

Aquinas, Compatibilist

What possible reason could there be for God who is good and almighty to permit the sin, suffering, and even ultimate failure of creatures He loves? Without supposing that St. Thomas posed the question in quite this way, it is fair to say that interpreters of St. Thomas in the 20th century have been intensely interested in this question, and have been driven by it to explore what seem to be tensions in and among Aquinas' accounts of human freedom, divine providence, and the goodness of God. The works of three such interpreters have been made widely available, and a brief overview of each of their approaches will serve as an introduction to the perceived tensions in Aquinas' thought.

One interpretive direction for resolving those tensions, a self-styled traditional Thomist view popularized in this century by Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, has anchored itself firmly in the causal certitude of providence.¹ While it insists that no sum of natural causal antecedents to choice determine how or whether the will chooses, the Thomist view (following in the tradition of Dominic Bañez) holds that God moves the will through an internal physical premotion, applying it to determinate acts without violating its freedom. Although they are adamant that God does not will that sin occur, these interpreters hold that whether or not a creature freely sins follows inevitably from the sort of help which God (logically prior to any foreknowledge of merit) chooses to give to that creature; sin follows inevitably when merely sufficient rather than efficacious help is given as the creature's will is determinately applied to its act. God determines of Himself for mysterious purposes which human beings will be saved and which permitted to remain lost. Hence the Thomist reading of the relation of providence to creaturely freedom seems in tension with the claim that God desires the salvation of all, and thus with the doctrine of divine goodness.

Rejecting this perceived assault on “the absolute innocence of God”, Jacques Maritain proposed after more than six centuries an apparently fresh reading of Aquinas which far more fully assuages libertarian intuitions about freedom.² Moored in the very deep waters of a two-tiered metaphysic, Maritain generally accommodates what Aquinas says about causation by referring it to the line of being, even while he distances God from causal responsibility for sin by interjecting between divine causal stimulus and creaturely sinful response free initiatives in a newly discovered line of nonbeing. By thus inserting the metaphysic of nothingness, Maritain seems to accommodate libertarian intuitions about freedom while championing divine innocence. But Maritain’s view affords a remarkably different purchase on the causal certitude of Providence and specifically on the doctrine of predestination than do traditional Thomist readings. Sympathetic modern readers of Aquinas may be glad to have the teaching of the angelic doctor cut free of such devilish entanglements. But such freedom comes at a price: Maritain’s view seems to require a being who is pure act to react either to what He somehow knows free creatures would do, or to what He sees them actually do. Either way, Aquinas’ account of God’s knowledge does not seem to provide the resources needed to sustain such a reading.³

Bernard Lonergan offered a third significantly different interpretation of Aquinas on these matters, arguing forcefully against the account of God's operation which both Garrigou-Lagrange and Maritain accepted.⁴ Lonergan proposed an account on which God operates through creatures by creating beings with causal powers and sustaining their existence in the context of a complex causal network intended to produce whatever of being and act follows from it. God controls the activity of each creature not by an immediate determining activation of its causal powers--the Bañezian reading of activation adopted by both Garrigou-Lagrange and Maritain--but rather by placing a complete set of mutually ordered created causes from which the acts of each created being follow determinately. Only the acts of free creatures have a measure of independence from this causal order.

Insofar as they cooperate with Him, God moves free creatures, too, by situating them in a complete set of causal circumstances, but free creatures are capable of voluntary refusal to cooperate with that order and thus with its Author. This refusal is unintelligible, absolute objective falsity. It is the source of a third category of relations between the will of God and created effects: in addition to those effects which occur because God wills, and those which do not occur because God wills that they do not, there are effects which are permitted to occur. Sinful acts of free creatures alone make up the latter category of created effects. Whether a free creature's actions fall into the first or the third category is determined by the creature, not by God; Lonergan adopts Dom Odon Lottin's thesis that Aquinas' thought about the nature of creaturely freedom underwent a fundamental change some time prior to the writing of the *De Malo*, a change away from intellectual determinism to a new-found freedom of the will. That theory of change turns out to have far less evidence in its favor than its advocates initially hoped.⁵

Lonergan's treatment of Aquinas' theory of operation poses a significant challenge to the readings of Maritain and Garrigou-Lagrange; the criticism of the theory that Thomas's teaching on the will underwent fundamental change places Lonergan's reading in question, as well. These weaknesses leave the three interpretive vessels listing but not yet capsized. No interpretive account can be overturned in the absence of a more promising rival account. As I read the texts of Aquinas and the state of the discussion among his interpreters, an alternative interpretation suggests itself. My impression is that traditional interpreters left Aquinas' account of the relationships among human freedom, Providence and divine goodness inadequately defended, while Maritain and Lonergan with fair intention subverted it, because their readings were hampered by libertarian intuitions about human freedom which Aquinas did not share.

Understanding Aquinas' account of freedom in compatibilist terms reveals greater coherence in his account of the nature of human freedom and the role our freedom plays in the created order than do accounts infected with libertarian notions of freedom. Once the compatibilist conception of freedom is comprehended, it functions like a lens of superior clarity through which other aspects of Aquinas' thought concerning the created order can be seen afresh. Accordingly, our first task is to craft the lens itself: a compatibilist conception of freedom will be ground from the material available in Aquinas' writing on the will, its acts, and their causes in a way unclouded by the apparent tensions between causality and freedom which libertarian intuitions introduce. Then grasping the compatibilist lens, we will see through it a coherent account of the high purpose in the plan of providence for free creatures. Finally, we will observe coherence in Aquinas' account of the permission of sin and even the ultimate failure of free creatures through the perspective afforded by compatibilist freedom.

I. The human will, its acts, and their causes: a compatibilist rendering.

A compatibilist understanding of freedom reveals an account of the will, its acts, and their causes unclouded by perceived tensions between the freedom of the will and its determination by the universal causal order in which the will is moved to act. Libertarian readers find tensions between the apparent determinism of the causal order within which the will and intellect operate, and the clear rejection of necessitation of the will's acts found consistently throughout Aquinas' writings on the will. To avoid what seems to libertarians to be a contradiction, they make distinctions: Garrigou-Lagrange, between natural and supernatural causal antecedents to choice (no sum of the former but only the latter determine the will *ad unum*); Maritain, between the line of being (which operates causally) and the line of nonbeing (in which intelligent creatures can freely and culpably

resist cooperating with any and all natural and supernatural causal antecedents to choice); Lonergan, between earlier (deterministic) and later (nondeterministic) accounts of the will. All these interpreters have looked past a clear alternative for resolving this apparent tension between determinism and freedom in Aquinas: reading the texts on freedom along compatibilist lines. One reason for looking past the compatibilist alternative is the recognition that Aquinas clearly rejected the necessitation of the will's acts, coupled with the supposition that this rejection amounts to a rejection of causal determinism. A second reason for ignoring the compatibilist alternative is the recognition that it is an account of *freedom* that is needed, coupled with the supposition that compatibilist freedom is no real freedom at all. Both of these suppositions are false. To show this, I'll present an overview of Aquinas' teaching on the will, its acts, and their proximate causes along compatibilist lines. The free acts of the will, on that account, will be shown to be causally determined but not necessitated. Aquinas' own remedy for recognizing the reality of the compatibilist freedom which emerges from that account will be presented. The account of the nature and modality of creaturely free acts which emerges from this discussion will plainly cohere with the determinism of the Aristotelian causal order embraced by Aquinas, and will be available for investigation into the coherence of his accounts of providence and the permission of sin.

Intellect, will, and freedom.

"The act of the Will", St. Thomas wrote in the *Pars Prima*, "is nothing but an inclination which follows on an apprehended form, just as natural appetite is an inclination which follows on a natural form."⁶ The capacity for rational apprehension is the capacity to apprehend aspects of reality which are not sensible. Aquinas called the faculty of rational apprehension the intellect, and the faculty of inclination responding to such apprehension, the will. Whatever the intellect can apprehend, the will can take as its

object; that is, we can incline toward whatever we can apprehend, since there is always something of being in any apprehended object, and thus something desirable, as useful or for its own sake, under some circumstances or other.⁷

Though the will *can* incline toward whatever the intellect can apprehend, all finite being can be apprehended insofar as it lacks being. Thus the will *need not* incline toward any created apprehended object, since any such object can be apprehended *as lacking in being*, that is, as lacking some mode of being in virtue of which one might incline toward the apprehended object, were it present instead of lacking.⁸ The ability of the intellect to *abstract*--to notice in apprehended objects certain aspects (such as their lacking a given perfection) which are capable of multiple instantiation--is the ground of the nonnecessary character of the will's inclination toward finite apprehended objects. This is part of what St. Thomas meant by his claim that the root of freedom is in the intellect: given simply the fact that some finite being is apprehended, no inclination of the will toward it follows with necessity, since the intellect can apprehend that object insofar as it lacks being.⁹

Freedom from necessity is one of the three conditions which St. Thomas consistently designated as belonging to creaturely freedom; the other two--self-movement, and control--will be introduced shortly.¹⁰ First, though, we should note that the freedom from necessity on the level at which we have so far considered it is of a passive sort: the will is not moved of necessity by any given apprehended object because of something which *can happen to* the intellect, namely, its apprehending a given created object as good, or as lacking in being in some respect. But there is a second dimension of the power of the intellect which transforms the passivity of the will's nonnecessitation. Among the aspects of created being which the intellect can apprehend are its own acts (we can notice that we are thinking, for example), and those of the will (we can notice that we intend something or other.¹¹) This capacity to apprehend its own acts and those of the will is the intellect's

capacity for *reflection*.¹² The will, in turn, can have inclinations corresponding to these reflective apprehendings, and these inclinations in turn can be apprehended. A fuller description of the interplay between intellect and will would reveal even more complexity.

Since human beings can apprehend their own apprehendings and willings, can incline toward these in various ways, and can apprehend the causes of these of their states, they can incline to change what they apprehend, what they will, whether they apprehend, and whether they will. As rational animals, human beings move themselves, like nonrational animals, in the sense that their principle of motion for each act--the apprehended object--is internal to them. Yet nonrational animals are passive with respect to what that internal principle of motion, that apprehended object, will be. With rational creatures things are otherwise. Because of their capacity for reflection--for apprehending the acts of the intellect and will--the source of the specification of their internal principle of motion is also in a way internal to rational creatures. For the intellect can apprehend its own acts, and the will can incline or not toward any of these apprehended acts of the intellect.

Rational creatures are in this sense active with respect to their internal principle of motion, the apprehended good, and so can be said to move themselves in a richer sense than can nonrational animals. The intellect moves the will, in the primary sense that the will's inclination just is a response to the intellect's apprehension of an object. But the will also moves the intellect to act, because the intellect can apprehend its own acts, and the will can incline accordingly.¹³ The will moves the will, as well, since it is in virtue of its inclination toward an end that the will inclines toward an object apprehended as a means to that end.¹⁴ In this way, the will moves itself to act, as well as moving the intellect and, in various ways and to various degrees, the senses, the passions, and the executive powers--like speech--to act.¹⁵

We have seen how the will is both not necessitated by any finite apprehended object, and that it can play a role in specifying which objects it will apprehend, and in what way. Rational creatures have the full range of created being as possible objects of inclination, and they can move themselves to apprehend whichever objects they will in fact incline toward. Nonnecessitation coupled with self-movement amounts to control. Rational creatures not only have control over how they will fulfill their desires (as nonrational animals do), but over what their desires will be, whether or not they will yield to them, and under what conditions. This control which rational creatures have over their own acts is as indefinitely deep as is the intellect's capacity for reflection. The control which rational creatures have over *what* they incline toward has been called *freedom of specification*, and their control over *whether* they will incline toward a given apprehended object, *freedom of exercise*.¹⁶ Aquinas clearly distinguished between these dimensions of nonnecessitation of the will's act, and located the roots of both in the capacity of the intellect to reflect on its own acts, as well as on those of the other faculties, including acts of the will.¹⁷

It is particularly the will's control over the judgment of the intellect which marks the choices of rational creatures as free. St. Thomas is explicit in his claim that human free choice comes from our power over our own judgments in the *Summa Contra Gentiles* and the *De Veritate*, and he cites the intellect's capacity to consider an apprehended object from a different point of view--a capacity over the exercise of which the will has power--as the grounds for the freedom and nonnecessitation of the will's acts in the *Prima Secundae* and the *De Malo*.¹⁸ We have seen that the will both is moved by the intellect and can move the intellect. Because the will can exercise control over the acts of the intellect, the free agent can be said to move the judgment of the intellect freely. (The resulting free judgment, *liberum arbitrium*, is the act from which the power is named.¹⁹)

But insofar as the will is moved to exercise its control over the judgment of the intellect, that control is dependent on the causes of the will's acts. To understand the nature of that control, then, the variety of causes operating on the will, and the extent of the will's control over those causes, must be examined.

The causes of the will's acts.

The will is a self-mover, moving itself from willing the end to willing an apprehended means, and because particular acts of the intellect can be among these suitable apprehended means, the will is able to play a role in forming the intellect and the will, the wellsprings of human action. According to St. Thomas the will is not only a self-mover, though, but is a moved mover as well. St. Thomas understood being a moved mover and a self-mover as fully compatible.²⁰ Having examined the sense in which the will is a mover, we need next to explore the senses in which it is moved.

There are five important dimensions to the will's being moved which we should briefly consider. First, the intellect moves the will, as we've said: the will is nothing but an inclination responding to a form understood. These apprehended objects do not necessitate the will's acts, again, since the intellect can consider any finite apprehended object under different aspects, so that it seems good under one and not good under another. The will can incline toward a wide range of apprehended objects, but none of these move the will with necessity insofar as they can be apprehended as lacking in being (and thus as not good) in some respect. Hence, all that we can say about the will's nature is that it inclines toward *whatever* the intellect apprehends as good, which is to say toward the good in general. This is what St. Thomas meant by identifying the universal good as the will's proper object: by its nature, the will inclines toward whatever is apprehended as good.²¹

Since the intellect can apprehend its *own* act of considering any object under any given aspect, the will can incline toward such apprehended acts of apprehension and can thus move the intellect from considering an object under one aspect to consider it under another. Thus, while the will is moved by any object apprehended as good and suitable, the will has control over whether a given apprehended object is apprehended as good and suitable, and thus over which apprehended objects move the will; this control is freedom of specification.

In a second and related sense, God moves the will in virtue of His providence over the causes of the intellect's apprehending as it does.²² God has given to all beings in the created order their natures with the attendant causal powers which flow from those natures, both at their moment of coming into being--this is *creation*--and at every subsequent moment of their existence (*conservation*). He has placed those beings in various causal orders which are themselves mutually ordered and interacting according to the plan of providence. (This placement is *application*.) He thus operates through all created being, accomplishing His purposes, proximate and ultimate, for each being, for each order, and for the whole created order by means of the interactions of the beings within and among these causal orders; no created being acts without thereby accomplishing God's purposes. (Being thus employed all created being exhibits *instrumentality*.)²³

God exercises this control without in any way necessitating the will's acts, for the nature of the will remains open to being moved or not moved by any particular apprehended object.²⁴ Neither does God's control over the intellect's apprehending as it does obviate the will's control over how the intellect apprehends; primary causality operates through secondary causality, as the woodsman's intention to remove the tree in no way obviates

but rather is the cause of the ax's role in felling it.²⁵ Thus, neither the proximate nor ultimate (nor, *a fortiori*, any intermediate) causes on the side of the object of the will's act are opposed to the will's freedom of specification.

The next two senses in which the will is moved concern the exercise of the will's act. In a third sense, the will moves itself, from willing the end, to inclining toward the means. (The precise form of the will's inclination toward the means can vary: from consent, to choice, to use.) We touched on the way in which the will moves itself when considering the various sorts of control the will exercises; here we need to focus on the moved side of the will's relationship to itself. The will is moved in virtue of its inclination toward the end to choose the means: it is in virtue of my willing to be healthy, a state of affairs apprehended as a universal, that I choose to take the medicine I apprehend as productive of health (and finally see as this particular tablet: action concerns particulars.) But the intellect can apprehend various means to the same end, or apprehend a given means as useful for one end though useless for or even impeding others, i.e., as not suitable. Therefore, even while willing the end, the will is under no necessity to move itself to choose an apprehended means.

The reduction from willing the end to willing the means takes place only insofar as the means is considered as suitable to the end. But that act of consideration can itself be apprehended by the intellect as good, or as not, and the will can accordingly incline or not incline toward that apprehended act of consideration, moving the intellect to continue that consideration or to cease from doing so. Thus, the will has control over whether or not it will reduce itself from willing an end to willing a certain means, even given the apprehension of that means as suitable²⁶; this control is freedom of exercise.

The fourth dimension of the will's being moved is related to the third as the second was to the first: In creating the will with the nature that it has and in sustaining that nature in existence, God moves the will to the universal good, that is, in accord with its nature.²⁷ St. Thomas' reasoning runs as follows: since no particular end has been perpetually actually willed by any given human will, the will must have come to will that end. But if the will had moved itself to will that end, that end would have had to have functioned also as a means to some further end: moving itself from willing the end to willing the means is the only kind of self-movement St. Thomas allows for the will, for nothing can reduce itself from potency to act in the same respect. If the will moved itself to will the end, deliberation would have had to have taken place for the will to move itself, from willing some further end to willing what with respect to that act of will is the means, and with respect to our original act is the end. No infinite regress of deliberation is possible, though, and so at some point the will must be moved--in the order of exercise, and not only of specification--by something else.²⁸ That something else must be God, Who alone is capable of moving the will by sustaining it in existence with an active inclination toward its natural object, which is the universal good, the good-in-general.²⁹ Since God's movement of the will in this fourth sense is toward whatever is good, the will's act of choice is not necessitated by this divine motion, any more than by the divine control over the objects of the intellect's apprehension, the second sense.³⁰ Nor does God's moving the will to the universal good obviate the will's control over whether it moves itself from willing the end to willing the means, for it does not destroy the intellect's ability to apprehend its own acts of apprehending either a given end or any given means to that end, and these acts can be apprehended as other than good and suitable. So neither the proximate nor highest (the only) causes moving the will to the exercise of its act are opposed to the will's freedom of exercise.

The fifth and final sense in which the will is moved by another is not only distinct but also different from the others, since those four all apply to every conceivable act of the will. St. Thomas thought, however, that sometimes³¹ God moves the will beyond His control on the side of the object through the Providential arrangement of the causes of apprehension (sense two), and on the side of the exercise of the act by sustaining the will in existence with an inclination toward whatever is apprehended as good (sense four). God also moves the will (in the fifth sense) by bestowing upon it a higher power than it has from its own nature³²; that power is grace, a participation in God's nature.³³ Grace is not always present in every human will: the will is capable of acting to achieve the goods within the reach of its natural powers--to toil in fields, to take nourishment, and to have friends, for example³⁴--without grace in this sense. But to achieve goods which exceed their natural capacity--to inherit eternal life, say--human beings require the help of a higher force.

This higher power--present in the soul as a habit³⁵--is to the soul as form is to matter, and all matter must be properly disposed to receive any form. But were this proper disposition itself the work of a higher power present in the soul, a new proper disposition would be required for the second higher power to effect disposition toward the first. The impending regress is avoidable; no higher power need be present in the soul to properly dispose the soul to receive grace.³⁶ Still, divine help is needed to properly prepare to receive this higher power as habitual grace. God effects proper disposition in the soul in two ways: by moving its act immediately toward the highest good, and toward proximate goods through subordinate movers.³⁷ This divine assistance is the kind of help every creature needs to achieve its good³⁸; it is the same two-fold help which rational creatures need to know those truths or achieve those goods which require only their natural powers³⁹: this divine assistance is providence, the second and fourth senses (above) in

which God moves the will, insofar as ordered to the higher end of creaturely participation in the divine nature.⁴⁰

Thus the proper disposition toward grace is the effect of providence insofar as God directs men to Himself as to a special end.⁴¹ God creates and conserves beings, places them in a causal nexus, and thereby creates disposing conditions for his operating immediately with and through the lives of free creatures to whose natures he conjoins his own. Aquinas compares the reception of this higher power to illumination by a divine light, who is God himself.⁴² In the *De Malo* Aquinas asserts that the divine light is everywhere accessible to beings insofar as they are properly prepared to receive it:

God as He is in Himself communicates Himself to all according to their capacity; hence if a thing has some deficiency in the participation of this goodness, this is because there is to be found in the thing itself some impediment to this divine participation. In this way, then, if some grace is not given, the cause is not from God, but from this, that the man himself, to whom the grace is given, presents an impediment to grace, in as much as he turns away from a light which does not itself turn away. . . .⁴³

So grace is always present *to* the will, but not always present *in* or operating *through* the will.

God's moving the will to prepare for grace is compatible with human freedom, since providence does not destroy the contingency of effects, and specifically not the freedom of human choice, as shown above in the discussions of the second and fourth senses in which the will is moved. Neither does the higher power, once present as habitual grace in the properly disposed soul, obviate free choice. Its effect is the proper ordering (justification) of the soul consisting of an inclination of the will toward God and away

from sin, enabling the will to freely choose in ways which merit eternal life. Neither God's motion to justice nor to merit takes place without a movement of the created will.⁴⁴ Thus neither God's movement of the will to prepare the soul for grace (in senses two and four considered as ordered toward participation in the divine nature), nor His movement of the soul in virtue of its participation in his divine nature (sense five) diminishes the capacities of the intellect and the will, nor thus the freedom of the will's acts.

These are the causes of the will's acts. None of them remove the radical proximate contingency of the will. More specifically, none of them remove the intellect's capacity to apprehend finite goods, including those goods which are its own acts and the acts of the will, as limited goods and hence as not good in some respect. Hence none of these causes removes the will's control over the practical judgments of the intellect; *liberum arbitrium* is preserved through the operation of these causes. So in answer to our inquiry about the extent of the will's control over the judgment of the intellect and thus over its own acts, we may reply that the will retains control over whether and to what it is moved given any of these causes of its acts.

But included in these five senses in which the will is moved are all the causes of the will's act; beyond these, there is nothing with respect to which the will stands in potency. Thus both whether the will chooses any particular object, and how the will chooses it, follow determinately from the exercise of the causality of the first cause, God himself. Hence any particular act of the will "may fall outside the order of any particular active cause, but not outside the order of the universal cause, under which all particular causes are included."⁴⁵ This order of universal causality is the order of providence. God's providential control over the acts of the will is certain; all its effects--including the free choices of rational creatures--follow inevitably. Thus the control which the will has over

its own acts is control from a certain point of view, a conditioned control: the will has control over its own acts, those of the intellect, and over some of the causes of these acts, from perspectives embracing fewer than all the orders of created causes acting on the intellect and will. But the created will does not have control over the order embracing all the causes with respect to which it stands in potency; it does not have control over the order of providence.

Causation without necessitation.

Let us summarize the nature of freedom associated with this conditioned control. According to the interpretation presented, the will may be moved by any object it apprehends as good--which is to say, by any object which when apprehended may move the will--as by a sufficient cause.⁴⁶ Such apprehended objects are sufficient in St. Thomas's sense: when the cause is posited, the effect follows always, unless some obstacle impedes the cause.⁴⁷ Many things can impede the will's being moved by a rationally apprehended good, and the will itself is among these. Because of the indefinitely deep capacity of the intellect to abstract and reflect, the intellect can apprehend any created object, including its own acts and those of the will, as good, or as not. Thus, even when the intellect apprehends an object which is sufficient to move the will, the will can impede that movement. Because the intellect can apprehend its own acts, the will can move the intellect to consider that sufficient cause of the will's movement as lacking in being in some respect. So considered, that object which is sufficient to move the will under some considerations will not in fact move the will. The cause impeding the sufficient causality of that apprehended object is the will itself, having moved the intellect to consider that sufficient cause differently. So the will has control over which apprehended objects it will incline toward: this is freedom of specification. Nor need the will act even toward an object which is being considered as

good--this is freedom of exercise--since the intellect can apprehend many other goods whose pursuit entails cessation of its act of consideration of such an object, thus moving the will to move the intellect to cease consideration of that object.⁴⁸ This wondrous depth of the intellect's capacities for abstraction and reflection is the ground of the substantial control which free creatures can exercise over their own lives.

Yet the will can move the intellect toward or away from any particular apprehended object only in response to some additional act of apprehension.⁴⁹ This additional act of apprehension is either moved by the will (commanded), or not. If by the will, then the will is being moved by the intellect's judgment of that additional act of apprehension as good. This deliberative chain must ultimately terminate in acts of apprehension which are not commanded by the will. The causes involved in the production of any such chain, however complex, must extend beyond the will, if we are to understand the will as the rational appetite, the faculty of response to rational apprehension.⁵⁰

On this view, the sum of the causal influences on the faculty of rational apprehension which are causally prior to any act of the created will are sufficient causal conditions for bringing about that particular act of the will.⁵¹ Given the placement of such a full set of causal antecedents, it is impossible for the will to exercise its very real causal power over its own acts and those of the intellect otherwise than it in fact does, for there is no element of potency left in the will which is not being determinately moved to act. Acts of the created will--as do all creaturely acts--follow inevitably from the placement of the full range of causes in the order of universal causality, the order of providence. That inevitability seems, on the face of it, to imply necessitation of the sort we have already seen Aquinas reject as incompatible with free will; here lies the apparent inconsistency between Aquinas' accounts of created freedom and causally certain providence.

That apparent tension in Aquinas' thought dissolves, in part, once we grasp his account of the modality of created effects. On Aquinas' understanding of causation and modality, effects are called necessary precisely when they are the proper effects of *per se* causes which cannot be impeded in the production of their proper effects; contingent effects are those brought about through the operation of *per se* causes which can fail in the production of their proper effects. In order to fail, a contingent cause must be impeded by some cause from another independent causal order. The conjunction of such independent causal orders is an accidental union. This union, insofar as it is not the proper effect of some higher *per se* cause, has no higher cause: "accidental being has no cause and is not generated."⁵² What follows from the accidental intersection of causal orders is determined *ad unum* through the placement of those causal orders, even while is not necessitated (i.e., produced by an unimpedible *per se* cause) by such placement.

Some conjunctions have a certain unity, a certain being, such as intentional unions (like a meeting of servants in the market, planned by the master who sent them) or natural ones (like a family.)⁵³ Insofar as there is an intentional ordering of the otherwise accidentally ordered causes of an event, then *from the point of view of the orderer* (the master, or God) the event is not a product of chance, but of causation. Divine providence orders all events insofar as they have being and act; accordingly, Aquinas held that considered as falling under the order of Providence--the only higher cause governing the conjunction of all of the causes of the will's acts--all created effects are found to be necessary.⁵⁴ Yet effects are called necessary or contingent after their proximate causes, not their higher causes.⁵⁵ And so God determines not only which effects occur, but also their modality (contingent, or necessary) in assigning to some effects causes which can, and others causes which cannot fail in the production of their proper effects.⁵⁶

From the point of view of providence, the effects of causes which can be impeded follow no less inevitably than the effects of causes which cannot be:

Although contingent causes left to themselves can fail to produce an effect, the wisdom of the divine economy brings it about that the effect will inevitably follow when certain supplementary measures are employed, which do not take away the contingency of that effect. Evidently, therefore, contingency in things does not exclude the certainty of divine providence.⁵⁷

The contingency of effects produced through *liberum arbitrium* is accounted for explicitly in terms of this same model of the modality of created effects. For predestination, that part of providence through which God secures merit and glory for those He has chosen, produces its effects inevitably, but imposes no necessity because it does not destroy the contingency of the proximate cause, *liberum arbitrium*.⁵⁸ Aquinas had only just explicitly discussed creaturely freedom when he asserted that "the effect of every cause is found to be necessary insofar as it comes under the control of Providence."⁵⁹

So on Aquinas' account of the modality of created effects, no assemblage of causal orders which is sufficient for determining a given effect *ad unum* destroys the contingency of that effect unless that assemblage includes the unimpedible *per se* cause of that effect, or unless that assemblage itself has a kind of unity. But the will is not an unimpedible *per se* cause. Nor is fate, considered in itself apart from providence, a unified order; it is an accidental assemblage of independent causal orders.⁶⁰ So the acts of the intellect and will would retain their contingency, were they subject to fate, on the same grounds as do any accidental effects in nature.

But the intellect and the will are not subject to fate in the way the acts of nonrational beings are. Acts of the intellect and will are at a further remove from necessitation than are the acts of nonrational animals. That the sheep sees a bolt of lightning is accidental, but that having seen it the sheep flees, is not. Human beings are not led by natural instinct to their actions, as are other animals whose powers are affixed to corporeal organs.⁶¹ When a man sees and fears, he might well remember and decide not to flee. Human memory and human acquired habit bring the experiences of the past to the present, impacting the way a human being will respond to the placement of even a full set of accidentally ordered present circumstances. Of course, nonrational animals also learn from experience, naturally or in response to training. But none of them notice that they so learn, nor participate actively in coming to learn. So human beings have control over the first principles of their own reactions in any full set of present causal circumstances. They thus exhibit a degree of independence from natural causal circumstances which nonrational beings do not. Present circumstances do not determine human acts. And the full sum of causal antecedents to choice, linked together--abstracting from the order of providence--only in their impact on the human memory and will, are an accidental union neither having nor constituting a *per se* cause, for “what does not exist together cannot be the cause of anything.”⁶²

Thus acts of human intellect and will, though determined by the placement of a full set of causal antecedents to choice, are contingent effects; they are products of accidentally ordered unions of causes. Their claim to contingency in this sense is based upon no special property of free creatures; the blooming of a flower is contingent in this same sense. But the blooming follows inevitably from the specification of a relatively narrow range of causal circumstances. The inevitability of acts of nonrational animals follows from a somewhat broader set; that of acts of animals which can learn from experience,

from a set broader still. The inevitability of acts of the human intellect and will follow from the most broad range of causal antecedents: anything we rationally apprehend (past or present) can impact the acts of these powers. This range of causal antecedents which must be placed in order to produce a determinate act of the intellect or will is larger than the mind of an individual human being can altogether grasp.⁶³ So human beings experience independence from any measure of the causal antecedents to choice which they can comprehend.

This independence--this ground of compatibilist freedom--is real, but it is not the whole causal story. We can reason to the existence of a full set of causal antecedents to choice, which is the universal order of causality. Should that order be comprehended and intentionally placed (by an intellect and will which must be far greater than our own), that intelligent agent would be a necessary *per se* cause of all the effects of that order.

Aquinas reasoned to the existence of such an order, the order of providence, which is an order precisely because it is intentionally placed by such an Orderer. In placing just the order He does, God at once causally determines each created effect and assures the contingency of those effects which follow inevitably from however complex an assembly of independent causal orders--an assembly accidental in every respect save from the point of view of providence--that suffices to produce them. In just this way, God determines the acts of free creatures without necessitating them; ours is a compatibilist freedom.

Compatibilist Freedom?

Thus part of the apparent tension between Aquinas' accounts of freedom and providence dissolves, once we see that his account of the modality of created effects enables a rejection of necessitation of acts which follow inevitably on placement of the full order of

providence. It remains open to the libertarian interpreter, however, to insist that the sort of freedom which escapes necessitation only in *that* sense is no real freedom at all.

To those to whom it seems that divine determination rules out the possibility of real creaturely freedom, the compatibility of such Providence with the causal efficacy of intercessory prayer is likely to fare no less well. For if God, prior (in nature, if not in time) to taking account of any actions of created beings, determines exactly, efficaciously, and unchangeably which events will occur and which will not, what could be the use asking Him to do anything, at all? St. Thomas affirmed both the efficacy of prayer and the immutability of Providence, however:

It is apparent, then, from the foregoing that the cause of some things that are done by God is prayers and holy desires. But we showed above that divine Providence does not exclude other causes; rather, it orders them so that the order which Providence has determined within itself may be imposed on things. And thus, secondary causes are not incompatible with Providence; instead, they carry out the effect of Providence. In this way, then, prayers are efficacious before God, yet they do not destroy the immutable order of divine Providence, because this individual request that is granted to a certain petitioner falls under the order of divine Providence. So, it is the same thing to say that we should not pray in order to obtain something from God, because the order of His Providence is immutable, as to say that we should not walk in order to get to a place, or eat in order to be nourished; all of which are clearly absurd.⁶⁴

Few among the many physical determinists in the world have taken the determinism of the whole physical order to cast doubt on the efficacy of attempts to walk, or eat; that

would be absurd, in the way St. Thomas meant. But prayer is asking God to do something different than would otherwise happen, and many are intimidated away from Prayer by the thought that all events are determined by the order of Divine Providence. While the absurdity of such a position seems less clear, the mistake is no less real, according to Aquinas:

Now, if a person carefully considers these statements, he will find that every error that occurs on these points arises from the fact that thought is not given to the difference between universal and particular order. For, since all effects are mutually ordered, in the sense that they come together in one cause, it must be that, the more universal the cause is, the more general is the order. Hence, the order stemming from the universal cause which is God must embrace all things. So, nothing prevents some particular order from being changed, either by prayer, or by some other means, for there is something outside that order which could change it. . . .

But, outside the order that embraces all things, it is not possible for anything to be indicated by means of which the order depending on a universal cause might be changed. That is why the Stoics, who considered the reduction of the order of things to God to be to a universal cause of all things, claimed that the order established by God could not be changed for any reason. But again on this point, they departed from the consideration of a universal order, because they claimed that prayers were of no use, as if they thought that the wills of men and their desires, from which prayers arise, are not included under that universal order. For, when they say that, whether prayers are offered or not, in any case the same effect in things follows from the universal order of things, they clearly isolate from that

universal order the wishes of those who pray. For, if these prayers be included under that order, then certain effects will result by divine ordination by means of these prayers, just as they do by means of other causes. . . Therefore, prayers retain their power; not that they can change the order of eternal control, but rather as they themselves exist under such order.⁶⁵

Aquinas included free choice under precisely the same solution as he did intercessory prayer.⁶⁶ The solution which he spells out explicitly regarding the efficacy of prayer is the same general solution he offers for the modality of all created effects: that God determines not only which effects will occur, but also their modality. For all effects occur necessarily, from the point of view of providence, and necessarily with the modality God intended them to derive from their proximate causes.

Even those with libertarian intuitions about human freedom can imagine, now, that God *had* created a world inhabited by creatures with the rational and appetitive faculties I described above, under the compatibilist interpretation. Surely Divine Providence would no more rule out the efficacy of those creatures' deliberations, in such a world, than it would the efficacy of prayer in our own. That imaginary world would contain pretty impressive rational creatures, but without libertarian freedom, and in their deliberations and choices they would exercise substantial control over their own lives. Their wills would be open to opposite courses of action and they would exercise control over their own apprehendings and choosings, insofar as they can comprehend the proximate causes of these states. Considered, however, from the perspective of that order embracing all created and uncreated causal influences with respect to which the created intellect and will stand in potency--i. e., considered under the order of Providence--the acts of their intellects and wills would be determined *ad unum*, since there is nothing outside that

highest order with respect to which they stand in potency. As I read St. Thomas, ours is a world inhabited by rational creatures operating in such a causal order. His was a compatibilist account of creaturely freedom.

Hence the tension between causal determination and human freedom can be avoided; on the compatibilist model, it is only determination at proximate causal levels which must be rejected, and this can be done without rejecting determinism *simpliciter*. The compatibilist model leaves human beings with exactly the measure of independence from proximate causal orders which reflection on human experience reveals, a measure of independence which elicits ever more wonder as that reflection deepens. But that independence from proximate causal orders, freedom from necessity in that sense, in no way implies independence from the entire order of created causality. There is scarcely a trace of evidence to the contrary to be found in the writings of Aquinas, and plenty of evidence on behalf of this thesis of causal dependence.⁶⁷

To interpreters who sympathetically grasp only libertarian intuitions concerning freedom, or who are captivated by the agenda of others who grasp only such intuitions, freedom from necessity of the sort which follows from this compatibilist analysis will seem plainly insufficient to preserve freedom; worse, it seems irrelevant. For libertarians, causal determinism of any sort, even of the suave Bañezian variety allowed by Garrigou-Lagrange and others, does not merely weaken freedom; it destroys it entirely.⁶⁸ Rather than ascribe to Aquinas--and Augustine, too⁶⁹--what seems to them to be such a significant mistake, interpreters with libertarian sympathies comb the texts of Aquinas to find resources for resolving a tension which was never present in his thought.

Predictably, the pickings are slim. There is little support in the texts for Maritain's discovery of separate metaphysical line of nonbeing. There is little support for

Lonergan's claim that Aquinas' thought in his later writings underwent a profound change away from "momentary aberration(s)" in the *De Veritate*, the *De Potentia*, and in the *Prima Pars* in which Thomas asserted that freedom from coercion makes necessary acts free. There is little support for the traditional Thomist view that the will stands causally aloof from the entire sum of natural causal antecedents to choice. Bringing a compatibilist intuition about freedom to the texts of Aquinas enables them to be taken as a whole, meeting the criterion which Aristotle laid out for wholeness in the *Poetics*: its parts "so closely connected that the withdrawal of any one of them will disjoin and dislocate the whole. For that which makes no perceptible difference by its absence is no real part of the whole."⁷⁰ Libertarian readings require resources to extirpate created freedom from a deterministic causal order, resources not found in the texts; thus they treat the thought these texts embody as disjointed, as less than whole. But throughout his writings Aquinas did not seem to notice his omission of what to libertarians seems the obvious.

Yet there is a coherence in Aquinas' writing on freedom which emerges once the texts are read through a compatibilist lens. If one gives up the search for libertarian freedom, one finds in the texts of Aquinas a rich compatibilist analysis--presented above only in overview--of the psychology of human deliberation and freedom of choice. That analysis, for all its richness, has been overlooked by libertarian interpreters of Aquinas since it implies that human beings operate entirely in a deterministic causal order. Some of the reason, at least, for rejecting determinism and thus compatibilist analyses of freedom lies in what are feared to be its unseemly implications for the problem of evil.⁷¹ If only in a preliminary way, then, we must turn the compatibilist lens toward the heavens, considering the entire order of creation and the salvation of free creatures within that order. It will turn out, I think, that the prospects for compatibilism are considerably brighter than libertarians have supposed.

II. The role of the free creature in the plan of providence.

To adequately consider the plan of providence insofar as it is ordered to the final outcome of the lives of free creatures, it is necessary first to consider their origin. Why are there free creatures, anyway? This question seems especially pressing insofar as free creatures are part of the same causal order as the rest of creation; if free creatures have some special status or worth on the compatibilist model, it is not in virtue of any degree of ultimate independence of their will from that causal order. Yet we can see from the compatibilist perspective a coherent account of the high purpose of free creatures in the plan of providence. A first look at the heavens through the compatibilist lens will not result in the careful collection of data through which initial observations are confirmed and analyzed; it is necessary to begin by getting a broad view. And while it is right to recognize that even the most careful efforts will produce tentative and only partial results, the grandeur of the objects of this inquiry should not deter us from asking the difficult questions which will drive our inquiry as far as it might profitably go. We will need to inquire into the end of God's creative activity, and into the means by which He directs the created order toward that end.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Why? Aquinas' answer is to reflect God's glory, to make His nature manifest. In order to accomplish that end, God the first cause of all else confers the dignity of causality to created effects: providence operates *through* created causes to manifest His wisdom, His power, and His love. To manifest His wisdom, He created creatures capable of achieving a measure of wisdom, rational creatures, who immediately on account of their rationality partake in a measure of God's freedom. In the real causal power communicated to free and all creatures, God makes manifest His own power. By His participating in the nature of rational and free

creatures--first, though the Incarnation--He invites them to participate in the divine nature, sharing His own divine life with them in a manifestation of His love.

It is of the nature of wisdom to order, and thus God in His wisdom orders all created effects by operating through rational creatures in their wisdom. Since God has chosen to direct created effects through rational intermediaries, it is only insofar as God directs the activity of rational creatures that He directs the activities of the rest of the created order--on this point, Aquinas insists:

All corporal beings are governed through spiritual beings But spiritual beings act on the corporal through the will. Therefore, if choices and movements of the wills of intellectual substances do not belong to God's providence, it follows that even corporal beings are withdrawn from His providence. And thus there will be no providence at all.⁷²

Thus questions of the manner and the extent to which God directs the free activities of rational creatures are central to understanding the manner and the extent of His direction of the whole created order. Let us consider first the manner, and then the extent.

To grasp the manner in which God operates in created effects, it will be necessary to recall first the general account of divine operation in created effects, and then--both to show that the general account is complete, and to focus on God's operation in free creatures in particular--the dimension of divine operation which is specific to His interaction with free creatures: His ordering them toward participation in His own life.

God operates in all effects in the following manner: He gives all created beings the natures, and thus the causal powers they have from the first moment of their existence

and at every moment thereafter. God has created and conserves these beings in the context of a complex dynamic network of causal orders; placement in that network determines the causal conditions in which the causal powers of each being will be moved to act and in turn move other beings to act. Placing them in this dynamic set of causal relations constitutes applying them to act, in the Aristotelian, not Bañezian sense⁷³: this placement of the causal conditions sufficient to move each creature to determinate exercise of its causal powers occurs temporally prior to its coming to act; and that placement may involve a change in the being whose causal powers will be activated, or in the being who will be acted upon. In bringing into existence this dynamic causal order God intends a set of proximate and ultimate ends, and He operates in the actions of all creatures who are thus instruments through which and through whom God accomplishes whatever He intends.

Yet the order God established in creation is knowable to us only to an extent; God intends to bring about effects in creation whose nature and causal requirements outstrip the ability of our intellect to comprehend them.⁷⁴ Central among these higher intentions is God's plan to enter his creation and dwell therein through cooperation with free creatures who have been disposed as matter for participation in the divine nature. The order in created effects insofar as intended to accomplish these higher purposes is the order of grace.

What are to us two orders--the one we can comprehend in principle, and the one we cannot--are a single order in themselves (i.e., to God), and through that single order God operates to accomplish his ultimate intention and proximate intentions, the whole plan of providence. God works in and through the activity of the whole created order, much as a general who commands a flagman to signal the start of a planned invasion works in and through the flagman as an instrument. The flagman has the power to start the invasion, a

power of which he may or may not be aware. That power is present in him nonetheless, in virtue of his being situated in an order of properly disposed causes, the extent and the efficacy of which he cannot know, but only suppose. The general, more so than the flagman, signals the invasion when the latter acts as instructed. And at a higher level still than the general's ordering of causes is the whole plan of providence, which God alone can fully understand and intend. God's intention to implement the order of providence works through the flagman more surely than the general's intention: since God's order extends to all contingencies, the divine plan is executed in the flagman with certainty, whereas the general's plan may fail.

The flagman is thus an instrument of God, even more so but in the same way in which he is an instrument of the general. Suppose for a moment that both the readiness to obey orders which his training produced and his subsequent faithfulness in executing those orders were arranged by God in the flagman for salvific purposes and were transformed in the flagman by the presence of a genuine love for God. In such a case, the flagman's readiness and faithfulness in execution would be (roughly speaking) grace in the flagman.⁷⁵ (Both would be something like habitual grace, operative in the training which imparted the habit, cooperative in the steadfastness with which he acted as trained.) The instruction of the general to signal *now* would be actual operative grace: not a habit, but an operation ordered to a salvific end. The flagman's intention to signal at the right moment would be an effect which could be produced in him by God only through the flagman's will: this is cooperative actual grace. All these would be effects in the flagman ordered to God's salvific purpose, just as analogous effects in the flagman--including a readiness to obey for love of country, say--might be ordered by a single general for the accomplishment of his own purposes. The flagman would be both an instrument of the general and an instrument of God: powers ordered by the general toward the lower end of victory, and by God to the higher end of salvation, would both be

present in the flagman. The former power is a natural power; the latter flows from grace, and is thus a supernatural power. This notion of supernature adds to the notion of nature--to the idea of beings with causal powers flowing from their natures situated in a complex and dynamic causal order--no new thing other than the notion of an end whose nature and causal requirements surpass in principle our ability to fully comprehend and thus to effect them.

There is an elegant simplicity to Aquinas' account of providence and grace, nature and supernature which was lost to the tradition of interpretation which succeeded him. This account--my repackaging of Lonergan's reading, if I understand his--adds no new motions to those we observe, as did the tradition of Bañezian premotion, but only a new frame of reference for what is already familiar to us.⁷⁶ The accompanying account of grace is a special case of the general theory of universal instrumentality;⁷⁷ the very same causal order involved in ordinary providence receives a new level of being which is precisely the presence of an intention coordinating ordinary causal powers to higher ends, as the power of the general's intention is present in the properly situated flagman.⁷⁸ This (Lonergan's) alternative to the traditional Bañezian account of application⁷⁹ poses a challenge to the interpretations of the standard Thomist positions as well as to that of Maritain. In what follows I will presume (as I did in the discussion of the nature the will and its freedom, above) that Lonergan's account is essentially correct. I will not pause to consider the prospects for adjustment of standard Thomistic or Maritain's accounts in light of Lonergan's unseating of their approach to the manner in which God directs the created order.⁸⁰ Instead, let us consider differences which can arise concerning the extent of that direction, given the manner of that direction described just above.

Given this account of providence on which God directs the activity of lower effects through rational intermediaries, the central interpretive question regarding the extent of

God's direction of created effects is this: does the complete set of circumstances, including whatever proper disposition toward participation in the divine nature God has ordered those circumstances to produce, fully determine the activity of free creatures⁸¹? Interpreters with libertarian intuitions about created freedom will insist that the act of the will remains undetermined even given the placement of that complete set of causal antecedents. Plainly Lonergan himself falls in this category: according to him, "God exercises control [over the will's acts] through the created antecedents . . . but that is not . . . infallible . . ." ⁸²

The interpretive difficulties which face this libertarian rejection of divine determinism are formidable. First, divine providence seems weakened, since God is left to work with whatever cooperation free creatures are willing to give Him. Second, either a) God's knowledge is not the cause of each thing known (when joined to His will), since He must conform His intellect to objects whose form He does not entirely determine⁸³, or b) He does not know a great deal of what occurs in His creation. Third, the cause of the distinction between creatures who cooperate with God and those who do not lies in the creatures themselves, on libertarian views. But St. Thomas ascribes the distinction to predestination, which involves

the choice by which he who is directed to the end infallibly is separated from others who are not ordained to it in the same manner. This separation, however, is not on account of any difference found in the predestined . . . ⁸⁴

These difficulties are well known in Thomist interpretive tradition, and need not be treated in depth here.⁸⁵ But mentioning them here serves to highlight the clarity,

simplicity, and close fit with the Thomistic texts of the fully deterministic model which the lens of compatibilist freedom brings sharply into focus.

Thomists have traditionally recognized that on Aquinas' account God determines all created effects, but they secured that determination through an account of application which Lonergan has unseated. Thus there is a void in the interpretive conversation, one which the compatibilist reading can fill. Aquinas held that God determines created effects through created intermediaries.⁸⁶ Since free creatures are included among (and indeed at the apex of) those intermediaries, God determinately directs the acts of free creatures (especially). Since the acts of free creatures are themselves created effects, God must direct those free acts through the placement of the full order of the causal antecedents to those free acts (detailed in the first part of this essay); beyond this full set of causal antecedents, there is nothing with respect to which the created will stands in potency. That the created will both determines and is determined is characteristic of all causal interaction in the created order. But the created will, at the apex of the order of causal intermediaries, determines much, and is itself determined only by so complex a set of causal arrangements that only divine intention makes their coincidence other than fortuitous. Here is an orderly account of the causal certitude of providence which embraces the elegant simplicity of Lonergan's reading of Aquinas' account of God's operation in created effects (consisting of creation, conservation, application, and instrumentality) while preserving the divine determinism which traditional interpreters have recognized. Of course, this simple and orderly account can be embraced only at the cost of libertarian freedom. But creaturely freedom is not an expendable part of the Thomistic system. Thus it is the compatibilist conception of freedom which enables this simple and deterministic account of providence to be seriously entertained, explored, and sharpened.

In the first part of this essay I gave an overview of that compatibilist conception of freedom, an account of human action situating the deliberation and choice of rational creatures in a deterministic causal order, an account which stays near to the texts of St. Thomas. And in this second section, we have had a quick look at how creatures with compatibilist freedom function in the order of causally certain providence. But those who would reject a compatibilist reading of Aquinas out of hand are most likely to do so not on account of its lack of support in what Aquinas wrote about human action, or for any alleged inability of a compatibilist account to secure the causal certitude of providence. Rather, concerns about compatibilist freedom center on what a deterministic order seems to imply about the goodness of God. But it turns out that safeguarding the doctrine of divine goodness seems a principle strength, and no weakness, of a compatibilist reading of Aquinas on freedom and providence. Let us turn, finally, to explore God's permission of sin from a compatibilist perspective.

III. The permission of sin and ultimate failure in free creatures.

To those inclined toward a libertarian conception of freedom, determinism seems repugnant to the goodness of God, since it seems opposed to the freedom and dignity of rational creatures. But as an interpretation of Aquinas, the determinist/compatibilist reading seems to secure the goodness of God better than traditional Thomist and more fully libertarian readings. For their attempts to graft libertarian intuitions into Aquinas' account of the permission of sin have rendered his account incoherent.

A coherent account of God's permission of evil must include the specification of a state of affairs the existence of which constitutes a *greater good* than would the nonexistence of all the evil which actually exists, and it must include an account of why the permission of all that evil is *necessary* for that greater good to obtain. Traditional Thomistic

accounts, cast as they are in terms of Bañezian premotion, fail to specify a state of affairs which cannot be achieved without the permission of sin. Libertarians can point to a state of affairs--the existence of creatures with libertarian freedom--which indeed cannot be achieved without the permission of sin, but to make that account sound like one Aquinas might have held, the language used to describe it must be misshapen to the point where coherence is lost. (There may be coherent alternatives to Aquinas' position, but they are not included among the legitimate readings of Aquinas' position.) But the compatibilist reading can provide a state of affairs which quite plausibly cannot be achieved without permission of sin, and it can describe this state of affairs without importing concepts which Aquinas did not himself employ. Again, while this material deserves fuller treatment, the aim here is to employ the compatibilist lens for a preliminary set of observations. But prior to taking up that perspective, let us first take a brief look at the troubles afflicting traditional Thomist and more fully libertarian readings to remind ourselves of the view without the compatibilist optic, that the differences between libertarian and compatibilist perspectives may stand out more sharply.

Put plainly, traditional Thomists have been unable to clearly specify a state of affairs which cannot be obtained without the permission of sin.⁸⁷ They talk about God's maintaining an order of justice, but with all libertarians they insist that the placement of all causal antecedents to choice in the order of nature--the only order of which we have any clear idea--is compatible both with the occurrence and nonoccurrence of sin. Justice involves the preservation of order⁸⁸: exactly what sort of order is preserved when God gives less help than he might without violating the natural order to free creatures who are failing? Why would God demonstrate the possibility and consequences of failure? What is He showing to whom? Such an order of justice seems "obscurissima"⁸⁹ at best; "an insult to the absolute innocence of God"⁹⁰, at worst.

Maritain, Lonergan, and other full-blown libertarians can extricate the doctrine of divine goodness from this morass. God cannot determine the free acts of creatures; the nature of freedom, as libertarians conceive of it, logically precludes determination of any sort. The very existence of free creatures is thus the greater good for which the permission of sin is logically necessary. This may be a very sensible thing to think about God and freedom, but as an interpretation of Aquinas--concerning what he actually held, not what he should have held--it faces severe difficulty. Some of that difficulty was mentioned in the previous section: the resulting notion of providence is weakened; Aquinas' account of God's knowledge is rendered incomplete; the distinction between the righteous and the reprobate is rooted in the free creatures themselves.

Especially regarding this last point, the difference in impressions one gets from reading the texts of Aquinas and those of his libertarian interpreters is striking. It seems that Aquinas is bent on denying the very heart of the position his interpreters are striving so desperately to preserve. In fact, the more careful and precise Aquinas' treatment, the worse he sounds to libertarian ears.⁹¹ Accordingly, Maritain sought to preserve the language of Aquinas to the fullest extent possible. It is only in the line of nonbeing, about which Aquinas virtually never wrote⁹², that free creatures have the first initiative; in the line of being and act, God is the first and full cause of all that is good, of being and act, in the creature. If the creature cooperates with grace (conceived of in Bañezian terms), that cooperation is an act moved by God, and to God goes all the credit. If the creature resists (not actually resists--that would be an act--but rather nihilates, impedes God's grace by a free initiative in the line of nonbeing), the creature alone is the cause.

Perhaps there is nothing incoherent in the idea of a causal order which is not fully deterministic. There is no contradiction, perhaps, even in the notion of a two-tiered metaphysic, with free creatures being first causes only of a strange sort, having in virtue

of their freedom only the capacity (even if because of its limited domain we refuse to call it a power or an ability) to negate causal influence, whether from grace or from nature. What is incoherent is ascribing this nihilating initiative to the creature, while ascribing all to God and nothing to the creature when the creature refrains from nihilating.⁹³ One cannot refrain from doing nothing, perhaps. But as nihilating gets close enough to doing nothing so as to warrant ascribing everything in cooperative activity to God, just so close does nihilating come to a simple failure to be moved.⁹⁴ But insofar as nihilating is doing something, refraining from nihilating also seems to be doing something. One cannot have power over only one of a pair of contrary alternatives; if nihilating is in the creature's power in any sense of power, then not nihilating is also in the creature's power in that same sense of power. In its attempt to graft a libertarian notion of freedom onto the Thomistic account of God as the first and full cause of all that is of being and goodness, Maritain's account has so twisted the Thomistic conception of moral evil as to render what is in some respect incomprehensible, instead incoherent.

So neither traditional Thomist nor more fully libertarian readings of Aquinas can employ Aquinas' own concepts to give a coherent account of a sufficiently greater state of affairs for the sake of whose attainment the permission of sin is necessary. But the compatibilist account can.

The existence of a complex causal order entailing a series of interactions of finite creatures on whom has been bestowed the dignity of causality and through the interactions of whom the entire order is brought into wondrous order and wholeness: the existence of such an

order requires that some of these creatures fail. For “. . . the large number and variety of causes stem from the order of divine providence and control. But granted this variety of causes, one of them must at times run into another cause and be impeded”⁹⁵ Aquinas asserted that it is contrary to the rational character of the divine regime to refuse permission for created things to act in accord with their nature. A consequence of their acting in accord with their nature will be that they impede one another at times, due to the incompatibility of the proximate ends to which they are directed (the lion to eat, the lamb to continue in existence, for example.) Hence corruption and evil result inevitably from the placement of such an order.⁹⁶

When the strong who eats the weak is a human being who has not yet properly interacted with a culture sufficient to produce in him a lasting recognition that weaker human beings deserve special care and not special targeting, the evil which results is moral evil. This and every other sort of evil which results--indeed, every instance of evil which results in the playing out of a deterministic order--is necessary given the existence of that order, since it follows inevitably from the placement of that order. If there is some greater good for the sake of which this order's existence is permitted, then all the evil which actually results is necessary for the achievement of that good. A lion would cease to live if there were no slaying of animals; there would be no patience of martyrs if there were no tyrannical persecution.⁹⁷ Both kinds of evil occur in a deterministic order, and thus both are necessary for, because they are entailed by, the existence of whatever deterministic order produces them. The compatibilist model of freedom enables us to take seriously the possibility that Aquinas thought of the created order as deterministic, and when we take that possibility seriously, the necessary connection between evil and the greater good of the entire order of creation brought to fulfillment in Christ comes sharply into focus.

If the compatibilist lens makes plain the necessary connection between the existence of evil (and thus the permission of sin) and whatever good results from the placement of the deterministic created order, it may seem to provide less clarity with regard to the goodness of the resulting order. The good of preventing the evil which exists must be clearly outweighed by--consider St. Paul's "not worth comparing to"⁹⁸--the good for which permitting that evil is necessary. Doubts about the good of any state of affairs in which free creatures inevitably fall into sin and failure leap right to the fore of the libertarian mind. It seems morally perverse even to permit, if (supposing there's a difference) not directly intend the inevitable sin, suffering, and death of free creatures (supposing that compatibilist freedom is enough to make them free.) So no deterministic system which entails the occurrence of sin or at least of ultimate failure can outweigh the good of avoiding that evil. So the libertarian objection might proceed. How might the compatibilist respond?

Arguing for the goodness of the created order is an imposing task. But *of course* the universe--our universe--is good, whether or not it is deterministic. The universe is fuel for the fire of divine love. The love of God is enkindling that wood as it seasons, consuming and consummating, like the fire of burning bush from which the Lord spoke to Moses. The love of God is real, intensely attractive, and as it consumes us it turns our hearts toward others, bringing us into the life of Christ through whom the invisible God is made known. As confidence in the love of God increases, doubts about the goodness of whatever He does decrease.

But is precisely the love of God which is called into question by the inevitability of ultimate failure of rational creatures, the objection continues. Yet the compatibilist account need only accept whatever degree of failure is necessary for the existence of a created order which is good, an order of which human beings are essentially a part. A

universe in which the wills of some rational creatures are inevitably malformed so as to resist the outstretched hand of God's saving love is the price of our own existence, an existence which is a great good. The libertarian objector does not accept such a universe. But such a universe is essential (if actual) to his objecting; this is an objection which reflects a desire for the good of each intelligent creature, a desire which is in fact found more perfectly in God. But the goodness of that desire can only be made manifest in human beings if human beings exist. And if the created order of which human beings are essentially a part is both deterministic and productive of sin and ultimate failure, then the goodness of that expressed concern can only exist if such sin and failure is permitted by God. Both human existence and the loving concern for others in which is the fruit of that existence are in fact good things; practically wise human beings are in fact inclined to preserve them both.

Thus God's loving presence can be understood as transforming creation as it is made ready through the unfolding implications of a causally deterministic order. That order exists precisely to receive God's wise and loving rule through the participation of rational creatures in God's own nature. But those creatures are essentially part of an order which does not immediately prepare the way for the Lord, but rather only in the fullness of time. The creation is subject to futility in this respect, as it groans while awaiting the revealing of the children of God. The failure of rational and thus free creatures--perhaps even the ultimate failure of some⁹⁹--follows inevitably from the interplay of causes in the created order. That failure produces groaning in us which is both a proper response to and part of the remedy for the fearsome. But that failure need not extinguish hope which drives us to heal the wound of sin. Sin is inevitable, but it is not permanent.

The compatibilist lens reveals a world in which the horror of sin is not diminished, yet is made intelligible and in principle able to be endured and overcome. By accepting the

compatibilist perspective, sin is seen as inevitable, but also as necessary for a greater good which includes--more, ensures--the overcoming of sin. Once sin and our freedom from it are viewed as inevitable, the greater good of the whole created order moves to center stage in the drama of creation. The unfolding of the full plan of God in and through the created order is the real wonder. The existence of the very created order we see, and not any obscure order of justice, is the greater good for which the permission of sin is necessary. Aquinas' teaching concerning the goodness of God and the permission of sin shows new promise of coherence once his doctrine of freedom is understood in a compatibilist light.

IV. Conclusion.

Understanding Aquinas' account of freedom in compatibilist terms thus indeed reveals greater coherence in his account of the nature of human freedom and the role our freedom plays in the created order than do accounts infected with libertarian notions of freedom. The compatibilist understanding of freedom opens our eyes to a real and impressive level of control over their own actions which rational creatures exhibit, a level of control which is every bit as impressive as human experience reveals, even while it operates in a deterministic causal order. The compatibilist understanding of freedom reveals the possibility that the created order is fully causally deterministic, thus grounding a causally certain providence working through secondary causes, but without having recourse to immediate Bañezian intervention through which God steers the whole order through endless manipulation of its parts. The compatibilist understanding of freedom makes manifest the unfolding of the whole plan of God for creation as the proper context within which to view God's permission of sin; God's flooding the universe with his own wise and loving rule by drawing a properly disposed humanity into cooperative participation in His own nature is the greater good for which the permission of sin is necessary.

There seems to be a compatibilist alternative to traditional and more fully libertarian readings of Aquinas on freedom, providence, and the goodness of God.

1 See R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *God: His Existence and His Nature*, and *Predestination*, both tr. Dom Bede Rose, (St. Louis: B. Herder Book. Co.) 1936, 1939, and *Grace*, tr. Dominican Nuns (St. Louis: B. Herder Book. Co.) 1952. There are of course a number of distinguished writers with varying positions which--in part for lack of competence, in part for lack of space--I am grouping together under the "traditional Thomist" label. Some justification for this categorization lies in the fact that Maritain, Garrigou-Lagrange, and many others with greater competency and more space did the same: see *God and the Permission of Evil*, p. 18-19; *Grace*, p. 202-203; see also Msgr. Joseph Pohle's *Grace: Actual and Habitual*, ed. A. Preuss (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co.) 1945, p. 232-248; Mark Pontifex, *Freedom and Providence* (New York: Hawthorn Books) 1960, p. 66-68.

2 Jacques Maritain, *God and the Permission of Evil*, tr. Joseph Evans, (Milwaukee: Bruce Pub. Co.) 1966; *St. Thomas and the Problem of Evil* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1942). By libertarian intuitions about freedom I mean the inclination to accept entirely or in some modified form the definition of freedom given by Molina in the *Concordia*: "Free will is the faculty which, given all the requirements for acting, can either act or not."

3 To follow one set of responses to this and other problems facing libertarian readings of St. Thomas, see Fr. John H. Wright, S.J., "The Eternal Plan of Divine Providence", *Theological Studies* Vol. 27, No. 1, March 1966; "Divine Knowledge and Human Freedom: The God Who Dialogues", *Theological Studies* Vol. 38, No. 3, September 1977; and his articles entitled "God", "Providence", and "Predestination" in *The New Dictionary of Theology* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc.) 1987, pp. 423-436, 815-818, 797-798. My thanks are due to Fr. Wright for his remarks on a draft of this paper. To see one way in which Fr. Wright's views seem to diverge from St. Thomas's, see esp. p. 45 and note 42 of his "The Eternal Plan of Divine Providence"; cf. *Summa Theologiae I* q. 23, a. 7, where both the number and the specific individuals who are certainly predestined is said to be preordained *per se*. Fr. Wright's claim that predestination of specific individuals is accomplished through God's consequent will does not seem to provide him with the resources to account for the clear distinction which St. Thomas makes in this article between the prosperity of the particular ox (which must be ordained through God's consequent will) and the salvation of particular rational creatures.

4 Lonergan's work originally appeared as a series of four articles (cited individually below) in *Theological Studies*, Vols II (1941) and III (1942), reprinted as *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Herder and Herder, 1971). On the implications of Lonergan's work for the interpretations of Maritain and Garrigou-Lagrange, see Fr. David Burrell's "Jacques Maritain and Bernard Lonergan on Divine and Human Freedom" in *The Future of Thomism*, ed. Deal W. Hudson and Dennis W. Moran, University of Notre Dame Press, 1991.

5 For a critical review of Lottin's (and Lonergan's) theory of a radical change in Aquinas' understanding of freedom, see Daniel Westberg, "Did Aquinas Change His Mind about the Will?", *The Thomist* Vol. 58, No. 1 (Jan 1994), p. 41 - 60. The presentation below of a compatibilist reading of the nature of the will, its acts, and their causes is itself evidence against the thesis that Thomas' thought underwent drastic movement toward the ascending voluntarism of his day.

6 *Summa Theologiae I* (hereafter *I, I-II, II-II, III*) q. 87, a. 4: ". . . actus voluntatis nihil aliud est quam inclinatio quaedam consequens formam intellectam, sicut appetitus naturalis est inclinatio consequens formam naturalem." And in the *Prima Secundae*: ". . . the act of the will is nothing else than an inclination proceeding from the interior principle of knowledge, just as the natural appetite is an inclination proceeding from an interior principle without knowledge." ("actus voluntatis nihil est aliud quam inclinatio quaedam procedens ab interiori principio cognoscente: sicut appetitus naturalis est quaedam inclinatio ab interiori principio et sine cognitione." *I-II* q. 6, a. 4.) All quotations from Aquinas are from the Marietti edition, save those from the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, which are from the Leonine.

7 *Summa Contra Gentiles* (hereafter *SCG*) II, 47, 48.

8 *De Veritate* q. 22, a. 6; *I* q. 105, a. 4; *I-II* q. 10, a. 2; *De Malo* q. 6, a. 1.

9 *I-II* q. 10, a. 2, and q. 17, a. 1, ad 2m; *De Malo* q. 6, a. 1.

10 On nonnecessitation: *De Veritate* q. 22, a. 6; q. 24, a. 12; *I* q. 82, a. 1; *In III De Anima* L. 3, (621); *De Malo* q. 6, a. 1; On self-movement: *De Veritate* q. 24, a. 1; *SCG* II, 48; *I* q. 83, a. 1c, ad 3m; *Compendium Theologiae* I, c. 76; *De Malo* q. 6, a. 1; On control: *De Veritate* q. 24, a. 1, 2, 4; *SCG* II, 48.

11 *I* q. 87, a. 4; *I-II* q. 17, a. 1.

12 *SCG* II, 48: ". . . no judging power moves itself to judge unless it reflects on its own action; for it is necessary, if it moves itself to judge, that it know its own judgment." ("Nulla autem potentia iudicans seipsam ad iudicandum movet nisi supra actum suum reflectatur: Oportet enim, si se ad iudicandum agit, quod suum iudicium cognosca.")

13 *I* q. 82, a. 4.

14 *I-II* q. 9, a. 3.

- 15 I am leaving aside a good many complexities arising from the distinction between commanded and elicited acts: the will can move itself and other faculties either directly, indirectly, or (for some faculties) both. For a discussion of some of the complexities of the complete human act, see Alan Donagan's "Thomas Aquinas on Human Action" in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, ed. Kretzmann, et al. (Cambridge University Press, 1982) p. 642-654.
- 16 The distinction between these dimensions of human freedom is discussed most clearly in *De Malo* q. 6, a. 1; See also *I-II* q. 9, a. 1, and q. 10, a. 2; *De Veritate* q. 22, a. 6.
- 17 Some interpreters (see Joseph J. Sikora, S.J., "Freedom and Nihilation", *The Modern Schoolman*, XLIII, Nov. 1965, p. 23ff.) have identified freedom of exercise as the root of freedom of specification, and thus as the most basic element of freedom. It seems to me that St. Thomas's position was precisely the reverse. It is because the intellect can apprehend its own acts as particular goods--and thus as good or as not good in some respect--that the will is able to incline or not to incline toward the intellect's continuing to consider a given object under the aspect of good and suitable. Hence, particular apprehended objects need not move the will, even if the intellect's assessment of them continues to be that they are both good and suitable, because the intellect can focus on its own continued apprehension under an aspect in which that continued apprehension is not both good and suitable. See *De Malo* q. 6, a. 1; *I-II* q. 10, a. 2; q. 13, a. 6.
- 18 *De Veritate* q. 24, a. 1, a. 2; *SCG* II, 48; *I-II* q. 17, a. 1, ad 2; *De Malo* q. 6, a. 1.
- 19 *I* q. 83, a. 2 ad 1. See J. B. Korolec's "Free Will and Free Choice" in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, p. 629-641, for a brief discussion of the history of liberum arbitrium and its relationship to intellect, will, choice, and freedom.
- 20 *I* q. 83, a. 1 ad 3; *I-II* q. 9 a. 4 ad 1, 3; *Compendium Theologiae I*, 129; *De Malo* q. 6, a. 1 ad 4.
- 21 *De Veritate* q. 22, a. 9; *I* q. 82, a. 4, and *I-II* q. 9, a. 6; *De Malo* q. 6, a. 1.
- 22 *De Veritate* q. 24, a. 14; *I-II* q. 6, a. 1 ad 3: "God moves man to act . . . by proposing the appetible to the senses, or by affecting a change in his body . . ." (" . . . Deus movet hominem ad agendum . . . sicut proponens sensui appetibile, vel sicut immutans corpus . . .")
- 23 *De Potentia* q. 3, a.7; *SCG* III, 67.
- 24 *I-II* q. 6, a. 1 ad 3.
- 25 *SCG* III, 70; *I*, q. 22, a. 2, 3.
- 26 *I-II* q. 10, a. 1; *De Malo* q. 6, a. 1.
- 27 *De Veritate* q. 22, a. 9; *I* q. 82, a. 4, and *I-II* q. 9, a. 6; *De Malo* q. 6, a. 1.
- 28 *I-II* q. 9, a. 4, and *SCG* III, 89; *De Malo* q. 6, a. 1.
- 29 *I-II* q. 9, a. 6, corpus and ad 3.
- 30 *I* q. 83, a. 1c, ad 3 and q. 105, a. 4, ad 2; *I-II* q. 6, a. 1, ad 3, and q. 9, a. 4, ad 1, 3; *De Malo* q. 6, a. 1 ad 4.
- 31 *I-II* q. 9, a. 6 ad 3m.
- 32 *I-II* q. 109, a. 1, 2.
- 33 *I-II* q. 110, a. 3.
- 34 *I-II* q. 109, a. 2, 5.
- 35 *I-II* q. 109, a. 7: ". . . requiritur auxilium gratiae ad hoc quod homo a peccato resurgat, et quantum ad habituale donum, et quantum ad interiorem Dei motionem." (" . . . the help of grace is required in order for a man to rise from sin, both as to a habitual gift, and as to the interior motion of God.")
- 36 *I-II* q. 109, a. 6c and ad 3, a. 9 ad 3.
- 37 *I-II* q. 109, a. 6.
- 38 *I-II* q. 109, a. 9 ad 1.; q. 110, a. 2.
- 39 *I-II* q. 109, a. 1, 2.
- 40 The twofold pattern of movement on the side of the exercise of the will's acts and on the side of the specification thereof is repeated throughout Aquinas's discussion of divine help beyond bestowing habitual grace in *I-II*: q. 109 a. 1, a. 2 ad 1 (ex), ad 2 (spec), a. 6, a. 9; q. 110 a. 2; q. 111, a. 2. See also *De Veritate* q. 24, a. 15.
- 41 *I-II* q. 109, a. 6.
- 42 *I-II* q. 109, aa. 1, 6, 7.
- 43 *De Malo* q. 3, a. 1, ad 8.
- 44 *I-II* q. 113 a. 3c and ad 2 on justice; a. 7 ad 4 on merit.
- 45 *I* q. 19 a. 6.
- 46 *De Malo* q. 6, a. 1, ad 15.
- 47 *In VI Libros Metaphysicorum* L. 3 (1192, 3); *SCG* III, 86; *I-II* q. 75, a. 1, ad 2.
- 48 These grounds for the will's nonnecessitation are given in *De Malo* q. 6, a. 1.
- 49 *I* q. 82, a. 5, ad 3; *I-II* q. 113, a. 7 ad 2; *SCG* III, 89; *De Malo* q. 6, a. 1. James F. Keenan stops short of considering this possibility; see his "The Problem with Thomas Aquinas' Concept of Sin", *Heythrop Journal* XXXV (1994), pp. 401 - 420, esp. p. 405. Keenan argues that Aquinas overcame his intellectual determinism by introducing the priority of the will's exercise over its specification, and that he carried that revised emphasis on exercise into his treatment of the theological virtues (where the parallel distinction is between charity and prudence), but that Thomas

failed to adjust his account of sin accordingly. The compatibilist reading seems committed to turning the perceived failure around, employing it as evidence that the perceived shift toward priority of freedom of exercise is illusory. I think that Westberg's discussion ("Did Aquinas Change His Mind about the Will") and the presentation of a compatibilist reading of freedom unseats Keenan's (and Lonergan's, Lottin's) change thesis. But Keenan is owed a compatibilist reading of Aquinas' account of the virtues.

50 A position reaffirmed in *I-II* q. 6, a. 4; see note 6, above.

51 Here as elsewhere I have omitted a discussion of the role of the faculties of sensory apprehension and appetite (the passions.) Including mention of these and the causes operating on them would complexify but not substantially alter the overview of the nature of the intellect, will, and their causes offered here. See *I-II* q. 9, a.2; q. 10, a. 3; and then q. 6, a. 1 ad 3.

52 *In VI Libros Metaphysicorum*, L. 3, 1201: "ens per accidens non habet causam neque generationem"; also, *De Malo* q. 6, a. 1, ad 21: "Nor again is it true that everything that is done has a natural cause, for those things which are done per accidens are not done by any active natural cause, since what is per accidens is not being and one." ("Nec iterum verum est quod omne quod fit, habeat causam naturalem; ea enim quae fiunt per accidens, non fiunt ab aliqua causa activa naturali; quia quod est per accidens, non est ens et unum.") See also SCG III, 74; *I* q. 115, a. 6; q. 116, a. 1.

53 *In I Peri Hermeneias* L. 14; *In I Libros Ethicorum* L. 1, l. 5. Thanks to Al Howsepian for pointing out to me the latter text in his comments on a draft of part of this paper.

54 *In VI Libros Metaphysicorum*, L. 3, 1220.

55 SCG III, 72; *In VI Libros Metaphysicorum*, L. 3, (1221).

56 *In VI Libros Metaphysicorum* L. 3, (1201); *In I Peri Hermeneias* L. 14.

57 *Compendium Theologiae I*, c. 140: "Multo magis hoc ex sapientia divinae dispositionis contingit, ut quamvis causae contingentes deficere possint quantum est de se ab effectu, tamen quibusdam adminiculis adhibitis indeficienter sequatur effectus, quod ejus contingentiam non tollit. Sic ergo patet quod rerum contingentia divinae providentiae certitudinem non excludit." (See Cyril Vollert, S.J., *Compendium of Theology*, B. Herder Book Co., 1947, p. 150.)

58 *I* q. 23, a. 6.

59 *In VI Libros Metaphysicorum* L. 3, (1220): "Invenitur igitur unius cuiusque effectus secundum quod est sub ordine divinae providentiae necessitatem habere."

60 The ordering itself of secondary causes is said not to have the nature of fate, except as dependent on God (*I* q. 116, a. 2 ad 1); but inasmuch as all that happens on Earth is subject to divine providence, the existence of fate can be admitted (q. 116, a. 1). See the example in *I* q. 115, a. 6 of a burning object crashing down on particular combustible matter.

61 *I* q. 114, a. 4.

62 *In VIII L. Physicorum* L. XII (1074): "... ea quae non simul sunt, non possunt esse causa alicuius ..."

63 Whether these causes can be comprehended through classification of causes in the context of an extended community of shared inquiry is another--and open--question; whether there can be a scientific study of human behavior, that is.

64 SCG III, 96 (8), tr. Vernon J. Bourke (NY: Doubleday & Co.), 1956.

65 SCG III, 96 (14), tr. Bourke.

66 SCG III, 94, esp. (6), (15) of Bourke's translation.

67 The best piece of evidence to the contrary is employed forcefully by Lonergan ("St. Thomas' Thought on Gratia Operans", *Theological Studies* III (1942), p. 549-552.) The suggestion Aquinas makes that moral evil may fall into a special category of absolute objective falsity does, on the face of it, suggest that the will stands outside the order of determinate causality in some respect; why else might one distinguish between the category of intelligible but accidental failure, on one hand, and unintelligible accidental failure, on the other? One direction for a compatibilist reply would note the difference between God's intentions for the good of intelligent species, versus nonintelligent creatures: only with intelligent creatures does God intend the good of each individual member of the species. Failure of an intelligent creature, which necessarily involves voluntary evil, is directly contrary to the antecedent will of God, and stands in need of an explanation. And while an explanation is forthcoming for moral evil in general, there is none for the moral failure of each individual. For the will of that creature is the proximate *per accidens* cause of its sin, and there is no higher cause, since the sin is not intended by God. Nonmoral evil also has only a *per accidens* cause, but no explanation for it is called for, since it is not opposed to the antecedent will of God; hence, the lack of a *per se* cause of nonmoral evil constitutes no lack of intelligibility.

68 See the Pohle-Preuss analysis of the standard Thomist position in *Grace: Actual and Habitual* (St. Louis: B. Herder) 1945, p. 232-248.

69 See Portalié's summary in Edmund G. Fortman, S.J., ed., *The Theology and Man and Grace* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co.) 1966, p. 139: "In our time, we must admit, a good number of critics on all sides favor the strict interpretation which sees in Augustine a theory of divine determinism fatal to freedom of the will."

70 *Poetics* 1451a30.

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- 71 Consider Maritain's vehement accusation against antecedent permissive decrees as insulting to "the absolute innocence of God." *God and the Permission of Evil*, chapter I, section II.
- 72 *SCG* III, 90: "Omnia corporalia per spiritualia administrantur Spiritualia autem agunt in corporalia per voluntatem. Si igitur electiones et motus voluntatem intellectualium substantiarum ad Dei providentiam non pertinent, sequitur quod etiam corporalia ipsius providentiae subtrahantur. Et sic totaliter nulla erit providentia."
- 73 See esp. sections III and IV of Lonergan's "St. Thomas' Theory of Operation", p. 383-391.
- 74 *De Veritate* q. 24 a. 15: "non enim potest sciri modus praeparationis ad formam, nisi forma ipsa cognoscatur." See also *SCG* III, q. 149.
- 75 The love of God itself would be grace, properly speaking; the readiness and steadfastness would be supernatural virtues, effects of that grace. *I-II* q. 110 a. 3.
- 76 *Theological Studies* III (1942), "St. Thomas' Theory of Operation", p. 399.
- 77 *Theological Studies* III (1942), "St. Thomas's Thought on Gratia Operans", p. 572.
- 78 The general's intention is present in the flagman only as the principle of intelligible ordering of the effects the general produced in the flagman precisely in order to accomplish the general's intention. With grace, the analogous effects are present in the soul, but the intention is present there in an additional way, as well; the soul participates in the divine nature, and thus God's intention is present because God is.
- 79 On the Bañezian account, God's application constitutes an immediate activation directed toward each act of each created agent in addition to whatever activation derives from a being of its nature being placed in determinate causal circumstances. Garrigou-Lagrange objected to the attachment of the Bañezian appellation to standard Thomistic accounts of grace; he thought the Bañezian line was plainly rooted firmly in the texts of Aquinas and the interpretive tradition prior to Bañez. (See *Grace*: the section entitled "The Bañezian Comedy and Contemporary Syncretism", p. 445.) Pohle-Preuss ascribes the Thomist position to Bañez in just the way that troubles Garrigou-Lagrange; see their *Grace: Actual and Habitual*, p. 232.
- 80 Fr. Burrell considers these prospects to be bright, along the lines of Maritain's interpretation. See his "Jacques Maritain and Bernard Lonergan on Divine and Human Freedom" in *The Future of Thomism*, ed. Deal W. Hudson and Dennis W. Moran, University of Notre Dame Press, 1991.
- 81 Here and above I am leaving aside the evident development of Aquinas' thought on the extent of the causal certitude of providence. Plainly the model which Aquinas employed in his discussions of providence in *De Veritate* q. 5 and 6--one of divine government ordered toward the achievement of generalized ends ends while leaving aside concern for which particular means achieves those ends--gave way by the time of the *Contra Gentiles* (III, 64 - 98) to the notion of a universal cause including all particular causes within its causal reach. That same doctrine of the universal order is carried over into the *Prima Pars* and beyond. Treating the mature view as Aquinas' view simpliciter is a suitable approach, since the later view is not a radical departure from the earlier views, but rather the result of a more careful thinking through of the implications of earlier views. For with respect to the most important matters, providence was certain in its detail even in the *De Veritate*: see the account of predestination in q. 6 a. 3, and compare it with *SCG* III 163, where the notion of predestination has been brought under the notion of providence conceived of as universal cause.
- 82 Lonergan, "St. Thomas on Gratia Operans", p. 553. Lonergan allows "no end of room for God to work on free choice without violating it", but insists that no created antecedent can rigorously determine choice. Yet he never discusses whether the entire sum of causal antecedents determine choice. He implies that they do not when he insists that whatever is permitted to follow inevitably from a policy of inaction is intelligibly ordered, and thus not irrational, while sin is irrational (p. 552). But he offers little argument for his linking inevitability with intelligible ordering. In his silence he leaves unaddressed the possibility that what is foreseen by God as inevitably occurring but in no way intended requires an explanation insofar as it is a privation, a lack of due perfection and not a mere absence (*I-II* q. 75 a. 1). Sin alone falls into this category, and it has no *per se* cause, but only the created will as *per accidens* cause. But what has only a *per accidens* cause is fortuitous, and from every point of view save that of any intelligence who intentionally arranged for such an effect to be brought about through a combination of causes (*SCG* III, 92). But God does not combine causes with the intention of producing sin. Hence, sin which is a privation and requires an explanation has only a *per accidens* cause (the will of the creature), and thus no explanation of the sort required. So it is unintelligible, in that sense, whether or not it follows inevitably from causes which God combined to produce other (nonsinful) effects.
- 83 These objects are either possible (a), or actual (b). If (a) God knows how free creatures will behave in every possible circumstance, and then chooses to actualize certain circumstances, then his knowledge when joined to His will is the cause of all actual things known in a substantial sense. But it would not be the cause of all possible things known; the ground for the truth values of counterfactual propositions about created free choices would lie outside of God (and apparently in no other being, since He would know these propositions logically prior to having created anything.) The resources necessary to sustain such an account must be drawn from outside the texts of Aquinas; Molinism is not a viable interpretive direction, unless as a corrective supplement to Aquinas' thought. But (b) if God "takes into account" the noncooperation of free creatures logically posterior to His having created them, then the state of these actual creatures is the cause of the likeness in God's knowledge. God's knowledge would seem to depend on

His creation. (Sikora claims that "God does not depend on our nihilations in order to constitute His eternal plan; he simply takes them into account in freely decreeing this plan creatively." But God's taking into account a determining factor in created activity which God does not cause is a pretty close unfolding of what we might mean by God's knowledge and plan "depending" on creatures. See his "Freedom and Nihilation", Part II, p. 30.) But this dependence seems incompatible with the claim that God is pure act, standing in potency to nothing whatsoever (SCG I, 16).

Aquinas insisted "that things that occur in time are the cause of something occurring in God . . . [is] impossible" (SCG III 96), and that God's knowledge is not in potency with respect to anything at all (SCG I, 71).

84 *De Veritate* q. 6, a. 1; see also aa. 2 - 4; SCG III, 161 - 163; *I q.* 23 aa. 1-8.

85 See Garrigou-Lagrange's discussion of the difficulties in his *Grace*, p. 450-464.

86 In *I q.* 22, a. 3 Aquinas affirms an immediate providence. But that immediacy is located in the plan of providence as it exists in the mind of God: He intends all that He causes, down to the detailed effects for which particular causes are assigned and given power. (This power is the natural power that follows from their natures, rather than any immediate divine activation beyond creation, conservation, and application via situation in particular causal circumstances, on Lonergan's account of providence.) But the execution of that plan of providence employs intermediate causes, that the dignity of causality might be imparted even to creatures. Divine determination is mediated in that sense.

87 See Garrigou-Lagrange, *Predestination*, tr. Dom Bede Rose (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co.), 1939, p. 206-212. The section is entitled "The Motive for Reprobation".

88 *I q.* 21, a. 1.

89 R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *The One God*, p. 701.

90 Jacques Maritain, *God and the Permission of Evil*, chapter I, section II.

91 E.g., "it is impossible that the whole of the effect of predestination in general should have any cause as coming from us, because whatsoever is in man disposing him toward salvation is all included under the effect of predestination, even the preparation for grace" (*I q.* 23, a. 5).

92 Writing in the tradition of Maritain, Joseph Sikora admits that St. Thomas does not discuss initiatives in the line of nonbeing, but Sikora insists that this lack of discussion does not mean that St. Thomas was unaware of these matters. See Sikora's "Freedom and Nihilation: An Essay on the 'Free Existent and the Free Eternal Purposes'", part II, *The Modern Schoolman*, XLIII, Nov. 1965, p. 38.

93 *God and the Permission of Evil*, chapter II, section I.

94 That simple failure to be moved, on account of its own inadequate formation, is just the right description of the relationship between the grace of God and the uncooperative created will, on the compatibilist picture. Grace is always available, but the poorly formed will is inadequately disposed to be moved by it; there is no *per se* cause of that lack of proper formation, but only a *per accidens* cause, which is the will in its own movement toward whatever else besides cooperation with grace the will in fact inclined toward at the moment cooperation with grace was due.

95 SCG III, 74.

96 SCG III, 71.

97 *I q.* 22 a. 2 ad 2.

98 Romans 8: 18.

99 Aquinas' expressed confidence (*I q.* 23, a. 7 ad 3) that those who ultimately fail are in the majority reveals the implications of Aristotelian natural philosophy and then-current approaches to interpreting the New Testament, more so than the inexhaustible hope of the children of God.