but he does not will it because it is not good to him.⁹³

⁹¹ "Freedom, however, principally resides in that power insofar as it is will, for although it has been freely judged to be good, the will is yet free to will or not to will...therefore freedom is primarily of the will." [Libertas autem principaliter residet apud illam potentiam in quantum est voluntas, nam cum libere iudicaverit esse bonum, adhuc est libertas ut velit vel non velit...et ideo secundum prius est libertas voluntatis.] Ibid. (W I, 173-174, lines 264-8). "Free decision is said first, according to freedom, to be will." [Dicitur primo secundum libertatem esse voluntas.] Ibid. (W I, 177, 378-379).

⁹² "We concede that will is free decision, but not only under its aspect as will." [Concedimus ipsam esse liberum arbitrium, sed non solum secundum rationem voluntatis.] Ibid. (W I, 177, lines 378-379).

⁹³ "Veritas autem principium est veritatis que est in anima et ideo cogit rationem ad suum consensum. Sed non est ita in bono, quia quantumcumque sit bonum, in voluntate est quod velit illud vel quod non velit. Hinc contingit quod si consentitur de aliqua re quod verum sit, non consequenter est voluntas in rem illius, et hoc quia non est ipsi bonum; tamen non potest negare esse verum, non tamen vult illud quia non sibi bonum." Ibid. (W I, 177-178, lines 384-389).

This is easy enough to understand. If you point out to me that hot chocolate is delicious, or that orthodontists have lucrative careers, I do not rush out to buy hot chocolate or become an orthodontist, even if I acknowledge that what you say is true. The will, when presented with a good, does not desire it necessarily.

Philip has explained, at least partially, *why* will cannot be forced. As an immaterial power, it cannot be forced by an organ or by a physical interaction.⁹⁴ In addition, as a particular power of the soul, will is not required to direct itself to any apprehended good.

Philip talks about will's inability to be forced in terms of its relation to its object, not in terms of its relation to a temptation. The difference is more significant than might at first appear. A discussion of how will relates to its object is morally neutral. It does not contain a consideration of evil embraced or good upheld. Such a discussion considers the *object* as in some way undesirable, or non-coercive, instead of simply claiming that the *agent* cannot be coerced. In addition, by discussing the good as the object of the will, Philip shows that he has a different view of what is most fundamental to will in the context of *liberum arbitrium*. For Anselm, it is essential that will have a capacity for rectitude; for Peter, it is essential that will have an ability to move toward either good or evil. But Philip does not see these as the most fundamental aspects of will. In his view, will relates to free decision as a power, and so it can be defined by its relation to its object, goodness, and its fundamental activity, seeking this good.

⁹⁴ "For each one (namely reason and will) looks at what is to be done, and on account of its immateriality it has its freedom of doing what it wants." [Propter quod cum utraque, scilicet ratio et voluntas, respiciat faciendum, propter immaterialitatem eius libertatem habet faciendi quod vult et quanto fuerit magis immaterialis, tanto habet ampliorem libertatem.] Ibid. (W I, 173, lines 256-258).

The Chancellor's treatise continues to focus on the object of the will, and on defining will by its relation to that object, because Philip uses will's relation to its object to argue that reason and will are the same power. These arguments form a semi-separate treatise within Philip's question on free decision: Wicki gives them the title "On the Act of Judging and Willing." The majority of these arguments (there are thirteen of them, by my count) for the identity of will and reason depend on treating the powers of reason and will through their objects. It is not my intention here to discuss Philip's arguments in detail. It is enough for the purposes of this chapter to say that the large portions of Philip's discussion of the acts of judging and willing provide proof of the novelty this section describes: while discussing the question of free decision, Philip compares reason and will by considering their relation to their objects of truth and goodness. Here, I will give two examples of Philip's reasoning, solely for the purpose of noting that his argumentation depends on a discussion of the objects of reason and will.

The first argument Philip offers for the identity of reason and will works by establishing a unity of matter and form between the actions of understanding the good and willing the good:

Wherever there is matter with some sort of disposition, there is a form, too, because the disposition is for the sake of the form. Understanding the good, however, is like a material disposition to willing the good; for when the good is understood, it is chosen by well-ordered will, because nothing seems to be better. But understanding is in the cognitive power, namely reason, and willing is in the motive power, which completes the understanding. Therefore the cognitive power is the same as the motive power, and will the same as reason.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ "Et in qua materia est quasi dispositio, in eadem est et forma, quia propter hoc est. Sed quasi materialis dispositio ad volendum bonum est cognitio boni; cognito enim bono ex quo non videtur melius eligitur a bene ordinato. Sed cognitio est in cognitiva, scilicet ratione, velle in motiva ut complementum. Ergo cognitiva est eadem cum motiva, voluntas cum ratione." *Summa de bono*, Q 2 2.b (W I, 179, lines 13-17).

Thus, for Philip, reason and will are one power because they have a unity of matter and form: understanding the good disposes one toward the completion of willing the good. This argument is not entirely convincing, in my opinion. But it could not be made at all unless Philip were viewing the understood good as the object of both reason and will. His notion that an intellect which understands a good has been given a disposition that makes it open to completion by the will shows his readiness to think about will in terms of its object, the understood good, without bringing in any question of conflict between will and reason or moral responsibility based on reasoning or willing.

Philip's third, and strongest, argument for the identity of reason and will also depends on considering will in terms of its object:

The end of reason is the truth; the end of will is the good. Therefore just as the ends are related, so the powers will be related. But the true and the good are only different in description [*ratio*]. Therefore will and reason are only different in description, and so they are one.⁹⁶

In this simple but oddly compelling argument, Philip uses will's relation to its object to show that it is the same power as reason because the object is the same.⁹⁷ In other words, he thinks it is important, for the sake of understanding *liberum arbitrium*, to consider the nature of the object that lies outside the soul and ask how reason and will respond to it.

⁹⁶ "Item, finis rationis est verum, voluntatis bonum. Ergo sicut se habet finis ad finem, ita potentia ad potentiam. Sed verum et bonum tantum differunt ratione. Ergo voluntas a ratione tantum diversa est ratione et ita sunt unum." Ibid. (W I, 180, lines 23-26).

⁹⁷ Thus, for Philip reason and will are different only in *ratio*: that is, reason and will are two accurate descriptions for a power that is one in substance. So also one person, Alice, can be accurately described as both Tom's wife and Caroline's grandmother. Philip's position is thus opposed to that of Thomas Aquinas, who teaches that reason and will are, in fact, two different *things*: just as Alice and Tom are two different people. It is perhaps worth noting that Albert objected very strongly and specifically to Philip's position and the arguments he makes for it: in *De homine*, Albert's article 3.3, "On the Acts of Free Decision" expressly refutes Philip's argumentation.

We can also point out what is *not* present in Philip's account. He does not use the word *temptation* at all. His use of the term *consent* is very limited (most of the occurrences of this word are direct references to Bernard of Clairvaux) but when he does use the term it seems to indicate consent of the will to a good object, not to an evil choice. He does not discuss clinging to, preserving, or retaining original rectitude. (For Philip, righteousness is the goal to which free decision is directed, but not its proper object or matter.) Other elements of a complete theory of will, however, are also absent. Philip does not discuss here the distinction between willing the end and willing the means, nor does he consider any difference between a sort of pre-choice will and post-choice will (the "perfected" will) that Peter hinted at.

The general point I wish to make about Philip's use of will is fairly simple. Philip is interested in the will's relation to its object, the good. He is like Anselm and Peter in regarding will as a power that has flexibility and cannot be coerced, but he explains these properties by emphasizing will's unique relation to its object, and it is this consideration of will, in addition to several statements about will's nature as a power of the soul, that he finds most helpful in discussing *liberum arbitrium*.

b. Albert

Albert, like all of our authors, uses several properties of will to explain free decision. A rough overview of the statements about will that are common to his several treatments would include the following:⁹⁸

⁹⁸ For a more detailed treatment of Albert's teachings about will, including his sources, see Michaud-Quantin, *La psychologie de l'activité chez Albert le Grand*, chapters 12 and 13: "La Volonté," and "Les Éléments Rationnels dans l'Acte de Volonté." See also Rolf Schönberger, "Rationale Spontaneität. Die Theorie des Willens bei Albertus Magnus."

1. Will is not a component of free decision.⁹⁹
2. Will is not the subject in which free decision inheres as a habit.¹⁰⁰
3. Will is free because it is not bound to an organ (it is immaterial).¹⁰¹
4. Will is more free than reason is because it is not coerced by its object.¹⁰²
5. Will prefers (desires, loves) one of the objects presented to it by reason.¹⁰³
6. There is a distinction between the will's preferring of an alternative and its moving to complete an action.¹⁰⁴
7. Will is free because it is the cause of its own action, and it is the source of free decision's freedom.¹⁰⁵

Some aspects of will which Albert emphasizes are the same as those that interest Philip: particularly the claims that will is a free, immaterial power that is neither a component of, nor a subject for, free decision. Others seem more like the aspects that interested Peter Lombard: namely, the idea that the will prefers one of the alternatives presented by reason and the idea that the will is the source of freedom. We can see the same combination of ideas if we look closely at the *De homine* treatment of free decision, which makes will's role in choosing more distinct. Albert here makes clear four additional aspects of will that are relevant to free decision:

1. Will is not the same power as reason or as free decision.¹⁰⁶

⁹⁹ "Ad id quod obicitur quod liberum arbitrium sit ratio et voluntas, dicendum quod non est verum." *De homine* 3.2 ad 25 (C 27.2, 516, lines 8-9). See also *Sentences* II. 24. 5, *ad quaest. 1* "And therefore both are put in its definition: and it is not composed, as some say, from both [reason and will] but because of the order [of operations] it looks toward both." [Et ideo utraque ponitur in diffinitione ejus: et non est compacta, ut quidam dixerunt, ex utraque, sed per ordinem respicit utraque.] (B 27, 402).

¹⁰⁰ "Facultas facilem et perfectam potestatem supponit, quae non est ita rationis et voluntatis tamquam in ipsis existat." *De homine* 3.2 ad 1 (C 27.2, 514, lines 25-27).

¹⁰¹ *De homine* 3.2 ad 23 (C 27.2, 515, lines 75-80).

¹⁰² "Ratio...cogitur vero ab objecto exteriori consentire vero et dissentire falso...Voluntas autem habet utramque libertatem; non enim cogitur ad volendum id quod ratiocinatum est." Ibid. (C 27.2, 515-516, lines 75-2).

¹⁰³ "Secundum est voluntas consentiens in unum appetibilem." *De homine* II. 3.2, *solutio* (C 27.2, 513, lines 48-49).

¹⁰⁴ "Quartum est perfecta voluntas quae movet ad consecutionem appetibilis." *De homine* II. 3.2 (C 27.2, 513, lines 51-52). "The act of free decision precedes the act of will in doing, just as choosing precedes willing." [Actus liberi arbitrii praecedat actum voluntatis in agendo, sicut eligere praecedat velle completamentum ad consensum.] *Sentences* commentary II.25.1, *ad object.* (B 27, 424).

¹⁰⁵ "Every freedom is from will, as was shown above: because no power in act is in every way the cause of itself except will. And it is from will that anything whatever is free." [Libertas omnis a voluntate est, ut supra ostensum est: quia nulla potentia in actu omnino causa sui est nisi voluntas: et a voluntate quaecumque sunt libere.] Ibid., *ad quaest. 3*.

2. In bringing about a human action, will has two activities:
 - a. Prior to free decision's act of choice, will desires something under the aspect of good – this object may later be judged by reason to be good or evil.
 - b. After free decision's act of choice, will moves to complete the act determined.¹⁰⁷
3. Choice is not an act of the will.¹⁰⁸
4. Will and freedom are not co-extensive.¹⁰⁹

In order for Albert to show that free decision is not will – a claim he makes most explicitly in *De homine* – he must clearly distinguish the acts of will from the act of free decision. In his four-step account of how human action takes place, then, he gives will two roles. First, it desires something, under the aspect of good, though often it desires only an apparent, sensual good. Will presents its desire to free decision for arbitration, while reason also presents its judgment of what is desired. (This judgment by reason is the second step in human action.) The power of free decision sometimes chooses what will desires, while sometimes it chooses what reason has judged to be good instead – this choice constitutes the third step. After free decision makes its choice, the completed will brings about the action.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ “It is said to be ‘of reason and of will’ because its judgment is always between a decree of reason and a desire of the will, and not because it is either will or reason or both according to its being or account.” [Et dicitur rationis et voluntatis, eo quod semper est arbitrium eius inter decretum rationis et concupiscentiam voluntatis, et non ita quod sit voluntas vel ratio vel utramque secundum suum esse vel rationem.] *De homine* 3.2 (C 27.2, 514, lines 7-9)

¹⁰⁷ “The second is the will consenting to one desirable thing...the fourth is the perfect will which moves to the effecting of the desirable.” [Secundum est voluntas consentiens in unum appetibilem...Et quartum est perfecta voluntas quae movet ad consecutionem appetibilis...] *De homine* II. 3.2 (C 27.2, 513, lines 48-54).

¹⁰⁸ This claim is implicit throughout the article, since Albert always says that choice is the act of free decision, and also makes clear that free decision is not will. (see, for instance, the replies to objections 17-29). One particular text which makes clear that choice is not an act of the will is Albert's discussion of choice as the third step in human action. Albert says that “what chooses” (*id quod eligit*) acts *after* the will and is free decision. Since free decision is not will, therefore, choice is not an act of will. [Tertium est id quod eligit amatum a voluntate, et hoc vocamus liberum arbitrium.] *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ “Will in us is always free, but from this it does not follow that every free thing in us is the will.” [Voluntas in nobis semper est libera, sed ex hoc non sequitur quod omne liberum in nobis sit voluntas.] *Ibid.*, ad 21 (C 27.2, 515, lines 63-65).

¹¹⁰ The four steps, then, are these: 1) will desires a good, 2) reason judges whether this is truly good, 3) free decision chooses what is desired by will or judged correct by reason, 4) the perfected will completes the activity.

Albert is, in fact, a very faithful student of Peter Lombard in discussing the activity of will in the realm of free decision. Like Peter, he points out that will can desire either good or evil, and he makes Peter's distinction between the will's activity of desiring and its activity of "completing" an action or bringing it about.¹¹¹ For Albert, as for Peter, will is able to reject the judgment or "sentence" of reason; consequently, it can desire either good or evil – either what reason approves or what it condemns.

At the same time, however, the *De homine* treatment gives us an example of the novelty we saw in Philip's *liberum arbitrium* treatise. Albert compares will to reason by comparing the way the two powers relate to their objects:

Will, however, has freedom from both the coercion by a body and the coercion of truth, for it is not constrained to willing what is reasoned, because it often wills contrary to reason.¹¹²

In making this comparison, Albert shows *why* will can be called free – it is immaterial, and it need not will what is presented to it as good by reason.¹¹³ Why, however, did Albert bother to make this claim about will's freedom in his treatise on free decision? Since free decision

¹¹¹ Albert says that the will consents to a desirable thing (*voluntas consentiens in unum appetibilem*), but after choice has been made (by free decision) the "perfect will" (*perfecta voluntas*) moves to carry out the choice. [Secundum est voluntas consentiens in unum appetibilem...Et quantum est perfecta voluntas quae movet ad consecutionem appetibilis...] Ibid., 3.2 (C 27.2, 513, lines 48-54).

¹¹² "Voluntas autem habet utramque libertatem; non enim cogitur ad volendum id quod ratiocinatum est, quia saepe contrariae movet rationi." *De homine* 3.2 ad 23 (C 27.2, 515-516, lines 80-2).

¹¹³ There is a parallel passage in Albert's commentary on the *Sentences*: "Another binding is from the object, when it convinces the power to consent to it – just as all the apprehensive powers of the rational soul, like intellect, and reason, and things of this kind, are convinced by reasons to consent to the true: and therefore they are not for their own sake, but for the sake of another. But will is bound in neither way, because it is not a power affixed to an organ, nor does it necessarily consent; because, when reason says that this should be done or should not be done, it has a relation to what it shall will in such a way that it can will the contrary to that which is adjudicated by reason. And therefore the will is free, and the choice of free decision has that same freedom from that part." [Altera obligatio alteri est ab objecto, quando convincit potentiam de consensu in ipsum, sicut omnes potentiae apprehensivae animae rationalis, ut intellectus, et ratio, et huiusmodi, convincuntur rationibus ad consentiendum in verum: et ideo non sunt causa sui, sed alterius. Sed voluntas neutro modo est obligata: quia non est affixa potentia organo, nec etiam necessario consentit: quia ratione dictante hoc esse faciendum vel non, adhuc se habet ad quod voluerit, et potest contrarium velle, quam quod ex ratione dijudicatum est: et ideo voluntas libera est, et electio liberi arbitrii ab illa parte habet eandem libertatem.] II.24.5 (B 27, 402).

and will are separate powers in Albert's view, it seems there is little point in accounting for will's freedom. Albert would answer this question by saying that the will's freedom is the source of the freedom of *liberum arbitrium*:

Since free decision is a power consequent to reason and will, it takes from them those things which it has in itself.¹¹⁴

Will and free decision may be separate powers, but free decision is dependent on will for its freedom. This is why the characteristics of will that render it free are needed in order to understand free decision.¹¹⁵

Albert, like Philip, does not use the word *temptation*, nor does he describe the will's activity as "clinging to" or "preserving" goodness. Goodness, in Albert's account, is the object of will, but it is an object which is presented to the will by the agent's apprehension of something *outside* itself: Albert makes no mention, in any of his treatises on *liberum arbitrium*, of any original righteousness or "rectitude" to which the will clings.

On the question of will's role in accounting for free decision, I am inclined to think that Albert was most concerned to give a clear interpretation of Peter Lombard's rather obscure passage from the *Sentences*. He is not a particularly good representative of the change this section discusses because he, like Lombard, emphasizes will's ability to turn to either good or evil without offering any reason for this ability. Especially in his *Sentences* commentary, Albert emphasizes will's self-motion in a way very similar to Anselm's – he emphasizes will's ability to move itself without attempting to explain this. Still, we can see a

¹¹⁴ "Cum enim liberum arbitrium sit potentia consequens ad rationem et voluntatem, accipit ab ipsis ea quae habet in seipso." *De homine* 3.4.2 solutio (C 27.2, 522, lines 2-4).

¹¹⁵ We note, in passing, a difference in emphasis: Philip is content to remark that will need not respond to an apprehended good, but Albert openly says that will often wills contrary to reason, setting up a possible conflict between the two powers. "Voluntas...saepe contrariae movet rationi." *De homine* 3.2 ad 23 (C 27.2, 515-516, lines 80-2). This passage is cited above in full.

partial innovation in Albert's writings on will and free decision if we compare them to those of Anselm and Peter: Albert diminishes the importance of temptation and emphasizes will's freedom with relation to its object, comparing it to reason for that purpose.

c. *Thomas*

What aspects of will interest Thomas Aquinas as he tries to explain what *liberum arbitrium* is? A sad necessity forces us to ignore the individual details that make each of Thomas's treatments unique and reveal the growth of his ideas. A detailed comparison of Thomas's works to each other would inevitably blur the comparison of methods and authors which is the chief goal in this dissertation. Just as in Albert's case, we can get nowhere in comparing Thomas to other authors unless we focus on the elements which are common in his treatises. Here is a quick list of the aspects of will which are discussed in the treatments of free decision in the *Sentences* commentary, in *De veritate*, in the *Summa theologiae*, and in the *De malo*:

1. Will is not a subject of which free decision is a habit.¹¹⁶
2. Will is not an element of which free decision is composed.¹¹⁷
3. Will is not the same power as reason.¹¹⁸
4. The object of the will is the good apprehended by reason.¹¹⁹
5. The will both desires the end and chooses the means.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ "It is impossible for free decision to be a habit." [Unde impossibile est quod liberum arbitrium sit habitus.] *Summa theologiae* I.83. 2. See also *Sentences* commentary, II.24.1.1, "Utrum liberum arbitrium est habitus," and *De veritate* 24.4, "Utrum liberum arbitrium sit potentia, vel non."

¹¹⁷ "They said that free decision includes several powers as an integral whole contains its parts. But this is not possible." [Unde dixerunt liberum arbitrium colligere in se plures potentias per modum quo totum integrale continet suas partes. Hoc autem esse non potest.] *De veritate* 24.5. See also *Summa theologiae*, I.83. 4 and the *Sentences* commentary, II.24.1.2, "Utrum liberum arbitrium dicat plures potentias vel unam."

¹¹⁸ "Free decision is an appetitive power." [Liberum arbitrium est appetitiva potentia.] *Summa theologiae* I.83.3. See also *Sentences* commentary II.24.1.3, "Utrum liberum arbitrium distincta a voluntate a ratione," and *De veritate* 24.6, especially ad. 3.

¹¹⁹ "The object moving the will is the good apprehended as befitting." [Obiectum movens voluntatem est bonum conveniens apprehensum.] *De malo* 6.1 4th paragraph. See also *Sentences* commentary I.24.1. 3. ad 3 (M II, 597); and *Summa theologiae* I. 83, articles 3-4.

¹²⁰ "It belongs to the same power to will and to choose: and on this account the will and the free will are not two powers, but one." [Unde etiam eiusdem potentiae est velle et eligere. Et propter hoc voluntas et liberum

6. Free decision, whose proper act is choice, is not a different power than will is.¹²¹
7. Will necessarily desires happiness, an inclination which is natural to it.¹²²
8. However, that the will desires a particular thing for the sake of something else (that is, that the will *chooses* a particular thing) is not necessary.¹²³

By establishing and dwelling on these aspects of the will, Thomas can offer some explanation of *why* and *how* the will moves itself, as well as why and how the will is not coerced by its object.¹²⁴ He can also show exactly how these aspects of will are relevant to the power known as *liberum arbitrium*, something that Philip and Albert did not achieve very well – in Albert’s case because he is unclear about will’s connection to free decision, and in Philip’s case because, though he claims the two powers are identical, he does not show what this identity means or how it is possible.

We should note that, particularly in the *Summa* treatise, some of these characteristics of will are only lightly touched on. This is because Thomas has already discussed them in the previous question on will and sees no need emphasize them heavily at this point. In the following paragraphs, I will deal more specifically with two particular aspects of will that Thomas uses in his discussions of *liberum arbitrium*. The first aspect can be characterized

arbitrium non sunt duae potentiae, sed una.] *Summa theologiae*, I.83.4. See also *Sentences* commentary I.24. 1.3; *De veritate* 24.6; *De malo* 6.1.

¹²¹ Ibid. Some confusion may be caused by Thomas’s claim in *De veritate* 24.4 that free decision’s act is to judge freely (*libere iudicare*). However, Thomas works to make himself more clear in the subsequent articles, and states quite clearly in article five of this question that “the act which is attributed to free choice is a single specific act, to choose.” [Actus, qui libero arbitrio attribuitur, sit unus specialis actus, scilicet eligere.] L 22.3, 693, lines 82-83. David Gallagher shows how the two descriptions of the act are not incompatible in “Free Choice and Free Judgment in Thomas Aquinas.”

¹²² *Sentences* commentary I.25. 1.2; *De veritate* 24.1. ad 20; *Summa theologiae* I. 83.1 ad 5, and article 2; *De Malo* 6 ad 7.

¹²³ Ibid. (This point is always made in parallel with the previous one.)

¹²⁴ For discussions, in the context of free decision, of why and how the will moves itself, see, for example, *Summa theologiae* I.83.1 objection 3 and reply; *De malo* 6.1 objections 15, 17, and 20, and replies. For discussions, in the context of free decision, of how will is not coerced by its object, see, for example, *De malo* 6.1 objections 6-10 and replies. Other texts on this will be discussed below.

as self-movement, the second as flexibility. Thomas gives a very distinctive character to his treatment of both these aspects of will.

i) The will's self-movement

Anselm discussed will's resistance to temptation in order to show how choice cannot be forced from the outside. The agent cannot be forced to sin; therefore, his will moves "of itself." How can Thomas, who has removed the element of temptation from his treatises on *liberum arbitrium*, explain the fact that will, as free decision, is "the cause of its own movement" in choosing? He uses the idea that will is both moving and at rest. Its desire for happiness is stable and unchanging, and thus, by virtue of naturally resting in one desire, the will can stretch itself out to desiring the means by which the end it is to be reached. This is how Thomas had solved the paradox of self-motion in the case of the intellect: by resting in the first principles, intellect can stretch itself out to newly understand the truths derived from those first principles. He believed the same solution of resting in order to move was appropriate in explaining the self-motion of the will. As Thomas puts it in *De malo*,

Just as a man, by his intellect, moves himself to knowledge by way of discovery – since from one thing actually known he arrives at something of which he was ignorant, that was known only in potency, so from this that man actually wills something he moves himself to actually will something else.¹²⁵

This explanation is a direct reflection of a more subtle passage from the *Summa* treatise on *liberum arbitrium*:

¹²⁵ "Sicut enim homo secundum intellectum in uia inuentionis mouet se ipsum ad scientiam, in quantum ex uno noto in actu uenit in aliquid ignotum, quod erat solum in potentia notum; ita per hoc quod homo aliquid uult in actu, mouet se ad uolendum aliquid aliud in actu; sicut per hoc quod uult sanitatem, mouet se ad uolendum sumere potionem." *De malo* 6, ninth paragraph (L 23, 149, lines 365-372). See also the reply to objection 20.

It has been shown above that it belongs to the same power both to understand and to reason, *even as it belongs to the same power to be at rest and to be in movement*. Wherefore it belongs also to the same power to will and to choose.¹²⁶

The will, in choosing, moves itself to choose the means by willing the end. Aquinas expressed the same idea, using the same comparison of intellect's movement to will's movement, in his *Sentences* commentary:

Intellect is of principles, but reason, properly, as Isaac says, acts by running from a cause to what is caused. So properly the act of reason is to proceed from principles to conclusions. Bringing forth conclusions, therefore, is the act of reason insofar as there remains in it the power [*virtus*] of intellect; and so this activity is more properly attributed to reason than to intellect. So also counsel precedes choice, as is said in the *Ethics*, just as a disputation precedes the conclusion; for choice is desire which has been counseled. And so to choose is principally an act of the will, not however, absolutely, but insofar as there remains in it the power [*virtus*] of intellect, or counseling reason, whence thus considered will is called free decision, and not absolutely.¹²⁷

These latter two arguments are intended to show that will and free decision are the same power, but in doing so they also make clear how will moves itself to choice, which is free decision's act, by making a comparison between choosing and reasoning. Thomas, therefore, links will's ability to move itself with its orientation toward an end, just as Anselm does. But in Anselm's case the will moves itself because it is able to subordinate one of its two orientations toward the just and the beneficial, while for Thomas, will moves itself in virtue of an orientation toward the single end of happiness. Will's direction to an end is not

¹²⁶ "Ostensum est autem supra quod eiusdem potentiae est intelligere et ratiocinari, sicut eiusdem virtutis est quiescere et moveri. Unde etiam eiusdem potentiae est velle et eligere." *Summa theologiae* I.83.4 (L 5, 311).

¹²⁷ "Intellectus principiorum est; ratio autem proprie, ut Isaac dicit, est faciens currere causam in causatum; unde proprie actus rationis est deducere principium in conclusionem. Hoc ergo quod est conclusiones elicere est actus rationis, secundum quod manet in ea virtus intellectus; unde magis proprie attribuitur rationi quam intellectui. Ita etiam electionem praecedat consilium, ut in III *Ethicor.*, cap. IX, dicitur, sicut disputatio conclusionem; est enim electio praeconsilii appetitus; et ita eligere erit principaliter actus voluntatis, non tamen absolute, sed secundum quod manet in ea virtus intellectus, vel rationis consiliantis; unde sic consideratum voluntatem nominat liberum arbitrium, et non absolute." *Sentences* commentary II.25.1.3 (M II, 597).

characterized as in conflict, or in possible conflict, with some other end. It is simply considered as the absolutely stable source of other desires.¹²⁸

ii) *The will's flexibility and consequent resistance to coercion by the object of desire*

Let us turn to the second aspect of will that Thomas treats in a unique way. Will moves itself, and so it is not a passive participant in choice. But what about the object which it seeks? Does this object, when conceived, coerce the will into seeking it? Anselm and Peter Lombard do not have much to say about the effects of the object upon the will. They do envision the possibility of a temptation that cannot be resisted, but the resistance which they discuss is the resistance to a tempter or to an object that is clearly understood to be evil, in a context where there is a clear contrast with the good alternative. The thirteenth-century authors, however, asked whether will could be coerced¹²⁹ by its object in ordinary, non-temptation circumstances: they were inspired, especially, by the consideration of reason, which necessarily responds to truth. Must will, like reason, respond to reality in a certain way?

Thomas, like Philip and Albert, distinguished between freedom from coercion on the part of the subject and freedom from coercion by the object – though by the time he came to write *De malo* (and the second part of the *Summa*) he has refined this language and discusses the lack of necessity on the part of exercise of the will's act and the lack of necessity in the specification of the will by the object. Freedom on the part of the subject is the freedom

¹²⁸ For more about the relation of will to its object in Thomas's teaching, see Klaus Riesenhuber, *Die Transzendenz der Freiheit zum Guten*, and Mark Jordan, "The Transcendentality of Goodness and the Human Will," 129-150.

¹²⁹ It is true that, especially in the case of Thomas, the authors *conclude* that the object cannot violently or physically "coerce" the will – and they do not really think that truth violently coerces the intellect. But they do use the word "coerce" (*cogi, coactio*) when they *ask* about the relation of the object to will – even Thomas uses the word in *argumenta*.

associated with the will's self-movement: it is the will's ability to act or not act. Such freedom of exercise is not really a new idea. Thomas's innovation was not so much in claiming that it exists as in giving a reason for it by discussing will's ability to remain constant to one desire and bring forth other desires out of its constancy to this one. While Thomas's emphasis on will's natural unchanging desire for happiness helped to explain self-movement, however, it also helped to explain the fact that not all of will's desires are necessary. In showing this lack of necessity, Thomas set up a freedom of flexibility, which explains why will need not respond to every object that is offered to it. We can look at some texts more carefully to see how this was so.

In his treatises on *liberum arbitrium*, Thomas always sets up a contrast: will's desire for happiness is not subject to free decision;¹³⁰ but its other desires can be rejected. Through this contrast, Thomas is able to explain *why* will is not forced by any desirable object.

Thomas's first use of this pattern is found in the *Sentences* commentary:

If some good which has the complete nature [*ratio*] of good is proposed to the will (such as last end, on account of which all things are desired) the will is not able not to will this; whence no one is able not to will to be happy, or to will to be miserable. In those things, however, which are ordered to the last end...nothing is found good to such a degree that it suffices in all respects. Whence however much it proves good or bad, will can always adhere to or flee to the contrary, by reason of the other which is in it.¹³¹

¹³⁰ An excellent treatment of Thomas's teaching on will's naturally necessary desire is Robert Sullivan's article, "Natural Necessitation of the Human Will." Sullivan makes a number of crucial distinctions necessary for understanding this doctrine, and carefully goes through the relevant texts in Aquinas. For Sullivan's discussion of the necessary desire for happiness, see particularly pages 367-380. (This article was the basis for a book, *The Thomistic Concept of Natural Necessitation of the Human Will*, which is also very helpful, though difficult to find.)

¹³¹ "Si proponatur voluntati aliquod bonum quod completam boni rationem habeat, ut ultimus finis, propter quem omnia appetuntur; non potest voluntas hoc non velle; unde nullus non potest non velle esse felix, aut velle esse miser. In his autem quae ad finem ultimum ordinantur, nihil invenitur adeo malum quin aliquod bonum admixtum habeat, nec aliquod adeo bonum quod in omnibus sufficiat: unde quantumcumque ostendatur bonum vel malum, semper potest adhaerere, et fugere in contrarium, ratione alterius quod in ipso est, ex quo accipitur, si malum est simpliciter, ut apparens bonum; et si bonum est simpliciter, ut apparens malum: et inde est quod in

In the *Summa* treatise, Thomas does not explain this as clearly as in the *Sentences*. This is because he has faith that the reader can remember what was said in the previous article:

The will can tend to nothing except under the aspect of good. But since the good is of many kinds, for this reason the will is not necessarily determined to one.¹³²

A few lines later Thomas offers a slightly deeper explanation of why this is so:

As the capacity of the will regards the universal and perfect good, its capacity is not subjected to any individual good. And therefore it is not of necessity moved by it.¹³³

Precisely because of the will's orientation toward happiness, which is the perfect good containing all goods, it is not coerced by any lesser object of desire. In the *De malo* treatise on free choice, Thomas explains this directly:

We need to apprehend good and suitable things as good and suitable in particular and not only in general. Therefore, if we apprehend something as a suitable good in every conceivable particular, it will necessarily move the will. And so human beings necessarily seek happiness...If the good is such as not to be found good in every conceivable particular, it will not necessarily move the will.¹³⁴

As Brian Shanley put it, in commenting on these texts, "We are free to choose any particular good at any time precisely because none of them can completely satisfy our natural desire for happiness."¹³⁵

omnibus quae sub electione cadunt, voluntas libera manet, in hoc solo determinationem habens quod felicitatem naturaliter appetit, et non determinate in hoc vel illo." *Sentences* commentary. II.25.1. 2 (M II, 649).

¹³² "Voluntas in nihil potest tendere nisi sub ratione boni. Sed quia bonum est multiplex, propter hoc non ex necessitate determinatur ad unum." *Summa theologiae* I.82.2 ad 1 (L 5,296).

¹³³ "Cum autem possibilitas voluntatis sit respectu boni universalis et perfecti, non subiicitur eius possibilitas tota alicui particulari bono. Et ideo non ex necessitate movetur ab illo." *Summa theologiae* I. 82.2 ad 2 (L 5, 296-297)

¹³⁴ "Requiritur ut id quod apprehenditur ut bonum et conueniens, apprehendatur ut bonum et conueniens in particulari, et non in uniuersali tantum. Si igitur apprehendatur aliquid ut bonum conueniens secundum omnia particularia que considerari possunt, ex necessitate mouebit uoluntatem, et propter hoc homo ex necessitate appetit beatitudinem... Si autem sit tale bonum quod non inueniatur esse bonum secundum omnia particularia que considerari possunt, non ex necessitate mouebit, etiam quantum ad determinationem actus." *De Malo* 6.1 (L 23, 150, lines 429-444).

¹³⁵ Brian Shanley, "Thomas Aquinas on Created Freedom," 75.

Thomas, unlike Philip and Albert, was able to clearly explain how this flexibility of will relates to free decision. Primarily, he achieved this by giving free decision an object. The object of choice, for Thomas, is not “a good that is within our power” (Peter Lombard’s description) nor is it “rectitude for its own sake” (Anselm’s description). It is “goods which are means to an end.” Since free decision deals with means, all of which are “useful” goods, the way that will relates to objects other than the last end of happiness is the way that free decision relates to its objects also. Thus Thomas can explain the freedom of flexibility which free decision takes from the will as a freedom rooted in will’s capacity for the perfect good.

Like Philip and Albert, Thomas in these discussions characterizes will’s activity as searching for a good which is external to it and removes himself from considering temptation as the standard case of choice. In doing so, he no longer treats choice as a response to an interior dichotomy but as a response to a good which leads to some further good.

Brief summary of Part I

For all five of our authors, flexibility and self-movement are key aspects of the will, at least when it comes to accounting for free decision. Will must be open to more than one possibility, and it must be able to move itself, or else it is difficult to explain how free choice could happen. But the thirteenth-century authors completely changed the way in which those two key aspects were presented by adding an aspect of their own: will as a power with a determinate object. Flexibility was considered in terms of will’s inability to be filled by any single object, not in terms of will’s ability to desire either good or evil (or, as in Anselm’s case, either the just or the advantageous). Thus, the idea of what it meant for will to be free

changed: it was no longer free to desire good and evil, or free to put the advantageous over the just, but free to desire a good or not to desire that good. Self-movement, also, began to be explained in terms of the will's movement towards an object – will began to be considered as free to desire or not desire *this* thing, not as free to desire *this* thing in preference to *that* thing.

Because of their emphasis on will as a power with a determinate object, the thirteenth-century authors did not present will in a vague way as the human principle of autonomy and self-direction – a principle that can easily be confused with the agent himself. Instead, they compared will to reason because reason is the closest analogue we have: the two rational powers allow man to encounter the truth or the goodness which is outside him. The consideration of how will responds to the exterior good became, for them, an innovative part of the account of human free decision.

Part II. Reasons for change

A certain innovative approach to *liberum arbitrium* has been established as a fact: Peter and Anselm used will to explain free decision by emphasizing will's response to temptation, considering its flexibility and self-movement as given by the truths of theology and by the experience of moral responsibility and reflection on one's own movements. Philip, Albert, and Thomas emphasized will's relation to its object, using this relationship to explain the flexibility and self-movement of the will. What were the reasons behind this innovation?

Aristotle's influence can still be traced here as an exterior factor, particularly in the case of Albert and Thomas. In *De anima*, Aristotle emphasized that in defining powers we

must begin with their objects and, more particularly, with the aspect under which the powers are related to their objects. Both sight and hearing could encounter a guitar, for instance, but sight encounters it as colored and hearing encounters it as sounding. Therefore one must begin to define sight by a consideration of color, and hearing by a consideration of sound.¹³⁶

The application of this method to the power of will was simple enough: in order to define it in an Aristotelian fashion, the thirteenth-century authors had to pay more attention to the object of the will and the formality under which the power responds to that object. In addition, Aristotle's discussion of choice in books three and six of the *Nicomachean Ethics* led to debate on whether choice was an act of reason or of desire/will, a tension which Albert is always careful to articulate and which Thomas attempts to solve.¹³⁷ Aristotle's discussion of motion and self-movement also had an impact on Thomas, who paid attention to the

¹³⁶ In book 2 of *De anima*, Aristotle lays out the general method for investigating powers of the soul: "If we are to express what each is, namely what the thinking power is, or the perceptive, or the nutritive, we must go farther back and first give an account of thinking or perceiving, for in the order of investigation the question of what an agent does precedes the question, what enables it to do what it does. If this is correct, we must on the same ground go yet another step farther back and have some clear view of the objects of each; thus we must *start* with these objects, for example, with food, with what is perceptible, or with what is intelligible." *De anima* II.4, 16-22. A precursor for this text is *Republic*, book 5: "With a power I look only to this – on what it depends and what it accomplishes." The ensuing discussion makes clear that "that on which a power depends" is what Aristotle or Aquinas would call the object: knowledge depends on "what-is," etc. (*Republic* V, 477c-478b). Matthew Walz discusses this Aristotle passage, and Thomas's use of the method it prescribes, very thoroughly in "Thomas Aquinas on the Will and Freedom," pages 124-154.

¹³⁷ The definitions of choice Aristotle offered were in *Nicomachean Ethics*, book 3: "Choice is deliberate desire of things in our own power," (ch. 4, 1113a11) and book 6: "Choice is either desiderative reason or ratiocinative desire, and such an origin of action is a man." For one of Thomas's treatments of the latter definition, see *Summa theologiae* I.83.3, reply. Albert's writings make it clear that he thinks that choice as Aristotle describes it in *Ethics* III and the "choice" of *liberum arbitrium* are two different things: see especially *De homine* 3.2 (the definition question) reply to objection 28: "It must be said that choosing [*eligentia*] is not free decision. For choosing means deliberation according to right judgment, as is clear from what is attributed to choosing in the third book of the *Ethics*. However, free decision does not follow right judgment of necessity. For choice [*electio*] is not of one form here. For the choice of *eligentia* is of what is rightly judged by reason and through deliberation. The choice of free judgment, however, is an inclination "to those things which it wills by act," as Peter says, whether desired by will or decreed by reason" [Dicendum quod *eligentia* non est liberum arbitrium. *Eligentia* enim ponit deliberationem secundum iudicium rectum, sicut patet ex his quae attribuntur *eligentiae* in tertio *Ethicorum*. Liberum autem arbitrium non de necessitate sequitur iudicium rectum. *Electio* etiam non est uniformis hinc inde. *Electio* enim *eligentia* est de recte iudicato per rationem et cum deliberatione. *Electio* autem liberi arbitrii est inclinatio 'ad quos voluerit actus', ut dicit Petrus, sive concupitos per voluntatem sive decretos per rationem.] (C 27.2,516, lines 23-34).

philosopher's criteria when talking about the will's self-motion,¹³⁸ while the Aristotelian definition of the free as "that which is for its own sake" (*causa sui*) had a serious impact on Albert, who argued for will's particular kind of freedom in view of this definition.¹³⁹ Last, but not least, Aristotle insisted that man had a single final end, happiness, in virtue of which he desired all other ends¹⁴⁰ – thus, a consideration of human choice based on Aristotle's teaching would necessarily be antithetical to Anselm's portrayal of a will with two "affections."

The internal reasons for the innovation, however, are more interesting. For one thing, the changes that we have already considered in this dissertation clearly encouraged and brought about this change in the treatment of will. As the thirteenth-century authors rejected the context of temptation and sin and embraced a more natural perspective, they rejected the emphasis on will's behavior during temptation and dwelt, instead, on will's nature as a power of the soul. The new context encouraged a consideration of man as part of the natural order: he is no longer presented as an agent tempted by Satan to disobey a divine command but as an agent responsive to the goods around him. Thus, it became more natural to present will as responsive to an exterior object, not to an exterior suggestion or an interior certainty. Similarly, as the thirteenth century authors began to define their goal as a more causal account of free decision, they began to look more deeply at the causes of will's flexibility

¹³⁸ For specific texts from Aristotle, arguing that a thing cannot move itself as a whole – that is, that mover and moved cannot be the same, and in the same respect – see *Physics* 8.4 and 5. Aquinas's discussion of the will's self-motion was given in some detail above. We can also see Thomas's defense of the axiom, "everything that is moved is moved by another" in the *Summa contra gentiles* I. 13 – here, he uses the concepts of act and potency to explain the axiom.

¹³⁹ See note 21, in this chapter, for more about this "causa sui" definition of freedom, which Albert took from *Metaphysics* I.2; 982b26-28. Albert uses this definition in a large number of passages: see, for instance, *Sentences* commentary II. d. 24. article 5 (B 27, 401-402) and d. 25 article 1 (B 27, 424).

¹⁴⁰ See *Nicomachean Ethics* book 1.

and self-movement also, searching in them for causes of the will's freedom and the causes of free decision. Thus the exploration of will's relation to its object was encouraged by the search for explanations within the natural order.

Perhaps the single biggest reason for the new focus on will's relation to its object is the definition of free decision as a power and the clarification of the relation of free decision to will. The simple clarification which stated that will is neither the subject of nor a part of free decision made it much easier to ask what will *did* do for free decision. In addition, if free decision is to be defined as a power, it must be made clear what its object is and in what way that object relates to will's object. Thomas and Philip had an extra motive for discussing the object of will. Since they defined free decision as the same power as will, the object of will *is* the object of free decision: or, at the very least, some of the will's objects are the objects of free decision. Even Albert, who said that free decision takes its essence from reason and will, had a stake in discussing will's freedom.

A last change that encouraged this new perspective on will was the innovative comparison of reason's freedom and will's freedom. Once the authors had begun to say that reason was both free and not free because of a certain relation of the power to its object, they could go on to claim that will was free with regard to its proper object in a way that reason is not.

There may also have been some deficiencies in the way Anselm and Peter used will that prompted the changes in how will was used by our thirteenth-century authors. Peter and Anselm's temptation-based discussions of will must use the ideas of consent and persistence

to describe will's activity.¹⁴¹ A will that is being tempted either consents to temptation or persists in righteousness. But these ideas of consent and persistence are very difficult to analyze. Consent, or "saying yes," is a perfectly clear concept, but it is a dead end philosophically. There is no answer to the question, "*How* does one say yes?" or "*Why* can one say yes?" or "What does saying yes *mean*?" The case is similar with the idea of rejection and perseverance. Although rejection, "saying no," is understandable, it cannot be analyzed.¹⁴² Consent and dissent are something like the 1 and the 0 that make computer programming possible. These minimal bits of content provide minimal material for understanding the principles behind them.

A second inadequacy inherent in the way that Peter and Anselm treat will is that their way of speaking tends toward the fault of confusing the will with the agent. Neither of them believes that will actually *does* perform the actions which belong to the whole man – Anselm, especially, is clear on the fact that the will is an instrument – but, in the context of temptation, it seems very natural to use phraseology such as "the will chooses" and "the will consents." Thus Anselm will say, for instance, that the will can "submit itself" to temptation (*voluntas potest se subicere tentationi*)¹⁴³ and that "no external power can bring will into subjection without its consent" (*aliena potestas sine suo assensu subicere non potest*).¹⁴⁴

Peter Lombard sometimes says things like "free decision chooses." (*liberum*

¹⁴¹ One influential author whose theory of free decision was very heavily based on the idea of "consent" was Bernard of Clairvaux – see especially the first few chapters of *De gratia et libero arbitrio*. Those interested in further reading on this emphasis can turn to A. Forest, "Das Erlebnis des *consensus voluntatis* beim heiligen Bernhard," in *Bernhard von Clairvaux, Mönch und Mystiker*. The fact our authors preferred to work with Peter Lombard's "faculty of reason and will" definition instead of Bernard's "voluntary consent" is another sign that they found the concept of "consent" difficult to analyze and not truly helpful in understanding free decision.

¹⁴² I suspect that the slogan, "Just say no," contains the "just" precisely to emphasize the simplicity of the concept of "saying no."

¹⁴³ "Voluntas potest se subicere tentationi." *De libertate arbitrii*, ch. 5 (S I, 217, line 3).

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 216, lines 2-3.

arbitrium...eligit.)¹⁴⁵ This language is encouraged by the emphasis on consent. There is very little difference in the content of the two statements “Edith consented” and “Edith’s will consented” because consent is difficult to analyze in terms of its cause, as well as in terms of its nature. Philip, Albert, and Thomas avoid this problem of confusing the will with the person by focusing on ways in which the will is actually a limited, distinct power of the soul rather than emphasizing ways in which the will behaves as a miniature agent, rejecting or embracing choices by its own consent. By emphasizing will’s response to an object they emphasized will as a power with boundaries: will does not, like the person, deal with all of reality: it only deals with reality rationally perceived as desirable.

Part III. Some points of controversy

Before I end this section on the new aspects of will used in accounting for free decision, it is worthwhile to bring up two points of controversy. These points may also be helpful in clarifying some of the more obscure aspects of the claims made above.

A. Is there any real difference between temptation and desire?

One might ask whether there is a real difference between talking about the will’s response to temptation (as Peter and Anselm do) and talking about the will’s relation to its object (as Philip, Albert, and Thomas do). It is obvious that a temptation must present the will with an object of desire. Does this mean, then, that our five authors are talking about the

¹⁴⁵ “Liberum vero arbitrium est facultas rationis et voluntatis...et aliquando quidem, discretionem habens boni et mali, quod malum est eligit; aliquando vero quod bonum est.” *Sentences* II.24. 3.1 (Br. I, 452-453, lines 27-5)

same relation between will and its object, and just using slightly different descriptions of that relation? A more careful discussion of temptation should help explain the difference.

The essential elements in a temptation are the agent and his activity. The apple is a prerequisite in the tempting of Eve, but it is not really what her temptation is *about*. The significance of her action lies in breaking the commandment of God, not in eating a piece of fruit. In the parallel case of the temptation of Christ in the desert, the idea of bread is a prerequisite, but the significance of his act lies in his rejection of Satan's promises, not in his refusal to transform stones into bread. Historically and narratively, the meaning of giving in to temptation does not lie in any goal which is achieved by the agent, but in the abandonment of good which his action entails; the meaning of resisting temptation does not lie in the loss of some offered benefit, but in the perseverance of the agent in some kind of goodness or innocence. For this reason, a discussion of will which emphasizes its response to temptation likewise emphasizes the agent as abandoning or retaining his grasp on some interior standard, rather than the agent's will in its activity of desiring something exterior to himself.¹⁴⁶

A further difference lies in the fact that temptation involves the will in two fundamentally different responses. When a person is tempted, he looks toward evil as possibly consenting to it, and toward good as possibly rejecting it. As he considers one possible activity, he views two standards in two completely different ways. This is why we

¹⁴⁶ A sign of this difference in perspective can be seen by contrasting Anselm with Thomas: Anselm says that man is able to will rectitude "only if he has it," (*De concordia III*. 3, trans. 202); but Thomas presents the will as able to desire an exterior good not yet possessed: "The intellectual appetite...tends to individual things which exist outside the soul insofar as they stand under the universal." [Appetitus intellectivus, etsi feratur in res quae sunt extra animam singulares, fertur tamen in eas secundum aliquam rationem universalem.] *Summa theologiae* I. 80 2. ad 2 (L 5, 284).

do not speak of “temptation” toward the good.¹⁴⁷ Similarly, we do not speak of “perseverance” in evil – when Christians pray for “final perseverance” they presume that perseverance in good is meant. The tempted will is involved in two different responses (temptation and perseverance) that are proper to the different moral alternatives of good and evil. If we discuss the will’s response to an object is, however, the description is much simpler, at least by contrast. In considering the will as directed toward the good, we consider one way of relating to one object. Will may desire or not desire such an object, but the author who describes the relation of will and object is no longer considering the agent as simultaneously rejecting one object and preserving another.

Another way of looking at this is to consider that, while temptation tells us quite a lot about human interaction and behavior, it tells us almost nothing about what is essential to will itself – about what makes will *will* instead of some other power of the soul. It is not *essential* to will to cling to a gift of rectitude: if it were, then when rectitude was lost will would have been lost.¹⁴⁸ Nor is it *essential* to will to reject evil: if it were, Eve before she met the serpent would have had no will. However, it *is* essential to the will to seek the good. When Philip, Albert, and Thomas discussed will’s relation to its object without putting that object in a context of temptation, they began to discuss will as it is in its essence.

¹⁴⁷ As C.S. Lewis once remarked, speaking in the character of the demon Wormwood, “God cannot tempt to virtue as we do to vice.” *The Screwtape Letters*, ch. 8 (24).

¹⁴⁸ Anselm would say that it is essential to will *to be able* to cling to rectitude. But in what does this ability subsist?

B. Is 'specification by the object' really important in explaining human free choice?

I have stressed the fact that the main innovation of our thirteenth-century authors, with regard to will, is their consideration of will's relation to its object. Through this consideration, I argued, Philip, Albert, and Thomas were able to give causes (or at least begin to give causes) of the flexibility and self-movement of will that are relevant to free decision. But is this relation of will to its object truly an essential component of an author's view on free choice? A number of commentators on the medieval tradition have suggested that the essential problem of free decision is *not* how reason and will relate to their objects, but how reason and will relate *to each other*. Can will cause reason to deliberate? Can will choose contrary to reason? Can reason cause will to choose? Does reason make the choice of will necessary? Only if we are clear on these relations, many authors believe, will we be clear about whether man is really free or not. If such thinkers are correct, this innovation I have been discussing is really a minor inflection rather than a major change, because it has nothing to do with the crucial problem of free decision. Which is truly more important to the question of free choice, philosophically speaking: the relation of powers to their objects or the relation of powers to each other?

A number of authors present the relation of reason and will to each other as the crucial problem of *liberum arbitrium*. This is often translated into an assumption that the most interesting thing about a particular free choice theory is whether it is "intellectualist" or "voluntarist." Dionysius Siedler discusses Albert's theory of free decision in what he regards as the obvious context of intellectualism and voluntarism,¹⁴⁹ Colleen McCluskey asks whether the thirteenth century authors held cognitive or volitional accounts of human

¹⁴⁹ Siedler, *Intellektualismus und Voluntarismus bei Albertus Magnus*. See especially his introduction, 1-10.

action,¹⁵⁰ George Reilly compared Albert's free will theory to Thomas's in terms of Augustinian voluntarism and Aristotelian intellectualism,¹⁵¹ and Lottin sees, in the development of doctrine throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, primarily a question of whether will or reason is responsible for freedom.¹⁵² Robert Pasnau, also, assumes that the interaction between reason and will, and the sense in which Aquinas is an "intellectualist," is the most important factor in expounding Thomas's question on *liberum arbitrium*.¹⁵³ Why have these authors, and many others, decided that the crucial problem of free decision is the relation of reason and will to each other? McCluskey explains her reasons for focusing on the active relations between reason and will very simply:

We need a general account of what it is to act before we can begin to analyze what allows that action to be free. The philosophers under consideration hold that both cognitive and appetitive powers have unique roles to play in the explanation of an action...There are two basic accounts of freedom, a cognitive account and a volitional account...According to the cognitive account, reason specifies the alternative chosen by the will, while on the volitional account, the will specifies the alternatives chosen.¹⁵⁴

Odon Lottin's analysis of the significance of the medieval presentations is similar:

All moral philosophy ought to begin with a psychological analysis of the human act, where two factors come into play, reason and will. But one desires precision regarding the respective roles of these two faculties....In studying free decision among the thinkers of the 12th and 13th centuries, let us fix our attention, at the same time, on the manner in which a number of philosophers and theologians of the middle ages have envisaged the problem of the psychology of the human act.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁰ McCluskey, *Four Theories*. See especially the introduction, pages 28-39.

¹⁵¹ George Reilly, "The Psychology of Saint Albert the Great compared with that of Saint Thomas," chapter 7 (75-83).

¹⁵² Lottin, *Psychologie I*, 11-12.

¹⁵³ Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, section 7.4 (221-233).

¹⁵⁴ McCluskey, "Human Action and Human Freedom," 28, 38-39.

¹⁵⁵ "Toute philosophie morale doit en effet débiter par l'analyse psychologique de l'acte humain, où interviennent deux facteurs, la raison et la volonté. Mais on désire des précisions sur le rôle respectif de ces deux facultés...En étudiant le libre arbitre chez les penseurs du XII^e et du XIII^e siècle, nous fixerons donc du même coup la manière dont nombre de théologiens et philosophes du moyen âge ont envisagé le problème de la psychologie de l'acte humain." Lottin, *Psychologie*, 11.

Why shouldn't we conclude, with these thinkers, that the chief issue in the medieval treatises of *liberum arbitrium* is the interaction of reason and will that takes place in the course of a single human action? In doing so, these authors might urge, we will be doing nothing contrary to the texts. Albert, in his *De homine* treatise, builds his definition of *liberum arbitrium* around an analysis of human action; Thomas also includes a complete analysis of the interaction between reason and will in the second part of the *Summa theologiae* and in his most mature treatment of free decision in *De malo*.

I am hesitant, however, to agree that the problem of how reason and will relate to each other is primary in the discussions of *liberum arbitrium* under consideration. It is true that modern readers have, or have developed, a compelling curiosity about whether will can reject the judgment, or "sentence," of reason. But it is presumptuous to assume that, because of this curiosity, the issue of how the will relates to its object is of secondary importance. The authors I have been considering are very careful to emphasize this relation and compare it to the relation of reason to its object: in fact, I think it is fair to say that they are *more* careful in explaining this relation than they are in explaining the relation of reason to will during the act of choice. In the writings of the particular authors considered in this dissertation, the will's freedom in responding to its object is given at least the same amount of emphasis as the will's freedom as a moving subject.

The reason for this emphasis on will's object is simple. In their treatises on *liberum arbitrium* Philip, Albert, and Thomas are not primarily trying to understand the psychology of the human act. We may think we need a complete description of how action takes place in order to understand whether choice is free, but they didn't subscribe to this belief. What

Philip, Albert, and Thomas were trying to achieve was a portrait of powers of the soul, and in describing powers a good Aristotelian can never neglect the object of a power in order to concentrate on the activity of the power. To do so would be like trying to explain the activity of seeing and neglecting to say much about color and light.

James Ross once described those who regard God as the creator of “states of affairs” as engaging in “shadow talk.” God is the creator of *beings*, not of states.¹⁵⁶ Similarly, those who regard freedom purely in terms of action theory are engaging in shadow talk. They have forgotten to look at the beings responsible for the activities they describe. Philip, Albert, and Thomas, however, were interested in beings. They wanted to know about the principles of the actions, the real, permanent things that bring forth transient activities. That is why they ask about *liberum arbitrium* – about its nature, its presence, and its relations – before they ever begin the difficult task of describing the interaction of reason and will in a single choice.

The question of whether will is free with regard to its object is primary for another reason. No one can understand whether reason necessitates will, or whether will determines reason, unless he knows what these powers do in themselves. What are the natural acts of will and reason? If the actions of will and reason in response to their natural objects are not free, it makes very little difference how their interaction comes about. Let me try to explain this in another way. Suppose someone argues that will cannot be determined by reason to choose one alternative over another. Thus, will is free, and therefore human choice is free. But these statements are meaningless if will, in its own proper activity of desiring the good, is not free. The question of whether coercion happens during a particular choice is not as

¹⁵⁶ Ross, “Creation II,” in *The Existence and Nature of God*.

relevant to freedom as the question of whether the essential activity of will is necessary by nature. This is why the focus on the will's capacity with regard to its object is of primary importance: it is a question of whether will is necessitated in its essential activity.

Thus, the innovative focus on the will's relation *to its object* is not a change in a secondary or minor area. As our authors saw it, by considering the objects of will they were developing an account of the powers which are the principles of action, not, primarily, an account of action in which powers are involved.

Brief Summary of Section 2

There has always been some temptation to view the human will as a sort of magical, absolute faculty whose actions cannot be explained. It is easy to add to an absolute freedom to such a faculty, setting up "free-will" as an inviolable and inexplicable miniature agent. The authors we are considering in this dissertation fought this tendency, but Anselm and Peter did so in a limited fashion. They tried to show factors in the nature of will that made possible its ability to resist temptation, but their emphasis on temptation was far more fitted to discussing the person than the will. Philip, Albert, and Thomas, however, advanced much farther in showing how will was free from coercion as a subject and most especially in its relation to its object. Their emphasis on the object of the will revealed will as a simple power with a straightforward activity, directed beyond the agent to something outside the soul. Will as they made use of it could easily be compared to reason, and it was clearly a part of the human soul rather than the whole of human nature. The property of will thus elicited (that is, a capacity extending beyond any particular object) became crucial in an account of

free decision that used will's relation to its object to show *why* men have free choice of their actions.

Conclusion to Chapter 4

When Philip, Albert, and Thomas say that the freedom of free decision comes from, or lies in, reason and will, they move beyond a common view which simply admits that these powers need to perform their proper activities of reasoning and desiring before choice can occur. Their treatments deal with reason and will in their proper activities (desiring and knowing) and in their relation to their proper objects (truth and goodness) which are outside the soul. As all three of these authors discuss reason in its response to truth and in its immateriality, so also all three of them discuss will in its response to goodness. They then use these relations of powers to objects to show how free choice comes about: Philip ties free decision to the mingling of truth and goodness in the apprehended good. Albert bases free decision on the capacity of reason and the experienced knowledge of the yet greater capacity of will. Thomas Aquinas goes well beyond either of them: he bases free decision on the capacity of reason for the universal, and the capacity of will for perfect happiness. All three authors make their treatments of reason and will serve their goal of giving a more causal account of human freedom, and in doing so they represent a fundamental change in approach in comparison to Anselm and Peter Lombard.

Chapter 5: Continuity in the Treatment of Human Freedom

In the course of four chapters, I have noted four changes in the methods used by the medieval authors. First, the thirteenth-century authors we are considering change the context in which they introduce questions of human free decision: they cease to consider the temptation in the garden of Eden and simply ask about the nature of the human soul. Second, they change the goal of the investigation, because they ask in a new way for causes of free decision and proof that it exists. Third, they insist on a new level of precision and characterize free decision as a power of the rational soul. Fourth, they take into account new characteristics of reason and will, particularly the relations of these powers to their objects, when they ask how these powers give rise to human freedom of choice.

In some ways, the dissertation is completed at this point. I set out to prove that there was an innovative approach to free decision in the thirteenth century, and this is what I have done. However, to end here would be to leave the reader with a false impression of a great dichotomy or divide between the old and new. Thus, this last chapter had to be written: it puts the innovative ways of approaching free decision back into perspective by emphasizing the guiding influence of traditional methods and the continuity in certain key themes. By writing about this continuity and growth, I hope to leave the reader with a more truthful portrait of how the methods of approaching free decision developed over the course of time. Despite changes which greatly altered the investigation into human free decision, all of the authors I have been considering continued to investigate freedom in accordance with certain fundamental approaches. The continuity in the ways free decision was approached is just as real as the innovation: in fact, in many ways it was because of the goals which they had *in*

common with Anselm and Peter Lombard that Philip, Albert, and Thomas made the changes that they made.

This chapter will have the usual two parts. In the first part, I will show that there is, in fact, continuity in several areas. First, all of our authors attempt to explain *liberum arbitrium* without defining it by evil or the possibility of evil. Second, all of our authors try to find a definition or account of *liberum arbitrium* that will fit both God and man. Third, all of these authors consider free decision as something that is received from God, and from God alone, who has this power pre-eminently. At the same time they are convinced that, unlike grace, which is also a gift from God, free decision cannot be lost. Lastly, all of our authors try to show that man's free decision is defined by (or accounted for by) a certain relation toward God as the object of human desire.

In the second part of the chapter, I will discuss reasons for the continuity of these convictions. Why do these authors have these approaches in common? In part, we can appeal to forces outside the debate to answer: these ways of approaching free decision were inspired by Christian doctrine and by the teaching of Augustine. However, these methods of approaching free decision also provided the dialogue on *liberum arbitrium* with an interior coherence and direction. The several convictions (freedom without evil, freedom as a relation to God, etc.) are different but not really distinct. As fundamental insights, they fit together to provide a picture of free decision that connects this human capacity with the goodness that human beings by nature desire.

Part I: The Fact of Continuity: Five Fundamental Approaches to Free Decision

This part of the chapter will point to five characteristics of Anselm's treatment of *liberum arbitrium* and argue that these approaches to free decision were also present in Peter Lombard's treatise, as well as being preserved in the thirteenth-century mini-tradition created by Philip, Albert, and Thomas. One characteristic of the Anselmian approach is the explicit rejection of a certain avenue of thought: Anselm refused to consider the ability to choose evil as an essential element of freedom. In tandem with this negative strategy, however, he worked along several lines of thought that can be more positively characterized. His attempt to explain free decision was enriched by the idea that freedom had a common meaning for God and man, and so he took steps toward showing that free decision was a gift through which man shares in the divine nature. Despite viewing free decision as a gift, Anselm insisted that, unlike grace, free decision could not be lost. Finally, since he considered free decision as a gift involving choice, he worked to show that man's free decision included, in essence, a certain orientation toward God. All the other authors we are considering – Peter Lombard, Philip the Chancellor, Albert the Great, and Thomas Aquinas – worked along the same lines. The following pages will show this through a careful look at the texts in question.

A. *Freedom without evil*

While each of our authors realized that human wrong-doing was a result of human free decision, none of them was willing to define free decision, absolutely speaking, as the ability to do evil. In order to see this more clearly, and especially to see how the thirteenth-

century authors continued to follow this method while making the changes that we discussed in earlier chapters, let us look at the relevant texts in each case.

1. *Anselm and Peter*

The first thing that the teacher establishes in Anselm's dialogue is that the definition of free decision *cannot* involve the possibility of doing evil. These are the teacher's first lines in *De libertate arbitrii*:

I don't think that freedom of choice is the power to sin and not to sin. After all, if this were its definition, then neither God nor the angels, who cannot sin, would have free choice – which it is impious to say.¹

Anselm does not deny that sin – that is, the choice to do evil – happens “through” free decision and because of it.² But he is adamant in saying that this ability to do wrong is not a defining characteristic of free choice. As the teacher tells the student, regarding the fallen angel and the first human being, “They sinned through their choice, which was free; but they did not sin through that in virtue of which it was free.”³ For Anselm, free decision may be a principle of evil, but it should not be defined by this ability; just as a candlestick may be a murder weapon but it is not defined by this ability.

This way of approaching free decision is negative insofar as it indicates a direction that is *not* taken in the search for an account of free decision. It is a positive one, however, insofar as it sets up a goal that is to be achieved: Anselm plans to define free decision without making the choice to do evil, or the possibility of such a choice, essential to its definition.

¹ “Libertatem arbitrii non puto esse potentiam peccandi et non peccandi. Quippe si haec eius esset definitio: nec deus nec angeli qui peccare nequeunt liberum haberent arbitrium; quod nefas est dicere.” *De libertate arbitrii*, 1 (S 1, 207-208; Williams, 32).

² “Per liberum arbitrium peccavit apostata angelus sive primus homo, quia per suum arbitrium peccavit...” *Ibid.*, 2 (S 1, 210; Williams, 34).

³ “Peccavit autem per arbitrium suum quod erat liberum; sed non per hoc unde liberum erat...” (*Ibid.*)

Anselm's concern was shared by the other authors we are considering in this dissertation: all of them pointedly include rejections of the "good and evil" thesis, though the rest of them do not introduce their treatises with this question.

One might question whether this is true in the case of Peter Lombard, since his definition seems to assert, in defiance of Anselm, that free decision is free because of the ability to do evil. In distinction 24 he writes that "Free decision is a faculty of reason and will, which chooses the good when grace assists it, or the bad when grace is lacking; and it is called free with regard to the will, which can turn to either."⁴ Again, in distinction 25, he says that "it is called *free* decision on account of the will, because it is voluntarily moved and can be brought by spontaneous desire to those things which it judges, or which it is able to judge, good or evil."⁵ However, Peter was obviously uncomfortable with the idea that something is free because it is "able to turn to both good and evil," for in a later paragraph he repeats Anselm's reasoning. He rejects the idea that free decision is *defined* by the ability to choose evil because he realizes that God has free decision, but does not have the ability to do evil:

It seems that free decision is only in those...in whom there is the power to choose the good or the bad, and to do both (or refrain from doing both) according to choice. According to this free decision is neither in God nor in all men...But that God has free will, Augustine teaches.⁶

⁴ "Liberum vero arbitrium est facultas rationis et voluntatis, qua bonum eligitur gratia assistant, vel malum eadem desistente." Peter Lombard, *Sentences*, II. d. 24, c. 3 (Br I, 452, lines 26-27).

⁵ "Liberum ergo dicitur arbitrium quantum ad voluntatem, quia voluntarie moveri et spontaneo appetitu ferri potest ad ea quae bona vel mala iudicat, vel iudicare valet." Ibid, d. 25, c. 1 (Br I, 461, lines 9-12).

⁶ "Et quidem, secundum praedictam assignationem, in his tantum videtur esse liberum arbitrium, qui voluntatem mutare et in contraria possunt deflectere, in quorum videlicet potestate est eligere bonum, vel malum, et utrumlibet secundum electionem facere, vel dimittere; secundum quod nec in Deo nec in his omnibus, quia tanta beatitudines gratia sunt roborati, ut iam peccare nequeant, liberum arbitrium esse nequit. Sed quod Deus liberum arbitrium habeat, Augustinus docet..." *Sentences* II, d. 25. 4-5 (Br I, 462, lines 5-13).

The next several chapters of Peter's account are dedicated to showing how God, the angels, and the saints in heaven still have free decision, despite their inability to turn toward evil. Peter does not completely reject his previous definitions, but these several pages of discussion show us that he has accepted the Anselmian imperative: free decision does not, by definition, require the possibility of doing evil.

2. *Philip and Albert*

Philip shows the same refusal to proceed in any way that considers free decision as essentially the ability to choose evil. His treatment of this topic is found in the last section of his treatise, where he seeks a definition of freedom. Although some authorities have defined freedom as "the ability to bend to opposite acts," and although this is the first definition Philip quotes, he does not believe this definition can be accepted:

We cannot say that the first way of speaking is the true meaning [*ratio*] of freedom, because according to this there would not be free decision in God, who is always most free. Whence Augustine says "Certainly although God is not able to sin we cannot say that he does not have free decision."⁷

Philip refuses to uphold the "opposites" definition of freedom. Instead, he develops definitions that do not involve the potential for evil choice, such as "not being under a defect," and "not being under a master."⁸

Albert also argues that free decision is not defined as the power to do evil. Like Philip, he tends to treat this question at the end of his treatises rather than at the beginning.

In the *De homine*, his question on the definition of freedom (the fourth in the treatise) opens

⁷"Sed primo modo non possumus dicere rationem libertatis, nam secundum hoc non esset in Deo liberum arbitrium, in quo constat esse liberrimum. Unde Augustinus 'Certe Deus ipse numquid, quoniam peccare non potest, ideo liberum arbitrium negandus est?' " *Summa de bono* (W I, 183, lines 10-11).

⁸ See Philip's reply to the question on the definition of freedom: *ibid*, pages 186-187. "Potestas non subesse alicui defectui" is on page 186, line 115; "Potestas non subesse alteri" is on page 187, line 131. Both of these are interpreted and extended by Philip, but my purpose here is only to show his rejection of the "opposites" definition, so I will not dwell on his positive ideas here.

with six objections which are entirely concerned with whether free decision can be defined as flexibility to good or evil. In his reply, Albert gives a qualified account reminiscent of Peter Lombard. Although free decision can *act* in choosing good or evil, he writes, free decision is not called “free” because it can do evil,⁹ nor can it be defined as the ability to choose evil if we are considering “the end to which it habitually tends.”¹⁰ His replies to the objections are very carefully nuanced: Albert wants to preserve the notion that free decision means that an agent can act to choose evil, but at the same time he regards the actual activity of making such a choice as a privation that diminishes freedom. In the end, he suggests that the ability to do opposites which accompanies any rational power is, at least in some sense, not the same as the ability to do evil which is a certain impotence in such a nature.¹¹

⁹ “Dicimus quod libertas arbitrii multipliciter determinatur. Si enim determinatur ad actus, in quos potest per se ex natura sui, tunc est flexibilitas ad oppositos actus. Si vero determinatur secundum nomen libertatis, tunc est potestas faciendi quod vult. Sicut enim hominem dicimus liberum, qui potestatem habet eundi quo vult, eo quod non detinetur ab aliquo domino, ita liberum arbitrium dicimus liberum, quia potestatem habet faciendi quod vult, non detentum ab aliquo superiori.” *De homine*, 3.4.1, body (C 27.2, 520, lines 58-67). Note that the name “free” is applied because of the power of doing what is willed, *not* because of the ability to move in opposite directions.

¹⁰ “Si vero determinatur in comparatione ad finem ad quem est per habitum, tunc libertas arbitrii est potestas conservandi rectitudinem voluntatis propter se, sicut dicit Anselmus.” *Ibid.*, lines 69-72.

¹¹ This, at least, is my interpretation of the argument in the replies to objections 1-5. Albert begins by arguing that only the *act* of choosing opposites diminishes freedom, not the *ability* to choose opposites: “Flexibilitas ad oppositos actus secundum sui naturam non minuit libertatem, sed secundum suum actum.” (*Ibid.*, 521, lines 1-3), and again, “In malis, quae sonant privationem vel ligationem, actus est post potentiam ratione et natura, eo quod amplior privatio est in actu quam in potentia, et idcirco actus minuit libertatem.” (*Ibid.*, lines 6-9). Albert then admits that someone might still regard the ability to do evil as a privation, however: “Si vero dicatur quod secundum hoc potentia etiam ponit privationem, licet minorem quam actus...” but makes a distinction in how the power of choice should be viewed: “Respondendum est quod potentia duobus modi consideratur, scilicet secundum comparationem ad actum, et secundum comparationem ad oppositum. Et primo modo est in potentia et sonat in privationem. Secundo modo est eadem cum potentia quae est in bono, eo quod omnis potentia rationalis est ad opposita.” (*Ibid.*, lines 9-17).

In treating this issue in *De homine*, Albert refers to an idea taken from Peter Lombard, “the power of sinning is rather an impotence than a power.”¹² In his treatise on *liberum arbitrium* in his *Sentences* commentary, Albert brings up this teaching again:

It must be said that the power of sinning is not part of free decision except *per accidens*...for insofar as it is the power of sinning, it is a defect and an infirmity, and not a power.¹³

In the *Summa* treatise on free decision Albert continues to rely on Anselm’s definition to explain that free decision’s end has nothing to do with evil choices, even though the power can be directed towards opposite objects.¹⁴ In general, Albert, like Peter Lombard, seems to be in a state of uneasy compromise on the issue of freedom as the ability to choose evil. He does not reject the “good and evil thesis” absolutely as Anselm and Philip do. But he does not accept the idea either, trying instead to hammer out some kind of distinction that will allow him to hold both that free decision can choose evil and that it is not intended to do so. In all cases, he tends to refer approvingly to Anselm’s definition in his discussion, emphasizing the idea that free decision’s purpose, and that by which it is free, has nothing to do with evil.

¹² “In fine secundi *Sententiarum* probatur quod potentia peccandi magis est impotentia quam potentia.” *De homine* 3.4.1 arg 3 (C 27.2, 519, lines 64-66). The passage from Peter Lombard is *Sentences* II. 44.1.3, where Peter quotes both Gregory and Augustine to the effect that God gives all powers, but man’s evil-doing is from his own mind. (Br. II, 579, lines 2-7).

¹³ “Dicendum quod potestas peccandi non est pars libertatis nisi per accidens...sed in quantum est peccandi, defectus est et infirmitas, et non potestas.” *Sentences* commentary, II. 24.6, ad 1 (B 27, 403-404). Another passage from the *Sentences* commentary that tells us Albert’s thought on this issue is from his question on whether God has will. He writes, “It does not belong to the nobility of will, that it can be directed to evil, because this is not a power; instead, this ability is present in the created, unconfirmed will as a defect, because the created will comes into being from non-being. But that it can be directed toward contradictory opposites, namely that it can do this or cease from doing it, or do something else [does belong to the nobility of the will]: for that is the power shown by the will itself, of being obligated to nothing.” [Hoc non est de nobilitate voluntatis, quod potest in malum, quic hoc non est posse: sed consequitur voluntatem creatam non confirmatum ex defectu, quia fluxit in esse post non esse: sed quod potest in opposite contradictorie, scilicet quod potest hoc, et potest cessare ab ipso, et potest aliud: ista enim potestas ostendit ipsam voluntatem nulli esse obligatam.] Ibid, I. 45. 100. 2, ad 5 (B 26, 403).

¹⁴ *Summa* II. 91.4.1, replies to objections to Anselm’s definition. (B 33, 191).

3. Thomas Aquinas

Thomas shows the same commitment to defining free decision without evil. In his *Sentences* commentary, in response to an objector who denies divine free decision, he argues that *liberum arbitrium* cannot be defined by the ability to do evil:

It does not pertain to the nature of free decision that it be related indeterminately to good or to evil, because free decision in itself is ordered to the good, since the good is the object of the will. Nor does free decision tend toward evil except on account of some defect (when evil is apprehended as good) since there is no will or choice except of the good, or of the apparent good.¹⁵

Thomas, like Anselm, realizes fully that free decision is able to choose evil – in commenting on distinction 24, he quoted Peter’s definition approvingly: “Free decision is that by which good or evil is chosen.” But Thomas refuses to *define* the power by this ability – he will not say that the ability to choose evil is part of free decision’s *ratio* or account. Like Peter Lombard, he realizes that such a theory would deny free decision to God, the blessed, and the angels; thus, he refutes this notion in commenting on distinction 25. Unlike Peter, Thomas can give a positive reason for leaving evil out of free decision’s definition: free decision’s object is the good, and therefore it has nothing to do with evil as such.

The conviction that free decision is not *defined* by the ability to choose evil is revisited in Thomas’s *De veritate*. Here, also while discussing free choice in God, Thomas puts his view quite simply: “The ability to choose evil does not belong to the nature [*ratio*] of free decision.”¹⁶

¹⁵ “Ad rationem liberi arbitrii non pertinet ut indeterminate se habeat ad bonum vel ad malum: quia liberum arbitrium per se in bonum ordinatum est, cum bonum sit objectum voluntatis, nec in malum tendit nisi propter aliquem defectum, quia apprehenditur ut bonum, cum non sit voluntas aut electio nisi boni, aut apparentis boni.” Thomas, *Sentences* commentary II. 25. 1.1. ad 2. (M II, 646). There is a very similar exposition in *De malo* 16.5.

¹⁶ “Dicendum quod posse eligere malum, non est de ratione liberi arbitrii.” *De veritate* 24.3. ad 2 (L 22.3, 688, lines 98-99).

Thomas does not refer to the ability to choose evil in his *Summa theologiae* treatise on free decision or in his *De malo* treatise, but this is almost certainly because, in the *Summa*, he had already dealt with the issue, and, in the *De malo*, he was planning (or, perhaps, had already written) a more serious question later. In the *Summa theologiae* question on angelic choice, Thomas had written:

It belongs to the perfection of its liberty for free decision to be able to choose between opposite things, keeping the end in view; but it pertains to the defect of liberty for it to choose anything by turning away from the order to the end; and this is sinning.¹⁷

For Aquinas, as has been noted by others, “Freedom is exercised within the range of goods that are truly consonant with the ultimate good.”¹⁸ Anselm wrote that free decision’s freedom came from pursuing its divinely ordained purpose of preserving rectitude. Albert made some attempt to show that free decision’s ability to turn to opposites was not the same as the ability to sin, which is an impotence rather than a power. Here, Thomas seems to blend the two approaches. He says that free decision, when it turns from its true end, does so by a defect of freedom, just as Anselm had said; he also claims that to choose between opposites with the end in view is not the same as to sin, following Albert’s inclination. In *De malo*, in his question on the immutability of the demonic will, Aquinas explains the same idea in more depth:

The second diversity to which free decision can extend is considered according to the difference of good and evil; but this diversity does not pertain to the power of free decision essentially (*per se*) but is related to it incidentally (*per accidens*), inasmuch as it is found in a nature capable of defect. For since the will of itself is ordered to good as to its proper object, that it tends to evil can occur only from this that evil is

¹⁷ “Unde quod liberum arbitrium diversa eligere possit servato ordine finis, hoc pertinet ad perfectionem libertatis eius, sed quod eligat aliquid divertendo ab ordine finis, quod est peccare, hoc pertinet ad defectum libertatis.” *Summa theologiae* I.62.8 ad 3 (L 5, 118). This passage is on angels, but Thomas explicitly compares them to us humans in the following sentence: “Unde maior libertas arbitrii est in angelis...quam in nobis.”

¹⁸ Shanley, “Beyond Libertarianism and Compatibilism,” 82.

apprehended under the aspect of good; which pertains to a defect of the intellect or reason, which are the causes of freedom of decision. But it does not belong to the nature of any power that it be defective in its act; for example it does not pertain to the nature of the power of sight that a person sees indistinctly.¹⁹

This passage seems to summarize all the aspects of Thomas's arguments on freedom and evil: Although free decision *can* choose between good and evil, this ability does not belong to *liberum arbitrium* by nature. The reason given for this claim is the same as that given in the *Sentences* commentary: the will is ordered to the good, never to evil as such. Thomas, like Anselm, refuses to concede that free decision, by definition, is or even includes the ability to choose evil. For Thomas, free decision is will, and will desires and chooses only what is good.²⁰

I am not making the claim that each of our five authors has the *same* view with regard to evil and freedom. Peter Lombard and Albert the Great take the ability to choose evil as more relevant to free decision than do the others; Thomas's treatment of this problem is unique in almost every way, and his order of argumentation (that is, which ideas for him are premises and which are conclusions) is significantly different from the others we have

¹⁹ "Secunda autem diuersitas in quam liberum arbitrium potest, attenditur secundum differentiam boni et mali. Sed ista diuersitas non per se pertinet ad potestatem liberi arbitrii, sed per accidens se habet ad eam, in quantum inuenitur in natura deficere potenti. Cum enim uoluntas de se ordinetur in bonum sicut in proprium obiectum: quod in malum tendat, non potest contingere nisi ex hoc quod malum apprehenditur sub ratione boni; quod pertinet ad defectum intellectus uel rationis, unde causatur libertas arbitrii. Non autem pertinet ad rationem alicuius potentiae quod deficiat in suo actu, sicut non pertinet ad rationem uisuiuae potentiae quod aliquis obscure uideat." *De malo* 16.5 (L 23, 305, lines 253-266).

²⁰ One might ask whether the statement that free decision chooses only what is good is compatible with a frequently quoted line from the *Summa theologiae*: "Free decision is indifferent to good or evil choice." [Liberum autem arbitrium indifferenter se habet ad bene eligendum vel male.] I.83 2 (L 5,309). The answer lies in the context of this sentence about indifference. When he says this, Thomas is in the middle of arguing that free decision is not a habit by contrasting it with a virtuous habit such as temperance: temperance leads to a "good choice" – that is, a virtuous choice, but free decision does not. Free decision *does* however, always lead to a "choice of a good." The good chosen, since it might be six martinis in two hours, is not necessarily a "good choice" in the sense that it is not a temperate choice – but Thomas does not say that free decision is indifferent to *goodness*, only to *virtuous action*. The same contextual clarification applies to a passage from the *Sentences* commentary that has been cited to show that Thomas thinks free decision acts "indifferently": "Liberum aute, arbitrium ad electionis actum se habet ut quo talis actus efficitur quandoque quidem bene, quandoque autme male, et indifferenter." *Sentences* commentary II.24.1.1 (M II, 591).

discussed. However, this chapter is meant to deal with very general approaches to free decision. At this general level, it is clear that our authors had a persistent and clear goal of proving that free decision is not to be defined through the ability to do evil.

The question about whether free decision is the ability to do both good and evil was closely linked to the question of whether God (as well as angels, the blessed in heaven, demons, and the damned in hell) has free decision, and so we can turn to a second area of continuity: our authors' comparison of human free decision to free decision as it exists in God.

B. Divine free decision is similar to human free decision

The topic of divine free decision was treated by all five authors, and we note, in their treatises on human *liberum arbitrium*, a second common approach: all of our authors were explicit in their attempts to find a definition of free decision that fits both God and man. Let us look at some texts in order to see this more clearly.

1. Anselm and Peter

In Anselm's *De libertate arbitrii*, immediately after the refutation of the "ability to do good and evil" thesis, the teacher makes his first positive point: there must be some commonality between human free decision and divine free decision:

Even though human free decision differs from that of God and the good angels, the definition of freedom should still be the same for both. For example, even though one animal differs from another...the definition of the word *animal* is the same for all animals. Therefore, we ought to offer a definition of freedom of decision that contains neither more nor less than freedom.²¹

²¹ "Quamvis differat liberum arbitrium hominum a libero arbitrio dei et angelorum bonorum, definitio tamen huius libertatis in utrisque secundum hoc nomen eadem debet esse. Licet enim animal differat ab animali siue substantialiter siue accidentaliter, definitio tamen secundum nomen animalis omnibus animalibus est eadem.

If Anselm had been willing to grant that beings who can turn to evil had a kind of freedom that was completely different from that of beings (like God) who cannot, the entire dialogue would have followed a different course. As it is, because of Anselm's commitment to the reality of divine freedom and its similarity to human freedom, he must struggle to formulate a definition of free decision that will apply to both God and man.²² He finds the answer to his struggle in his definition, "the power to preserve rectitude of will for the sake of rectitude itself." As the student willingly admits, "Freedom as defined in this way is common to every rational nature," including God.²³

Peter Lombard, like Anselm, felt the need to include a discussion of divine *liberum arbitrium* in his treatise. He argues that free decision is said of God and of creatures in different ways.²⁴ Nevertheless, he is concerned to explain away a passage from one of Jerome's sermons which implies that God does *not* have free decision. Also, like Anselm, Peter is willing to draw conclusions about the nature of human free decision based on the fact that God, though free, cannot choose evil. In doing so, he implicitly accepts Anselm's dictum that the divine and human freedom have some positive nature in common, though he may not have believed that the definition was the same in both cases. Peter's own complete definition "Free decision is a faculty of reason and will which chooses the good when

Quapropter talem oportet dare definitionem libertatis arbitrii, quae nec plus nec minus illa contineat." *De libertate arbitrii* 1 (S 1, 208; Williams, 32).

²² We can also see Anselm's certainty regarding divine free decision in *De concordia*, where Anselm notes that "it is absurd even to suppose" that God wills and causes everything by necessity – he takes it as a premise that God "freely wills and causes" some things. (I.4, S II 252, lines 17-19). Whether God acts freely is still a much debated topic: for an introduction to the contemporary debate on divine freedom, see William Rowe, *Can God Be Free?*

²³ "Secundum hanc definitionem communis sit omni rationali naturae..." Ibid., 14 (S 1, 226; Williams, 51).

²⁴ "Sed aliter accipitur liberum arbitrium in Creatore quam in creaturis. Dei etenim liberum arbitrium dicitur eius sapientissima et omnipotens voluntas, quae non necessitate, sed libera bonitate omnia facit, prout vult." *Sentences* II. d. 24.2 (Br I, 462, lines 20-23).

assisted by grace and evil when grace is lacking,” could not apply to God; but the first part of it might. There is not much material available to form a complete picture of Peter’s views on divine free decision. Although he argues, against Abelard and others, that God can do otherwise than he does,²⁵ he does not make use of any notion of *liberum arbitrium* in doing so.

2. Philip and Albert

Philip the Chancellor explicitly accepted the goal of developing a definition of freedom which can be common to both God and man. In the third section of his treatise on human free decision, which has the title *Quid libertas*, Philip gives a very detailed account of the many ways in which “free” and “free decision” are defined, taking care all the while to show how the various definitions are applicable to God as well as to man. For example, freedom’s common meaning is “not being under a defect,” thus God’s freedom consists in being under no defect “simply,” while the freedom of creatures consists in being under no defect except by their own consent.²⁶

Albert also took time in each of his treatises on *liberum arbitrium* to explain that the term is *not* equivocal when it is applied to God. He uses the language of analogical predication to capture both Peter’s conviction that free decision is said of God and of creatures in different ways, and Anselm’s conviction that there must be a common definition for divine and human free decision. In the *De homine* treatise, Albert only mentions this

²⁵ *Sentences* I. d. 44 (Br I, 303-306). Marcia Colish’s discussion of this passage is both interesting and helpful: see *Peter Lombard*, 290-302.

²⁶ “Reliqua vero diffinitio datur secundum rationem communem libertatis ubicumque fuerit inventa contractam in hoc genere. Verbi gratia ratio libertatis est communiter dicta potestas non subesse alteri a Primo in agendo aut recipiendo, quia aut agens subest alteri aut non subest. Si non subest alteri, ut Deus, liberum est. Si vero subest alteri, sed secundum voluntatem aut preter, id est natura que non est voluntas, licet cum voluntate, si ipsi Primo immediate, liberum est.” *Summa de bono* Q 2 2.c (W I, 187, lines 130-135).

analogous naming in passing: “In God it is not received, and in rational creatures it is received; and the name free decision through analogy is common to both.”²⁷ In his commentary on the *Sentences*, however, Albert makes some effort to explain what he means by analogy, when he says that there is “community by way of analogy” in applying the term free decision to God and his creatures. He uses Anselm’s definition to clarify his view:

It must be said that according to analogy there is community of that [free decision] in creatures and in the Creator: because rectitude in the Creator does not differ from the power of conserving it, except by a difference of description [*secundum rationem*]. Nor does the power of conserving differ from the one who has the power, except by difference of description. In creatures, however, there is a difference of thing [*secundum rem*] between these, and in God there is [free decision] as in the first exemplar, and in creatures, as in the exemplated.²⁸

In his *Summa* treatise Albert again uses the language of analogical predication, in his question on whether free decision belongs to God:

It must be said that neither univocally nor equivocally does free decision belong to God and to creatures, but by community of analogy, which is according to prior and posterior: for freedom is first in God, and afterwards in creatures. And Anselm himself implies this, when he says that “freedom is present in God in one way, and in creatures in another way.”²⁹

We see, then, that Albert consistently claims that free decision can be truly said of both God and creatures, and he most frequently uses Anselm’s definition to make the claim. He accepts, as does Philip, the dictum that free decision *must* be truly said of God. However, he

²⁷ “Dicendum quod liberum arbitrium quantum ad libertatem a coactione habet duas comparationes. Unam ad substantiam cuius est, et sic in deo est non acceptum, in creatura vero rationali acceptum; et nomen liberi arbitrii per analogiam est commune ad utrumque.” Albert, *De homine* 3.6 (C 27.2, 526, lines 16-21).

²⁸ “Dicendum, quod secundum analogiam est communitas ista in creatura et Creatore: quia rectitudo in Creatore non differt a potestate servante eam, nisi secundum rationem: nec potestas servans differt a potente, nisi secundum rationem: in creatura autem differentia est inter haec secundum rem: et in Deo est, ut in exemplari primo: et in creatura, sicut in exemplato.” *Sentences* II.25.5 (B 27, 430).

²⁹ “Dicendum quod non univoce, nec aequivoce liberum arbitrium convenit Deo et creaturae, sed communitate analogiae, quae est secundum prius et posterius: libertas enim per prius est in Deo, et per posterius in creatura. Et hoc innuit ipse Anselmus dicens, quod ‘libertas aliter est in Deo, et aliter in creatura.’” *Summa theologiae* II. 94, m. 2 (B 33, 213).

begins to offer a reason *why* and *how* such commonality would exist: since free decision is “first in God” it can be said of his creatures by analogy. God’s free decision is related to human free decision as exemplar to exemplated, or as unreceived to received.

3. Thomas

Thomas Aquinas, unlike Anselm and Philip, does not explicitly seek a definition of freedom or free decision that will fit both man and God. However, he is still very interested in attributing free decision to the divine nature, and he clearly means to give an account of free decision that is applicable to God as well as to man. Thomas asks whether God has free decision in his *Sentences* commentary, the *De veritate*, the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, and in the *Summa theologiae*, arguing that he does in all these texts.

In the *Sentences* commentary, Thomas explicitly includes God when he argues that all intellectual beings have free decision, since they direct themselves to their own end through knowledge of that end.³⁰ He develops an account of free decision which, since it depends only on the proper activities of intellect and will, can apply to God as well as to creatures. He does the same thing in *De veritate*, though he uses different characteristics of the divine activity to manifest God’s free decision:

His goodness does not need the things which are ordained to it, except in order to manifest itself. Because this manifestation can suitably take place in a number of ways, there remains in him a judgment free to will this or that, just as there is in us.³¹

The treatise on human *liberum arbitrium* in the *Summa theologiae* does not include a section on divine free decision; Thomas had already argued for it in his question on the divine will.

³⁰ *Sentences* commentary, II.25.1.1. “In solis intellectum habentibus liberum arbitrium inventitur.” (M II, 645). The title of this article is “Utrum in Deo sit liberum arbitrium.” (Ibid., 644).

³¹ “Eo quod bonitas eius his quae ad ipsam ordinantur, non indiget nisi ad eius manifestationem, quae convenienter pluribus modis fieri potest: unde remanet ei liberum iudicium ad volendum hoc vel illud, sicut in nobis est.” *De veritate* 24.3 (L 22.3, 688, lines 40–45). See also *Summa theologiae* I. 19.10.

His argument there showed that God was free because of the nature of the divine intellect and will:

We have free decision with respect to what we will not of necessity, nor by natural instinct...Since God necessarily wills His own goodness, but other things not necessarily, as shown above, he has free decision with respect to what he does not necessarily will.³²

Thomas is unique among our authors because he does not propose a definition of *liberum arbitrium* and then show or assert that it is applicable to God. Instead, he argues that God has free decision by considering the characteristics of his intellect and will. But his conviction is fundamentally the same as that of the others: according to Thomas, we can give an account of free decision that can be properly applied to God and to rational creatures, particularly man. Thomas emphasizes this through his use of first person pronouns in these discussions: there is free decision in God, “just as there is in us,” “We have free decision with respect to what we will not of necessity,” etc.³³

Just as all five authors refused to define free decision as the ability to do evil, so also all five authors demanded, and achieved, an account of free decision that can fit both God and man. In finding such an account, our authors achieved a positive portrayal of free

³² “Respondeo dicendum quod liberum arbitrium habemus respectu eorum quae non necessario volumus, vel naturali instinctu. Non enim ad liberum arbitrium pertinet quod volumus esse felices, sed ad naturalem instinctum. Unde et alia animalia, quae naturali instinctu moventur ad aliquid, non dicuntur libero arbitrio moveri. Cum igitur Deus ex necessitate suam bonitatem velit, alia vero non ex necessitate, ut supra ostensum est; respectu illorum quae non ex necessitate vult, liberum arbitrium habet.” *Summa theologiae* I. 19. 10 (L 4, 248).

³³ For more about Thomas’s arguments on God’s freedom to create (the premise for divine free decision) see John Wippel, “Thomas Aquinas on God’s Freedom to Create or Not,” in *Metaphysical Themes II*, 218-239. Norman Kretzmann has argued that Aquinas does not actually leave room for free choice in his account of God’s will (Kretzmann, *The Metaphysics of Creation*, 120-126, 132-136) Wippel responds specifically to these criticisms in an article entitled, “Norman Kretzmann on Aquinas’s Attribution of Will and Freedom to Create to God.”

decision, proving and displaying the true kinship between the free decision in God and free decision in his creatures.

C. Free decision is received from God, in whom it exists pre-eminently

The question of whether free decision is defined by the ability to do both good and evil led directly to the question of whether free decision means the same thing in God and in us. This question, in its turn, leads to another one: granted that there is some commonality, what is the difference between divine and human free decision, and how are the two related? All of our authors worked along the same lines in answering this question, showing that human free decision is received from God, who has it in a pre-eminent way. This discussion helped our authors to avoid one of the oldest problems in philosophy: in the case of human free decision and divine free decision, there is no “third man” – that is, no “third” free decision in which both God and man share. God is the source from which human free decision takes its origin, and free decision as it exists in him is perfect and absolute.

1. Anselm and Peter

In the last chapter of *De libertate arbitrii*, the student points out that his teacher has not yet explained how God’s freedom differs from that of rational creatures. The teacher is quick to respond:

There is a free decision that is from itself, neither made by nor received from anyone else; it belongs to God alone. There is another free decision that is made by and received from God; it belongs to angels and human beings.³⁴

³⁴ “Libertas arbitrii alia est a se; quae nec facta est nec ab alio accepta, quae est solius dei; alia a deo facta et accepta, quae est angelorum et hominum.” *De libertate arbitrii* 14 (S 1, 226 ; Williams, 51).

Anselm thus gives a positive view of human free decision as both gift of God (since is it “received”) and likeness to God (since his definitions fits both instances of *liberum arbitrium*). This emphasis on receiving echoes Anselm’s earlier arguments, which ask about the purpose for which free decision was given, and view free decision first and primarily as a gift from the divine giver.

I have already noted Peter’s emphasis on free decision as a gift from God.

Distinction 24 opens by arguing that the first man received help from God, enabling him to stand firm if he had so desired; when the question, “What was that help?” is asked, the answer is, “Free decision.” Peter does *not* characterize the difference between human and divine free decision as the difference between an original principle and a received one: however, his account of human free decision is still markedly one of a received gift. Since he connects free decision so strongly to grace (in his definition grace is required for free decision to choose the good) he makes it relative to another one of God’s gifts as well as characterizing it as a gift in its own right.

2. Philip and Albert

How does God’s free decision relate to that of creatures? Philip, since he regards immateriality as one of the causes of freedom, can explain how free decision is pre-eminently in God and derivatively in his creatures, since God is supremely immaterial. In his question on *liberum arbitrium* in angels, Philip talks about free decision in creatures as a likeness or participation in divine free decision:

Free decision in angels is more free than in man, because of its fuller likeness to the divine free decision. For the one [the angel] is separate from the bodily mass; the other [the man] however, is not.³⁵

Philip also notes that free decision, insofar as it seeks the good, is a likeness to God, the “highest being” from which a spiritual creature originates:

Since the creature comes forth in this way (that is, from non-existence into existence, from the highest being) it was fitting that it should have some likeness of that from which it came...So it has the freedom to the good, or to existing rightly, from that from which it came.³⁶

Human free decision, in Philip’s eyes, is not an indifferent power because it has two positive characteristics: it is a likeness to God and it is received from God in creation. The organization of Philip’s treatise also emphasizes his view of free decision as a gift from God, since he places *liberum arbitrium* among the goods of nature, in a volume centered around the idea that all goods flow from one first good.

Albert’s remarks on the difference between divine and human free decision are not lengthy. However, they tend in the same direction as Philip’s. Albert says in *De homine* that free decision in God is not received, while in man it is received;³⁷ in his *Sentences* commentary he notes that free decision is in God as in the first exemplar;³⁸ and in the *Summa*

³⁵ “Respondendum est quod liberum arbitrium angeli liberius est quam hominis propter ampliorem similitudinem eius cum libero arbitrio divino. Nam hoc est separatum a mole corporis, illud autem non.” *Summa de bono*, Q 7 (W I, 98, lines 165-167).

³⁶ “Cum enim exitus sit creature huiusmodi de non esse in esse a summo ente, conveniebat ut similitudinem haberet cum ipso a quo fluxit aliquam...Retinuit autem libertatem ad bonum sive ad bene esse ex illo.” Ibid., Q 2, 2.c (W I, 192, lines 272-274).

³⁷ “In deo est non acceptum, in creatura vero rationali acceptum; et nomen liberi arbitrii per analogiam est commune ad utrumque.” Albert, *De homine* 3.6 (C 27.2, 526, lines 18-21).

³⁸ “In Deo est, ut in exemplari primo: et in creatura, sicut in exemplato.” *Sentences* commentary, II.25.5 (B 27, 430).

de mirabilis he says that free decision is first in God, and then in creatures, referring to Anselm's definition to support this.³⁹

3. Thomas

Does Thomas, like the others, view free decision as pre-eminently in God and as received in us? In the *Sentences* commentary, he definitely asserts the pre-eminence of divine freedom: "Freedom from the necessity of coercion is found more nobly in God than in an angel, and more nobly in one angel than in another, and more nobly in angels than in man."⁴⁰ The *Summa theologiae* also suggests that God's freedom is more perfect than ours, because Thomas argues that intellectual natures are endowed with free decision to the extent to which they have intellect:

Wherever there is intellect, there is free decision. It is therefore manifest that, just as there is intellect, so also there is free decision in angels, and in a higher degree of perfection than in man.⁴¹

Since God is the highest intellect, then, his free decision must have the highest degree of perfection.

Thomas does not seem to share Anselm's concern for pointing out that human free decision is received and divine free decision is not. We do not see the words "received," "gift," or "accepted" in his treatises on free decision. But, in truth, there is very little need

³⁹ "Libertas enim per prius est in Deo, et per posterius in creatura. Et hoc innuit ipse Anselmus dicens, quod 'libertas aliter est in Deo, et aliter in creatura.'" *Summa theologiae* II. 94, m. 2 (B 33, 213).

⁴⁰ "Hoc autem est naturale et essenziale libero arbitrio ut sufficienter non cogatur coactione compellente, et hoc sequitur ipsum in quolibet statu; unde non augetur talis libertas nec diminuitur per se, sed per accidens tantum. Omnis enim proprietas quae consequitur naturam aliquam, quanto natura illa nobilior invenitur in aliquo, tanto etiam proprietas illa perfectius participatur ab eo, secundum quem modum homo dicitur minus intelligens quam Angelus; et ita etiam libertas a necessaria coactione nobilior invenitur in Deo quam in Angelo, et in uno Angelo quam in alio, et in Angelo quam in homine." Thomas, *Sentences* commentary II.25.4 co. (M II, 654).

⁴¹ "Sed solum id quod habet intellectum, potest agere iudicio libero, inquantum cognoscit universalem rationem boni, ex qua potest iudicare hoc vel illud esse bonum. Unde ubicumque est intellectus, est liberum arbitrium. Et sic patet liberum arbitrium esse in Angelis etiam excellentius quam in hominibus, sicut et intellectum." *Summa theologiae* I. 59.3 (L 5, 95).

for Thomas to be explicit about the reception of free decision because he always argues that free decision is a direct result of the intellectual nature. This nature, however, is received from God and God alone: “the rational soul can be made only by creation.”⁴² Since free decision is rooted in intellect, and since it is through intellect that man is called the image of God, Thomas can begin the second part of the *Summa Theologiae* with these words:

As Damascene states, man is said to be made to God’s image, in so far as the image implies an intelligent being endowed with free decision and self-movement: now that we have treated of the exemplar, God...it remains for us to treat of his image, man, inasmuch as he too is the principle of his actions.⁴³

Thomas is quite clear about the fact that intellect, the root and foundation of *liberum arbitrium*, is the image of God in man and has its generating cause in God alone. He also makes it very clear, in his discussion of choice in the second part of the *Summa*, that will, the power of the soul which *is* free decision, can only be generated by God.

Why couldn’t a creature cause the will, since, after all, not everything that is generated needs to be created directly? Thomas argues that a creature is a particular good, and because of this it cannot give what it does not have: a creature cannot endow a being with a capacity for a perfect and universal good, because it itself is only a limited and perfect good:

The cause of the will can be none other than God. And this is evident for two reasons. First, because the will is a power of the rational soul, which is caused by God alone, by creation, as was stated in the first part. Secondly, it is evident from the fact that the will is ordained to the universal good. Wherefore nothing else can be the cause of the will, except God himself, who is the universal good: while every other

⁴² *Summa theologiae* I. 90.2

⁴³ “Quia, sicut Damascenus dicit, homo factus ad imaginem Dei dicitur, secundum quod per imaginem significatur *intellectuale et arbitrio liberum et per se potestativum*; postquam praedictum est de exemplari, scilicet de Deo, et de his quae processerunt ex divina potestate secundum eius voluntatem; restat ut consideremus de eius imagine, idest de homine, secundum quod et ipse est suorum operum principium, quasi liberum arbitrium habens et suorum operum potestatem.” *Summa theologiae* I-II, prologue (L 6, 5).

good is good by participation, and is some particular good, and a particular cause does not give a universal inclination.⁴⁴

For Thomas, then, the will can only be generated by God, who gives it the capacity by which it moves itself and is free. In receiving its nature, the human soul and its powers receive the capacity that makes them free in choosing – the capacity by which will as the principle of choice can be called *liberum arbitrium*.

In fact, then, the Anselmian idea that only God can be a source of free decision is very much alive in Thomas's teaching. After arguing that free decision is rooted in intellect and identical to will, Thomas states clearly that man's spiritual, intellective nature, and the rational appetite which results from that nature, can only come by divine creation.

It may seem that the notion this section discusses – that God is the only source of free decision, which he possesses pre-eminently – is not particularly crucial to our author's accounts. And it is true that none of them spends a lot of time emphasizing and explaining this idea. But the continuous presence of this theme is not accidental. The clear indication that God is the pre-eminent source of free decision is essential both philosophically and theologically. Philosophically, it is necessary to clarify the relation of received and

⁴⁴ "Voluntatis autem causa nihil aliud esse potest quam Deus. Et hoc patet dupliciter. Primo quidem, ex hoc quod voluntas est potentia animae rationalis, quae a solo Deo causatur per creationem, ut in Primo dictum est. Secundo vero ex hoc patet, quod voluntas habet ordinem ad universale bonum. Unde nihil aliud potest esse voluntatis causa, nisi ipse Deus, qui est universale bonum. Omne autem aliud bonum per participationem dicitur, et est quoddam particulare bonum, particularis autem causa non dat inclinationem universalem." *Summa theologiae* I-II. 9.6 (L 6, 82). It may be tempting, at first glance, to think that Thomas is talking about God as the *efficient* cause of the will, rather than as the generating cause of the will, in this passage, particularly since the title of the article is "Whether the will is moved by God alone as an exterior principle?" However, we must pay attention to the way Thomas's argument proceeds in the article. He begins by saying "only that which is the cause of a thing's nature can cause a natural movement in that thing." (*Motum naturalem causare non potest nisi quod est aliquantulum causa naturae.*) Thus, a man can cause a rock to move upward, violently, but he cannot cause it to move downward, at its natural speed, because he is not the cause of the rock's nature. Next, Thomas argues that God alone is the cause of the will's nature, using the words quoted above. Then, he can *conclude* that God is the only exterior or efficient cause of the will, using the notion that God is the only generating cause of the will as a premise.

unreceived free decision in order to establish that free decision is neither said equivocally of God and man, nor said of them both in virtue of some “third” *liberum arbitrium*.

Theologically, it is important to establish that man’s choice is not free as a result of some kind of imperfection in his intellectual nature. Augustine argued in *The City of God* that man’s ability to choose evil is a result of his coming forth from non-being.⁴⁵ Our authors are careful to clarify: the *freedom* of man’s choice is not an effect of his emergence from non-being. Instead, its origin is from God: free decision, as such, is a reflection of the divine free choice by which it was created.

D. Free decision involves an orientation toward God

All of our authors retained a commitment to showing that free decision is received, in its freedom, from God, who has this ability perfectly and pre-eminently. There is continuity in our authors in yet another way relating free decision to its creator. They all show that free decision is not only received from God but directed toward God. Anselm, Peter, Philip, Albert, and Thomas all view the power of free decision as something that, *by its nature*, involves the relation of the agent toward God. This theme is present in many different ways, but it never entirely disappears. Let us look at some texts in more detail in order to see this.

⁴⁵ *De civitate dei*, 12.8 (trans. 387). Thomas also quotes John Damascene (*On the Orthodox Faith*, II. 27) and Nemesius (*On the Nature of Man*, 41) in support of the idea that “the reason why a rational creature can turn to evil in its choice is that it is from nothing.” See *De veritate* 24.7.

1. Anselm and Peter

Anselm's formal definition of free decision implies an essential relation to God, and Anselm himself makes this explicit. When a man "wills to preserve rectitude for its own sake" he not only wills what he ought to will, but also what God wills for him:

For any will that preserves rectitude, its preserving rectitude of will for the sake of rectitude itself is the same as its willing what God wills it to will.⁴⁶

One way of expressing the dependency of free decision on God is to say that, for Anselm, there could be no free decision if there were no God: not only because free decision would have no creator, but also because it would have no end or *telos*. In Anselm's view, free decision's purpose is to do the will of God. Adam and Eve had freedom of decision "in order to will what they ought to and what was expedient for them to will." Rectitude is both God's gift and God's will, and free decision is what preserves this for its own sake. Anselm does not merely say that the man who wills rectitude is "more free" than the one who does not. He says that *free decision*, as a capacity, is the capacity for preserving rectitude. Thus it is *liberum arbitrium*, not *libertas*, that is identified with the ability to do, of one's own volition, the will of God.

For Anselm, then, free decision is not only received from God, it is directed toward God, since the human person, in seeking rectitude for its own sake, is seeking to do what God wishes. God is responsible for free decision not only as the giver of its existence but as the giver of its end.

Peter Lombard also includes an essential relation to God in his definition of *liberum arbitrium*. While Anselm used the idea of rectitude to connect free decision with God,

⁴⁶ "Sed iam positum est servare hoc modo rectitudinem voluntas esse omni servanti velle, quod deus vult illum velle." *De libertate arbitrii* 8 (S 1, 221; Williams, 45).

however, Peter uses the idea of grace. Since free decision, for Peter, “chooses the good when grace is present, and the bad when grace is lacking,” one of the defining characteristics of free decision is the fact that it is a receptor of grace. Only when it receives God’s gift of grace can it be directed to the good, thereby fulfilling its natural purpose. Without this capacity for God’s help, free decision would only be half-free, at best: free to do evil but not free to do good. Thus for Peter as well as for Anselm, free decision depends on God in two different ways. God is needed not only to create free decision and give it to man, but also to provide free decision with its object or purpose through the gift of grace. Free decision without grace or at least the capacity for grace would not be able to do what it does or be what it is.

One should not make the mistake of saying that these authors cannot *define* free decision without God. Anselm’s definition, and the substantive first part of Peter’s definition, include no specifically theological terms. But, according to these authors, free decision could not *exist* if it were not either directed toward God’s will or at least capable of receiving help toward such a direction. What it means to *be* free decision is to be in, or at least potentially in, a certain relation to God as goal. Their discussions indicate a fundamental dependency on the divine as the end or object of human free decision.

2. *Philip and Albert*

The thirteenth-century authors also gave free decision an essential dependence on God. Philip and Albert are nearly identical in their claim that, when free decision is defined by its end, the correct definition is the Anselmian one. Thus, Philip says,

It must be said that freedom of decision, with regard to that on account of which it is, (that is, with regard to the act for whose sake it is) is rightly defined by Anselm as “the power of conserving rectitude of will for rectitude’s own sake.”⁴⁷

And Albert echoes him:

If it [free decision] is defined in comparison to the end to which it habitually tends, then free judgment is the power of preserving rectitude of will for its own sake, as Anselm says.⁴⁸

For both Philip and Albert, God gave man free decision in order that he might use it for doing his will. The end to which free decision is directed and the end to which it is meant to direct itself are the same: rectitude. Philip and Albert cling to the Anselmian definition because they believe free decision must be defined by its end as well as by its nature as a power. In maintaining the view of rectitude as free decision’s end, they maintain as well the ontological situation Anselm set up: there could be no freedom if there were no God, because free decision’s purpose is identical to doing God’s will.

3. *The special case of Thomas Aquinas*

Thomas Aquinas does not attach Anselm’s purpose-based definition of free decision to his own account of it, as Albert and Philip do – indeed, as we have noted, he shows no desire to retain Anselm’s definition or the elements of it. Despite this, it is clear that he sees free decision as a relation to God also. In fact, for Thomas, not only is free decision’s end in God, but its freedom belongs to it because of that end.

⁴⁷ “Et dicendum est quod libertas arbitrii quantum ad illud propter quod est, id est quantum ad actum propter quem est, recte diffinitur ab Anselmo ‘potestas conservandi rectitudinem voluntatis propter ipsam rectitudinem.’” *Summa de bono* Q 2, 2.c (W I, 186, lines 93-94).

⁴⁸ “Si vero determinatur in comparatione ad finem ad quem est per habitum, tunc libertas arbitrii est potestas conservandi rectitudinem voluntatis propter se, sicut dicit Anselmus.” *De homine*, 3.4.1 (C 27.2, 520, lines 69-72).

Thomas argues, in each of his treatises, that man's choice is free because will is not determined on the side of the object or on the side of the subject. Will can reject any single good object in virtue of its capacity for the ultimate good of happiness.⁴⁹ But the happiness of man is the vision of God: "Final and perfect happiness can consist in nothing else than the vision of the divine essence."⁵⁰ If there were no God, man's happiness would not exist; his natural desire to seek the cause of created effects would necessarily remain unfulfilled. Thomas, like Anselm, realizes that God is necessary as the end of man and not just as the beginning of man. This dependency is reflected in his theory of free decision: Since human happiness is the vision of God, God is, for man, the object to which all choice is directed and thereby the principle by which all choices are free.

In addition, man's choice is free on the side of the subject because will is able to move itself and the other powers. But it does so, as we discussed above, in virtue of its primary orientation toward happiness. Without this, there could be no self-movement because there would be no actual desire by which potential desires could be made real.

It is necessary to make a point about methodology here. Thomas does not need to know that God exists, or that man's happiness lies in possessing God, in order to prove the existence of free decision or the possibility of a free act of will. But, while Thomas's *knowledge* of free decision is not dependent on a knowledge of God, free decision *itself*, as

⁴⁹ See Chapter 4, section II, part I.

⁵⁰ "Ultima et perfecta beatitudo non potest esse nisi in visione divinae essentiae." *Summa theologiae* I-II. 3.8 (L 6, 35). In Question 1 of this part of the *Summa*, Thomas argues that man does, in fact, have the last end of happiness, and in Question 2 he argues that no created good can constitute that happiness. See Chapter 4, above, for more about the way in which Thomas's emphasis on the last end of happiness impacts his theory of free choice.

Thomas describes it, requires the orientation of the will towards God as an object.⁵¹ If there were no God, there would be no happiness: if there were no happiness there could not be any capacity for happiness, and then there could be no free decision.

Suppose someone objected as follows: Although Thomas argues that man's happiness lies in God, many people do not *believe* that this is where their happiness lies. So, for instance, we could imagine that Fred believes happiness lies in money. In virtue of this desire for money, he can reject lavish dinners, beautiful women, and even his own friends and family. Why not say, then, that Fred has free decision in virtue of his will's capacity for another good, labeled as "highest" by him, regardless of whether it is, in fact, a higher good? There is thus no need for a "real" highest good in order for free decision (free, at least, on the side of the object) to exist.⁵²

Thomas Aquinas could not accept this thesis. Money is not desirable in every particular, and since Fred is a rational creature, nothing prevents him from noticing this: inclinations of habit, passion, and physiology are always "subject to the judgment of reason."⁵³ So, Fred will (or at least *can*) reject money someday. If Fred's free decision were based on his acceptance of money as the highest good, it would be liable to collapse at any moment. Whatever he might set up as a "new" highest good would be liable to a similar collapse.

⁵¹ Brian Shanley expresses this relation of will to God particularly clearly: "The natural desire for the beatifying good is *de facto* an ordering to God, even though most people do not recognize this." ("On Created Freedom," 75).

⁵² A number of authors have argued or suggested that the root of freedom is the ability to order one's desires, subordinating those of a certain kind to those of a "higher" kind: perhaps the most famous is Harry Frankfurt. Stan Tyvoll has argued that Anselm's theories of free choice are based on this idea ("Anselm's Definition of Free Will: A Hierarchical Interpretation"). Colleen McCluskey, in writing on Albert, occasionally suggests that this is a basis for freedom on Albert's account ("Worthy Constraints," 520). Pasnau, also, suggests that this lies at the root of Aquinas's account of freedom.

⁵³ "Tamen istae etiam inclinationes subiacent iudicio rationis." *Summa theologiae* I 83.1. ad 5 (L 5, 308).

What if we simply said that Fred's free decision was based on his capacity to set up new "highest goods" for himself? The problem is that this capacity to set up new highest goods is dependent on a further capacity. Fred must have some grounds for rejecting the various potential highest goods; he must have some capacity, whether he knows it or not, for something absolutely better and not just relatively better. Imagine a man who has a certain place on his wall designated for "my most beautiful painting." As his opinions fluctuate, he hangs different paintings from his collection on the wall. What allows him to reject every painting in his collection, even if he does it consecutively or only potentially? This sequential rejection can only be possible if he has some capacity for beauty that is unfulfilled by *any* of his paintings. So, too, the man who rejects (or can reject) any proto-type for the highest good (such as money) has some capacity for perfect happiness which allows him to reject it.

As Thomas views the case, then, man's free decision is only accounted for by a capacity for true happiness, the highest good of man. This happiness is nothing other than the vision of God, and man's ability to reject other goods lies in a capacity for God, whether or not he is aware of that fact.⁵⁴ As Brian Shanley wrote, summarizing Thomas's position:

We are free precisely because we are naturally and so necessarily ordered to the perfect good who is God. What we call freedom of choice presupposes as its condition what is not a matter of choice but given in human nature: the orientation to the infinite good as known and loved.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Robert Sullivan explained this situation in these words: "The will does not elicit an act towards the bare formal notion of last end or beatitude in general, nor towards that of the good in general....The will goes out to a particular, really existing thing in which the universal notion is found to be more or less realized or embodied. But precisely because, in most cases, it is *more or less*, the adequation between the universal notion and the particular object more or less incorporating it is not complete. An aspect of imperfection or non-good remains, so that when the mind adverts to this element, the will remains free to reject the object as last end, because of the element of non-good which it contains. But in the unique case of God, clearly seen, the intellect can find no element of non-good, but perceives that God is the perfect good" ("Natural Necessitation," 378.)

⁵⁵ Shanley, "On Created Freedom," 76.

Thomas famously adds a second relation toward God that is essential to the power by which men freely choose. In Thomas's teaching, God is the first mover in any act of free choice. So, in a different way, unique to Thomas, there could be no free decision if there were no God, not only because the will would have no direction or end, but also because it would have no motion.⁵⁶ As I have already noted, this dissertation is not the right place to discuss Thomas's teaching on the act of choice in its entirety. It is enough to point out that, for Thomas, *liberum arbitrium* is dependent on God, who is its creative source, its natural object, and its first mover. The idea that every act of choice begins with God as first mover and is directed toward God as the final end is particularly striking if we consider Thomas's well-known use of the "emanation and return" (*exitus/reditus*) motif in his writings. M.D. Chenu first discussed this as an organizational theme of the *Summa theologiae* a number of years ago,⁵⁷ and many others have commented on it since, finding this motif in other parts of

⁵⁶ "We must, of necessity, suppose that the will advanced to its first movement in virtue of the instigation of some exterior mover, as Aristotle concludes in a chapter of the *Eudemian Ethics*." [Unde necesse est ponere quod in primum motum voluntatis voluntas prodeat ex instinctu alicuius exterioris moventis, ut Aristoteles concludit in quodam capitulo *Ethicae Eudemicae*.] *Summa theologiae*, I-II. 9.4. (L 6, 78). Another text explaining this doctrine is *Summa Contra Gentiles*, book 3, chapter 89: "We receive not only the power of willing from God, but also the operation." [Unde non solum virtutem volendi a Deo habemus, sed etiam operationem.] (L 14, 272). I have already discussed this idea of God as first mover of the will in Chapter 4, and a great deal of attention has been paid to this particular doctrine in the secondary literature. Eleanor Stump, in her book *Aquinas* and in other writings, suggests that God does not act as an *efficient* cause of the will's motion. J.L.A. West ("On Eleanor Stump's Aquinas"), Brian Shanley ("On Created Freedom," and "Divine Causation and Human Freedom in Aquinas") and Lawrence Dewan ("St. Thomas and the Causes of Free Choice") have all responded to this claim. Odon Lottin discusses several aspects of this Thomistic claim in the article "Liberté humaine et motion divine," though I cannot agree with a number of his conclusions. There is also an article specifically on Aquinas's use of the passage from Aristotle's *Eudemian Ethics*, by Cornelio Fabro, entitled "Le 'Liber de bona fortuna' de l' 'Ethique à Eudème' d'Aristote et la dialectique de la divine Providence chez saint Thomas."

⁵⁷ M.D. Chenu, "Le plan de la Somme théologique de S. Thomas," esp. page 97-98.

Thomas's teaching.⁵⁸ Here, we see that the human choice has, in its own particular way, an emanation from God and return to God.

In Thomas's account of free decision, then, as well as in the four other accounts of *liberum arbitrium* we are considering, free decision's dependence on God is described as more than the simple dependence of every creature on the creator. Instead, free decision, as a power or capacity, possesses an additional dependence on God. It needs to be oriented *toward* God, as well as coming forth from him, in order to be what it is. Somehow, specifically, the *freedom* of free decision is said to come from this direction toward the divine. In a way, it is not surprising that our authors should make this claim. All of them view God as the first Truth and the first Goodness. Insofar as free decision depends on reason and will, it depends on truth and goodness; thus, also, on some orientation toward the source of these things.

I do not want to be taken as claiming that these various theories of the relation of choice to God are essentially the same. They are very different, particularly those of Aquinas and Anselm, since Anselm claims that freedom is caused by a relation of conformity to God's will, something that only righteous men have, while Aquinas claims that the non-necessary character of choice is caused by a natural relation to God as the object of the will – something all men have. Peter, too, since his definition relies on grace, is operating on a very different level than Aquinas is, and perhaps even on a different level than Anselm is. I do not think, however, that these differences are sufficient to obscure the main point: as far as all

⁵⁸ For instance, Gilles Emery discusses this theme in relation to the Trinity and creation (*The Trinitarian Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 358-378. I should note that Rudi te Velde has recently been critical of exitus/reditus as the scheme for the *Summa theologiae*: see his *Aquinas on God*, 11-18.

five of our authors are concerned, any account of free decision which does not present it as a power oriented toward God is missing something.

E. Free decision is not losable

One last common theme needs to be noted before I bring this part of the chapter to a close. All of our authors take one side on a particular question: Can free decision be lost? Their answer is always no. The conviction of an unlosable freedom, and the methods which derive from this conviction, are very important counterweights to the other ideas we have been investigating, because all of these other ideas suggest that free decision *can* be lost. If free decision does not, by nature, choose evil, couldn't the one who chooses evil lose his free decision? If free decision is essentially a gift from God, why cannot it be taken back, refused, or given away? If free decision lies in a certain relation toward God, could it disappear when the agent turns away from following God's will? The more one connects freedom to goodness, the more pressing the question of whether free decision can be lost becomes – especially because, in a Christian context, freedom can easily be confused with grace, which *can* be lost. In giving the consistent answer that free decision could not be lost, our authors balance and clarify their view of the connection between free decision and the goodness of God. They also explain what *kind* of good free decision is – it is a good of nature, not a good of grace. In order to see that this continuity does, in fact, exist, let us look at several texts in detail.

1. Anselm and Peter

In the first sentence of *De libertate arbitrii*, Anselm's student expresses his desire to know two things: what free decision is, and whether we always have it. When Anselm defines free decision as the ability to preserve rectitude, this seems to imply that free decision would be lost when rectitude is lost: as the student puts it, "How can it preserve what it does not have?" The student also draws a particular scripture passage into the debate; he points out that all fallen human beings are "slaves to sin" – thus, they seem to have lost their freedom. Anselm is not persuaded, however. He embarks on an explanation of free decision as capacity rather than act in order to answer these difficulties, arguing that free decision belongs to the rational nature because of its capacity for rectitude, even if rectitude itself is not present: "He is always by nature free to preserve rectitude when he has it, even when he does not have the rectitude that he might preserve."⁵⁹

Peter Lombard has an excellent reason to say that free decision is lost when man sins. In addition to the scripture text about being "slaves to sin" which Anselm's student quotes, he takes note of a passage from Augustine which we will see again in Albert and Thomas:

Augustine says in the *Enchiridion*, "For it was by the evil use of his free decision that man destroyed both it and himself....when man by his own free decision sinned, then, sin being victorious over him, free decision was also lost."⁶⁰

However, Peter does not take the text as an absolute indicator. Instead, he divides freedom into three different kinds (two which can be lost, one which cannot) in order to argue that the

⁵⁹ "Semper enim naturaliter liber est ad servandum rectitudinem si eam habet, etiam quando quam servet non habet." *De libertate arbitrii*, chapter 11 (S 1,223; Williams, 48). In *De concordia*, Anselm repeats this claim, contrasting free decision, which cannot be lost, with justice, which can: "This freedom is present in man inseparably and naturally...by contrast, justice is not a natural possession." (I.6, trans 192).

⁶⁰ "Unde Augustinus in *Enchiridion*: 'Libero arbitrio male utens homo, et se perdidit et ipsum. Cum enim libero arbitrio peccaretur, victore peccato, amissum est et liberum arbitrium.' " *Sentences II*. d. 25.7.2 (Br I, 465, lines 18-20). The *Enchiridion* quotation is from chapter 30.

power of free decision is *not* lost. This division did not originate with Peter,⁶¹ but what is important for our purposes is Peter's resounding insistence that freedom from necessity is never lost.

Man is said to lose free decision, not because after sin he does not have free decision, but because he has lost freedom *of* decision, not, indeed, with regard to all things, but with regard to freedom from misery and from sin. And so there is a threefold liberty, namely from necessity, from sin, and from misery. From necessity, both before sin and after, man has free decision. For just as then he could not be forced, so even now he can in no way be forced. Therefore God judges the will, which is always free from necessity and can never be forced, by its merit....This liberty is in all men, whether good or evil.⁶²

Despite Augustine's words, then, Peter claims quite seriously that free decision, in the primary sense required for merit, cannot be lost, and that those who do evil remain in full possession of free decision, in that primary sense.

2. Philip, Albert, and Thomas

Philip's remarks on the topic of whether free decision can be lost are none too clear. Unlike the others, he does not quote the passage about losing free decision from Augustine's *Enchiridion*, nor the text from scripture about men becoming "slaves to sin." However, in a passage that leans heavily on Bernard's writings, Philip re-uses the distinction between three kinds of freedom. He claims, more or less in passing, that Adam did not, and could not, lose free decision as a result of his sin. "Adam had freedom of decision, and he did not lose it,

⁶¹ As I noted earlier, the division of freedom into three kinds is taken from Bernard of Clairvaux, who was also a resounding defender of the claim that freedom from necessity is not lost: "Neither by sin nor by suffering is it lost or lessened; nor is it greater in the just man than in the sinner." (*De gratia et libero arbitrio*, 4.9).

⁶² "Ecce liberum arbitrium dicit hominem amisisse: non quia post peccatum non habuit liberum arbitrium, sed quia libertatem arbitrii perdidit: non quidem omnem, sed libertatem a miseria et a peccato. Est namque libertas triplex, scilicet a necessitate, a peccato, a miseria. A necessitate et ante peccatum et post aequale liberum est arbitrium. Sicut enim tunc cogi non poterat, ita nec modo. Ideoque voluntas merito apud Deum iudicatur, quae semper a necessitate libera est et nunquam cogi potest....Haec libertas in omnibus est, tam in malis quam in bonis." *Sentences* II. d. 25 7-8 (Br I, 465-466, lines 21-9).

because it is unlosable.”⁶³ It is reasonable that Philip did not give much emphasis to this point: since for him free decision is the same power as reason and will it is self-evidently impossible that a man could lose it and remain human.

In the *De homine* Albert is content to make the same argument as Peter Lombard regarding whether free decision can be lost. To an objection quoting the *Enchiridion* text, Albert replies by quoting the Teacher:

Augustine does say that “man badly using free decision lost both himself and it.” But the Teacher expressly explains in the *Sentences* that this is about freedom from sin, and ought not to be understood of freedom from coercion.⁶⁴

Albert’s commentary on the *Sentences* contains a complete article on whether free decision can be lost.⁶⁵ After objections in which the *Enchiridion* passage again appears, Albert gives a very similar answer:

It must be said that freedom, as the Master says in the following distinction, is threefold, namely from necessity, from sin, and from misery, and the first cannot be lost, but the second and third can.⁶⁶

One small change is worth noting: in *De homine*, Albert said that freedom from *coercion* could not be lost; here, he becomes more specific, saying that freedom from *necessity* is unlosable.

In the *Summa* treatise, which to a great extent follows the order of the *Sentences*, Albert once more argues that free decision is an unlosable power: in answer to the question *Si*

⁶³ “De Adam ergo querit: Libertatem arbitrii habuit, hanc non amisit quia inamissibilis est, ut supra. Quid ergo amisit?” *Summa de bono*, 2.c (W I, 191, lines 256-257). Wicki gives no reference for “supra” except the citation from Bernard’s work.

⁶⁴ “Vero dicit Augustinus quod ‘homo male utens libero arbitrio et se amisit et ipsum’, expresse explanat Magister in Sententiis de libertate a peccato, et dicit non debere intellegi de libertate a coactione.” (C 27.2, 525, lines 37-40).

⁶⁵ This is *In II Sententiarum*, 24.6, “An liberum arbitrium amitti potuit, et ejus libertas per aliquid tolli?” (B 27, 403)

⁶⁶ “Dicendum, quod *libertas* ut in sequenti distinctione Magister dicit, triplex est, scilicet a necessitate, et a peccato, et a miseria: et prima non potest amitti, sed secunda, et tertia.” Ibid., *solutio*.

libertas sit amissibilis he writes: “Freedom from coercion cannot be lost in any way, because it is of nature, and nature is not taken away through sin.”⁶⁷

Thomas, like Albert, puts the *Enchiridion* passage into the mouths of his objectors, who try to establish that free decision can be, or has been, lost. He disproves the argument in each of his treatises on free decision, using Peter Lombard’s solution just as Albert did.

Thus, in the *Sentences* commentary we find this reply,

Man is said to lose free decision, not essentially, but because he loses some freedom which is the freedom from sin and from misery, as will be said below.⁶⁸

In the *Summa*, Thomas says almost the same thing, “Man is said to have lost free decision by falling into sin, not as to natural liberty, which is freedom from coercion, but as regards freedom from fault and unhappiness.”⁶⁹ The *De veritate* and the *De malo* treatises have very similar objections and replies.⁷⁰

Free decision cannot be lost. All of our authors agree on this point, and most of them use a simple division to explain the sense of the *Enchiridion* passage which claims that man has lost his freedom of will. Again, it might be said that this is rather a minor point of doctrine – there is little or no development of the theme by any of our authors. This is true, but the idea of unlosable freedom is still of crucial philosophical and theological significance.

⁶⁷ “Libertas a coactione numquam et amissibilis, quia a natura est: natura enim non tollitur per peccatum.” (B 33, 219).

⁶⁸ “Homo dicitur liberum arbitrium amisisse, non quidem essentialiter, sed quia quamdam libertatem amisit quae quidem est a peccato et a miseria, ut infra dicitur.” *Sentences* commentary, II. 24.1.1 ad 4 (M II, 591).

⁶⁹ “Homo peccando liberum arbitrium dicitur perdidisse, non quantum ad libertatem naturalem, quae est a coactione; sed quantum ad libertatem quae est a culpa et a miseria.” *Summa theologiae*, I. 83.2 ad 3 (L 5, 309).

⁷⁰ *De veritate* 24.4 ad 6: “Homo male utendo libero arbitrio, non totaliter ipsum perdidit, sed quantum ad aliquid.” (L 22.3, 691, lines 219-221). *De malo* 6.1 ad 23: “Homo peccans liberum arbitrium perdidit quantum ad libertatem quae est a culpa et miseria, non autem quantum ad libertatem quae est a coactione.” (L 23, 153, lines 718-721).

Theologically, it was necessary to preserve a sense in which man could truly be said to be enslaved to sin and yet free to choose. Philosophically, this unlosable freedom is necessary for the attribution of praise and blame, and also for making clear that free decision is part of nature, not a supernatural dispensation like grace is.

Conclusion to Part I

Looking at these five themes should convince the reader that a comparison of Peter Lombard and Anselm's *liberum arbitrium* treatises with those of Philip, Albert, and Thomas does not result in an endless list of differences. The arguments made in the first part of this chapter show that there was continuity in the thought of these authors, specifically insofar as certain goals of discussion were agreed on. All five authors sought to give an account of free decision in such a way that evil or the capacity for evil would not be essential to it. More positively, all of them sought to show that free decision was a participation in the divine nature, flowing forth from God to his rational creatures just as intellect and will do. Again, all of them sought to show that human free decision involved an essential relation to God, while at the same time they believed it was not lost through sin. Now that this continuity has been established as a fact, we can go on to ask for some of the reasons for it.

Part II. Reasons for Continuity

Above, we discussed several ways of approaching free decision that remained present over the course of time. All five of our authors refused to approach *liberum arbitrium* as if it were defined by the ability to choose evil. All of them insisted on viewing free decision as a perfection belonging preeminently to the divine nature, and found in man derivatively. In addition, all of them took time to establish that free decision was directed toward God as an end – they show no interest in viewing free decision as a power that is neutral with respect to its creator. Why did these approaches remain consistent? Several elements must be involved in a complete answer to this question. A preliminary answer to this question lies in viewing certain factors that were common ground among our authors: Christian doctrines and Augustinian teachings. However, there seems to be another reason for these common methods of approaching *liberum arbitrium*. The fact that certain approaches were never pursued, while others were practically required, allowed our authors to establish a unified portrayal of human free decision that would have been impossible otherwise. The five ways of approaching *liberum arbitrium* discussed above join together to present a single picture of free decision as a natural good in relation to other goods, including God as the absolute good.

A. *Exterior causes of continuity*

It is not difficult to find reasons from outside the dialogue on free decision that dictated the continuity of the various approaches we have noted. All of our authors were Christians following church teaching and biblical doctrine: all of them, also, were theologians who treated St. Augustine with great respect. Conformity with Christian doctrine

and continuation in the tradition of Augustine seem to be the main exterior causes for the continuity of the approaches pointed out above.

1. Conformity with Christian doctrine

All five of the “durable” approaches treated in this chapter are connected to Christian teaching and Christian instincts; as our authors continued in the same faith, they continued in the same insights. The refusal to consider free decision as defined by the ability to do evil, for instance, is obviously tied to two teachings: the doctrine that God is not the cause of evil, and the revelation-based instinct that teaches that God himself is free, since he was free to create the world or not to create it. Again, the connection of free decision to God as source and exemplar seems also to depend on and support the idea that freedom is a perfection that should not be denied to God. Lastly, the idea that free decision seeks God as an end obviously belongs in conjunction with the Christian notions of sin as slavery and true happiness as the service of God and ultimately the vision of him in heaven.

These Christian ideas caused the durability of certain methods in several ways. First of all, they acted as roadblocks. For instance, Anselm, Peter, and Philip make it very clear that, since they were committed to the idea that God was free, exploring free decision as the power to sin does not make sense: such an approach would be a guaranteed waste of time. So some approaches are simply not taken – some paths are never pursued. Secondly, the Christian teachings set up standards. Within the context of Christianity, a definition of free decision that does not apply to God (for example) was simply not good enough and could be rejected out of hand. Lastly, Christian teaching demanded precision: every author needed to

make clear how free decision was affected by sin without being destroyed by it, a task that demands that an author attain a certain level of sophistication in arguing.

The presence of these insights did not mean that Christian teachings were always taken as premises. Almost always arguments are made to support these doctrines. Albert and Thomas, especially, will argue to a distinctively Christian idea rather than using it as a premise. So, for example, they do not use God's freedom as a premise to argue that free decision is not defined by the ability to choose evil; instead, they offer arguments through which they can conclude to the truth which the earlier authors first articulated by faith. Thomas achieves this by claiming that the will never turns to evil as such, only to evil considered as good; while Albert prefers to rely on the notion that the ability to sin is an impotence or weakness and thus has no place in the definition of a power.

Two Christian ideas, in particular, seem to have been most involved in generating the five standard approaches discussed above. One was a consideration of the relation between sin and slavery; the other was the doctrine of creation.

A certain characteristically Christian view of freedom was inspired by a particular passage from the gospel of John. One line is quoted over and over again in the *liberum arbitrium* treatises: "He who sins is a slave to sin."⁷¹ Sometimes another verse is added: "If the Son has freed you, you will be truly free."⁷² The context in which this verse occurs, though rarely elaborated, would have been perfectly familiar to the five theologians.

⁷¹ The text is John 8:34. Anselm quotes it in chapter 2 of *De libertate arbitrii* (S I, 209); Williams, 33); Peter Lombard in *Sentences* II. 25.4; Philip in his question on the definition of freedom - *Summa de bono* 2.c, (W I, 184, line 38); Albert in *De homine*, 3.4.1, in his question on the definition of freedom (C 27.2, 519, lines 62-63) and in the *Summa*, II. 91 m 1 (B 33, 183). Thomas does *not* discuss the verse in his *liberum arbitrium* treatments in the *Sentences* commentary, the *Summa theologiae*, or the *De malo*; however, we do find this passage cited in in *De veritate*, 24.1 arg. 7. (L 22.3, 678, lines 51-52)

⁷² See, for example Peter Lombard, *Sentences* II.25. 8; Philip, *Summa de bono* 2.c (W I, 184, line 36).

To the Jews who believed in him Jesus said, “If you make my word your home, you will indeed be my disciples; you will come to know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” They answered, “We are descended from Abraham, and we have never been the slaves of anyone; what do you mean: ‘you will be set free?’” Jesus replied, “In all truth I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave. Now a slave has no permanent standing in the household, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the son sets you free, you will indeed be free.”⁷³

Sin is slavery; life in the service of God is freedom: this way of stating things was part of the Christian faith. It became, therefore, an inspiration and a guideline for the idea that *liberum arbitrium* was directed toward God as its object and as its source. At the same time, the view that sin was slavery forced our authors to resolve the apparent conflict between the view of free decision as the basis of moral responsibility and the view of freedom as something lost through sin.

A second Christian teaching that seems relevant as an exterior cause of continuity was the doctrine of creation.⁷⁴ The “continuous” methods I have noted in this chapter seem to have been particularly encouraged by the realization that reality was contingent on God’s will, and three of these relations are worth pointing out, if only briefly.

First of all, our authors were sure that free decision ought to be viewed as a capacity for goodness (rather than as a capacity for evil by definition) because they were sure that God created it. They consistently introduce free decision as something that God made: easily referring to it as a “natural good” and a “gift from God.” For Anselm, freedom of decision is given to the rational nature by God – he quotes Scripture to point this out: “What do you have that you have not received?”⁷⁵ Peter Lombard places free decision among the “best

⁷³ John 8: 31-36, *The New Jerusalem Bible*.

⁷⁴ David Burrell has developed a number of insights regarding the overall connection of the ideas of freedom and creation – see Burrell, *Freedom and Creation in Three Traditions*.

⁷⁵ *De libertate arbitrii* chapter 3 (S I, 211). The bible verse is I Corinthians 4:7.

gifts” of God (*data optima et dona perfecta*), those which are goods of nature: “*Libertas arbitrii bonum naturale est.*”⁷⁶ As I have already noted, Philip also places free decision among the goods of nature, dealing with it, and all the powers of the soul, as a “good of nature which cannot be diminished by the evil of guilt” – *bonum naturae quod non est diminuibile per malum culpe*. Albert says that free decision is “given to the soul with its nature,”⁷⁷ and emphasizes the fact that this gift has a purpose – its “ultimate end” because of which it is given to us.”⁷⁸ Thomas does not commonly refer to free decision as a gift; still, the order of his works clearly reveals that he treats of man, and of man’s free decision, as creatures proceeding from the creator.

This basic understanding of free decision as a gift of nature is reflected by the context of the treatises on *liberum arbitrium*. Peter Lombard put free decision into the section of the *Sentences* that dealt with creation, and even while our thirteenth-century authors abandoned the context of the first sin, they maintained the general pattern of introducing *liberum arbitrium* while discussing God’s creation of the world. Albert’s *De homine* is part of his *Summa de creaturis*; Thomas’s treatise on man in the *Summa* follows his discussion of the six days of creation; Philip’s treatise in the *Summa de bono* is part of a treatment of created goods. Such a continued meditation on creation encouraged our authors to understand free decision without viewing it as essentially a capacity for evil: Free

⁷⁶ For *adiutorium* see *Sentences* II. d 24. 2 (Br I, 452, lines 20-25); for *dona perfecta* see II. d 25. 7 (Br. I, 465, lines 10-15); for “natural good” see II. d 25.8 (Ibid., line 14) and also chapter 9. (Br I, 467 and 469)

⁷⁷ “*Liberum arbitrium non dicitur sic acceptum quod prius fuerit natura animae rationalis, et postea acceperit ipsum, sed quia datum est ei cum natura, sicut omnes alienae potentiae naturales.*” *De homine* 3.2, ad 12 (C 27.2, 514-515, lines 73-2).

⁷⁸ “*Finis autem ultimus est propter quem datum est liberum arbitrium nobis, scilicet qui ponitur ab Anselmo.*” Ibid., ad 41 (C 27.2, 517, lines 6-8).

decision, since it is part of creation, is a gift of God, and God is not the giver of poisoned gifts.

A second way in which the Christian doctrine of creation seems to have influenced these continuous themes was by inspiring the certainty that God could truly be called “free.” If a thinker is convinced that the world came to be, *ex nihilo*, as a result of the divine intellect and will, he very likely thinks that God was free to create it. As David Burrell puts it, speaking of both Christian and Jewish theologians, “It is the freedom of divinity to act, in creating and in revealing, which constitutes the nub of the notion of *creator*.”⁷⁹

The doctrine of creation may have inspired yet another of the continuous patterns I have noted. As we saw, our authors described free decision as possessing a natural orientation toward God. It is reasonable to think that they were comfortable describing a free decision that tends toward God as its end because they were sure that God had designed all creation to seek him and imitate him insofar as it was able – and particularly, because they were sure that God had designed man to seek and imitate his creator.⁸⁰ Someone who held a “deist” idea of God, and believed that reality proceeds from the divinity without being ordered toward it again, would not find it natural to assume that free decision is ordered toward its creator as well as proceeding from Him. But for our authors, such a deistic viewpoint would be completely alien. To them, it made sense that, while treating free

⁷⁹ Burrell, *Freedom and Creation*, 9.

⁸⁰ To some extent, this is a theme derived from the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius, who wrote of the procession of all things from the Good and their return to it. For some discussion of Albert’s notion of a “return” to God, see Burrell and Moulin, “Albert, Aquinas, and Dionysius,” 636-637. One quotation used here is especially striking: “All things desire the Good because of their similarity to the Prime Good, and all their motions, all their actions and all their productions, are performed for it.” [“Omnia appetunt bonum sub ratione similitudinis ad primum bonum et propter illud moventur omnibus motibus suis et agunt omnes actiones suas et operantur omnia sua opera.”] Commentary on the *Metaphysics*, 11.2.39 (C 16.2, 533, lines 50-53).

decision as something that God had created, they also treated it as something that was meant to return to God.

2. Augustine

A second exterior reason for the continuity of these approaches is undoubtedly the influence of Saint Augustine. First of all, it seems safe to say that Augustine was largely responsible for the continued notion that freedom did not lie in the possibility of evil. He is the authority quoted to show that God and the blessed in heaven are free; the passage cited is from book 22 of the *City of God*:

Neither are we to suppose that because sin shall have no power to delight them, they will not have free decision. It will, on the contrary, be all the more truly free...For certainly by sinning we lost both piety and happiness; but when we lost happiness, we did not lose the love of it. Are we to say that God himself is not free because he cannot sin? In that city, then, there shall be free will...delivered from all ill, filled with all good, enjoying indefeasibly the delights of eternal joys, oblivious of sins, oblivious of sufferings.⁸¹

This passage from Augustine seems to be the origin of Anselm's mode of argument: he insists that since God and the blessed are free, freedom is not essentially an ability to turn toward evil.⁸² It is quoted by Peter Lombard,⁸³ Philip the Chancellor,⁸⁴ and by Albert in the

⁸¹ "Nec ideo liberum arbitrium non habebunt, quia peccata eos delectare non poterunt. Magis quippe erit liberum a delectatione peccandi usque ad delectationem non peccandi indeclinabilem liberatum....Certe Deus ipse numquid, quoniam peccare non potest, ideo liberum arbitrium habere negandus est? Erit ergo illius ciuitatis et una in omnibus et inseparabilis in singulis uoluntas libera, ab omni malo liberata et impleta omni bono, fruens indeficienter aeternorum iucunditate gaudiorum, oblita culparum, oblita poenarum." Augustine, *City of God*, 22.30 (CCL 48, 863, lines 49-52; 864, lines 72-77; Dods, 865-866). For a discussion of this passage, and its impact, see Simon Gaine, *Will There Be Free Will in Heaven?*, 22-25. This book is a good resource for considering the significance of the teaching that the blessed have *liberum arbitrium*, an issue I can only touch on here.

⁸² For more on Augustine's teaching that free decision is not the ability to do evil, see M. Huftier, "Libre arbitre, liberté et péché chez saint Augustin." Huftier argues that Augustine never viewed freedom as the power to choose evil: "Ce risque [de défaillir et d'opter pour le mal] ne définit pas le libre arbitre; il lui est accidentel." (280). Ironically, some early medieval interpreters, misguided by collections of texts, believed Augustine supported this view, although he put it in the mouth of an objector.

⁸³ *Sentences* II. 25.1(Br 1, 462, lines 13-15)

⁸⁴ *Summa de bono*, 2.c (W I, 183, lines 11-13).

Summa de mirabilis.⁸⁵ As far as I have been able to find out, however, Thomas never quotes this particular passage, though he often refers to book 22 of *De civitate* to describe the life of the blessed. Perhaps the argument by rhetorical question (“Are we to say...?”) was not sufficiently rigorous in Thomas’s eyes; perhaps, too, he preferred to prove God’s freedom rather than use it as a premise.

Another Augustinian teaching probably had a more subtle, but no less real, effect on the rejection of evil as a defining element of *liberum arbitrium*. Augustine advanced the thesis that evil was the absence of being – evil is not any real thing but only a name given to the privation of the good. God does not choose to create evil, Augustine taught, because there can be no choice to create the non-existent. While the Manicheans considered evil as an element in the universe that caused phenomena and could be appealed to as an explanation, Augustine rejected this notion: evil does not have a proper cause of its existence and it is not the proper cause of the existence of other things. In the writings of these five authors, we see Augustine’s teaching making itself apparent at the level of definition of a human power. If evil really is a kind of non-being, it will be of no use in explaining anything at all. Thus, it does not belong in the account given for any term. Our authors agreed with Augustine that evil was non-being,⁸⁶ and as they continued to absorb Augustine’s insight,

⁸⁵ Albert, *Summa theologiae*, II. 94 m 2, sed contra (first set) 1 (B 33, 212).

⁸⁶ As examples, see Anselm, *De concordia*, I.7 “Malum vero, quod est iniustitia, omni carere existentia.” (S II, 258; trans 194); Peter Lombard, *Sentences II*. d 34. 4, “Malum est corruptio vel privatio boni” (Br. I, 526); “Tendere ad non-esse malum est.” *Sentences I*. d 46. 7 (Br I, 320); Philip *Summa de bono Q 6* “Est oppositio boni et mali ...secundum privationem...malum ponit non esse in eo quod malum.” (W I, 23, lines 10-11) Albert *De natura boni*, “Ut dicit Augustinus...malum est corruption boni.” (C 25.1, 4, lines 1-3); *Super Dionysium de Divinis Nominibus 4*, “Dicendum...per-se-malum, quod scilicet tantum est malum, nihil est; nec etiam in subiecto malum aliquid est.” (C 37.1, 242, lines 35-38); Thomas Aquinas *De malo*, I.1, “Id quod est malum, non est aliquid.” (L 23, 6, lines 237-238).

they dropped evil from the account of free decision, just as Augustine himself had dropped it from the account of the real world.

Augustine's arguments with the neo-Platonists, against whom he maintained that God made the world by choice and not by necessity, are also likely sources of the conviction of God's freedom.⁸⁷ With regard to the idea that God is the source of free decision because he is the object sought by it, Augustine's theology once more plays a leading role. The idea that man is designed to seek God and only God is certainly not unique to Augustine, but it pervades his writing and he is more likely than most to use this concept in his understanding of human nature and human abilities. Finally, in the area of whether free decision is losable or not, Augustine kept the issue open with his suggestion that free decision was lost, embodied in the quotation from the *Enchiridion*. Every Christian scholastic had to respond to it, and this necessary response encouraged both clarification and sophistication in formulating a theory of *liberum arbitrium* that was related to goodness but not identical with it.

It can be quite natural to think that Christian doctrine impacted the free-will debate mostly by generating odd cases that confused the issue. A simple, straightforward account of human free decision was not good enough for a theologian in the middle ages: our authors felt that they had to include God, angels, demons, the blessed, the damned, man before the fall and man after the fall. Sometimes a modern reader is tempted to visualize a group of thinkers who just kept getting distracted. However, this is not the only way to view Christianity's impact on questions of free decision. Christian ideas, and particularly Augustinian ideas, fostered a certain way of approaching freedom, and certain methods of

⁸⁷ See, for instance, *City of God*, book 11, chapters 4 and 5; and *Confessions*, book 11, chapters 4-13.

dealing with common difficulties, that were beneficial because they established a unity of concern among our authors and gave a certain direction and sophistication to their inquiries.

B. Reasons for continuity within the debate on free decision

The approaches discussed in this chapter did not merely allow our authors to remain faithful to their Christian and Augustinian heritage; there are other reasons, within the discussion itself, for the fact that certain approaches to free decision endured while others changed. To explain why *all* these approaches remained consistent, we should begin by noting that they depend on each other. If we ask the reason for this dependence, we uncover a positive characteristic that all of them have in common: all of these approaches relate freedom and goodness. This emphasis on the relation of freedom and goodness seems to have had very beneficial results for the discussion of free decision as a whole. It allowed our authors to present free decision as a power within a context of goods, both natural and supernatural. Let us look at these ideas in more detail.

1. These approaches depend on each other

All of the approaches that were detailed above – the resolution to explain free decision without evil and the characterization of it as an unlosable natural gift which exists in the creator, from whom it originated from and toward whom it returns – are linked together. In most cases, one of these methods of dealing with *liberum arbitrium* implies all the others, and if one of them is rejected, the others must be rejected as well.

Let us try to see this dependency in action. If free decision were to be pursued as if it were essentially the ability to do evil, then it could not be pursued as something that God has;

and if God does not have *liberum arbitrium* then an author cannot explore human freedom as a perfection resulting from the fact that man is the image of God through his rational soul.

Or, again: if free decision is considered as the kind of thing that can be lost, then it cannot simultaneously be treated as result of the rational nature which makes us images of God; and if free decision cannot be viewed as a reflection of God, then God's freedom and our human freedom might be said equivocally, and it becomes possible that free decision is, in fact, the ability to do evil.

Or, consider a third chain of dependency: if free decision is not essentially directed toward God as its end, it is indifferent to the highest Good. This would lead to the suspicion that it is, in fact, the ability to sin or not sin – to accept or reject God. The result would be that freedom was said equivocally of God and man.

One simple reason for the continuity of these approaches, then, is that they allowed our authors to remain consistent. If they wanted to take one of these approaches, or insist on one of these themes: say, that free decision cannot be lost – then they were, in a some sense, obliged to take note of them all.

2. These approaches have the same positive character: they all relate free decision and goodness

These five methods of approach are obviously not isolated, completely distinct ways of dealing with free decision, or else they would not be so heavily dependent on each other. What is the underlying reason for the connection between them? The answer seems to be that each of these ways of dealing with free decision relates that human power to goodness.

If free decision is approached as something that is not defined as the ability to choose evil – if it is not “the ability to sin and not to sin” – then free decision is, simultaneously, approached as something that is directed toward the good by its nature or essence. Thus all of our authors, as they consistently claim that “the ability to do evil is not part of the account of free decision” end up seeing free decision as a power which is not indifferent to goodness but essentially ordered to it.

When free decision was approached as something that is similar in God and man, it was given another relation to the good, this time to the highest Good. If there truly is free decision in God “just as there is in us,” and *liberum arbitrium* is not said equivocally of man and his creator, then free decision is a perfection, and it has an essential account that relates it to Goodness itself as an exemplar. In addition, when our authors explained this relation between human and divine free decision as a relation of a received principle to the original, they clarified the relation of free decision to the highest Good by establishing that freedom belongs to that Good preeminently and originally.

Yet another relation to God as the highest Good is implied by the fourth of our continuous methods: if free decision is approached as the kind of thing that is oriented to God as its end, it is defined and explained by a relation to the highest Good as its final cause. The results of this general approach varied: Anselm, for instance, will say that free decision is the capacity to do the will of God, while Thomas will say that free decision derives its freedom from the will’s desire for God.⁸⁸ Despite the variations, however, the result of treating free

⁸⁸ As Riesenhuber puts it, for Thomas, “The absolute good is the reason and basis for freedom of choice” (“The Bases and Meaning of Freedom in Thomas Aquinas,” 107).

decision as a power directed toward the divine is that free decision is given an essential relation to the highest Good as its end.

These four approaches allowed our authors to define and account for free decision through its relations to various forms of goodness. However, free decision must be distinguished from other human faculties which are related to goodness and to the highest good – hence the last of our five approaches makes its appearance. This crucial distinction was supported by the continuous treatment of free decision as a faculty that cannot be lost. By taking this approach, our authors distinguished *liberum arbitrium* from both virtue and grace, which are acquired goods in the natural and supernatural orders. In making the claim that free decision could not be lost, our authors clarified the kind of good that free decision itself was: a good of nature, belonging to the soul as such.

In relating free decision to goodness in these ways, our authors were also following a philosophical method recommended by Plato before Christianity came on the scene at all. Socrates claimed that the highest and best human study is the study of the *idea*, or form, of the good, because the idea of the good “provides truth to the things known and gives power to the one who knows” and “existence and being are present in things as a consequence of the good.”⁸⁹ By knowing the good, then, men know all things in a certain way. When our authors relate free decision, *as* a good, *to* other goods and to the highest good, they are applying this method in their own way: they try to understand the being of a thing, in this case, the being of *liberum arbitrium*, by understanding its goodness and its relation to the Good itself.

⁸⁹ *Republic*, VI, 505a-509c.

3. *These five approaches allowed our authors to put liberum arbitrium in a context*

These five continuous approaches have a common character because they qualify and specify the relation of free decision to goodness. In doing so, they achieved a result that is highly valuable, both philosophically and theologically. They place free decision within a context.

The task of defining a thing must involve distinguishing it from all other things. But it is just as crucial that this process not become a process which *isolates* the thing defined from all other things. A definition which creates such isolation is no longer a definition, since it necessarily cuts off the thing defined from its causes and removes it from its natural genus. It is particularly important that the definition of a power not isolate it from the rest of the world. Powers cannot hover unsupported in ontological space – the Latin term *potentia*, also translated as “potency” reminds us that powers need objects to fulfill them as well as complete beings to which to belong.

How, then, can free decision be defined in way that gives it a context? The continuous approaches we have seen in this chapter provide one answer to this question. As our authors related free decision to God, they gave it both a source and an end. As they emphasized free decision’s character as an unlosable natural power, they established it as a good of nature and clarified its relation to the rational soul which supports it. In general, the methods that Anselm, Peter, Philip, Albert, and Thomas used allowed them to assert that free decision is itself a natural good, ordered towards other natural goods, and a good in such a way that it derives from the highest good and seeks it as well. Free decision is not cut off from the rest of the world precisely because it is considered in terms of goodness.

I can only hint, here, at the further philosophical benefits provided by the fact that *liberum arbitrium* is given a context in this way. For one thing, an account of free decision that provides this context spells out the relation of *liberum arbitrium* to the divine, so our authors are prepared to respond to theological difficulties about whether God determines human choice. Its relation to human nature is also, at least partially, spelled out in the same way, since our authors' methods emphasized free decision's connection to the rational soul and its parts. This prepares them to respond to philosophical difficulties about whether some element of the soul destroys the possibility of genuine free decision.

Conclusion to Chapter 5

It is not very surprising to find our authors maintaining a consistent approach to free decision in certain areas that are specifically Christian and Augustinian. Anselm, Peter, Philip, Albert, and Thomas remain committed to certain standards in exploring the relation of *liberum arbitrium* to God and its relation to evil. They also consistently point to its character as an unlosable natural good for mankind, and insist on its similarity to the freedom they attribute to a divine nature. Yet this pattern of continuity was not motivated solely by respect for doctrine and authority. We have seen in this chapter that our authors' fidelity to these insights provided free decision with a context, because it enabled them to define free decision as a good and relate it to other goods.

Conclusion

There was continuity as well as change in the approaches that the medieval authors took toward free decision, and there were good and sufficient reasons for both – some of those reasons came from outside the discussion of human free choice and others were generated within it. While their innovative methods helped our thirteenth-century authors find causes for free decision within the natural order, the durable approaches uncovered in Chapter 5 helped put free decision in a context by leading them to express how *liberum arbitrium* relates to both nature and God. The conclusion of this dissertation, like each of the chapters, has two parts. In the first part, I will point out something that could not have been proved until this point, when both innovation and continuity have been thoroughly established: the continuous pursuit of the five insights discussed in chapter 5 set up the structure in which the innovations discussed in the previous chapters took place. It was possible for Philip, Thomas, and Albert to be innovative because there were some truths they did not question, and a number of fundamental methods of approaching free decision that they continued to pursue. In the second part of the conclusion, I will offer a brief summary of the dissertation and a last word to the reader.

Part I: A Framework for Innovation

Is there any relation between the innovations discussed in the first four chapters and the continuities that were discussed in the fifth one? Or are the two sets of methodological observations unrelated to each other? In truth, the continuous methods of approaching free decision, as they related free decision to goodness, also helped provide the framework for the innovations that were discussed in the first four chapters of this dissertation. Each of the

innovations discussed in the earlier chapters has a natural place in the context of freedom and goodness which the consistent methods discussed in chapter 5 create. What is more, all the changes in method we have discussed helped maintain the traditional Christian and Augustinian approach to free decision that was described above. Let us look at the innovations individually in order to see how this is so. This activity provides a good opportunity to summarize at the end of this dissertation.

A. The first two innovations: abandoning the context of temptation and treating free decision through its causes

In chapter 1, we saw that our thirteenth-century authors abandoned the context of temptation and the first sin and began to consider free decision as an element in human nature. As I argued in that chapter, this shift can be only partially explained by the new Aristotelian interest in natural science. It also represents an attempt to overcome difficulties arising from the context of temptation: for instance, the fact that this context encouraged a blurred identification of freedom with moral goodness. Now, however, we can see that the innovation was also encouraged by the continuous views of free decision that have been discussed in chapter 5. All of our authors believed that free decision should be approached without considering it as the ability to do evil. When Philip, Albert, and Thomas laid aside the context of sin and temptation, they simply took a further step in the direction already indicated by this tradition. Not content with making the claim that free decision is not defined as the power to sin, they removed even the *context* of sin from their treatment of *liberum arbitrium*.

When our thirteenth-century authors placed their questions on free decision into the new context of human nature, their choice reflected another of the traditional approaches. The emphasis on free decision as an unlosable power had always had the result of treating free decision as a good of nature, not a superadded gift of grace. By treating free decision in their treatises on man, Philip, Albert, and Thomas were able to give more weight to free decision as a natural good.

A third constant pattern, the insistence on a similarity between human and divine freedom, was also supported by the change of context. Since free decision in the divine nature must be defined in terms of intellect and will, rather than in terms of some ability to remain sinless, an account of *liberum arbitrium* that looks at its place among the natural powers of the intellectual soul is more faithful to this approach than one that considers it as the God-given ability to resist temptation.

The changes discussed in chapter 2 are closely related to those in chapter 1. Philip, Albert, and Thomas were less inclined to treat free decision as a given fact and had an increased interest in its immediate causes: in particular, they emphasized immateriality, intellect, and will. This innovation reflected the absence of the need for theodicy in their historical period; it also shows the influence of Aristotle's argument for the immateriality of the intellect. In addition, however, the innovation was a natural result of the new context and of a certain increased preference for accounts of freedom as indeterminacy.

This particular change in the kind of account offered was encouraged and supported by two of the constant approaches to freedom that have been discussed. First of all, in changing the way they defined free decision and accounted for its freedom, our authors in

fact continued to take the path of arguing that human and divine freedom were similar, since a freedom based on immateriality, intellect, and will is suitable to the divine nature.

Secondly, in making their claim that freedom can be explained as a natural, undetermined capacity in the human soul, the authors were supported by the view that all men are equally free; their innovation was made in the framework which acknowledges free decision as a good proper to human nature.

My point here is relatively simple, despite the number of changes and continuities involved: the innovations discussed in chapters 1 and 2 were encouraged and supported by certain ways of viewing freedom which did *not* go out of fashion as the debate on free decision progressed. The following section will show that the same thing is true of the innovations discussed in chapters 3 and 4.

B. The third and fourth innovations: treating free decision as a power and specifying its relation to its object, to reason, and to will

Chapter 3 pointed to the innovation of defining free decision as a power, and the related innovation of making clear its relation to the other immaterial powers and to its object. This innovation, like that discussed in chapter 1, seems to have been strongly motivated by vagueness in the earlier accounts; it is also motivated by the desire to give a clear account of human psychology in Aristotelian terms and by the goal of presenting a unified account of the human soul. When they made these innovations, however, our thirteenth-century authors were able to clarify how free decision related to its creator as well

as how it related to the world. Thus, the innovations served to advance the connection between freedom and goodness which is proper to the “durable” approaches to free decision.

By showing that free decision was a power, not a habit, our authors showed that it was unlike grace and virtue, which can be lost and gained, diminished and increased. They could easily dismiss the possibility of its getting lost when people sinned – thus, their innovative clarification reinforced the common method of treating free decision as an unlosable good of nature. In clarifying the relation of free decision to reason and will, our authors continued to work within this framework, since they asked what kind of natural good free decision is and how it is related to other natural goods.

In chapter 4, I emphasized the innovative consideration of the objects of reason and will that we see in Philip, Albert, and Thomas. This new focus on the relation of powers to their objects helped clarify the relation of freedom to goodness, as the traditional approach demands. First and foremost, the focus on objects helped them express exactly *how* free decision was related to the good that is chosen. The consideration of powers and their objects also helped our authors clarify exactly *how* free decision could have an essential orientation toward God. Anselm took it as a given that free decision must be intended to allow human beings to hold fast to the rectitude that is God’s will for them. As this perspective, which depends upon a simple assumption of the divine goals, became less valuable, it was necessary to explain anew how free decision essentially relates man to God. The new emphasis on the objects of reason and will (especially will) fits into such a strategy. By considering the object of the will as the good, the good universally conceived, and finally as God himself in the beatific vision, the thirteenth-century authors helped to keep the goal of

human life, God himself, in the definition of *liberum arbitrium*. In doing so, they remained faithful to the traditional way of approaching free decision, which is committed to the idea that freedom lies in serving God.

Part II. Short Summary and Last Word

In this dissertation, I have looked at a number of texts in order to point out instances of innovation in the way *liberum arbitrium* was approached, as well as instances of continuity in ways of approaching free decision. Philip, Albert, and Thomas abandoned the context of man's first sin to place free decision among the powers of the soul. They began to give reasons for the existence of free decision, rather than assuming it as a given due to the justice of God. They sought to give free decision a formal account as a power of the soul, specifying its relation to the powers of reason and will, and used new characteristics of reason and will – particularly the way these powers relate to their objects – to explain free decision. Yet all the while, they remained committed to certain specifically Christian ways of treating free decision: they viewed it as a principle derived from God and directed to him; they maintained that it was not, in essence, the ability to choose evil and held constantly to the notion that it was an unlosable natural principle.

This tour of texts was not intended as a merely technical exercise. Both innovation and continuity reveal to us the methods of the authors, allowing us to analyze both the reasons for these methods and the results of these methods. In each chapter of this dissertation, the discussion of the reasons for the changes in method was, perforce, more speculative than the mere description of the change. It was also, I hope, more interesting.

Though there can be no complete explanation, it should be evident that our authors were not blindly reacting to the influences of Augustine, the church fathers, and Aristotle. The real debate on freedom, with its ongoing tensions and areas of vagueness, as well as the areas of certainty springing from Christian insights, fostered deliberately chosen changes in method.

In abandoning the context of the first sin, the thirteenth-century authors began a new approach to free decision as a power of the human soul. As I suggested in the first chapter, this methodological change allowed Philip, Albert, and Thomas to eliminate the vagueness and lack of reference inherent in definitions based on theodicy, such as Anselm's "power to preserve rectitude" and Peter's "faculty that chooses the good when assisted by grace." At the same time, the change helped them continue to emphasize the connection of free choice to the good, because it dissipated the emphasis on sin which this context requires.

In deciding to seek a more causal account of *liberum arbitrium*, Philip, Thomas, and Albert left behind a traditional approach that took free decision as a given fact, proved by the justice of God. Their decision to speak of *liberum arbitrium* in terms of natural causes seemed to move away from theological considerations, because it no longer relies on our intuition of the divine purpose in creating it. Yet the consideration of freedom in terms of its natural causes was encouraged by ideas about the freedom of God and the progress of man toward perfection. As they sought an account of free decision that could belong to both man and God, and to both sinner and saint, our authors were drawn to a consideration of intellect, will, and immateriality in order to explain a freedom of indeterminacy.

In speaking of free decision as a power, and in giving its precise relation to reason and will, the thirteenth-century authors established a new lexicon of terms for explaining free

decision. As I argued in chapter 3, the precision of this terminology made it possible for them to give a unified and consistent account of the human soul in a way that was impossible for Anselm and Peter. Unlike their predecessors, Philip, Albert, and Thomas could look at free decision “at home” in the human soul, not only “at work” during the course of a particular and transient activity. They were able to deal with free decision, reason, and will, not as mere stages in the act of choosing, but as powers in their own right, with a permanent existence of a specific kind. At the same time, the thirteenth-century impulse to explain the precise relation of free decision to reason and will continued an emphasis on the unlosable character of free decision due to its natural roots, which is also evident in Anselm and Peter.

In dealing with new characteristics of the powers of reason and will, particularly with their objects, Philip, Albert, and Thomas broke new ground in linking freedom to the objects of the true and the good, toward which the powers of reason and will are directed. As I argued in the two sections of chapter 4, their rejection of the context of sin and temptation left the thirteenth-century authors free to consider characteristics of reason other than its capacity as moral judge. Likewise, this rejection allowed them to consider characteristics of will other than the morally relevant activities of consent and resistance. Their definition of free decision as power naturally drew them into a consideration of various objects toward which the soul is directed, allowing them to explain the free nature of both reason and will in terms of their response to their objects. Even as their methods were shaped by their rejection of a traditional context and terminology, however, the thirteenth-century authors followed the traditional pattern of considering the orientation of man to God by considering God as the highest object of the will – and, in some cases, as the first mover of the will. Their

consideration of human psychological powers strengthened the view that man cannot be what he is without seeking the divine and absolute good.

A general way of summarizing all of this is to say that the active choices of method made by our thirteenth-century authors provided them with an account of free decision that lies within the order of nature – *liberum arbitrium* is considered as a particular element in the nature of man, related by definition to the natural objects of truth and goodness. However, this innovative consideration of a natural order did not require them to sacrifice their ability to show that free decision also belongs in the order of creation and salvation. The continuous emphasis on freedom's relation to goodness suggested and guided the innovations that took place.

It is my hope that this dissertation, by the contrast it examines, has achieved a better understanding of the medieval methods of approaching human free choice. Such an improved understanding of method can give us a greater, deeper, and more realistically founded appreciation for what these authors have achieved; it can help us see medieval thinkers as men engaged in conversation instead of machines who produced doctrine in response to ideological stimuli; and it can help us understand medieval teachings within their natural context, rather than forcing those teachings to fit into modern categories. Finally, this understanding of method can allow us to evaluate other methods of approaching free will, giving us valuable perspective on the work of modern and contemporary thinkers. If the readers of this work are able to find any of these benefits as a result of their reading, this dissertation will achieve its practical purpose as well as its speculative one.

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