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THE STRUCTURE OF OCKHAM'S MORAL DOCTRINE

by

David W. Clark

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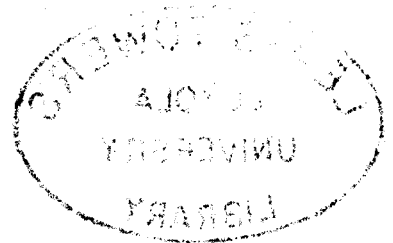


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INTRODUCTION

The English Franciscan, William of Ockham, was a central and transitional figure among fourteenth century thinkers. By the time he entered Oxford University, the academic world was largely divided between Thomistic and Scotistic schools of thought. Building on the logical studies of William of Sherwood (c. 1200-1271) and Peter of Spain (c. 1210-1277), Ockham developed a linguistic stance to avoid issues which he considered false and to remedy the embarrassment of parallel, yet contradictory, lines of explanation which had acquired a semi-official status among the Dominican and Franciscan doctors. Apparently, Ockham recognized neither the novelty of his conceptual reorganization nor the extremes it suggested. Forced to defend the Catholic orthodoxy of his position and tangled in political-ecclesiastical disputes, Ockham achieved only the outline of a philosophical system. Instead of unifying the Scholastic argument, he represented a third faction. Now verbal fights erupted between "realists" and "nominalists."

Despite the pivotal character of his thought, important aspects of Ockham's teaching remain obscure. This is true of his moral theory. An abbreviated academic career, a critical and abrupt style, many unfinished and not critically edited writings --these factors make a clear picture of his accomplishment in ethics difficult. His ancient and contemporary sources, and the

positive and negative reactions which they evoked, contributed to his moral point of view yet are textually hard to identify. This study means to delineate the structure of Ockham's moral doctrine and indicate the balance and organization of its elements and sources. It is precisely the internal consistency of Ockham's theory of moral value which is so frequently questioned.

The Problem

Looking back on the generations of Scholasticism, Francis Suarez attempted a seventeenth century classification of the various themes and types of ethical theories developed. In De Legibus, he put William of Ockham in the group which attached the force and nature of law to the divine will.¹ In both Ockham studies and Histories of ethical systems, it is still commonplace to read this judgment.² This interpretation, known as

¹De Legibus ac de deo legislatore, I, c. 2; Vol. V, Suarez. Opera Omnia (ed. Carolus Berton; Paris, 1856), p. 18; "Est ergo secunda opinio principalis, affirmans legem esse actum voluntatis legislatoris...ut Ockham..."

²Typical studies of Ockham's ethics would be, for example, Anita Garvens, "Die Grundlagen der Ethik Wilhelms von Ockham," Franziskanische Studien XXI (1934), p. 265; "Denn sittlich gut und richtig ist in Ockhams Sinn schlechthin das, was der Wille Gottes als gut bestimmt, und umgekehrt ist etwas deshalb schlecht, weil es Gott nicht will." Citing Professor Garvens with approval, a Franciscan scholar, Father Elzearius Bonke, concludes that "nemo neget Venerabilem Inceptorem revera docuisse characterem positivum moralitatis." "Doctrina nominalistica de fundamento ordinis moralis apud Guilielmum de Ockham et Gabrielem Biel," Collectanea Franciscana XIV (1944), p.60. Léon Baudry, whose textual and doctrinal investigations of the Venerable Inceptor deserve close attention, cautions his readers to consider Ockham's notion of moral goodness "en rapport avec ce qu'on appelle son volontarisme." Lexique Philosophique de Guillaume d'Ockham. Étude des Notions Fondamentales (Paris: P. Lethiellieux, 1958), p. 33. And

"voluntarism" or "positivism" or "authoritarianism," generally holds that Ockham's ethic has no metaphysical basis, that moral goodness means divine approval, and that the nature of ethical behavior is obedience. The recently published Encyclopedia of Philosophy explains the meaning of "theological voluntarism" by describing Ockham's ethic.³ This classification should be considered the "majority opinion."

There is also a significant minority opinion. Research on Ockham, the political theorist, turns up an emphatic doctrine of "natural right." Attempting to balance the claims of papacy and emperor, he indicated common limits to authority and

while searching for the origins of Reformation theology, Erwin Iserloh joins the consensus: "Mit Recht können wir also vom Voluntarismus und Aktualismus bei Ockham sprechen." Gnade und Eucharistie in der philosophischen Theologie des Wilhelm von Ockham (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1956), p. 61. General studies maintain similar views. "Moral law is reduced to positive divine law, obligation is contingent, and it is doubtful that a valid ethics can be constructed apart from theology. Ockhamist ethics, then, is truly authoritarian." Vernon J. Bourke, A History of Ethics, Vol. I: Graeco-Roman to Early Modern Ethics (Garden City: Doubleday, 1968), p. 155. The same judgment appears in Alasdair Mac Intyre, A Short History of Ethics (New York: Macmillan, 1966), p. 119; A. P. d'Entreves, Natural Law, An Historical Survey (New York: Harper and Row, 1951), p. 69; and Jacques Maritain, Moral Philosophy (New York: Scribner's, 1964), p. 91.

³Richard Taylor, "Voluntarism," Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed. Paul Edwards, 8 (New York: Macmillan, 1967), p. 271; "Ockham said that the divine will, and not human or divine reason, is the ultimate standard of morality, that certain acts are sins because they have been forbidden by God, and other acts are meritorious only because they have been commanded by God. He denied that God forbids certain things because they are sins or commands certain things because they are virtues, for it seemed to him that this would be a limitation upon God's free will...The moral law, accordingly, was for Ockham simply a matter of God's free choice."

jurisdiction in the natures of things--much like a Natural Law moralist would. Commenting on Ockham's political thought and its corroborating ethic, Ewart Lewis concludes that "within the terms set by the data of revelation, Occam's system was one of rationalism pushed to the bitter end."⁴ Indeed, to enter the domain of Ockham's moral theory through the politico-polemical works fosters the impression that rational and immutable orders of nature support morality.⁵ When Ockham is called a "rationalist" the category implies that human nature entails certain rights and duties, that certain actions are intrinsically good or evil for men, and that valid moral laws must respect the "ethical facts" of the governed agents.

The contrast between the majority and minority reports is severe. But this problem is historiographical; it shows the

⁴Medieval Political Ideas, Vol. II (London: Routledge and Kegan, 1954), p. 551.

⁵Max A. Shepard, "William of Occam and the Higher Law," The American Political Science Review 26 (1932), p. 1009; "We constantly find "jus naturale" and "ratio naturalis" linked together, which shows us that Occam held the time-honored, ancient and medieval tradition of eternal, immutable principles of nature, discoverable by the use of reason." A recognized Ockham scholar, Rev. Philotheus Boehner, O.F.M., finds the position that "The only restriction of the power of the Pope was imposed by the divine law and the immutable and indispensable natural law. In other words, things which were directly forbidden by God and the natural law to all human beings without exception, because they are illicit in themselves, could not be commanded by the Pope." Boehner, Collected Articles, ed. Eligius M. Buytaert (St. Bonaventure: The Franciscan Institute, 1958), p. 448. Also see the studies of Charles C. Bayley, "Pivotal Concepts in the Political Philosophy of William of Ockham," Journal of the History of Ideas X (1949), p. 200; and E. F. Jacob, "Ockham as a Political Thinker," Essays in the Conciliar Epoch (re. ed., Manchester: Univ. of Manchester Press, 1953), p. 94.

difficulties of historians more than those which confronted Ockham. The use of interpretive classifications such as voluntarism and rationalism--and there is textual evidence for both--forces an either/or conclusion.⁶ The issue facing Ockham was fundamental to the Scholastic enterprise--how can revealed and experiential data be reconciled systematically? The problem of relating positive and "natural" law represents one tension among many faced by the Medievals who used Aristotle to elucidate the gospels. Ockham dramatized this perennial concern by his ambitious portrait of God's moral authority and his enthusiasm for the Nicomachean Ethics. Like a voice from the patristic age, he seems to enlarge the discretionary powers of the Almighty until the paradigm of moral response is Abraham, climbing the mountain to sacrifice his innocent son. Aristotle would have frowned upon this task, yet Ockham never repudiates "the Philosopher." On the contrary, Aristotle remains "the" authority on moral doctrine. The stark contrast between God's moral omnipotence and the exigencies of "Right Reason" have been noticed by many commentators;⁷ some

⁶See my article, "Voluntarism and Rationalism in the Ethics of Ockham," Franciscan Studies 31 (1971), pp. 72-87.

⁷For example, G. de Lagard says, "Ainsi la morale ockhamiste apparaît-elle comme un jeu alterné où le volontarisme et le rationalisme se répondent curieusement. Au départ, lorsque nous analysons la nature de la loi morale promulguée par Dieu, tout nous paraissait arbitraire et irrationnel pur. En étudiant la moralité naturelle et le jeu de l'agir humain, nous avons vu la raison prendre une part de plus en plus importante dans la définition et l'orientation de la vie morale." Naissance de l'Esprit Laïque au Déclin du Moyen Âge, Vol. VI: Ockham, La Morale et le Droit (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1946), p. . Francis Oakley also finds "in intimate juxtaposition, the

think that the contrasting elements are not contradictory.⁸ Unfortunately, there is no published account of precisely how Ockham can allow God to tamper with concrete obligations without jeopardizing the rational requirements for an ethical "science." How can the theologian's belief in an absolute and absolutely free norm of good and evil permit any philosophical credibility for unchanging principles of morality? Because Ockham magnifies the legislative powers of God without excluding the presence of non-revealed ethical certainties, and because scholars have made Ockham the forerunner of the Reformation's theological positivism and the Renaissance's "natural" morality, the coherence of his moral viewpoint is questionable.

rationalist and voluntarist theories, and no peace can be found to grow between these antinomies." "Medieval Theories of Natural Law: William of Ockham and the Significance of the Voluntarist Tradition," Natural Law Forum VI (1961), p. 70. Certain textbooks such as Frederick Copleston, A History of Philosophy, Vol. III, Part I: Ockham to the Speculative Mystics (Garden City: Doubleday, 1963), p. 120; and Arthur Hyman and James J. Walsh, Philosophy in the Middle Ages: The Christian, Islamic and Jewish Traditions (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), pp. 608-609, also speak of Ockham's "dualism" in ethical theory.

⁸For example, Paul Vignaux in his article, "Nominalisme," Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique, Vol. XI (Paris, 1931), C. 771, cautions that neither Ockham nor the nominalists in general obviate a non-theological ethic. "Une première conclusion s'impose: pour le nominalisme, toute morale n'est pas nécessairement d'autorité et de révélation; il peut y avoir une éthique naturelle et rationnelle." It is the thesis of Father Lucan Freppert, O.F.M. that "there is a dual viewpoint to be found in Ockham's ethical theory." "The Basis of Morality According to William Ockham," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Philosophy, St. Bonaventure University, 1966), p. 241. Father Freppert divides the elements which belong to the "divine will" and "right reason" viewpoints. But the interpretive problem is not so much in identifying Ockham's various perspectives as in showing their conceptual harmony or inconsistency.

Ockham was not unaware of the problem. Translating the scriptural injunctions to "love God and love your neighbor as yourself" into theologically useful information was a common Medieval concern. After Aquinas' Summa Theologica, the Scholastics show a marked sensitivity to the nature and frontiers of revealed and natural laws. As prima facie evidence that Ockham appreciated the difference between revealed and evident moral rules, and that he satisfied his own mind at least regarding the systematic compatibility of religious beliefs and philosophical principles in determining moral duty consider his second Quodlibet, question fourteen.

Whether there can be demonstrative science about morals?

[Negative] There cannot be since demonstrative science cannot pertain to those things subject to the will; but morals are such things, therefore, etc.

[Affirmative] On the contrary, morals are knowable; therefore, etc.

In this question, I shall first clarify one of the terms used; secondly, I shall assert one distinction; and thirdly, I shall answer the question.

Regarding the first point: I claim that "moral" is applied loosely to human acts which are controlled by the will absolutely and the term is used in this manner in the Decretum [of Gratian], distinction one, chapter "Mos" - as is clear from the gloss. Otherwise, it is applied more strictly to customs or actions subject to the power of the will according to the natural dictate of reason and the other circumstances.

Regarding the second: it should be known that moral doctrine has many parts of which one is positive and the other non-positive. Human positive science is that which contains human and divine laws which oblige us to accomplish or avoid those actions which are good or evil only because they are prohibited or commanded by a superior able to establish and decide laws. Non-positive

moral science is that which directs human actions without any command of a superior. As principles known per se or known through experience, they direct thus, namely, that "everything honest ought to be done," and "everything dishonest ought to be avoided," etc., about which Aristotle speaks in moral philosophy.

Regarding the third: I claim that positive moral science is not demonstrative. Thus, legal science is non-demonstrative, although it might be governed by demonstrative science in many instances, because the arguments of lawyers are based upon human positive laws which do not include propositions known evidently. However, the non-positive moral discipline is a demonstrative science. I prove this assertion because a cognition deducing conclusions syllogistically from principles known per se or through experience is demonstrative; moral discipline is this kind of thing; therefore, etc. The major premise is obvious. The minor is proved since there are many principles known per se in moral science, for example, that "the will ought to be conformed to right reason," "all blameworthy evil should be avoided," and others like this. Likewise, many principles are known through experience as is manifestly clear to one considering experience. And furthermore, I claim that this science is more certain than many others inasmuch as one can have a more certain experience about his own actions than about the acts of others. Hence, it is clear that this science is very subtle, useful and evident.

To the principal argument I respond that propositions, which are true and known per se and which can demonstrate many conclusions, can be formed about those things controlled by the will.⁹

⁹Quodl., II, q. 14 (quoted from Vaticana Lat., 3075, f. 20vb); Utrum de moralibus potest esse scientiam demonstrativam?

Quod non: quia de illis quae subjacent voluntati non posset esse scientiam demonstrativam; sed moralia sunt huiusmodi, ergo, etc..

Contra: moralia sunt scibilia, ergo, etc..

In ista quaestione, primo exponam unum terminum positum; secundo, ponam unam distinctionem; tertio, ad quaestionem.

Circa primum: dico quod "morale" accipitur largiter pro actibus humanis quae subjacent voluntati absolute, et sic accipitur in Decretis, distinctio prima, c. "Mos," ut patet in glossa. Aliter accipitur stricte magis pro moribus sive actibus subjectis postestati voluntatis secundum naturale dictamen rationis et secundum alias circumstantias.

Circa secundum: sciendum quod moralis doctrina habet plures partes, quarum una est positiva, alia est non-positiva.

The Texts

Doctrinal studies of William of Ockham suffer collectively from the sparse information about his life,¹⁰ and the condition of his extant writings. Ockham changed his mind about the nature

Scientia humana positiva est illa quae continent leges humanas et divinas quae obligant ad prosequendum vel fugiendum illa quae nec sunt bona nec mala nisi quia sunt prohibita vel imperata a superiore cuius est leges condere seu statuere. Scientia moralis non-positiva est quae, sine omni praecepto superioris, dirigit actus humanos sicut principia per se nota vel nota per experientiam; sic dirigunt, scilicet, quod "omne honestum est faciendum," et "omne inhonestum est fugiendum," etc., de quibus loquitur Aristoteles in morali philosophia.

Circa tertium: dico quod moralis scientia positiva, cuiusmodi est scientia juristarum, non est demonstrativa, quamvis sit a scientia demonstrativa ut in pluribus regulata, quia rationes juristarum fundantur super leges positivas humanas quae non accipiunt propositiones evidenter notas. Sed disciplina moralis non-positiva est scientia demonstrativa. Probo, quia notitia deducens conclusiones syllogistice ex principiis per se notis vel per experientiam scitis, est demonstrativa; huiusmodi est disciplina moralis, ergo, etc.. Major est manifesta. Minor probatur, quia multa sunt principia per se nota in morali scientia; puta, quod "voluntas debet se conformare rectae rationi," "omne malum vituperabile est fugiendum," et huiusmodi. Similiter, per experientiam sciuntur multa principia sicut manifeste patet sequenti experientiam. Et ultra, dico quod illa scientia est certior multis aliis, per quanto quilibet posset habere majorem experientiam de actibus suis quam de aliis. Ex quo patet, quod illa scientia est multum subtilis, utilis et evidens.

Ad principale, dico quod de illis quae subjacent voluntati possunt formari propositiones verae et per se notae, quae multas conclusiones possunt demonstrare."

¹⁰For what little documentation there is about Ockham's life, see F. Federhofen, "Ein Beitrag zur Bibliographie und Biographie des Wilhelm von Ockham," Philosophisches Jahrbuch 38 (1925), pp.26-48; Léon Baudry, Guillaume d'Occam. Sa vie, ses oeuvres, ses idées sociales et politiques, Vol. I, L'Homme et les Oeuvres (Paris: J. Vrin, 1950); and Philotheus Boehner, The "Tractatus de Successivis" Attributed to William Ockham (St. Bonaventure, New York: The Franciscan Institute, 1944), pp. 1-15.

of universal concepts,¹¹ and in moral theory, about the question of divine commands to hate God.¹² The order of composition thus becomes critical in determining his mature position. Yet the biographical data is simply lacking for a chronological listing of publication dates which marked his academic career. Literary evidence, mostly in the form of cross references, makes the following order probable: the Reportatio or unrevised commentary on books II-IV of Peter Lombard's Sentences, the Ordinatio or revised commentary on book I of the Sentences, the Summa Logicae and the Quodlibeta Septem.¹³ These works contain Ockham's major treatment of ethical questions; they are the principal sources for this research.

¹¹Ockham first held that a universal was a "fictum" or mental construct having the ideal being (esse objectivum) of thought objects. Later, he considered universals as acts of the intellect possessing "subjective being" (esse subjectivum)--the existential status of real accidents which adhere in a subject. For the importance of this doctrinal development in dating Ockham's works, see Boehner, Collected Articles..., pp. 99-107; and Gedeon Gal, "Gualteri de Chatton et Guillelmi de Ockham Controversia de Natura Conceptus Universalis," Franciscan Studies XXVII (1967), pp. 191-212.

¹²Erich Hochstetter noticed this change in "Viator Mundi. Einige Bemerkungen zur Situation des Menschen bei Wilhelm von Ockham," Franziskanische Studien 32 (1950), pp. 1-20.

¹³We follow the proposals of Father Boehner, Ockham: Philosophical Writings, ed. and trans. by Philotheus Boehner (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1964), pp. lii-lvii. C. K. Brampton corroborates this order of composition in "The Probable Order of Ockham's non-polemical Works," Traditio 19 (1963), pp. 469-483. Chapter one of Léon Baudry's Guillaume d'Occam..., gives a different sequence to the academic writings but not one which affects the relationships between the four works on which our study depends.

The absence of a reliable "life" is not a problem peculiar to Ockham studies. Judging by the literary remains of the 13th and 14th centuries, the Schoolmen seem to be disembodied intellects; their personalities are fabricated from their styles in philosophy and theology; their formative years are conformed to the institutional history of the university which they attended. In determining his final and definitive position, Ockham presents a special problem only because his career falls into two parts--the academic and the polemical periods. Arguments with the popes --often about morals--form a considerable portion of Ockham's publishing and postdate his university life. But the ethical viewpoints advanced by Ockham to refute his opponents are not always his own. This study, consequently, looks to the political works for certain definitions and examples of applied moral theory only when the context shows that the Venerable Inceptor is "asserting" rather than "reciting" opinions.

The scribes who copied and circulated Ockham's work also transmitted numerous mistakes. Scholars must live with these corruptions, additions and subtractions until the Franciscan Institute of St. Bonaventure University completes its critical edition of Guillelmi de Ockham, Opera Philosophica et Theologica. For the present, it is necessary to use the texts readily available in modern photostats of the fifteenth century incunabula, namely, Guillelmus de Occam. Opera Plurima, Vol. III-IV (Lyons, 1494-1496)--reprint in London: Gregg Press, 1962; and Quodlibeta septem cum una Tractatu de Sacramento Altaris (Strasbourg, 1491)--

reprint at Heverlee-Louvain: Editions de la bibliothèque S. J., 1961. The Lyons edition of Ockham's Scriptum super Sententias has a fair text of the Ordinatio; the important questions on ethics from the Ordinatio and the major part of the Summa Logicae are critically edited by the Franciscan Institute. The incunabula give a poor text, however, of the Reportatio and Quodlibetal Questions. This is most unfortunate because the Scholastic inventory of moral questions, as proposed by Peter Lombard, occurs mainly within book three of the Sentences. And the random or "quodlibetal" questions which Ockham handled often concern ethics. The problem involves not only those subtle changes of doctrine worked by careless scribes, but whole questions added to or extracted from Ockham's original copy. To give a precise warning, it should be known that the following questions will be quoted frequently as part of Ockham's Reportatio yet they apparently did not belong to the original inventory of this work: Scriptum in Sententias, book II, question 3; book III, questions 12-15; and book IV, Dubitaciones Addititiae.¹⁴ These questions were probably Ockham's--since no serious objections to their authenticity have been raised--and later inserted into his questions on the Sentences by some secretary. For example, question twelve of book three (Are the virtues interdependent?) is called a "question on the Bible" by Walter of Chatton, a contemporary who pursued

¹⁴Father Boehner indicates that these texts are absent from the oldest manuscripts. Collected Articles..., pp. 293-300.

Ockham's publications with a critical interest.¹⁵ This would imply that the text had origins other than the lectures on Peter Lombard. The dubious policies of Medieval scribes and editors, however, have seen this same question printed as part of the Lyons edition of the Reportatio and the Strasbourg edition of the Quodlibeta Septem. All these textual difficulties cannot be eliminated; our modest hope is to minimize the problems by comparing key texts from the Reportatio on the notion of "right reason" with codex 16398 of the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris and important Quodlibetal Questions on the "scientific" nature of ethics with Vaticana Lat., 3075.

The following sources and abbreviations will be standard:

Text Quoted

Printed Source

A) from the prologue and distinctions I-III of the Ordinatio

A) G. de Ockham Opera Philosophica et Theologica, Vols. I-II, Scriptum in librum primum Sententiarum: Ordinatio, ed. Gedeon Gál et Stephen Brown (St. Bonaventure, New York: The Franciscan Institute, 1967-71).

¹⁵The editors of the Ordinatio call attention to codex Paris. Nat. lat. 15,887, f. 131va, in which Chatton refers to this question and, in the margin, the scribe identifies it as "Quaestio super Bibliam." This may represent one of Ockham's earliest writings since at the time Chatton composed his lectures, he knew only the unrevised and initial "commentary" of Ockham. In the normal course of study at Oxford, Ockham would have studied the Bible before Lombard. See G. de Ockham Opera Philosophica et Theologica, Vol. I, Scriptum in librum primum Sententiarum: Ordinatio, ed. Gedeon Gal et Stephen Brown (St. Bonaventure, New York: The Franciscan Institute, 1967), pp. 36*-37*, n. 5.

a) Abbr. e.g., Sent., I,
d. 1, q. 4 (I, 106).

B) from distinctions IV-
XLVIII of the Ordinatio
and books II-IV of the
Reportatio.

b) Abbr. e.g., Sent., II,
q. 19, 0.

c) from the Quodlibetal
Questions

c) Abbr. e.g., Quodl., I,
q. 20.

D) from parts I, II and I-
III of the Summa Logicae

d) Abbr. e.g., Summa Log.,
I, c. 4, p. 15.

E) from the works of John
Duns Scotus.

e) Abbr. e.g., Comm. Ox.,
II, d. 25, q. unica (XIII,
210).

a) Scriptum..., book one, dis-
tinction one, question four
(volume one of Opera Philosophica
et Theologica, page 106).

A) Opera Plurima: Guillelmus de
Occam, Vols. II-IV, Super Quat-
tuor Libros Sententiarum (Lyons,
1494-96).

b) Super Quattuor..., book two,
question nineteen, marginal
letter "O".

C) Quodlibeta Septem (Strasbourg,
1491).

c) Quodlibet Primi, question
twenty.

D) William Ockham. Summa Logicae:
Pars Prima, ed. Philotheus Boeh-
ner (St. Bonaventure, New York:
The Franciscan Institute, 1957);
Pars Secunda et Tertiae Prima,
ed. Philotheus Boehner (St.
Bonaventure, New York: The Fran-
ciscan Institute, 1962).

d) Summa Logicae, Pars Prima,
chapter four, page fifteen of
Boehner's edition.

E) J. D. Scoti Opera Omnia, ed.
Wadding and Vives (Paris: 1891-
95), 26 vols.

e) Commentaria Oxoniensia super
Sententias, book two, distinc-
tion twenty-five, question unica
(volume thirteen of Opera Omnia,
page 210).

In Gratitude

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helpful criticism of my director, Professor Francis J. Catania,

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CHAPTER I

THE HUMAN WILL, THE PRINCIPLE OF MORALITY

In 1270 and 1277, the bishop of Paris condemned certain tenets of Greek and Latin Necessitarianism.¹ These Parisian statutes prompted an increased sensitivity to the large differences between Aristotle and Christianity and added motives of orthodoxy to the perennial scholastic interest in the nature of freedom and the will. In retrospect, John Duns Scotus (d. 1308) was a central figure in the theological reaction to the Paris correctives; his doctrine of free will moves emphatically away from the Aristotelian account of "choice" and "rational appetite." Scotus proposed "the more formal characteristic of the will is 'freedom' rather than 'appetite;' as freedom is the will's form of receptivity, so the characteristic of freedom is the more constitutive feature of the will."² William of Ockham, sharing the aims if not the methods of Scotus, also re-examined the nature of human freedom.

¹See Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis, ed. H. Denifle and E. Chatelain, 4 vols. (Paris: Delalain, 1889-1897), Vol. I, pp. 486-87; pp. 543-588. Etienne Gilson gives a balanced study of these condemnations in History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages (New York: Random House, 1955), pp. 402-427 with notes.

²Scotus, Comm. Ox., II, d. 25, q. unica, n. 6 (XIII, p. 210); "Ratio autem formalior voluntatis est magis libera quam ratio appetitus, quare est ratio recipiendi in quantum libera, sicut ratio libertatis est magis ratio constituendi..."

This chapter considers Ockham's conception of the human will, its freedom, and its regulating influence on his moral theory. Our study intends to determine the sense in which the will is a "sufficient principle" of morality;³ and why "acts of will" alone are moral.⁴ The answers require close attention to the psychological evidence, conditions and character of human freedom. Many commentators render Ockham's moral theory as a function and prerogative of the omnipotent God. The Venerable Inceptor's examination of the human will provides a more accurate record of his motives as a moralist. But first, some general remarks on causality are in order. The will involves a special mode of causality and shares features and problems belonging to causality in general.

1. Causality in General

Ockham gives a descriptive definition of causality; that is, he offers a set of criteria by which an instance of causality can be recognized. Experiencing an essential order among beings, so that the occurrence of the posterior requires the prior, justifies an inference of causality.⁵

³Quodl., II, q. 16; "...ad eliciendum actum laudabilem concurrat voluntas; igitur nihil aliud a voluntate est sufficiens principium ad talem actum."

⁴Cf. Sent., III, q. 10 R; Sent., III, q. 12, F, XX; Quodl., I, q. 20; Quodl., III, q. 13.

⁵Sent., I, d. 1, q. 3 (I, 418); "ad secundum, dico quod ex tali ordine semper contingit inferre causalitatem in priori respectu posterioris, maxime si prius potest esse sine posteriori et non e converso, naturaliter etiam...Ergo si prius exigitur ad

To the first of these (objections), I answer that although there can be many causes of the same effect, nevertheless, this should not be asserted without necessity. For instance, unless one can be convinced through experience that precisely with this thing present and the other absent, the effect follows; or that with this thing absent and everything else present, the effect does not follow. An example of the first--one proves that fire is a cause of heat because with fire itself present and everything else removed, heat follows in a heatable thing which is close. In the same way, one proves that the sun is a cause of heat because when fire is absent and the sun is brought to bear, the production of heat follows. An example of the second--one proves that the object is the cause of intuitive cognition because with everything else present and the object alone removed, the intuitive cognition does not follow. Therefore, the object is a cause of intuitive cognition. Such an argument is valid by means of such a proposition that 'Whatever absolute thing, required in real existence for the being of another thing, is a cause of that thing in some genus of cause.' The first argument is valid through this proposition. 'All that, when asserted, is followed by another thing, is a cause of the other thing.' Otherwise, it could be proved that something is a cause of another through reason, without such experience.⁶

esse secundi, quia secundum non potest esse sine priori, prius erit causa illius in aliquo genere causae." Also see, Sent. II, q. 16, C.

⁶Sent., I, d. I, q. 3 (I, 416); "Ad primum istorum respondeo quod quamvis respectu ejusdem effectus possint esse plures causae, hoc tamen non est ponendum sine necessitate, puta: nisi per experientiam possit convinci, ita scilicet quod ipso posito, alio destructo, sequitur ille effectus, vel quod ipso non posito, quocumque alio posito, non sequitur effectus. Exemplum primi: probatur quod ignis est causa caloris, quia ipso igne posito--omnibus aliis amotis--sequitur calor in calefactibili approximato; eodem modo probatur de sole quod est causa caloris, quia igne amoto et sole approximato sequitur calefactio. Exemplum secundi: probatur quod objectum est causa intellectionis intuitivae, quia omnibus aliis positis, ipso solo amoto, non sequitur notitia intuitiva; ergo objectum est causa notitiae intuitivae. Et tenet tale argumentum per talem propositionem quod "quaecumque res absoluta requiritur in esse reali ad esse alicuius, est causa illius in aliquo genere causae". Primum argumentum tenet per istam propositionem 'omne illud quo posito sequitur aliud, est

Ockham's experimental or experiential approach to causality is manifest. He proves or tests causality by perceiving the essential order between two beings. A causal nexus cannot be established "through reason" or "through conceptual analysis." According to Ockham, "cognition of the cause does not virtually contain the notion of its effect."⁷ This can be misunderstood rather easily. Ockham means that the concept of one absolute thing excludes the proper conception of every other absolute thing. The metaphysical unity and singularity of being parallels the discrete and singular perceptions caused by beings. Hence, the notion of "man" does not include any proper understanding of the particular, non-human things producible by a man. To be sure, the notion of "cause" includes that of "effect." As "correlative" terms, cause and effect mutually and simultaneously entail each other.⁸ "Cause" is a complex or "connotative" notion precisely

causa illius." Aliter aliquid esse causam alterius potest probari sine tali experientia per rationem." See Baudry, Lexique..., pp. 34-43, for the major types and divisions regarding Ockham's doctrine of causality.

⁷Sent., Prologue, q. 9 (I, 299); also see Idem (I, 241); and Sent., I, d. 3, q. 8 (II, 528).

⁸Sent., I, d. 43, q. 2, F; "Generaliter, omni relativo correspondet si convenienter assignetur aliquid correlativum. Et in omnibus relativis qui vocantur relativa secundum propositionem (activam et passivam vel causam et effectum), semper correlativa sunt simul natura; et ideo quia sunt simul natura et mutuo se inferant, neutrum est magis causam alterius quam e converso..." Because "cause" and "effect" are correlatives, Ockham says, "cognoscere causam sub ratione causae praesupponit notitiam illius rei quae est effectus." Sent., Prologue, q. 9 (I, 243). Cf. Aristotle, Categories, c. 13 (14^b 24-15^a 12) for the source of Ockham's notion of "correlatives."

because its significance presupposes an observed priority between two distinct beings. No analysis of the proper concept of "a" cause, however, permits an a priori deduction that this thing, e.g., "man," produces this other thing, e.g., a statue. Regarding the requirements for a logical proof, Ockham points out that two simple and proper concepts lack any intrinsic and necessary relationship which could serve as the means of demonstration.⁹ Thus, Ockham insists that two things be perceived in an immediate, irreversable and essential order of dependence to justify an inference of causality.

Notice that Ockham "inferred" causality from the experienced dependence between two beings. Strictly speaking, it is impossible to demonstrate even a posteriori that this created object produced this given effect.¹⁰ The dictum that "God can produce immediately what He ordinarily produces through secondary causes" was true and "well known" for Ockham. This theological

⁹Cf. Damascene Webering, Theory of Demonstration According to William Ockham (St. Bonaventure, New York: The Franciscan Institute, 1953), pp. 104-105; 146-149; for a technical discussion of "proof" in Ockham and a more thorough explanation of why actual causes cannot be demonstrated a priori or a posteriori. Cf. Aristotle, Post. Analytics, II, c. 16 (98^b 25-48).

¹⁰Sent., qes. 4-5, R; "Ex hoc sequitur quod non potest demonstrari quod aliquis effectus producitur a causa secunda, quia licet semper ad approximationem ignis ad combustibile sequatur combustio, hoc tamen potest stare quod ignis non sit ejus causa, quia Deus potuit ordinasse quod semper ad presentiam ignis passo approximato, ipse solus causaret combustionem sicut ordinavit cum ecclesia, quod ad prolationem certorum verborum, causetur gratia in anima." In a late theological work, Ockham affirms that the entire order of natural causes and effects could be changed by God. See De Sacramento Altaris, ed. T. Bruce Birch (Burlington, Iowa: The Lutheran Literary Board, 1930), p. 191.

axiom was reason to admit the possibility of causal "occasionalism." Although combustion always results from the approximation of fire and wood, their proximity may be the "occasion" in which God directly and totally produces combustion. It seems, therefore, that even experience cannot identify causes with absolute certitude.

Ockham's "razor" cuts away any explanation of causation as entitative, intrinsic and absolute relationship. Production is not an entity distinct from producer and produced.¹¹ But in so doing, Ockham ends in modified scepticism about knowing the extrinsic causal connections between natural beings. Reliable and evident knowledge of created causes depends upon conditions--e.g., the autonomy of Nature vis-à-vis the causal prerogatives of God¹²--which cannot be known evidently. As a philosopher,

¹¹Quodl., VI, q. 12; "...si productio activa sit alia res; aut ergo est prior natura ipso effectu producto, aut simul natura, vel posterior natura. Non primo modo, quia relatio si sit alia res essentialiter dependet tam a fundamento quam a termino, et per consequens neutro est prius natura...Et eodem modo probatur quod respectus causae ad effectum non est simul natura cum effectu; nec est posterior natura ipso effectu quia tunc prior natura esset effectus in rerum natura quam produceretur..." Ockham's argument is cryptic. He seems to say that "production" or "active causality" cannot be asserted before or after the cause and effect exist. No argument there. Many scholastics, however, would argue that the "aspect of causality" is simultaneous with the cause and effect, as the foundation of the terms of relationship. Ockham's rejoinder is that if cause and effect exist, then a simultaneous and entitative relationship of causality need not be asserted. His rejection of a single, substantive referent for "causality" parallels Ockham's denial of absolute space, time, and motion. Cf. Herman Shapiro, Motion, Time and Place According to William Ockham (St. Bonaventure, New York: The Franciscan Institute, 1957), pp. 132-144.

¹²Ockham does not systematically doubt the productiveness of natural forces. But to attribute an effective influence to

Ockham demands immediate experience as the means of knowing causes because the logical analysis of simple concepts never reveals their mutual dependence or entailment. Then, as a theologian, he admits that divine power can totally replace any effective influence between the natural beings of experience. Ockham would have the same trouble as David Hume in "seeing" that one billiard ball "moves" another, albeit for different reasons.¹³ Given

some created beings requires that the normal operation of nature, or the usual concurrence of God, be presupposed. Ockham cannot distinguish, on the basis of perception, the normal working of secondary causes from a "special intervention" of God. Hence, causal explanations of the physical world remain only probable accounts; the laws of nature rest on hypotheses. The conditional potency of natural causes, and the corresponding conditional certitude of perceptual experience of natural causes, is called "ex suppositione naturae" by Professor Ernest Moody, "Ockham, Buridan, and Nicholas of Autrecourt," Franciscan Studies 7 (1947), pp. 120-146. William J. Courtenay speaks of causal connections being necessary "ex pacto et ex natura rei." "Covenant and Causality in Pierre d'Ailly," Speculum 46 (1971), pp. 116-119. These studies are excellent in describing the historical and theological context of Ockham's doctrine of causality.

¹³The verbal parallels between Ockham and David Hume have been drawn to show Ockham's "scepticism" about natural causality. Cf. G. M. Manser, "Drei Zweifler am Kausalprinzip im XIV Jahrhundert," Jahrbuch für Philosophie und speculative Theologie 27 (1912), p. 408; H. Becher, S.J., "Gottesbegriff und Gottesbeweis bei Wilhelm von Ockham," Scholastik 3 (1912), pp. 390-393; and Harry R. Klocker, S.J., "Ockham and Efficient Causality," The Thomist 23 (1960), pp. 112-120. The general complaint is that "in all of his analyses, causality means nothing more than association, sequence and succession." (Klocker, p. 120). This criticism is textually refuted by E. Hochstetter, Studien zur Metaphysik und Erkenntnislehre Wilhelms von Ockham (Berlin, Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter, 1927), pp. 139-179, by showing Ockham's use of the "causal principle" and his assertion of a "causal influx." Ockham accepts the general scholastic position about "what" causality is; his novelty consists in casting doubts about the identification of particular causes. A sequential definition of cause permits Ockham to avoid identifying the source of a perfective transfer or influence when an effect is perceived. He modestly wishes to identify only the precedents which govern the

these problems in knowing the productiveness of causes, Ockham's sequential definition is understandable. By describing "cause" as "an absolute thing required in real existence for the being of another thing," he can use the notion of causality in explanations without compromising his logical or theological problems. We experience regular patterns of priority among natural beings; Ockham's definition asserts only this observed order between prior and subsequent. Even if God were the only causal being, the precedence of natural "occasions" to supernatural effects remains constant and reliable. Fire would precede heat in wood even if God were the sole cause of the heat. By teaching causality as priority rather than productiveness, Ockham gives a working principle of discovery and explication to physical scientists; he allows for generalization and predictability in personal experience.

Ockham's empirical treatment of causality entails a reinterpretation of many "causal laws" proposed by "realistic" metaphysicians. That causes "virtually contain" their effects

effect's occurrence. Ockham's belief extends to angels in human form; to physical rituals or sacraments which had supernatural effects; to miracles in which mud cures blindness and water heals the lame. Scripture and theology suggest Ockham's doubts about the perceptual differentiation between supernatural and natural causality. And it is the religious conviction in God's "ordained laws" and "general influence" which makes perception of natural causality ordinarily and generally reliable. Hence, the origin and limit of Ockham's alleged "scepticism" rest in theological principles which cannot be evidently known. The History of Philosophy must wait for David Hume to hear the notion of causality questioned because of an empirical or atomistic theory of perception.

means, for Ockham, that causes "can produce" their effects.¹⁴ That effects "are assimilated" to the form of the cause means that the effect and cause are ordered as inferior to superior.¹⁵ Because causality constitutes an external relationship between things, Ockham seriously limits the "class parallel" or "type similarity" between cause and effect. For example, the ontological similarity between the will-power and will-effect is expressed when "real thing" is predicated of both. The freedom, indifference and indetermination which belongs to the will cannot be attributed to will-acts by warrant of "assimilation" or formal similarity between producer and produced. Predicates expressing the will's nature are not applicable necessarily to voluntary acts. Any methodology, therefore, for examining Ockham's doctrine of the

¹⁴See Sent., Prologue, q. 9 (I, 229-244), where Ockham refutes Duns Scotus regarding the virtual inclusion of accident in subject and effect in cause. "Non est proprie dictum quod talis una forma includat plures formas virtualiter, quia virtualiter includere aliquid est posse producere illud." Sent., I, d. 3, q. 5 (II, 481). Also see Sent., I, d. 7, q. 1, EE in finem.

¹⁵Sent., I, d. 6, q. 1, H; "Sexto, falsum est quid dicit vel non est ad propositum, scilicet quod effectus assimilatur formae agentis per quam agit, quia quaero; Aut ista assimilatio est in genere aut in speciae aut inferiori, sive sit analogum sive non. Primo modo non, quia sol agit naturaliter multos effectus qui non habent formam ejusdem rationis cum forma solis. Similiter nec secundo modo, quia substantia est causa accidentis et similiter, secundum eum (Scotum), e converso accidens est causa substantiae... Si intelligatur tertio modo, ita effectus assimilatur formae per quam voluntas agit sicut formae agentis naturalis; quia certum est quod tam forma quam voluntas agit quamvis effectus est ens reale et per se in aliquo genere, saltem quantum ad multos effectus...(K) Praeterea, quid dicit (Scotus) quod agens naturale facit quale ipsum est, si dicatur secundum formam specificam, hoc est simpliciter falsum, quia tunc sol non faceret nisi solem. Si secundum genus vel secundum aliquid superius, hoc est certum quod agens naturale facit rem naturalem. Et hoc potest concedi, sed nihil ad propositum quia ita voluntas facit unam rem realem.

will ought to respect the distinction of characteristics applied to the volitional potency and the volitional effect. To know the will as the principle or sufficient cause of morality, and knowledge of the positive being of moral effects within the will, require distinct experiences and studies.

A thorough study of Ockham's doctrine of causality remains unwritten. Our modest contribution to this unwritten monograph, and to the often-debated question of Ockham's "scepticism," is to indicate the dual meaning of "experience"--the indispensable means of knowing causality. Experience can mean the immediate awareness of either external or internal facts.¹⁶ Ockham doubts only the infallibility of human perception (of externals). Internal experience or introspection, however, gives evident and reliable knowledge about the productiveness of one's own powers. Because of the greater certitude regarding inner experience, Ockham feels that his doctrine of the will is based upon better evidence than the natural sciences. And moral science "is more

¹⁶Sent., III, q. 12, SS; "Aliqua talis propositio habet cognosci per experientiam acceptam respectu actus alterius hominis; alia non potest evidenter cognosci nisi per experientiam acceptam respectu proprii actus. Exemplum primi; 'Iracundus est mitigandus per pulchra verba' quando vidi eum sic mitigatum per alium vel per me. Notitia evidens istius potest esse sine virtute morali quia aliquis potest evidenter illam propositionem cognoscere, et tamen nolle eum simpliciter mitigare sicut patet per experientiam et probatur haec pars per rationes prius factas pro secunda conclusione. Exemplum secundi; aliquis enim eliciendo frequenter actum continentiae et temperantiae magis disponitur ad Dei cognitionem et dilectionem et ad studendum... quae non possunt evidenter esse verae nec evidenter ab aliquo sciri sine actu proprio elicitive generativo virtutis." Also see Sent., Prologue, q. 1 (I, 40-41) where Ockham appeals to Augustine that experience directly concerns "intelligibilia" and "sensibilia." Cf. De Trinitate, c. 1, n. 3 (P. L., 42, 1015).

certain than many others in so far as one can have a more certain experience about his own acts than about others' acts."¹⁷

2. The Definition of Will

Ockham distinguishes clearly between two modes of production; causality is either natural or free. Any agent whose activity is determined by its concrete possibilities is a "natural" cause. If the approximation of agent and patient results inevitably in a predeterminable effect, then the agent's production is natural.¹⁸ Characteristically, non-free or natural causes produce at every moment everything within their power.¹⁹ In every similar

¹⁷Quodl., II, q. 14; see Introduction, n. 9.

¹⁸Sent., II, qes. 4-5, F; "Ad primum oppositum dico, quod auctoritas Philosophi et Commentatoris et omnes consimiles intelliguntur de naturalibus causis qui semper eodem tempore producant eosdem effectus nisi sit aliquod impedimentum. Exemplum, sol semper in Autumno producit eosdem effectus et similiter aliis temporibus per approximationem et remotionem nisi aliquid impediat." Also see Sent., Prologue, q. 1 (I, 62), for a later and more exact description. "Ad tertiam probationem, dico quod Philosophus II De Generatione loquitur de agente naturali, quod manens idem, semper facit idem. Quia scilicet quidquid facit uno tempore, facit alio tempore, nisi sit aliqua variatio ex parte passi vel ex parte agentis vel aliquod aliud impedimentum, ita quod si uno tempore facit unum, omni tempore faciet unum, et si uno tempore facit centum, alio tempore faciet centum, et ita semper idem." Cf. Aristotle, De Generatione et Corruptione, II, c. 10 (336^a 28-32).

¹⁹Ockham's "probable proof" that God acts contingently regarding finite beings depends upon the character of natural agents in producing everything within their power at any given instant. God is capable of infinite effects; but an infinite number of finite effects do not exist; hence, God is not a natural cause. In Ockham's words: "...tenendum est quod Deus est causa contingenter agens quia si esset causa naturalis vel omnia produceret simul vel nulla, quorum utrumque probantur esse manifeste falsum. Et ideo manifeste falsum est Deum esse causam naturalem aliorum a se." Sent., I, d. 43, q. 1, M. See also Quodl., II,

situation, "Nature" causes similar effects. On the other hand, any agent capable of producing opposite effects within similar situations possesses "Will"--the principle of free actions. The apprehension of regular patterns of prior-posterior among beings constitutes the evidence for natural causation. What evidence supports Ockham's claim of free causes?

Strictly speaking, it is impossible to demonstrate syllogistically that an effect is produced freely. Nevertheless, man experiences himself as a free agent.²⁰ Inner experience is evident and infallible evidence for human freedom and renders any logical proof superfluous. The evidence remains a personal privilege. To communicate this experiential truth, one can only appeal to similar experiences. As described by Ockham, freedom appears

q. 9. This is the only philosophical defense offered by Ockham that God acts contingently; that "potest facere aliqua quae non facit." As a theologian, Ockham asserts the "absolute power of God" to maintain this precise truth--God can do things which He does not do. In Distinction Fourty-Three, Ockham rejects the Thomistic proofs for the First Principle's contingency. See the study of Anton Pegis, "Necessity and Liberty," The New Scholasticism 15 (1941), pp. 18-45. In Sent., II, qes. 4-5, "Utrum Deus sit agens naturale vel liberum?", he rejects the Scotistic arguments for God's contingent activity ad extra. By default of the reasons of Aquinas and Scotus, Ockham emphasizes the non-selective and "total" quality of natural agency to preserve his own "persuasion" for divine contingency. This quality of natural causality is not explicit in the De Generatione et Corruptione text which Ockham adduces to support his description.

²⁰Quodl., I, q. 16, asks "Whether it can be sufficiently proved that the will freely causes its acts effectively?" His answer: "Non potest probari per aliquam rationem, quia omnis ratio probans accipit aequa dubia et aequa ignotum conclusioni vel ignotius. Potest tamen evidenter cognosci per experientiam, per hoc, quod homo experitur quod quantumcunque ratio dictet aliquid, potest tamen voluntas hoc velle vel nolle." Cf. Sent., I, d. I, q. 4 (I, 434); and Sent. I, d. I, q. 6 (I, 490).

within the awareness that in every practical situation I have the fundamental option of saying "yes" or "no." In Ockham's words, "I can indifferently and contingently cause something, so I am able to cause and not cause the same effect without a change made within that power."²¹ Objects which are simply apprehended (e.g., this man, John), or apprehended within a proposition (e.g., "I should love John"), appear to the will's affection as options to be accepted or rejected. No object necessitates the will's love or hate by its presence in consciousness. Ockham's doctrine of the will, therefore, flows from the experience of indifference regarding known objects to the residual capacity to love or hate any object. As a residual potency, the ability to cause freely is called "will" (voluntas). The experience of indifference towards opposite types of behavior indicates the free power from which a person's deliberate actions originate. Ockham's analysis of the will's nature revolves around the experience of indetermination and self-determination. Syllogistic proof is out of the question.

The experience of freely causing can be approached indirectly from other perspectives. First, a person's recognition of guilt or moral responsibility entails the ability to avoid wrong acts. It is not cogent, Ockham says, to consider actions

²¹Quodl., I, q. 16; "Circa primum est sciendum quod voco libertatem potestatem qua possum indifferenter et contingenter effectum ponere; ita quod possum eundem effectum causare et non causare, nulla diversitate circa illam potentiam facta." Also see Sent., I, d. I, q. 6 (I, 501).

either good or bad (imputable) when they occur necessarily.²²

The realization, therefore, that certain acts are blameworthy constitutes a mediate experience that certain acts are done freely. Secondly, accidental or chance happenings would be impossible without the presence of free causes.²³ Natural causes inevitably produce their determined effects if the conditions of their production, i.e., the potency and the object, are given. Natural

²²Sent., IV, q. 14, E; "Dico igitur quod libertas et posse peccare se habent sicut superius et inferius, sit quod quicumque potest peccare habet libertatem et non e contra. Et causa est, quia potens peccare habet libertatem et contingentiam respectu illorum actuum in quibus consistit peccatum." Quodl., III, q. 16; "Ad istam quaestionem dico quod sic, quia homo laudabiliter et viciose potest operari et per consequens potest mereri et demereri; tum quia homo est agens liberum et omne tale potest mereri et demereri; tum quia multi actus sunt imputabiles homini, ergo per istos potest mereri et demereri." Also see Opus Nonaginta Dierum c. 95, ed. H. S. Offler, Vol. II, Guillelmi de Ockham, Opera Politica (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1963), p. 723, where Ockham puts this argument into syllogistic form. [Hereafter citations from this three volume edition of Ockham's Opera Politica will be abbreviated as "Manchester ed., volume number, and page."] Liberty does not entail the ability to sin, according to Ockham, because God is free but cannot sin. Furthermore, since Anselm's tract De Libertate Arbitrii, the scholastics commonly taught that sin constituted a type of "servitude"--a limitation of freedom. Cf. Anselm, De Libertate Arbitrii, c. 3 (P. L., 158, 500-503.)

²³Quodl., I, q. 17; "In ista quaestione ostendam quod sine libertate voluntatis non potest esse casus nec fortuna. Secundo, quo modo ista salvantur per libertatem voluntatis. Circa primum tunc arguo sic: Omne quid inevitabiliter sit, non fit a casu nec a fortuna, sed omne quid fit non ab agente libero sed naturali inevitabiliter fit, ergo et cetera. Major patet in II Physicorum; minor est manifesta." This argument is repeated in the Summulae in libros Physicorum (Philosophia Naturalis), Pars II, c. 12, ed. Bonaventure T. Veliterno (Rome, 1637--reprinted by Gregg Press: London, 1963), p. 45. Cf. Aristotle, Physics, II, c. 6 (197^b 1-14). "Chance and what results from chance are appropriate to agents that are capable of good fortune and of moral action generally." (Trans. R. P. Hardie and R. K. Gaye.)

effects are produced by necessity and in an inevitable manner. Thus, the fact that accidents and circumstances occur, which are not inevitable, implies the involvement of a free cause.

Contrasting acts of knowing with acts of willing highlights the precise character of the free power. The intellect is a "natural power;"²⁴ that is, its operation follows the mode of necessity. Just as vision happens when the healthy eye contacts color, so knowledge occurs when the intellect contacts the singular fact. The presence of the object (intelligible) and potency (intellect) invariably results in apprehension (intellection) unless this operation is impeded by a superior power. Cognitive acts, therefore, are experienced as determined by the object. We are aware of a proportion between the nature of a given thing and the determinate act by which it is known. Ockham asserts that the essence of the thing known is the "cause (ratio) of understanding."²⁵ The rational power is passive in the sense that its

²⁴Sent., I, d. 3, q. 5 (II, 473-474); "Contra: Quodcumque intellectus habet aliqua requisita ad intellectionem multorum, si quodlibet illorum respiciat equaliter omnia illa multa, intellectus, cum sit potentia naturalis, vel intelliget quodlibet illorum vel nullum." Also see Sent., I, d. 38, q. 1, F; for a general description of a natural potency; and Sent., II, q. 3, F-G, for the various meanings of the term "natural."

²⁵Sent., II, q. 15, U; "His visis, dico and primam questionem loquendo de cognitione intuitiva naturali quod angelus et intellectus noster intelligunt alia a se non per species eorum, nec per essentiam propriam, sed per essentiam rerum intellectarum, et hoc prout ly 'per' dicit circumstantiam causae efficientis, ita quod ratio intelligendi ut distinguitur a potentia est ipsa essentia rei cognitae." Intellection, or the cognitive, act of the intellect, is caused by the intellectual power and the object known; the intellect being a passive cause and the object apprehended being the active cause. Cf. Sent., I, d. I, q. 3 (I, 416).

activity is evoked by the given object and is impedable by "superior" powers, e.g., the will or God. Ockham hesitates to say that "knowing" or any natural act stands "within our power" except in a minimal and mediate sense.²⁶ True, man normally has the power to know, but cognition and assent follow the given object automatically if no impediment intervenes. The mind does not control or initiate intuitive cognition because such activity happens in the mind by necessity with the knowable object present.

Given the conditions of knowing, therefore, the mind inevitably produces cognitive acts. The passive nature of the intellect insures the accurate representation of extra-mental things within the mind. In contrast, Ockham indicates that the presence of every prerequisite for willing does not result necessarily in volitional acts.²⁷ The conditions for knowledge act

²⁶Sent., III, q. 12, XX; "Contra primum: Impossibile est quod de actu nonvirtuoso fiat virtuosus per aliquem actum pure naturalem, qui nullo modo est in potestate voluntatis, quia propter talem nullus laudatur nec vituperatur, ex quo solum est actus naturalis. Sed actus prudentiae secundum eum (Scotum) et secundum veritatem est solum actus naturalis, et nullo modo in potestate nostra plusquam actus videndi." An act of prudence, according to Ockham, is an act of knowing accomplished without the cooperation of the will.

²⁷Sent., IV, q. 14, G; "Loquendo de primo actu, posito omni sufficienti et necessario requisito ad talem actum, puta ad actum voluntatis, si objectum cognoscatur et Deus velit concurrere cum voluntate ad causandum quando placet voluntati; potest voluntas ex sua libertate sine omni alia determinatione actuali vel habituali actum illum et ejus objectum elicere vel non elicere. Et ideo respectu illius actus non oportet in aliquo quod determinetur voluntas nisi a seipsa." Also see Sent., I, d. 1, q. 3 (I, 417); where Ockham considers knowing and willing in terms of his definition of causality. Cognition is necessarily prior to volition and contributes partially to the specific character of will-acts. By definition, therefore, cognition is a cause of

as intellectual determinants while the conditions for volition remain mere possibilities or options.

The reliability of the experience of freely causing can be questioned. Ockham maintains that God could produce intuitive cognition within the human mind without the natural object and cause of that intuition.²⁸ Serious questions have been raised whether the knower could distinguish between naturally caused and divinely caused intuitions.²⁹ In the same way, God could directly and solely produce acts of volition within the human will without the human will-power.³⁰ Could the agent distinguish supernatural

volition. Not a necessitating cause, however. The will's capacity to select or decide its objects *qua* causes renders it self-determining. Also see Sent., II, q. 19, M; and Quodl., I, q. 16.

²⁸Cf. Sent., II, q. 15, D-E; Sent., Prologue, q. 1 (I, 38-39); Quodl., V, q. 5.

²⁹The on-going debate regarding Ockham's "scepticism" centers around the divinely caused cognition of non-existent objects. For the opinion that scepticism follows Ockham's position; see E. Gilson, The Unity..., 78-84; Anton Pegis, "Concerning William of Ockham," Traditio 11 (1944), pp. 465-480; and "Some Recent Interpretations of Ockham," Speculum 23 (1948), pp. 452-463; Marilyn McCord Adams, "Intuitive Cognition, Certainty and Scepticism in William Ockham," Traditio 26 (1970), pp. 389-398. Answering the charge of scepticism; see Philotheus Boehner, Collected Articles..., pp. 268-319; and Sebastian Day, Intuitive Cognition. A Key to the Significance of the Later Scholastics (St. Bonaventure, New York: The Franciscan Institute, 1957). The state of the question now concerns how Ockham would or could distinguish intrinsically between supernatural and naturally caused intuitions.

³⁰Sent., III, q. 10, R; "Ad aliud dico quod ex hoc quod praecise est conformis rationi rectae, non est virtuosus; quia si Deus faceret in voluntate mea actum conformem rationi rectae, voluntate vel (read non) agente, non esset ille actus meritorius nec virtuosus. Et ideo requiritur ad bonitatem actus quod sit in potestate voluntatis habentis talem actum." Also see Sent., II, q. 19, N.

In admitting this possibility, Ockham stimulated a

effects within his will from volitions which he produced freely? Ockham's solution to this question is remarkably unconvincing. The problem arises within discussions of morality; Ockham merely indicates that moral acts entail the free causality of the human agent. Acts produced within the human will supernaturally would be beyond the power of the human agent and therefore non-moral acts.³¹ This defense begs the question; if created freedom must

controversy which divided many 14th century thinkers. Konstanty Michalski has outlined the arguments regarding the created will's autonomy and freedom vis-à-vis its dependence upon the Uncreated Cause. La Philosophie au XIV^e Siècle: Six Études, Tome I, Opuscula Philosophica, ed. by Kurt Flasch (Frankfurt: Minerva GMBH; 1969), pp. 281-391. One aspect of this problem regards God's ability to place volition within the human soul; another is the requirement of God's "general influence" or co-agency for even the normal (and free) operation of the will. Neither theological truth, according to Ockham, impunes the will's liberty or causal efficacy in its intrinsic operation. While the will can be necessitated to receive purely divine effects, it cannot be coerced! "Ad aliud dico quod voluntas non cogitur in recipiendo illum actum causatum a Deo solo, tamen, bene necessitatur. Primum probatur quia tunc aliquid proprie cogitur quando facit aut patitur aliquid contra naturalem inclinationem suam...modo voluntas non recipit illum actum contra naturalem inclinationem suam quia posset naturaliter illum causare saltem partialiter...Secundum probatur quia tunc agens vel patiens necessitatur quando non est in potestate sua agere vel non agere, pati vel non pati, recipere vel non recipere; sed non est in potestate voluntatis illum actum causatum a solo Deo recipere vel non recipere, ergo necessitatur." Sent., II, q. 19, N. The subtle distinction between "coercion" and "necessitation" was not satisfactory to many of Ockham successors. Gabriel Biel (d. 1495) reviews many scholastic objections to Ockham's solution and attempts an "explanation" of Ockham's position that the will cannot be "coerced." See Collectorium in quattuor libros Sententiarum II, d. 25, q. unica, art. 3 (Tubingen, 1501). Cf. James E. Biechler, "Gabriel Biel on Liberum Arbitrium: Prelude to Luther's De Servo Arbitrio," The Thomist 34 (1970), pp. 114-127.

³¹Quodl., V, q. 5; "Et si dicis; Deus potest facere assentum evidentem huius contingentis mediante existentia rei sicut mediante causa secundaria, ergo potest hoc facere se solo. Respondeo, quod haec est fallacia figurae dictionis, sicut, Deus potest facere actum meritorium mediante voluntate creata, ergo

be established before asserting moral behavior then the possibility of moral behavior is itself questionable. A better justification of the will's autonomy and freedom in causing can be given ad mentem Ockham. Namely, both the causal power and the effects of will are manifest to introspection. I am conscious of the causal connection between my volitional power and my acts of choice. Immediate cognition of the created cause of volition precludes the problem of distinguishing personal from supernatural effects within the created will. Divine productions within the human will are "foreign" because they are not chosen by the created agent.

Based on the evidence of personal experience, Ockham gives various definitions of "will." The "nominal definition" (quid nominis) indicates what the term signifies. "Will" means "the substance of the soul able to will."³² The name indicates directly the unitary and simple substance, soul, and indirectly the act of willing. Ockham's grammar, therefore, preserves a Franciscan tradition of not treating the will and intellect as

potest hoc facere se solo." Also see Sent., Prologue, q. 3 (I, 141).

³²Sent., II, q. 24, K; "Sed distinguo de 'potentia' nam potentia primo modo accipitur pro tota descriptione exprimente quid nominis potentiae. Alio modo pro illo quid denominatur ab illo nomine vel conceptum. Primo modo loquendo de intellectu et voluntate; dico quod distinguuntur nam diffinitio exprimens quid nominis intellectus est ista, quod 'intellectus est substantia animae potens intelligere;' sed descriptio voluntatis est quod 'est substantia animae potens velle.'" Also see Sent., IV, q. 2, K.

really distinct powers of the human soul.³³ Although "velle" and "intelligere" are numerically and specifically different acts, they do not involve different powers. The distinction between will and intellect is not ontological but terminological. Both "will" and "intellect" directly signify the soul; they differ in connoting different acts of the soul. Ockham's semantics render "will" a connotative term; it signifies two items--the soul and the act of volition. In contrast absolute terms, e.g., tree, man, stand for just one thing and receive "real definitions" (quid rei).³⁴

³³ Bonaventure and Scotus, to name two major Franciscan thinkers, follow John of La Rochelle (d. 1245) in denying a real distinction between the soul's powers. See texts and study given by Vernon Bourke, History of Ethics, pp. 137-140. The "ancient authority" for this position is St. Augustine, De Trinitate X, c. 11 [P. L., 42, 983].

³⁴ Summa Log., I, c. 10, pp. 33-34; Unde sciendum quod nominum quaedam sunt mere absoluta, quaedam sunt connotativa. Nomina mere absoluta sunt illa quae non significant aliquid principaliter et aliud vel idem secundario, sed quid-quid significatur per idem nomen, aequè primo significatur; sicut patet de hoc nomine 'animal,'...Nomen autem connotativum est illud, quod significat aliquid primario et aliquid secundario. Et tale nomen proprie habet definitionem exprimentem quid nominis, et frequenter oportet ponere unum illius definitionis in recto et aliud in obliquo..."

The difference between absolute and connotative terms is crucial to the proper understanding of Ockham's psychology and the moral doctrine built upon that psychological theory. Ernest A. Moody explains the difference: "...an absolute term means precisely the things which it can be used to denote, and hence it can be used as a sign of the things which it means without involving, implicitly or otherwise, the truth of any proposition or the existence of any fact, circumstance, or temporal or spatial determination such as might be involved in any particular experience of such individuals. A connotative term is said to be one which signifies one kind of thing primarily, and a different kind of thing secondarily or obliquely. It stands for one kind of thing by connoting something distinct from it contingently

Ockham also defines the will "properly" as "a rational potency capable of opposites."³⁵ This formula indicates the soul's ability to appreciate opposite objects and effects. The indifference toward opposites, possessed by the soul as a "rational power," results in contingent operations. The psychological evidence of causing freely is formulated to indicate the inherent and habitual indifference of the soul towards opposite objects. This description originates in Aristotle,³⁶ it is commonplace among Ockham's predecessors. But Ockham's effort to conform to these "authorities" can be misleading. The "liberty of opposites" was not fundamental to the nature of the will, according to Ockham; the emphasis of his doctrine on the will's

connected with it, or by connoting a determinate part of it as if separated or separable from it." The Logic of William of Ockham (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1935), p. 55.

³⁵Sent., IV, q. 14, G; "Ad aliud dico quod voluntas proprie est potentia rationalis quia valet ad opposita secundum intentionem Philosophi." See the later text in Sent., I, d. 1, q. 3 (I, 425), where the will is identified with the "rational soul." Leon Baudry, Lexique..., p. 297, maintains that this definition should be considered Ockham's fundamental one because it also occurs in Quaestiones in libros Physicorum, q. 126 and Expositio super Physicam Aristotelis. But Ockham does not seem concerned to formulate a favorite or complete definition. A text which indicates Ockham's 'nonchalance' pertaining to precise definition and his caution regarding the distinct characteristics of will-power and will-act comes in the Opus Nonaginta Dierum, c. 54 (Manchester ed., II, 543). "'Voluntas' habet plures significationes quam hoc verbum 'velle,' ideo, licet 'voluntas' sic diffiniretur: 'Voluntas est potentia, quae primo et libere valet ad opposita,' non tamen 'velle' posset sic diffini: 'Velle est ferri primo et libere in opposita;' et licet 'voluntas' sic diffiniretur: 'Voluntas est potentia incorporalis potens ferri in opposita,' non tamen 'velle' posset sic diffinire: 'Velle est actus incorporalis, qui fertur in opposita.'"

³⁶Metaphysics, IX, c. 5 (1048a 1-24).

freedom rests with the "liberty of contraries"--which will be discussed shortly.

A preliminary conclusion, however, regarding Ockham's so-called "Voluntarism" should be drawn now. Within the Thomistic and Scotistic debate over whether the intellect or will possesses primacy and greater perfection among human powers, Ockham attempts a neutral position.³⁷ The absolute simplicity of the soul--the absence of distinct psychic parts or powers--makes the issue of "greater nobility" a false question. To ask whether the intellect or will is more noble reduces to asking whether the same power, i.e., the intellective soul, is more noble than itself.

To the first principle argument, I concede that "enjoyment" is in the most noble potency. And when someone says, "The intellect is the most noble power," I agree; and likewise when it is said, "The will is the most noble power." Because that potency which is intellect and that which is will are not distinguished in reality nor in reason.³⁸

³⁷This debate has psychological and moral dimensions. Thomistic-Aristotelian "intellectualism" makes the intellect primary within the human psyche, while an act of intellect constitutes man's ultimate perfection. According to the Franciscan-Augustinian tradition, this psychic primacy resides with the will. When Ockham is called a moral "voluntarist," of course, the classification has ramifications beyond these historically well-defined issues of human psychology. For the historical context of this aspect of Ockham's thought, see Paul Vignaux, "Occam," Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique, Tome XI, cc. 877-882; and Justification et Prédestination au XIV^e Siècle: Duns Scot, Pierre d'Auriol, Guillaume d'Occam, Grégoire de Rimini (Paris: E. Leroux, 1934), pp. 127-140. Professor Vignaux indicates Ockham's general adherence to the Franciscan School by teaching the greater nobility of will-acts. Left unsaid, however, by Vignaux and most commentators, is Ockham's re-formulation of the question and his attempt at a middle position.

³⁸Sent., I, d. 1, q. 2 (I, 402); "Ad primum principale concedo quod frui est in potentia nobilissima. Et quando dicitur

Ockham rephrases the terms of the debate between the "Intellectualists" and "Voluntarists." The proper question, he says, is whether the act of willing or knowing is more perfect. Ockham gives the greater nobility to volitional acts, although an act of intellect precedes an act of will.³⁹ Both volition and intellection are involved, however, in beatitude--man's ultimate and perfect happiness. The chief antagonist of this position, Thomas Aquinas, was "coerced by the truth" at least once when he admitted the greater perfection residing in will-acts!⁴⁰

'intellectus est potentia nobilissima,' concedo; et similiter voluntas est potentia nobilissima, quia illa potentia quae est intellectus et illa quae est voluntas nullo modo distinguuntur a parte rei nec a parte rationis." Also see Sent., II, q. 24, K. "Utrum memoria, intellectus et voluntas sint potentiae distinctae realiter?" Where Ockham argues the identify of psychic powers, Ockham's position became a "strategy" for many Nominalists. For example, Adam Wodham (d. 1358) sets Thomas against Scotus and offers Ockham's solution: "teneo conclusionem ad viam reductionis, cum dico scilicet quod non intellectus est potentia nobilior voluntate nec e converso." Sent., I, q. 4 (quoted by Michalski, Opuscula Philosophica..., p. 313).

³⁹Sent., II, q. 24, P; "...dico quod accipiendo 'voluntatem' pro illo quid denominatur a tali nomine vel conceptu, quid est principium elicitive actus volendi et intellectionis; similiter ut sic voluntas non est intellectu nobilior non plus quam intellectus est nobilior voluntate, quia sunt omnino idem. Sed accipiendo utrumque quantum ad signatum quid nominis eorum, sic potest concedi quod voluntas est nobilior intellectu, quia actus diligendi qui connotatur per voluntatem est nobilior actu intelligendi qui connotatur per intellectum. Isto etiam secundo modo potest concedi quod intellectus est prior voluntate; quia actus intelligendi qui connotatur per intellectum est prior actu volendi qui connotatur per voluntatem." Also see Sent., I, d. 1, q. 2 (I, 402-403). That beatitude resides within the intellect and will, see Ibid., (I, 403).

⁴⁰Ibid., (I, 402-403); "Si tamen distinguerentur, dicerem quod potentia volitiva esset nobilior. Et hoc dicit Thomas, quamvis alibi dixerit oppositum. Unde libero primo, distinctione prima, quaestione prima dicit sic: 'Suprema pars habet intellectum

In what Konstanty Michalski has called "the battle for the soul" in the 14th century, Ockham's was a moderate voice.⁴¹ His writings attempt to reconcile the differences between Aquinas and Scotus which had been institutionalized into opposing schools. But Ockham's tools were too radical, his approach too original. Instead of resolving the "problem of the will," Ockham became a third faction. Ockham's "medicine" of logical precision was useless and "windy sophistry" against the needs of the Renaissance. To the Reformers, his doctrine of man's freedom smacked of Pelagianism.

3. The Will's Freedom

Ockham's definition or definitions of the will do not support the inference that every will-act occurs freely. While every

et voluntatem, quorum intellectus est altior secundum ordinem et voluntas secundum perfectionem. Et similis ordo est in habitibus et etiam in actibus, scilicet visione et amore. Fruitio autem nominat altissimam operationem quantum ad sui perfectionem.' Et ita iste, tamquam a veritate coactus, dicit hic fruitionem, quae est actus voluntatis esse nobiliorem actu intellectus."

⁴¹"La lutte pour l'âme," Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Philosophy, 1930 (Oxford: 1931), pp. 508-515. Whereas Michalski indicates clearly the controversies which surround the doctrine of human and divine volition in the first half of the 14th century, his evaluation of Ockham's position is derogatory and poorly documented. Professor Ernest Moody is one of few commentators who notice that amid the extreme voluntarism of Holcot, the voluntaristic determinism of Thomas Bradwardine and John of Mirecourt, and the epistemological criticism of Nicholas of Autrecourt, Ockham proposed a "conservative doctrine." Professor Moody's comments, directed toward the doctrine of natural causality, apply to Ockham's doctrine of the will. See Moody, Franciscan Studies, 7, pp. 141-146.

free act is a volitive effect, the converse is not true.⁴² Duns Scotus and Scotists such as William of Alnwick (d. 1332) constructed the evidence for natural and free modes of causality into "Nature" and "Will"--principles with "opposed modes of origination."⁴³ But Ockham rejects their construction because both the divine and human will produce certain acts of necessity. To know the will as a moral principle, and the formal character of all moral acts, we must consider the nature and limits of human freedom. Only acts which originate in freedom are imputable or moral.

The description of volitional freedom given by Ockham approximates and represents the experiential evidence which establishes the facts of free causality. Semantically, "freedom" is a

⁴²Sent., I, d. 10, q. 2, H; "Si autem intelligatur quod liberum sit idem quid contingens vel indifferens, sicut mihi videtur esse de intentione auctorum; sic dico quod si voluntas aliquid velit necessario, non vult illud libere. Et ideo Spiritus Sanctus non producitur libere sicut non contingenter (licet voluntarie)." Also see Sent., I, d. 2, q. 1, (II, 34-35), and Sent., II, qes. 4-5, D ad tertiam.

⁴³The strict division which Scotus places between Nature and Will is analyzed by J. R. Cresswell, "Duns Scotus on the Will," Franciscan Studies 8 (1953), pp. 147-149; and Etienne Gilson, Jean Duns Scot, Introduction à ses positions fondamentales (Paris: J. Vrin, 1952), pp. 574-578. Ockham quotes this doctrine of Scotus (Sent., I, d. 1, q. 6: I, 486-496) and William of Alnwick (Sent., I, d. 2, q. 1: II, 8-14) extensively to reject it. Ockham will claim that "nature" and "freedom" are opposed principles; not "nature" and "will." In historical perspective, therefore, Ockham reverts more to the position of St. Thomas who also asserted that some will-acts originate out of necessity. Unfortunately, Stephen Chak Tornay, Ockham: Studies and Selections (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court Publishing Co., 1938), p. 175, attributes to Ockham the position of Scotus and Alnwick. This mis-quotation helps establish Ockham's "insistent voluntarism." In point of fact, Ockham means to find a middle position between the Thomistic and Scotistic doctrines on the limits of free-will.

connotative term "meaning the will itself or the intellectual nature while connoting that something can be accomplished contingently by the same (will)."⁴⁴ The term, therefore, collects the items of inner experience which interject the agent's contingency between the recognition and the execution of practical possibilities.

Freedom had many dimensions within the theological anthropologies of Scholasticism. Christendom's "great chain of being" arranged in hierarchy the Infinite Being, angelic being (beatified or damned), human being (beatified, damned or "in via"). Each type and division of personal being possessed distinct brands of freedom. Ockham attempts to isolate the precise character of the "viator's" freedom by contrast. He reviews the traditional dimensions of freedom to explain what the earthling's liberty is not. St. Augustine and Peter Lombard assert a three fold liberty in men--the liberty of nature, the liberty of grace and the liberty of glory.⁴⁵ These perspectives on freedom are expressed

⁴⁴Sent., I, d. 10, q. 2, M; "Unde illa ratio et sequens procedunt ex falsa imaginatione. Imaginantur enim ac si libertas esset unum aliquid reale distinctum aliquo modo ex natura rei a voluntate vel non omnino idem cum voluntate; quid tamen non est verum. Sed est unum nomen connotativum importans ipsam voluntatem vel naturam intellectualem connotando aliquid contingenter posse fieri ab eadem."

⁴⁵Sent., I, d. 1, q. 6 (I, 501); "Secunda distinctio est de libere frui. Quia libertas uno modo distinguitur a coactione, et sic accipitur impropriissime, quia isto modo libertas potest competere intellectui. Alio modo opponitur servituti creaturae rationalis, et hoc vel servituti culpae vel servituti poenae. Et hoc modo beati sunt liberiores quam viatores, quia magis liberi a servitute culpae et poenae. Alio modo opponitur necessitati secundum quod necessitas opponitur contingenti secundo modo dicto

as freedom from coercion, freedom from guilt and freedom from punishment.⁴⁶ Ockham disputes each sense of freedom. Human freedom does not exclude guilt or punishment which follow the ill-use of freedom. Here Ockham agrees with his "authorities" because only men beatified in heaven withstand these consequences of free activity. But Ockham then rejects most of his predecessors when they assert that "freedom from coercion" describes the type of liberty peculiar to the "viator."⁴⁷ Consider that the intellect cannot be coerced to assent to false propositions. Neither the intellect (a natural power) nor the will (a free power) can be forced by an external power to judge truth and goodness contrary to the agent's own estimation and affection. The point is significant for Ockham since he begins to look for a description of freedom which cannot be applied to the intellect--or any natural power. Autonomy is no longer sufficient for the prime characteristic of experienced freedom.

Ockham's fundamental objective against his predecessors on the question of freedom is their tendency to consider freedom

in priori distinctione. Et sic libertas est quaedam indifferentia et contingentia, et distinguitur contra principium activum naturale." See the parallel and earlier text, Sent., II, q. 19, R, where Ockham uses this framework to differentiate the liberty possessed by angels, devils and men.

⁴⁶For the history of these divisions, see St. Bonaventure, In Sent., d. 25, part 1, q. 1 (Opera Omnia, II; Quaracchi: Ex typographia Collegi St. Bonaventurae, 1885, pp. 594-95).

⁴⁷For example, see St. Augustine, De Civit. Dei, V, 10 (P.L. 41, 152) and St. Thomas, Sum. Theol., Ia IIae, q. 6, art. 4.

or the will as another instance of "nature" whose inner structure is revealed by the Aristotelian explanation of final, formal, efficient and material causality. Freedom, which is opposed to the operation of natural powers, cannot be analyzed as if it were a type of natural cause. For example, St. Thomas claims "Each power of the soul is a form of nature, and has a natural inclination to something. Hence each power desires, by natural appetite, that object which is suitable to itself."⁴⁸ Finality or intrinsic teleology is needed to explain both the operation and the intelligibility of a spiritual power. Ockham rejects this "net of explanation" and those scholastics who used it to capture the character of human freedom. The human will possesses no inclination to the good, no natural appetite for goodness. According to Ockham, "inclination" or "appetite" can be taken in two ways.⁴⁹ A loose meaning of the term implies a being "in potency to another without any inclination and activity to the contrary." For example, prime matter has a receptive potency for

⁴⁸ Sum. Theol., I, q. 80, art. 2 (trans. Anton C. Pegis).

⁴⁹ Quodl., III, q. 19; "Dico ad primum quod 'inclinatio' sive 'appetitus' dupliciter accipitur, scilicet large et stricte. Large accipiendo inclinationem, non est aliud quam esse in potentia ad aliud, sine omni inclinatione et activitate in contrarium. Et sic materia est in potentia naturali ad formam, et inclinatur ad eam. Et sic non accipitur inclinatio ut addit aliquid ultra formam. Aliter vero accipitur et hoc prout aliquid ultra addit esse in potentia receptiva, puta, activitatem. Et sic materia non inclinatur ad formam, quia sic accipiendo inclinationem nihil inclinatur nisi agens naturale, nec aliquid agens naturale quid sic inclinatur ad contraria non est indifferens, quia breviter, inclinare est idem quid agere." Also see Sent., IV, qes. 8-9, D.

substantial form. Strictly speaking, however, the term "inclination" indicates more than receptive potency, it implies activity in some power. Bodies with weight "incline" to the center; air "inclines" upwards. To assert that a power is inclined to some object or end, is equivalent, according to Ockham, to saying that the power does something. "Appetite" implies some determined activity so that the power in which appetite resides cannot be undetermined. If the notion of inclination is thus understood, it follows that the will is not inclined either to the ultimate end or its own perfection.⁵⁰ Such inclinations would jeopardize the will's native indifference to opposites.

A review of Thomistic and Scotistic doctrines regarding the will's inclinations reveals the originality of Ockham's position. St. Thomas Claims that the will necessarily adheres to the

⁵⁰Sent., I, d. 1, q. 6 (I, 507); "Ad argumentum principale dico quod voluntas non naturaliter inclinatur in finem ultimum, nisi accipiendo inclinationem naturalem secundum quod sit secundum communem cursum. Et de tali inclinatione non est verum quod quidquid fit contra inclinationem violentatur. Et quando dicitur quod 'unumquodque inclinatur in propriam perfectionem,' ista est neganda, stricte accipiendo inclinationem, nisi quando illud perfectibile est activum naturale, cuiusmodi non est voluntas." Also see Sent., III, q. 3, G.

A qualification is required here. Ockham speaks frequently about the "inclination" within the will toward determinate objects consequent to habit formation. See Sent., IV, q. 4, O, and Quodl., III, q. 17. This "inclination," which Ockham calls a "habit," consists in the previous will-acts which generate a facility and promptitudo in producing similar acts. Thus, the inclination consists of acts and the will might well be inclined or habituated to the ultimate end or self perfection. But Ockham's argument concerns innate or natural inclinations. He proposes the will as a tabula rasa; its habits or inclinations are freely generated rather than original equipment.

ultimate end of human operations, happiness. The desire for happiness is not freely effected since the will moves to the ultimate end by internal and natural necessity. Aquinas maintains that the will's freedom concerns the means which can be chosen to achieve this necessary end.⁵¹ Duns Scotus disagrees. According to the Subtle Doctor, the will is not necessitated by the ultimate end whether that end is known in general or in particular.⁵² A more radical and extensive conception of volitional indifference accompanies Scotus' notion of the will because Infinite Goodness cannot determine the will's movement. The freedom of the will is

⁵¹See Aquinas Sum. Theol., I, q. 82, art. 1. In this article, Aquinas explains that freedom is "opposed" to the "necessitas coactionis" and not to "necessitas naturalis." Hence, the desire for the ultimate end derives from the will's nature and expresses an ontological relationship and affective tendency to the will's perfectant. See William R. O'Connor, "Natural Appetite," The Thomist 16 (1953), pp. 361-409. In St. Thomas' words, this volitive tendency or relation is the "necessitas finis." This means; a) the will necessarily adheres to the ultimate end, happiness, and b) the will necessarily elicits acts which are indispensable for freely chosen ends. Ockham, however, denies that every movement of the will depends upon an immovable, permanent orientation to happiness as a "root" and principle. On the other hand, he agrees with St. Thomas that freely chosen ends necessitate the selection of sine qua non means. The texts of St. Thomas and Ockham have been collected and contrasted by G. de Lagarde, Ockham..., pp. 72-73.

⁵²Scotus, Ordinatio, I, d. 1, p. 2, q. 2, n. 82 (ed. Vaticana, II, 62). In proving this conclusion, Scotus denies both senses of "necessitas finis" explained by St. Thomas. "Necessitas naturalis non stat cum libertate, quia natura et voluntas sunt principia activa habentia oppositum modum principiandi, igitur cum modo principiandi voluntatis non stat modus principiandi naturae; sed voluntas libere vult finem; igitur non potest necessitate naturali velle finem, ergo et circa finem." (loc. cit., n. 80; II, 60).

manifested by its undetermination to the ultimate end of life and the means to that end. And Ockham sides with Scotus; the will can recognize the ultimate end clearly and still not choose this end.⁵³

Ockham's analysis of "inclinations," however, makes him reject the Scotistic position that the will possesses both absolute freedom and natural inclinations. To be precise, Scotus posits a natural inclination within the human will toward its proper perfection.⁵⁴ In effect, the will contains a natural

⁵³Ockham accepts the conclusions, but not the reasons, of Scotus. "Tertia conclusio est quod aliquis potest nolle beatitudinem in particulari creditam esse possibilem, ita quod potest nolle habere beatitudinem." Sent., I, d. 1, q. 6 (I, 504). Also see Sent., IV, q. 14, D. Ockham's disagreement derives from his conviction that certain acts are produced necessarily by the will, e.g., acts which are entailed by a prior volition through "necessitas finis."

⁵⁴Comm., Ox., IV, d. 49, q. 10, n. 2 (XXI, 318-319); "Respondeo ad primam quaestionem dico, quod duplex est appetitus in voluntate, scilicet naturalis et liber. Naturalem solum dico potentiam voluntatis absolute, sed non aliquid superadditum voluntati, sicut enim quaelibet natura habet inclinationem naturalem ad suam perfectionem... De primo appetitu dico, quod non est actus aliquis elicited a voluntate sed tantum inclinatio, quaedam." Also in Rep. Par., IV, d. 49, q. 9, n. 3-5 (XXIV, 659ss). For Ockham's refutation of this text, see above, note 50. This argument between Scotus and Ockham appears verbal rather than substantive. Scotus claims the will's natural appetite is not an act; Ockham rejoins that it must be. As interpreted by Father Allan Wolter, O.F.M., the "natural appetite" is simply "an ontological relationship between any faculty (or the soul) and that which perfects it...[the will as nature] is regarded passively as the recipient of its own immanent operations." "Duns Scotus on the Natural Desire for the Supernatural," Franciscan Studies 31 (1949), pp. 302-305. Understood in this way, Scotus' doctrine on natural appetite is not guilty of the inconsistency which Ockham attributes to it. Furthermore, the debate over terminology hides the fact that Scotus conceives the freedom of the will more extensively than does Ockham. The Subtle Doctor claims that every

appetite and a free appetite which Scotus (and St. Anselm) call "affections" because these inclinations prompt selfish and altruistic acts respectively.⁵⁵ The will's natural appetite necessarily seeks its own perfection (velle commodi) while the free appetite appreciates what is good-in-itself (velle justitiae). Opposed appetites explain the will's indifference to opposites. But to Ockham, dual appetites do not explain the will's indifference, they deny it. The will cannot possess a natural and pre-conscious inclination towards its own perfection without eliminating the possibility of altruistic acts. Consciousness of a good-for-the-will would determine the will's natural desire according to Ockham's analysis of "appetite" or "inclination" as act. Thus, Ockham rejects the Thomistic insertion of natural necessity, and the Scotistic assertion of natural appetite, within the free will.

Ockham's critique of St. Thomas and Duns Scotus appears to announce a more radical and libertarian conception of human freedom. But the doctrinal development is not so clear. Ockham means to remove any intrinsic, teleological relationship from the will. He does not, however, eradicate all traces of necessity

voluntary act is a free act, while Ockham teaches that some voluntary acts are produced of necessity.

⁵⁵Comm. Ox., III, d. 26, q. unica, n. 17 (XV, 340-341); "In voluntate sunt duae affectionae, scilicet justitiae et commodi. Nobilior autem est affectio justitiae...secundum quam aliquis potest velle aliquod bonum non in ordine ad se. Secundum autem affectionem commodi non potest velle, nisi in ordine ad se."

from the will's operation. To be specific, Ockham admits a necessity of the end (necessitas finis) reminiscent of Aquinas' doctrine.⁵⁶ He ever denied the natural or teleological necessity of the ultimate end, but admitted the necessity which a freely chosen goal imposes upon the selection of the consequent means. For example, if an agent freely desires health while believing that a certain medicine is indispensable for his health, then volition of that medicine follows necessarily. To terminate the desire for this medicine, the agent must first cease to desire health. The will cannot seriously or efficaciously desire a goal while rejecting sine qua non means. The natural or metaphysical dependence between things parallels a logical order of "consequentiae" and, according to Ockham, parallels a volitional exigency which binds together certain ends and means. In this light, the freedom of will appears as the indifference and contingency with which the agent decides the goals of his affection and behavior. The will freely decides its ends; but once the goals of activity have been established the will necessarily elicits the means which appear necessary. Ockham's criticism of

⁵⁶Sent., I, d. 1, q. 6 (I, 499-500); "Hoc per experientiam: quia experimur quod libere et contingenter ante volitionem efficacem sanitatis possumus appetere potionem amaram vel non appetere, non autem stante illa volitione cum firma opinione aliter non posse consequi...manifestum per experientiam quod aliquando ad actum aliquem intellectus et actum voluntatis sequitur necessario et naturaliter aliquis actus voluntatis, quod ille actus causatur sufficienter ab illis actibus praecedentibus sine activitate voluntatis." Also see Sent., III, q. 4, 0. Father Lucan Freppert, O.F.M., The Basis of Morality..., pp. 58-60, seems alone among Ockham's commentators in indicating this qualification on the will's freedom.

Aquinas is that natural necessity contradicts the will's indifference to opposite ends; his objection to Scotus is that natural inclinations deny the will's contingent operation concerning opposite acts. It is not coincidental, therefore, that Ockham's positive analysis and characterization of volitional freedom involves indifference and contingency.⁵⁷

A. The Freedom of Opposites

The will's indifference or "freedom of opposites" concerns the connection between the will and its objects and between the will and intellect. Ockham indicates the psychological conditions of the will's freedom through analysis of volitional indifference or "rationality." The psychic context of free acts will serve to clarify the metaphysical basis of freedom--the "freedom of contraries."

Volitional indifference concerns the will's undetermined stance towards apprehended objects of desire. Following Scotus, Ockham claims that "being," not "good," is the adequate object of the will.⁵⁸ The soul retains the capacity to love or hate any

⁵⁷For example, Sent., I, d. 1, q. 6 (I, 501); Sent., I, d. 2, q. 1 (II, 42); Sent., I, d. 10, q. 2, H; and Quodl., I, q. 16. These texts analyze "freedom" into indifference and contingency.

⁵⁸Sent., I, d. 1, q. 4 (I, 434); "...aut hoc esset per libertatem voluntatis, quia scilicet voluntas ex hoc ipso quod libera est potest appetere quodcumque volibile...aut per universalitatem objecti voluntatis, quia scilicet objectum suum est ens in communi, et per consequens quodlibet contentum...aut per capacitatem voluntatis, quia scilicet est capa boni infiniti." Also see Sent., III, q. 13, S. For Scotus' position and texts

being, or any aspect under which a being is conceived. Everything conceivable has an equal and un-determining claim to the will's affection. Perhaps, we should designate this the "primitive" or initial indifference of the will toward being in general. According to Ockham, the will loses its indifferent profile when eliciting objects which entail or require concomitant objects. Precluding any prior volition which requires a further will-act--as desire for health requires desire for the medicine considered essential to health--the will is indifferent toward every being. Nevertheless, given the desire for health, the agent experiences medicine as necessarily desirable. Hence, Ockham's statement of the will's "primitive" indifference to opposites must be reformulated to express a permanent (rather than initial) capacity of the created will. The human will is not indifferent to every object in every case. Rather, the will's indifference means that: a) by nature the will is undetermined by its objects--however conceived, and b) the will can produce the situation in which it might accept or reject any habituated object--however conceived.

In his own mind, there is a large difference between Ockham's doctrine of the will's indifference and the majority opinion of Scholasticism. Many held that the volitive power must elicit its objects sub ratione boni. In every instance, volitional

see, Robert Prentice, O.F.M., "The Voluntarism of Duns Scotus as Seen in His Comparison of the Intellect and Will," Franciscan Studies 28 (1968), pp. 63-65.

affection moves toward its proper object, the good. For example, many Scholastics claim that the will necessarily chooses objects sub ratione boni.⁵⁹ This terminology, and perhaps the entire "problem" which Ockham sees is a terminological one, the Venerable Inceptor finds inconsistent with the will's primitive indifference. He insists that "indifference" means a neutral stance toward both opposite objects and objects conceived under opposite modes. As a moral power, the will can choose sub ratione boni or sub ratione mali. Ultimately, Ockham sees the Aristotelian analysis of a nature in terms of an inherent final cause as insufficient and misleading when applied to a free nature. Only by understanding the term "good" in the metaphysical sense of "what is willed or willable" can Ockham accept the position of the "authorities and saints."⁶⁰ The transcendental or metaphysical

⁵⁹Cf. Sum. Theol., I, q. 82, art. 2; and I-II, q. 10, art. 2, for the opinion that the will must choose its objects sub ratione boni. See the study of Robert P. Sullivan, O.P., "Natural Necessitation of the Human Will," The Thomist 16 (1951), pp. 351-399; 490-528.

⁶⁰Sent., III, q. 13, S-T; "Ad tertium dico quod 'bonum' accipitur dupliciter. Uno modo ut dividitur in bonum honestum et delectabile, alio modo bonum idem est quid volitum vel accipitur pro omni illo quid est volibile. Et eodem modo, 'malum' accipitur dupliciter ut opponitur bono primo modo dicto vel ut accipitur pro aliquo quid est nolibile vel nolitum. Accipiendo 'bonum' primo modo et 'malum' prout opponitur bono primo modo, sic dico quod voluntas potest velle malum quid nec est bonum realiter nec apparenter...Secundo, dico quod accipiendo bonum et malum secundo modo; sic voluntas non potest velle aliquid nisi bonum nec nolle aliquid nisi malum vel sub ratione mali. Hoc patet, quia sic accipiendo bonum, idem est quid volitum vel volibile; malum idem est quid nolitum sive nolibile. Tunc autem videtur contradicere quod voluntas velit aliud [read, aliquid] nisi sit volitum et volibile. Igitur, etc. Et sic possunt glosari auctoritates et dicta

description of the good transforms the statement, 'the will must desire what is good,' into the equivalent and innocuous assertion that, 'the will must desire what is desireable.' It is not clear that Ockham's predecessors, such as Thomas Aquinas, did not hold the same position. Rather than a point of departure, it seems that Ockham's doctrine represents an emphasis upon the volitive capacity for evil chosen deliberately and unequivocally.

Ockham's doctrine on habits offers certain difficulties of consistency with the will's indifference. He teaches that the will lacks a necessary object, yet experiences that certain objects are chosen more easily than others. For example, the discipline of study becomes easier with each choice to apply oneself. Repeated volitions have a cumulative and facilitating effect upon the will; they generate a proclivity toward certain objects and aversion toward opposites.⁶¹ Habits incline the will to similar acts regarding similar objects. Ockham categorically denies an innate, inclination within the will, but allows for habitual and acquired inclinations produced and constituted by

sanctorum qui dicunt quod voluntas non potest velle aliquid nisi sit bonum realiter vel sub ratione boni apparenter."

⁶¹Sent., III, q. 10, G; "Ideo dico quod virtus est ponenda in voluntate propter majorem perfectionem actus, et majorem facilitatem et inclinationem ad eliciendum actus, ceteris paribus, et tunc potest sic argui: Quaecumque potentia, ceteris paribus, magis inclinatur post actum quam ante et ad intensiorem actum, et ex illis acquirit habitum. Sed voluntas est huiusmodi..."
 Also see Quodl., III, q. 14. The volitive habits are studied by Oswald Fuchs, O.F.M., The Psychology of Habit According to William Ockham (St. Bonaventure, New York: The Franciscan Institute, 1952), pp. 64-76, but he remains silent about the problem of determining habits within a free power.

the combined "weight" of many free acts.⁶² A strong volitive habit, given the presence of its appropriate object, automatically receives that object and precludes its opposite.⁶³ Habits, therefore, provide another example of the necessity which affects the will's operation because of prior, free acts. Habitual desires give further evidence that total volitional receptivity and indifference to every being is a "primitive," initial condition of the will. Soon enough, the will's possibilities are restricted by its history. The adult, through discipline and contrary volitions, must frequently recapture his original capacity to accept or reject certain objects.

It was Ockham's consistent position (Sent., III, q. 10, H; Sent., III, q. 12, G; Quodl., III, q. 13) that only habits of the will are per se virtuous. Only free acts are intrinsically moral; hence, only habits generated by free, voluntary acts are

⁶²Sent., III, q. 4, U; "Ad aliud dico quod (habitus) non requiritur propter facilitatem vel promptitudinem tamquam principium activum tantum. Sed propter inclinationem dicitur proprie principium activum; et ex hoc sequitur facilitatio et promptitudo quia magis inclinatur nunc quam prius, et ita principaliter ponitur propter inclinationem, secundario autem propter alia duo." Also see Quodl., II, q. 18; for the two meanings of habitus.

⁶³Sent., III, q. 4, N-0; "Potest dici quod licet voluntas sit libera respectu cuiuslibet actus ab eo eliciti absoluti considerati; tamen considerando aliquem actum voluntatis in quantum ille actus antecedit in voluntate non est voluntas libera respectu illius actus...Tunc dico quod non est in potestate voluntatis quando eliciat cum habitu inclinate aliquem actum circa illud, et ille actus potest dici primus motus qui excusatur a peccato secundum doctores." See the parallel and later text in Sent., I, d. 17, q. 2, C. See Quodl., II, q. 13, where Ockham says that passions within the sensitive powers can override the will's freedom.

intrinsically virtuous. Habits formed in the intellectual or sensitive powers are morally good by "extrinsic denomination," that is, by the causality of intrinsically good acts. The obvious objection arises: Ockham has excluded habituated actions from the dimension of free action and thereby, from morality. How can Ockham consider volitive habits intrinsically virtuous when everything produced "with a habit inclined" is not "within the power of the will?" Any answer depends upon conjecture rather than explicit texts. Ockham sometimes speaks as if the will's inclination or addiction to a determinate object must be presently approved by a free volition to be operative;⁶⁴ elsewhere he says that habits are only partial causes, with the will, of volitive acts.⁶⁵ Such replies merely indicate that the primary and intrinsically moral act is volitional consent or dissent to habits which operate naturally within the will. The will's primitive indifference makes it possible for the agent to produce a situation, e.g., through formation of opposite habits, in which habitual inclinations can be countermanded. Thus, the presence

⁶⁴Quodl., III, q. 19 (corr. by Vaticana Lat., 3075); "Ad aliud dico quod habitus et passiones proprie loquendo non inclinat voluntatem nisi quando consentit eis mediante voluntate. Et ita si voluntas nolit illas passiones et nolit elicere actum secundum habitum non inclinabunt voluntatem."

⁶⁵Sent., III, q. 4, M; "Apparet inconveniens quod aliquis actus totaliter causetur in voluntate a causa creata alia a voluntate propter libertatem voluntatis quae non potest cogi, saltem per causam creatam, licet talis actus posset causari a Deo totaliter. Ideo potest dici quod ille actus (vel inclinatio habitus) causatur partialiter ab habitu et partialiter a voluntate." Also see Sent., III, q. 10, D.

of habits within the will remains imputable even though the acts generated by those habits are non-moral. Of course, this does not "explain away" Ockham's attribution of per se morality to volitive habits which are naturally determined causes. It does explain, however, the techniques by which the will retains its indifference vis-à-vis its habitual inclinations.

The freedom of opposites was traditionally given to the will as a "rational power." The will's rationality indicates; a) its capacity to receive opposite objects, and b) its dependence upon intellectual acts. To "indifferently move to one opposite or the other," the will must recognize opposite acts or objects.⁶⁶ Free choice (liberum arbitrium) implies knowledge of opposite things and volitive indifference to those options or alternatives. We must consider, therefore, the will's relationship to the intellect.

Again, there is no real difference between the intellect and will. There is, however, a definite and constant order between cognitive and voluntary acts. "The will cannot wish something unless it is known."⁶⁷ Volition does not create its options; rather it chooses among the rational proposals. Necessarily, an

⁶⁶ Sent., IV, q. 14, G; and Sent., I, d. 10, q. 2, F. Curiously, when the soul produces an act of understanding, it should not be called a "rational power" according to Ockham. The intellect knows by necessity when presented with an intelligible object--it is a natural, active principle. "Sed omne principium activum respectu cuius necessario agit; respectu illius non potest dici potentia rationalis, quia respectu illius non potest dici potentia valens ad opposita."

⁶⁷ Quodl., III, q. 17; "Voluntas non potest aliquid velle nisi cognitum."

act of knowledge precedes any act of volition. The operation of the intellect determines the present scope, the "here and now" limits, within which the will exercises its freedom. Given Ockham's definition of a cause, he consistently concludes that intellection is a partial cause of volition.⁶⁸ The will is a passive potency in the sense that it must receive as a possibility or option whatever the intellect apprehends as "do-able." Knowledge is a necessary, but not a necessitating, cause of volition. When the will elicits some volition, the preceding act of intellection is constituted as an efficient cause (i.e., because of Ockham's definition of cause as the essentially prior item with a sequence) of the volitive act.

In summary, what we call the "freedom of opposites" concerns the will's connection with its objects. Ockham maintains that the will is originally free from any extrinsic determination. Furthermore, the human agent is permanently able to re-gain his primitive indifference toward opposites--even after the growth of passions or the formation of volitive habits and commitments. It should be understood that Ockham's defense of the will's indifference was simultaneously an attack against a prominent doctrine of Aristotelian psychology and physics. According to the Philosopher, every nature or "source of motion and rest" possessed

⁶⁸Sent., II, q. 24, P; "...quia actus intelligendi est causa efficiens partialis respectu actus volendi; et potest esse naturaliter sine actu volendi, licet non e contra. Sed ista prioritas non infert perfectionem in illo quid est prius nec imperfectionem in posteriori." Also see Sent., II, q. 4-5, E; where Ockham asserts that volition has a natural and free cause, namely, the intellect and will.

a teleological relationship or intrinsic finality to its perfect-ant or fulfillment.⁶⁹ Independent of any act, a potency can be analyzed and explained by means of its final cause. For example, the power of sight is ontologically related to its proper object, color, as the condition of actually seeing. Hence, color perfects or completes the visual potency. The Scholastics who considered the will a distinct source of human operations generally followed Aristotle in asserting the will's inherent finality to what perfects or actualizes the volitive potency, i.e., "happiness," "beatitude," "the good," etc.⁷⁰ But because Ockham denies the "distinct faculties" or "formally distinct powers" theories of the human soul, he protests against a specifically identical end or "aspect" involved whenever the soul elicits an act of volition. He denies that the will must be naturally and pre-consciously

⁶⁹Cf. Physics, II, c. 7-8; De Anima, III, c. 10. Sir David Ross' comments on the Aristotelian doctrine of nature vis-à-vis the four causes is enlightening. "But further Aristotle often indicates the identity of form with efficient and with final cause...The form is the plan of structure considered as informing a particular product of nature or art. The final cause is the same plan considered as not yet embodied in the particular thing but as aimed at by nature or by art...And in nature, the form which is to find fresh embodiment is already present and is the cause of movement. Aristotle (5th ed.; New York: Barnes and Noble, 1949), pp. 74-75. Ockham complains that Aristotle and Avicenna confused final and formal causality. Sent., II, q. 3, H.

⁷⁰At least some Thomistic and Scotistic scholars assert that the will's natural desire, according to their mentor's thought, concerns a pre-conscious and ontological relationship rather than a conscious volition. Thus, Sullivan, The Thomist, 16, pp. 351-399; and Wolter, Franciscan Studies, 31, pp. 300-307. Cf., for example, Aquinas, Sum. Theol., I, qes. 80-81.

directed to the good to explain the possibility and intelligibility of the will's activity. In asserting the will's freedom of opposites, Ockham precludes an Aristotelian analysis of the will qua nature and form. Whatever is known and however the mind specifies the known object, the will remains indifferent. Only freely chosen final causes influence the will's operation. The will's objective indifference and undetermination has rather obvious consequences within Ockham's moral theory. To be explicit, nothing can be classified a priori as "unsuitable," "unnatural," or "immoral" on the basis of the will's nature.

B. The Freedom of Contraries

The freedom of contraries or "freedom of execution" concerns the will's connection with its own acts. The will is not a passive potency in spite of the fact that volition requires a prior intellection.⁷¹ Everything required for a determinate volition can be present to the will, yet the will need not act. In discussing the fundamental locus of human freedom, Ockham emphatically leaves the realm of "liberum arbitrium." The will acts freely and indifferently even without the choices or alternatives which derive from the intellect's activity.⁷² In

⁷¹Sent., I, d. 1, q. 6 (I, 486); "Voluntas est receptiva nolitionis et volitionis respectu cuiuscumque objecti; sed nullius est receptiva nisi cuius est activa; ergo active potest in volitionem respectu cuiuscumque objecti, et etiam nolitionem; ergo libere et contingenter." Also see Sent., I, d. 17, q. 2, F; and Sent., IV, q. 14, G.

⁷²Sent., I, d. 6, q. 1, G; "Si voluntas tantum posset in unum, tamen contingenter sic quod haberet in potestate sua ferri

deliberating about a single goal, i.e., conscious of only one end, the will retains its intrinsic freedom to accept or reject that goal. For Ockham the freedom of the will rests ultimately upon the contingent connection between the soul and the contrary acts of "velle," "nolle," and "non-velle." "Properly speaking, nothing is produced freely and non-naturally unless what is produced contingently and can be produced and not produced."⁷³ Ockham explains the positive freedom of the moral agent as the active, self-determining capacity of the will and characterizes every effect of freedom as contingent.

Ockham's explanation, in contrast to his assertion, of the will's freedom rests upon the originative and spontaneous causality of the will.⁷⁴ As an active power, the will is self-determining. The soul is an "unmoved-mover" in producing, determining and specifying its volitive effects.

in illud vel non ferri in illud, adhuc sufficienter distingueretur a natura in causando." Ockham rarely utilizes the notion of "free choice" in analyzing the will's freedom. "Choice" implies a determination of alternative means; according to Aristotle's terminology, one does not "choose" his ends. Ockham is emphatically opposed to the doctrine entailed by this vocabulary. He maintains that men are free to establish or decide their goals, and having decided their goals, certain means are willed naturally and necessarily. Father Boehner correctly remarks: "Therefore according to Ockham liberty is not only the power of free choice which would presuppose the choice between two objects, but ultimately the power of self determination or the dominion of the will over its own act." Collected Articles..., p. 426.

⁷³Sent., I, d. 2, q. 1 (II, 35).

⁷⁴Sent., IV, q. 14, G; "Si (voluntas) esset potentia passiva et nullo modo activa, non videtur quomodo possit salvari ejus libertas."

If the object is known, and if God wishes to concur with the will for causing whenever the will is ready, the will can elicit or not elicit that act and its object from its freedom without any other habitual or actual determination. Therefore, concerning that act, it is not necessary that the will be determined to something unless by the will itself.⁷⁵

Ockham's "principle of economy" prompts him to maintain only one active (i.e., self-moving) power among the spiritual faculties of man.⁷⁶ He rejects the Philosopher's and Commentator's doctrine of an "agent intellect," just as he denies the passivity attributed the "power of choice" or "rational appetite" by Aristotle. Only the will is active and "in nostra potentia" because causal explanations of any volition cannot proceed beyond the will's power. The effects of natural powers, however, require explanation through a series of causes which include the power and its determining object. As an active cause, the will

⁷⁵Sent., IV, q. 14, G; "Loquendo de primo actu, posito omni sufficienti et necessario requisito ad talem actum, puta ad actum voluntatis; si objectum cognoscatur et Deus velit concurrere cum voluntate ad causandum quando placet voluntati, potest voluntas ex sua libertate sine omni alia determinatione actuali vel habituali actum illum et ejus objectum elicere vel non elicere. Et ideo respecu illius actus non oportet in aliquo quod determinetur voluntas nisi a seipsa." Also see parallel and later texts in Sent., I, d. 38, q. 1, G; and Quodl., I, q. 16. Ockham's evidence, therefore, for the will's active nature hinges upon the will's indifference. Given all the conditions for volition, the will can produce or not produce its effect; thus, the determining factor is the will itself.

⁷⁶In Sent., II, q. 25, A; Ockham reviews twenty-one arguments for asserting an "agent" or "active intellect." He refutes all of them as inconclusive. "Sciendum est, quod circumscripta omnium sanctorum auctoritate et philosophorum, propter nullam rationem necessario concludentem oportet ponere intellectum activum sed solum passivum..." Often the arguments prove merely the active nature of the will (AA).

initiates and originates a causal series which can control every other human power.⁷⁷ The will can command that the eyes close and thus impede vision; volition can direct or re-orientate the intellect's consideration to certain objects. The will, by means of its acts, dominates the agent's physical faculties and controls the mental faculties by affecting the objects available to the mind.

We can now answer why the will alone is a sufficient principle of moral acts. If the will elicits some act, the moving cause is the will itself. The will's movement from potency to act is self-determined. Hence, the sufficient reason and responsibility for volition rests with the active will.

A question might arise: Does not the active nature of the will's causality contradict the Aristotelian-Thomistic axiom that "whatever is in motion is placed in motion by another"--omne quod movetur ab alio movetur? If the will is in potency to volition, how can it reduce itself to act? Three times Ockham considers this objection to the will's self-determination.⁷⁸ His

⁷⁷Sent., Prologue, q. 10 (I, 292); "Omnis operatio quae est in potestate nostra est praxis. Et ideo cum tam cognitio quam volitio quam alii actus exteriores sint in potestate nostra, sequitur quod quilibet istorum vere poterit dici praxis. Tamen praxis primo dicitur de actu voluntatis, cum ipsa sit primo in potestate nostra, et nulla alia sit in potestate nostra nisi mediante ea..." The term "praxis" will be discussed in Chapter Two. Also see Sent., III, q. 10, H, where Ockham asserts the will's mastery over the agent's physical operations.

⁷⁸First, in Sent., IV, q. 13, K and in Sent., IV, q. 14, D and F; then in Quodl., I, q. 16; "Sed hic est dubium, quia impossibile est quod agens dum existit per tempus in potentia essentiali ad actum quod reducat se de potentia ad actum sine

answer is that the cinesiological principle applies only to natural agents, i.e., passive powers. (And the principle is not universally valid for instances of natural causality.)⁷⁹ The

agente extrinseco. Sed voluntas potest esse per tempus in potentia essentiali ad volitionem; ergo, non potest educere seipsam. Respondeo et dico quod argumentum est verum de agente naturali sive sit corporale sive spirituale. Sed in agente libero cuiusmodi est voluntas est instantia manifesta quia objectum potest esse cognitum et praesens voluntati, et omnia alia requisita ad actum volendi possunt manere per tempus, et potest non elicere actum suum et deindi elicere sine omni actione extrinseca--et hoc totum est propter liberatatem suam. Ad principale argumentum dico quod idem potest esse activum et passivum respectu ejusdem, nec ista repugnant ad invicem." See the parallel argument of Scotus in Comm. Ox., II, d. 25, q. unica, n. 5 (XIII, 200 ff). Father Roy Effler has published a study of John Duns Scotus and the Principle "Omne quod movetur ab alio movetur." See especially pp. 32-51. Scotus refutes both the physical and the metaphysical sense of this axiom as given by St. Thomas, Henry of Ghent and Godfrey of Fontaines. Many of Father Effler's comments could be applied verbatim to Ockham's position. For example, "there is nothing in the bare notions of active and passive principle to forbid that one and the same thing be active and passive in reference to one and the same perfection. Thus the two notions do not necessarily exclude self-motion." p. 41. Cf. Aristotle, Physics VII, c. 1 (241b 25-242a 16).

⁷⁹In the above text from the First Quodlibet, Ockham implies that natural agents are not self-moving. Elsewhere, Ockham analyses the mechanics of projectile motion as an instance of self-movement. When a stone leaves the hand of the thrower, it moves--not by the tangent air currents, or by an impressed force--but by itself. Professor Ernest A. Moddy reviews the Greek, Arabian and Scholastic background of the scientific discoveries of Galileo; he gives Ockham's theory of projectile motion a place of importance in the history of modern Mechanics. "Ockham helped to break down the tacit assumption, made by the partisans of Averroes and Avempace alike, which had vitiated the sound elements in each position. This was the assumption, summed up in the phrase Omne quod movetur ab alio movetur, that the condition of "being in motion" is ipso facto a condition of "being moved by something," so that the motion under the action of no force was excluded as formally impossible." "Galileo and Avempace," Journal of the History of Ideas 12 (1951), p. 399. P. Duhem, Etudes sur Leonard de Vinci, Vol. II (Paris: 1906), p. 86, maintains that Ockham's rejection of the cinesiological principle produced the first

experience in which all the external, non-volitive factors required for willing are operative, yet the will first refuses to act and then produces a determinate act, can only be explained as the will's self-activating ability. The will cannot be moved by another created power; an extrinsic force cannot actualize the will's potency. Although Ockham admits that cognition "causes" volition, i.e., cognition is prior necessarily to any act of willing, it is apparent that the intellect influences volition by means of, and contingent upon, the will's causality. The intellect's act does not place in act, or move, the will. Thus, Ockham asserts that the will can be both active and passive regarding the same perfection, i.e., volition. The soul is the active principle of the action which it receives. Hence, self-motion is not only possible, but demanded by the experienced facts.

The acts within the will's power immediately are "velle," "nolle," and "non-velle." Acceptance (velle), rejection (nolle) or the absence of any decision (non-velle) regarding an object depends upon the will's self-determination. Not only positive acts of accepting or rejecting (velle and nolle), but the lack

statement of the law of inertia. Herman Shapiro, Motion, Time..., pp. 51-62, shows the tacit rejection of the principle of motion in Ockham's treatment of many questions of Natural Philosophy. It should be noted, however, that Ockham's rejection of the causal principle is not categorical; he denies its usual sense that things in motion require an external created force to initiate and continue movement. He also "reinterprets" this law of movement as universally valid when it designates the necessity of divine force for all secondary causality and movement. See Sent., IV, q. 13, K.

of positive action (non-velle) is attributable to the will's freedom. The will's responsibility for its active or indifferent state extends to all the mental and physical effects of the agent, which are controllable by volition. Notice, however, that the non-volitive powers regulated by the will's self-determination are not themselves free powers. Acts of eating, walking, thinking, etc., are natural activities although mediately controlled by a free power. This point deserves remembrance. Upon this basis, Ockham will claim that non-volitive acts have no moral status. Against his major predecessors--Aquinas and Scotus--Ockham teaches that "external" actions lack a "proper moral goodness or evil." His reasoning is that external acts are "natural" and natural actions are not themselves contingent although they are produced by means of contingent acts. According to Ockham's thought, "moral" or "imputable" can be predicated properly and intrinsically of only the acts "velle," "nolle," or "non-velle." Just as Ockham traces human freedom to the will's self-moving nature, so he attributes moral value only to acts produced freely and contingently by the will. "Only the act of will is praiseworthy or blameworthy."⁸⁰ Sins of commission are positive will-acts (velle or nolle); sins of omission are the will-not-willing (non-velle).

The possibility of two simultaneous acts within the human will is admitted by Ockham. This assertion supports Ockham's

⁸⁰ Quodl., III, q. 13; Sent., III, q. 10, H; Sent., III, q. 13, P.

claim of morally indifferent acts within the will; it renders problematic a necessarily good act; it subjects Ockham to strong criticism from his successors. Thus, Ockham's position requires close study.

In the Reportatio, Ockham's earliest work, the possibility of indifferent acts derives from the will's capacity to constantly will the same object for successively different reasons.⁸¹ For example, the will could first love some man and then love that man for God's sake. To simply love something is morally indifferent--a single act; to love something out of love for God is morally good--two simultaneous acts. The love of object and end

⁸¹Sent., III, q. 10, P; "Si autem duo actus volendi possunt simul esse naturaliter in voluntate--quid credo esse verum sicut in primo (Sent., I, d. 1, q. 1: I, 381-389) probatum est--tunc in voluntate potest esse aliquis actus indifferens modo praedicto. Exemplum, si enim diligam aliquem hominem absolute terminando actum volendi ad illum hominem et non ad aliquam circumstantiam bonam vel malam tunc iste actus non est bonus vel malus moraliter, sed est neuter. Sed tunc stante illo actu eligam alium actum quo volo diligere tantum hominem propter Deum secundum rectam rationem et secundum omnes alias circumstantias requisitas, iste secundus actus est perfecte et intrinsece virtuosus. Et qui prius fuit indifferens, nunc est virtuosus denominatione extrinseca quatenus elicitur conformiter actui perfecte virtuosus et recto dictamini."

Ockham's consistency in this text is problematic. In the preceding paragraph he claims that a change in the partial objects of an act changes the numerical identity of the act. "Cum circumstantiae non sint nisi objecta partialia actus virtuosus, ad quorum variationem variatur necessario actus." (O). In his example, therefore, to simply love a man cannot be specifically or numerically the same act as to love that man for God's sake. The example introduces successively different acts rather than a single act which remains in conjunction with a novel volition. Yet unless two distinct actions occur simultaneously within the will, Ockham claims no act would be morally indifferent. And Ockham proceeds to explain his example as "idem actus numero" being first indifferent and then extrinsically good.

are separable and distinct; hence, two acts can exist simultaneously within the will. Ockham's argument, therefore, seems to run thus: If volition can occur without being ordered to some end, then that volition is neither orderly nor disorderly. At the same time, Ockham implies that volition of the object and end remain distinct acts--even when elicited simultaneously. In the Ordinatio, when discussing the Augustinian terms "frui" and "uti," Ockham asserts that the will can determine the means and the end of action by a single volition or two simultaneous acts.⁸² Just as the intellect knows the principle and conclusion of some argument by distinct acts or by a single act; so the will can desire the means and the end by distinct volitions or by a single wish. Volition of the object and the end are not always different actions. Will-acts, therefore, can have simple or complex objects. How could Ockham distinguish between two simultaneous acts and one act with many partial objects? What criteria individuate an act within the will?

⁸²Sent., I, d. 1, q. 1 (I, 381-382); "Sed istis rationibus non obstantibus, videtur probabile quod possunt esse duo actus, et quod possunt esse unus actus. Hoc potest declarari, quia sicut intellectus se habet ad principia et conclusiones, ita voluntas se habet ad finem et ad ea quae sent ad finem. Sed intellectus potest scire conclusionem distincto actu ab actu quo cognoscitur principium, et potest unico actu cognoscere utrumque, ergo eodem modo voluntas potest habere distinctos actus respectu finis et illius quod est ad finem, et unum actum respectu utriusque." This text begins Ockham's response to six objections against his position that two acts might co-exist within the will (pp. 379-381). Ockham's solution to these difficulties (pp. 384-389) proves how specifically different predications can be applied to the same will-act--how specifically different acts co-exist--and not how numerically distinct will-acts occur simultaneously.

Ockham is simply not clear on these questions. He seems to vacillate between an integrated view of the will-act with many partial objects; and an analytic view of many will-acts in proportion to the partial objects. The ambiguity reappears in Ockham's effort to describe types of moral acts--witness below in Chapter Four. Ockham indulges in dubious logical acrobatics when he: a) maintains against Scotus that change in the partial objects of the act changes the act's numerical and specific identity and b) maintains against Aquinas that the same (morally indifferent) action can remain while the will's objects change. Ockham's evidence for simultaneous acts within the will is fundamentally the experience that certain will-acts "endure" for successively different reasons. Thus, the agent might love this man simply; then love this man for God's sake; then love this man to impress others. But by Ockham's standards, the same act numerically cannot "endure" for different final causes.⁸³ The same specific act endures; each action Ockham describes can be called "love-for-man." Ockham, who accepts the "plurality of forms" doctrine, allows the same thing to receive specifically different predications. Hence, specifically distinct actions can co-exist in the will because the same act can receive different "class" or "type" predications. The action "loving mankind for God's sake" receives different and opposed classifications--

⁸³Sent., III, q. 10, N; "Impossibile est quod unus actus nunc terminetur ad unum primarium objectum et post terminetur ad aliud objectum primarium; sed fines sunt objecta primaria voluntatis." See also Sent., III, q. 12, XX-YY; and Quodl., III, q. 15.

namely, love for man/love for God, volition of means/volition of end, amor concupiscentiae/amor amicitiae, uti/frui, etc. Given the case of one who hates sin for God's sake, Ockham claims that the "same action numerically" might be called "detestatio" and "amor."⁸⁴ Gregory of Rimini (d. 1358), among others, was incredulous that hating (nolle) one thing while loving (velle) another thing could be considered "the same action numerically."⁸⁵ We concur with Rimini; Ockham's position is perplexing in the absence of a clear statement of what individuates action. In place of explanation, we have Ockham's assertion that the will's freedom determines whether diverse objects are elicited by separate acts or whether diverse objects are "ordered" and "conjoined" by a single act. This position rules out a priori or methodological means for identifying individual volitions. The irony is acute-- Ockham, who rejects the need for "principles of individuation" to

⁸⁴ Sent., I, d. 1, q. 1 (I, 386-387); "Ad quartum potest concedi quod idem actus numero respectu unius potest denominari detestatio seu actus detestandi et respectu alterius actus amandi quando unico actu detestor aliquid propter aliud amatum eodem actu." This example would seem to offer the clearest instance of two simultaneous acts within the will, but Ockham insists the terms "to hate" and "to love" could apply to the same action, and thus vitiates his only acceptable illustration that "in voluntate possunt esse simul duo actus volendi." Also see Sent., IV, qes. 8-9, U.

⁸⁵ Super Primum et Secundum Sententiarum, I, d. 1, q. 1, art. 2 (Venice: 1522, f. 24r: reprint St. Bonaventure, New York: The Franciscan Institute, 1955); "Ad hanc rationem respondet primus doctor (in marg...Ockham) concedendo consequens et dicit quod non est inconveniens eundem actum esse volitionem unius et nolitionem alterius...Sed procerto hoc non nisi absurde concedi videtur posse." Rimini's argument proposes that whenever opposite predicates can be applied to the will, then two acts exist simultaneously.

explain the singular facts of experience, has no method for isolating singular actions.

The will, therefore, determines its object (or objects) and its own act (or acts). The will's determination is accomplished, however, without terminating the volitive potency to opposite objects or acts. The will's indifference to opposites, to producing or not producing some act, occur "nullo variato ex parte sua" or "nulla diversitate circa illam potentiam facta." With these phrases, Ockham describes a contingent power.

A fundamental motive which vitalizes Ockham's theological orientation is to maintain the contingency of human existence and action. Our life and thought rest on a free divine choice. Creation depends upon the Necessary Being whose omnipotence is the sole sufficient reason for non-necessary beings. Ockham expresses the contingency of every effect by saying that any effect produced by a created and secondary agent can be done by God immediately, as the primary and necessary agent.⁸⁶ Because of this regulative notion, Ockham asserts that human causality--whether free or natural--is contingent since the Creator could impede or totally effect any activity of the creature.⁸⁷ Anything

⁸⁶ Quodl., VI, q. 6; "Praeterea in illo articulo fundatur illa propositio famosa theologorum, Quidquid Deus producit median-
tibus causis secundis potest immediate sine illis producere et conservare."

⁸⁷ Sent., I, d. 1, q. 6 (I, 501); "Prima distinctio est de contingentibus quod dupliciter accipitur (ad presens) frui aliquo contingenter sicut et producere aliquid contingenter. In uno modo quod simpliciter potest frui et non frui, vel producere et non

which is an effect, therefore, is contingent in the sense that its being is radically dependent, non-necessary, and mutable.

Besides this metaphysical contingency of created being, which implies imperfection, Ockham also distinguishes another meaning of contingency which connotes a perfection possessed by the will. This second sense of contingent refers to "that which produces some effect, with no change on its part nor on the part of another. It has in its power, thus, to not produce as well as to produce, so that of its nature, it is determined to neither."⁸⁸ (We imply this "volitive" sense of contingent when discussing the will, unless otherwise stated.) This conception of contingence belongs to both the divine and human will, but not to a natural power. The production and continuing production of natural potencies depend upon external factors; contact between agent and patient necessitates action which continues until the extrinsic conditions change. Volitive contingency, however, implies that the will could cease its action unilaterally.⁸⁹ A

producere. Et isto modo, quidquid producit quemcumque effectum producit contingenter, quia potest Deus facere quod non producat." Also see Sent., III, q. 4, L; and Quodl., III, q. 13.

⁸⁸Sent., I, d. 1, q. 6 (I, 501); "Alio modo accipitur pro illo quod producit aliquem effectum et nullo variato ex parte sua, nec ex parte cuiuscumque alterius, habet in potestate sua ita non producere sicut producere, ita quod ex natura sua ad neutraum determinatur. Et eodem modo dicendum est de contingenter frui."

⁸⁹Sent., I, d. 38, q. 1, F; "Concedendum est quod voluntas quando causat contingenter causat. Sed ista potest habere duas causas veritatis. Vel quia possibile est quod in eodem instanti sit verum dicere quod non causat et hoc est impossibile quia posito quod in aliquo instanti sit causans, impossibile est quod

contingent act--and all moral actions are contingent--can be retracted immediately although all other prerequisites for willing continue unchanged. Ockham cautions that "contingent" does not mean that the will could both cause and not-cause at the same instant.⁹⁰ Rather, before and after a will-act, the will can either cause or not-cause. A positive movement of the will (either velle or nolle) produces a self-determined act but the will is not thereby determined. Ockham's rather extreme example of the will's contingent character pictures a person jumping from

in eodem instanti sit non causans. Vel dicitur causare contingenter quia libere sine omni variatione adveniente sibi vel alteri, et non per cessationem alterius causae potest cessare ab actu in alio instanti, ita quod in alio instanti sit non causans, non quod in eodem instanti sit non causans. Et isto modo, voluntas causat contingenter. Also see Sent., I, d. 10, q. 2, H.

⁹⁰In probably a later work, the Tractatus de Praedestinatione et de Praescientia Dei et de Futuris Contingentibus (ed. Philotheus Boehner, O.F.M.; Saint Bonaventure, New York: The Franciscan Institute, 1945), Ockham seems to distinguish three "moments" in the will's operation--before, during and after the will-act. Arguing against John Duns Scotus, Ockham insists that while the will elicits its act, it cannot simultaneously be capable of the contrary act. The will "valet ad opposita" successively, not simultaneously. Hence, the will can produce opposite acts before or after its self-determination--but not during or while it elicits some volition. "...voluntas creata in illo instanti in quo agit contingenter agit. Sed hoc potest intelligi tripliciter: Uno modo quod ipsa prius duratione existens ante A instans, in quo causat, potest libere et contingenter causare vel non causare in A, et iste intellectus est verus... Secundo modo potest intelligi, quod in eodem instanti, in quo causat, sit verum dicere, quod non causat; et iste intellectus non est possibilis propter contradictoria...Tertio modo potest intelligi contingenter causare in A, quia libere sine omni variatione et mutatione adveniente sibi vel alteri causae et sine cessatione alterius causae potest cessare in alio instanti post A ab suo actu, ita quod in A instanti sit haec vera: Voluntas causat, et in alio instanti post A sit haec vera: Voluntas non causat; et sic voluntas contingenter causat in A." (pp. 35-36).

a cliff to take his own life. In the midst of his descent, and with no possibility of stopping his fall, the person retains his capacity to reject the volition which will produce his suicide.⁹¹ Physically, the man's body is determined by necessary laws of gravity but volitionally, the will is not necessitated to continue its choice even though the effect of that choice is inevitable. Thus, the normal sequence of volitive cause and effect is sometimes actual, always possible, but this sequence is never necessary or permanent.

Ockham often asserts a distinction between the Absolute and Ordinate Power of God.⁹² This distinction concerns the difference between what God can do (absolutely) and what God actually decides to do (ordinately). Absolutely, there is no necessity that God produce or conserve any created effect. Due to the will's contingency, Ockham also speaks of the absolute power of the human will. "Every potency acting freely and contingently can cease from its acts by its own absolute power either mediately

⁹¹Sent., III, q. 12, G; "Tum quia nullus actus est viciosus nisi sit voluntarius et in potestate voluntatis, quia peccatum adeo est voluntarium etc. Sed actus exterior potest primo esse in potestate voluntatis, puta quia aliquis dimittat se in praecipitium, et post descendendo potest illum actum simpliciter et meritorie nolle propter deum." Ockham gives this same example in Quodl., III, q. 13.

⁹²The absolute/ordinate power of God will be discussed in Chapter Three. Cf. below, pp. 190-197. For now, we only wish to indicate that Ockham applies this distinction to the human will. The parallel is important. The absolute power of the created will expresses its contingent operation; likewise God's absolute power indicates fundamentally the contingency of divine action ad extra.

or immediately...but the will acts freely and contingently regarding every object; therefore, the will can simply stop its act by its absolute power."⁹³ The absolute power of the will indicates that every free movement of the will originates and continues contingently.

Even though Ockham believes that the will's perfection is the loving enjoyment of God,⁹⁴ the will and its mode of operation remain contingent when face to face with the Creator. Ordinarily, the human will would elicit an act of love when presented with a vision of the Divine Essence. But absolutely, the human will could choose not to be blessed with the enjoyment of God. Just as Ockham claimed that "freedom of opposites" implies the primitive, volitive indifference to all objects; so the "freedom of contraries" requires the will's native contingency to all acts. Even the love for God-known-clearly.⁹⁵ If the will

⁹³Sent., I, d. 1, q. 1 (I, 399); also see Sent., II, q. 19, E. and F.

⁹⁴Sent., I, d. 1, q. 4 (I, 447); "Ad secundum dico quod solus Deus est summe diligendus, quia est summum bonum." Also see I, 446; "Ad primum principale dico quod nullum aliud objectum a Deo potest satiare voluntatem, quia nullus actus respectu cuiuscumque alterius a Deo excludit omnem anxietatem et tristitiam quicquid objecto creata habito potest voluntas aliquid aliud cum anxietate et tristitia appetere."

⁹⁵Sent., IV, q. 14, D; "Sexto potest dici quod videns clare Deum habens actum beatificum a Deo totaliter, creatus non potest Deum nolle propter repugnantiam formalem inter illos actus diligendi et odiendi. Si tamen actus beatificus non causaretur a Deo totaliter et voluntas relinqueretur totaliter naturae suae et libertati et fruitio beatifica suspenderetur per potentiam divinam, tunc posset voluntas Deum nolle, sed illa non esset beatifica." According to Ockham the clear vision (visio nuda)

necessarily loved its Creator when known through a proper concept, then the love of God would not be praiseworthy. Ockham intends to build his doctrine of moral goodness upon the foundation of love for God; hence, he is careful to maintain the contingent and imputable character of the viator's love for God.

The will's contingency does not extend, however, beyond death. Ockham does not envision souls wandering between heaven and hell in the after-life, à la George Bernard Shaw. Rather, Ockham claims the permanent beatitude called "heaven" and the permanent misery called "hell" are supernaturally caused.⁹⁶ While

of God and the consequent enjoyment (beatifica fruitio) engendered by that vision are effected supernaturally. Because God can separate what is prior and posterior, it follows that God could cause the vision without the subsequent enjoyment normally associated with seeing God face to face. In this abnormal case, then, Ockham asserts the will's natural power to cease loving God. Having determined the meaning of volitive contingency regarding already experienced volitions, Ockham simply extends this meaning to all possible acts. Cf. Sent., I, d. 1, q. 2 (I, 398); and Sent., I, d. 1, q. 6 (I, 505). When "left totally to its own nature," the will produces and responds to its activity contingently. Ockham's position in this question was questioned by the papal commission at Avignon. See Auguste Pelzer, "Les 51 articles de Guillaume Occam censurés, en Avignon, en 1326," Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique 18 (1922), p. 254; 266-67; 268-69. Articles 6, 40 and 46 concern Ockham's doctrine of the relationship and primary causality of the vision and enjoyment of God. This seems to be the only point at which Ockham's doctrine of created freedom ran into official objections. The most strenuous censures were given to Ockham's "Pelagian" tendencies; these articles touch on the relationship between free will and divine grace. We will consider this relationship in Chapter Five.

⁹⁶Sent., IV, q. 13, K (in finem); "Omnis natura libere mota ad volitionem aliquam potest esse misera si ejus felicitas non dependeat ab aliquo alio sicut a causa totali. Quid dico propter angelos et homines qui possunt libere velle multa in patria et tamen non possunt esse miseri quia eorum felicitas dependet a Deo sicut a causa totali." Also see Sent., II, q. 19, F-G; and Sent., I, d. 1, q. 2 (I, 398).

the created will retains its native contingency, God will not cooperate with the "blessed" to cease loving God, nor with the "damned" to cease hating God. Unable to reject this love without the general influence of God, the beatified person is necessarily and permanently happy. In his effort to reconcile permanent states of beatitude and damnation with the will's contingency, Ockham must appeal to the primary and total causality of God. In patria, the metaphysical rather than volitive contingency of creatures is manifest.

In summary, the freedom of contraries attributes a self-determined and contingent connection between the soul and its volitive acts. These characteristics--not indifference⁹⁷--express Ockham's basic conception of human freedom. Except for the special intervention of God, no external power could challenge the will's sovereignty over its own acts. Analysis of motives, prior conditions and conditioning, and the immediate cognitive possibilities cannot sufficiently nor precisely explain the will's preference. In Ockham's estimate, personal autonomy and freedom

⁹⁷It is common to read that "indifference," "indetermination" or "freedom from coercion" typify man's basic freedom according to Ockham. Thus, G. de Lagarde, Ockham..., p. 74; Anton Pegis, The New Scholasticism 15 (1941), p. 43; and James Kevin McDonnell, "Religion and Ethics in the Philosophy of William of Ockham," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Philosophy, Georgetown University, 1971), p. 85. "Freedom from" external forces and internal finality is part of Ockham's doctrine; but Ockham places the emphasis or basic characteristic of human freedom on the will's active control over its own act.

require the irreducible element of spontaneity.⁹⁸ Rather than a lame excuse, the exasperating explanation "I wanted to" becomes the only adequate reason for my deliberate acts. Ockham's close analysis of "contingent" insures that no determining reason could be given for free volition save "I wanted to." In the end, human freedom is as unsearchable as personality itself.

Ockham insists that "necessary" and "free," "natural" and "contingent" are formally contradictory notions--a position denied by many Scholastics before and after the Venerable Inceptor. The meaning of "freedom" and "contingency" derive from the experience in which "I can cause or not-cause the same effect." Ockham has almost naive confidence in the libertarian meaning of this experience. Yet the awareness described is compatible with a deterministic interpretation. The character resulting from native temperament and infantile-adolescent experiences could make conscious options either illusionary or trivial. Perhaps such criticism is "philosophical hindsight;" twentieth century experiments in behavior modification and developments in psychoanalytic techniques make contemporary Libertarians more cautious with their evidence. On the other hand, hindsight brings Ockham's procedure into perspective. Namely, if self-determined alternatives give rise to the concept of freedom, then these characteristics must obtain whenever "free" is predicated. The situational,

⁹⁸Sent., I, d. 10, q. 2, H; "Unde libertas et spontaneitas videntur non posse distingui." Also see Quodl., II, q. 13.

intermittant awareness of operative options (velle, nolle, non-velle) is generalized as a volitive capacity for all situations. Ockham need not re-define the resultant notions of freedom and contingency to describe the divine activity ad extra!

4. The Moral Function of the Will

For Ockham, the question of free will remains inextricably within a moralistic context. His experiential evidence, his logical and metaphysical analysis, serve to elucidate the will's freedom as moral agency. The elements of a humanistic and personalistic vision of human freedom are present, but not articulated. Radically and originally indifferent to extrinsic forces and attractions, the will possesses autonomy, self-determination and a dominant influence over the direction of one's life and behavior. Ockham mentions that "the rational animal is best distinguished by freedom which is the principle of volition."⁹⁹ But man's uniqueness among the blind forces of nature introduces his moral responsibility. Freedom remains a Medieval preface to obligation rather than creativity or dignity. Ockham "secularized" the will only by eliminating any natural and intrinsic connection to the Supernatural. Human freedom still must render its account to the divine Legislator, find its perfect satisfaction in the Infinite

⁹⁹Sent., I, d. 1, q. 3 (I, 426); "Creatura rationalis est perfectior omni creatura irrationali, ergo illud accidens per quod distinguitur maxime a creatura irrationali erit perfectius; sed videtur quod creatura rationalis magis distinguitur per volitionem quam per quamcumque delectationem. Assumptum patet, quia maxime distinguitur per libertatem quae est principium volitionis."

Good, and realize its true nobility in conformity to the Supreme Will. Pico's "Oration on the Dignity of Man" is still in the future.

Although the freedom of will is a meta-ethical concern, some moral doctrines follow immediately from Ockham's psychology. The causal indifference and contingency which describe the free will also characterize every instance of "imputable" efficacy. With admirable but frustrating consistency, Ockham insists that moral value involve inevitably a radically free will. To be precise, Ockham's usual parlance that morals are "acts of will" or "within the power of will" must be understood as "contingent acts of will" and "within the power of will freely." This because some will-acts are elicited necessarily and naturally. Such acts are "voluntary" but neither free nor moral. With his rigorous logic, Ockham excludes any moral value from natural causes. Here is the origin of Ockham's criticism of Natural Law moralists who find a "proper moral goodness or evil" in external acts; here the source of Ockham's nebulous, if not evasive, treatment concerning the non-positive determinants of moral value. He cannot predicate "good" or "evil" except of the free will, yet the will must recognize the moral course before its free volition. This problem is developed later. For now, we merely indicate that Ockham's value theory hinges upon a conception of freedom which entails indifferent, self-determined and contingent causality.

The psychic conditions and limitations of volitive freedom have a more extensive function within his ethic. The qualifications

of liberty which derive from the psychological environment--sensitive, mental or voluntary activity--directly affect certain moral doctrines. Passions or habits in the sense powers might overwhelm the will's primitive indifference; cognition precedes and causes every volition; previous volitive commitments could necessitate further will-acts. Each point has its impact.

First, if passions override freedom, they also eliminate moral responsibility. There are significant conditions which must be met by the sensate-intellective-volitive complex called "man" before freedom obtains. The weight of repeated acts or the pleasure which accompanies certain physical acts produce a disposition or "promptitudo" which cancel the agent's immediate options. If the motive force of passions or habits elicits a determined effect within the will, that volition would be morally neutral. "Nothing is indifferent according to a habit since a habit is a natural cause."¹⁰⁰

Secondly, the immediate possibilities of volition follow from the intellect's activity. The specific acts "within the power of will" at any instant are a function of the contemporaneous cognitive acts. If the intellect (partially) causes every free volition, we might expect that the intellect has an essential part in moral activity. On the basis of Ockham's psychology, attempts to eliminate rationality from the fundamental character

¹⁰⁰ Sent., I, d. 17, q. 2, C.

of morality should be suspect.¹⁰¹ The created will requires both efficient and final causality from the intellect. Cognition does not influence volition until the will's self-determination; but when the will decides, the intellectual act then becomes an efficient cause and the known end a final cause of the resultant will-act. Truly purposeful acts are permitted only to rational, free beings.¹⁰² It is poetic but incorrect to construe natural forces as "intending some goal;" fire burns and the intellect knows

¹⁰¹Erwin Iserloh, Gnade und Eucharistie..., p. 47; and Oswald Fuchs, The Psychology of Habit..., pp. 80-81, for example, tend to exaggerate the will's part in moral behavior to the exclusion of reason's partnership. Thus Iserloh says: "Verdienstlich ist allein das Handeln und nicht das Sein, und das Handeln wird moralisch gut nicht durch seine Übereinstimmung mit der recta ratio, durch sein Ziel oder einen anderen Umstand, sondern allein durch seine Freiwilligkeit."

¹⁰²Sent., II, q. 3, NN; Sent., Prologue, q. 11 (I, 308-309); Quodl., IV, q. 1-2; and Summulae in libros Physicorum II, c. 6; "Praedicta de causa finali intelligenda sunt de agente a proposito et sponte, de quibus manifestum est quod agunt propter finem et quod est aliqua causa finalis eorum. De aliis autem quae non agunt per cognitionem et voluntatem, magis dubium est..." Ockham's definition of "final cause" is "esse amatum et desideratum efficaciter ab agente propter quod amatum fit effectus." Quodl., IV, q. 1. Ockham's notion of finality is studied unsympathetically by Harry R. Klocker, S.J., "Ockham and Finality" The Modern Schoolman 43 (1966), pp. 233-247. We cannot agree with his analysis that "final causality can be reduced to efficient causality." (p. 236) Rather, Ockham holds that the will freely establishes which final causes operate within volition. The same efficient cause, i.e., the will, produces specifically different acts according to different final causes. Ockham's point, therefore, is not that finality reduces to efficiency but that final causes require (volitive) effects. In what viable sense could final causes be said to "move" the agent to action, if the agent does not act? Surely, Ockham does not eliminate final causes from philosophical explanation. On the other hand, Anita Garvens indicates the problems in determining natural moral norms which follow Ockham's denial of a teleological connection between non-rational natures. Franziskanische Studien, 21, pp. 249-262.

because such is their nature.¹⁰³ It is cogent to ask "how" natural causes behave but not "why" because motive and purpose indicate a conscious and free agency. While denying that intrinsic finality which attributes intelligence as well as intelligibility to Nature, Ockham insists upon final causality as concomitant with Will. Restricted to the agency of free will, final causes accept a central and critical role in morality. Clearly, Ockham's conception of final cause ("to be loved and desired efficiently by the agent and for the sake of which the loved thing is an effect") closes certain avenues of ethical knowledge open to "realistic" or "Aristotelian" metaphysicians. The end embodied in the nature of certain acts allow, for example, St. Thomas and Duns Scotus to judge the suitability and moral propriety of those actions. In Ockham's system, the final cause and intention established by the free will replaces the natural finality of acts as standards of ethical value.

Thirdly...finally, the 'internal logic' of the will directs Ockham to concentrate on the order between volitive ends and means. To achieve given purposes, an agent must accept compatible means. Often the means selected are pre-determined and automatic because the intellect (rightly or wrongly) considers

¹⁰³Quodl., II, q. 2; "Sed causa mere naturalis quae ex sui natura determinat sibi certum effectum et non aliud non requirit praecognoscentem nec ductorem; saltem ratio naturalis non concludit quod requirat. Verbi gratia: Ignis approximatus ligno calefacit eum sive hoc intendatur a cognoscente sive non. Et si quaeras, quare tunc plus calefacit quam frigefacit? Dico quod natura sua talis est."

them indispensable to the will's anticipated goal. Ockham does not hesitate to articulate the implication--the ethical importance of "entailed" volitions is negligible.¹⁰⁴ Actions elicited because they are necessary to achieve more ultimate goals are necessary, natural and non-moral actions. Ockham reserves intrinsic moral status to volition-of-ends; the means chosen often have a derived or extrinsic value. Given correct knowledge and volition regarding God, the rest of human activity falls into "ethical" line.¹⁰⁵ In this light, Ockham's central motive as a moralist is to articulate the ultimate end and greatest good which gives the volitive structure of the moral life. This is the moral program encapsulated in the first distinction of his Commentary on the Sentences. Ockham's inspiration and guide in this enterprise will be St. Augustine.

The freedom of the will is a meta-ethical concern. Nevertheless, upon this psychological basis Ockham constructs his theory of morality. Certain turns taken by Ockham's ethic derive

¹⁰⁴Sent., III, q. 4, 0; "...voluntas non est libera respectu secundi actus stante primo actu cum apprehensione praedicta; quia impossibile est quod ego uno actu diligam Deum et omne quid vult Deus diligere a me in generali et quod sciam quod Deus vult Johannem diligere a me, nisi diligam Johannem in speciali ...licet in primo actu voluntatis consistat meritum quia est in potestate voluntatis, non tamen in actu secundo qui non est in potestate voluntatis." Also see Sent., I, d. 1, q. 6 (I, 499).

¹⁰⁵Sent., III, q. 12, II; "...rectitudo circa finem ultimum repugnat omni difformitati circa ea quae sunt ad finem..." Also see Sent., I, d. 1, q. 1 (I, 390-391). Michele Fiasconaro gives a thorough analysis of the relationship between Ockham's psychology and ethics as contained in Distinction One. La Dottrina Morale di Guglielmo di Ockham (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Philosophy, University del S. Cuore, 1958), Chapter Three.

properly from his conception of the conditions, limits and nature of human freedom--the executive agency of moral activity. But free acts remain just that--free acts. The transformation of contingent volitions into good or evil acts requires the principle of Right Reason.

CHAPTER II

RIGHT REASON, THE PROXIMATE NORM OF REALITY

The translation and dissemination of the complete Nicomachean Ethics during the early thirteenth century made the notion of "recta ratio" a common topic in Scholastic moral systems. On the authority of Aristotle, most Schoolmen argued that right reasoning must precede praiseworthy action.¹ A working definition of "right reason" would be: the correct understanding of suitable behavior based on man's rational nature and his total

¹"What affirmation and negation are in thinking, pursuit and avoidance are in desire; so that since moral virtue is a state of character concerned with choice, and choice is deliberate desire, therefore both the reasoning must be true and the desire right, if the choice is to be good." Nic. Ethics, VI, 2 (trans. W. D. Ross; 1139a 21-25). The different perspectives from which Aristotle considered "orthòs lógos" may explain the diverse meanings which the Schoolmen attribute to recta ratio. For the Philosopher, right reason is a component of virtue's definition (II, 6, 1106^b 35 - 1107^a 3); it determines the mean between excess and defect (VI, 1 1138^b 17-20); it is identified with Practical Wisdom or Prudence (VI, 13, 1144^b 20-29); it is called a virtue (VI, 5, 1140^b 20-25). H. H. Joachim finds a fundamental dualism in Aristotle's explanation. "The 'orthòs lógos,' therefore, is the right rule of conduct in the twofold sense that (a) it is that which limits the amount of 'pátha' so as to make the action good, and (b) it is the principle of the limitation formulated in and as the scientific knowledge of the 'phrónimos'." The Nicomachean Ethics, A Commentary, (ed. D. A. Rees; Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1951), p. 167. It is appropriate, therefore, to speak of right reason as knowledge qua (the regulative function of practical knowledge) and knowledge quae (the content of practical knowledge). Ockham emphasizes the former sense.

environment.² But the notion is curiously difficult to verify by explicit definitions. Right reason seems to have a loose meaning: its manifestations include synderesis (knowledge of general norms), prudentia (knowledge of particular norms), and conscientia (knowledge of personal duties); its process merges with the practical syllogism; its content often coincides with eternal or natural law. The scholastics usually reserved analysis for specific facets of right reasoning. Hence, elusive variations in the meaning of "recta ratio" go unobserved although they produce fundamental changes in the history of moral theory.

Usually sensitive to problems of terminology, Ockham also neglects to define his understanding of Aristotle's phrase. His doctrine must be constructed from bits and pieces. The picture

²Professor Vernon J. Bourke describes the general notion of right reason as; "simply another name for a correct or justifiable understanding of the natural order. Universalized, right reason is expressed in general rules; applied to particular actions right reason is a personal decision as to the suitability or unsuitability of this individual action in its present conditions." History of Ethics, I, 132. Robert Hoopes devotes half of his published study of the Renaissance understanding of right reason to the Greek and Medieval precedents. His general definition is: "Reason thus simultaneously disposed, so that it presides with equal validity and certainty over the realms of intellect and morality." Right Reason in the English Renaissance (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 4. These authors point out that the phrase "right reason" was in general use from the mid-thirteenth century into the eighteenth century. Their definitions are more or less acceptable, as is our description, depending on whose thought is under consideration. When Professor Bourke contrasts the Thomistic and Scotistic theories of right reason (pp. 145 and 152-53), he adduces texts regarding the relational sets constituting moral goodness rather than explicit definitions. This comment does not intend criticism of the excellent research of Professor Bourke; it intends to indicate the indefinite, undefined status of this phrase which permits its inclusion within diverse ethical systems.

which emerges is considerably different than that found by, for example, commentators of St. Thomas or Duns Scotus. We will argue that the inconsistency alleged between the individual's right reason and the moral prerogatives of God³ results partially from an inaccurate view of Ockham's unique doctrine of recta ratio. His peculiar understanding of a common scholastic position supports a novel turn in the history of Medieval ethics.

This chapter examines the structure and nature of "right reason" as the immediate, subjective norm of morality. Part One locates Ockham's doctrine within the context of the Practical Intellect and its divisions. Part Two takes up the analysis of why "right reason" is the proximate standard of moral behavior. The many facets of Ockham's doctrine reflect his essential

³See Anita Garvens, Franziskanische Studien, 21, p. 374; "Hinsichtlich der völligen Kontingenz des Sittengesetzes, wie Ockham es in bezug auf Inhalt und Allgemeingültigkeit fasst, staunt man deshalb nicht wenig, dass bei ihm trotzdem eine subjektive das sittliche Handeln des Menschen bindende Norm sich findet: die recta ratio..." Quoting Garvens approvingly, Father Elzearius Bonke, O.F.M., mentions God's power to command theft and adultery and concludes "In doctrina igitur Venerabilis Inceptoris ita considerata nihil remanet de relatione inter voluntatem et intellectum, immo videtur in flagranti contradictione cum illis quae prius dixerat de recta ratione ut norma voluntatis..." Collectanea Franciscana, 14, p. 67. Georges de Lagarde also cites the work of Garvens and concurs; "La somme des impératifs de la droite raison s'impose a priori, sans qu'il y ait besoin de les rapporter à la nature ou à la volonté éternelle de Dieu." Ockham, La Morale..., p. 67. The general criticism, then, seems to hold that Ockham's doctrine of right reason is inconsistent with the absolute power of God and that this doctrine is not justified rationally within his system. These criticisms might be warranted if Ockham meant by "right reason" exactly what, say, St. Thomas meant.

assertion that no one sins unknowingly; or conversely, that no one acts virtuously by accident.⁴

Part I: The Description of Right Reason

A. Practical Reason

We begin with Ockham's notion of the Practical Intellect. The myriad of issues which surround contemporary discussions of "ought" and "is" were attached to Medieval analyses of the "practical" and "speculative" intellects. In Ockham's mind, man possesses one, unitary intellect capable of formulating practical and speculative propositions. Practical Reason indicates the human intellect constructing and retaining practical statements. By way of preliminary definition, "practical" propositions signify some "practice" or human operation. Speculative propositions signify matters which are beyond the scope of human powers to alter or cause. The precise character of these different propositions is established by Ockham in order to describe the nature of Practical Reason.

Ockham holds that practical and speculative statements can be distinguished 1) inherently, 2) according to the formative causes, and 3) according to the objects of these statements.⁵

⁴Sent., III, q. 11, Z; "Sciendum est quod recta ratio requiritur ad perfectam virtutem et actualis; et ideo ebriosus et furiosus et pueri qui non habent usus rationis non peccant coram Deo; quia nullus ignoranter peccat secundum Augustinum." Also see Sent., III, q. 12, GG; and Quodl., II, q. 6.

⁵Sent., Prologus, q. 11 (I, 310); "Ex his respondeo ad quaestionem quod istae scientiae seipsis distinguuntur intrinsece et formaliter, sed per fines vel per finem distinguuntur

Regarding the first, Ockham is clear that all knowledge is the result of a unitary cognitive power and consists of simple, accidental forms which inhere in a substance, i.e., the soul.⁶ As such, every proposition known is distinct from every other proposition. In this sense, speculative propositions are distinct from each other as well as distinct from practical propositions. Regarding the second distinction, different types of knowledge can be distinguished on the basis of different causes. The end or purpose for which a person forms a mental proposition has the character of a final cause.⁷ Because the end is

causaliter, sicut causaliter distinguuntur per causam efficientem. Sed per subjecta scientiae nullo praedictorum modorum distinguuntur necessario quia, nec formaliter et intrinsece, nec causaliter necessario, nec tanquam per aliqua sibi propria. Sed isto ultimo modo distinguuntur per objecta. Hoc est, per conclusiones scitas." See also R. Guelluy, Philosophie et Théologie chez Guillaume d'Ockham (Paris: J. Vrin, 1947), pp. 300-306.

⁶Sent., Prologus, q. 11 (I, 311); "Primum patet quia istae scientiae sunt formae simplices, sicut alias declarabitur de omnibus accidentibus; sed formae simplices non possunt distinguuntur intrinsece et formaliter nisi seipsis; ergo etc."

⁷Idem.; "Secundum patet, quia ab eodem causaliter habet res esse et esse distinctum a quocumque alio; igitur cum quaelibet scientia, sicut quaelibet alia res, habeat esse suum a causa finali sua, sequitur quod ab ea habet esse distinctum. Et ideo dico quod posito quod scientia speculativa et practica habeant eandem causam finalem, per illam distinguuntur causaliter, quia illa in illo genere causandi est causa distinctionis earum. Et isto modo omnes res creatae distinguuntur per Deum, quia est cause distinctionis omnium. Et si dicatur quod nulla distinguuntur per illud in quo conveniunt. Respondeo, quod verum est: tanquam per sibi propria. Tamen causaliter, quando causa est illimitata vel simpliciter vel secundum quid, non est inconveniens quin per illud distinguantur in quo conveniunt, illo modo quo conveniunt in illo. Verumtamen, sciendum quod accipiendo finem per illo qui secundum rectam rationem deberet esse finis, modo exposito, sic distinguuntur per fines tanquam per aliqua propria, quia alius est finis unius et alterius." Also

partially responsible for the reality of knowledge, it is also partially responsible for the distinct reality of the proposition. However, Ockham cautions that the same end can be the final cause of specifically distinct types of knowledge. For example, out of self-love, a person might acquire both speculative and practical knowledge.⁸ The speculative and the practical propositions of the intellect are distinguished by their final causes only when the "finis scientiae" is understood as what ought to be done by the knower. Ockham will accept the "common saying" that the final cause which is characteristic of practical

see Summulae in Libros Physicorum, II, c. 5 (Rome, 1637).

⁸Sent., Prologus, q. 11 (I, 304-305). Ockham develops his doctrine on the distinction of practical and speculative propositions in terms of final causes in contrast to the doctrine of Henry of Ghent. Henry's position is summarized accurately by Ockham and then criticized. Henry taught that the end of knowledge and the end of the knower were different; the former is "that to which knowledge is ordered," and the latter is "that to which the knower orders knowledge." Furthermore, Henry maintained a distinction between the ends of knowledge; namely, an accidental end and a principal end. The principal or per se end of knowledge is "that to which knowledge is ordered by its nature;" the principal ends of action and truth distinguish properly the practical and speculative types of knowledge, respectively. See Henry of Ghent, Summae Quaestionum Ordinariarum, art. 36, q. 4 (reprint of 1520 edition; edited by Eligius M. Buytaert, O.F.M.; St. Bonaventure, N. Y.: Franciscan Institute Publications, 1953). Ockham criticizes this doctrine by indicating that the reason for which a person acquires knowledge is the final cause of both the knower and the knowledge he acquires. Thus, Henry is wrong to claim that the end of knowledge and the knower is distinct. For exactly the same motive; i.e., personal gain, a person could acquire both practical and speculative knowledge. Only when the end apprehended by the knower is something which should be done does Ockham speak of a final cause which is proper and distinctive to practical knowledge as opposed to speculative propositions.

propositions is a deed, whereas the final cause of speculative knowledge is the truth; but he understands by "deed" an obligatory act. Regarding the third, the "object" of knowledge can distinguish speculative from practical propositions.⁹ The object of speculative knowledge; i.e., the speculative proposition itself, does not indicate anything which can be done by the knower. The object of practical knowledge, however, is a proposition which signifies something which can be accomplished by the

⁹Sent., Prologus, q. 11 (I, 315); "Ideo dico quod cum notitia practica sit directiva alicuius praxis, oportet quod semper notitia practica habeat praxim vel significans praxim vel aliquid operabile a nobis pro objecto saltem partiali. Et cum notitia practica sit respectu alicuius complexi, oportet quod illa notitia sit magis directiva operis quam notitia incompleta cuiuscumque termini illius complexi. Et quando sic est, tunc est notitia practica, aliter non."

Previously, Ockham considered the "object" of knowledge as the "conclusion known." Now he speaks of the object as what is signified by a proposition. It is necessary to refer to the Expositio Super viii Libros Physicorum, which is one of Ockham's latest philosophical efforts, to clarify the "subjectum et objectum scientiae." The subject of knowledge can be considered in three ways; as the intellect in which knowledge inheres, as the thing about which something is known, and as the subject-term of the proposition. The object of knowledge is the whole proposition which is known. See Philosophical Writings: William of Ockham, ed. by Philotheus Boehner, O.F.M. (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1957), p. 9. The texts of the Ordinatio and the Expositio consider the "object" of knowledge in a three-fold way; as a conclusion known, as the significance of a proposition and as a proposition which is known. These three meanings of the "objectum scientiae" can be harmonized by considering the object of practical knowledge as "a proposition which indicates human operation." Father Armand Maurer, C.S.B. has published a valuable study of the "object of science" in "Ockham's Conception of the Unity of Science," Medieval Studies 20 (1958), pp. 98-100. "Let us observe Ockham's distinction between the subject and object of a science. This distinction became classic among the later scholastics and was adopted even by some Thomists. According to Ockham, the object of a science is the whole proposition which is known; the subject is only a part of the proposition namely the term functioning as its subject." (p. 99).

knower. In the end, therefore, Ockham proposes that the only distinctive characteristic of practical propositions is reference to human operations.

The nature of the object of practical knowledge is explained by Ockham through analysis of the term "praxis." This term is transliterated from the Greek and stands for "an operation existing within the power of the will."¹⁰ "Praxis" indicates any deed which can be effected immediately or mediately by the will. All practical propositions imply or signify praxis, i.e., a state of affairs subject to the contingent power of volition. Two items are clarified here. First, statements which include concepts or terms standing for human operations are not thereby practical. The praxis involved in practical propositions is an operation producible or changeable by the will. For example, "rational animals are capable of thought" signifies a state of affairs which is not within the power of the will. Hence, this proposition is not practical. Secondly, speculation or the formation of speculative propositions is a human operation which can be initiated and controlled by the will. For example, the proposition "God is triune" can be thought and its thinking is subject to the will, i.e., an instance of praxis.

¹⁰Sent., I, d. 35, q. 6, G; "Ad cuius intellectum sciendum est quod differentia est inter actum practicum et praxim. Nam praxis est operatio existens in potestate voluntatis, quia omnis talis actus potest elici virtuose et viciose, loquendo de actu voluntatis nostrae de quo est modo sermo. Sed actus practicus est ille qui habet pro objecto saltem partiali praxim, vel aliquid operabile contingenter a voluntate." Also see Sent., Prologue, q. 10 (I, 292).

Although speculative propositions do not signify operative potential, speculation itself can be effected by the will power. Thus, speculation is praxis, but the statements of the speculative intellect are never practical.¹¹ In Ockham's terminology; "praxis" indicates an extra-conceptual action which the will can accomplish in fact; "practical" is a linguistic category whose member propositions all include a praxis-term; "speculative" is a linguistic category whose member propositions never include a praxis-term.

The function of a proposition is perhaps the most serviceable way to distinguish between Ockham's understanding of the speculative and the practical. A proposition can be a reason for true knowledge or a reason to do something. When a proposition is a reason to consider the truth, the proposition has a speculative function. When a sentence is a reason to act, that knowledge is practical.¹² The particular function served by a sentence is reflected in the signification of that proposition. The speculative use of reason is apparent when the object of knowledge--what is signified--cannot be altered or caused by human powers. The practical function of the intellect, however,

¹¹Sent., Prologue, q. 10 (I, 296); "Et ideo pura speculatio et similiter dilectio, quia sunt operabiles a nobis, quamvis non habeant talia pro objectis; vere sunt praxes et de ipsis, vere erit notitia practica."

¹²Sent., Prologue, q. 11 (I, 308); "Alius est finis scientiae qui secundum rectam rationem deberet intendi ab agente quod libere agit. Et isto modo finis scientiae practicae est opus vel operari, et finis speculativae est considerare." Cf., Aristotle, Metaphysics, II, 1, 993^b 20.

is indicated by objects (propositions) which signify human actions. The speculative and practical use of reason, therefore, involves different uses of knowledge and concomitantly, different meanings.

Two minor points must be made concerning the distinction of speculative and practical propositions. First, Ockham claims that the subject-term of a proposition is not a reliable indicator of the difference between speculative and practical intellect.¹³ The same thing can have properties which cannot be controlled by a human agent and other attributes which are. Thus, the subject-term of a proposition can receive predicates which do not signify praxis and others which do. Secondly, Ockham claims that speculative and practical propositions can be distinguished by the conclusions which can be deduced from them.¹⁴ From the general principles of practical reason, other particular

¹³Sent., Prologue, q. 11 (I, 313); "Nec distinguuntur per subjecta tanquam per aliqua sibi propria patet, quia idem simpliciter potest esse subjectum notitiae speculativae et notitiae practicae. Nam de omni subjecto quod habet aliquas passiones quae sunt in potestate nostra et aliquas quae non sunt in potestate nostra, potest esse notitia speculativa qua sciuntur illae passiones quae non sunt in potestate nostra de illo subjecto, et etiam notitia practica qua sciuntur aliae passiones quae sunt in potestate nostra de illo eodem subjecto."

¹⁴Ibid., (I, 315); "Quartum, scilicet quod istae notitiae distinguuntur per conclusiones scitas tanquam per propria sibi, ita scilicet quod necessario est alia conclusio scita notitia practica et alia scita notitia speculativa, patet; quia in illa conclusione quae scitur notitia speculativa, nihil ponitur operabile a nobis, nec aliquid importans operabile a nobis, cum notitia speculativa non sit de operibus nostris."

propositions can be validly deduced. It would be impossible to deduce validly a practical conclusion from two speculative premises. Of course, to distinguish the speculative from the practical on the basis of distinct conclusions is a derivative method. That is, this method depends upon a prior difference between the speculative and the practical propositions which are the major premises of the syllogism. But Ockham's point is not irrelevant. Ockham means to affirm that a valid conclusion cannot contain an element which is not virtually contained in the premises. The conclusion of a practical syllogism implies that something can be done or ought to be done; thus, a practical proposition could not be deduced validly from statements which do not imply that something can or ought to be done.

There is only one intellect in a man which is capable of knowing speculatively and practically. Still, the speculative use of reason is nominally different from the practical function. The nominal definition of the speculative intellect is "the intellect able to consider those things which are not in our power." The definition of the practical intellect is "the intellect able to consider or to have knowledge of those things which are in our power."¹⁵

¹⁵Sent., Prologue, q. 10 (I, 292); "Et ita est intelligendum dictum auctorum quando distinguunt inter intellectum speculativum et practicum, quia habent distinctas diffinitiones exprimentes quid nominis eorum. Unde si definiatur intellectus speculativus, hoc est, iste terminum 'intellectus speculativus,' debet sic dici: 'Intellectus speculativus est intellectus potens considerare illa quae non sunt in potestate nostra.' Intellectus practicus sic: 'Intellectus practicus est intellectus potens considerare vel habere scientiam illorum quae sunt in potestate nostra.'"

Having distinguished the practical use of reason from the speculative on the basis of an object (proposition) which signifies something "do-able," Ockham further differentiates practical propositions as "directive" and "ostensive." Some practical propositions express what ought to be done; that is, some propositions imply an obligation to accomplish some deed. A proposition whose object should be effected is categorized by Ockham as directive, practical knowledge. Other practical propositions show how a deed should be done without directing that it be done.¹⁶ Ockham mentions the propositions which form the science of logic, grammar, rhetoric and the mechanical arts as ostensive, practical knowledge because they show how certain operations should be done. For example, the statement "This house should be built," is directionally practical, while the assertion that "This house should be built with brick walls" is ostensively practical. Both directive and ostensive

¹⁶Sent., Prologue, q. 11 (I, 316); "potest tamen distinguere de practica, quia quaedam est dictativa et quaedam tantum ostensiva. Prima est illa qua determinate dictatur aliquid esse faciendum vel non faciendum; et sic loquitur Philosophus, vi Ethicorum et iii De Anima. Et isto modo nec logica nec grammatica nec rhetorica est practica, nec etiam ars quaecunque mechanica, quia nulla istarum dictat aliquid esse faciendum vel fugiendum, sicut ars mechanica non dictat quod domus est facienda, sed hoc pertinet ad prudentiam qua scitur quando est facienda et quando non, et quando est operandum et quando non. Secunda notitia practica est tantum ostensiva, quia non dictat aliquid fugiendum aut persequendum, sed tantum ostendit opus quomodo fieri potest, virtute cuius notitiae, si intellectus dictet illud est faciendum et voluntas vellit, statim potest recte operari." Also see, Sent., III, q. 11, U. Cf. Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, VI, c. 1 (1138b 18-29); De Anima, III, c. 9 (432b 26-29).

statements comprise prescriptive language; but Ockham's moral doctrine involves properly only the former.

It should be understood that Ockham does not explicitly differentiate practical and speculative proposition on the basis of the verbs "ought" and "is." Rather, Ockham distinguishes between a state of affairs within the will's competence and other affairs which are not. Ockham does not specifically say that practical propositions are assertions of obligation or value while speculative propositions are statements of fact. This terminology is characteristic of more contemporary discussions of moral philosophy. Nevertheless, the "ought-is" difference is clearly implied by Ockham's analysis of practical, "directive" propositions. Some practical propositions are "directives," which "dictate that something is to be chosen."¹⁷ An analysis of the structure of a directive practical proposition reveals three distinctive features. A directive proposition 1) signifies a deed within the power of the human will, 2) has a final cause which is that possible deed and 3) directs that this future deed be done.

¹⁷Summulae in libros Physicorum, I, c. 4; "Duplex est notitia practica: una dictativa quae scilicet aliquid esse eligendum dictat vel dimittendum, et sic prudentia et moralis philosophia est practica. Alia est notitia practica tantum ostensiva quae scilicet docet qualiter res potest fieri vel debeat fieri, si aliquis vellet eam facere. Non tamen dictat eam esse faciendum vel fiendum et sic artes moechanicae sunt practicae." Notice that Ockham uses "debeat" to formulate an ostensive proposition. He does not seem aware of special problems or pre-eminence belonging to "ought" statements within moral doctrine.

In summary, practical reason concerns what can be through the human will; the speculative reason involves what is. In Latin, the linguistic peculiarity of practical propositions can be expressed adequately by gerundives or future passive participles which express actions "to be done." But whether prescriptive language incorporates gerundive constructions or the verb "ought," its distinctive feature is the signification of behavioral ends. Action "to be done" has the character of an end. "The practical intellect pertains to practical principles and also practical conclusions, and thus, the practical intellect concerns the end."¹⁸ Practical propositions originate evidently from the consideration of the human will's capacities. Ockham finds empirical justification for expressing what can be, as well as for what is. Men know the definite possibilities open to their volitional acts as they know determinate facts. Ockham does not derive "ought" from "is", but he bases the demonstrative and evident character of moral science on the validity of deriving "can" from "is." Knowing what the will-power is, and knowing what a given extra-mental thing is, a person knows what can be done voluntarily. Ockham never doubts the empirical

¹⁸Sent., Prologue, q. 10 (I, 290); "Circa primum dico quod intellectus practicus est respectu principiorum practicarum et etiam respectu conclusionum practicarum. Et ideo intellectus practicus est respectu finis, quando scilicet de aliquo fine iudicatur quod est appetendus vel prosequendus. Et hoc est intelligendum quia est respectu unius complexi quod affirmat aliquem finem esse appetendum, et istud est primum principium practicum in operando." Ockham claims that "whatever can be dictated by Right Reason can fall under the will's competence." Sent., I, d. 1, q. 6 (I, 504).

warrant and verification for practical statements such as "Health is to be sought" or "The house is to be built." This is hardly the procedure of a strict empiricist since these gerundive constructions signify future, un-realized actions. The descriptive feature common to all directive and ostensive propositions is the indication of "praxis," future ends available to the will's free orientation. The verbal structures of description--gerundives or the verb "ought"--lend themselves to prescription. That is, the normative feature of practical propositions derives from what is implied by assent to particular, volitional ends. If the agent thinks "Health is to be sought" or "The house is to be built," then his assent or "yes-saying" establishes a norm of behavior. Consistency requires the appropriate action if one agrees that something is to be done. Because of the meaning of practical propositions, their affirmation entails or implies a behavioral response. Ockham's argument with Henry of Ghent (d. 1293) regarding the "end of practical knowledge" clarifies the Venerable Inceptor's position that linguistic structure alone cannot explain the imperative function of normative language. Academic moralists construe and analyze the logic of practical propositions with the same detachment with which physicists consider the law of gravity. We speculate about moral laws for reasons other than knowing what to do. Ockham claims that the significative peculiarity of practical language does not explain fully the moral function of such talk. An obligatory final

cause or "required" end of behavior follows from the meaning of practical propositions and the assent of Right Reason.¹⁹

The notion of Practical Reason is more inclusive than that of Right Reason. Practical Reason denotes the natural apprehension and formation of practical propositions and the habitual possession of such propositions. However, there are many propositions in the practical intellect which do not have an immediate moral function. For example, the ostensive proposition that "This house can be built with brick and mortar" might be necessary to build this house correctly. But this ostensive proposition does not dictate that this house be built. Furthermore, the practical intellect apprehends directives which may not be considered true. For example, the propositions "men should not eat meat" or "men should not cut their beards" may be apprehended but not considered as true moral norms. "Right Reason" on the other hand, involves only those propositions of

¹⁹Sent., I, d. 35, q. 6, I; "Secundum rectam rationem, acquirens scientiam practicam debet intendere opus tanquam finem et tanquam objectum illius scientiae." Sent., Prologue, q. 11 (I, 308); "...potest distingui de fine scientiae: Unus, qui simpliciter potest esse causa finalis proprie dicta propter quem ipsa scientia adquiritur et qui movet agens ad agendum. Alius est finis scientiae qui secundum rectam rationem deberet intendi ab agente quod libere agit. Et isto modo finis scientiae practicae est opus vel operari, et finis speculativae est considerare..." Also see Sent., Prologue, q. 10 (I, 291). Ockham's doctrine of practical reason (normative language) parallels the contemporary treatment of "assent to commands" by R. M. Hare, The Language of Morals (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), Ockham would say with Professor Hare "the essential difference between statements and commands...lies in what is involved in assenting to them." (p. 19). For Ockham, "assenting to them" is the function of right reason.

the practical intellect which are judged to be true directives. "According to Right Reason, one acquiring practical knowledge ought to intend the deed just as an end or just as the object of that knowledge."²⁰

B. Right Reason

Ockham, no less than his Scholastic predecessors, insisted that morally right action was consequent to a right or true reason for acting. A proportion was established between goodness in the will and truth in the intellect, based upon the texts of Aristotle.²¹ Thus, Ockham's doctrine of "Right Reason" concerns the true, intellectual directives which are necessary to correctly regulate the will.

Right Reason is discussed by Ockham in two ways; as a possession and as a function of the Practical Intellect. His statements about "recta ratio" become hopelessly confused if these two meanings are not distinguished. Indeed, the inconsistency which commentators find between the divine authority to posit moral obligations and Right Reason as a necessary and indispensable cause of moral goodness, betrays a lack of sensitivity for the two facets of Ockham's doctrine.

²⁰Sent., I, d. 35, q. 6, I.

²¹Nic. Ethics, VI, c. 2 (1139a 21-26); "What affirmation and negation are in thinking, pursuit and avoidance are in desire; so that since moral virtue is a state of character concerned with choice, and choice is deliberate desire, therefore both the reasoning must be true and the desire right, if the choice is to be good, and the latter must pursue just what the former asserts." (trans. W. D. Ross) See St. Thomas' use of this text in Summ. Theol. Ia IIae, q. 57, a. 5.

As a possession or content of the practical intellect, right reason indicates every directive proposition which a person knows to be true. These "right reasons" may be known naturally or by revelation.²² Experiential, conceptual or revealed data all provide and verify moral directives. But Ockham will not admit that contrary moral rules can be simultaneously true according to diverse types of evidence. Apparent conflicts between laws known naturally and divine laws are decided in favor of the revealed and believed mandates.²³ One meaning of "recta ratio," therefore, signifies the apprehension of a complex or propositional statement which asserts that, in truth, some act should be performed or avoided.

²²Sent., III, 13, K; "...ponatur aliquis habens istam rationem universalem rectam 'omni indigenti in extrema necessitate est benefacienum ne pereat' quae est evidens ex notitia terminorum..." Quodl., III, q. 16; "Recta ratio deberet dictare quod 'volendum est abstinere propter Deum' quia sic est dictatum a recta ratione aliter non esset recta sed erronea." Opus Nona-ginta Dierum, c. 65 (Manchester ed.; II, 574); "Jus autem poli vocatur aequitas naturalis, quae absque omni ordinatione humana et etiam divina pure positiva est consona rationi rectae, sive sit consona rationi rectae pure naturali, sive sit consona rationi rectae acceptae ex illis, quae sunt nobis divinitus revealata."

²³Sent., Prologue, q. 10 (I, 293); "...nulla ratio recta potest dictare quod 'inimicus est odiendus' contra divinum praeceptum." Also see Sent., III, q. 13, M. This brief quotation may leave the impression of an antagonism between faith and natural reason; its meaning may be interpreted as a Scholastic precedent for the Lutheran "sola fides." But Ockham means to indicate the harmony of scripture and reason as he indicates elsewhere. "...prima regula et infallibilis in huiusmodi est scriptura sacra et ratio recta." An Princeps pro suo succursu ..., c. 6 (Manchester ed.: I, 254).

This descriptive or literal meaning of right reason insures an objective basis for morality. A "right reason" is simply a true norm of behavior. However, coupled with strong convictions about the primacy and contingency of the divine mandates, this conception of right reason opens to a system of theological positivism. When the absolute standard of morality is conceived as the unlimited and changeable Will, then the human formulation of the moral order, i.e., right reason, has an objective but flexible basis. The infinite freedom of God gives the scope of flexibility. Hence, Ockham and others of the so-called "Nominalist" school will speculate on the extreme possibility of God's moral authority--the possibility of a divine command and thereby a right reason to hate God.²⁴ Ockhamists

²⁴Cf. Ockham, Sent., IV, q. 14, D; and Quodl., III, q. 13. Robert Holcot, Determinationes quarundam aliarum quaestionum, q. 1, art. 2, ZZ (Lyons, 1497). Gregory of Rimini, Super primum et secundum sententiarum, I, d. 42-44, q. 1, art. 2, F-H (Venice, 1522), and Gabriel Biel, Epithoma pariter et collectorium circa quattuor sententiarum libros, I, d. 42, q. 1, art. 2, concl. 2 (Tubingen, 1501). The various branches of the so-called "Nominalist school" which have been indicated by Professor Oberman, "Some Notes on the Theology of Nominalism," The Harvard Theological Review 53 (1960), pp. 51-56, should be kept in mind. Ockham, Holcot, Rimini and Biel all raise the question of a commanded odium Dei; their responses to the question show considerable diversity. Ockham and Holcot seem to grant the possibility of a meaningful, divine command to hate God. Rimini and Biel, however, admit only the metaphysical possibility of a command to hate God since God is co-efficient with created agents who might issue this command. But they deny that God could issue this command as total cause without contradicting his Goodness. Cf. Oberman, The Harvest of Medieval Theology (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1967), pp. 90-96. We take up this question systematically in Chapter Four. For now, we want to indicate only that conformity to the will of God was critical to Ockham's ethical insight. His treatment of the commanded odium Dei means to emphasize, not the possibility of drastic and perplexing changes

do not necessarily stabilize morality by associating "right reason" with God's eternal law,²⁵ since from eternity God might have ordained individual exceptions and drastic changes to the present moral order. Because the revealed laws take precedence over natural evidence, and because the revealed laws are contingent decrees of God ad extra, the truth of a "right reason" is mutable. The moral life becomes a question of obedience; its orientation is given by private or public revelation.

More frequently, however, Ockham intends a technical rather than a descriptive meaning of recta ratio. As the obliging function of the practical intellect, "right reason" is an act of judgment or assent to a directive proposition.²⁶ Ockham

in the moral order, but the permanent moral requirement of conformity to God's will. This emphasis fosters an authoritarian morality; its spirit announces Luther's extreme example of conformity wherein the creature should wish his eternal damnation and unhappiness if God so wishes.

²⁵For example, Gabriel Biel, Sent., II, d. 35, q. 1, art. 1, n. 1, C (Tübingen, 1501); "Lex aeterna extendit se ad omnem rectam rationem et non solum ad praeceptionem vel prohibitionem proprie acceptam." Biel, however, goes on to say (Sent., III, d. 37, q. 1, art. 2, concl. 3) that the right reasons and eternal laws contained in the second table of the Decalogue might be dispensed. The identification of right reason with the eternal law supports radically different deductions within the "via moderna." See W. Kölmel, "Von Ockham zu Gabriel Biel. Zur Naturrechtslehre des 14. und 15. Jahrhunderts," Franziaskanische Studien 37 (1955), pp. 218-259.

²⁶Sent., III, q. 12, CCC; "...recta ratio sive actus assentiendi quae vocatur recta ratio..." Sent., III, q. 11, X; "Recta autem ratio est prudentia in actu vel in habitu...Et sciendum quod actus dictandi intellectus non est formaliter complexum; sed est actus assentiendi vel dissentendi complexo jam formato et ex illo actu assentiendi generatur prudentia; non autem ex formatione complexi." Cf. my article, "William of Ockham on Right Reason," Speculum 48 (1973), pp. 13-36.

intends this second meaning with the phrase "the dictate of Right Reason." The difference between the descriptive and the functional meanings turns on the separability of acts of apprehension and judgment, and on the distinction between speculative and practical assent. An apprehended directive may be a true rule of behavior, but it lacks the force of obligation until the agent assents that it is true. Ockham is emphatic on this point--it is not enough to simply remember a rule and act accordingly.²⁷ The intellect must judge that rule to be true now, in this situation, before the agent explicitly recognizes a moral obligation. Thus, beyond the normal scholastic distinction between speculative and practical propositions, Ockham teaches a specific difference between speculative and practical assent. To be precise, judging that a directive is true constitutes an imperative or "dictate" that the will conform. Rather than a "complex" or proposition, the functional meaning of recta ratio signifies a non-complex act of judgment which asserts an obligation. The human will is morally obliged, not when the intellect formulates a directive, but when the intellect dictates that directive. A practical rule may be incorrect--literally a wrong reason for

²⁷Sent., III, q. 11, X; "Si dicas quod ostenso objecto diligibili sine omni dictamine rationis potest voluntas illud diligere, et iste est bonus moraliter quia diligit quid diligendum est etc.: puta si formetur hoc complexum 'Hoc bonum est diligibile' et intellectus non assentiat, tunc est dubium utrum illa dilectio sit bona moraliter. Respondeo, licet actus ille sit bonus ex genere et non sit malus moraliter, tamen non est virtuosus quia de ratione actus virtuosi est quod eliciatur conformiter rationi rectae et respectu objecti convenientis et quod habens talem actum sit sciens."

acting--yet judgmental assent through inculpable ignorance becomes a "right reason" for following the erroneous rule. The technical meaning of Right Reason (hereafter this useage is indicated by capitalizing), therefore, is that practical assent which provides the proximate norm of morality and the subjective basis of moral obligation.

Any natural or "secular" morality fostered by Ockham would derive from this functional meaning of recta ratio. Moral autonomy centers on the personal and subjective judgment of what is right; even divine commands must be judged as true moral rules before they bind the creature. Norms are variable with changes in circumstance or divine decrees, but the sanction and force of Right Reason's dictate remains constant for every moral response. Ockham maintains a "positive" obligation to conform to Right Reason; but without any divine command the dictate of Right Reason would still be binding.²⁸ Certain of Ockham's

²⁸Those commentator's who find an absolute voluntarism or positivism in Ockham's ethic "explain" his doctrine of recta ratio as ultimately a positive obligation and contingent upon the divine will. E.g., Father Copleston, A History..., p. 121; Erich Hochstetter, "Viator Mundi. Einige Bemerkungen zur Situation des Menschen bei Wilhelm von Ockham," Franziskanische Studien 32 (1950), pp. 12-14; Professor Oakley, "Medieval Theories..., p. 70; and Professor Bourke, History of Ethics, p. 155. Indeed, Ockham does teach that God commands the creature to conform to right reason. An act against conscience or Right Reason "eliceretur contra praeceptum divinum et voluntatem divinam volentem talem actum elicere conformiter rationi rectae." Sent., III, q. 13, C. But Ockham also claims that the obligation to follow Right Reason is known naturally and is binding without a "superior will." "Scientia moralis non-positiva est quae, sine omni praecepto superioris, dirigit actus humanos, sicut principia per se nota vel nota per experientiam, sic dirigunt, scilicet quod 'Omne honestum est faciendum' et 'Omne inhonestum est

successors, however, defend the legitimacy of Right Reason's dictate as independent of the divine will. For example, Gregory of Rimini (d. 1358) and Gabriel Biel (d. 1495) both define sin as "voluntarily to commit or omit something against Right Reason" rather than "against the eternal law." Why?

so that one would not think that sin is precisely against divine reason and not against some right reason about the matter, or would maintain that something is a sin, not because it is against the divine reason as right, but because it is against the divine reason as divine. For although impossible, if there were no divine reason or if that divine reason were in error, or if God himself did not exist, still one would sin if he acted against angelic or human or some other right reason - if such existed. And if there were no right reason at all, still if someone should act against that which some right reason would dictate to be done - if there were any - then he would sin.²⁹

Their defense of recta ratio strongly suggests the systematic effort of Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) to elucidate a secular system

fugiendum' ... 'Voluntas debet se conformare rectae rationi,' 'Omne malum vituperabile est fudiendum'..." Quodl., II, q. 14 (corrected by Vaticana Lat. 3075, f. 20vb).

²⁹Rimini, Sent., II, d. 34-35, q. 1, art. 2, H-J (Venice, 1522); "Respondeo ne putetur peccatum esse praecise contra rationem divinam et non contra quamlibet rectam rationem de eodem, aut estimetur aliquid esse peccatum non quia est contra rationem divinam inquantum est recta sed quia est contra eam inquantum est divina. Nam si per impossibile ratio divina sive Deus ipse non esset, aut ratio illa esset errans, adhuc si quis ageret contra rectam rationem angelicam vel humanam aut aliam aliquam - si aliqua esset - peccaret. Et si nulla penitus esset ratio recta, adhuc si quis ageret contra illud quid agendum esse dictaret ratio aliqua recta - si aliqua esset - peccaret." See the literal parallel in Biel, Sent., II, d. 35, q. 1, art. 1, D-E (Tübingen, 1501). Cf. Professor Oberman's treatment of this text from Rimini and Biel in The Harvest of Medieval Theology, pp. 105-107.

of morality and legality which would be valid "etiamsi daremus non esse Deum."³⁰

Ockham's own statements on natural or Aristotelian morality serve to highlight the Christian transformation of

³⁰See Grotius, De Jure Belli et Pacis, ed. Joannes Barbeyracius and trans. William Whewell (Cambridge, John W. Parker, 1853), Vol. I, p. xivi; "Et haec quidem quae jam diximus, locum aliquem haberent, etiamsi daremus, quod sine summo scelere dari nequit, non esse Deum, aut non curari ab eo negotia humana." The respect which Grotius had for Francis Suarez (1548-1617) has been well documented by Anton-Herman Chroust, "Hugo Grotius and the Scholastic Natural Law Tradition," The New Scholasticism XVII (1943), pp. 114-120. Before Grotius wrote the "De Jure Belli et Pacis" Suarez had outlined a well developed tradition of treating the dictate of right reason as valid independent of any divine legislation. Mentioning texts in Gregory of Rimini and Gabriel Biel, Suarez says "Atque hi auctores consequenter videntur esse concessuri legem naturalem non esse a Deo, ut a legislatore, quia non pendent ex voluntate Dei, et ita ex vi illius non se gerit Deus ut superior praecipiens aut prohibens; immo ait Gregorius quem caeteri secuti sunt, licet Deus non esset, vel non uteretur ratione, vel non recte de rebus judicaret, si in homine esset idem dictamen rectae rationis dictantis, verba gratia, malum esse mentire, illud habiturum eandem rationem legis, quam nunc habet." Tractatus de Legibus et Legislatore Deo, II, c. 6, ed. Carolus Berton, Opera Omnia: Suarez (Paris: Vives, 1856), Vol. 5, p. 105. See Jaime Fernandez - Castaneda, S.J., "Right Reason in Francis Suarez," The Modern Schoolman 45 (1968), pp. 105-122. A rather clear line of influence can be drawn from Rimini and Biel, through Suarez, to Grotius and Pufendorf in the seventeenth century. Commentators such as Chroust (p. 116), and A. P. d'Entreves, Natural Law..., p. 70, see this development as a reaction to the excessive voluntarism of Ockhamism. This judgment is only half true. True because Suarez interprets this perspective on right reason as the "extreme contrary" of Ockham's position. Ockham would not admit the separation of morality from God's will; but neither would Rimini, Biel or even Grotius. False because the hypothetical arguments of Rimini and Biel in which this tradition originates are developed from Ockham's suggestion that "sine omni praecepto superioris" the will should conform to Right Reason. Partially, therefore, the source of a secular theory of natural law rests in Ockham's doctrine of Right Reason's autonomy.

ethics.³¹ He would not support a doctrine of Right Reason or conscience which repudiates a theological foundation. The objective and subjective norms of morality, the literal and the functional meanings of recta ratio, are mutually consistent and required. Every act of judgment entails an act of apprehension; the "act of assent which is called Right Reason" includes the directive or "right reason" to which the intellect assents.³² Ockham distinguishes between directives and dictates; first because prescriptive statements are not always moral imperatives and secondly, because obligation occurs precisely with the intellectual assent to, not formulation of, normative propositions. Thus, it is appropriate to speak of two complementary facets of Ockham's doctrine of recta ratio. The texts do not support the claim, however, that Ockham pursues the autonomy of Right Reason's dictate into ethical Subjectivism or a "secular" ethic. Only excusable or inculpable ignorance can justify a discrepancy between the objective (i.e., the will of God) and

³¹The difference between Aristotle's ethic and that of Christianity is not in what the moral agent does, but rather, in why the agent acts. The intention to love God characterizes the perfect, Christian virtue. See Sent., III, q. 10, I; Sent., III, q. 12, GGG; Sent., IV, q. 3, S.

³²Quodl., V, q. 6; "Circa primum, dico quod duplex est 'assensus,' unus quo intellectus assentit aliquid esse vel aliquid non esse vel aliquid esse bonum vel album; alius quo intellectus assentit alicui complexo. Secunda distinctio est quod duplex est apprehensio; una est compositio vel divisio sive propositionis formatio, alio qua est cognitio ipsius complexi jam formati..." The assent of Right Reason is the second type of judgment (see above, note 26) which presupposes an apprehended "complex" or directive proposition to which it assents.

subjective (i.e., the dictate of Right Reason) norms of morality. On the other hand, Ockham could assert that the obligation to obey Right Reason stands without any divine decree.

Although complementary, a careful determination of which sense of "right reason" Ockham intends within a given text is not merely academic. Individual doctrines turn on the meaning of this notion. To give one example, Ockham criticizes Henry of Ghent for distinguishing practical and speculative propositions in terms of intrinsic, final causality.³³ Only after the judgment of Right Reason will Ockham speak of activity as the proper and distinctive end of practical knowledge because activity is then the required or obligatory end.

Nevertheless, according to the common position, one can distinguish regarding the end of knowledge: one which can be simply the final cause (of knowledge) properly speaking for the sake of which the knowledge itself is acquired and which moves the agent to action. I spoke previously about this. The other is the end of knowledge which according to Right Reason ought to be intended by an agent which acts freely. In this way, the end of practical knowledge is the deed or the operation.³⁴

The assent of Right Reason gives a practical directive a morally required final cause regardless of the purpose for which the knower formulated that proposition. Assent to factual statements, on the other hand, does not demand a conforming act of the will. Ockham's position on the causal import of prescriptive language

³³See above, notes 7 and 8.

³⁴Sent., Prologue, q. 11 (I, 308). See above, note 19.

would be objectionable if recta ratio were taken in its literal sense of a true directive proposition. The literal meaning makes the argument circular; namely, that right reason gives practical knowledge its distinctive final cause while right reason is itself practical knowledge.

Although Ockham is clear about what he means by recta ratio, the phrase is not explicitly defined. He simply uses the notion in two different ways. Most of Ockham's commentators equate right reason with prudence or conscience and analyze these latter notions.³⁵ Father Lucan Freppert, O.F.M., seems alone in indicating the importance which Ockham places upon Right Reason as "an act of assenting or dissenting to this proposition already

³⁵For example, Anita Garvens, Franziskanische Studien, 21, p. 374, says that recta ratio "dem scholastischen Begriff des Gewissens entspricht." Iserloh claims "...gebraucht Ockham recta ratio gleichbedeutend mit conscientia und besonders mit prudentia..." Gnade und Eucharistie..., p. 54. Ockham does equate recta ratio with "prudence" and "conscience," but these notions do not exhaust what Ockham means by "right reason." It is important that "Right Reason" be understood in its non-propositional designation. Logical contradictions obtain between propositions. Even though the divine commands were formulated as propositions they could not stand as contradictory to this simple act of assent to directives which Ockham calls "Right Reason." Recta ratio is not "a" judgment about good or evil which God might overrule; rather, it is that function of the practical intellect which turns natural value judgments and divine commands into moral imperatives. By considering recta ratio as normative propositions, however, commentators introduce the false possibility of conflict between God's legislative power and the natural assessment of morals. In view of Ockham's doctrine of Right Reason, and the importance this doctrine assumes within his value theory, scholars might better ask if the principles of the Practical Intellect and the general axioms of ethical reasoning are normative statements or simply factual assertions to the "Venerable Inceptor."

formed."³⁶ Surely, this is a unique perspective within the Medieval history of Aristotle's ἄρθὸς λόγος; it argues irrefutably against construing recta ratio as a monolithic doctrine which passes unchanged through the generations of Scholasticism. Within Ockham's system, this functional sense of recta ratio supports his analysis of normative language and his value theory. Right Reason is the psychological mechanism which transforms value judgments into imperatives; whether directive propositions are grounded in experience or in revelation, the assent of Right Reason renders them obligatory. Moral values inevitably connote the judgment of Right Reason. The unity of Ockham's moral doctrine depends upon his innovative treatment of Right Reason. And it is the unity of Ockham's ethic which suffers when recta ratio is understood exclusively as moral knowledge. Prudence and Conscience indicate types of directive propositions which can be called right reasons or ethical knowledge. But in considering these facets of Ockham's moral science, we must remember that the assent of Right Reason gives prudence and conscience their binding force.

³⁶The Basis of Morality..., pp. 71-72. Our only complaint with Father Freppert's treatment of "recta ratio" is that, after detecting Ockham's unique understanding of this doctrine, he proceeds to split the Venerable Inceptor's ethical viewpoint into a right reason theory and a will of God theory. (pp. 241-247) We will argue, especially in the Conclusion, that the functional meaning of Right Reason is precisely Ockham's method of avoiding such dualism.

C. Prudence

Ockham's doctrine of right reason and prudence correspond closely. Ockham states that "the role (ratio) of prudence is to regulate the act of will because it is the right reason of do-ables."³⁷ "It is impossible for moral virtue to exist without right reason which is an act of prudence."³⁸ A close analysis of the meaning of "prudence," will clarify Ockham's literal understanding of right reason.

According to Ockham, "prudence" can be understood in four different ways.³⁹ Notice that the common element of these four

³⁷Sent., III, q. 13, D; "Cum igitur de ratione prudentiae sit regulare actum voluntatis, quia est recta ratio agibilium."

³⁸Sent., IV, q. 3, L. Also see Sent., III, q. 13, B.

³⁹Sent., III, q. 12, H; "Circa secundum articulum est prima distinctio quod prudentia accipitur quadrupliciter.

Uno modo accipitur pro omni noticia directiva respectu cuiuscumque agibilis mediate vel immediate. Sicut accipit Augustinus prudentiam in De Libero Arbitrio. Et isto modo tam noticia evidens alicuius universalis propositionis (quae evidenter cognoscitur per doctrinam, quia procedit ex propositionibus per se notis, quae noticia scientifica proprie est scientia moralis) quam noticia evidens propositionis universalis quae solum evidenter cognoscitur per experientiam, quae noticia etiam est scientia moralis et prudentia. Exemplum primi: 'omni benefactori bene est faciendum.' Exemplum secundi: 'quilibet iracundus est per pulchra verba leniendus.'

Secundo modo accipitur pro noticia evidenti immediate directiva circa aliquid agibile particulare, et hoc per noticiam alicuius propositionis quae evidenter sequitur ex propositione per se nota tanquam majori et per doctrinam. Exemplum huius; 'huic benefactori est benefaciendum' quae sequitur evidenter ex ista 'omni beneficienti...'

Tertio modo accipitur per noticia immediate directiva accepta per experientiam solum respectu alicuius agibilis. Exemplum: 'iste iracundus est per pulchra verba leniendus.' Et hoc noticia est solum respectu alicuius propositionis particularis cognitae per experientiam. Et hoc videtur esse prudentia

definitions is the apprehension of a practical, directive proposition while the distinguishing feature of each description is the way in which the practical proposition is recognized or considered. First, "prudence" indicates every evident and directive apprehension of some operation which can be done immediately or mediately by the knower. Thus, prudence signifies the universal proposition known through their terms (per se) or known through experience. Secondly, prudence indicates an evident and immediately directive cognition of some particular operation. Thus, prudence signifies the particular propositions which can be deduced from universal, directive premises. Thirdly, prudence indicates an immediately directive apprehension of some operation which is known only through experience. Thus, prudence signifies the particular directive propositions whose origin is not deduction but rather experience. Fourthly, prudence indicates the collection of all, immediately directive apprehensions necessary to live morally. Thus, prudence designates the universal and

proprie dicta secundum intentionem Philosophi prout distinguitur a scientia morali.

Quarto modo accipitur per aliquo aggregate ex omni noticia immediate directiva, sive habeatur per doctrinam sive per experientiam, circa omnia opera humana requisita ad bene vivere simpliciter. Et isto modo prudentia non est una noticia tantum, sed includit tot noticias quot sunt virtutes morales requisitae ad simpliciter bene vivere, quia quaelibet virtus moralis habet propriam prudentiam et noticia directivam." Also see Sent., II, q. 15, G-H. A useful study of Ockham's doctrine of prudence was made by Othmar Suks, O.F.M., "The Connection of Virtues According to Ockham," Franciscan Studies 10 (1950), pp. 9-32, 91-119. The above text follows Father Suks' correction of Sent., III, q. 12, H and Quodl., IV, q. 6 according to the better manuscripts.

particular propositions, known per se or through experience, which are required "to live well."

The first two meanings of prudence coincide with Ockham's notion of "moral science."⁴⁰ He considers the universal directive propositions of Practical Reason which are known per se and their deducible conclusions as the content of ethical philosophy.⁴¹ This agrees with Aristotle's maxim that "science" concerns the universal. Moral science is a collection of universal, directive propositions regarding those things which are within

⁴⁰On the distinction between moral science and prudence as between "habitus magis universalis et minus universalis" see Sent., Prologue, q. 11 (I, 321); Sent., III, q. 11, U; and Sent., III, q. 12, U. Ockham describes moral science in a twofold way: "Dico quod scientia moralis dupliciter accipitur: uno modo pro scientia quae est praecise de moribus qui sunt in potestate nostra, ita quod in omni scito ponatur aliquid importans aliquid quod est in potestate nostra. Aliter accipitur pro illa scientia secundum quod est tradita ab Aristotele et a philosophis et a Sanctis." Sent., Prologue, q. 12 (I, 359). Ockham repeats this division when explaining the term "morale" in Quodl., II, q. 14. He gives a slightly different analysis of "moral science" in Sent., III, q. 15, G.

⁴¹Ockham gives four different meanings of the term "scientia." See Gaudens F. Mohan, O.F.M., "The Prologue to Ockham's Exposition of the Physics of Aristotle," Franciscan Studies 5 (1945), pp. 236 and 239-240. The meaning applicable to "moral science" or "non-positive moral science" is "notitia evidens veri necessarii nata causari ex notitia evidenti praemissarum necessariorum applicatarum per discursum syllogisticum." (p. 240) This is Aristotle's description of "demonstrative science" in the Nic. Ethics, VI, 6 (1140b 30-35). In Quodl., II, q. 14, Ockham asks "Whether there can be demonstrative science about morals?" and answers: "...disciplina moralis non-positiva est scientia demonstrativa. Probo, quia notitia deducens conclusiones syllogistice ex principiis per se notis vel per experientiam scitis, est demonstrativa; huiusmodi est disciplina moralis; ergo etc." On Aristotle's position that science concerns the universal rather than the particular, see Meta., XI, c. 1 (1059b 26).

human powers.⁴² The object of ethics is not the good life, nor beatitude, nor virtue; rather, the object of moral science is any proposition which directly or indirectly regulates human volition.⁴³ In contrast to the interpretation that his moral doctrine lacks any metaphysical basis, Ockham himself claims that

⁴²Sent., Prologue, q. 1 (I, 8-9); "Ad primum istorum dico quod scientia, ad praesens, dupliciter accipitur. Uno modo pro collectione multorum pertinentium ad notitiam unius vel multorum determinatum ordinem habentium. Et scientia isto modo dicta continet tam notitiam incomplexam terminorum quam notitiam complexorum, et hoc principiorum et conclusionum..." Also see Father Mohan, Franciscan Studies, 5, p. 240. An important text in this regard is Summulae in Libros Physicorum, I, c. 1; "Sic ergo dico, quod scientia naturalis non est una numero primo modo, sed secundo modo quia est una unitate collectionis vel ordinis. Omnes enim partes istius scientiae habent determinatum ordinem inter se qualem non habent cum logica nec cum morali philosophia nec cum aliqua alia scientia, propter quod dicuntur una scientia." Thus, the propositions which comprise "moral science" do not have a determinate order; there is no primary or fundamental directive to which all other moral norms are attached; there is no subject matter common to all ethical knowledge. On the basis of this text alone, the search for a central insight or an organizing principle in Ockham's moral doctrine should be considered suspect.

⁴³Sent., I, d. 2, q. 4 (II, 134); "Ad secundum argumentum principale dico quod scientia realis non est semper de rebus tamquam de illis quae immediate sciuntur sed de aliis pro rebus tantum supponentibus. Ad cuius intellectum et propter multa prius dicta et dicenda, propter aliquos inexercitatos in logica, est sciendum quod scientia quaelibet sive sit realis sive rationalis est tantum de propositionibus tamquam de illis quae sciuntur, quia sole propositiones sciuntur." Father Maurer comments accurately that Ockham "was convinced with Aristotle that science concerns the universal and not the particular as such... Having proved to his own satisfaction that universality is a property only of concepts, which are the terms of propositions, he drew the inevitable conclusion: propositions alone are the object of science." Medieval Studies, 20, p. 100. This study shows the contrast between Ockham's notion of science and those of Scotus and Aquinas.

ontological truths contribute to ethical knowledge.⁴⁴ Any proposition which participates in a practical syllogism about what ought to be done, is a part of moral science.

This conception of moral science reveals that turn in moral doctrine peculiar to Ockham and his followers. The tools and concern of the moralist are propositions and concepts; logical formulas and words are the matter of scientific ethical study. To be sure, ethics is a "real" science (in contrast to a "rational" science such as logic) because its concepts stand for real, non-conceptual things. But the created intellect directly and immediately "knows" propositions; real things are known through concepts. For Ockham, there exists a certain "distance" between thought and the extra-mental world. This distance or distinction between concepts and things is the heart of Ockham's criticism of Scotistic "common natures" and "formal distinctions." Regarding morality, this notion of science

⁴⁴Sent., Prologue, q. 12 (I, 364); "Illa tamen quae considerantur a metaphysica possunt esse principia ad probandum conclusiones practicas de Deo, sicut ex hoc quod Deus est causa omnium est summe diligibilis vel honorandus vel aliquid huiusmodi." Ibid., (I, 360); "Et propter hoc in scientia morali tradita a philosophis et a Sanctis inveniuntur multae veritates simpliciter speculativae, sed vocant eam scientiam moralem quia conclusiones practicae morales sunt ultima adquisita in illa scientia." These texts stand in direct opposition to the opinion of Anita Garvens that "Das Sittengesetz hat sein Fundament nicht in der Seinsordnung und damit im Wesen der Dinge und ihren Beziehungen zum Urheber allen Seins." Franz. Studien, 21, p. 262. Following Professor Garvens, commentators who find a strict voluntarism or positivism in Ockham's moral thought also assert that he "severs the bond between metaphysics and ethics." On the contrary, Ockham claims there are "good reasons"--ontological reasons--for certain moral norms.

produces Ockham's certitude about the principles of morality and his doubt about a necessary and unchangeable moral status inherent in concrete acts. The third meaning of prudence is a proper definition because it distinguishes prudence from the meaning of moral science. Strictly speaking, prudence is constituted by the particular, directive propositions of practical reason which are known only through experience. Properly, "prudence" signifies the particular premises which are known experientially and the conclusions of a practical syllogism.⁴⁵ Only by extending this signification can Ockham also consider the general premises of a practical syllogism as constitutive of prudence. The fourth sense of "prudence" indicates the collective unity imposed upon the total practical propositions required for the moral pursuit of life.

The importance of prudence in determining what one ought to do is clear. Moral deliberation is resolved by action; a moral agent who recognizes a required or obligatory end must determine the means which will realize that end. The sensitive moment in determining a moral issue is the concrete decision

⁴⁵Sent., III, q. 12, T; "Virtutes omnes generales connectuntur in quibusdam principiis universalibus; puta, 'omne honestum est faciendum,' 'omne bonum est diligendum,' 'omne dictatum a recta ratione est faciendum,' quae possunt esse majores et minores in syllogismo practico, concludente conclusionem particularem, cuius noticia est prudentia immediate directiva in actu virtuoso. Et potest idem principium numero esse major cum diversis minoribus acceptis ad concludendum diversas conclusiones particulares quarum notitiae sunt prudentiae directivae in diversis actibus virtuosis." See also Sent., III, q. 15, H.

that this action should be accomplished for the sake of a determined end.⁴⁶ The general moral principles--such as "everything honest should be done," and "all evil should be avoided"--would be futile and ineffective if these norms could not be applied to factual situations. Universal directives can be realized in particular situations, only after the intellect decides on the basis of experiential evidence that "this is honest" and "this is evil." It is the proper role of prudence to take into account the circumstances and peculiarities of an act, and thus to direct that this deed should be done here and now.⁴⁷ The moral suitability of concrete acts often depends upon circumstantial factors which can only be known experientially.

Ockham makes prudence an indispensable condition of morally good behavior because experience is necessarily involved in knowing what is good. A virtuous act must be reasonable and voluntary. To be reasonable, a moral act requires the presence of prudence in at least the second and third senses given to the term by Ockham.⁴⁸ Thus, Ockham asserts that either universal

⁴⁶Sent., III, q. 12, PP; "Peccans ex ignorantia habet noticiam universalem sicut peccans ex malitia; quia peccans ex ignorantia scit tales majores 'Omne justum est faciendum,' 'Omne bonum est faciendum,' 'Omne quid Deo placet...' et cetera; sed ignorans minores, puta quod, 'Hoc est justum,' 'Hoc est honestum,' 'Hoc est placitum Deo.'"

⁴⁷Sent., Prologue, q. 11, (I, 316); "Et non dictat (notitia practica ostensiva) quod domus est facienda nec quando est facienda; sed ad prudentiam pertinet dictare quod tali tempore est facienda, vel sic est agendum vel sic."

⁴⁸Sent., III, q. 12, UU; "Sed ad hoc quod actus virtuosus eliciatur necessario requiritur prudentia secundo modo vel tertio

directives or particular directives known by experience are required for a person to elicit a virtuous act. The notion of "experience" can be taken in two respects; first, an "indirect experience" in which a person perceives the activity of another and secondly, a "direct experience" in which a person intuits his own act.⁴⁹ Any practical proposition evidenced by direct, inner experience indicated the presence of moral virtue. Ockham claims that "the acquisition of prudence cannot be separated from moral virtue."⁵⁰ He means, for instance, that a person cannot know evidently that temperate acts prompt one to love God without actually performing temperate actions. Likewise, a person cannot know evidently how much alcohol is a moderate amount to drink without direct experience. Such interior experiences indicate the actual presence of a temperate or a virtuous act.

Ockham does admit that the divine will could alter the "common law." The scriptural commandments, for example, could

modo dica. Eodem modo ad virtutem moralem non requiritur prudentia primo modo dicta, quia ut patet notitia particularis cuiuscunque immediate directiva potest haberi per experientiam ad quam non requiritur notitia alterius universalis. Si tamen notitia evidens alicuius particularis non posset haberi per experientiam, tunc virtus illa cuius notitia particularis esset directiva requireret necessario prudentiam primo modo et secundo modo et non tertio modo." Also see Ibid., NN.

⁴⁹Sent., III, q. 12, SS; "Aliqua talis propositio non potest cognosci nisi per experientiam aliquam acceptam respectu actus alterius hominis, alia non potest evidenter cognosci nisi per experientiam actus proprii."

⁵⁰Sent., Prologue, q. 11, (I, 320); "Non potest prudentia seperari, in acquisitione ipsius a virtute morali." Also see Sent., III, q. 12, SS; and Sent., IV, q. 14, G.

be changed so that fornication, adultery, stealing, etc., would be good and meritorious acts. Given the possibility that God could change the revealed directives of right reason, prudence remains necessary to produce a moral act. Whether a moral agent thinks that "Murder is wrong" or "Murder is right" because of the divine wish, it is still necessary to determine experientially that "This is murder." Consequently, the possibility that some directives of right reason are positive or authoritarian norms does not deny the absolute requirement of natural reason, i.e., prudence, in establishing the particular location of moral obligation.

Othmar Suk, O.F.M., analyzed "The Connection of the Virtues according to Ockham," and considered prudence as a cardinal virtue.⁵¹ This does not seem correct; prudence is not a moral virtue in Ockham's thought. For one thing, Ockham placed the moral virtues in the will but prudence is clearly an intellectual habit. Secondly, every moral or virtuous act requires an act of prudence and an act of the will as partial efficient causes of virtue.⁵² An act of prudence must precede the

⁵¹Franciscan Studies, 10 (1950), p. 18.

⁵²Sent., III, q. 12, NN; "Et si quaeras utrum post generationem virtutis potest elici actus virtuosus sine actu prudentiae; respondeo quod non, quia nullus virtuose agit nisi scienter et ex libertate. Et ideo si aliquando talis actus virtutis voluntatis elicatur a tali habitu sine actu prudentiae non dicitur virtuosus, nec est... Si quaeras de actu prudentiae; in quo genere causae se habet ad actum virtuosum?... Respondeo quod est causa efficiens necessario requisita ad actum virtuosum, sine quae impossibile est actum esse virtuosum, stante ordine divino."

production of a virtuous act. If prudence were a virtue it would precede itself. Thirdly, prudence is a "natural" or unfree act "and no more within our power than an act of seeing."⁵³

Only a free act of the will, however, can be intrinsically virtuous and only a habit of the free will can be a virtue.⁵⁴

Prudence, therefore, is not a moral virtue but rather a necessary condition and cause of any moral virtue. Prudence is located in the intellect and is presupposed by any moral action in the will.

The close association between prudence and right reason gives an empirical feature to Ockham's notion of moral knowledge. Prudence adds an experiential emphasis to Ockham's treatment of moral science. It is morally necessary to apply the knowledge expressed as universal norms and general rules. Consequently, the collection of right reasons necessary to act properly is impossible without an empirical and intuitive knowledge of particular cases. Ockham claims that it is impossible or "possible with extreme difficulty" to acquire the propositions necessary for virtuous activity without prudence.⁵⁵ Ockham's

⁵³Sent., III, q. 12, XX; "Sed actus prudentiae secundum veritatem est solum actus naturalis, et nullo modo in potestate nostra plusquam actus videndi."

⁵⁴Ibid., F; "Quarta conclusio est hoc, quod actus primo et necessario virtuosus est actus voluntatis. Haec patet primo quia ille solus est laudabile et virtuosus secundum se; alii vero non nisi secundario et per quandam denominationem extrinsecam, puta, per hoc quod eliciuntur conformiter actui voluntatis."

⁵⁵Sent., Prologue, q. 11 (I, 320); "Et ideo dico quod si aliquis studens in morali philosophia sine omni actu prudentiae vel morali, posset acquirere notitiam omnium propositionum universalium quas acquirit alius exercitatus, quod ita perfectum

notion of prudence indicates the importance of sensitivity to the factual order and to the interior life in determining right and wrong behavior. Experience, both in the sense of perception of other beings and in the sense of a person's awareness of his internal condition, is required for a person to live morally. Aristotle's empirical approach to determining the means of virtue is apparent in Ockham's doctrine of prudence.

Is it possible to distinguish Ockham's notion of prudence from his conception of right reason? As was mentioned before, Ockham sometimes considers the terms prudence and right reason as convertible. "Perfect moral virtue cannot exist without prudence and consequently, there is a necessary connection among the moral virtues to prudence. This is proved because the essence (ratio) of virtue and its perfect act is that it is elicited in conformity to right reason; because virtue is thus defined by the Philosopher in the second book of the Ethics (Cf., Nicomachean Ethics II, 6, 1107a). Moreover, right reason is prudence in act or in habit."⁵⁶ It can be said, however, that right

habitu et ita perfecte directivum haberet ipse sicut alius. Sed de facto vel hoc non est possibile vel cum maxima difficultate. Et propter istam rationem, sicut patebit in tertio (III, q. 12), non potest prudentia separari in acquisitione ipsius a virtute morali." Also see Sent., IV, q. 14, G.

⁵⁶Sent., III, q. 11, X; "Dico quod virtus moralis perfecta non potest esse sine prudentia, et per consequens est necessaria connexio inter virtutes morales ad prudentiam. Quid probatur, quia de ratione virtutis et actus ejus perfectae est quod eliciatur conformiter rationi rectae, quia sic diffinitur a Philosopho secundo Ethicorum. Recta autem ratio est prudentia in actu vel in habitu."

reason is a more inclusive notion than that of prudence. Every moral directive, whether it is known through revelation or through natural evidence, belongs to the content of right reason. The notion of prudence, on the other hand, properly includes only those directives which are known by experiential evidence. Thus, every act of prudence is a right reason but not every right reason is an act of prudence. Prudence signifies only those right reasons which are known naturally. Prudence can be distinguished from the notion of right reason, therefore, because "prudencia" has a less extensive signification than "right reason." Furthermore, prudence indicates a type of ethical knowledge and is distinguishable from the functional meaning of Right Reason which does not signify an act of knowledge.

D. Conscience

Ockham's consideration of "conscientia" adds another dimension to his notion of Recta Ratio. When Ockham wishes to speak about the autonomy of Recta Ratio, he speaks about conscience. The inviolable and authoritative character of right reason, as the conscious norm of moral right, is manifested by Ockham's notion of conscience.

It is impossible that some act of the will elicited against conscience and against the dictate of reason--whether right or erroneous--be virtuous. It is clear about right conscience because such an act would be elicited against the divine precept and the divine will which wishes him to elicit such an act in conformity to Right Reason. Regarding an erroneous conscience in

invincible error it is clear because such an error is not culpable for him because it is not in the power of the erring person to be acting against an erroneous reason which you do not know is erroneous, nor is it in your power to know this, that you are acting against an erroneous conscience. Regarding an erroneous conscience in vincible error, it is clear because although the error is culpable by which you are not aware that you err, nevertheless, by acting against such a reason you condemn a reason which you do not know is erroneous; and thus you sin from contempt.⁵⁷

Ockham makes distinctions about conscience similar to those made by St. Thomas,⁵⁸ namely: correct conscience, erroneous conscience in invincible error and erroneous conscience in vincible error. Both thinkers agree that to act against one's conscience is sinful. The conscientious judgment of reason is morally binding. No one sins unknowingly; to commit a moral fault a person must violate his conscience. What a person believes to be his duty is thereby obligatory.

Ockham seems to consider conscience as the awareness of a personal moral obligation. As in the case of Right Reason,

⁵⁷Sent., III, q. 13, C; "Impossibile est quod aliquis actus voluntatis elicited contra conscientiam et contra dictamen rationis sive rectum sive erroneum sit virtuosus. Patet de conscientia recta, quia talis eliceretur contra praeceptum divinum et voluntatem divinam volentem talem actum elicere conformiter rationi rectae. De conscientia erronea errore invincibili patet, quia talis error non est culpabilis pro eo quod non est in potestate errantis sic faciendo contra rationem erroneam quam nescis erroneam, nec est in potestate tua hoc scire quod facis contra conscientiam erroneam. De conscientia erronea vincibili patet, quia licet error sit culpabilis, tamen, ex quo tu ignoras te errare faciendo contra talem rationem, contemnis rationem quam nescis erroneam et sic peccas ex contemptu."

⁵⁸See St. Thomas, De Verit., q. 17, a. 4; Quodl., III, q. 12, a. 26.

Ockham does not define explicitly the concept of conscience. Statements such as "A person sins, when acting against conscience, through contempt of that which ought to be his rule in acting,"⁵⁹ however, indicate that conscience is the voice of personal duty. Conscience might be expressed as personal directives, e.g., "I should do this," or indicate the "assent of Right Reason" which is invariably "my" judgment of practical truth. By characterizing conscience as the awareness of a personal obligation, it is possible to distinguish Ockham's notion of "recta ratio" from that of "conscientia." Right reason includes every normative proposition of the Practical Intellect which is judged to be true; conscience involves only those particular norms of the Practical Intellect which express my obligation. The distinction between right reason and conscience is not superfluous or irrelevant. The norms of right reason might include many dictates which are not personally binding, but which are valid directives. In Ockham's milieu, there were obligations endemic to the clergy which did not apply to the laity. A layman might consider celibacy as a valid requirement for priests but not as a personal

⁵⁹Sent., III, q. 13, M. St. Thomas is more clear that the judgment of conscience is the last intellectual judgment made by an agent regarding his actions. See Aquinas, De Verit., q. 17, a. 1; Sent., II, d. 24, q. 2, a. 4. Vernon J. Bourke presents a clear analysis of St. Thomas' doctrine of conscience which is helpful in recognizing the similarities between the philosophies of Thomas and Ockham on this point. See Ethics: A Textbook in Moral Philosophy (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1951), chapters IV and VI.

requirement, i.e., not as a matter of the lay conscience.⁶⁰

Ockham asserts that it is always sinful to act against one's conscience. The judgment of conscience can be wrong regarding facts which are pertinent to determining one's obligation,⁶¹ or wrong regarding the divine command which pertains to a particular situation.⁶² Nevertheless, the judgment about what

⁶⁰Ockham gives examples of moral norms which are obligatory for one person and not another. "Et si dicatur voluntas nunquam debet esse difformis voluntati divinae, sed iste qui vult honorare parentes quos Deus non vult honorari habet voluntatem difformem voluntati divinae, ergo peccat in honorando. Dicendum est quod si Deus vult eos non honorari, nec ab isto nec ab illo, iste peccat in honorando parentes suos. Si tamen Deus non vult eos honorare ab alio, sed vult eos honorari ab isto, iste in honorando non peccat." Sent., I, d. 48, q. 1, H. Also see Sent., IV, q. 9, E. James Keven McDonnell, "Religion and Ethics in the Philosophy of William of Ockham" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Philosophy, Georgetown University, 1971), pp. 135-136, claims that Ockham rejects the "universalizability" of moral norms in the above quoted text. "The commands of God, as Ockham conceives them, are not universalizable in this way. These commands are particular in that God may command one person to do something in one situation while commanding another person to do something quite different in a morally identical situation." We cannot agree. Situations covered by different divine commands are not "morally identical" for Ockham.

⁶¹Sent., III, q. 13, K; "Hoc patet per exemplum. Ponatur aliquis habens istam rationem universalem rectam, "Omni indigenti in extrema necessitate est benefaciendum, ne pereat," quae est evidens ex notitia terminorum. Occurrente igitur aliquo paupere qui apparet indigere in extrema necessitate, si voluntas imperet intellectui ut inquirat si talis sic indigeat, sicut apparet indigere, facta investigatione per omnem viam possibilem poni, si ex aliquo latente quid non est in potestate sua scire, intellectus assentiat quod talis indigeat sicut apparet indigere (licet non sic indigeat secundum veritatem), evidenter intellectus dictabit quod tali qui sic apparet indigere (licet non sic indigeat), est subveniendum...Et tamen voluntas volens efficaciter sic ei subvenire habet actum rectum et virtuosum et meritorium si hoc velit pro amore Dei."

⁶²Sent., III, q. 13, O; "Ad propositionem dico quod quamvis intellectus divinus dictet quod tali non sit subveniendum

ought to be done by me in this situation conveys a moral obligation that the will execute this judgment. Ockham's notion of conscience, however, should not be considered as subjectivistic. The judgment of conscience is not the source of moral obligation. Clearly the foundations of moral obligation exist prior to the judgment of conscience if conscience can be mistaken about its duty. Furthermore, Ockham asserts only that it is always wrong to act against conscience; he does not claim that one is always right in following conscience. On the contrary, to follow a conscience in culpable error is wrong.⁶³ If a person does not fulfill his obligation to be aware of his obligations, then that person's conscience is "perplexus." The state of 'perplexity' results in a morally wrong act whether the will is conformed to erroneous conscience, or not conformed to erroneous conscience,

modo predicto et voluntas Dei nolit quod sic ei subveniatur, tamen, voluntas creata sequens rationem erroneam errore invincibili est voluntas recta quia voluntas divina vult eam sequi rationem non culpabilem."

⁶³Ibid., M; "Eliciendo actum conformiter rationi erroneae vincibili peccat, quia elicit actum quem non debet elicere, immo oppositum actum tenetur elicere... Si autem voluntas eliciat actum difformiter rationi erroneae culpabili, puta, contra talem rationem, peccat etiam duplici peccato commissionis, eliciendo actum contra rationem quam credit esse veram et sic peccat faciendo contra conscientiam per contemptum illius quid debet esse regula sua in agendo, etiam tenetur conformare dictamini... et cetera, in operando sive sit rectum sive erroneum. Si autem nullum actum eliciat nec conformiter rationi erroneae nec difformiter, sed omnem actum suspendit, tunc peccat duplici peccato ommissionis... Et per consequens, talis necessario peccat et est perplexus et sive voluntas operatur conformiter illi rationi sive difformiter sive nihil operetur, semper peccet uno modo vel alio modo." For a discussion about "perplexity" by St. Thomas, see Sent., II, d. 39, q. 3, a. 3.

or suspends any act regarding the dictate of erroneous conscience. Therefore, the subjective norm of morality, i.e., conscience, is not an independent source of moral authority. The necessity of acting according to one's conscience derives by definition from the consciousness of duty.

Ockham's notion of conscience has been cited as proof of the nascent "natural morality" in his thought.⁶⁴ G. de Lagarde and Paul Vignaux find the seeds of a moral theory independent of theology and scriptural authority which was to be characteristic of Renaissance and Enlightenment morality. This may be true about the historical use of Ockham's doctrine, but not about his own motives. Ockham means to show the psychological constants within moral deliberation and action; but he is also aware of the tension between a naturalistic ethic and the prerogatives which scripture attributes to God. Ockham makes the point that a law must be recognized by the moral agent to be binding: he is cognizant of the complexity of concrete moral issues which often must be solved by a sincere but not certain judgment of

⁶⁴ See G. de Lagarde, Ockham, La Morale..., p. 66; "M. Vignaux a donc raison de dire que le nominalisme 'ouvre le plus large horizon à la moralité naturelle.' Après avoir paru résumer toute la morale dans le précepte arbitraire de Dieu, il nous incline à penser que, même si Dieu n'existait pas, la catégorie de moralité s'imposerait à l'homme qui trouverait toujours en lui-même la coexistence des deux éléments constitutifs de la moralité: une raison dictant des impératifs catégoriques, et une volonté libre de s'y soumettre ou de se rebeller contre eux." This statement is based upon the text of Sent., III, q. 13, and it refers to Vignaux' article "Nominalisme" in the Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique, XI, col. 771.

what should be done. But Ockham also teaches that conscience can be erroneous and that a person sins when following a (culpably) erroneous conscience. Ockham's doctrine of conscience substantiates that of St. Thomas; at least this aspect of Ockham's moral doctrine does not break with the scholastic tradition.

In summary, it has been shown that Ockham's notion of Practical Reason, right reason, prudence and conscience all involve practical propositions but that each concept in this series has a less extensive signification than the preceding concept. Practical Reason is composed of the propositions which are known to deal with volitive actions. Right reason concerns those propositions of the practical intellect which are directive or prescriptive statements and which are known to be true. Prudence indicates the particular directives of right reason which are known by experience. Conscience signifies the acts of prudence which are personally obligatory. Right reason, when considered as moral knowledge, is a generic category so that the specific acts of prudence and conscience can be considered as acts of right reason. Together, these intellectual judgments constitute the structure or form of every moral deliberation, and represent the rational precedents for every virtuous act of the will. It should be clear, furthermore, that these intellectual acts pertain to the apprehension and attainment of human goals. Ockham describes right reasons or the prudential and conscientious acts of right reason as the intellectual effort to specify the proper order between ends and means. Right Reason, when considered as

a non-propositional act of assent, is the technique by which these various types of value judgments become obligatory.

Remember, however, that the act of conscience, which is the final act of the intellect in a moral deliberation, can err regarding what should be done. Mistakes about the facts of a given situation or mistakes about the divine mandate applying to a given situation are mentioned by Ockham as the causes of an erroneous conscience. Conversely, evident facts and the divine commandments can also be shown as the reasons for a correct judgment of conscience. It is now necessary to study these natural and revealed foundations of Right Reason.

Part II: The Foundations of Right Reason

The doctrine of Recta Ratio is of central importance to the ethical theory of William of Ockham. A general feature of every good act is the conformity of the will-act to an act of Right Reason; conversely, the formal characteristic shared by every evil action is a deformity to Right Reason. In light of the criticism of Anita Garvens and George de Lagarde that Ockham's doctrine is "unexplained" it is necessary to search the reasons for Right Reason.⁶⁵ Analysis reveals both psychological

⁶⁵Professor Garvens claims: "Grund und Entstehung der recta ratio ist nach Ockham in der urteilenden Tätigkeit des praktischen Verstandes gegeben," Franz. Studien 21, p. 377. G. de Lagarde says: "Or, cette loi extérieure à notre volonté, qui s'impose à priori sans discussion et sans explication, est celle de la "droite raison." Ockham, La Morale..., p. 65. The only explanation of recta ratio, which these and many other commentators find in Ockham's writings is the free command of God that men act in accord with Right Reason.

and metaphysical dimensions. Two distinctions have been maintained in this section: first, the distinction between Right Reason as the moral function and right reason as the propositional content of the Practical Intellect; secondly, the distinction between "positive" elements and "evident" elements. These distinctions are Ockham's own and should be recognized by any interpretation.

We intend to answer two questions: Why is Right Reason itself a condition of moral behavior, and Why are the directives of right reason morally binding? A double question is required because Ockham treats the notion of "Recta Ratio" from two perspectives. That is to say, Ockham considers Right Reason as a function or simple act of the practical intellect (a judgment of assent to directive propositions) and as a complex act or habitus of the Practical Intellect (the directive proposition, itself).

A. Right Reason as the Proximate Norm of Morality

As a condition of moral behavior, Right Reason indicates the intellectual act of assent to a directive proposition which must precede the production of any good or bad action in the will. The phrase "condition of moral behavior" is appropriate because an intellectual dictate must precede but cannot necessitate the voluntary production of a good action. The intellectual assent or dictate is a necessary cause of moral goodness in the will, but not a necessitating cause. The relationship between

the intellect's assent and the will's volition is hypothetically necessary. That is, on the condition that the will acts correctly, the will-act must be conformed to, or caused by, the intellect's directive. Ockham formulates this connection as an evident principle of demonstrative moral science--voluntas debet se conformare rectae rationi.⁶⁶ Why?

Ockham maintains that the human will is obliged to conform to Right Reason because the divine will has ordered it. "While the present ordination stands, no action is perfectly virtuous without being elicited in conformity to Right Reason."⁶⁷ "Action of the will elicited against conscience...would be elicited against the divine precept and will which desire that we elicit such action in conformity to Right Reason."⁶⁸ Thus, there is a revealed reason; i.e., a law promulgated by the free will of God through revelation, which supports Ockham's contention that an act of Right Reason is partially the cause of moral goodness and presently the vehicle of moral obligation. Can we assume, therefore, that Right Reason is a necessary and permanent condition of all moral behavior?

When Ockham asserts that the will is obliged by God to conform to Right Reason, he is not asserting that Right Reason is a necessary component of a virtuous act. The phrase, "Stante

⁶⁶Quodl., II, q. 14.

⁶⁷Sent., III, q. 12, CCC.

⁶⁸Sent., III, q. 13, C.

ordinatione quae nunc est," ("While the present ordination stands") is a qualification which Ockham often attaches to his statements about the world of experience. The ordained order could be changed by God's absolute power; if conformity to Right Reason is a moral requirement de potentia Dei ordinata, then de potentia Dei absoluta non-conformity to Right Reason could become a moral requirement.⁶⁹ If conformity to Right Reason is simply a positive good, that is, good because it is commanded, then the conclusion is inevitable that Right Reason is not a necessary condition of moral behavior. Ockham mentions that theft, adultery and hate for God are evil because these acts are prohibited by divine precept but the divine precept could change and render these actions meritorious.⁷⁰ Might the obligation to follow Right Reason change?

⁶⁹Sent., III, q. 13, G; "Aliter potest dici quod actus intrinsece virtuosus non potest fieri non virtuosus negative, etiam per naturam, quia si corrumpatur actus prudentiae, necessario corrumpitur actus virtuosus cuius prudentia erat directiva necessitate, dico, naturali...Tamen, per potentiam Dei absolutam potest fieri contrarium sicut prius probatum est, quia de illa potentia non intelligebatur illud dictum."

⁷⁰Sent., II, q. 19, O; "Ad aliud dico quod licet odium dei, furari, adulterari habeant malam circumstantiam annexam et similia de communi lege quatenus fiunt ab aliquo qui ex praecepto divino obligatur ad contrarium. Sed quantum ad esse absolutum in illis actibus possunt fieri a deo sine omni circumstantia mala annexa, et etiam meritorie possunt fieri a viatore si caderent sub praecepto divino sicut nunc de facto eorum opposita cadunt sub praecepto divino. Et stante praecepto divino ad opposita eorum non potest aliquis tales actus meritorie nec bene exercere, quia non fiunt meritorie nisi caderent sub praecepto divino et si fierent a viatore meritorie, tunc non dicerentur nec nominarentur "furtum," "adulterium," "odium," etc."

It is consistent with Ockham's principles to suppose that the command to follow Right Reason could be changed by God's absolute power. Unfortunately, Ockham never treats the possibility of this divine precept being retracted. However, the command to love God could be changed and Ockham considers this act as intrinsically and necessarily virtuous.⁷¹ Thus, while the possibility remains that the mandate to follow Right Reason could change it does not follow that Right Reason is not a necessary and essential cause of a virtuous act. Philotheus Boehner has shown that an actual divine command to hate God would result in absurdity or an ethical antimony; i.e., the obedient hate of God would be love for God.⁷² In the same way, an antimony would

⁷¹Ockham frequently asserts that the command to love God might change. See preceding note; Sent., IV, q. 14, D; Quodl., III, q. 13. But Ockham is specific that the altruistic love of God is intrinsically, and necessarily right. See Quodl., III, q. 13; Quodl., III, q. 14.

⁷²"it is well known that Ockham admitted that God can command by His absolute power that a person should hate Him or at least not love Him. It is important to note that this possibility is admitted in the purely ontological and logical realm. For in this realm there cannot be a contradiction, since it is a fact that creatures can command others to hate God; the command, therefore, is a reality, considered as a mental or spoken sentence, and every reality has God as its primary cause. In the ethical realm, however, an antimony is encountered, the only real antimony in Ockham's philosophy. If God commanded a creature to hate Him or simply not to love Him, the creature would be obliged to obey, but it could not obey since in obeying it would love Him." See Philosophical Writings: Ockham, pp. xlix-1. The love of God above all, as the intrinsically virtuous act, will be discussed further in Chapter Four.

It is interesting that although Ockham speaks of the possibility of God changing the "positive" law to love God, he still considers the act of loving God above all necessarily virtuous. In the same way, Ockham admits that God might command acts contrary to Right Reason (Sent., III, q. 13, G), yet he later affirms that "necessarily" Right Reason is required for intrinsically good acts. Quodl., III, q. 15; "Sicut voluntas potest velle abstinere

occur should God command that a person violate Right Reason.

Right Reason is the dictate or assent to a directive proposition; a directive proposition can be known naturally or known through revelation. The fact that God commands something to be done is a "right reason" for the will to perform this act.⁷³ Consequently, if God commanded the human will to elicit acts which are not conformed to Right Reason, Right Reason should dictate that the will reject Right Reason. Just as the divine command to hate God would result in the moral absurdity of hating God out of love for God, so the divine command to act contrary to Right Reason would result in an act which is non-conformed and conformed to Right

propter Deum pro loco et tempore, mediante actu dictativo intellectus, ita potest velle abstinere propter Deum loco et tempore, cum sola apprehensione illius propositionis--'Volendum est abstinere propter Deum pro loco et tempore'--sine omni assentu respectu ejusdem. Hoc posito, tunc quaero; aut ita volitio est virtuosa intrinsece vel non. Si sic: contra, non elicitur conformiter rectae rationi, quid necessario requiritur ad actum intrinsece virtuosum; ergo, non est virtuosa intrinsece." Here, Ockham clearly discusses the "assent of Right Reason" as a necessary cause of moral virtue. What is necessary cannot be contingent on the will of God. This is another example of the "distance" between thought and reality. The changeable form of divine commands encounters certain moral "facts" which are constant. The necessary goodness of the love of God is one such "fact;" the regulative function of Right Reason's assent is another.

⁷³Sent., Prologue, q. 10 (I, 293); "Ex istis sequuntur aliquae conclusiones. Una, quod non est respectu cuiuslibet praxis est scientia practica cui notitia debeat conformari, vel magis proprie, cui sit nata elici conformiter ad hoc quod sit recta. Et hoc quia quantumcumque de omni praxi posset esse aliquod dictamen verum quid debet elici vel non elici, et ita aliquo modo sibi conformatur, tamen aliqua est praxis mala quae nullo modo potest conformiter elici rationi rectae, quia nulla ratio recta potest dictare eam eliciendam, sicut nulla ratio recta potest dictare quod inimicus est odiendus contra divinum praeceptum." Also see Sent., I, d. 41, q. 1, K.

Reason. Thus, while God's absolute power could issue the commandment to "Hate God" and "Reject Right Reason," it would be impossible for the moral agent to accomplish these deeds in obedience to the divine commandment. Clearly, Ockham's statements that Right Reason is an essential and a necessary cause of a virtuous act⁷⁴ indicate a permanent, pervasive and indispensable characteristic of moral goodness which remains unaltered in the face of changeable divine commands. The test of "God's absolute power" can be used to establish necessary truth as well as contingency.

⁷⁴Sent., III, q. 13, F; "Ad primum istorum tenendo istud principium, quod effectus sufficienter dependet ex suis causis essentialibus, ex quo sequeretur quod nullum absolutum necessario requiritur ad aliquem effectum nisi aliquo modo sit causa illius effectus et per consequens cum prudentia actualis necessario requiratur ad actum virtuosum et est aliquo modo prior, necessario sequitur quod actus prudentiae sit vera causa efficiens essentialiter et necessario requisita ad actum virtuosum, ita essentialiter sicut voluntas necessario requiritur tanquam causa efficiens ad hoc, quod sit virtuosus vel meritorius, et consequens sequitur ultra quod suspensa activitate voluntatis vel actus prudentiae nullo modo dicitur talis actus virtuosus. Et ratio est; quia virtuosum et viciosum sunt nomina connotativa et significant ipsum actum non absolute sed connotando cum hoc activitatem voluntatis et prudentiae, et quando deficit aliquid connotatum non dicitur talis actus virtuosus. Et si dicas quod talis actus per positum elicitur effective a voluntate conformiter rationi rectae secundum alias circumstantias requisitas, igitur est virtuosus. Respondeo, actum elici conformiter rationi rectae est ipsum elici secundum rectam rationem regulantem et dictantem talem actum esse eliciendum, quid quidem 'dictare' sive 'regulare' non est aliud quam speciali modo illum actum causare." Because Right Reason is an essential and a necessary cause of virtuous acts, Ockham says that a voluntary act conformed to Right Reason cannot be evil. "Si quaeratur utrum ille habitus acquisitus ex actu detestandi peccatum propter Deum sit virtuosus vel non. Respondeo quod sic, cuius ratio est, quia inclinatur ad actus conformes rationi rectae et actus sunt ita boni quod non possunt esse mali." Sent., IV, qes. 8-9, X. Acts which are "so good that they cannot be evil" are necessarily good acts. Also see Sent., IV, q. 3, L.

Right Reason is a condition or necessary cause of morality because of the divine command. But what rarely is noticed is that Ockham also teaches that the directive "The will ought to conform to Right Reason" is known per se.⁷⁵ "Without any precept of a Superior" the moral agent knows the truth of this directive.

When the terms of this proposition are understood, the intellect immediately and necessarily assents to this statement as evident and true. Ockham considers analytic propositions as "evident" because intuitive knowledge of the meanings of the constitutive terms is sufficient to assert the truth of the statement. Intuitive knowledge of the meaning of the terms "will" and "Right Reason" immediately causes the dictate or assent that, in fact, the will ought to conform to Right Reason. Ockham explains that:

For this, that a correct act be first elicited by the will, some right reason in the intellect is necessarily required. This is clear through reason and authorities; through reason because that will which can act well or badly regarding itself, because of itself it is not necessarily right, requires some directing rule other than itself for this, that the will act correctly. This is clear, because for that reason the divine will does not require some directing rule, because that will is the first directing rule and cannot act badly; but our will is like this because it can act correctly and incorrectly, thus it requires some directing reason. Through authority it is clear through the definition of

⁷⁵Quodl., II, q. 14; "Sed disciplina moralis non-positiva est scientia demonstrativa. Probo, quia noticia deducens conclusiones syllogistice ex principiis per se notis vel per experientiam scitis, est demonstrativa; huiusmodi est disciplina moralis, ergo et cetera. Major est manifesta. Minor probatur, quia multa sunt principia per se nota in philosophia morali; puta, quod 'Voluntas debet se conformare rectae rationi'." See D. Webering, O.F.M., Theory of Demonstration According to William of Ockham (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: Franciscan Institute, Philosophy series, 10; 1953), for an excellent and pertinent study of Ockham's understanding of demonstrative knowledge.

virtue in the second book of the Nicomachean Ethics that 'Virtue is an elective habit consisting in the mean determined by reason' etc...And there are many other authorities for this point that an act cannot be right and virtuous unless it have Right Reason.⁷⁶

The will is a rational, active potency capable of producing or not producing volition freely, contingently and indifferently: this is known on the basis of inner-experience. To call volition right or wrong requires that some standard or criterion be applied to the acts of will which sub-divides free actions into correct and incorrect actions. The standard or rule which determines free acts as good or bad is the judgment of Right Reason. It is the nature of Right Reason to dictate what ought to be done. It happens when I say, "Yes, I should do this," that a particular act is required. "Doing this" is implied by saying "yes." The practical principle that the will should conform to Right Reason, therefore, is grounded on evident facts of human psychology known by anyone who has affirmed a directive statement.

Unfortunately, Ockham does not analyze the logical structure of this directive--the will ought to conform to Right Reason

⁷⁶Sent., III, q. 13, B; "Ad quaestionem primo sciendum est quod ad hoc quod actus rectus primo eliciatur a voluntate necessario requiritur aliqua recta ratio in intellectu. Hoc patet per rationem et auctoritates; per rationem quia illa voluntas quae potest quantum est de se bene agere et male, quia de se non est recta necessario, ad hoc quod recte agat indiget aliqua regula dirigente alia a se. Hoc patet, quia ideo voluntas divina non indiget aliquo dirigente, quia illa est prima regula directiva et non potest male agere; sed nostra voluntas est huiusmodi quia potest recte et non recte agere, igitur indiget aliqua ratione dirigente. Per auctoritatem patet per diffinitionem virtutis, II Ethicorum, quod 'virtus est habitus electivus consistens in medio determinata ratione' etc. Et multae aliae auctoritates sunt ad hoc quod non potest esse actus rectus et virtuosus nisi habeat rationem rectam." See Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, II, 6, 1107a. Another persuasion is given by Ockham in Sent., IV, q. 3, L.

--to confirm that it is known per se. Nevertheless, this directive can be corroborated by reference to Ockham's treatment of "per se" knowledge. Ockham holds that every necessary proposition is known "through itself" in either the first or the second mode. In the first mode, "per se" indicates that nothing signified by the predicate is extrinsic to what is signified by the subject of the proposition: in the second mode, "per se" indicates that what is signified through the predicate is really distinct from what is signified through the subject.⁷⁷ In both the first and second mode, per se indicates "direct and proper" predication, and that "the cause of the other" is predicated.⁷⁸ The proposition

⁷⁷Sent., Prologue, q. 6 (I, 178 and 180); "Circa primum, dico quod omnis propositio necessaria est per se primo modo vel secundo modo. Hoc patet quia omnis simpliciter necessaria. ... Potest dici quod per se primo modo et per se secundo modo dupliciter accipiuntur distingui: Uno modo, quando praedicatum non dicit aliquid totaliter distinctum ab importato per subjectum primo. Et tunc dicitur 'per se primo modo', quando nihil importatum per praedicatum, tamquam praedicabile de illo praedicato universaliter et non solum particulariter, est totaliter extrinsecum subjecto. Et sic nihil praedicatur per se primo modo nisi per se superiora et partes intrinsecae rei, vel importantia praecise partes rei. Per se autem secundo modo dicitur illud quod importat aliquid distinctum realiter ab importato per subjectum, sicut hic: 'omnis homo est risibile;' 'Deus est creativus,' et sic de aliis." This text is discussed by Robert Guelley, Philosophie et Théologie..., pp. 215-217. Also, E. A. Moody, The Logic..., pp. 234-36; and Leon Baudry, Lexique Philosophique..., pp. 196-99, offer useful analyses of Ockham's notion of "per se" knowledge, and fill out this text from the Ordinatio with later statements of Ockham in the Summa Totius Logicae. Ockham's comment that "nec potuit esse falsa" is an important characteristic of necessary and per se nota propositions which sheds light on the distinction between intrinsically necessary and accidentally necessary propositions. Pertaining to ethical norms which are known per se, Ockham certainly does not conceive of a time prior to the divine commands of revelation in which such moral norms "were able to be false."

⁷⁸Summulae in Libros Physicorum, II, c, 8; "Ad cuius evidentiam est sciendum quod 'per se' et 'per accidens'

"The will ought to conform to Right Reason," therefore, is known per se in the second mode because the act of Right Reason signified by the predicate is extrinsic to the act of will signified by the subject. Simply by knowing the terms or concepts which constitute this proposition, it is evident that this predication is direct and proper because Right Reason and the will are the ordered, essential causes of a virtuous act. Because Right Reason is the rule of volition, the will ought to conform to Right Reason. An analysis of this practical principle from Ockham's logical point of view would be helpful. In its absence, we simply echo Ockham's position that this directive is known per se, and is logically necessary and universal--characteristics shared by all principles of demonstrative science.⁷⁹

As the moral function of the intellect, Right Reason dictates what ought to be done by the will. The intellect assents to, or judges to be true, necessary and contingent propositions

multipliciter capitur primo Posteriorum quia aliqua sunt, in quibus omnia sunt necessaria, et ubi est praedicatio directa et propria et illi dicuntur 'per se' primo modo vel secundo modo... Aliter accipitur 'per se' et 'per accidens' in propositio, quod illa propositio dicitur 'per se' et non 'per accidens' in qua praedicatur propria causa de aliquo, scilicet, quando in subjecto exprimitur propria causa praedicati, sicut ista est per se, 'aedificator aedificat,' vel 'est causa domus.'" Cf. Post. Analytics, I, 4 (73^a 12-27). The history of the scholastic treatment of "propositions known through themselves" is covered by Rainulf Schmücker, Propositio per se nota. Gottesbeweis und ihr Verhältnis nach Petrus Aureoli (Franziskanische Forschungen, Heft 8; Werl. l. W.; Druckerei, 1941).

⁷⁹"Every proposition belonging to a demonstrative proof must be necessary, per se and universal." Webering, The Theory of Demonstration..., p. 32.

because the propositions convey the facts.⁸⁰ In distinction to the intellectual assent to a speculative proposition, the mental assent to a directive proposition presents an obligation to the will. The difference between speculative and practical assent is affirmed by Ockham when he calls the latter assent a "dictate."⁸¹

⁸⁰Sent., Prologue, q. 1 (I, 16); "...Quia nulli assentimus per intellectum nisi quod verum reputamus; nec dissentimus nisi quod falsum aestimamus." Also see Quodl., IV, q. 17; "Alius est actus assentiendi quo assentio alicui ita quod actus assentiendi referatur ad aliquid, assentiendo complexo vel dissentiendo; puta, assentiendo huic propositioni 'Haec propositio, homo est animale, est propositio vera,' ubi haec propositio 'homo est animale' est subjectum. Sed assentio huic propositioni 'homo est animale' in se et absolute. Et hoc quia scio quod sic importatur per istam propositionem sicut est in re."

⁸¹Sent., III, q. 11, X; "Si dicas quod ostenso aliquo objecto diligibili, sine omni dictamine rationis, potest voluntas illud diligere, et iste est bonus moraliter quia diligit quid diligendum est etc., puta si formetur hoc complexum, "Hoc bonum est diligibile" et intellectus non assentiat; tunc est dubium utrum illa dilectio sit bona moraliter. Respondeo, licet actus ille sit bonus ex genere et non sit malus moraliter, tamen non est virtuosus quia de ratione actus virtuosus est quod eliciatur conformiter rationi rectae et respectu objecti convenientis et quod habens talem actum sit sciens. Unde dicit Philosophus secundo Ethicorum, primo quod sit sciens, deinde quod sit eligens (Nic. Ethics, II, 9, 1109a 20-29); unde si modo omnes circumstantiae requisitae ad actum virtuosum praeter rectam rationem ponantur, non erit ille actus perfecte virtuosus. Et sciendum quod actus dictandi intellectus non est formaliter complexus, sed est actus assentiendi vel dissentendi complexo jam formato, et ex illo actu assentiendi generatur prudentia. Non autem ex formatione complexi." Also see Sent., III, q. 13, F.

Both Aristotle and Augustine substantiate Ockham's position that an act must be done knowingly and willingly to be morally good or bad. This quotation clarifies what Ockham means by "sciens." First, a person does not know what should be done until the intellect judges that some directive is true. Secondly a person must choose to follow the dictate of Right Reason; that is, the moral agent must intentionally execute the dictate of Right Reason because it is right. Both of these elements are contained in the notion of "conformity to Right Reason."

Even the principle "the will ought to conform to Right Reason" must be intellectually confirmed or "dictated" before this directive is morally binding. "Conformity," therefore, is a proportion which obtains between the dictate (assent) of the intellect and the command (assent) of the will to execute that dictate. The will is conformed to Right Reason when the intellectual assent to a directive is matched by the affective and effective volitional assent to that directive. And conformity to Right Reason must be deliberate. The will should act because of, or for the sake of, a practical dictate.⁸² The obligation embodied in Right Reason's dictate is a dimension of human experience with its own exigencies. We are not justified in asking: Why should we do what we ought to do? We are not permitted to translate moral "ought" into "the pleasing," "the socially expedient" or even "the salvific." Ockham considers the "dictate" of Right Reason as a cause and object of every good act produced by the will.⁸³

⁸²Sent., III, q. 12, CCC; "Confirmatur, quia nullus actus est perfecte virtuosus nisi voluntas per illum actum velit dictatum a recta ratione propter hoc, quod est dictatum a recta ratione. Quia si vellet dictatum a ratione, non quia dictatum sed quia delectabile vel propter aliam causam, jam vellet illud dictatum si solum esset ostensum propter apprehensionem sine recta ratione. Et per consequens, ille actus non esset virtuosus, quia non eliceretur conformiter rectae rationi; quia hoc est elicere conformiter rationi rectae, velle dictatum a ratione recta propter hoc quid est dictatum." Also see Quodl., III, q. 14, and Sent., III, q. 11, X.

⁸³Sent., III, q. 13, f; "Respondeo, actum elici conformiter rationi rectae est ipsum elici secundum rectam rationem regulantem et dictantem talem actum esse eliciendum; quid quidem 'dictare' sive 'regulare' non est aliud quam speciali modo 'illum actum causare,' sicut alibi patet." Quodl., III, q. 15; "...ergo ille actus voluntatis, qui non habet istam rationem pro objecto, non est natus elici conformiter rationi rectae..." Right Reason as an object of virtuous will-acts is discussed systematically in the fourth chapter.

A person must know what is right before he can choose to do what is right. The intellect dictates or assents that "The will ought to conform to Right Reason" is true per se because this proposition expresses the sequence of essential, necessary causes for any and every virtuous act.

When Ockham calls Right Reason a condition or necessary cause of moral behavior his reasons cannot be catalogued as either voluntaristic or rationalistic. Ockham teaches that conformity to Right Reason is a moral requirement because of revealed evidence and the natural evidence of human psychology. This evidence gives necessary truth. God's will complements the rational determination of the inner moral order. Upon the certitude of free will and the normative function of Right Reason's assent, Ockham supports the "non-positive part" of his moral doctrine and his value theory. The simple, non-propositional act of judgment passed upon directive propositions and commands functions itself as the proximate, indispensable norm of volition. To identify and exhaust Ockham's doctrine of "recta ratio" with the complex, propositional acts of Prudence and Conscience is an unfortunate, vitiating oversight. The assent of Right Reason is a generic and formal feature of all moral behavior whereas the particular directives of Prudence or Conscience may or may not enter a concrete moral deliberation.

According to Ockham, it is not cogent to ask why one should do what he judges ought to be done. On the other hand, we must ask why the agent judges, in the first place, that something ought to be done?

B. The Evidence for the Directives of Right Reason

Ockham's two-sided conception of "recta ratio" permits that all true directives of Practical Reason be called "right reasons." Thus, a preliminary but trivial reason for Right Reason's assent is that the agent reputes the directive to be true. "We assent to nothing unless what we consider to be true." Why do we consider a proposition true? If the will ought to conform to Right Reason, to what should Right Reason conform? It remains to establish the evidence on which the particular directives of right reason are based.

Ockham often asserts that the intellect should not consider anything as true unless there is an evident or a revealed reason for doing so. To be precise, the foundation of every warranted assent of the intellect rests in conceptual analysis, experience, or Scripture.⁸⁴ "Ratio," "experientia," and "auctoritas" are the sources or types of evidence to which the intellect refers in substantiating the truth of any proposition--speculative or practical. The directive propositions of the Practical Intellect are morally binding, (a) because Right Reason judges them to be true directives, and (b) because ultimately either logical

⁸⁴Sent., IV, q. 3, N; "Ideo dico quantum ad istum articulum quod praeter virtutes morales natas acquiri ex actibus nostris, non sunt aliquae aliae ponendae. Sed istud non potest evidentiter probari vel improbari sed quia pluralitas non est ponenda sine necessitate, nec apparet aliqua necessitas; nec per rationem nec per experientiam nec per auctoritatem..." Also see Sent., I, d. 30, q. 1, E; Sent., III, q. 8, D; Sent., Prologue, q. 11, (I, 319-320); Epistola ad Fratres Minores (Manchester ed., III, 16); and De Sacramento Altaris, ed. T. Bruce Birch (Burlington, Iowa: Lutheran Literary Board, 1930), p. 126.

analysis or experience or revelation verify these directives. We must consider the psychological and metaphysical aspects of Ockham's position on valid evidence.

The mind performs two related acts; apprehension and judgment.⁸⁵ The act of apprehension produces a concept while the act of judgment produces "knowledge." Ockham describes these two acts in the following way:

I say that assent (judgment) is twofold: One, by which the intellect assents that something is or that something is not or that something is good or white. Another by which the intellect assents to some proposition. The second distinction is that apprehension is twofold: One is the composition or division or the formation of a proposition. The other which is the cognition of the proposition itself already formed just as the cognition of whiteness is called apprehension.⁸⁶

Assent or judgment, therefore, must concern an object which is apprehended. The first kind of judgment has an individual thing for an object. Assent in this sense forms a proposition. The second kind of judgment has a "complex," i.e., a proposition, for an object. This second type of judgment includes those

⁸⁵Sent., Prologue, q. 1 (I, 16); "Inter actus intellectus sunt duo actus quorum unus est apprehensivus, et est respectu cuius libet quod potest terminare actum potentiae intellectivae, sive sit complexum sive incomplexum; quia non solum apprehendimus incomplexa sed etiam propositiones et demonstrationes et impossibilia et necessaria et universaliter omnia quae respiciuntur a potentia intellectiva. Alius actus potest dici iudicativus, quo intellectus non tantum apprehendit objectum sed etiam illi assentit vel dissentit."

⁸⁶Quodl., V, q. 6; "Circa primum, dico quod duplex est 'assensus;' unus quo intellectus assentit aliquid esse vel aliquid non esse vel aliquid esse bonum vel album, alius quo intellectus assentit alicui complexo. Secunda distinctio est quod duplex est apprehensio; una est compositio vel divisio sive propositionis formatio, alio qua est cognitio ipsius complexi jam formati, sicut cognitio albedinis dicitur apprehensio."

affirmative judgments called Right Reason. This judgment assesses the truth value of the proposition. When the intellect judges the truth or falsity of a proposition, it then possesses knowledge.⁸⁷ The truth or falsity of a statement depends upon the correspondence between the significance of the statement and the actual state of affairs signified.⁸⁸ Ultimately, therefore, the psychological causes of Right Reason's assent to "evident" directives are acts of apprehension which point to the natures of things as the real or non-conceptual foundations of moral rules.

⁸⁷Quodl., III, q. 6; "Circa primum dico quod actus assentiendi duplex est sicut actus sciendi. Unus quo aliquid scitur esse vel non esse; sicut scio quod lapis non est asinus, et tamen nec scio lapidem nec asinum, sed scio quod lapis non est asinus. Similiter assentio quod homo est animale. Alius est actus quo aliquid scitur quo de aliquo habetur scientia; ita quod actus sciendi referatur ad aliquid." Properly speaking, the second sense of "knowing" or "assenting" means that a proposition is considered or "referred" in terms of its truth or falsity. "Scientia," therefore, is to know what is true. See Aristotle, De Interpretatione, 4.

⁸⁸Philotheus Boehner has examined Ockham's theory of truth, signification and supposition most thoroughly. See Boehner, Collected Articles, pp. 174-267. Father Boehner's studies indicate that Ockham's epistemology is a form of Realism, namely, Realistic Conceptualism. Ockham teaches an immediate causal connection between reality and conception; his doctrine of intuitive and abstractive cognition is meant to insure the immediacy of this causal connection. Regarding Ockham's theory of truth, Boehner says: "Verum and Falsum predicated about a proposition mean or express the correspondence between the proposition and the fact; i.e., between the proposition as signum and the fact as significatum. If, therefore, the proposition signifies the state of thing or the thing as it is, the proposition is true; if it signifies as it is not, the proposition is false." (p. 200) To justify this analysis Boehner quotes Expositio Aurea, In Periherm., Prooem.,: "Sed veritas et falsitas sunt quaedam praedabilia de propositione importantia, quod est ita vel non est ita a parte significati, sicut denotatur per propositionem, quae est signum. Unde propositionem esse veram est: ita esse in re, sicut significatur per eum."

Regarding "revealed" directives, Ockham claims that the will will can be a cause why the intellect assents to a proposition. An act of the will is a psychic reason for assent to a proposition in two ways. First, apprehension is simply the recognition of an object or of a mental statement. The recognition of a simple object results in a concept; however, apprehension cannot account for the formation of concepts into propositions. Hence, Ockham considers the will's command that a certain proposition be formulated as a cause of the truth or falsity of that proposition.⁸⁹ Secondly, the intellect's assent to a proposition which is already formulated and apprehended, can be commanded by the will. Some contingent propositions are judged to be true because the will wishes to believe them. The will can freely choose to consider some propositions as authoritative and therefore the intellect assents to them. Because of an assent to one thing, e.g., God, the intellect will also assent to other

⁸⁹Sent., II, q. 25, K; "Ideo dico quod causa quare plus formatur propositio vera vel falsa, affirmativa vel negativa, est voluntas. Quia voluntas vult formare unam et non aliam. Et ideo actus qui apprehenditur post complexum formatur a notitiis incomplexis terminorum illius propositionis, et ab actu illius voluntatis et hoc generaliter; quia posito actu voluntatis quo vult tale complexum formari et positis notitiis incomplexis terminorum illius complexi, necessario sequitur actus apprehendendi sive formandi illud complexum--sicut effectus sequitur necessario ad suam causam." Ockham continues in this question to affirm that contingent propositions can be affirmed because of authority or because of the will. Ibid., L; "Et si sit contingens tunc illi assentit intellectus aliquando propter auctoritatem, aliquando propter voluntatem quia vult credere."

things, e.g., the divine precepts.⁹⁰

Apprehension and volition are thus the psychological causes of every intellectual judgment. The judgments of Right Reason are based upon internal acts of apprehension and acts of the will. The psychological causes of a judgment give the means by which the intellect formulates an act of assent or dissent. Ockham holds that an act of apprehension and volition must precede and cause every intellectual judgment. Natural directives are known to be true; positive mandates are believed to be true.⁹¹ Thus, acts of apprehension which terminate at factual matters verify or falsify the practical propositions which are known naturally; i.e., known per se or known through experience.⁹² Acts of the will which command that the mind consider a given proposition as certain are psychic causes of non-evident directives.

⁹⁰Sent., II, q. 25, L; "Et si sit contingens (propositio) tunc illi assentit intellectus aliquando propter auctoritatem, aliquando propter volentatem, quia vult credere. Si primo modo, assensus respectu auctoritatis causat assensus respectu illius propositionis. Si secundo modo, tunc volitio cum notitiis incomplexis et apprehensione complexi causat assensum illum. Et de similibus, simile est iudicium, quia non potest certa ratio dari quomodo causatur assensus vel dissentus respectu omnium propositionum." Also see Sent., Prologue, q. 1 (I, 21).

⁹¹Sent., III, q. 12, QQ; "Intellectus nulli adheret nisi propter evidentiam rei aut auctoritatem, vel propter imperium voluntatis; sed sive sic adhereat sive sic, semper necessario adheret posito illo propter quod adheret, puta evidentia rei vel imperio voluntatis."

⁹²Sent., Prologue, q. 7 (I, 187); "Omne quid est evidenter notum, aut est per se notum, aut notificatum est per 'per se nota,' aut per experientiam mediante notitia intuitiva, et hoc mediate vel immediate." Also see Quodl., IV, q. 17; and Quodl., V, q. 6; "Actus apprehensivus causat actum iudicativum."

For a number of reasons, the positive norms of right reason, which are based upon a divine command, constitute the more sensitive issue regarding the metaphysical foundations of Right Reason. For one thing, the command of God could establish every simple action which is possible for a man to perform as a moral obligation. By "simple act" we mean those volitions or nolitions which terminate at one individual object. The same voluntary or physical act could be now good and later evil because the will of God now commands and later prohibits that action. Secondly, the positive commands of God do not express the intrinsic and necessary goodness or evilness of certain actions, but rather the divine freedom in determining which acts will be conducive to salvation. Thus, Iserloh, Lagarde, Garvens and others, claim that: (a) there is no metaphysical basis for the positive right reasons because they are grounded in the unrestricted freedom and omnipotence of the divine will and (b) there is no metaphysical basis for the non-positive, natural directives of right reason because they could be countermanded by God's absolute power to "posit" the contrary of any natural directive.⁹³ Ockham, for one, would not agree.

⁹³See E. Iserloh, Gnade und Eucharistie..., pp. 58-59;

"In bezug auf Ockham müsste man sagen: Das Freigewolltsein eines von der Vernunft als geboten hingestellten Aktes macht dessen Moralität aus. Dabei ist noch zu bedenken, dass die Vernunft für das Gebotensein keine vom Sein geforderten Gründe beizubringen vermag, worauf auch de Lagarde gebührend hinweist. Wir haben keinen Grund, von besonderer Rationalität oder gar von Rationalismus in Ockhams Moralauffassung zu sprechen. Ein Weniger an Vernunftgebundenheit des moralischen Handelns war für jemand, der

The positive directives of Right Reason signify some action which is neither good nor evil of itself; but which is presently a moral obligation or prohibition because of a command of a superior.⁹⁴ "To worship God on Sunday" is a moral obligation "posited" by God; "To drive on the right side of the road" is an

noch im Rahmen des Christlichen bleiben wollte, kaum möglich." Professor Iserloh quotes G. de Lagarde who also finds a separation between metaphysics and morality and concludes: "Ainsi le volontarisme ockhamiste commande un rationalisme intransigeant dont aucune école n'avait encore approché." Ockham, La Morale..., p. 77. In his turn, Professor Lagarde quotes Anita Garvens' comment that moral norms in Ockham have no connection to the nature of things. Franz. Studien, 21, pp. 373-74. Earlier, and in an article known to Professor Garvens, Father Gallus Manser, O.P., had asserted a break between ontology and moral doctrine in Ockham's thought. See "Drei Zweifler am Kausalprinzip im 14. Jahrhundert," Jahrbuch für Philosophie und spekulative Theologie 27 (1912), p. 412. These systematic studies have had an influence upon the textbooks of the history of Medieval Philosophy. It is somewhat common to read that Ockham "severs the bond between metaphysics and ethics."

⁹⁴Quodl., II, q. 14 (corr. by Vat. Lat., 3075. f. 20 vb); "Circa secundum; sciendum quod moralis doctrina habet plures partes, quarum una est positiva, alia non-positiva. Scientia humana positiva est illa quae continent leges humanas et divinas quae obligant ad prosequendum vel fugiendum illa quae nec bona sunt nec mala nisi quia sunt prohibita vel imperata a superiore, cuius est leges condere seu statuere." Regarding the divine positive laws, Ockham does not mean that all the moral precepts which God has revealed are "positive." Many revealed directives can also be known naturally. See Sent., Prologue, q. 12 (I, 347-348); "Ad tertium dubium dico, distinguendo de habitu theologico practico sicut de theologico speculativo, quod sicut dictum est in una quaestione quidam habitus theologicus speculativus est notitia evidens et quidam non est evidens. Ita est in proposito quod habitus practicus quidam est evidens, sicut ille quo evidenter cognoscitur quod 'Unicuique reddendum est quod suum est.' 'Nulli est pro bono malum reddendum.' Alius est non evidens, sicut ille quo cognoscitur quod 'Corpus Christi in sacramento altaris est adorandum,' et sic de aliis." Thus, in many cases the revealed commandments reaffirm directives which are "evident" or known by the Practical Intellect naturally.

obligation "posited" by the legitimate civil authorities in the United States. The intellect dictates that these acts ought to be done propter auctoritatem. That is, if the source of a directive is a legitimate authority "able to decide and establish laws," then Right Reason dictates that directive on the basis of its authority. The commands to "worship God on Sunday" or to "drive on the right side of the road" are not "evident;" that is, these directives do not command the agent to perform acts which are necessarily and evidently good. If these commands were put into propositional forms, they would be contingent propositions. The assent of Right Reason to these commands depends upon a prior assent to the source, divine or civil, of the commands and not upon conceptual analysis or direct experience of the positive directive itself.

It is Ockham's position that many propositions of the Practical Intellect are dependent upon speculative or metaphysical principles.⁹⁵ That is, some practical directives can be

⁹⁵Sent., Prologue, q. 12 (I, 359-360); "Dico quod scientia moralis dupliciter accipitur; uno modo pro scientia quae est prae-cise de moribus qui sunt in potestate nostra, ita quod in omni scito ponatur aliquid importans aliquid quod est in potestate nostra aliter accipitur pro illa scientia secundum quod est tra-dita ab Aristotele et a philosophis et a Sanctis. Primo modo scientia moralis est simpliciter practica et nullam partem specu-lativam habet, quia sic nullum complexum ibi habetur nisi quod includit aliquid importans aliquid operabile a nobis cuius notitia est directiva magis quam notitia incomplexa illius operabilis. Et sic scientia moralis non speculatur aliquod verum nisi sim-pliciter practicum. Unde isto modo accipiendo scientiam moralem istae veritates 'Omne quod est in anima vel est passio vel poten-tia' etc., et 'Anima dividitur in intellectum practicum,' etc., et huiusmodi quae ponuntur in libro Ethicorum, non pertinent ad scientiam moralem. Secundo modo, tales veritates pertinent ad

known through speculative truths "because practical moral conclusions are ultimately acquired in that knowledge." Pertaining to the "positive" directives of God, Ockham holds that metaphysical principles can be used to prove practical principles about God; e.g., that God is most lovable and that God should be honored.⁹⁶ Because natural reason can know (although perhaps not with demonstrative certitude) that God exists,⁹⁷ that God is the ens

scientiam moralem, et sic una pars scientiae moralis est simpliciter speculativa et alia simpliciter practica. Et ratio est quia, sicut dictum est prius, multae conclusiones practicae dependent ex principiis speculabilibus et sciuntur per ea, et ideo volens tradere notitiam talium conclusionum practicarum oportet quod utatur principiis speculabilibus ex quibus conclusiones illae sequuntur. Et propter hoc, in scientia morali tradita a philosophis et a Sanctis inveniuntur multae veritates simpliciter speculativae, sed vocant eam scientiam moralem quia conclusiones practicae morales sunt ultima acquisita in illa scientia." See Ibid. (I, 314).

⁹⁶Ibid. (I, 364); "Ad aliud respondeo, quod metaphysica non est practica quia quamvis de Deo sint aliquae veritates practicae etiam naturaliter inventae, illas tamen non considerat metaphysicus, quia metaphysicus non considerat aliquid de Deo quod sit in potestate nostra sed tantum illa quae non sunt in potestate nostra, sicut quod 'Deus est incorruptibilis, simplex, perpetuus, causa omnium' et sic de aliis, et ideo metaphysica est simpliciter speculativa. Illa tamen quae considerantur a metaphysica possunt esse principia ad probandum conclusiones practicas de Deo, sicut ex hoc quod 'Deus est causa omnium, est summe diligibilis vel honorandus,' vel aliquid huiusmodi. Sed illae conclusiones practicae non pertinent ad metaphysicam sed ad aliquam aliam scientiam moralem quae erit practica."

⁹⁷Quaestiones super Libros Physicorum, q. 136; and Quodl., I, q. 1, both affirm that the existence of God can be proven and in the former question, Ockham offers a demonstration for a "primum efficiens." Boehner has edited and analyzed these texts in Collected Articles, pp. 399-420.

perfectissimum,⁹⁸ that God is good,⁹⁹ the practical conclusion follows that God ought to be loved and obeyed. Ockham does not maintain that the positive directives of Scripture signify acts which are good or evil by nature. But he does assert that altruistic love and obedience to God are good by nature. The authority of divine positive laws is grounded (a), in the facts of God's supreme goodness and perfection which can be known through a natural use of reason and (b), in the end served by the fulfillment of those positive laws; namely, the love of God. Surely,

⁹⁸Sent., IV, q. 7, I; "Unde argumentum de causalitate et activitate respectu effectus perfectioris vel imperfectioris in creaturis non concludit universaliter causam esse perfectiorem effectui; et ratio est, quia nulla creatura est causa totalis respectu alicuius effectus sed tantum partialis, quia in omni actione creature concurrens Deus. Sed ex causalitate et activitate causae totalis quae est totalis vel potest esse totalis respectu cuiuslibet effectus potest argui causam esse perfectiorem effectui. Et sic solus deus est causa totalis vel esse potest causa totalis respectu cuiuslibet effectus. Ideo sequitur quod Deus sit perfectior omni effectui producto: aliter, enim, periret omnis via ad probandum Deum esse ens perfectissimum."

⁹⁹Sent., Prologue, q. 1 (I, 7); "Ex isto sequitur quod aliquae veritates naturaliter notae seu cognoscibiles sunt theologicae, sicut quod Deus est, Deus est sapiens, bonus etc., cum sint necessariae ad salutem; aliquae autem sunt supernaturaliter cognoscibiles, sicut: Deus est trinus, incarnatus et huiusmodi." Also see Quodl., II, q. 6. In 1326, the papal commission at Avignon censured Ockham for saying that "ex puris naturalibus, possumus cognoscere istam propositionem: Deus est summum bonum." See A. Pelzer, Revue d'Histoire ecclésiastique 18, p. 57; and J. Koch, "Neue Akenstücke zu dem gegen Wilhelm Ockham in Avignon geführten Prozess," Rescherches de Théologie ancienne et médiévale 8 (1936), pp. 169-171. The papal commission refers to Sent., I, d. 1, q. 5 (I, 464) in Ockham's corpus.

Right Reason does not dictate irrationally when directing the will to fulfill the divine positive laws.¹⁰⁰

Ockham maintains explicitly that the principles of Practical Reason are non-positive directives which are valid and binding "sine omni praecepto superioris." Indeed, these principles govern the application of positive directives. In spite of God's absolute moral authority, the directives of Right Reason which are known per se cannot change. Consider the directives which Ockham mentions as being "evident" and "known per se:" the will ought to conform to Right Reason; every evil is avoidable and should be avoided; everything honest should be done; every dishonesty should be avoided;¹⁰¹ everything determined by Right Reason to be done for the sake of a determined end and also concerning the other circumstances, should be done; every good dictated by reason should be elicited.¹⁰² The truth of such propositions does not depend upon a positive command of God; their evidence rests in the meaning of the constitutive concepts. As universal, necessary and "per se nota" directives, conceptual

¹⁰⁰ Indeed, Ockham is explicit that the obligation to obey God is consequent to "some cognition of God." Sent., I, d. 48, q. 1, D: "Dicendum quod aliquis talis quo complacet voluntati omne illud quid complacet voluntati divinae, qui debet esse semper in omni honeste usum rationis postquam ad aliqualem Dei cognitionem attingerit vel potuit attingere." Also see Sent., III, q. 12, PP, where Ockham claims that the directive "Nullus est inducendus ad faciendum contra praecepta Dei sui" is known per se.

¹⁰¹ Quodl., II, q. 14.

¹⁰² Sent., III, q. 11, Z.

analysis can show these norms are true by definition. Ockham's definition of "moral good" and the derivation of virtue-definitions from the primary value term will be discussed in Chapter Five. For now, we merely assert that "moral good" is something which should be willed according to Right Reason; a moral evil is something which should not be willed according to Right Reason. The directives which are per se nota are various restatements of Ockham's basic definition of good or evil. In a given situation, to tell a falsehood might be a "positive" right or wrong, but in either case the moral agent is evidently obliged to pursue what is right and flee what is wrong. Thus, these evident norms of morality do not signify absolutely the simple nature of some action; rather, they are composed of connotative concepts which signify an action and connote acts of will and Right Reason. Divine commands or circumstances could change "what" is now proper, but propositions known per se would still be valid directives on "how" the agent should respond to the changeable commands and circumstances. The norms of morality which are necessary and known through themselves are formal or analytically true statements. The meaning of these norms remains constant in spite of variable circumstances and the mutable will of God, which might alter the moral determination of particular acts. The validity of the natural or "evident" directives of Right Reason depends logically upon the meaning of moral goodness and

metaphysically upon the nature of moral goodness.¹⁰³ Thus, the search for the foundations of the evident "Right Reasons" keeps returning to the executive powers of morality--the free will and assent of Right Reason which cause and define moral goodness. The principles of Practical Reason are "formal" directives in that they describe and prescribe the generic features of moral behavior rather than specific acts. Indeed, with Ockham it appears that human nature as a moral norm shrinks to the imperative-giving nature of Right Reason's judgment.

The formalistic character of the directives of Right Reason which are known per se has been noticed before.¹⁰⁴ That is

¹⁰³Quodl., III, q. 14; "Nullus actus est moraliter bonus vel virtuosus nisi sibi assistat actus volendi sequi rectam rationem, vel quia causatur a tali velle, puta, velle honorare patrem vel continuare honorem quia volo facere quid recta ratio dictat. Et similiter, volo benefacere tibi quia volo quid dictat recta ratio...Et ideo rectitudo actus non est aliud quam ipse actus qui debite elicitur secundum rectam rationem." Thus, in answer to the question, What is moral goodness or rectitude? Ockham responds that it is the will act itself which is elicited in conformity to Right Reason. This metaphysical stance supports the prescriptive propositions which are known per se. Ockham explicitly makes the connection between Right Reason and the factual state of affairs. See Sent., III, q. 13, S; "hoc solum voco realiter apparenter bonum vel malum, quid iudicatur ab intellectu bonum vel malum. Et si iudicetur ab intellectu recto, non errante, esse tale, tunc non solum est apparenter bonum vel malum sed realiter, quia sic dictat intellectus esse sicut est in re." Needless to say, Ockham considers the laws ordained by God as "revealed" facts which an "unerring" use of Reason would recognize.

¹⁰⁴E.g., Anita Garvens, Franz Studien, 21, p. 248; "Wenn für Ockham die allgemeinen ethischen Prinzipien schliesslich doch mehr als nur formale Sätze sind, wie im Laufe der folgenden Untersuchung sich zeigen wird, so liegt das vornehmlich in seiner gläubigen Annahme der Offenbarung als der Erkenntnisquelle für die vom Willen Gottes festgesetzte Sittenregel, die augenblicklich und ordinate gültig ist. Sie allein liefert Ockham den Inhalt

to say, these directives are a priori statements which are true by definition but which give little information about concrete acts. These general directives are not self-sufficient in establishing which particular acts are good or evil. A person knows by conceptual analysis that to do what is right remains his unchangeable obligation; but on the basis of a directive which is known per se, the moral agent does not know what particular act is right. Likewise, we know a priori that it is either raining or not raining outside; but without knowing whether or not we should take an umbrella.

While it is true that the universal norms called "right reasons," which are known per se, have a formal character; nevertheless, Ockham provides a mechanism for adding "content," i.e., reaching particular, practical conclusions. Namely, Ockham's analysis of recta ratio as prudence indicates how a person applies general norms, whether they are known through revelation or through themselves, to particular situations. It is the function

der sicheren allgemeinen ethischen Prinzipien." Erwin Iserloh calls Ockham's ethic a "formalism" because the meaning of all moral directives reduces to conformity to the will of God. Gnade und Eucharistie..., pp. 66-67.

It is undeniable that, for Ockham, the general ethical principles which are known per se, are formalistic statements. It is not true, however, that the will of God is the only means of determining what particular acts are good or evil. The divine will adds "positive" content to the general propositions of moral science. But also, acts of prudence are means by which general principles are brought to particular, practical conclusions which are known naturally. See Sent., III, q. 15, G. And given a "contentful" directive issued by God, e.g., "parents should be honored," this directive is operative only through an experiential, prudential judgment, e.g., "these are my parents." See Summulae in Libros Physicorum, I, c. 4.

of prudence to consider the various circumstances of an act as determinants of the correctness of that act.¹⁰⁵ Experience is a necessity for the proper determination of a moral question since the particular and individual aspects of an act--e.g., the principal object or end, the common object which is the exercise of a human potency, the time and the place--affect the propriety of that act.¹⁰⁶ For Ockham, morality is not simply a question of deductions from a priori norms. The effort to know what is right,

¹⁰⁵Sent., I, d. 35, q. 6, C; "Sicut ostensum est prius, logica, rhetorica, grammatica et artes mechanicae sunt simpliciter practicae et tamen non sunt dictativae, sed dictamen de exercitio illarum notitiarum practicarum non pertinet ad istas artes sed ad prudentiam pertinet. Quod, autem, ad prudentiam pertineat patet quia omnis actus imperatus qui virtuose elici potest ad prudentiam pertinet." Also see, Sent., Prologue, q. 11 (I, 316); "Potest tamen distingui de practica, quia quaedam est dictativa et quaedam tantum ostensiva. Prima est illa qua determinate dictatur aliquid esse faciendum vel non faciendum; et sic loquitur Philosophus VI Ethicorum et III De Anima. Et isto modo nec logica nec grammatica nec rhetorica est practica, nec etiam ars quaecumque mechanica, quia nulla istarum dictat aliquid esse faciendum vel fugiendum, sicut ars mechanica non dictat quod domus est facienda, sed hoc pertinet ad prudentiam qua scitur quando est facienda et quando non, et quando est operandum et quando non... sed ad prudentiam pertinet dictare quod tali tempore est facienda vel sic est agendum vel sic."

¹⁰⁶Sent., III, q. 10, N; "Respondeo, omnes circumstantiae actus voluntatis sunt objecta partialia illius actus; ita quod finis in omni actu est objectum principale sicut prius patuit, aliae circumstantiae sunt objecta secundaria, partialia respectu illius actus. Exemplum, si enim ad hoc quod actus voluntatis quo aliquis vult orare deum sit perfecte virtuosus requirantur de necessitate istae circumstantiae: quia velit orare propter honorem dei secundum rectum dictamen rationis in tempore statuto, puta, die dominico, in loco determinato, puta, in ecclesia; tunc, iste actus sic virtuosus habet honorem dei pro objecto principali, actum orandi pro objecto communi, rectam rationem, diem dominicum et ecclesiam pro objectis secundariis et partialibus."

here and now, requires that a person consider the variable factors of each situation. The concrete decision that "I should do this," or "I should not do this" involves the facts which surround this act. The circumstances or objects of a will-act are various determinants of the act's virtuousness. Likewise, these circumstances are the various means or criteria by which the intellect can determine the propriety of an intended act.

The positive directives of Right Reason, therefore, which are based upon divine authority depend on the fact that God is the Summum Bonum.¹⁰⁷ The evident directives which are known per se are verified by the nature of a good act. In either case, the dictate of Right Reason is generated for the sake of an end;¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷Sent., I, d. 1, q. 4 (I, 447); "Ad secundum dico, quod solus Deus est summe diligendus, quia est summum bonum." Also, Sent., I, d. 1, q. 1 (I, 375-376); "Secunda conclusio est quod Deus non est objectum usus ordinati, quia si sic, aut esset objectum volitionis ordinatae aut nolitionis. Non nolitionis, quia nullus potest ordinate odire Deum; nec volitionis, quia tunc posset aliquid plus amari ordinate quam Deus. Similiter, finis ultimus non est ad aliquid aliud referibilis, sed Deus est simpliciter finis ultimus.

Tertia conclusio est quod omne aliud a Deo potest esse objectum usus ordinati. Hoc probatur, quia omne aliud a summe acceptato potest assumi in facultatem voluntatis propter summe acceptatum; sed Deus ordinate summe acceptatur, ergo omne aliud a Deo potest ordinate assumi in facultatem voluntatis propter Deum."

¹⁰⁸Sent., Prologue, q. 10 (I, 290-291); "Circa primum dico quod intellectus practicus est respectu principiorum practicorum et etiam respectu conclusionum practicarum. Et ideo intellectus practicus est respectu finis, quando scilicet de aliquo fine iudicatur quod est appetendus vel prosequendus. Et hoc est intelligendum quia est respectu unius complexi quod affirmat aliquem finem esse appetendum, et istud est primum principium practicum in operando. Et hoc modo dicit Philosophus quod 'sicut principium in speculabilibus, ita finis in agibilibus.' Et

the end in the former case being the Ultimate End; in the latter case being the production of a moral end or obligatory act. Ockham shows no fear that the validity of divine positive laws might undermine the validity of the formal principles of Right Reason. On the contrary, Ockham teaches a single moral doctrine which contains positive and evident norms. The moral principles which are known per se give the structure and framework of moral decisions. Right Reason necessarily assents to these principles because they invariably signify the essential causes of moral goodness. Positive laws add content to this austere framework. Right Reason assents to the divine positive laws as deriving from, and conducive to, the Greatest Good. It is then, with the content or specific norms of morality that Ockham finds a certain "relativity" here. Those who call Ockham a moral voluntarist are partially correct. But only partially. Reason as well as faith militate against an intrinsic, native and unchangeable moral value in simple acts.

Consider the Decalogue or Ten Commandments as examples of non-formal, moral norms since these directives command or prohibit specific acts as good or evil. The formal directives or universal "right reasons" which are known per se command goodness and prohibit evilness in general; the Decalogue precepts determine certain acts as good or evil. Are the ten commandments "evident," or are they positive norms?

ratio huius est, quia voluntas nihil agit nisi propter finem..."
See Aristotle, Physics, II, c. 9 (200a 15-24).

Ockham never speaks of the Decalogue as moral rules which are known per se in the philosophical-theological works.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹In the political works, Ockham finds occasion to discuss the notions of common law, natural law, and jus gentium more extensively. In the Opus Nonaginta Dierum, c. 99 (Manchester ed., II, 747); for example, Ockham claims that the Ten Commandments were part of the law of nature before they were promulgated by Moses. In the same work, Ockham asserts that the natural law is immutable (c. 66, p. 581). In the Octo Quaestiones de Potestate Papae, q. 1, c. 12 (Manchester ed., I, 245); Ockham speaks of certain laws of the Old Testament which are known to oblige without dispensation. In the Dialogus III, II, I, X (Lyons edition, F. 235r), Ockham considers the Decalogue precepts as "absolute natural precepts" and without any condition, modification or determination. These texts might incline one to think that the commandments of the Decalogue are known per se since they are characterized by immutability and unchangeableness. Such is not the case. Ockham recognizes the right of the Creator to countermand the laws of nature. "Secunda absurditas est quod papa de plenitudine potestatis posset contra legem divinam et jus naturae, praesertim in hiis in quibus potest Deus contra huiusmodi; et ita, quemadmodum Deus praecepit--nec contra fas praecepit--Abrahae ut filium suum innocentem occideret, quia Deus est dominus vitae et mortis, cum tamen ad legem divinam et jus naturae pertineat non occidere innocentem, posset papa de plenitudine potestatis praecipere fidelibus occidere innocentes, et fideles Christi obedirent; quod sapit haeresim manifestam." An Princeps, c. 5 (Manchester ed., I, 245). If there are cases in which natural laws, such as the law not to take an innocent life, are not in effect; there are also cases in which the divine laws are not operative. "Si enim leges, non solum humanae, sed etiam divinae, in necessitate cessant et in eis excipitur necessitas...multo fortius privilegia humana cessant et in eis necessitas excipi debet." (Ibid., c. 8, p. 259).

These texts from Ockham's polemical tracts indicate that he considers the Ten Commandments to be natural laws and revealed, divine laws. There are exceptions to the validity of these mandates; both because God can order the opposite of some mandate and because human events admit of extreme situations in which these mandates are dispensed. Ockham implies that these special cases or exceptions "prove the rule;" rather than denying validity of the prohibition against killing, for instance, the case of Abraham or the case of a just war, reveal the spirit or intention of the law. Ewart Lewis' study of Ockham's political ideas (Medieval Political Ideas, Vol. II, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1954) finds that the Venerable Inceptor makes constant use of the principle that the authority of an office or a law is measured by the end for which that office or law exists. "Thus in Occam's system the normal pattern of government in the Christian commonwealth,

However, Ockham does mention that certain revealed mandates can be known naturally. For instance, the directives that "Unicuique reddendum est quid suum est," "Nulli est pro bono malum reddendum," and "Deus est honorandus" are known through scripture and "evidently."¹¹⁰ Furthermore, the acts of praying and giving alms are generically good while acts of theft and fornication are evil "ex genere."¹¹¹ On the basis of these texts, it would seem that Ockham considers the precepts of the decalogue as "evident" or naturally known moral norms. On the other hand, Ockham says that "hate for God, theft, adultery, etc.," are acts which could be done meritoriously by the earthling, implying that the Decalogue is a series of divine, positive laws which could change

was bordered by a frontier of special cases which required a more fundamental criterion than could be derived from traditional right or official fiat. For the solution of problems that arose on that frontier he was willing to make use of precedent and canon law, but he would not admit their validity against the imperative of a particular situation. Even the prescriptions of revelation must be understood 'with their exceptions.'" (p. 551, Lewis refers to De Imperatorum, c. 11; and Breviloquium, II, c. 14, in support of his statement.) The "exceptions" to natural or divine law are those peripheral situations in which such laws were not intended to be authoritative; the "exceptions" clarify the application of the rule.

¹¹⁰Sent., Prologue, q. 12 (I, 348 and 364). See above, note 94.

¹¹¹Sent., III, q. 12, N; "Sexta distinctio est quod aliquis actus est bonus ex genere vel malus, aliquis ex circumstantia, aliquis ex principio meritorio. Exemplum primi quantum ad actum bonum ex genere, sicut orare, dare elemosinam sive velle talia facere absolute sine omni circumstantia bona vel mala. Exemplum quantum ad actum malum ut furtum facere, velle fornicari absolute sine aliqua circumstantia bona vel mala, de quibus dicunt philosophi et sancti quod statim nominata convoluta sunt cum malitia."

momentarily.¹¹² If the Ten Commandments are simply positive precepts, then the acts which are commanded or forbidden there, cannot be evidently known as "good" or "evil." A reference to Duns Scotus, with whom Ockham is in basic agreement regarding the Decalogue, will set the stage for Ockham's own view.

Scotus asserts that most of the Ten Commandments do not belong to the "law of nature," strictly speaking. The commands of the Second Table--Honor thy father and mother, Do not bear false witness, Do not commit adultery, etc.--cannot be known per se nor deduced from principles known per se. One reason for Scotus' position is that the bible and experience offers examples of situations in which these commandments were dispensed. For instance, the Israelites were commanded to despoil the Egyptians before the exodus, and persons in extreme need may take what is necessary to preserve their life, although both of these cases appear contrary to the prohibition against stealing.¹¹³ Scotus, however, after a lengthy analysis of the "relativity" of most of the precepts of the Decalogue, continues in the next question to say that every lie is a sin.¹¹⁴ His reason is that the term "lie"

¹¹²Sent., II, q. 19, 0; Sent., IV, q. 14, D. See below, note 116.

¹¹³Scotus, Comm. Ox., III, d. 37, q. unica, nos. 5-10. See Efrem Bettoni, O.F.M., Duns Scotus: The Basic Principles of His Philosophy, trans. by Bernadine Bonansea (Washington: Catholic University Press, 1961), pp. 170-174; and C. R. S. Harris, Duns Scotus, Vol. II, The Philosophical Doctrines of Duns Scotus (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1927), pp. 304-310; for these texts and competent surveys of Scotus' ethics.

¹¹⁴Scotus, Comm. Ox., III, d. 38, q. unica, n. 6 (XV, 870); "Aliter dicitur quod 'mentiri' ex ratione sua dicit intentionem

implies a bad and blameworthy intention on the part of the agent.

In the same way, Ockham maintains that the prohibitions against the simple acts designated by the terms "murder," "adultery," and "covetousness" are not necessary and immutable laws of morality. Ockham takes the relativity of moral norms further than Scotus did since the Subtle Doctor held that at least the command to love God was the necessary and unchangeable standard of morality.¹¹⁵ Ockham holds that God could validly command a person to hate Him. Yet, Ockham speaks of acts that are "generically good;" and non-formal precepts of the Decalogue which are evident. Ockham clarifies this ambiguity by considering the terminology contained in the moral prohibitions. "Theft," "adultery," and "hate for God" are wrong acts because these terms co-signify prohibitive circumstances; and the divine commands are moral "circumstances" for Ockham.¹¹⁶ Such terms indicate a

malam, quia intentionem decipiendi; licet autem aliqui actus non includentes intentionem malam, possint aliquando esse boni ex aliqua bona circumstantia, actus tamen includens secum intentionem malam, nunquam potest esse bonus quia includit formaliter malum 'velle,' ita est in proposito."

¹¹⁵ Scotus, Comm. Ox., III, d. 37, q. unica, n. 5 (XV, 826); "De praeceptis autem primae tabulae...ista sunt stricte de lege naturae, quia sequitur necessario si est Deus, est amandus ut Deus..." Ockham asserts that the command "hate God" or "Do not love God" could issue from God as sole cause. But he insists that in every instance the complex act of "loving God above all" is intrinsically and necessarily good. Quodl., III, q. 13.

¹¹⁶ Sent., II, q. 19, 0; "Ad aliud dico quod licet odium Dei, furari, adulterari habeant malam circumstantiam annexam et similia de communi lege, quatenus fiunt ab aliquo qui ex praecepto divino obligatur ad contrarium; sed quantum ad esse absolutum in illis actibus possunt fieri a Deo sine omni circumstantia mala

deliberate violation of a moral obligation which the agent recognizes. The physical act signified by "theft" or "adultery" could be done without guilt, but only on the condition that extreme circumstance or a direct command of God dispense one from his obligation to the contrary.

Ockham requires that the necessity attributed to the Decalogue precepts be logically apparent. When the divine commands are stated propositionally, or when the mind formulates these directives through natural evidence, their necessary truth derives from the constitutive concepts. If the Decalogue precepts signify the "absolute being" of specific acts, then they are not necessarily true. If, on the other hand, these mandates signify

annexa. Et etiam meritorie possunt fieri a viatore, si caderent sub praecepto divino sicut nunc de facto eorum opposita cadunt sub praecepto divino. Et stante praecepto divino ad opposita eorum non potest aliquis tales actus meritorie nec bene exercere; quia non fiunt meritorie nisi caderent sub praecepto divino et si fierent a viatore meritorie, tunc non dicerentur nec nominarentur 'furtum,' 'adulterium,' 'odium,' etc., quia ista nomina significant tales actus non absolute sed connotando vel dando intelligere quod faciens tales actus per praeceptum divinum obligatur ad oppositum et ideo quantum ad totum significatum quid nominis talium nominum significant circumstantias malas; et quantum ad hoc intelligunt sancti et philosophi quod ista statim nominata convoluta sunt cum malicia. Si autem caderent sub praecepto divino, tunc faciens tales actus non obligaretur ad oppositum et per consequens tunc non nominaretur 'furtum,' 'adulterium,' etc."

By "common law," Ockham means those revealed moral laws which generally obtain. Those laws of ethics whose exceptions require God's "special dispensation" belong to the "common law," meant by God to be followed by all men. Father Lucan Freppert, The Basis of Morality..., pp. 223-24, shows the importance of quoting paragraph "O" of question nineteen in its entirety. Ockham claims that the simple acts described by the terms "theft," "adultery," etc., might be commanded by God. On the other hand, Ockham could well assert that theft is always wrong because as we understand this concept, it signifies a simple act against one's express obligation.

specific acts as ordered or forbidden by God then the Decalogue is a series of necessary, indispensable moral norms. Scotus inserts the connotation of an "evil intention" into the meaning of concepts which stand for acts which are always evil. Ockham seems more confident in including "divinely prohibited" in the description of such acts. Both indicate that the concept of which "evil" is predicated necessarily cannot have a purely descriptive content and still attain the standards required for analytical truth. The natural evidence by which Right Reason might judge that, say, "murder is wrong" receives but meager treatment by Ockham. He objects to the doctrine that "for one thing, there is one essential final cause," and thereby excludes a source of natural evidence which Scholastics such as St. Thomas find significant. Ockham gives only "quasi" validity to the moral uses of finality.

To all authorities, I respond that they treat the end which according to Right Reason (at least in most cases) ought to be intended if everything were ordered suitably. Nevertheless, if it is not actually intended then it is not truly and properly a final cause.¹¹⁷

We might well wish that Ockham had devoted more time to "the order between things" as a basis of natural moral norms. His treatment shows the logician who is more concerned with the conceptual formulation of necessary norms.

¹¹⁷ Sent., Prologue, q. 11 (I, 309); "Praeterea, unius rei est una causa finalis essentialis, sed si omne tale intentum esset causa finalis, essent plures causae finales, cum talia plura possint intendi:

Ad omnes auctoritates respondeo quod procedunt de fine qui secundum rectam rationem--saltem ut in pluribus--deberet intendi si omnia essent convenienter ordinata, et ideo quasi ex natura sua

Both the political works and the philosophical-theological texts, therefore, suggest that the precepts of the Decalogue are known naturally and evidently as well as by revelation. The decalogue precepts, however, should not be considered as necessary moral norms in the sense that they indicate acts whose "absolute being" is good or evil. These moral norms are necessary only in the sense that connotations which Ockham associates with the names of "theft," "adultery," "murder," etc., make these acts evil by definition. Regarding natural knowledge, Ockham points out that even the pagan philosophers abstained from acts like fornication because such acts are generally inconsistent with worthy, natural ends.¹¹⁸ The impact of Christian Revelation upon natural morality does not change "what" is right or wrong, but "why" the agent acts. Regarding revealed knowledge, Ockham indicates that the acts commanded or prohibited by the Decalogue are ordinarily

habet quod sit ordinabilis ad talem finem. Si tamen non actualiter intendatur non est vere et proprie causa finalis." Also see Sent., I, d. 48, q. 1, C.

¹¹⁸Sent., IV, q. 3, S; "Et quando dicitur quod virtutes philosophorum fuerunt ejusdem rationis cum virtutibus nostris (Christianis). Nego et dico quod virtutes morales distinguntur secundum distinctionem objectorum partialium. Nunc autem finis est objectum parziale virtutis, sicut aliis dictum est; nunc autem philosophi in acquirendo virtutes morales habuerunt alium finem quam Christum. Verbi gratia, abstinet christianus ab actu fornicandi propter Deum et quia Deus praecepit sibi abstinere, ita quod Deus est hic causa finalis vel praeceptum istius absentiae; et sic de omnibus aliis virtutibus acquisitis a bono christiano, quia semper Deus est principalis finis intentus. Philosophus, autem, licet absteineat a talibus, tamen totaliter propter alium finem vel propter conservationem naturae vel ad perficiendum in scientia vel propter aliquid tale. Igitur aliud fuit objectum parziale abstinentiae philosophi et boni christiani." Also see Sent., III, q. 10, I; Sent., III, q. 12, CCC.

conducive or detrimental to the achievement of man's Ultimate End. However these substantive norms are known, the circumstances of the actions--the time, place, end and the command of God concerning that act--are included in the meaning of actions which are conceptualized as "obligatory."¹¹⁹ Consequently, the non-formal directives or right reasons such as the Ten Commandments might be known naturally or through scripture, but in either case these precepts invariably connote contingent circumstances and presuppose the conscious, deliberate and voluntary response of those subject to these directives.

Previous interpreters have placed an exaggerated emphasis upon the absolute power of God to posit moral obligations as the reason for the "relativity" and contingency of moral rules in Ockham's ethic. While it is true that Ockham's belief in the omnipotence of God prompts him to assert that God could order any simple action possible to man as a moral obligation, it is also true that Ockham has philosophical reasons for considering non-formal moral rules as contingent. First, a madman could perform the opposite of every divine and natural law without moral fault.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹Sent., IV, q. 3, L; "Contra, impossibile est virtutem moralem esse sine suo objecto, quia sicut impossibile est quod aliquis intelligat se intelligere nisi intelligat, ita impossibile est talem virtutem esse sine tali objecto. Nunc autem objecta partialia virtutis moralis sunt circumstantiae, sicut locus et tempus, inter quae est precipua recta ratio, cuius actus debet conformari ad hoc, quod sit virtuosus perfecte." Also see Sent., III, q. 10, O.

¹²⁰Sent., III, q. 11, Z; "Sciendum est quod recta ratio requiritur ad perfectam virtutem et actualis, et ideo ebriosus et furiosus et pueri, qui non habent usus rationis non peccant

In a similar way, God concurs in the production of every human action since He is the immediate cause of the "absolute being" or positive being of every human act; yet God cannot sin.¹²¹ These considerations reflect and support Ockham's metaphysic of goodness since the "absolute being" of any act--that is, an existential and individual reality as isolated from its extrinsic causes--is neither moral nor immoral. The created will is completely free to order and re-order the ends and means of volition. Every object accepted by the will, every individual which terminates an act of volition, might be directed by the agent's motive or intent to something else. Hence, every action commanded by the Decalogue, and even the love of God, could be performed with malice because of an evil intention in the will.¹²² Ockham devotes the first

coram Deo; quia nullus ignoranter peccat secundum Augustinum. Unde, ebrius non habens usus rationis committens adulterium non peccat quia licet habeat volitionem respectu talis actus et intentionem, non habet rectum dictamen rationis; ideo non peccat." Also see Sent., I, d. I, q. 1 (I, 378-379).

¹²¹Sent., II, q. 19, F; "Potest Deus causare actum obediendi Deum quantum ad esse absolutum in actu in voluntate creata. Probatur, quia Deus potest omne absolutum causare sine omni alio quod non est idem cum illo absoluto; sed actus odiendi Deum quantum ad esse absolutum in eo non est idem cum difformitate et malitia in actu, ergo Deus potest causare quicquid absolutum est in actu odiendi Deum vel nolendi non causando aliquam difformitatem vel malitiam in actu, ergo etc..." In Sent., I, d. 47, q. 1, Ockham takes up the question of "whether God can order that evil be done?" Ockham can avoid attributing the production of evil to God, even though he holds that God is a partial cause in every instance of human causality, by distinguishing the metaphysical being of an act from the obligation to avoid that act which is extrinsic and accidental. Also see Sent., IV, q. 14, D.

¹²²Sent., II, q. 19, Q; "Illud etiam quid assumit est falsum quod dilectio Dei sit semper bona propter debitum finem,

distinction of the Ordinatio to various questions on "enjoyment" (frui) and "use" (uti). These terms designate acts of will assuming something "for its own sake or for the sake of another."¹²³ Because God is the Ultimate End, God should be enjoyed or loved for His own sake and cannot be ordinately "used" or loved for the sake of something other than God.¹²⁴ Everything other than God--

quia aliquando potest esse mala et propter indebitum finem; puta, quando amo Deum amore concupiscentiae." Also see the principal objection in Quodl., III, q. 13.

¹²³Sent., I, d. 1, q. 1 (I, 374); "Circa quod primo videntum est quomodo distinguitur actus utendi ab actu fruendi; secundo, quod est objectum actus utendi. Circa primum sciendum quod aliquis potest assumere aliquid in facultatem voluntatis dupliciter: vel propter se vel propter aliud. Primo modo aliquid assumitur in facultatem voluntatis quando aliquid praesentatum voluntati per intellectum (etiam si sine omni alio praesentaretur) assumeretur in facultatem voluntatis. Secundo modo assumitur in facultatem voluntatis quando aliquid assumitur in facultatem voluntatis alio praesentato, ita quod si illud aliud non praesentaretur voluntati vel non assumeretur in facultatem voluntatis illud non assumeretur in facultatem voluntatis."

¹²⁴Ibid., 375-376; "Secunda conclusio est quod Deus non est objectum usus ordinati, quia si sic, aut esset objectum volitionis ordinatae aut nolitionis. Non nolitionis, quia nullus potest ordinate odire Deum; nec volitionis, quia tunc posset aliquid plus amari ordinate quam Deus. Similiter, finis ultimus non est ad aliquid aliud referibilis, sed Deus est simpliciter finis ultimus.

Tertia conclusio est quod omne aliud a Deo potest esse objectum usus ordinati. Hoc probatur, quia omne aliud a summe acceptato potest assumi in facultatem voluntatis propter summe acceptatum; sed Deus ordinate summe acceptatur; ergo omne aliud a Deo potest ordinate assumi in facultatem voluntatis propter Deum, et per consequens, omni alio contingit ordinate uti. Major patet, quia omne aliud a summe acceptato aut est bonum aut malum. Si bonum, potest esse amatum propter summe acceptatum. Si sit malum, potest ordinate esse nolitum a voluntate propter summe acceptatum. Igitur omne aliud a summe acceptato potest ordinate assumi in facultatem voluntatis propter ipsum." Notice that Ockham "proves" this argument; statements which are believed; i.e., "credabilia," cannot be demonstrated.

persons, virtues, acts--should be accepted by the moral agent as means to the Ultimate End. Thus, Ockham establishes the required priority of the will's affection and the moral direction of life in the first distinction of his Commentary. Consequently, every object of the will's affection other than God is not valuable-in-itself but ought to be valued for the sake of God. No simple act of the human agent is good-in-itself; but every complex act could be good if directed to, and ordained by, the Ultimate End.¹²⁵

¹²⁵The first distinction of Ockham's Ordinatio, in our interpretation, is the clearest and most systematic presentation of his ethical program. The inspiration of this distinction flows from St. Augustine, De Trinitate, X, 11, where Augustine discusses fruition and use (frui et uti); and Aristotle, Nic. Ethics, I, c. 7, where Aristotle considers three kinds of ends and asserts that the end chosen for itself and never for the sake of another is simply perfect and the ultimate goal of action. These precedents are accepted by Ockham and developed as the framework of his moral doctrine. By identifying the Ultimate End as God, Ockham establishes the priorities of human love, specifies the intrinsically and primarily good act, and formulates the paradigm relation of end and means. Ockham's ethical doctrine, both its positive and non-positive parts, elucidates the procedure of the viator toward the Ultimate End. Erich Hochstetter has noticed the general direction of Ockham's ethical thought (Franz. Studien, 32, pp. 9-16), and indicated that Ockham's basic purpose in ethical doctrine is to articulate the way of man to God. On the other hand, Muschietti, Breve saggio sulla Filosofia di Guglielmo Ockham, Fribourg, 1908, p. 157; Garvens, Franz. Studien, 21, pp. 249-262; and Lagarde, Ockham La Morale..., pp. 54-55; all deny that the finality of human acts influences the morality of those acts in Ockham's ethic. The importance of the end intended by an agent in determining the morality of an act will be systematically studied and documented in the fourth chapter. For the present, however, it should be said that the first distinction of the Ordinatio states emphatically that every human act should be a means to the Ultimate End and every object of the human will should be loved in terms of the Greatest Good. Thus, the finality or teleology of the will-act, even though it is not the imminent finality which Aristotle and Thomas teach, is crucial to the moral determination of that act.

The order between the ends and means of the moral life cannot be established rationally without identifying the Greatest Good. As a Christian, Ockham means to emphasize that moral norms which are perfectly directive about "what" is good or evil, must conceive those specific acts in relationship to God. Not all concrete acts are ethically relative. The complex act of loving God above all for His sake is necessarily, immutably and only good. But every moral norm, whether known naturally or revealed, which signifies only the simple nature of human acts is but contingently true. Ockham's search for moral certitude, therefore, is not jeopardized by the Absolute Power of God so much as by a standard of logical clarity which requires every factor which affects the moral performance of a specific act to be governed by the full understanding of the pertinent directive. Without connoting the divine wish, no moral directive attains this degree of logical precision.

Ockham does not doubt that in the ordinary course of human events, the acts commanded or forbidden by the Decalogue can be recognized by natural reason, as well as by scripture, to be valid directives. But Ockham is careful to admit that extraordinary situations can arise naturally and supernaturally which are excluded from the application of such precepts. For example, a starving person represents a peripheral case in which the law against stealing does not apply. Likewise, a "private revelation" giving a special mandate to some individual or individuals would

be an extraordinary situation. Thus, if God countermanded the order prohibiting theft, as when the Hebrews despoiled the Egyptians, it would be a particular and exceptional case rather than the general rule.¹²⁶

Ockham expresses the binding force of Right Reason's dictate as the practical principle: "The will ought to conform itself to Right Reason." The directives which express the content of the will's obligation are authoritative through the principle that "Every good dictated by Right Reason is to be chosen."¹²⁷ In general, the natural or revealed sources of directive propositions are also the means by which their truth is determined and dictated by the intellect's judgment. Positive laws are binding because of prior assent to the origin of those laws. Non-positive laws are considered true and obligatory because of experiential evidence (e.g., "whoever is angered is to be calmed through soft

¹²⁶Sent., I, d. 47, q. 1, F-G; "Circa secundum dicerent illi qui vellent tenere primam opinionem jam dictam, quod Deus potest praecipere malum, non tamen male, et potest praecipere injustum, non tamen injuste. Alii dicerent quod sicut haec est impossibilis, 'Deus praecipit aliquid injuste sive male.' Et ideo loquendo deberet dicere quod Deus non potest praecipere malum propter quod illa distinctio quae ponit quod Deus potest praecipere malum non manens malum, sed non potest praecipere malum manens malum; ut in uno sensu sit haec vera 'Deus potest praecipere malum' et in alio sensu falsa: non est secundum artem logicae, de qua tamen pertranseo quia alibi tactum est de consimilibus.

Ad primum principale, patet quod spoliare Egyptios non fuit malum sed bonum. Et ideo Deus praecipiendo spoliare Egyptios, non praecepit malum, nec filii Israel peccaverunt spoliando, nisi illi qui malo animo non precise obediendo divino praecepto spoliaverunt." Ockham refers to Sent., I, d. 2, q. 1 (II, 47-49).

¹²⁷Sent., III, q. 11, 2.

words")¹²⁸ or conceptual analysis (e.g., "all dishonesty is to be avoided").¹²⁹ It is simply untenable to claim that Ockham knows no necessary and immutable moral norms. In point of fact, his texts include many such norms. Ockham's ethical certitudes, however, give little information to guide the decision-making process. The rational principles of morality indicate the psychological framework of free will and Right Reason within which ethical acts occur. He conceives a permanent pattern of causality among the changeable circumstances and determinants of morality. Perhaps...perhaps it is warranted to speak of an "inner moral order" and an "outer moral order." Within the Christian agent, morality requires the constant priority of Right Reason's assent to the proper exercise of human freedom for the sake of God. Without, the moral order displays all the flexibility of the circumstances and determinants which might affect the moral decision.

Ockham's doctrine of free will reveals his consistent effort to encapsulate morality within the created will. Only contingent volitions are intrinsically "good" or "evil." In conjunction with this doctrine, Ockham's treatment of the necessary and immutable principles of morality concerns the "subjective" world of intellect and will; the psychic complex of efficient and final causality. The ethical knowledge which gives demonstrative

¹²⁸Sent., III, q. 12, H.

¹²⁹Quodl., II, q. 14.

certitude indicates the interior order between intellectual and voluntary assent, between the ends and means of volition. Ockham interprets even the divine precepts as regulating primarily the exercise of free will and secondarily the physical acts controlled by the will. The divine will might alter the moral choices or means in particular situations; but Ockham consistently maintains the unchanging end of morality to be God himself for all men who recognize His goodness. Beyond doubt, the circumstance of the present divine wish has a special importance for Ockham in determining what choices the created agent should make. But as long as God commands men, the structure of moral response will be rational-voluntary assent for the sake of the Greatest Good.

Finally, Ockham denies any determinant order among the propositions which comprise moral science. He does not speak of a formal or material subject of ethics; he does not list "a" first principle of morality. Consequently, efforts to locate Ockham's central insight or organizing principle are suspect. Attempts to classify his ethics as "voluntarism," "subjectivism," "rationalism," "positivism," or "formalism," miss Ockham's point that our understanding of morality--our "right reasons"--have no formal or systematic unity. These categories are all true partially and, for that reason, imprecise. To rigorously apply any of these interpretive categories to Ockham's moral doctrine would exclude a significant portion of the data to be explained.

CHAPTER III

THE DIVINE WILL, THE OBJECTIVE NORM OF MORALITY

Ockham has critics and sympathizers who place the emphasis of his thought on God's omnipotence. Those who see Ockhamism as an unconstructive movement within Scholasticism--and this judgment was current among some of Ockham's contemporaries¹--complain that speculation about the "absolute power of God" undermines not only

¹Father Damasus Trapp, O.E.S. A., "Augustinian Theology in the 14th Century," Augustiniana VI (1956), pp. 146-274, indicates a movement of thought among the Augustinian order in reaction to the "logico-critical" and destructive tendencies of the 14th century. "The dis-quieting thought of the potentia Dei absoluta, already prominent in Anselm for whom the Moderns and the Modernists have so much affection, makes the revolutionary Modernists in particular lose sight of all perspective and of all horizons. On an ever-increasing scale, allowances are made for a possible divine intervention liable to suspend the created order..." (p. 149). Ockham is one of the revolutionary Modernists charged with "subtilitas" or the unbalanced application of divine omnipotence to theological and philosophical problems by the Augustinian monks who Father Trapp quotes. The most serious charges of the papal commission appointed to examine Ockham's writings center on the employment of the doctrine of God's omnipotence which seems to promote the heresy of Pelagianism. See the first four articles questioned in Auguste Pelzer, Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique, 18, pp. 250-253; and F. Hoffmann, Die erste Kritik des Ockhamismus durch den Oxforder Kanzler Johannes Lutterell (Breslauer Studien, Neue Folge 9: Breslau, 1941), pp. 1-21. Professor Moody's article on "Ockham, Buridan, and Nicholas of Autrecourt, the Parisian Statutes of 1339 and 1340," Franciscan Studies 7 (1947), pp. 113-146, is an important study showing Ockham's more conservative image in the second generation of "Nominalism."

natural knowledge but the theological enterprise as well.² Recent and generally approving studies of fourteenth century religious currents find a more biblical, less "philosophical," image of God dominating Ockham's vision.³ We wish to test the extent to which God's omnipotence affects the conduct of morality.

The free will, the dictate of Right Reason and the will of God are the three efficient causes of morality listed by Ockham.⁴ The divine will, however, is a cause of moral goodness only

²Thus, Iserloh, Die Gnade und Eucharistie..., pp. 74-78; David Knowles, The Evolution of Medieval Thought (New York: Vintage Books, 1962), pp. 323-324; Gordon Leff, Medieval Thought, St. Augustine to Ockham (Baltimore, Penguin Books, 1958), pp. 286-290; and Bradwardine and the Pelagians (Cambridge: University Press, 1957), pp. 130-133.

³Léon Baudry, who can hardly be called Ockham's critic, finds the divine omnipotence at the heart of the Venerable Inceptor's thought. Le 'Tractatus de Principiis Theologiae' attribué à Guillaume d'Occam (Études de Philosophie Médiévale, t. 23: Paris, 1936), pp. 23-25 of Introduction. Also discussing Ockham's philosophy, Francis Oakley claims "...from Ockham's fundamental insistence on the omnipotence and freedom of God follow, not only his nominalism, not only his ethical or legal voluntarism, but also his empiricism." Natural Law Forum, 6, p. 82; and his article "Pierre d'Ailly and the absolute power of God; another note on the Theology of Nominalism," Harvard Theological Review 56 (1961), pp. 63-65. Professor Heiko A. Oberman treats the religious and theological character of Ockham's thought, and concludes "that the theological concept of God is not merely one of many aspects of the inner core of Nominalism, but that its concept of God and Revelation is at the heart of this movement, while logic is its expression in philosophical language..." "Some notes on the Theology of Nominalism, with Attention to its Relation to the Renaissance," Harvard Theological Review, 53 (1960), p. 49. William J. Courtenay follows this line of interpretation in "Covenant and Causality in Pierre d'Ailly," Speculum 46 (1971).

⁴Sent., II, q. 4-5, K; "Dico ergo quantum ad secundum articulum quod Deus est prima causa immediate omnium quae producuntur a causis secundis." The fact that God is required for producing volition, renders God a partial cause of good or bad

concurrently or co-operatively. God is co-efficient in every instance of created causality and thus participates in whatever positive or metaphysical being that moral activity has. Normally, God's cooperation is available "whenever it pleases the created will." If God's co-efficiency were not forthcoming, the human agent could produce no activity--moral or otherwise. If God's cooperation turns to total causality, as when God alone produces some effect within the human will, then that divine effect cannot be imputed morally to the created agent. Hence, the issue of Ockham's "moral voluntarism" or "positivism" concerns the legislative rather than efficient influence of God's will. The extent of God's moral authority and the arbitrary character of His authority are in question. These problems become clearer against the historical background of St. Thomas and Duns Scotus. Their solution requires a study of the prerogatives and rationality which Ockham attributes to the divine will. We hope to look over Ockham's shoulder as he views the moral order from the awesome perspective of God's absolute power.

1. The Historical Context

A growing positivism seems to characterize the development of ethical doctrine from St. Thomas to Ockham. The natural foundation which Aquinas finds for the Decalogue gradually erodes

volition. Also see the parallel texts of Sent., II, q. 19, L and Sent., IV, q. 14, K. For a statement of the three essential causes of virtue--the will, Right Reason's assent and God--see Sent., III, q. 12, NN.

to reveal its sole support in God's discretionary powers.

It was the doctrine of St. Thomas that the precepts of the Decalogue were altogether indispensable. These laws express the intention of the Supreme Lawgiver; they are orientated to the common and final good; they express the proper regulation of the natural appetites of man.⁵ Those instances related by the Old Testament which seem to indicate that God dispensed or revoked the natural law and Decalogue, e.g., the laws against murder, adultery, theft, etc., only show the right of the Creator to control His creation. Thus, God's actions are always in harmony with the order of justice proposed by the natural law.

All men alike, both guilty and innocent, die the death of nature; which death of nature is inflicted by the power of God because of original sin, according to I Kings, ii, 6: The Lord killeth and maketh alive. Consequently, by the command of God, death can be inflicted on any man, guilty or innocent, without any injustice whatever. --In like manner, adultery is intercourse with another's wife; who is allotted to him by the law emanating from God. Consequently, intercourse with any woman, by the command of God, is neither adultery nor fornication. --The same applies to theft, which is the taking of another's property. For whatever is taken by the command of God, to Whom all things belong, is not taken against the will of its owner, whereas it is in this that theft consists. --Nor is it only in human things that whatever is commanded by God is right; but

⁵Sum. Theol., Ia IIae, q. 100, art. 8; "Praecepta autem decalogi continent ipsam intentionem legislatoris, scilicet Dei. Nam praecepta primae tabulae, quae ordinant ad Deum, continent ipsum ordinem ad bonum commune et finale, quod Deus est; praecepta autem secundae tabulae continent ordinem justitiae inter homines observandae, ut scilicet nulli fiat indebitum, et cuilibet reddatur debitum; secundum hanc enim rationem sunt intelligenda praecepta decalogi. Et ideo praecepta decalogi sunt omnino indispensable." "

also in natural things, whatever is done by God is, in some way, natural, as was stated in the First Part. (trans. by Anton C. Pegis)⁶

Scotus refuses to consider the whole Decalogue as "Laws of Nature;" nor does he agree precisely with Aquinas regarding the exegesis of the revealed "exceptions" (e.g., Abraham's duty to kill his innocent son) to the common law. In these cases, Scotus teaches that God dispensed individuals from moral laws which are neither immutable nor, strictly speaking, natural. Such "exceptions" show how God intended His laws to be understood in particular situations. For Scotus, the characteristics of "laws of nature" are; first, that the precept is known as true when the terms of the precept are known, secondly, that the precept commands some good necessary for the final end of men (or forbids some evil which necessarily excludes the final end), and thirdly, that the precept be stated negatively so that it is binding always

⁶ Sum. Theol., Ia IIae, q. 94, art. 5; "Dicendum est quod naturali morte moriuntur omnes communiter, tam nocentes quam innocentes. Quae quidem naturalis mors divina postestate inducitur propter peccatum originale; secundum illud I Reg. ii: "Dominus mortificat et vivificat." Et ideo absque aliqua injustitia, secundum mandatum Dei, potest infligi mors cuicumque homini, vel nocenti vel innocenti. Similiter etiam adulterium est concubitus cum uxore aliena, quae quidem est ei deputata secundum legem Dei divinitus traditam. Unde ad quam cumque mulierem aliquis accedat ex mandato divino, non est adulterium nec fornicatio. Et eadem ratio est de furto, quod est acceptio rei alienae. Quidquid enim accipit aliquis ex mandato Dei, qui est Dominus universorum, non accipit absque voluntate domini, quod est furari. Nec solum in rebus humanis quidquid a Deo mandatur, hoc ipso est debitum; sed etiam in rebus naturalibus quidquid a Deo fit, est naturale quodammodo, ut in Primo dictum est."

and at every moment.⁷ These qualities make natural laws immutable and indispensable. The laws of the "second table," however, can change by special commands of God or by grace of extreme circumstances. The precepts of the second table explain how the Legislator intends that a man should love his neighbor.⁸ Clearly, the realm of natural law begins to shrink according to Scotus' estimate, while the extent of positive law grows.

Ockham's sympathies are with Duns Scotus on this question. But Scotus did not go far enough. According to Ockham, even the precepts of the "first table"--i.e., the command to love God, could change by God's absolute power. In his philosophical-theological works, Ockham rarely even mentions "natural law" but

⁷Comm. Ox., III, q. 37, q. unica, n. 5 and 10 (XV, 825 and 844); "Ad quaestionem igitur dico quod aliqua possunt dici esse de lege naturae dupliciter: Uno modo tanquam prima principia practica, nota ex terminis, vel conclusiones necessario sequentes ex eis; et haec dicuntur esse strictissime de lege naturae... Non enim in his, quae praecipuntur ibi [in tabula secunda], est bonitas necessaria ad bonitatem ultimi finis, convertens ad finem ultimum; nec in his quae prohibentur, est malitia necessario avertens a fine ultimo, quin si bonum istud non esset praeceptum, posset finis ultimus amari et attingi; et si illud malum non esset prohibitum, staret cum eo acquisitio finis ultimi...(n. 10) Ad hoc potest tripliciter responderi: Primo modo, quod illud praeceptum: Diliges Dominum Deum tuum, non est simpliciter de lege naturae, in quantum est affirmativum, sed in quantum est negativum prohibens oppositum; non odire enim est simpliciter de lege naturae..."

⁸Ibid., n. 12 (XV, 845); "Verum est igitur, quod diligens proximum, legem implevit, eo modo scilicet quo lex explicata est debere servari, licet non eo modo quo dilectio proximi concluditur ex primis principiis legis naturae; et a simili, tota lex quantum ad secundam tabulam, et Prophetarum pendent ex hoc praecepto: Diliges proximum tuum sicut teipsum, intelligendo tale praeceptum, non ut sequitur ex primo principio practico legis naturae, sed ut Legislator intendit debere illud servari, prout explicatur in praeceptis secundae tabulae."

he is emphatic that God could command any act which is presently forbidden by the Decalogue. To some commentators, Ockham's ethic is the total number of revealed precepts and a total rejection of moral orders which are necessary, indispensable and evident to natural reason.

Although hate of God, theft, adultery and such might have an evil circumstance connected regarding the common law; insofar as they are done by someone who, by the divine precept is obliged to the contrary act; but regarding the absolute being of these acts, they can be done by God without any evil circumstance connected, and they could even be done by the earthling meritoriously if they should fall under the divine precept just as now, de facto, their opposites fall under the divine precept. And with the present divine precept for their opposite acts in force, one cannot perform such acts meritoriously or well, because they are not done meritoriously by an earthling, then they should not be called or termed "theft," "adultery," "hate," etc., because these names signify such acts, not absolutely, but by connoting or giving to understand that one performing such acts is obliged to the opposite acts by divine precept.⁹

⁹Sent., II, q. 19, 0; "Ad aliud dico quod licet odium Dei, furari, adulterari habeant malam circumstantiam annexam et similia de communi lege quatenus fiunt ab aliquo qui ex praecepto divino obligatur ad contrarium; sed quantum ad esse absolutum in illis actibus possunt fieri a Deo sine omni circumstantia mala annexa, et etiam meritorie possunt fieri a viatore si caderent sub praecepto divino sicut nunc de facto eorum opposita cadunt sub praecepto divino. Et stante praecepto divino ad opposita eorum, non potest aliquis tales actus meritorie nec bene exercere, quia non fiunt meritorie nisi caderent sub praecepto divino. Et si fierent a viatore meritorie, tunc non dicerentur nec nominarentur 'furtum,' 'adulterium,' 'odium,' etc., quia ista nomina significant tales actus non absolute, sed connotando vel dando intelligere quod faciens tales actus per praeceptum divinum obligatur ad oppositum." Notice that Ockham considers divine laws as circumstances of moral acts. Commenting on this passage, Elzearius Bonke says; "Clarius certe et magis concrete positivismus moralis exprimi non potuisset" Collectanea Franciscana, XIV, p. 60.

The difference in doctrines between Aquinas, Scotus and Ockham on the relationship of positive and natural law can be overstated. All three recognize the creature's obligation to obey a direct command of God; all teach that the concept of "murder," "theft," "adultery," etc., connote some illicitness. None would assert that the significance of the term prescribed is simply descriptive. Each of these theologians admit that the Decalogue consists of moral laws which are "natural" in some sense of the term;¹⁰ each teaches that moral doctrine includes positive and non-positive norms. Their disagreement over the "dispensability" of the Decalogue precepts is a matter of terminology. If the negative precepts mean actions done "with evil intent" or "against the divine command," then Scotus and Ockham concur that these mandates are "omnino indispensabilia." The doctrinal variations are more subtle than the stark contrast between the systematic unity of positive and natural law in Aquinas and Ockham's thoroughgoing positivism.

Our intention is not to analyze the ethics of Thomas and Scotus in depth; we only want to appreciate Ockham's heritage. How to reconcile the Decalogue precepts with the apparent

¹⁰ Scotus asserts the precepts of the second table are "consona" or harmonious with the laws of nature. Loosely speaking, all the Decalogue precepts are "laws of nature." Comm. Ox., III, d. 37, q. unica, n. 8. Ockham's political works often appeal to natural rights and laws as the individual's defense against the excessive claims of either king or pope. See Opus Nonaginta Dierum, c. 99 (Manchester ed.; II, 747); and Tractatus contra Johannem, c. 28 (Manchester ed.; III, 118). See W. Kömel, "Das Naturrecht bei Wilhelm Ockham," Franziskanische Studien 35 (1953), pp. 39-85.

immoralities of the Patriarchs was a lively issue in Scholasticism.¹¹ The Scotistic solution was developed and extended by Ockham giving his ethical outlook a biblical tone.¹² Scotus taught that the mandates of the second table explain how one's neighbor should be loved in normal situations. In an extraordinary case, and Abraham is witness, God might decide a different way of loving one's neighbor. Without changing any significant factor save the divine command, an act which normally would be murder becomes a moral obligation and praiseworthy. In Ockham's mind, this criticism suggests the overriding importance of the present divine command in establishing the specific acts which are morally suitable or unsuitable. As a moral determinant, the will of God takes precedence over any natural evidence. To reconcile the common laws with their exceptions, Ockham proposes that all Decalogue precepts be understood as denoting: a) the simple nature of actions and b), the obligations presently

¹¹See Roland H. Bainton, "The Immoralities of the Patriarchs According to the Exegesis of the Late Middle Ages and of the Reformation," Harvard Theological Review 23 (1930), pp. 39-49. This article indicates the importance of the question for the Scholastics. The four types of solution, however, are poorly conceived since Ockham would fit three (supposedly) separate categories. Furthermore, the absolute power of God was Ockham's way of allowing for the recurrence of "special revelations" and "exceptions" to the common law; Professor Bainton was unable to find "a single clear illustration" of this position. (p. 51).

¹²See Erich Hochstetter, Franz. Studien, 32, pp. 1-20, for a fruitful attempt to place Ockham within the intellectual currents of the early fourteenth century and to locate his ethics within a biblical or "covenantal" frame of reference.

associated with those acts.¹³ A second point of Scotus' solution was well taken by Ockham. The Subtle Doctor maintains that only the negative formulation of the "first table" belongs to the law of nature, strictly speaking. God could not dispense men from the command to love their Creator, but men are not obliged to elicit the love of God continually. The suggestion is that men could "not love" God momentarily without moral fault. Here Ockham begins to speculate on the possibility of a divine command "Do not love God." The permanence of the "first table" breaks down.

God can command that He be not loved for a certain time, because He can command that the intellect be occupied with study and the will likewise, so that at this time it cannot think anything about God. (P. Boehner's trans.)¹⁴

Developing suggestions made by Scotus on the exegetical problem of the Patriarchs' "immoralities," Ockham holds the "simple nature" of every human action is morally indifferent. By

¹³Sent., II, q. 19, F; "...quia Deus potest omne absolutum causare sine omni alio quid non est idem cum illo absoluto; sed actus odiendi Deum quantum ad esse absolutum in eo non est idem cum difformitate et malitia in actu..." Scotus anticipates this position, although not its radical application, in saying "Hoc potest exponi sic, quia licet actus positivus et malitia non sint unum per se, nec in re nec in conceptu; potest tamen aliquod nomen imponi ad significandum nec actum solum, nec deformitatem illam, sed totum simul." Op. Ox., III, d. 38, q. unica, n. 6 (Waddings-Vives, ed.; 15, 870-71).

¹⁴Quodl., III, q. 13. See P. Boehner, Ockham, Philosophical Writings, p. 146. In earlier texts, Ockham asserts the possibility of a divine command to "hate God;" the difference between "non-velle" and "odire" is considerable. We discuss the hate of God (odire Deum) in Chapter Four. For now, we only indicate that the question of "not loving God" could arise from a Scotistic doctrine which Ockham accepts and asserts, namely, "...non tenetur (quilibet) semper implere praecepta divina affirmativa. Sent., I, d. 48, q. 1, F.

"simple nature" is meant the specific character of acts of volition or nolition which terminate at one object. Even the act nolle Deum--to reject God--is not wrong by nature. A man cannot be obligated to the impossible;¹⁵ but men might be obligated to any simple act possible for them. This latter assertion seems an extreme position within the history of Scholastic ethics. It demands a hearing for those commentators who claim that Ockham teaches moral "voluntarism." The divine will might associate a negative or affirmative command with the performance of every non-complex act within the power of man. A radical notion of divine omnipotence supports this possibility. But there is also a different conception of human nature at work. Both Aquinas and Scotus believed in "almighty God" without reaching this conclusion about the divine legislative power.

2. The Divine Will

Ockham's teaching on the divine will depends on the privilege of revealed evidence. The "facts" by which Ockham governs a coherent image of God's operation ad extra are Scriptural data and ecclesiastical pronouncement. In particular, the absolute simplicity, omniscience and power of God must be maintained

¹⁵Sent., III, q. 12, QQ; "Nullus obligatur ad impossibile..." Also see, Sent., IV, qes. 8-9, E; and Sent., I, d. 1, q. 6 (I, 504-505). Ockham does not say that men could be obliged to any simple act within their power; but his principles and, in particular, the absolute power of God imply this position. This opinion was current by the time of Gregory of Rimini who explicitly rejects it. Sent., II, d. 34-35, q. 1, art. 2 (Venice, 1522; f. 119r.).

as revealed truth and each statement made about the divine will must be consistent with these tenets. Scripture speaks of God's external operation in diverse ways; Ockham's role as theologian is to explicate these various locutions in a manner consistent with the unity and omnipotence of God. Divine will-acts are identical with divine Being.¹⁶ In the divine agent, an act of willing does not indicate a faculty or permanent power which is distinct from intellect or essence. Rather, an act of willing is the divine will, is the divine essence.¹⁷ The term "will" signifies God's Being as productive and creative. Ockham speaks of the will of God in diverse ways and by means of various attributes, but these diverse locutions do not deny the Oneness of God.

Ockham discusses the will of God in terms of a distinction between the voluntas beneplaciti (benevolent will) and a voluntas signi (definite will).¹⁸ The Benevolent Will is divided into

¹⁶Sent., I, d. 35, q. 6, F; "Ad aliud dico quod volitio divina diversimode accipitur. Uno modo pro ipso actu existente realiter eodem cum divina essentia, et ista volitio divina non est praxis quia non est in potestate voluntatis, sed tanta necessitate est illa volitio quanta est ipsa voluntas, quia est omnibus modis ipsa voluntas." Also see Sent., I, d. 45, q. 1, B.

¹⁷Sent., I, d. 10, q. 1, P; "...nihil est volitum a voluntate creata nisi praecognitum, tamen in Deo est simpliciter falsa, quia in Deo actus voluntatis et actus intellectus et voluntas sunt omnibus modis idem, nec plus distinguitur actus voluntatis a voluntate quam distinguitur voluntas a voluntate." Also see Sent., I, d. 45, q. 1, C. This position is explicitly critical of the "divine psychology" constructed by Duns Scotus. See Quodl., XIV, n. 14 (XXVI, 52-54). The contrast between Scotus and Ockham is analyzed by Paul Vignaux, "Nominalisme," DTC, XI, Col. 762.

¹⁸Sent., I, d. 46, q. 1, B and C; "Ad quaestionem dicitur communiter quod voluntas Dei est duplex, scilicet voluntas

a) the Antecedent Will which indicates the "antecedents given to someone by which he can cause something and with whom God will be prepared to cooperate if the other should wish" and b) the Consequent Will "by which God wishes efficaciously by actually (in esse) doing something." The Definite Will of God is divided into five acts: prohibition, command, counsel, implementation, and permission. This structure of the divine will is imposed upon God's Oneness by the human perspective which understands the divine activity in diverse ways. Scholastics often used these categories (voluntas beneplaciti and voluntas signi) as a means

beneplaciti et voluntas signi, qui distinguitur in quinque--prohibitionem, praeceptum, consilium, impletionem, et permissionem. Similiter, voluntas beneplaciti distinguitur in voluntatem antecedentem et consequentem. Contra voluntatem beneplaciti Dei consequentem, nihil fit. Contra voluntatem autem Dei antecedentem beneplaciti, aliquid fit. Etiam contra voluntatem signi, aliquid fit. Et ita patet quomodo voluntas Dei potest impediri et quomodo non.

Concordando cum aliis in illa responsione; primo videndum est de praedictis distinctionibus, secundo ad quaestionem. Circa primum sciendum quod illa distinctio non est alicuius quid est realiter in Deo quia in Deo non est aliquo modo multiplex voluntas. Immo, etiam divina voluntas nullo modo distinguitur ab essentia, sed istae distinctiones sunt nominum et dictionum qui significant divinam voluntatem, qui Deus est, ... Et ideo debet intelligi quod sit multiplicitas nominis ita quod voluntas antecedens equivaleret isti toti propositioni, 'dari alicui antecedentia unde potest consequi aliquid cui Deus erit paratus coagere si alius velit,' et hoc cum praecepto vel consilio exequendi... Voluntas autem consequens est 'illa qua Deus vult efficaciter ponendo aliquid in esse.'" The terms "voluntas beneplaciti" and "voluntas signi" are commonly rendered as "will of good pleasure" and "will of sign." We feel that "Benevolent Will" and "Definite Will" better captures Ockham's employment of these terms. See below, footnote 20.

of reconciling the diverse statements in Scripture concerning the manifestations of God's activity.¹⁹

Ockham distinguishes the Benevolent and Definite Will because God wishes the existence of not only things, but free things. The Definite Will gathers the various ways in which God guides the activity of free beings; the Benevolent Will handles the possible discrepancy between what God antecedently wishes for creation and what actually occurs. Ockham claims that antecedently God wishes the salvation of all rational creatures; in fact, some have been damned.²⁰ Yet the will of God as identical with His essence remains unchanged, unchangeable. There is a note of optimism and trust in God's love throughout Ockham's writings; an undercurrent which, as Gregory of Rimini would point out,²¹ is not rationally warranted. But Ockham's trust in God promotes his fearless application of the distinction between God's absolute and ordinate power.

¹⁹Cf. St. Thomas, Summ. Theol., I, q. 19, arts. 6-11; and Sent., I, d. 45, q. 1, art. 4, C.

²⁰Sent., I, d. 46, q. 1, G; "Ad tertium dico quod Deus vult antecedenter omnes salvos fieri, quia scilicet dat eis antecedentia quibus possunt consequi salutem, cum praecepto et consilio exequendi et nunquam eis praecipiet contrarium et eis erit paratus coagere permittens eos libere velle agere ad consecutionem salutis. Et per illud ultimum excluditur una cauillatio quae posset fieri de damnatis, quam Deus non vult salvos fieri etiam antecedenter." Also see Quodl., IV, q. 10, in finem; Sent., IV, q. 3, X; Sent., I, d. 17, q. 1, L.

²¹Rimini, Sent., I, d. 41-42, q. 1, art. 1 (Venice, 1522; f. 180r); "Si ideo dicatur Deus velle omnes salvari antecedenter, quia omnibus vult vel dat antecedentia salutis quaecumque sint illa; multo fortius dici deberet quod vult omnes peccare vel esse in peccato antecedenter: quam omnibus dat antecedentia quibus possunt peccare..."

It is difficult to overlook the importance of the distinction between God's absolute and ordinate power in Ockham's thought. The distinction itself was traditional, namely, that God could do everything within the realm of possibility (His absolute power) even though He determined to produce a certain set of possibles (His ordinate power).

I say that God can do certain things by ordinate power and others by absolute power. This distinction should not be understood so that in God there are really two powers, of which one is ordinate and the other absolute, because there is only one power in God regarding created being (ad extra) which is God Himself in every way. Nor should the distinction be understood so that God could do some things ordinately and others absolutely and inordinately, because God can do nothing inordinately. Rather, it must be understood thus, "to be capable of something" is sometimes considered according to the laws ordained and instituted by God. God is said to be able to do those things by ordinate power. Otherwise, "to be capable of something" is taken as "to be able to do everything which does not entail a contradiction to be done," whether or not God ordained that He would do this, because God can do many things which He does not wish to do.²²

Many studies, however, have isolated the dialectic of God's absolute-ordinate power as the key to Ockham's thought and that of Nominalism in general.²³ It is true that the manner and

²²Quodl., VI, q. 1.

²³Professor Oberman indicates the vital part played by this distinction in Nominalist theology. It is "the common denominator of four such diverse characteristics as: 1) the sovereignty of God; 2) the immediacy of God; 3) the moral autonomy and freedom of man; 4) an attitude of scepticism which leans toward secularization." (Harvard Theological Review, 56, p. 56. A more critical interpretation of this distinction is found in David Knowles, "A Characteristic of the Mental Climate of the 14th Century," Mélanges offerts à Étienne Gilson (Études de philosophie médiévale, hors série, Paris: J. Vrin, 1959), p. 323; and Gordon Leff, Bradwardine and the Pelagians. A Study of his De

frequency with which this distinction enters fourteenth century debates is unique; it is a theological reason for enlarging God's moral authority and the domain of positive law. But what needs to be said, if research is to remain within Ockham's viewpoint, is that nothing happens by God's absolute power. By definition, an occurrence de potentia Dei absoluta would be a fact realized without divine ordination or foreknowledge--to assert such a possibility would be both dangerous and untrue according to Ockham.²⁴ Christ's miracles, St. Paul's conversion, the immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin and the divine command that Abraham kill Isaac were extraordinary facets of the divine plan, but they occurred with God's prescience as products of His ordinate power. Reference to the absolute power of God is one way to express the contingency of the present physical and moral orders as created systems, and the possibility of other exceptions to the lex communis of salvation.

causa Dei and its Opponents (Cambridge: University Press, 1957), pp. 131-133. These commentators find scepticism and fideism resulting from Nominalism's use of this distinction. We hold that this distinction, by itself, gives no clue to the doctrinal peculiarities of Ockham, or any "Nominalist." God's absolute power has an explosive effect only when asserted with a more empirical metaphysical stance.

²⁴ Opus Nonaginta Dierum, c. 95 (Manchester ed., Vol. II, p. 726); "Et ita dicere quod Deus potest aliqua de potentia absoluta, quae non potest de potentia ordinata, non est aliud, secundum intellectum recte intelligentium, quam dicere quod Deus aliqua potest, quae tamen minime ordinavit se facturum; quae tamen si faceret, de potentia ordinata faceret ipsa; quia si faceret ea, ordinaret se facturum ipsa." Also loc. cit., p. 727; "Ita haec est impossibilis: 'Aliquid fit a Deo, et non de potentia ordinata;' haec tamen habet unum sensum verum: 'Aliquid potest fieri a Deo, quod non fiet de potentia ordinata;' et tamen, si fieret, de potentia ordinata fieret."

The absolute-ordinate distinction provides Ockham with a methodology for analyzing issues in terms of necessity and possibility. He calls it "the famous distinction of theologians" and uses it with sophistication. To understand Ockham's subtlety, one cannot identify and exhaust God's ordinate power with the expression "communis lex" or "stante ordinatione quae nunc est." Nor is it correct to equate God's absolute power with the phrase "specialis dispensatio." The ordinate will of God includes past, present and future facts; it includes the "common law" or Decalogue precept against theft currently in force, the past exception to this common law, e.g., Exodus 12:36, and any future dispensation to this mandate. On the other hand, the absolute power of God is somewhat hypothetical. It is Ockham's reminder that whatever God ordains, He ordains contingently. Together, the ordinate and absolute power of God expose the hypothetical necessity of creation. The use of this theological distinction was paralleled by the philosophical development of the conditional or hypothetical syllogism within the Nominalist school-- a fruitful movement from the perspective of modern logic.²⁵ The dialectic of absolute-ordinate power shows the contingency of creation and affirms its nature as a process rather than a static

²⁵Cf. Philotheus Boehner, O.F.M., Medieval Logic: An Outline of Its Development from 1250 to c. 1400 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1952); and "Does Ockham know of material implication?" in Collected Articles..., pp. 319-351. Also E. A. Moody, Truth and Consequence in Medieval Logic (Amsterdam:North Holland Publishing Co., 1953).

fact. But, at the same time, this dialectic reveals the conditional necessity of certain features of human experience.

Ockham asserts, by means of the absolute-ordinate distinction, the omnipotence and freedom of God's creative activity. The omnipotent God can effect "everything which entails no contradiction to be done."²⁶ Ockham maintains that God could produce any "thing" whose "absolute being" is both possible and producible. He has in mind finite things which could be the referent for "absolute terms." The scope of God's omnipotence would not include, for example, moral goodness or evilness which are not things with "absolute being," but states of affairs which obtain between created beings and which are signified by "connotative terms."²⁷ On the other hand, an infinite-eternal person is a non-contradictory notion which could signify an independent or "absolute" being, yet such being cannot be produced.²⁸ Most

²⁶Quodl., VI, q. 1; "Aliter accipitur "posse" pro posse facere omne illud quid non includit contradictionem fieri..." Also see Sent., I, d. 20, q. 1, L-M.

²⁷Sent., Prologue, q. 3 (I, 141); "Et ideo in multis argumentis est fallacia figurae dictionis, sub nomine simpliciter absoluto accipiendo nomen connotativum. Sicut sic arguendo: quidquid potest Deus mediante causa secunda, potest immediate per se; sed actum meritorium potest producere mediante actu voluntatis; ergo sine ea." Also see Quodl., V, q. 5.

²⁸Sent., I, d. 20, q. 1, L; "Ad probationem, dico quod omnipotentia sicut modo loquimur non respicit omne illud quid non includit contradictionem. Hoc est dictum quod omnipotens non potest efficere omne illud quid non includit contradictionem, quia non potest efficere Deum. Omnipotens tamen potest efficere omne factibile quid non includit contradictionem..." Father Lucan Freppert, The Basis of Morality..., pp. 148-155, indicates that Ockham tries to rectify the imprecision of Duns Scotus regarding divine omnipotence. It was Scotus who said "...omnipotentia est

Scholastics would agree that the effective potential of God's will initially includes all possible and producible beings. Ockham, however, seems the first to apply this position to statements. Sentences which are contradictory are nevertheless real as spoken, written or mental expressions. For example, the proposition that "all men are immortal" might indicate an impossible state of affairs but nothing prohibits this proposition from being said, written or thought. In affirming God's omnipotence, the Venerable Inceptor allows that meaningless statements or contradictory commands are creatable.

The divine will is capable of producing all finite, possible beings. But their actual production or creation remains a free, non-necessary act. "God does nothing externally (ad extra) by necessity; nor wills anything other than Himself by necessity."²⁹ Ockham explains this position by means of necessary propositions, i.e., those propositions which are true independently of any divine volition. Absolute necessity obtains when a statement cannot be denied meaningfully.³⁰ For examples, Ockham

ad omne quod non includit contradictionem." Comm. Ox., I, d. 20, q. unica, n. 5 (X, 200). Ockham quotes this formula to refute it be the above "proof." It appears that St. Thomas would be included in Ockham's criticism. See Summ. Theol., I, q. 25, art. 3. For Ockham's claim that contradictory statements (e.g., man is an ass) are possible as assertions, see Quodl., III, q. 3; and Quodl., II, q. 8.

²⁹Quodl., VI, q. 2. Also see Sent., I, d. 43, q. 1, L.

³⁰Quodl., VI, q. 2; "Circa primum dico quod duplex est necessitas, scilicet absoluta et ex suppositione. Necessitas absoluta est quando aliquid simpliciter est necessarium ita quod

gives "God exists" and "man is capable of laughter" which cannot be denied without contradiction. God is the only necessary being;³¹ but necessarily true propositions can be formed regarding contingent things. If no man ever existed or ever will exist, it remains true to say that "man is capable of laughter." Hypothetical necessity deals with contingent propositions which have some necessary connection.³² In the conditional statement, "If Peter is predestined, Peter will be saved," neither the antecedent nor the consequent are necessary--but the "consequence" is. The will of God affects the state of affairs signified by both the antecedent and the consequence. But "if" God creates and predestines Peter, then necessarily "Peter will be saved." While Ockham claims everything other than God is radically or ontologically contingent, the truth value of certain categorical and conditional statements does not derive properly from divine creativity. God's will freely governs the existence of all finite

ejus oppositum esse verum includit contradictionem. Et sic haec absolute est necessaria: 'homo est risibilis,' 'Deus est,' quia contradictio est quod haec sint falsae et contradictoriae verae."

³¹Summ. Tot. Log., III, II, c. 5 (quoted from Webering, Theory of Demonstration., p. 37); "Propter quod sciendum est quod necessarium, perpetuum et incorruptibile dupliciter accipiuntur. Uno modo dicitur aliquid necessarium, perpetuum et incorruptibile quia per nullam potentiam potest incipere vel desinere esse. Et sic solus Deus est perpetuus, necessarius et incorruptibilis."

³²Quodl., VI, q. 2; "Necessitas ex suppositione est quando aliquid conditionalis est necessaria quamvis tam antecedens quam consequens sit contingens. Sicut haec est necessaria: Si Petrus est praedestinatus, Petrus salvabitur. Et tamen tam antecedens quam consequens est contingens."

beings; but the possibility and intelligibility of finite things is clearly not a function of divine freedom according to Ockham.

Those facts which constitute the experienced world, and the physical and moral laws which connect these facts, are dependent upon the contingent will of God. Even the formation of "necessary" propositions is a mental effect which requires the free co-efficiency of God. The absolute-ordinate distinction gives Ockham a way to assert the hypothetical necessity of what is given in experience. The ordinate power of God locates a hypothetical necessity within the laws and entities of creation; the absolute power of God reveals its lack of absolute or metaphysical necessity. Nothing compels God to continue the world's existence. And given the continued existence of the world, nothing compels God to conserve any physical or moral law which is not entailed necessarily by the existent natures.

There are two sides to the hypothetical necessity of creatures. From one perspective, all finite existence depends upon the free creative action of God. From the second perspective --and this facet is too often overlooked--the essential properties or characteristics of an individual thing are necessary on the condition that the individual exists. Ockham spoke of the "necessity of the end" which typifies the logic of human volition.³³ If the agent freely desires health, then the indispensable means to health must be chosen. In a similar way, if God wishes the

³³See above, Chapter One, pp. 47-49.

factuality of something, He is thereby committed to willing all the essential features of that thing. God could not create a naturally immortal man.³⁴ Nor could God produce a virtuous act without producing the created will and Right Reason which are necessarily required for morally good action. The rule of thumb seems to be: any attribute which can be predicated necessarily about some subject, must obtain if that subject exists. Hence, if Ockham extends the legislative authority of God there must be a corresponding reduction in the moral consequences which follow from the idea of human being.

3. The Divine Ideas

Ockham does not admit any priority of intellection to volition in the divine Being.³⁵ Acts of intellect completed prior to, and independent of, volition would jeopardize the absolute simplicity of God. For this reason, Ockham denies that the divine will is regulated (i.e., caused) by Right Reason. A text frequently offered as proof of the irrational and blind obedience which Ockham's God requires of His creatures intends to show the identification of will and reason in God. In response to the principal argument:

³⁴Quodl., II, q. 5.

³⁵Sent., I, d. 10, q. 1, P; "Nihil est volitum a voluntate creata nisi praecognitum. Tamen in Deo est simpliciter falsa quia in Deo actus voluntatis et actus intellectus et voluntas sunt omnibus modis idem; nec plus distinguitur actus voluntatis a voluntate quam distinguitur voluntas a voluntate."

Every right will is conformed to Right Reason; but that will by which God predestines this man and not the other is right, therefore it is conformed to Right Reason. Thus, there is some reason why the former man is predestined and not the latter. But that reason is not in God who is equally disposed to all men on His part since He is no respecter of persons. Hence, there is some reason in another and that can only be in the predestined.

Ockham replies:

To the first principal argument, when it proves that generally there is some reason and cause for both predestination and reprobation, it can be said that every right will is conformed to Right Reason. But it is not always conformed to a prior Right Reason which shows cause why the will should wish this; but by the fact that the divine will wants it, Right Reason dictates that it should be willed.³⁶

Because God's intellect, will and essence are the same "in omnibus modis" there is no possibility of non-conformity between intellect and will. Hence, Ockham frequently insists that God cannot act immorally; that God is subject to no moral obligation.³⁷

³⁶Sent., I, d. 41, q. 1, A and K; "Omnis voluntas recta est conformis rectae rationi; sed illa voluntas qua Deus prae-destinat istum et non alium est recta, ergo est conformis rectae rationi. Ergo, est aliquae ratio quare illum prae-destinat et non alium. Sed illa ratio non est in Deo quia Deus equaliter se habet ad omnes quantum est ex parte sua, cum non sit acceptor personarum. Ergo, est aliquae ratio in alio et non nisi in prae-destinato." "Ad primum principale, quando probat quod generaliter tam in prae-destinato quam reprobato est aliquae ratio et causa, potest dici quod omnis voluntas recta est conformis rationi rectae. Sed non est semper conformis rationi rectae praeviae quae ostendat causam quare voluntas debet hoc velle, sed eo ipso quod voluntas divina hoc vult, ratio recta dictat quod est volendum." Clearly, Ockham means to show the identity of reason and will in God. Yet Francis Oakley uses this text to show that for Ockham's version of morality "the last word lies with the will." Natural Law Forum 6, p. 70. Professor Vernon Bourke calls this quotation "a classic statement of divine voluntarism." Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association 36 (1962), p. 26.

³⁷For example, Sent., II, qes. 4-5, H; Sent., II, q. 19,

The divine Being is beyond good and evil. An essential condition of morality is absent without the possibility of discrepancy between one's reason and will. Thus, God's connection with the moral order is extrinsic. Whatever moral norms are embodied within the nature of created things operate because of God's creative, unilateral action. Revealed commands express some moral necessity or salvific economy for those other than the divine Legislator. It is foreign to Ockham's viewpoint to conceive of eternal truths of morality which necessitate the divine will.

Nevertheless, God operates rationally. Laws of intelligibility describe how the divine will operates. That which "non posse non-esse" and "non posse esse" can be expressed as the volitive characteristics "non posse non-velle" and "non posse velle." First, that which "cannot not-be" is necessarily loved by God because of the inner logic of His own activity. To be precise, God necessarily loves Himself as the only necessary existent.³⁸ Perhaps this assertion explains one sense in which

H; Sent., III, q. 13, O; Sent., IV, qes. 8-9, S. Occasionally, Ockham implies the identity of Right Reason and will in God as the reason He cannot act immorally. Thus, Sent., I, d. 14, q. 2, G; "Ex hoc ipso quod (Deus) vult, convenienter fit et non frustra; secus est in causis naturalibus et in causis voluntariis creatis, quae voluntariae causae debent se conformare rectae rationi primae, nec aliter faciunt aliquid juste vel recte." At other times, Ockham asserts that God cannot act immorally because He is "debtor" to no one. That is, God is totally self-sufficient and existentially independent. No other being presents a "claim" on the divine activity. Thus, see Sent., II, q. 19, H and P; Sent., III, q. 13, O; Sent., III, q. 5, N.

³⁸Sent., I, d. 1, q. 1 (I, 385-387); and Sent., I, d. 17, q. 1, T.

Ockham considers the divine will the "first directing rule" of morality.³⁹ The natural exigency of God's self-love becomes a moral necessity for creatures to love the Creator. The importance which Ockham places on "conformity to the divine will" gives credence to this conjecture. Whatever God produces ad extra is done for the sake of His Goodness; likewise, Ockham claims that every perfectly virtuous movement of the created will is done for His Goodness. Secondly, that which "cannot be" indicates the limits of divine volition. God cannot will to produce a manifest contradiction; He cannot actualize the impossible.⁴⁰ But Ockham does not speak of the law of contradiction as "limiting" or "obliging" the divine will. Impossibility or possibility is simultaneous with the divine will's incapacity or capacity.⁴¹ What "cannot be" describes the extent of the divine will's competence.

³⁹Sent., III, q. 13, B; "...illa voluntas quae potest quantum est de se bene agere et male, quia de se non est recta necessario, ad hoc quod recte agat, indiget aliqua regula dirigente alia a se. Hoc patet, quia ideo voluntas divina non indiget aliquo dirigente, quia illa est prima regula directiva et non potest male agere." Ockham implies the identification of will and Right Reason in God; but further, God's will is necessarily directed to the Greatest Good. And Ockham claims elsewhere that "rectitudo circa finem ultimum repugnat omni difformitati circa ea quae sunt ad finem." Sent., III, q. 12, II. (Also see Sent., III, q. 13, O; where Ockham discusses another ramification of conforming to the divine will.) In his late work, the Quodlibetal Questions, Ockham calls the 'Love of God above all' necessarily virtuous and "primus omnium actuum bonorum." Quodl., III, q. 13. The moral priority of love for God thus reflects the metaphysical exigency of God's self-love.

⁴⁰Quodl., VI, q. 6; "Quidlibet est divinae potentia attribuendum quod non includit manifestam contradictionem." Also see Sent., II, qes. 8-9, S.

⁴¹Sent., I, d. 43, q. 2, F; "Et quando quaeritur, an primo

For many reasons, the relationship between the divine will and that which "posse esse" is the important issue in determining the legislative authority of God. Creation makes no necessary claim on the divine will yet it remains a contingent possibility and producible by God. Does God operate rationally regarding creatures?

Ockham discusses God's knowledge in Distinction Thirty-Five of the "Sentences-Commentary." Question five of this distinction asks; Whether God understands everything other than Himself though ideas of them? Here Ockham claims that there are divine ideas because, as Augustine says, "God operates rationally."⁴² "By the fact that God is God, He knows everything; otherwise He would not be said to operate rationally unless He

conveniat Deo non posse facere impossibile quam conveniat impossibili non posse fieri a Deo, dico quod non prius convenit Deo non posse facere impossibile quam convenit impossibili non posse fieri a Deo. Nec etiam prius convenit impossibili non posse fieri quam Deo non posse facere impossibile. Et eodem modo dico de affirmativis, quod non prius convenit Deo posse facere possibile vel creaturam quam creaturae posse fieri a Deo, sed simul natura eo modo, quo secundum Philosophum factivum et factibile sunt simul natura..." Father Allan Wolter has published a thoughtful study of Ockham's doctrine of intrinsic and extrinsic possibility. His ironic conclusion is that Ockham is often criticized for the position of Henry of Ghent (i.e., the possibility of things derives from the divine will) which the Venerable Inceptor refutes. "Ockham and the Textbooks: On the Origin of Possibility," Franziskanische Studien 32 (1950), pp. 70-96.

⁴²Sent., I, d. 35, q. 5, F; "Ideo dico quod ideae sunt ponendae praecise ut sint exemplaria quaedam ad quae intellectus divinus aspiciens producat creaturas; cuius ratio est quia, secundum beatum Augustinum ubi supra, propter hoc praecise ponendae sunt ideae in Deo quia "Deus est rationabiliter operans." See Augustine, De diversis quaestionibus LXXXIII, q. 43 (P.L., XL, 30).

could know that which is done."⁴³ God acts reasonably regarding the creation and conservation of finite things--at least in the sense of having ideas about what He accomplishes. At face value, this does not attribute greater rationality to God than is attained by psychotics. But Ockham has an interesting and innovative conception of the divine ideas.

Ockham describes a divine idea as "something known by the effective intellectual principle, to which the causative (activum) knower can look to produce something in real being."⁴⁴ This description hardly pertains to the divine essence; Ockham consciously steps outside the majority opinion of Scholasticism which held that the divine ideas were really the divine essence and distinguishable only by reason.⁴⁵ Ockham's definition indicates,

⁴³Sent., I, d. 35, q. 5, R; "Ex hoc ipso quod Deus est Deus, Deus cognoscit omnia, nec aliter diceretur rationabiliter operans nisi cognosceret illa quae operatur."

⁴⁴Ibid., D; "Idea est aliquid cognitum a principio effectivo intellectuali, ad quid activum aspiciens potest aliquid in esse reali producere."

⁴⁵Ibid., B; "Circa primum (i.e., Quid sit idea?) concordant multi doctores et fere omnes in una conclusione communi; scilicet quod idea est realiter divina essentia et tamen differt ratione ab ea...Contra istam conclusionem communem ostendo quod idea non est realiter divina essentia..." Also see Sent., I, d. 2, q. 3 (II, 93); "...ideae in mente divina non sunt realiter ipsa divina essentia." Ockham cites as examples of the "common opinion" Godfrey of Fontaines, Quodl., VII, q. 1 (ed. M. De Wulf and J. Hoffmans, Les Philosophes Belges, III); Henry of Ghent, Quodl., IX, q. 2 (Paris, 1518); and Duns Scotus, Comm. Ox., I, d. 35, q. unica. St. Thomas could be included, see Summ. Theol., I, q. 15, art. 1. When Ockham claims the ideas are "in the divine mind" but are different from the divine essence he means: a) the act by which the ideas are known is the divine essence, and b), what is known is other than the divine essence.

not the divine essence as imitable, but the creatures-as-known which are really distinct from the divine mind. Indeed, "the creature itself is the idea."⁴⁶ In Ockham's jargon, the divine ideas are "connotative terms" which signify the creatures-as-known directly and the singular act of divine knowing indirectly. This definition avoids, to Ockham's satisfaction, certain perplexing problems annexed to the question of God's omniscience. First, it allows that God knows everything without disallowing the simplicity of God's Being. An infinite number of ideas are known by a single and unitary act of knowing which is the divine essence. God's intellection terminates at, but does not include, plurality. Secondly, as external to God's essence or as the creatures themselves, the ideas insure that God knows what is other than Himself. Ockham thinks that previous attempts to bring the divine ideas into God's mind as "relations of imitability" or the divine essence as "participateable" throws into question any divine knowledge of difference or otherness. Thirdly, the "cause of knowing" (ratio cognoscendi) remains God's

⁴⁶Sent., I, d. 35, q. 5, E; "...quantumcumque Deus cognosceret suam essentiam, nisi cognosceret creaturam non diceretur rationabiliter producere quantumcumque produceret. Ergo, ipsa creatura est idea." Also see Sent., I, d. 2, q. 2 (II, 71); ... quia ideae in Deo sunt ipsae res producibiles a Deo, nec praedicantur de Deo sicut ipsa attributa vere de Deo praedicantur." Grammatically, the term "idea" signifies "ipsammet creaturam in recto et etiam ipsammet in obliquo et praeter hoc, importat ipsam divinam cognitionem vel cognoscentem in obliquo. Et ideo de ipsamet creatura est praedicabilis ut ipsa sit idea; sed non est praedicabilis de agente cognoscente vel cognitione, quia nec cognitio nec cognoscens est idea sicut nec exemplar." Sent., I, d. 35, q. 5, E.

intellect. A finite being cannot cause knowledge in the infinite and self-sufficient God. The ideas are "what is known" and the means by which they are known is the divine essence. Finally, the ideas were known eternally by God although what is signified by the ideas, i.e., the creatures themselves, begin-to-be. The necessity and immutability by which God understands the ideas cannot be attributed to the ideas, but only to God's knowledge. This gives Ockham a foundation for necessary and immutable truths about the created world without asserting anything but God exists necessarily.

The Scholastics spent considerable metaphysical energy on the question of the divine ideas. It was Aristotle's position that scientific knowledge "must rest on necessary basic truths; for the object of scientific knowledge cannot be other than it is."⁴⁷ Accepting this position, and the revealed truth God alone "cannot be other than He is," the Schoolmen had to find some basis for necessary truth about the created world besides Plato's world of forms or Aristotle's eternal species. The divine ideas provided a likely place to establish at least the necessity of being known for finite things. The "common opinion" on the divine ideas was unacceptable to Ockham. His objections follow two lines: a) if the divine ideas are really the divine essence then God does not know other things and b) if the ideas have some type of being or ontological "weight" within God's mind then the

⁴⁷Post. Anal., I, c. 6 (trans. G. R. G. Mure).

divine simplicity is lost. Ockham avoids these problems by eliminating the ideas qua creatures from God's intellect. He is left with divine ideas which are "nothings."⁴⁸ They have neither esse essenziale, nor esse intelligibile, nor esse possibile, nor esse creabile: the eternal ideas are simply "null classes" whose one member might exist actually.⁴⁹ Yet Ockham insists that God's

⁴⁸Sent., I, d. 36, q. 1, P; "Ideo dico quod 'nihil' multipliciter accipitur. Uno modo sincathegoreumatice et sic est unum signum universale negativum includens suum distribuibile secundum modum loquendi logicorum; sicut dicimus 'nihil currit,' 'nihil est intelligens.' Alio modo accipitur cathegoreumatice pro aliquod quid dicitur 'unum nihil.' Et hoc potest accipi dupliciter: quia uno modo 'nihil' accipitur et dicitur illud quid non est realiter, nec habet aliquid esse reale. Et isto modo dicendum est quod angelus ab eterno fuit nihil quia nullum esse reale habuit ab eterno, quia nullum esse fuit ab eterno nisi solus Deus. Aliter accipitur 'nihil' pro illo quid non tantum non habet esse reale sed etiam sibi repugnat esse reale, et isto modo dicimus quod chymera est nihil... Dico, ergo, quod esse repraesentatum vel esse cognitum creaturae ab aeterno fuit 'nihil' primo modo accipiendo vel cathegoreumatice, non secundo modo. Et ideo non infert istam quod nihil fuit repraesentatum a Deo..." Ockham explains the difference between "cathegoreumatic" and "syn-cathegoreumatic" terms in Summa Logicae I, c. 4 (ed. by Philotheus Boehner, pp. 15-16). Also see Boehner, Collected Articles..., pp. 22-224. Also see Quodl., VI, q. 6 where Ockham claims that every creature is a "pure nothing" before its production.

⁴⁹Ockham, in denying the position of Henry of Ghent and Duns Scotus that ideas have a type of being in the divine mind (esse in essentia and esse intelligibile), denies any ontological or positive status to the ideas. The fact that they are known and can be created implies no reality on the part of divine ideas. Ockham is not asserting that the possibility or intelligibility of finite being is a function of the divine will or intellect; but that esse possibile and esse intelligibile are not "quasi" or "diminished" beings which precede the actuality of created things. For the context of Ockham's doctrine see Father Armand Maurer, "Ens diminutum: A Note on Its Origin and Meaning," Medieval Studies 12 (1950), pp. 216-222; and Edward Sullivan, The Divine Ideas According to William of Ockham: Study and Text (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Philosophy, University of Toronto, 1951), pp. 1-92. Father Allan Wolter comments that, according to

activity regarding creation is guided by these exemplars. We must determine the type of rationality these ideas-exemplars-creatures impute to God's legislation.

God knows perfectly, intuitively and individually every "creatable." As omniscient, God recognizes the truth and falsity of every proposition which could be formulated about that creature at any instant.⁵⁰ This knowledge includes certain hypothetical necessities. If a human creature exists, then he is existentially dependent upon the Creator; then he is a rational animal; then he is composed of matter and form; then he is mortal; then he is similar to every other existing man;⁵¹ then he is a free

Ockham, "possibility is not a real something which inheres in a creature. 'To be possible' is something predicable of a creature; it is a logical modality that has been elevated to the status of a predicate." Franz. Studien 32, p. 89. In support of this analysis, Fr. Wolter quotes: "Nec est proprius modus loquendi dicere quod esse possibile convenit creaturae, sed magis proprie debet dici quod creatura est possibilis non propter aliquid quod sibi conveniat sed quia potest esse in rerum natura." Sent., I, d. 43, q. 2, F. Fr. Wolter's comments regarding "esse possibile" could be extended to other areas on the basis of Sent., I, d. 36, q. 1, S - DD. Ockham maintains that: a) knowing-knowable, creating-creatable, able to do-able to be done, etc., are correlative terms so that neither is prior to or cause of the other; and b), that from eternity creatures were knowable, creatable and able to be done although metaphysically they were "nothings"! After solving the problem of attributing simplicity and omniscience to God, Ockham might have smiled at the consequent questions whose solution he left unclear.

⁵⁰Tractatus de Praedestinatione..., q. 2, art. 4 (ed. Philotheus Boehner, pp. 28-29); "...scientia Dei, qua sciuntur futura contingentia, sit necessaria; et hoc est verum, quia ipsa essentia divina est unica cognitio necessaria et immutabilis omnium tam complexorum quam incomplexorum, necessariorum et contingentium." See also the parallel text in Sent., I, d. 38, q. 1, L-M.

⁵¹Ockham's position on universal divine ideas is somewhat confusing. He first claims that "ideae praecise sunt singularium

being. Divine knowledge of the ideas entails these truths. These facts must obtain if men exist; expressed in the mode of possibility they are necessarily true even if men do not exist. Ockham's position that men cannot be obliged to the impossible indicates that God's creative power and legislative power are not co-extensive. God conceives intellectually and could effect verbal commands whose significance is incompatible with the ideas of human creatures. For example, the commands "Never die," "Lift yourself by your shoe laces," and "Know everything" are possible for God to produce but impossible for men to fulfill. Whatever God commands while expecting men to obey must respect the natural capacities of the human being commanded. Thus, the scope of God's legislative authority is established by what is impossible for moral beings to accomplish.

The moral "facts" which derive from the divine ideas are few. For one thing, the ideas as creatures depend upon God as their ontological principle or source. The original inventory of the divine mind comprises everything "producible" whose actual production requires a free and creative decision by God. Thus,

quia praecise singularia sunt factibilia." Sent., I, d. 35, q. 5, Q. Then he proceeds to say that "Deus de fiendis ab eo non habet tantum cognitionem de universalibus, sicut habet artifex creatus de fiendis ab ipso, sed etiam habet cognitionem distinctam et particularem de quolibet particulari fiendo..." Ibid., R. Probably, Ockham means that God knows every "universal proposition" which can be expressed about or by creatures. Surely, God knows the similarity between things because men can form true propositions about specific likeness. From eternity, God knows that "Socrates is similar to Plato." The truth of this proposition, however, does not require a universal essence of humanity but only knowledge of Socrates and Plato.

creatures are "debtors"--an ethical expression of man's dependence in origin and destiny. To be created, conserved and redeemed by God places a rational creature in a "claim producing" or obliging situation. Secondly, created acts of will and reason are not identical--whence the possibility of moral good or evil. The human capacity for free and rational actions gives the "condition of the possibility" of morality and meaningful divine commands. Those principles of demonstrative moral science listed by Ockham --Everything honest is to be done, All dishonesty is to be avoided, The will ought to conform itself to Right Reason, All blame-worthy evil is to be avoided--are necessarily true.⁵² Such principles are valid "sine omni praecepto superioris;" if they are formulated they cannot be false; God knows them from eternity as immutably true. Yet the value terms contained within these ethical principles are "connotative" and invariably signify a

⁵²These principles are listed in Quodl., II, q. 14. Ockham follows Aristotle in asserting that the principles of demonstrative proof must be necessarily true. See Meta., V, C. 5 (1915^b 5-10) and Nic. Ethics, VI, c. 3 (1139^b 18-35). As a Christian, Ockham believes that only God is absolutely necessary and everything else, even the facticity of a proposition, is radically contingent. These principles of morality are necessarily true in the sense that they cannot be false if they are formulated. "Aliter dicitur necessarium, perpetuum et incorruptibile propositio, quae non potest esse falsa, quae scilicet ita est vera, quod si formatur, non est falsa sed vera tantum." Summ. Log., III, II, c. 5 (quoted from Webering, Theory of Demonstration..., p. 37, also found in Baudry, Lexique Philosophique, p. 170). Thus, before creation these moral principles would be true if God formulated them. Other per se nota principles are given in Sent., III, q. 12, H; Sent., III, q. 11, Z; Sent., III, q. 13, K; and Sent., Prologue, q. 12 (I, 348). Among the divine ideas, therefore, are some "eternal laws" although not in the sense of Aquinas' "Eternal Law."

created volition and its created causes of freedom and Right Reason.⁵³ Moral necessities, for Ockham, are grounded on the human possibilities of free and rational behavior. No man exists necessarily; no virtuous act is metaphysically necessary--but if either is asserted then the "inner moral order" of intellectual dictate and volitive freedom must be asserted as the possible or actual causes of morality. Whatever transcends the productive powers of the created will (either categorically such as eternal life or "individually" such as singing tenor or understanding Einstein's theory of relativity) cannot be matters of conscience. We can speak of God's absolute power to issue "impossible" commands such as "Hate God" or "Act contrary to Right Reason," but according to Ockham, the discussion has left the realm of morality.⁵⁴

Creating while He looks to the exemplars, God knows; a) the creature's existential "indebtedness," b) the freedom and Right Reason which together make men moral beings, and c) the

⁵³Chapter V treats the meaning of value terms. Here we only assert that moral values are defined by Ockham by their essential causes, i.e., the created will and Right Reason. "... 'virtuosum' et 'vitiosum' sunt nomina connotativa et significant ipsum actum non absolute sed connotando cum hoc activitatem voluntatis et prudentiae; et quando deficit aliquid connotatum non dicitur talis actus virtuosus." Sent., III, q. 13, F, ad primum.

⁵⁴Quodl., II, q. 14; "Circa primum; dico quod morale accipitur largiter pro humanis quae subjacent voluntati absolute, et sic accipitur in Decretis, distinctio prima, c. 'Mos,' ut patet in glossa. Aliter accipitur stricte magis pro moribus sive actibus subjectis potestati voluntatis secundum naturale dictamen rationis et secundum alias circumstantias." Also see Sent., Prologue, q. 12 (I, 359).

total volitional capacities of every individual man. He knows the framework of morality as hypothetically necessary. These facts validate God's moral authority and define the limits of its application.

Ockham's doctrine of divine ideas allows God to command any "simple" act producible by the creature's operative power. ("Simple" means the volitional power as actualized or specified by a single object.) Between the individual nature of creatures and the simple nature of actions within the power of those creatures, God "sees" no inherent and necessary bond of moral suitability or unsuitability. Is there any simple act which would not be morally indifferent when performed by the insane, or one in inculpable ignorance, or accidentally? Besides distinguishing carefully between fact and value, Ockham requests a strict distinction between moral determinants and moral actions. The simple nature of an action is one moral determinant among many. (Ockham does talk about actions which are generically good; but he is clear that eliciting such acts for improper motives renders the volition an evil.)⁵⁵ Ockham insists that moral activity is a human enterprise with complex causes, objects and circumstances.

⁵⁵Sent., III, q. 12, N; "Sexta distinctio est quod aliquis actus est bonus ex genere vel malus, aliquis ex circumstantia, aliquis ex principio meritorio. Exemplum primi quantum ad actum bonum ex genere; sicut orare, dare elemosinam, sive velle talia facere absolute sine omni circumstantia bona vel mala. Exemplum primi quantum ad actum malum; ut furtum facere, velle fornicari absolute sine aliqua circumstantia bona vel mala, de quibus dicunt philosophi et sancti quod statim nominata convoluta sunt cum malitia."

At the same time, he allows for drastic and sweeping changes in the circumstance of the divine determination of right and wrong.

Ockham saw an internal problem with asserting; a) the creatures' ontological-moral "debt" to the Creator, and b) the possibility of affirmative or negative commands regarding every simple act of man. For example, rejecting God is a simple action (nolle Deum) controllable by the human will yet this action seems clearly inconsistent with man's existential dependence. Ockham could not resolve this problem at first. In the Ordinatio, he claims "no one can ordinally hate God;" in the Reportatio, he reasons that "to hate God can be a correct act on earth, if prescribed by God, therefore in heaven also."⁵⁶ His final solution in the Quodlibetal Questions does not retreat from his assertions that, a) God could command creatures to hate or "not love" Him and that, b) the creature ought to obey this extraordinary mandate. But he finds a way to maintain these prerogatives of the divine Legislator while simultaneously asserting that love for

⁵⁶Sent., I, d. 1, q. 1 (I, 375); "...nullus potest ordinate odire Deum..." Sent., IV, q. 14, D; "Praeterea, omnis voluntas potest se conformare praecepto divino; sed Deus potest praecipere quod voluntas creata odiat eum; igitur, voluntas creata potest hoc facere. Praeterea, omne quod potest esse actus rectus in via, et in patria: sed odire Deum potest esse actus rectus in via, puta si praecipitur a Deo; ergo, et in patria." Also see Sent., II, q. 19, O. We discuss the odium Dei further in the following chapter. As Erich Hochstetter has indicated, Ockham seems to change his mind about this question. Franz. Studien, 32, pp. 15-16. Yet when the papal commission at Avignon questioned Ockham about the possibility of the commanded hate for God and the human fulfilment of such a command, they determined that "non dixit." See Pelzer, Revue d'Histoire ecclesiastique, 18, pp. 253-254. The commission cites the text quoted above in Sent., IV, q. 14, D.

God above all is necessarily and immutably good whenever it occurs within the created will. Ockham's solution re-affirms the free and rational character of human moral response; man's moral nature requires conformity to the divine wish in a deliberate, well-motivated and free manner.

Thirdly, I say that this necessary virtuous act in the manner mentioned is an act of will, because the act by which God is loved above all for His own sake is this kind of act. For this act is so virtuous that it cannot be wicked nor can it be caused by the created will unless it be virtuous...

If one objects: God could prescribe that He not be loved for a certain time because He could command that the intellect and likewise the will be occupied with study so that it could not think about God for that period. Then I request that the will elicit an act of loving God.

Now either that act is virtuous--and this cannot be asserted since it is elicited against God's command--or it is not virtuous and the proposition prevails that the act of loving God above all is not virtuous.

I answer: if God could prescribe this act as it seems He could without contradiction, then I assert that the will could not elicit such an act for this period. By the fact that it elicits such an act, the will would love God above all and consequently would fulfil the divine command because to love God above all is to love whatever God wishes to be loved. And by the fact that it would thereby love God, the will would not follow the divine command in this hypothetical case. Consequently, by thus loving God, one would love and not love and fulfil the divine command and not fulfil it.⁵⁷

Ockham did not repudiate the common Scholastic position that loving God above all is necessarily and unalterably good. Nor is it correct to interpret Ockham as knowing only positive moral obligation. Given a hypothetical and highly improbable divine command to hate God, the created nature of man requires a loving, obedient response to the Creator's command. The

⁵⁷ Quodl., III, q. 13. Our translation follows the text established by Father Boehner in Ockham, Philosophical Writings, pp. 146-147.

absolute power of God does not throw all morality into question. On the contrary, divine omnipotence highlights and "proves" the natural structure of moral activity. This because God commands man who necessarily executes his moral obligations rationally and freely. Without asserting a divine idea of "humanity" Ockham's God is conditionally (i.e., if men exist) committed to "how" moral goodness is accomplished and the immutable goodness of created love for Himself above all.

4. The Objective Norm of Morality

Ockham maintains: "Every created will is obligated to conform itself to its rule; but the divine will is the rule of every created will; therefore, every created will is obligated to conform itself to the divine will."⁵⁸ Religious belief affects the conduct of morality. Concern to fulfill the divine wish "always should be in every honest use of reason."⁵⁹ The manner in which the divine will governs moral decisions, however, is far from clear.

Belief changes the motives or final causes of moral activity. The Christian acts are orientated to God; this pervasive intention differentiates Christian from "philosophical"

⁵⁸Sent., I, d. 48, q. 1, A; "Ad oppositum: quaelibet voluntas creata tenetur se conformare regulae suae; sed voluntas divina est regula cuiuslibet voluntatis creatae; ergo, quaelibet voluntas creata tenetur se conformare voluntati divinae."

⁵⁹Ibid., D.

virtues.⁶⁰ Ordering human acts to the Infinite Good seems to be an implication of religious belief rather than an explicit demand of divine positive law. At least, Ockham's willingness to defend the virtuousness of loving God above all in the face of divine commands to the contrary suggests the "natural" or non-positive obligation to love God. Believing that God is the cause of everything and the ultimate end has moral consequences. Dependent upon the divine will for his existence, the human creature should not allow a more fundamental obligation than his "debt" to the Creator. The moral necessity of loving God reflects the absolute necessity with which God loves Himself.⁶¹ The altruistic love for God, the "first of all good acts," becomes the human image of God's own life. Thus, the Christian conscience appreciates a motive in acting which is not apparent nor operative outside of faith.

The commands which God has or might institute, however, require behavior patterns which are observable. Here "conformity"

⁶⁰Sent., IV, q. 3, S; "...abstinet Christianus ab actu fornicandi propter Deum, et quia Deus praecepti sibi abstinere, ita quod Deus est hic causa finalis vel praeceptum Dei istius abstinence. Et sic de omnibus aliis virtutibus acquisitis a bono Christiano, quia semper Deus est principalis finis intentus. Philosophus autem licet absteineat a talibus, tamen totaliter propter alium finem, vel propter conservationem naturae vel ad proficiendum in scientia vel propter aliquid tale. Igitur, aliud fuit objectum parziale abstinence philosophi et boni Christiani et per consequens alia virtus et aliterius rationis..." Also see Sent., III, q. 12, GGG; Sent., III, q. 10, I.

⁶¹Sent., I, d. 10, q. 2, L; "Ad aliud dico quod voluntas divina necessario vult bonitatem suam; non tamen libere sed ita naturaliter sicut naturaliter intelligit bonitatem suam."

means the creature's accomplishment of a contingent divine wish.⁶² Ockham maintains that God's express desire for the human agent to perform some action is reason enough for Right Reason to dictate such action. It would be incorrect to conceive of God's will as "superceding" or "overriding" Right Reason--the proximate norm of morality. The requirement to love and obey God presupposes that this obligation is recognized and dictated by Right Reason.⁶³ Rather, the objectively correct use of Practical Reason would not prefer some natural criterion of moral goodness to the revealed will of God in determining the concrete location of one's obligation. Thus, God's will might require church attendance or baptism as facets of "Christian" morality--a somewhat trivial difference between the ethics of belief and unbelief. More importantly, on the basis of a divine command the Christian

⁶²Sent. I, d. 48, q. 1, G; "Quinto dico quod voluntas tenetur se conformare voluntati divinae volendo ea quae voluntas divina vult eam velle; et hoc si velit eam velle illud voluntate beneplaciti vel voluntate praecepti." See Freppert, The Basis of Morality..., pp. 157-67, for a study of the various senses of "conformity."

⁶³Sent., III, q. 11, Z; "...hoc est unum tale principium (quibus virtutes connexae sunt): Omne determinatum a ratione recta propter determinatum finem et sic de aliis circumstantiis esse faciendum, est faciendum; aliud, Omne bonum dictatum a recta ratione est eligendum--ista et alia multa sunt principia communia omni virtuti sine quibus non potest elici actus virtuosus. Et sicut ista principia sunt communia, ita habitus sunt communes istorum principiorum quae vocantur prudentiae; ita quod notitia istius principii communis est causa partialis immediata notitiae conclusionis in speciali. Et loquor de notitia actuali utrobique, ut si arguatur: Omne dictatum a recta ratione esse diligendum est diligendum; sed patrem vel matrem vel Deum diligendum esse est dictatum a recta ratione; ergo, et cetera." Also see Sent., I, d. 1, q. 4 (I, 443).

might be obliged to actions which the non-believer would find unconscionable. For example, Ockham teaches that the directive, "each should receive what belongs to him" is known evidently.⁶⁴ Yet religious commitment to God, the Creator of heaven and earth, gives a "supernatural" flexibility to the notion of ownership or property. According to the natural evidence, the Israelites were wrong to plunder Egypt prior to the Exodus, i.e., they committed "theft." But Ockham claims: "To despoil the Egyptians was not wrong but right, and thus God did not prescribe evil when commanding them to take from the Egyptians. Nor did the children of Israel sin by despoiling them unless they acted in the wrong spirit--unless they did not pillage precisely in obedience to the divine command."⁶⁵ God's wish not only presents a valid claim upon the created will's activity, it also affects the application of evident moral norms and the ethical designation of concrete actions.

Those who claim that Ockham teaches moral voluntarism have their point in that the divine will could override every natural criterion of moral right and wrong. With the exception of the altruistic love for God, which seems to be the only necessarily good act, the "content" or application of ethical principles is relative to God's contingent decrees.⁶⁶ Two common

⁶⁴Sent., Prologue, q. 12 (I, 348).

⁶⁵Sent., I, d. 47, q. 1, G.

⁶⁶Anita Garvens suggests the "form-content" distinction in Ockham's ethic. "Wenn für Ockham die allgemeinen ethischen

assertions of the Scholastics--a) that God is omnipotent and absolutely free and b) that God can produce immediately what He ordinarily causes mediately through secondary causes--break loose from their metaphysical restraints of intrinsically related essences, teleological connections between individuals and the internal continuity of divine operations ad extra. Thus, God could command or totally create acts of hate for Himself in spite of the moral necessity that men love God or the internal exigency of divine self-love.⁶⁷ As total cause, God might produce statements which are logically contradictory or imperatives which are humanly impossible to fulfill. The permanent truths

Prinzipien schliesslich doch mehr als nur formale Sätze sind, wie im Laufe der folgenden Untersuchung sich zeigen wird, so liegt das vornehmlich in seiner gläubigen Annahme der Offenbarung als der Erkenntnisquelle für die vom Willen Gottes festgesetzte Sittenregel, die augenblicklich und ordinate gültig ist. Sie allein liefert Ockham den Inhalt der sicheren allgemeinen ethischen Prinzipien." Franz. Studien, 21, p. 248. This terminology is helpful with two qualifications. First, the love of God above all is a concrete and "contentful" moral value whenever it occurs in the created will regardless of changeable divine decrees. Secondly, God's positive laws may be self-authenticating but they are not self-explanatory. That God has issued the command is warrant to obey the law for any believer; but understanding the intent and application of the law requires by necessity the agent's prudent judgments. For example, the agent must judge on the basis of experience that "this is murder," "these are my parents," etc., to recognize how to fulfill the divine mandates.

⁶⁷To reconcile the freedom of the created will with the "obstinacy" of the damned, Ockham makes God the primary cause of the permanent hate for God which characterizes the state of damnation. "Et eodem modo, potest assignari ratio obstinationis malorum per hoc quod Deus causat tanquam causa totalis quicquid absolutum est in actu nolendi et odiendi Deum..." Sent., II, q. 19, F. The fact that God does produce hate for Himself in the devils is a fortiori evidence that He might do so in men.

of morality and the limits placed upon God's legislative power derive from the nature of men and virtuous activity--not from the intrinsic necessity of divine Goodness.

Without doubt, Ockham's confidence in the ordained will of God makes the present moral order reliable. He speaks of God's "quasi absolute" will regarding "all goods which are not evils by guilt nor punishment."⁶⁸ And notice that by defining "murder," "theft" and "adultery" as "contrary to divine command," Ockham can maintain that only a direct revelation by God would justify the deliberate and voluntary taking of innocent life, another's property or wife. The biblical instances of dispensations to the "common law" are few; the likelihood of future expectations is small. But Ockham's expectation of continuity is just that, an expectation. God might have foreknown and ordained drastic and universal changes in the content of moral obligation. After allowing for particular exceptions to the present classification of (simple) acts as right or wrong, what prevents the exception from becoming the rule? The ordinate power of God might contain general mandates whose application would be as socially ruinous as the revolutionary potential which commentators have located mistakenly in God's absolute power. Admittedly, images of indiscriminate homicide or appropriation of property are completely foreign to Ockham's viewpoint and

⁶⁸Sent., I, d. 48, q. 1, B; "Tertio, sciendum quod quaedam sunt volita a Deo quasi absolute; cuiusmodi sunt omnia bona quae nec sunt mala culpae nec penae..."

intentions. Nevertheless, only terminology stands between his principles and such chaotic possibilities. A "common law" has been revealed; God is committed to the physical, moral and salvific orders which He has "ordained." But Ockham insists that God has commanded exceptions to the common law, e.g., in the cases of Abraham and Osee; and whatever God ordains regarding creatures is itself contingent.

The prerogatives of the divine will are a serious and pervasive polarity in Ockham's moral doctrine. But he does not recognize the discretionary power of God as the only source of moral obligation.⁶⁹ Without cognition or belief regarding the deity, divine positive laws should not be considered as authoritative within the non-believers moral decisions. For believers, God's will is the objective norm of morality because His will is the unqualified extrinsic basis of obligation. It is only believers who face the "theological" possibility of slight or sweeping changes in the content of one's duty. And Christians can balance this highly unlikely prospect with religious convictions about God's faithfulness and mercy.

⁶⁹Sent., III, q. 13, M; "...semper peccat voluntas peccato commissionis quando elicit aliquem actum ad cuius oppositum obligatur per praeceptum divinum vel ordinationem divinam vel alio modo obligatur ad oppositum..."

CHAPTER IV

THE CONSTRUCTION OF MORAL ACTIONS

William of Ockham seems reluctant or unable to explain the natural and evident criteria by which moral agents decide right and wrong. There are strong suggestions that the Decalogue precepts are harmonious, at least, with the natural evidence for ethical value. For example, he claims that Christian and "philosophical" virtues differ in motives--not in what is done.¹ In his political writings, he asserts that the Decalogue precepts were matters of natural law before their positive revelation.² What empirical data supports the moral judgments that acts of

¹Sent., III, q. 12, GGG; "Philosophus tamen non ponit virtutem moralem esse respectu objecti supernaturalis sicut nos ponimus; quia non ponit quod abstinencia et continentia sit volenda propter honorem divinum tanquam propter finem, nec talia et consimilia quae sunt praecepta a Deo quomodo bonus Christianus ponit talia. Sed solum ponit talia esse volenda quia sunt honesta vel conservativa naturae vel aliquid aliud mere naturale." Also see Sent., III, q. 10, I; and Sent., IV, q. 3, S; and Sent., III, q. 12, CC.

²Opus Nonaginta Dierum, c. 99 (Manchester ed.; II, 747); "Male arguit [Johannes XXII in bulla "Quia vir reprobus"], ac si argueret: 'Deus praecepit filiis Israel, ut legitur Exodi xx, Non occides, non moechaberis, non furtum facies; haec ergo eis prius praecepta non erant.' Constat enim quod in lege naturae ante legem Mosaicam haec erant praecepta...haec ante librum Deuteronomii praecepta fuerunt." See W. Kölmel, "Das Naturrecht bei Wilhelm Ockham," Franziskanischen Studien 35 (1953), pp. 39-85. Francis Oakley's article, "Medieval Theories of Natural Law; William of Ockham and the Significance of the Voluntarist Tradition," shows the problem with attempts to derive a coherent theory of natural law from the political works. Natural Law Forum 6 (1961), pp. 65-72.

theft or adultery are wrong? Because of Ockham's ambitious doctrine of God's legislative authority and his frequent descriptions of the divine will as the "first directing rule" of morality, the question of experiential criteria is problematic.

Two doctrines cause interpretive difficulties when isolating the non-scriptural foundations of moral judgments. First, ethical value is unavoidably an affair of human volition for Ockham. The intricate system of relationships proposed by St. Thomas and Duns Scotus for establishing moral suitability (convenientia) in actions controlled by the will are applied by Ockham to the will-acts themselves. Circumstances such as place and time pertain to the will itself.³ Even divine commands are understood as prescribing specific volitions and the circumstances of specific volitions.⁴ When the objects, ends and situational

³Sent., III, q. 10, F; "...circumstantiae nihil faciunt ad actum vel habitum partis sensitivae; sed tantum ad actum voluntatis quia sunt objecta ad actum voluntatis..." Also see Quodl., I, q. 20.

⁴Sent., III, q. 10, K; "Aliter potest dici quod actus interior et exterior prohibentur distinctis praeceptis, non quia sunt distincta peccata, quia peccatum solum consistit in actu interiori qui potest esse unus et idem cum actu exteriori et sine, sed ne detur simplicibus occasio errandi. Potest enim aliquis credere quod est peccatum solum quando actus interior est malus et actus exterior similiter. Et haec est opinio multorum quod non est peccatum in sola voluntate sed tantum quantum ponitur in opere." Also see Quodl., I, q. 20. Here Ockham objects to the doctrine of Duns Scotus that external (i.e., non-volitive) actions have some "proper moral goodness or evilness." See Scotus, Quodl., q. 18, nos. 12-14. This denial shows the clear distinction made by Ockham between moral determinants and moral values. On the other hand, it complicates the decision-making process. If there is nothing good or evil about sexual intercourse with another's wife, on what evident basis might the agent determine that to will adultery is evil?

factors affecting moral decisions are discussed in Ockham, their referent is not external or physical actions. Secondly and corroboratively, Ockham establishes the elements of the decision-making process as constitutive of actual virtue. Moral criteria appear in Ockham's work as components of the specific nature of will-acts. With these peculiarities in mind, we will study the causes-criteria of moral virtue, the degrees of virtuousness and the necessarily virtuous act. Our analysis attempts to reconstruct the moral order from the human agent's point of view. The final picture which emerges shows Ockham's concern for the divine will; but voluntarism is not the final word of his moral doctrine.

1. Causes and Criteria of Virtue

Ockham accepts the Aristotelian scheme of causality as comprising material, formal, efficient and final causes.⁵ But Ockham proposes definitions of these types of causes which cannot be considered strictly Aristotelian. Specifically, he defines an efficient cause as "that whose being or presence is followed by something else;" and a final cause is "a thing which is loved and desired efficiently by an agent."⁶ Both efficient

⁵Summulae in Libros Physicorum, II, c. 1-13; Sent., I, d. 35, q. 5, N; Quodl., IV, q. 1.

⁶Quodl., IV, q. 1; "Ex his patet quod causa finalis et efficiens ratione distinguuntur. Hoc est, diffinitiones exprimentes 'quid nominis' earum sunt diversae; quia diffinitio causae finalis est esse amatum et desideratum efficientis est esse agente propter quid amatum sit effectus. Diffinitio causae

and final causes are involved in the production of a moral act. Ockham's unique understanding of efficient and final causes provides the technique by which the circumstances-objects of a voluntary act become partial causes of the substance of a will-act and therefore the rectitude or evil of the will-act.

Ockham mentions three powers which comprise the total cause of a moral act--the will, God and the intellect.⁷ A voluntary act, the divine concursum and an intellectual act are

efficientis est esse illud ad cuius esse sive praesentiam sequitur aliquid. Et aliquando una istarum diffinitionum convenit uni et alia alteri; aliquando possunt competere eidem."

Cf. Aristotle, Metaphysics, V, 2; Physics, II, 7, 198a 14 -198b 10. It should be mentioned that the identification of final and efficient causality in some cases is not an innovation in Ockham's thought. Aristotle also teaches that these causes can be the same. "The soul is the cause or source of the living body. The terms cause and source have many senses. But the soul is the cause of its body alike in all three senses which we explicitly recognize. It is (a) the source or origin of movement, it is (b) the end, it is (c) the essence of the whole living body." (De Anima, II, 4, 415b 8 - 12, trans. J. A. Smith). Also see Physics, II, 7, 198a 25-27. On the other hand, Ockham's description of efficient causality seems to be more reserved than Aristotle's. Aristotle defines efficient causality as "initiating motion" as "the source or origin of movement" as "that from which the change or the resting from change first begins." Ockham, however, prefers to describe efficient causality without asserting a transfer of power. In Ockham's thought an efficient cause is a being whose precedence is required before another thing can be asserted. (See above, Chapter I, pp. 17-26.) Thus, all knowledge required for virtuous will-acts appears as a cause of virtue.

⁷Sent., III, q. 12, NN; "Si quaeras de actu prudentiae in quo genere causae se habet ad actum virtuosum, ex quo necessario requiritur per se? Et effectus sufficienter dependet ex causis suis essentialibus; igitur etc...Respondeo quod est causa efficiens necessario requisita ad actum virtuosum sine qua, impossibile est actum esse virtuosum stante ordinatione divina quae nunc est. Ita quod ad actum virtuosum necessario requiritur activitas actus prudentiae et activitas voluntatis; ita quod illae duae causae sunt causae partiales cum Deo respectu actus virtuosus." Also see Ibid., CCC; Quodl., III, q. 3.

mutually necessary to produce moral behavior. However, the causality of the will is "principally" required for the production of a praiseworthy or blameworthy act. Strictly speaking only a voluntary act is considered as a moral act.⁸ There is a rigid distinction between natural and free causality in Ockham's thought; moral goodness is necessarily the contingent effect of a free cause. Ockham implies that the free choice of the will establishes God and the intellect as partial causes of a moral effect. Given the willingness of God to concur and the mental preconception of some act, the human will remains free to produce or not produce the action.⁹ If the will elicits the act, however, then God and the intellect become partial causes. Because the efficient causality of the will is a sine qua non of moral activity, the fundamental characteristic of moral behavior is its

⁸Sent., III, q. 12, F; "Quarta conclusio est quod actus primo et principaliter virtuosus est actus voluntatis. Hoc patet primo quia ille solus est laudabilis primo vel vituperabilis. Alia autem non nisi secundario et quadam denominatione extrinseca; puta, per hoc, quod eliciuntur conformiter actui voluntatis... Praeterea, secundum sanctos, nullus actus est laudabilis vel vituperabilis nisi propter intentionem bonam vel malam. Intentio autem est actus voluntatis; ergo etc., Item, sola voluntas punitur sicut sola peccat secundum Anselmum, igitur etc... Also see, Quodl., III, q. 13; Sent., III, q. 10, D, H, R, I.

⁹Sent., IV, q. 14, G; "Loquendo de primo actu, posito omni sufficienti et necessario requisito ad talem actum, puta, ad actum voluntatis; si objectum cognoscatur et Deus velit concurrere cum voluntate ad causandum quando placet voluntati; potest voluntas ex sua libertate sine omni alia determinatione actuali vel habituali actum illum et ejus objectum elicere vel non elicere. Et ideo respectu illius actus non oportet in aliquo quod determinetur voluntas nisi a seipsa." Also see Sent., I, d. 43, q. 1, K.

voluntariness, its origination in freedom. Ockham's ethical program means to contain moral value within the contingent operation of the free will.

The intellect is a cause of moral activity because an act of reason must precede every volitional act. An act of understanding is an efficient cause of volition and hence, a partial efficient cause of every moral use of the will.¹⁰ To be precise, Ockham considers an act of prudence or Right Reason as the mental precedent for a correct act in the will.¹¹ An act of Right Reason is an essential cause of moral goodness in the will, but not a necessitating cause. The dictate of Right Reason does not force the will's production of a good act; on the contrary, Right Reason is not even a partial cause of moral behavior unless the will freely and contingently elicits an act conformed to Right

¹⁰Sent., III, q. 11, C; Sent., III, q. 12 NN. Cf. Chapter I, pp. 42-43.

¹¹Sent., III, q. 13, B; "Ad quaestionem primo sciendum est quod ad hoc quod actus rectus primo eliciatur a voluntate necessario requiritur aliqua recta ratio in intellectu. Hoc patet per rationem et auctoritates." Also see Sent., III, q. 11, C; and Sent., Prologue, q. 10, K. On the basis of these texts, we must take exception to Oswald Fucks, O.F.M., who denies that Ockham teaches the causal participation of Right Reason in the production of a good act. "If the contribution of Right Reason, while being necessary, is not one of causal influence on the moral act, then it can only be of the nature of a necessary condition or constitutive element of that act." The Psychology of Habit According to William Ockham (St. Bonaventure, New York: The Franciscan Institute, 1952), p. 89. In this text just quoted and in others (Sent., III, q. 13, F; Sent., III, q. 11, C), Ockham asserts that because Right Reason is a necessary condition or precedent for a virtuous act of the will, that Right Reason is thereby a cause of virtue. "Dictare sive regulare non est aliud quam speciali modo illum actum causare" as Ockham says. See below, in footnote 12.

Reason. The will freely chooses to accept or reject the intellectual dictate that "this ought to be done." But in order to freely do what is right, the agent must first know what is right. Hence, because acts of Right Reason or prudence must precede every correct operation of the will, Ockham considers Right Reason as a necessary efficient cause of moral goodness.

The dual meaning of "right reason" is consistently maintained in Ockham's analysis of the components of a morally good act. Recta ratio is both cause and object for virtuous will-acts. Assent to moral rules dictates the will's conformity; dictating is a special mode of causing.¹² The conformity of the will to Right Reason, a point which Ockham's moral doctrine insists upon, becomes the psychological parallel between intellectual and volitional assent to the same directive. Furthermore, Ockham calls recta ratio an "object" of a virtuous act. "The end and right reason and all the other circumstances are secondary partial objects of a virtuous act."¹³ The objects of an act give that action its specific nature. Every factor which determines a moral decision--intention, time, place, divine command, moral directive, physical act, sensitive passion, etc.--comprise the total object and specific character of a virtuous act. The

¹²Sent., III, q. 13, F; "Respondeo actum elici conformiter rationi rectae est ipsum elici secundum rectam rationem regulantem et dictantem talem actum esse eliciendum (quid quidem 'dictare' sive 'regulare' non est aliud quam speciali modo illum actum causare; sicut alibi patet)."

¹³Sent., III, q. 12, CCC. Also see Sent., III, q. 10, Q.

criteria by which future acts are known to be virtuous are the constituents of actual virtue. For example, walking to church for the exercise is morally indifferent and specifically different than walking to church because "God ought to be worshipped." These are not specifically identical acts with different circumstances. While Right Reason dictates or partially causes moral behavior, right reason (as a directive proposition) partially determines the kind of moral act produced.

It is the role of prudence to consider the propriety of an action in terms of its circumstances.¹⁴ All the circumstances which affect the moral status of intended acts, are determined and jointly dictated by the intellect. For example, the time and place in which volition should occur are dictated by Right Reason or prudence.¹⁵ A moral agent cannot determine whether the

¹⁴Sent., Prologue, q. 11 (I, 316).

¹⁵Sent., III, q. 12, DDD; "Si dicas quod requiritur ad actum virtuosus quod locus et tempus apprehendatur et dictentur a ratione sicut finis; et taliter non potest ratio causare actum virtuosum et per consequens tam locus quam tempus sunt objecta partialia actus dictandi et apprehensionis, non tamen sunt objecta volitionis virtuosae. Contra, volitio dicitur perfecte virtuosa quia in omnibus conformiter elicitur rationi rectae, quia si in aliquo conformiter elicereetur et in aliquo non, jam non esset perfecte virtuosa. Exemplum, si aliquis vellet actum carnalem propter talem finem dictatum a ratione recta, et nullum alium actum volendi haberet respectu loci et temporis quamquam ista dictentur a ratione recta, ista volitio non est perfecte virtuosa sed potius viciosa vel indifferens. Igitur ad hoc, quod sit perfecte virtuosa oportet quod conformetur rationi rectae et omnibus dictatis a ratione recta sibi debite competere. Igitur, si recta ratio dictet quod talis actus sit volendus loco et tempore, et per consequens, quicquid est objectum actus dictandi rectae erit oppositum [read,..."objectum"] actus perfecte virtuososi."

act of drinking is correct or incorrect without considering the circumstances within which the act of drinking occurs. To perform a virtuous act of drinking, the moral agent must voluntarily conform to Right Reason because it is obligatory, because the time and place are correct, because the end is right. Profit or pleasure are morally unacceptable motives to act in the correct time and place. The dictate of Right Reason includes a determination of the proper rule and end according to which the will should act. Consequently, Ockham considers the circumstances of an intended action as partial objects and partial causes of an actually virtuous act.¹⁶ The reasons why the will should elicit certain acts are recognized and affirmed intellectually, prior to any volitive fulfillment of obligation. Thus, the influence of final causes arrives through the efficient causality of the dictate of Right Reason.

Acts which St. Thomas Aquinas considers as intrinsically wrong, e.g., theft and murder; and which Duns Scotus considers as contingently wrong, e.g., telling a falsehood, are considered

¹⁶Sent., III, q. 10, N; "Respondeo, omnes circumstantiae actus voluntatis sunt objecta partialia illius actus; ita quod finis in omni actu est objectum principale sicut prius patuit, aliae circumstantiae sunt objecta secundaria partialia respectu illius actus. Exemplum, si enim ad hoc, quod actus voluntatis quo aliquis vult orare Deum sit perfecte virtuosus requirantur de necessitate istae circumstantiae; quia velit orare propter honorem Dei secundum rectum dictamen rationis in tempore statuto, puta, die dominico, in loco determinato, puta, in ecclesia; tunc iste actus sic virtuosus habet honorem Dei pro objecto principali, actu orandi pro objecto communi, rectam rationem, diem dominicum et ecclesiam pro objectis secundariis et partialibus; ita quod respectu actus voluntatis istae circumstantiae sunt objecta et causae effectivae partiales respectu illius actus."

as the "common object" of a volitional act by William Ockham. The physical actions denoted by the participles "stealing," "killing" or "lying" can be "common" to agents who act according to worthy or unworthy motives. An agent could contemplate stealing with a worthy motive, e.g., to avoid starvation; he could intend not to steal with an unworthy motive, e.g., to promote his own reputation. Physical acts are not moral actions independent of their voluntary and rational causes. The end or motive for which these "common objects" are produced by the will is considered by Ockham as the "principal object" of the will-act.¹⁷ "That object is the principal object of an act of the will whose choice is intended principally." The human will always acts for the sake of an end. Hence, Ockham asserts that the "common object" of a will-act can be substantially identical while the moral status of the will-act might change. During the same physical action--walking to church--an agent's intentions might change. Regarding the same physical act the will can produce a praiseworthy and a blameworthy act. Although the agent's physical action of walking to church is uninterrupted, and "walking to

¹⁷ *Idem.*, "Si dicas quod actus principaliter intentus a voluntate dicitur esse objectum primum illius actus; scilicet, si velim ambulare ad ecclesiam ad orandum propter laudem Dei, actus principaliter intentus est actus orandi vel ambulandi; ergo, isti actus sunt objecta primaria respectu actus voluntatis. Respondeo, illud objectum est principale objectum actus voluntatis cuius dilectio principaliter intenditur; huiusmodi est finis. Sed tamen vocando illud objectum principale quid est objectum causae, prout dicitur contra circumstantias requisitias, tunc actus exterior est objectum principale, quia objectum eorum commune est actus exterior, quia posset idem manere respectu multorum actuum voluntatis."

church" remains the common object of the will act, Ockham holds that a change in the agent's intention produces two different moral acts. In terms of the principle of morality, the will, an act of walking to church for God's sake and walking to church for my sake are not the same act. A change, therefore, in the partial objects of the will-act results in a different will-act.¹⁸ Ockham may follow the doctrine of St. Thomas and Duns Scotus in holding that certain acts are good or evil "by nature." But Ockham holds that only volitional acts which are deliberately conformed to Right Reason, or deliberately opposed to Right Reason, are good or evil "in se." The physical actions possible for the moral agent are "common objects;" they are one of the partial objects which together with the principal object or end, Right Reason dictates as the total cause of moral goodness in a voluntary act.¹⁹ Similarly to Peter Abelard, Ockham conceives the importance of the agent's intention to a degree which jeopardizes the "simple" natures of actions as sufficient or independent criteria of moral value. Dictated prior to virtuous will-acts, the required end affects the specific nature of the morally good volition.

Just as an action of the will is morally good because of its objects and causes, so also moral evil must be discussed in

¹⁸Ibid., O; "...quia semper per additionem vel subtractionem alicuius, quid est objectum et causa partialis respectu actus, variatur actus."

¹⁹Ibid., P-Q.

terms of causes. A sin of omission is a "privation;" that is to say, such a sin has a "defective cause."²⁰ The absence of an act which ought to be in the will indicates the absence of a cause which ought to have been operative. A sin of commission is not a privation; rather, it is the presence of a forbidden act within the will. Thus, the "positive" sins of commission have a positive cause. It is an act which "lacks rectitude" in the case of evil by commission; the will "lacks rectitude" in the case of evil by omission. Ockham questions the somewhat traditional distinction between the matter and the form of sin or moral evil because he thinks it incorrect if applied indiscriminately to both sins of commission and omission which have different causes.²¹

²⁰Sent., III, q. 12, YY; "Ex hoc patet quomodo peccatum dicitur privatio quia peccatum omissionis est formaliter privatio, et aliquid peccatum, scilicet commissionis, non dicitur privatio, sed est actus positivus quem voluntas tenetur non elicere, et ideo est peccatum. Si tamen cum isto peccato sit semper peccatum omissionis, tunc cum omni peccato est privatio, quia est peccatum. Non tamen omne peccatum est privatio quia solum peccatum omissionis est privatio. Et ex hoc patet quid est causa efficiens peccati, quia peccati omissionis nulla est causa positiva quia ipsum nihil est positivum, sed tantum habet causam defectivam, et illa est voluntas quae tenetur actum oppositum illi carentiae elicere et non elicit. Si autem loquamur de peccato commissionis, sic non solum voluntas creata est causa efficiens illius actus sed ipse Deus qui omnem actum immediate causat sicut causa secunda quaecunque, et ita est causa positiva difformitatis in tali actu; sicut ipsius substantiae actus, quia sicut dictum est, difformitas in actu commissionis non est nisi ipsemet actus elicited contra praeceptum divinum et nihil penitus aliud dicit."

²¹Idem., "Ex hoc etiam patet quod non bene dicitur quod actus positivus est materiale in peccato et carentia iustitiae debitae inesse est formale; quia aut est peccatum commissionis aut omissionis in voluntate aut utrumque simul. Si primum solum,

The objects and circumstances do not merely "surround" a morally good act, they cause and constitute that act. The dictate of Right Reason, the end or principal object, the common object, the time and place, the divine commands--these considerations are part of the prudential judgment that "this ought to be done." The factors by which the intellect judges what should be done, constitute the specific nature of the will-act which fulfills the dictate of prudence or Right Reason. The criteria which enable the moral agent to determine his moral obligation, comprise the structure of moral actions which are good. Ockham's doctrine of causality renders means by which the intellect decides moral goodness, as objects and causes of actual moral goodness. It seems to follow that there are no extrinsic moral determinants in Ockham's system regarding actual moral goodness.

The mind begins its deliberation with a directive proposition; a problematic situation which calls for some action generates a principle governing the agent's response. "Problematic" might mean a claim-producing situation (to meet a beggar evokes

puta si voluntas eliciat aliquem actum contra rectam rationem et praeceptum divinum et non teneatur elicere oppositum actum, tunc solum est in voluntate actus peccati sine omni carentia rectitudinis vel iustitiae debitae inesse. Et per consequens, carentia non est illi formale. Si secundum solum sit in voluntate, puta, quia voluntas tenetur aliquem actum elicere quem non elicit, tunc solum est illa carentia rectitudinis sine omni materiali et sine omni actu elicito. Si tertium detur, puta, quod voluntas elicit actum aliquem contra praeceptum Dei cum ad oppositum tenetur tunc est ibi duplex peccatum commissionis et omissionis. Peccatum commissionis est actus ille positivus solum; omissionis est carentia alterius actus debiti inesse. Et quod per consequens, nihil aliud erit dicere quam quod in peccato sunt talia duo materiale et formale, et quod peccatum commissum est materiale et omisum est formale."

the proposition - Every indigent in extreme need is to be helped) or a stimulation of sorts (to fall sick engenders the formula - Health is to be attained).²² Concrete circumstances suggest an end which the agent expresses as a directive. Ockham's analysis of the situational factors concern how or if these directives should be applied. He refrains from a priori classifications of specific will-acts as "suitable" or "unsuitable" with human nature. Instead, he outlines the procedural decisions which affect the relevance of rules to particular situations, of means to ends. Criteria serve to elucidate the precise import of evident directive principles and to characterize those actions subsumed under the principle. All virtuous activity is connected--not because virtuous actions all conform to some ideal of rational humanity or reflect a divine idea of human nature--but because they derive from common principles.²³ The elements of an ethical

²²Sent., Prologue, q. 10 (I, 290); "Circa primum dico quod intellectus practicus est respectu principiorum practicarum et etiam respectu conclusionum practicarum. Et ideo intellectus practicus est respectu finis, quando scilicet de aliquo fine iudicatur quod est appetendus vel prosequendus. Et hoc est intelligendum quia est respectu unius complexi quod affirmat aliquem finem esse appetendum, et istud est primum principium practicum in operando." Ockham describes the process of moral deliberation regarding the principle, Every indigent in extreme need is to be helped, in Sent., III, q. 13, K. The principle that "Health is to be attained" occurs in Sent., Prologue, q. 10 (I, 285-287) and Sent., II, q. 3, LL. Usually, therefore, the divine commands affect the agent's deliberation about the proper means for achieving his express ends. In the case of a special revelation, the divine wish would be the principle or expressed end since the encounter with the diety would be the "problematic" situation.

²³Sent., III, q. 12, T; "...virtutes omnes generales connectuntur in quibusdam principiis universalibus; puta, Omne

deliberation are together dictated by Right Reason giving the specific nature of conformed will-acts. The intellectual dictate includes and combines decisions about pertinent rules, the "simple" or common nature of the proposed action, the proper end, time and place. Conforming to this dictate, the will-act assumes the specific "ratio" of the combined judgments.

Two difficulties attend Ockham's methods. First, he gives no clear explanation of how the "suitability" or "propriety" of situational factors could be inferred from directive principles. For example, he claims that practical principles suggest a certain final cause which "ought to be intended if everything were ordered suitably, and thus practical knowledge is orderable to such an end as if by its nature."²⁴ Ockham seems to teach that the propriety of circumstances and ends are indicated by the directive which initiates moral deliberations. The precise technique for deriving the "suitable order" of situational factors is left unsaid. Ockham offers only the prudence of the moral agent to fill the silence. The second problem arises because Ockham contains all moral determinants within the will-act itself. The goodness or evilness of will-acts is not distinct from the substance of those acts. "If you ask from where an action

honestum est faciendum, Omne bonum est diligendum, Omne dictatum a recta ratione est faciendum..." Also see Sent., III, q. 11, 2.

²⁴Sent., Prologue, q. 11 (I, 309). The passages in Ockham which assert some order between things as the basis of moral judgments are rare.

receives its goodness or evil? I answer from the same causes by which the act has its substance--from the common object and all the circumstances as if from many partial causes which asserted together make one total cause."²⁵ The difficulty here is that Ockham also claims that God could separate the "absolute being" of any created volition from its goodness or evilness.²⁶ If the nature of volition varies in proportion to the diverse causes-objects, how could God produce the specific nature of any created will-act without producing moral goodness or evil? Ockham would answer that God is not subject to any obligation and thus He cannot produce "goodness" or "evilness" even though He might "duplicate" every human volition as total cause. Yet by Ockham's standards, acts which are not caused to fulfill the agent's obligation cannot be specifically similar to actions which are so caused. This problem affects the coherence of Ockham's doctrine of the moral good. We return to it in Chapter V.

2. Degrees and Types of Moral Virtue

The rational object of volition gives the will-act its specific nature. The intellectual consideration of the propriety

²⁵Sent., III, q. 10, Q. Also see Quodl., III, q. 14.

²⁶Sent., II, q. 19, F; "...quia Deus potest omne absolutum causare sine omni alio quid non est idem cum illo absoluto; sed actus odiendi Deum quantum ad esse absolutum in eo non est idem cum difformitate et malitia in actu; ergo, Deus potest causare quicquid absolutum est in actu odiendi Deum vel nolendi non causando aliquam difformitatem vel malitiam in actu."

of some action (common object), includes deliberation about the end (principal object), the right reason, the place, the time and the divine wish. These objects can be partial causes, and thus components of the volitional act which conforms to Right Reason or prudence. Thus, in discussing Ockham's doctrine of degrees and types of moral goodness, it is important to recognize that only direct and immediate experience of an agent's spiritual acts can verify whether the agent's effects are morally good or evil. The motives and intentions of a person's behavior are not readily apparent to the observer. I know the reasons for my actions; I do not perceive or observe the reasons for the behavior of other persons. The constitution of moral good and virtue must be approached introspectively.

Ockham distinguishes five grades or degrees of virtuousness on the basis of variations of the intellectual objects of volition. He cautions that each degree of virtue is an instance of generically the same virtue, e.g., justice or temperance, but that each grade constitutes a specifically different act than the other four grades of that virtue.²⁷

²⁷ Sent., III, q. 12, K; "Tertia distinctio est quod iustitia et quaelibet alia virtus moralis secundum quid, non est alia virtus nec formaliter nec equivalenter, habet quinque gradus non quidem ejusdem speciei sed distinctarum specierum... (in finem)... Distinctio numeralis istorum actuum et habituum patet per separabilitatem ipsorum. Distinctio specifica patet primo per distinctionem specificam objectorum partialium.... Ideo quando talia objecta variantur secundum speciem, actus et habitus eorum variantur secundum speciem, sed actus cuiuslibet gradus ascendendo habet aliquid objectum et circumstantiam speciem quid non habet alius gradus inferior. Secundum patet quia quantumcunque unus

The first level of virtuousness is described as an act produced in the created will which is conformed to Right Reason, and the definite circumstances dictated by Right Reason for the sake of the "justness" or "goodness" or "peace"--or any naturally good end.²⁸ The second degree of perfection possible in a virtuous act includes these elements and the added resolve that the agent will persevere in his virtuous act in spite of the consequences. In this situation, the agent might intend to follow Right Reason for the sake of justice and intend to perform this just act in the face of fortune and death.²⁹ The third degree of virtuousness includes all the elements of the first two degrees. This third "level" is characterized by the added intention to perform some just act precisely because it is obligatory--"quia

gradus augetur in infinitum, nunquam inclinabit ad actum alterius gradus, sed illa quae sunt ejusdem speciei possunt habere effectum ejusdem speciei, igitur etc."

²⁸Ibid., "Primus gradus est quando aliquis vult facere opera justa conformiter rationi rectae dictanti talia opera esse facienda secundum determinatas circumstantias, respicientes praecise ipsum objectum propter honestatem ipsius operis sicut propter finem; puta, intellectus dictat quod omni tale opus est faciendum tali loco, tali tempore, propter honestatem ipsius operis vel propter pacem vel aliud tale et voluntas elicit actum volendi talia opera conformiter juxta dictamen intellectus."

²⁹Ibid., "Secundus gradus est quando voluntas vult facere opera justa secundum rectum dictamen predictum et propter hoc, cum intentione nullo modo dimittendi talia pro quocumque quid est contra rectam rationem et non pro morte si recta ratio dictaret tale opus non esse dimittendum pro morte; puta, si homo velit sic honorare patrem secundum predictum dictamen rectum, loco et tempore etc., cum intentione et voluntate non dimittendi illum hominem pro morte si immineret."

est sic dictatum a recta ratione."³⁰ The fourth degree of virtue is the "true and perfect moral virtue about which the saints speak."³¹ Virtue in the fourth grade includes all the elements of the prior degrees but adds the precise intention of loving God by producing the action. Finally, Ockham identifies a fifth stage of virtuousness, namely, heroic virtue.³² This level of

³⁰Ibid., "Tertius gradus est quando aliquis vult tale opus facere secundum rectam rationem praedictam cum intentione etc., et propter hoc, vult tale opus secundum circumstantias praedictas facere praecise et semel; quia est sic dictatum a recta ratione."

³¹Ibid., "Quartus gradus est quando vult illud facere secundum omnes conditiones et circumstantias praedictas et propter hoc, propter amorem Dei precise; puta, quia sic dictatum est ab intellectu quod talia opera sunt facienda propter amorem Dei praecise, et ita universaliter est perfecta et vera virtus moralis de qua Sancti loquuntur. Autem sit proprie virtus moralis patet, primo, quia proprie generatur ex actuibus moralibus et inclinatur ad actus consimiles et dirigit in actibus respectu eorundem objectorum quod proprie pertinet ad virtutem moralem. Secundo, quia variatio finis non variat virtutem quantum ad moralitatem vel non moralitatem, quia respectu diversorum finium possunt esse diversas virtutes morales. Hoc autem solum variatur finis a tribus primis gradibus. Tertio quia vicium oppositum est proprie vicium morale, igitur istud est virtus moralis."

³²Ibid., "Quintus gradus quando aliquis eligit facere tale opus et non praedictas conditiones excepto fine, quando indifferenter potest fieri propter Deum tanquam propter finem aut propter honestatem vel pacem vel aliquid tale quid, dico pro intentione philosophi et propter hoc, elicit tale opus facere actu imperativo formaliter non tantum equivalenter, et si tunc velit actu imperativo formaliter facere vel pati aliquid quod ex natura sua excedit communem statum hominum, et est contra naturalem inclinationem vel si tale opus non excedit communem statum hominum, nec est hoc contra inclinationem naturalem quantum est ex natura actus, tamen ex circumstantia est contra inclinationem naturalem, talis inquam actus imperatus formaliter tale opus est generativus virtutis heroicæ, vel elicitus a virtute heroica secundum intentionem philosophi et secundum veritatem, et nullus alius habitus generatus ex quibuscunque aliis actibus est virtus heroica. Exempla primi, aliquis vult actu imperativo formaliter morte sibi

virtue directs an action to either God or a natural end such as "justice" without considering the other objects and circumstances. This degree of virtue is characterized by a general commitment to acts which exceed the "common state of man" or "natural inclinations" for the sake of some worthy goal. To profess one's faith in spite of imminent death is an example of heroic virtue. Heroic virtue is not identical with the second stage of virtue because it is the total and unqualified love of some good, while the second level of virtuousness is the commitment to some good within a definite set of circumstances.

Strictly speaking, a moral virtue is a volitional habit rather than an act of the will. However, these five grades of moral habits are caused by repeated will-acts which are specifically the same as the various habits engendered. Further, moral habits incline the will to produce specifically the same acts as those which produce the volitional habit. Hence, these grades of moral habits can be applied to five corresponding degrees of virtuous acts. Clearly, the degrees of morally good or virtuous action show a progressively more complex structure (at least, through the first four grades) which is indicated by a progressively more complete object.

The different levels of moral perfection possible for a volitional act reflect different partial objects of the will-act.

imminente pro defensione fidei sive combustione sibi imminente sustinere mortem vel combustionem." Also see *Sent.*, III, q. 15, D, where Ockham disputes Duns Scotus on the nature of heroic virtue.

Especially important is the end intended by the agent in differentiating the five kinds of virtuousness.³³ Each level is characterized by the distinct intensity with which the agent intends his end, or by a distinct and proper end. The importance of the agent's intention, and the end intended in determining the virtuousness of an act is further substantiated by Ockham's doctrine of the types of morally good actions.

Ockham holds that acts of the human will can be morally indifferent, contingently good or evil and intrinsically good or evil. Indifferent acts are possible; first, because the human will can immediately and spontaneously love or reject any object on the basis of its apprehension, and secondly, because the human will can produce two acts simultaneously. These "explanations" require explanation. Regarding the first, Ockham is not prepared to admit that a moral agent acts correctly or incorrectly without deliberately intending to do so. To love some object, without considering the object as morally good or evil, is not actually good or evil. For example, to simply pray without considering the propriety of the circumstances or motive, is morally neutral.³⁴ Ockham suggests that not every action possible

³³The fourth level of moral virtue is "true and perfect" virtue for Ockham. It is interesting to note that Ockham holds that the Aristotelian virtues produce the same physical acts as do Christian of "true and perfect" virtue, but they are specifically different virtues since the end or intention of a pagan is different than that of a Christian. See Sent., III, q. 10, i; Sent., IV, q. 3, s.

³⁴Sent., III, q. 12, M; "Quinta distinctio est quod aliquis habitus est intrinsece bonus moraliter, aliquis intrinsece

to man is the subject of moral obligation; man is not obliged to direct every action to the love and honor of God.³⁵ A will-act produced without regard for the circumstances or the dictate of Right Reason, and which is not commanded or prohibited by some valid moral obligation is morally indifferent. Regarding the second, Ockham considers morally indifferent acts as ones which can be rendered morally good or evil by an intrinsically good

malus et viciosus, aliquis neuter sive indifferens...Exemplum tertii, velle simpliciter orare sine aliquae circumstantia dictata a ratione, quia nec propter bonum finem nec propter malum finem, et talis actus sive sit interior sive exterior, solum dicitur bonus denominatione extrinseca, et nullo modo intrinsece bonus nec viciosus."

³⁵Ockham defends his assertion that the human will can produce acts which are morally indifferent in Sent., I, d. 1, q. 1 (I, 378); "Et si dicatur quod ille actus est malus quando diligitur aliquid quod est ad finem et non propter finem, respondeo quod actus respectu alicuius ad finem potest esse non malus quamvis non dirigatur vel non referatur positive ad finem; et hoc maxime si non apprehendatur finis. Et si dicatur quod omnis defectus circumstantiae requisitae ad actum bonum facit actum malum, sed circumstantia finis est requisita ad actum moraliter bonum, ergo quandocumque deficit, actus erit malus. Sed in proposito deficit, ergo etc. Respondeo quod non omnis defectus circumstantiae requisitae ad actum moraliter bonum facit actum esse malum vel peccatum. Tunc enim ignorantia nunquam excusaret; cum tamen secundum doctores et Sanctos, ignorantia aliquando excuset a toto. Sed quando deficit aliqua circumstantia ad quam eliciens actum pro tunc obligatur, tunc est actus malus, si autem non obligetur tunc ad illam circumstantiam, non est actus malus."

Ockham may argue here against the position of St. Thomas that a free act within the human will is always either morally good or bad, since that actual act is either referred to the final end or not. See Thomas, Summ. Theol., Ia IIae, q. 18, art. 9. Scotus affirmed the possibility of actually indifferent acts (See Comm. Ox., II, d. 41, q. unica; and Rep. Par., II, d. 41, q. unica) because there is no affirmative command of God that every human act must be directed to the Ultimate End. Ockham seems to agree with the argument of Scotus on this point.

act.³⁶ Moral goodness or evil can be predicated of an indifferent act by extrinsic denomination; such predication requires that the will produce two acts simultaneously--one which is morally neutral and the second which is intrinsically good or evil. For example, the human will can simultaneously hate sin and love God. To simply hate sin without any ulterior motive or regard for the pertinent circumstances is morally indifferent; to hate sin, however, out of the contemporaneous love of God renders the hate of sin an extrinsically good act.

Indifferent actions are morally good or evil "per aliud." If an indifferent act is caused by an inherently good action, then the morally neutral act is "denominated" or called extrinsically good. Ockham does not distinguish sharply between morally

³⁶Sent., III, q. 10, P; "Secundo, dico quod si quaeratur utrum aliquis actus voluntatis posset esse indifferens ad bonitatem et maliciam, et post fieri bonus vel malus denominatione extrinseca, sicut actus partis sensitivae? Tunc distinguendum est, quia aut ponitur quod in voluntate possunt esse simul duo actus volendi naturaliter aut non. Si non, tunc non posset esse aliquis actus in voluntate indifferens praedicto modo, quia non posset sic esse indifferens nisi quatenus conformare posset se alicui alteri perfecte et intrinsece virtuoso; sicut actus appetitus sensitivi non dicitur aliter virtuosus, ut patet. Si autem duo actus volendi possunt simul esse naturaliter in voluntate, quid credo esse verum, sicut in primo probatum est, tunc in voluntate potest esse aliquis actus indifferens modo praedicto. Exemplum, si enim diligam aliquem hominem absolute terminando actum volendi ad illum hominem et non ad aliquam circumstantiam bonam vel malam, tunc iste actus non est bonus vel malus moraliter, sed est neuter; sed tunc stante illo actu, eligam alium actum quo volo diligere tantum hominem propter Deum secundum rectam rationem, et secundum omnes alias circumstantias requisitas, iste secundus actus est perfecte et intrinsece virtuosus, et qui prius fuit indifferens nunc est virtuosus denominatione extrinseca." Ockham refers to Sent., I, d. 1, q. 1 (I, 381-384), where he shows the possibility of two acts simultaneously inhering in the human will.

indifferent action and morally contingent acts.³⁷ Both indifferent and contingently moral acts are considered as actually good or evil only "per aliud"--that is, by being caused by an action which is good or evil "in se."

Some actions are called good or evil by intrinsic denomination or "in se."³⁸ Now Ockham considers acts such as "to wish to pray," which is conformed to Right Reason and the divine precept and which intends to honor God, as intrinsically good. A volitional act which is contrary to Right Reason and the divine commandment and which intends an unworthy end, is intrinsically evil. The simple act of praying can be morally indifferent, intrinsically good or intrinsically evil depending on the reasons why the agent prays. "Praying" is the common object of will-acts of various moral degrees and of various intentions. When the act of praying is produced by the will because it is right, and

³⁷ Quodl., III, q. 13; "Et sic intelligendo 'actum virtuosum' dico secundo, quod sic potest aliquis actus esse virtuosus necessario. Quod proba: Quia impossibile est, quod aliquis actus contingenter virtuosus, ita quod indifferenter potest dici virtuosus vel vitiosus, fiat determinate virtuosus nisi propter alium actum necessario virtuosus." (ed. P. Boehner, Philosophical Writings, p. 145.) Also see Sent., III, q. 12, E.

It seems that Ockham means by contingently and indifferently good and evil acts, those acts which are good or evil "per aliud." While intrinsically and necessarily good or evil acts are those which are good or evil "in se."

³⁸ Sent., III, q. 12, M; "Quinta distinctio est quod aliquis habitus est intrinsece bonus moraliter, aliquis intrinsece malus et vitiosus... Exemplum primi, velle orare propter honorem Dei et quia praeceptum est a Deo secundum rectam rationem etc., Exemplum secundi, velle orare propter vanam gloriam et contra praeceptum Dei et contra rectam rationem."

because of the honor of God, and because the time and place are right, then the act of praying is intrinsically good.

The sources of goodness or evil can be threefold; ex genere, ex circumstantia and ex principio meritorio.³⁹ A generically good or evil act is simply an "imputable" act; that is to say, an act of the free will in desiring an apprehended object can be good or evil.⁴⁰ Without considering the dictate of Right Reason or the proper circumstances, the will spontaneously moves to some rationally given object. As a free act of the will, this spontaneous act has the genus of moral acts, i.e., it is within the power of the will. If the will happens to choose an object which is either permitted or commanded by valid moral laws (but without a deliberate intent to fulfill those laws), then the act

³⁹Sent., III, q. 12, N; "Sexta distinctio est quod aliquis actus est bonus ex genere vel malus, aliquis ex circumstantia, aliquis ex principio meritorio. Exemplum primi quantum ad actum bonum ex genere; sicut orare, dare elemosinam, sive velle talia facere absolute sine omni circumstantia bona vel mala. Exemplum quantum ad actum malum, ut furtum facere, velle fornicari absolute sine aliqua circumstantia bona vel mala, de quibus dicunt philosophie et sancti quod statim nominata convoluta sunt cum malitia." Also see Sent., Prologue, q. 10 (I, 284); and Sent., III, q. 11, X.

⁴⁰Ockham does argue against calling an act which is good "ex genere" virtuous. "Si dicas quod ostenso aliquo objecto diligibili, sine omni dictamine rationis posset voluntas illud diligere et iste est bonus moraliter, quia diligit quid diligendum est etc., puta, si formetur hoc complexum 'hoc bonum est diligibile' et intellectus non assentiat, tunc est dubium utrum illa dilectio sit bona moraliter. Respondeo, licet actus ille sit bonus ex genere et non sit malus moraliter, tamen non est virtuosus quia de ratione actus virtuosi est quod eliciatur conformiter rationi rectae et respectu objecti convenientis et quod habens talem actum sit sciens." Sent., III, q. 11, x. Cf. Scotus, Quodl., q. 18, n. 6, where Scotus analyzes "generic" and "specific" goodness in acts similarly to the analysis of Ockham.

is generically good. If, however, the will spontaneously loves an object which is morally forbidden, then that act is generically bad. The difference between generically good or evil acts, and morally indifferent acts, is whether the object chosen is morally commanded, morally forbidden, or subject to no moral obligation.⁴¹

Ockham does not mean that generically good or evil acts are actually good or evil. This would mean that a moral agent acts correctly and virtuously without intending to act correctly--an implication which Ockham rejects. Rather, good and evil ex genere should be conceived as the "common object" of will-acts which can be actually good or evil depending upon the specific determinations which the "common object" receives.

Actual moral goodness or evil depends upon the circumstances (ex circumstantia). Ockham's examples show the dictate of Right Reason, the end, the required circumstances of time and place and the divine commands as the specific determinants of

⁴¹We disagree with Othmar Suks, Franciscan Studies, X, p. 32, who sees generic goodness or evil as the logical concept of a possible act while an indifferent act is actually produced within the created will. "An act ex genere is taken as the general notion or concept of such good or bad acts which are not as yet actualized, while the indifferent act regards the act in its actual performance." The previous footnote shows that Ockham recognizes that generically good or evil acts can be actual with the will. The proper distinction between indifferent acts and acts which are good or evil ex genere is the fact that the former acts can be rendered good or evil by a different act which is intrinsically good or evil, while acts which are generically good can be specified as actually good acts within the present moral order, while acts which are generically bad cannot be specified as actually good stante praecepto quae nunc est.

moral goodness or evil.⁴² The factors by which the agent recognizes the moral right or wrong of a possible act are the criteria of time and place, end and dictate of reason. These criteria become moral determinants if the will actually produces the act which is recognized as potentially good or evil.

Ockham's discussion of actions which are good ex principio meritorio, moves into the realm of extrinsic moral determinants.⁴³ The fact that an action is meritorious depends upon the free and undetermined will of God who can accept that action as worthy of a supernatural reward. Such acceptance is extrinsic to the nature of the action caused by the moral agent.⁴⁴ When a generically and specifically good action is produced by the created will, while intending to love God by this action, then this action is meritorious by God's ordinate power.⁴⁵ The meritoriousness

⁴²Sent., III, q. 12, N; "Exemplum secundi [boni vel mali ex circumstantia], velle abstinere secundum circumstantias debitas et dictatas a recta ratione propter honestatem tanquam propter finem vel propter conservationem naturae vel propter alium finem quem intenderet purus paganus. Exemplum secundi quantum ad actum malum, velle fornicari contra rectam rationem, loco indebito etc., et propter libidinem tanquam propter finem."

⁴³Idem., "Exemplum tertii [boni ex principio meritorio], velle continere secundum rectam rationem et secundum circumstantias et propter honorem divinum, quia talis actus est Deo acceptus."

⁴⁴Even the act of loving God above all is not meritorious of its nature. See Sent., I, d. 17, q. 2, C. The love of God above all is, however, morally good of its nature. See Quodl., III, q. 13 and 14.

⁴⁵Sent., III, q. 10, I; "Aliae autem virtutes requirunt naturaliter tam actum quam habitum in parte sensitiva et generantur ex actibus voluntatis et requirunt caritatem ad hoc, quod

of an act, therefore, is the extrinsic determination of divine acceptance given to actions which are good "through the circumstances." Such "acceptance" does not affect the nature of the created volitive act.

The degrees and types of moral perfection possessed by voluntary acts are distinguished by Ockham on the basis of the will's objects. All five degrees of virtuousness, and acts which are good ex circumstantia, are intrinsically good so that "good" is predicated of these acts "in se." Indifferent acts, acts which are good or evil ex genere, and contingently virtuous or wicked acts are called good extrinsically; that is, by causal dependence upon an intrinsically virtuous or wicked act. If a generically good action is further specified by the proper end and circumstances of that act, or if an indifferent act is caused by an intrinsically good act, then it is possible to call those acts "good" by extrinsic denomination. Notice that the exercise of freedom is a factor common to all types of moral acts and to all degrees of moral perfection. The rational objects of volition account for the specific differences.

Ockham's explanation of contingently and necessarily good acts through the Reportatio, Ordinatio, and Quodlibetal Questions is not without certain problems of consistency. The major problem should be indicated before continuing to an analysis of the Quodlibet Three, question 13, in which Ockham resolves this

causent actum meritorium; ita quod in omni actu meritorio, caritas est causa efficiens partialis..."

problem. It is Ockham's position, from his earliest treatment of moral goodness in the Reportatio, that some activities are necessarily good, and not simply contingently good.⁴⁶ Somewhat later, Ockham offers a proof that some act must be necessarily good, else no act would be even contingently good.⁴⁷ Since Ockham considers a contingently good act as good "per aliud," he finds it necessary to terminate the analysis of the causes of contingent goodness at some act which is "in se" or intrinsically virtuous, or admit an infinite series of causes. For example, "to pray" without considering the propriety of praying, is a morally contingent act; this act can be good or evil depending upon the reasons for which the agent continues to pray. "To pray" is simply the common object of will-acts which can be morally good or evil. But Ockham also speaks of "praying" as intrinsically good when this act is elicited for the sake of

⁴⁶Ibid., P-Q.

⁴⁷Sent., III, q. 12, E; "Tertia conclusio quod aliquis actus est necessario et intrinsece virtuosus. Hoc probatur quia impossibile est quod aliquis actus contingenter virtuosus, sic scilicet quod potest dici indifferens viciosus et virtuosus, fiat determinate virtuosus propter novitatem alicuius actus non necessario virtuosus, quia per nullum contingenter modo dicto, virtuosum fit alius actus sive denominatur virtuosus; quia si sic, aut ille secundus actus qui est contingenter virtuosus per aliquem alium actum est necessario viciosus, aut per actum contingenter virtuosus. Si primo modo, tunc eadem ratione erit standum in primo, etiam tunc habetur propositum, scilicet, quod in homine est aliquis actus qui est necessario virtuosus. Si secundo modo erit processus in infinitum vel stabitur ad aliquem actum necessario virtuosus, et sic habetur propositum; sed actus hominis tam exteriores quam interiores, puta 'intelligere et velle' secundum quod quilibet est actus indifferens sunt contingenter virtuosus.

God's honor and according to the dictate of Right Reason and the divine command. In this example, "praying" is intrinsically good because the will chooses to pray for the honor of God and the other required circumstances. Now, this intrinsically good act is good ex circumstantia. It is performed in a determinate place, at a determinate time, for a definite end and according to a definite command of God according to Right Reason. It is conceivable that a different set of circumstances would render this act as morally wrong. For example, if I pray at a time when I should be working to support my family, if I pray in the middle of the highway, or if God commands that creatures should not pray, then praying might not be intrinsically virtuous. The act of praying, therefore, is intrinsically good only within a definite set of circumstances. And this is the problem with Ockham's exposition so far. Some act must be necessarily good or no act would be morally good; however, the intrinsically and necessarily good acts which Ockham describes are clearly dependent upon a definite set of changeable circumstances for their moral goodness. Thus, it seems to follow that unless Ockham can locate an act which is morally good regardless of the circumstances of time and place and divine commands, then Ockham has not established the possibility of a necessarily good act⁴⁸--nor the possibility of any moral action.

⁴⁸Ockham even asserts that "there are no circumstances regarding an act intrinsically and necessarily virtuous." See Sent., III, q. 12, FFF; "Ad primum argumentum secundae

3. The Necessarily Good Act

In the Quodlibetal Questions, when Ockham again discusses the importance of asserting some act as necessarily good, there is a subtle but important shift in his treatment of this issue. Ockham is now concerned, not with showing that some act of the will is good "in se" or intrinsically good; but with showing that some act of the will is good whenever it occurs in the human will. These are distinct issues. In Quodlibet Three, question 13, Ockham asks, "Whether only an act of the will is necessarily virtuous or wicked?" Therein, Ockham explicitly considers the problem of reconciling the assertions, first, that some act of the will must be morally good whenever it is elicited by the created will, and secondly, that God can render any action possible for a man to perform as morally obligatory through His absolute power. Father Boehner has edited this question and it stands as Ockham's most mature statement on the problem of the necessarily good act. Ockham's scholars, however, do not agree upon the proper interpretation of Quodlibet Three.

dubitationis, dico quod non sunt circumstantiae respectu actus intrinsece et necessario virtuosus; sed sunt objecta secundaria respectu illius actus, sed sunt circumstantiae respectu illorum actuum sive sint actus voluntatis sive intellectus sive cuiuscunque alterius potentiae, qui solum sunt virtuosus extrinsece secundum quamdam denominationem extrinsecam per conformitatem ad actum aliquem intrinsece virtuosus." Also see Quodl., III, q. 14 for a parallel text. Furthermore, Ockham has not defended the fact of a necessarily good act against the absolute power of God. Ockham often shows that moral norms could change due to the absolute power of God. Thus, a change in the divine command would apparently render any action which Ockham asserts as intrinsically good, as evil if the divine command should now prohibit that act.

To Erich Hochstetter, Ockham's argument proves that God could not change the moral requirement to "love God above all."⁴⁹ Hochstetter sees a development within Ockham's work because the earlier Commentary asserts the possibility of a divine command to hate God and the creature's conformity, while the thirteenth question of Quodlibet Three holds the human fulfillment of this command as impossible. Father Boehner holds that "God can command everything with this power (potentia Dei absoluta) except not to obey him."⁵⁰ The divine command to hate God is an ontological and a logical possibility. That is, the statement "hate

⁴⁹Franz. Studien, 32, p. 16; "Das Ganze ist also eine bloße theoretische Möglichkeit ohne ethische Konsequenzen. Auch hinsichtlich des Gebotes des Gotteshasses ist Ockham im Sentenzenkommentar, soweit wir sehen, noch nicht zu voller Klarheit durchgedrungen. Denn dort sagt er noch: 'Deus potest praecipere, quod voluntas creata odiat eum. Igitur voluntas creata potest hoc facere.' In den Quodlibeta aber hat er die Unmöglichkeit dieser Position erkannt. Denn einem Gebot Gottes folgen heißt Gott lieben, weil nur in der Gesinnung der Liebe zu Gott für Ockham echter Gehorsam möglich ist, wie wir oben dargelegt haben." Professor Oberman claims that Hochstetter interprets this "Quod libet passage as denying the possibility for God to command somebody to hate him." The Harvest of Medieval Theology, p. 93, n. 10. But it seems that Hochstetter is claiming only that men could not obey the command.

⁵⁰Philosophical Writings, p. xlix-1; "However it is well known that Ockham admitted that God can command by His absolute power that a person should hate Him or at least not love Him. It is important to note that this possibility is admitted in the purely ontological and logical realm. For in this realm there cannot be a contradiction, since it is a fact that creatures can command others to hate God; the command, therefore, is a reality, considered as a mental or spoken sentence, and every reality has God as its primary cause. In the ethical realm, however, an antinomy is encountered, the only real antinomy in Ockham's philosophy. If God commanded a creature to hate Him or simply not to love Him, the creature would be obliged to obey, but it could not obey since in obeying it would love Him."

God" as a verbal, mental or written sentence is fully possible. The statement "hate God" is not logically self-contradictory since it is a meaningful statement. However, the divine command would be ethically or psychologically impossible for the creature to obey. Thus, an actual command to hate God, if issued by God, would constitute an ethical antinomy, i.e., an instance of simultaneously valid but contradictory obligations. Erwin Iserloh considers a divine command to hate God a contradiction.⁵¹ Iserloh, however, quotes the Centiloquium in support of his interpretation and Father Boehner has offered serious and unanswered evidence that this work is not an authentic text of Ockham.⁵² Ernest A. Moody holds that "although there would seem to be no patent self-contradiction in supposing that God could issue such a command, it would seem to be self-contradictory, and hence impossible for God to will that this command be fulfilled."⁵³ Father Lucan Freppert agrees that God might issue this command, but he holds that the moral agent "cannot disobey

⁵¹Gnade und Eucharistie., p. 50; "Die nach Böhner im Quodlibet von Ockham aufgewiesene psychologische Unmöglichkeit ist klarer gesehen vom Verfasser des Centiloquium, allerdings sieht der auch einen logischen Widerspruch gegeben. Gott kann alles, was keinen Widerspruch in sich schliesst. Den Gotteshass befehlen heisst aber, etwas Widersprüchliches anordnen. Denn ein Gebot erfüllen, heisst verdienstlich handeln. Verdienstliches Handeln ist aber Handeln aus Liebe zu Gott. Der Betreffende würde also Gott hassen aus Liebe zu ihm."

⁵²Collected Articles, pp. 33-42.

⁵³"William of Ockham," The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Vol. 5, p. 316.

in this case."⁵⁴ Presupposing the creature's obligation to the divine legislator, the command requires both love and hate. Father Freppert claims either response is ethically satisfactory. In light of these divergent interpretations, it is necessary to reconsider Quodlibet Three, question 13.

When Ockham asserts that "Some act of the will is necessarily virtuous" it is necessary to consider the meaning of "necessarily." It can mean that the act exists necessarily--it cannot not-exist. This, of course, is not Ockham's meaning since every created effect is ontologically contingent; only the divine being is metaphysically necessary. There are two acceptable meanings of "necessary" when referring to a virtuous act: first, "it cannot be wicked while the divine commandment stands," secondly, "it cannot be caused by the created will unless it be virtuous."⁵⁵ These two meanings are obviously distinct yet Ockham considers them as similar. Nevertheless, Ockham offers distinct proofs to establish that the same act, namely, the

⁵⁴The Basis of Morality..., pp. 189-190.

⁵⁵Quodl., III, q. 13; "Circa affirmativam exponentem dico primo, quod de virtute sermonis nullus actus est necessario virtuosus. Hoc probatur: Tum quia nullus actus necessario est, et per consequens non est necessario virtuosus. Tum quia quilibet actus potest fieri a solo Deo, et per consequens non est necessario virtuosus, quia talis actus non est in potestate voluntatis. Tamen aliter potest intelligi actum esse virtuosum, ita quod non posset esse vituosus stante divino praecepto. Similiter, non potest causari a voluntate creata nisi sit virtuosus. Et sic intelligendo 'actum virtuosum' dico secundo, quod sic potest aliquis actus esse virtuosus necessario." (Quoted from Philosophical Writings, p. 145, since Boehner's edition of this question is preferred to the Strasbourg Edition of 1491).

altruistic love of God, is virtuous necessarily in either of the acceptable meanings of "necessarily."

The proof that some act "cannot be wicked while the divine commandment stands" actually proves that the love of God above all is necessarily virtuous even if the divine command does not stand.⁵⁶ Admitting the possibility that God could command a creature to hate Him, Ockham does not believe that a creature could obey this command without thereby performing an act of love for God by his obedience. The command is neither logically nor metaphysically impossible; Ockham affirms the position that he had maintained since the Reportatio, that God could issue such a command.⁵⁷ Thus Iserloh's interpretation does not seem tenable. The impossibility associated with this command pertains

⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 146-47; "Si dicatur, quod Deus potest praecipere, quod pro aliquo tempore non diligatur ipse, quia potest praecipere, quod intellectus sit intentus circa studium et voluntas similiter, ut nihil possit illo tempore de Deo cogitare: tunc volo, quod voluntas tunc eliciat actum diligendi Deum, et tunc aut ille actus est virtuosus--et hoc non potest dici, quia elicitur contra praeceptum divinum--aut non est virtuosus, et habetur propositum, quod actus diligendi Deum super omnia non sit virtuosus.

Respondeo: Si Deus posset hoc praecipere, sicut videtur quod potest sine contradictione, dico tunc, quod voluntas non potest pro tunc talem actum elicere, quia ex hoc ipso, quod talem actum eliceret, Deum diligeret super omnia; et per consequens impleret praeceptum divinum: quia hoc est diligere Deum super omnia, diligere quidquid Deus vult diligi. Et ex hoc ipso quod sic diligeret, non faceret praeceptum divinum per casum, et per consequens sic diligendo Deum diligeret et non diligeret, faceret praeceptum Dei et non faceret."

⁵⁷Not only does Ockham affirm the possibility that God could command the odium dei in Sent., IV, q. 14, d; and Sent., II, q. 19, 0; but as Hochstetter has indicated, Ockham suggests that the creature could obey such a command.

to the inability of the creature to execute such a command, not the divine inability to propose the command.

If Ockham's ethical theory were simply a case of divine positivism or voluntarism, this hypothetical command to hate God would not constitute an ethical antinomy. If morality were simply a question of executing the divine wish, Ockham would not appreciate the complexity of this issue which stems from a difference between "what" the will elicits and "why" the will elicits it. The divine command to hate God means that one "common object" of volition ought to be rejected by the human will. But the problematic of this command stems from the fact that the "principal object" or end which ought to be chosen by the human will is not altered by the commanded odium dei. The obligation that the will be orientated "intentionally" toward the Greatest Good and the Final End is grounded in the nature of things and not positive commands. Moral behavior is not simply de facto conformity to the positive commands of an absolute moral authority. Rather, it is a question of deliberate and purposeful conformity to moral authority. Thus, the divine command to hate God requires that human will produce simultaneously an act of hate and of love (or obedience) for the same object--this is psychologically impossible for the human will to do. God might alter the means, but not the end, of the moral order.

Ockham holds that the human will cannot be obliged morally to do what it cannot do. A valid moral "ought" entails that

the agent "can."⁵⁸ The possibility of God issuing the command "hate God" does not render it possible for the agent to execute this command. For example, the command "pick yourself up by your shoelaces" is possible for God to issue but impossible for the human agent to accomplish. Ockham tests the necessarily good act, in terms of the dialectic of God's absolute-ordinate power, and proves that love-obedience to God remains an essential component of virtuous behavior for the Christian regardless of God's ability to command the opposite. The love of God is necessarily good because the human agent cannot obey a divine mandate to hate God without, paradoxically, eliciting an act of love for God. If the moral agent cannot fulfill some command (i.e., fulfill some command knowingly and voluntarily), then the command is not a valid moral obligation.

The proof that some act of the will "cannot be caused by a created will without being virtuous" turns on the argument which Ockham has already mentioned (in Sent., III, q. 12, E) that no virtuous act can be asserted unless a necessarily virtuous act is asserted.⁵⁹ Ockham now identifies this necessarily

⁵⁸Sent., III, q. 12, QQ; "Confirmatur, quia ratio aliquando errat; tunc quaero, aut hoc est in potestate voluntatis aut non, si non, non peccat ex ignorantia, quia nullus obligatur ad impossibile..." Also see Sent., I, d. 48, q. 1, A; and Sent., IV, qes. 8-9, E-F.

⁵⁹Quodl., III, q. 13; (Philosophical Writings..., pp. 145-146). "Quod probat: Quia impossibile est, quod aliquis actus contingenter virtuosus, ita quod indifferenter potest dici virtuosus vel vitiosus, fiat determinate virtuosus nisi propter alium actum necessario virtuosum. Hoc probatur: Quia actus

contingenter virtuosus, puta actus ambulandi, fit determinate virtuosus per conformitatem ad alium actum. Quaero de isto secundo actu: aut est necessario virtuosus modo praedicto, et habetur propositum, quod est aliquis actus in homine necessario virtuosus, aut est contingenter virtuosus, et tunc iste fit virtuosus determinate per conformitatem ad alium actum virtuosum. Et de illo quaerendum est sicut prius. Et erit processus in infinitum, vel stabitur ad aliquem actum necessario virtuosum.

Tertio dico, quod iste actus necessario virtuosus modo praedicto est actus voluntatis, quia actus quo diligitur Deus super omnia propter se est huiusmodi; nam iste actus sic est virtuosus, quod non potest esse vitiosus, nec potest iste actus causari a voluntate creata, nisi sit virtuosus: Tum quia quilibet pro loco et tempore obligatur ad diligendum Deum super omnia, et per consequens, iste actus non potest esse vitiosus; tum quia iste actus est primus omnium actuum bonorum. Praeterea, solus actus voluntatis est intrinsece laudabilis vel vituperabilis. Praeterea, secundum Sanctos nullus actus est laudabilis vel vituperabilis nisi propter intentionem bonam vel malam; intentio autem est actus voluntatis; ergo etc."

A point of clarification is required here. Ockham asserts that "everyone is obliged for the place and time to love God above all." We have argued that the development of this question over Ockham's previous attempts to specify the necessarily good act, is that the love of God above all is not intrinsically good because of a definite but changeable set of circumstances. The love of God above all is intrinsically good regardless of changes in time, place, or even the divine law. It would be a misinterpretation of Ockham, however, to say that the moral agent need not consider the dictate of Right Reason, or the time and place, in producing a morally good act of love for God. In question 15, of Quodlibet Three, in which Ockham asks: Whether the circumstances of an act, for instance the end, Right Reason, and such things, are objects of a virtuous act?, he clarifies the structure of the necessarily good act. "Ad istam quaestionem, dico quod actus virtuosus est duplex: Unus qui contingenter et indifferenter potest esse aliquo modo virtuosus et vitiosus; Alius qui sic est virtuosus quod non potest esse aliquo modo vitiosus. Primus actus non habet circumstantiam pro objecto, quia non est virtuosus nec vitiosus nisi ex assistentia vel carentia actus boni vel male, a quo dependet in aliquo genere causae. Et ille actus potest esse idem cum circumstantiis talibus et sine. Secundus actus habet pro objecto circumstantias, quid proba, quia alias sequerentur duo inconvenientia: Primum quod nullus actus sit intrinsece et necessario virtuosus sed solum contingenter, cuius oppositum prius probatum est; Secundum, quod de actu non meritorio fieret meritorius per rationem alicuius materiae naturalis." Ockham's argument concludes that an act cannot be intrinsically virtuous if "non elicatur conformiter rectae rationi, quid necessario requiritur ad actum intrinsece virtuosum." Hence, the change of circumstance cannot affect the propriety of love for God above all.

good act as "the act by which God is loved more than everything else for His sake." This act is not merely good "in se" or intrinsically but necessarily good so that "this act cannot be caused by the created will without being virtuous." The altruistic love of God is necessarily good; first, because regardless of the time or place, everyone is obliged to love God, and secondly, because this is the "first of all good acts." The moral goodness of loving God is not bound by a definite set of circumstances; every act performed by the will can be performed virtuously for the love of God. There is no time or place in which loving God would not be right; there is no "right reason" for not loving God. Ockham's assertion that the love of God for His sake is the "first of all good acts," is more descriptive than explanatory. Ockham's meaning seems to be that, for a Christian, all explanations of morally good acts must ultimately arrive at the altruistic love of God as the essential, the necessary and the first virtuous act. Only this action has the intrinsic, necessary and immutable goodness required to support a Christian morality.

Any action which can be performed for an evil intention is contingently good. Before the Quodlibetal Questions were composed, Ockham had considered "to will to pray for the honor of God and because it is commanded by God according to Right Reason, etc.," as intrinsically good,⁶⁰ and "to do something because it is commanded by God" as necessarily good.⁶¹ However, to pray or

⁶⁰Sent., III, q. 12, M.

⁶¹Sent., III, q. 12, E.

to obey God can be done by the moral agent for the sake of gaining public acclaim or out of hypocrisy. The necessarily and intrinsically good act which is described in Quodlibet Three, questions 13 and 14, brings together the "common object" and the "principal object" of volition. The love of God for His sake and above all indicates both the act produced and the intention of the agent. Thus, Ockham answers the principal objection to his position: "Every act of the will can be elicited with an evil intention; therefore, every act of the will can be evil" by denying the premise. "Some act of the will (i.e., the love of God for His sake and above all) cannot be elicited with an evil intention."⁶² Ockham admits elsewhere that the will can elicit an act of love for God with a bad intention.⁶³ However, the will cannot love God above all for His sake with an evil intent since the love of God for His sake precludes a selfish motive. The "first of all good acts" is a complex action which allows Ockham the simultaneous assertions that God can attach a positive

⁶²Quodl., III, q. 13; (Philosophical Writings, pp. 144 and 147) "Utrum solus actus voluntatis sit necessario virtuosus vel vitiosus? Quod non: Quia omnis actus voluntatis potest elici intentione mala; ergo omnis actus voluntatis potest esse malus...Ad argumentum principale, nego assumptum, quia aliquis actus voluntatis nullo modo cum intentione mala potest elici, sicut patet ex dictis."

⁶³Sent., II, q. 19, Q; "Ad aliud dico quod si odium Dei causetur a solo Deo semper esset hoc, propter bonum finem, quia Deus ex odio creaturae in nullo damnificatur; sed odire Deum propter indebitum finem est malum et sic est actus creaturae et non a solo deo. Illud etiam quid assumit est falsum quod dilectio dei sit semper bona propter debitum finem; quia aliquando potest esse mala et propter indebitum finem, puta, quando amo Deum amore concupiscentiae."

obligation (negative or affirmative) to any simple action with the created will's power and that some (complex) action is necessarily good.

By asserting the altruistic love of God as necessarily good, Ockham affirms the central importance of the end intended by the agent as a moral determinant and affirms that a perfect love of the Ultimate End is primarily required to order and arrange the possibilities of volition as means to the Final End.⁶⁴ Given the ability of God to command a creature to hate Him, Ockham can still maintain that the love of God above all is essentially, morally good every time it occurs in the human will. On the other hand, it appears that Christians must derive the moral status of all their voluntary acts from this "primary" act. Ockham's tendency to empirically divide and analyze the components of will-acts to determine which are contingently and which necessarily good arrives at only one element which is irreducibly

⁶⁴Sent., III, q. 12, II; "Septima conclusio (est) quod virtutes theologicae nullum vitium morale compatiuntur. Hoc patet quia rectitudo circa finem ultimum repugnat omni difformitati circa ea quae sunt ad finem; quia si non, aut illa difformitas procedit ex ignorantia vincibili et tunc vincit si potest, aliter non est rectitudo circa finem; aut invincibili et tunc non est culpabilis; aut procedit ex malitia et passione, sive sic sive sic, destruitur rectitudo circa finem ultimum. Patet enim quod si recte diligit Deum, diligit Deum super omnia, quia habet autem aliquid vitium, diligit objectum illius plusquam Deum, ista non stant simul. Also see Sent., I, d. 1, q. 1 (I, 391); where Ockham argues that everything which is an object of volition, other than God, ought to be "referred" to God or accepted volitionally for God's sake. Also see Sent., III, q. 12, YY; where Ockham explains how every evil can be considered as an instance in which the created agent does not love God above all.

good--the love of God above all. In causal dependence upon this final cause or motive, other objectives of volition can be called "good."

4. Teleology and Deontology

An area of development apparent in Ockham's moral doctrine is the increasing emphasis on "why" the moral agent elicits some act, as opposed to "what" the moral agent elicits. Ockham's search for a necessarily good act is resolved only by identifying the love of God propter se as incompatible with evil intentions. This act, in which the object chosen merges with the agent's motive in choosing the object, is the "first of all good acts." The love of God-in-Himself brings together the "common object" of volition and the "principal object"--"what" is chosen and "why" it is chosen. As the "first" of all good acts, the love of God above all is the "only" necessarily good act. Every perfectly good act of the Christian is either an act of love for God above all or causally dependent upon the love of God above all. In his early works, Ockham describes a "perfectly circumstanced" act as intrinsically virtuous;⁶⁵ in the Quodlibetal

⁶⁵Sent., III, q. 10, P; "Si enim diligam aliquem hominem absolute terminando actum volendi ad illum hominem et non ad aliquam circumstantiam bonam vel malam; tunc iste actus non est bonus vel malus moraliter sed est neuter. Sed tunc, stante illo actu, eligam alium actu quo volo diligere tantum hominem propter Deum secundum rectam rationem et secundum omnes alias circumstantias requisitas, iste secundus actus est perfecte et intrinsece virtuosus et qui prius fuit indifferens, nunc est virtuosus denominatione extrinseca, quatenus elicitor conformiter actui perfecte virtuoso et recto dictamini." The new element which characterizes

Questions, he concentrates upon the perfect motive or end in acting which cannot be intended by the moral agent without being virtuous.⁶⁶ Both divine and human laws can change, but Ockham's doctrine of the necessary goodness of man's interior and unselfish orientation to the Creator is not jeopardized. Legalities are subject to flux; the fundamental exigency of morality is stable.

It is Ockham's mature position that the intention to love God above all is intrinsically and necessarily good. God's absolute power to posit moral standards does not alter the fact that God is the Greatest Good and therefore, ought to be the Ultimate End of human life and activity. The necessarily virtuous act gives the permanent orientation of the Christian conscience.

Psychologically, the premises of a moral deliberation are formulated with the apprehension and judgmental assent to some object as an end or goal of volition.⁶⁷ A statement of the end

the second act, is that it is "propter deum" and "secundum rectam rationem et secundum omnes alias circumstantias requisitas." However, Ockham does not identify the "propter deum" as the intrinsically virtuous element as he does in Quodl., III, q. 13.

⁶⁶Quodl., III, q. 15; "Praeterea, probatur quod finis est objectum actus virtuosus. Tum quia quando voluntas diligit aliquid propter finem, magis diligit finem quia propter quid...Tum quia si essent duo actus respectu duorum objectorum, quorum unus est causa alterius, si illa duo objecta diligeretur unico actu, illud objectum esset primum cuius actus esset causa alterius quando diligerentur distinctis actibus. Sed si quis diligeret finem uno actu et illud quid est ad finem alio actu; actus respectu finis esset causa actus illius quid est ad finem...Ad secundum dubium, dico quod finis est objectum principale actus virtuosus intrinsece, et hoc, quia dilectio finis principaliter intenditur."

⁶⁷Sent., Prologue, q. 10 (I, 290); "...Circa primum dico quod intellectus practicus est respectu principiorum practicarum et etiam respectu conclusionum practicarum. Et ideo intellectus

to be attained is the major premise of a practical syllogism; the means utilized to attain this end are inferred from the nature of the end.⁶⁸ Thus, the directive proposition which is dictated by Right Reason as the norm and rule of virtuous volition, originates in the end which is mentally recognized.

The will, which is the principle of virtuous activity, always acts for the sake of an end.⁶⁹ The acts of "velle," "nolle" and "non-velle" are within the power of the will; the will's freedom is the reason for its assent, dissent or indifference to a possible good or end. Also, the will is responsible for accepting or rejecting objects according to three (and only three) possible aspects: an end-in-itself which is loved greatest, an end-in-itself which is simply loved, and an end which is loved for the sake of another.⁷⁰ On the part of the

practicus est respectu finis, quando scilicet de aliquo fine iudicatur quod est appetendus vel prosequendus. Et hoc est intelligendum quia est respectu unius complexi quod affirmat aliquem finem esse appetendum, et istud est primum principium practicum in operando."

⁶⁸Sent., II, q. 3, 11; "Quinta conclusio (est) quod finis est principium in agibilibus quia est medium et causa in syllogismo concludente determinatum medium requiri ad talem finem. Exemplum, si enim finis praestitutus a voluntate infirmi sit quod sanitas sit acquirenda, et potio sit medium acquirendi sanitatem, tunc istud medium debet sic syllogistice inferri ex tali fine." Also see Sent., Prologue, q. 10 (I, 291).

⁶⁹Sent., Prologue, q. 10 (I, 291); Sent., III, q. 13, T; Sent., III, q. 10, n.

⁷⁰Sent., I, d. 1, q. 1 (I, 374-375); "Circa primum sciendum quod aliquis posset assumere aliquid in facultatem voluntatis dupliciter; vel propter se vel propter aliud...Sed quod aliquis actus sit non refertur posset esse dupliciter; vel quod objectum

moral agent, therefore, the recognition of moral standards and the volitional execution of moral directives, is unalterably a question of the ends of human activity. This, however, says only that man is a goal-orientated and purposeful animal.

Metaphysically, a human being is a "debtor." He owes his existence, his life, his activity to an Infinite and Creative Being. While a man exists, he is dependent moment to moment on the conserving causality of God for his existence. In the same way, whatever ontological value or desirableness a creature has is dependent upon the divine creativity. All created things are good or willable because they are. To be morally right, a man's love for created "good" or finite ends ought to reflect their dependence on God. Both reason⁷¹ and revelation assert that finite, experienced things have being and goodness "per Aliud." Thus, the ends available to human activity are de facto ordered; created goods are ordered to the Uncreated Good as effects to

acceptetur tanquam summum sibi possibile praesentari, hoc est tanquam summe diligendum ab ea, vel absolute quod acceptetur et absolute assumatur in facultatem voluntatis, nec ut summum nec ut non-summum."

⁷¹Sent., Prologue, q. 12 (I, 364); "Illa tamen quae considerantur a metaphysica possunt esse principia ad probandum conclusiones practicas de Deo, sicut ex hoc quod Deus est causa omnium est summe diligibilis vel honorandus vel aliquid huiusmodi." In spite of the fact that Father Boehner has edited two questions of Ockham which contains "proofs" for the existence of God, it is still common to read that Ockham denied the possibility of such demonstrations. See Collected Articles..., pp. 399-420. The basis of this proof concerns the impossibility of an infinite series of conserving causes and the necessity of every production to be conserved in being while it remains in being.

cause. The order and priorities of the human will ought to reflect this real state of affairs. The rationale for this position is thoroughly Augustinian. Only God should be "enjoyed" (frui) for his own sake; everything else should be "used (uti) for His purposes."⁷² "Only God should be loved greatest since He is the Greatest Good."⁷³

The psychology and metaphysic by which Ockham describes the human moral condition render final causes critical to ethical judgments. This important aspect of Ockham's moral theory is often vitiated by the claim that he denies the finality or teleological connection of the world.⁷⁴ Truly, Ockham denies that the

⁷²Sent., I, d. 1, q. 1 (I, 373); "Solo illo utendum quod est ad aliud ordinabile et omni illo; sed quidlibet aliud a Deo est ordinabile ad Deum, qui est finis omnium, et Deus non est ad aliud ordinabilis; ergo etc." See Augustine, De Trinitate, X, c. 11, n. 17 (P. L. 42, 982-983), and De doctrina christiana, I, c. 4, n. 4 (P. L., 34, 20).

⁷³Sent., I, d. I, q. 4 (I, 447).

⁷⁴Anita Garvens argues at length that Ockham rejects any effort to explain morality by finality. Franz. Studien 21, pp. 249-257. "Die Annahme durchgängiger Zielstrebigkeit aller Natur nach ihrem letzten Ziel, nach Erfüllung und Vollendung ihres Seins in Gott als ihrem ewigen Urbilde, bot der Scholastik die Grundlage, sittliches Streben für möglich und notwendig zu erklären. Eine solche Grundlegung der Ethik ist bei konsequenter Weiterführung der Grundgedanken Ockhams nicht möglich, denn ihm fehlen die metaphysischen Voraussetzungen, um auf dem Wege rationaler Deduktion auf eine immanente und notwendig bestimmte Zielstrebigkeit aller Natur schliessen zu können. So finden sich unter seinen Erörterungen keine Versuche, die Finalität der Welt aus dem Ordnungsgedanken zu folgern." (p. 249). For verification, she cites the study of H. Becher, "Gottesbegriff und Gottesbeweise bei Wilhelm von Ockham," Scholastik III (1928), p. 382. In turn, G. de Lagarde refers to Garvens' article in agreement, Ockham, la Morale..., pp. 54-55.

actions of irrational causes "intend" some end.⁷⁵ To act "prop-
ter finem" is the exclusive privilege of free and rational beings. But natural causes always produce the same effects given similar conditions. The regular and predictable effects of non-conscious operations give the moral agent a basis for judging the means conducive to his ends and the pragmatic outcome of his own physical actions. The natural outcome of human activity is part of the "common object" of deliberation and volition. It is man's dignity and responsibility, however, that his motives can transcend the effects of his natural powers. The "suitable" end of voluntary acts is dictated by Right Reason and becomes the "principal object" and chief characteristic of conformed volition. Rather than eliminating teleology from morality, Ockham teaches that inevitably moral actions have an intrinsic finality.

To act correctly, the agent must both recognize what is obligatory and deliberately fulfill that obligation. The will should elicit what is dictated by Right Reason "because it is dictated by Right Reason."⁷⁶ Prior to morally good or evil

⁷⁵Quodl., IV, q. 2; "...non potest sufficienter probari vel demonstrari, nec sciri per principia per se nota nec per experientiam, quod agens de necessitate naturae agat secundum talem causam finalem praestitutam a voluntate. Et hoc quia actio talis agentis sine variatione agentis vel passi vel alicuius concurrentis ad actionem nunquam variatur sed semper uniformiter sequitur actio. Et ideo non potest probari quod tale agens agat propter finem." Also see Summ. in libros Physicorum, II, c. 6.

⁷⁶Sent., III, q. 12, CCC; "...quia nullus actus est perfecte virtuosus nisi voluntas per illum actum velit dictatum a recta ratione, propter hoc, quod est dictatum a recta ratione."

volition, the mind must recognize an obligation.⁷⁷ Whatever the reasons for which the Practical Intellect decides and dictates some volition, the will should execute each facet of the directive precisely because it is morally required. It appears that obligation must be asserted before moral value. Ockham's account of the phenomenology of ethical experience thus might suggest the classification of "deontological." Indeed, commentators have mentioned the "precocious Kantian" in Ockham.⁷⁸ Yet the category "deontological" cannot be applied definitely to Ockham's ethic. His claims that, a) the dictate of Right Reason must include a decision about the suitable end, b) God should be loved because He is the Greatest Good, and c) rectitude regarding the ultimate end repels any distortion about the means to the ultimate end, do not sound like the assertions of a deontologist. A definitive classification of either teleological or deontological is as tenuous as the strict application of the categories of rationalism or voluntarism. This ambivalence requires a close look at Ockham's theory of moral value.

⁷⁷Sent., II, q. 19, P; "...sed Deus ad nullum actum causandum obligatur. Ideo, quemlibet actum absolutum potest sine omni malo culpae causare et ejus oppositum; et ideo sicut potest causare totaliter actum diligendi (Deum) sine bonitate vel malitia morali--quia bonitas moralis et malitia connotant quod agens obligatur ad illum actum vel ejus oppositum--ita potest totaliter causare actum odiendi Deum sine omni malitia morali propter eandem causam." Also see Sent., II, qes. 4-5, H; Sent., IV, q. 9, S and Sent., I, d. 42, q. 1, H.

⁷⁸Cf. Ernest A. Moody, The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Vol. 5, pp. 315-316; and James K. McDonnell, Religion and Ethics ..., pp. 138-141.

CHAPTER V

THE CONCEPT OF MORAL GOOD

It is somewhat common to read that moral goodness for Ockham is determined extrinsically and positively by God.¹ The good is what God commands; the evil is what He prohibits. This interpretation gives the prescriptive and descriptive import of moral language to divine discretion. Morality becomes the extrinsic assessment of human volition. Goodness derives from God's contingent approval rather than the nature of the act-in-itself. The typical argument proceeds: If God could change the obligation presently associated with any simple action within man's power, then moral value is external to the nature of every human action. It is curiously difficult, however, to produce explicit texts to establish Ockham's definition of "good." Léon Baudry thinks that Ockham's ethic fits the interpretive model of

¹Cf. Anita Garvens, Franz. Studien, 21, p. 248; "Hierzu muss vorweggenommen werden, was erst die Darlegung seiner material-ethischen Lehren deutlich aufweisen wird, dass nämlich die Begriffe Gut und Böse von Ockham positivistisch bestimmt werden dadurch, dass er sie lediglich als Ausdruck momentaner Entscheidungen des göttlichen Willens betrachtet, der die letzte Norm des sittlichen Handelns darstellt." Similar positions are maintained by Joseph Lortz, "Einleitung," Gnade und Eucharistie..., (bei Erwin Iserloh), p. XXXVI; Konstanty Michalski, "Les Courants Philosophique à Oxford et à Paris pendant le XIV^e Siècle," in La Philosophie au XIV^e Siècle: Six Études (Opuscula Philosophica, Vol. I: Frankfurt; Minerva GMBH, 1969), p. 11; G. de Lagarde, Ockham. La Morale..., p. 55; and Vernon J. Bourke, History of Ethics, Vol. I, p. 155.

divine voluntarism but he admits that explicit definitions of moral goodness cannot be found to include in his Lexique philosophique de Guillaume d'Ockham.² We propose to re-examine this issue by considering the doctrines of "rectitude," moral evil, and the meaning of moral good. Our study maintains a sharp distinction between "moral" and "meritorious" goods: the distinction is Ockham's and argues strongly against the voluntaristic and extrinsic conception of moral value.

The discussion of Ockham's value theory has been postponed to this final chapter for a number of reasons, but mainly to show the need to re-open the question in spite of the "majority opinion." Chapter I indicated Ockham's effort to contain all actual good and evil within the created will. Chapter II argued that the nature of an intellectual dictate is to regulate the will's freedom. Thus, certain moral norms--the will ought to conform itself to Right Reason--are necessarily true "without any precept of a superior." Chapter III studied the legislative power of the divine will and noticed the primacy of God's commands among the determinants of morality. God could posit a moral obligation regarding all simple acts within man's power. Chapter IV revealed that at least one complex action, the love of God above all, is necessarily good regardless of divine mandates to the contrary. These chapters should indicate the complexities involved in tracing Ockham's notion of moral goodness.

²Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1958, p. 32; "Guillaume ne donne pas, à ma connaissance de définition du bien moral."

As prima facie evidence that Ockham does not hold an extrinsic or positivistic conception of moral value, consider that Ockham criticizes Duns Scotus for just such a position.

1. Moral Rectitude

It is helpful to remember the Subtle Doctor's position on "rectitude." As in so many cases, Ockham's own position developed in contrast to the doctrine of Duns Scotus. Scotus defines the goodness of an act as the integrity of all those things which the right reason of the agent judges to be required for that act or the agent.³ Scotus lists the circumstances of an act as the object, end, mode, time and place; when these circumstances are agreeable or proper in terms of the agent's nature, his producing potency and the essence of the act produced, then the agent has caused a morally good act.⁴ When one or more circumstances are "unsuitable" so that the complex relationship becomes improper, then that act is morally bad. Scotus' position on moral goodness, therefore, involves the relationships possessed by an act of the will. The same volitional act could be morally good or evil depending on its extrinsic relationships. For example, the same act such as "walking to church" could be

³Scotus, Comm. Ox., II, d. 40, q. unica, n. 3; Quodl., 18, n. 4.

⁴Scotus, Comm. Ox., II, d. 40, q. unica, n. 3; Quodl., 18, nos. 5-6; see Comm. Ox., I, d. 17, q. 3, n. 2; where Scotus affirms the "relational" character of moral goodness. "Bonitas moralis in actu non dicit nisi relationem." (Waddings-Vives ed.; V, 947).

good and then evil because the agent's motive for walking to church is first proper and later improper. According to Ockham, Scotus' position asserts that "rectitude" and "difformity" are extrinsic determinations or relationships possessed by voluntary acts.

On at least five occasions, Ockham argues against this position of Scotus'.⁵ Ockham's own answer to the question, What is moral rectitude?, is contrasted to the Scotistic position. In one sense, Ockham's disagreement with Scotus about the nature of rectitude results from Ockham's different metaphysical stance. Denying the reality of relationships as substances distinct from the related objects, Ockham must relegate the traditional qualities of a relationship to the "relata" themselves. In another sense, however, Ockham's argument with Scotus is more verbal than substantive. Both Scotus and Ockham agree that the circumstances and objects of a will-act are moral determinants; they differ regarding the manner in which the situation and objects function as moral determinants. For Ockham, the circumstances and objects of an intended action are together apprehended by reason and constitute the rule or moral standard to which volition ought to conform.⁶ The apprehension of all the pertinent,

⁵Sent., III, q. 15, D; Sent., III, q. 12, XX; Sent., III, q. 13, E; Quodl., I, q. 20; Sent., III, q. 10, H, P, and Q. Ockham refers to Scotus' doctrine in Quodl., III, q. 14, without indicating the position he rejects as that of Scotus.

⁶Sent., III, q. 10, N; "Respondeo, omnes circumstantiae actus voluntatis sunt objecta partialia illius actus, ita quod finis in omni actu est objectum principale sicut prius patuit;

situational factors--the end, time, place, etc.,--is the total object of a will-act and gives the will-act its specific nature.⁷ Acts of the agent's will are distinguishable on the basis of what is willed; a change in volitive objects entails a corresponding change in the nature of the will-act. Ockham's general disagreement with Scotus, therefore, results from Ockham's insistence that the objects and circumstances of volition are intrinsic and internal determinants of moral goodness.

While Ockham's metaphysic takes issue with Duns Scotus on the substantial reality of relationships, their sharpest

aliae circumstantiae sunt objecta secundaria partialia respectu illius actus." Sent., III, q. 12, CCC; "Ad secundum dubium, dico quod tam finis quam recta ratio et omnes aliae circumstantiae sunt objecta partialia secundaria actus virtuosus. Cuius ratio est, quia est aliquis actus voluntatis qui est intrinsece et necessario virtuosus stante ordinatione divina quae nunc est, et nullo modo contingenter virtuosus. Nunc autem si illa quae dicuntur circumstantiae non sunt objecta actus virtuosus, nullus actus voluntatis esset necessario et intrinsece virtuosus, sed solum extrinsece et contingenter; cuius oppositum prius probatum est."

⁷Ockham teaches that the same potency can produce specifically different acts because of specifically different objects of that potency. Sent., III, q. 12, D; "Secunda conclusio est quod respectu objectorum distinctorum specie, sunt actus distincti specie. Hoc patet, quia aliter non potest probari distinctio specifica actuum, quia si illi essent ejusdem speciei, multo magis actus respectu objectorum ejusdem speciei essent ejusdem speciei; et sic omnes actus essent ejusdem speciei." In ethical theory, Ockham's position that: (a) the circumstances are partial objects of the will-act and (b) the object to which the will moves is responsible for the specific nature of that will-act, substantiates Ockham's claims that the circumstances of an intended act affect the moral nature of that act. "Si quaeras unde actus habet bonitatem suam vel malitiam? Dico quod ab eodem a quibus habet substantiam actus; quia ab objecto communi et omnibus circumstantiis tanquam a causis multis partialibus, quae omnes simul positae, faciunt unam causam totalem." Sent., III, q. 10, P-Q. Also see Sent., III, q. 12, CCC.

conflict in ethics concerns the extrinsic-intrinsic status of rectitude or goodness. For Ockham the goodness or evilness of a voluntary act is not distinct from the substance of that act.⁸ Consequences which are totally unacceptable for Ockham result from asserting that moral goodness is a relational and extrinsic quality possessed by will-acts.

For one thing, the same act can be first morally indifferent and then intrinsically good according to Scotus.⁹ Substantially the same will-act could be both morally indifferent and morally good because of changing relationships. For example, a person could perform the act of walking to church spontaneously and without consideration for the rightness or wrongness of that

⁸Sent., III, q. 10, P; "Hoc substantia actus est haec bonitas actus; et similiter de actu vitioso, haec substantia actus est haec malitia actus." Quodl., III, q. 14; "Ad istam quaestionem (i.e., Utrum rectitudo actus et difformitas differant a substantia actus?), dico quod nunquam actus et sua rectitudo differunt, quia omnis actus aut est rectus essentialiter aut per denominationem extrinsecam. Si primo modo, tunc substantia actus est sua rectitudo quid patet ex hoc, quia impossibile est quod talis actus sit a voluntate creata nisi sit rectus. Si secundo modo, tunc iste actus dicitur rectus, quia causatur vel continetur ab actu essentialiter virtuoso--ad cuius conformitatem dicitur actus rectus." Also see Sent., III, q. 12, YY.

⁹Sent., III, q. 12, XX; "Ad primum istorum, respondit Johannes in 'principio' de materia caritatis et 'secundo,' ubi quaerit utrum aliquis actus voluntatis sit indifferens et in Quotlibet ubi quaerit utrum actus dilectionis naturalis et meritoriae sint ejusdem speciei (Ockham refers to Scotus' Comm. Ox., I, d. 17, q. 6; Comm. Ox., II, 40, q. unica; and Quodlibetales Quaestiones, 17), et dicit quod tam habitus quam actus voluntatis potest esse indifferens sicut quod idem habitus abstinentiae generatus solet inesse naturae cuiusmodi actus solum est actus naturalis; potest postea per coexistentiam actus prudentiae esse intrinsece bonus."

act. Later, the agent might continue that act of walking because he now judges that walking to church is right and obligatory. For Scotus, this example indicates that an indifferent act can become intrinsically good through the "co-existence," or relation to, prudence. Ockham rejects this analysis because, first, it asserts that morally good acts can occur without being voluntary or deliberately chosen by the will and secondly, it asserts that a non-virtuous act of intellectual prudence can render another non-virtuous act as morally virtuous.¹⁰ For Ockham, the act of walking to church spontaneously is not substantially or by nature the same act as walking to church deliberately to fulfill an obligation. Furthermore, the same act could be first a natural act, then morally good, and finally meritorious according to Scotus.¹¹ The change from natural (non-voluntary), to morally

¹⁰Idem.; "Contra primum, impossibile est quod de actu non viruoso fiat virtuosus per aliquem actum pure naturalem qui nullo modo est in voluntatis potestate; quia propter talem nullus laudatur vel vituperatur, ex quo solum est actus naturalis. Sed actus prudentiae secundum eum (Scotum) et secundum veritatem, est solum actus naturalis et nullo modo in potestate nostra plusquam actus videndi. Igitur, impossibile est quod actus voluntatis indifferens et non virtuosus fiat virtuosus per solam coexistentiam prudentiae. Praeterea, nunquam de actu intrinsece non viruoso potest fieri virtuosus nisi per actum intrinsece virtuosum, et non solum extrinsece et contingenter; quia aliter esset processus in infinitum sicut patet supra. Sed sicut supra dictum est, solus actus voluntatis est intrinsece virtuosus vel viciosus, et nullus alius nisi extrinseca denominatione, ...quia impossibile est quod aliquis actus voluntatis non bonus fiat bonus propter solum actum prudentiae." Also see Quodl., III, q. 15; where Ockham repeats this criticism of Scotus.

¹¹Idem., "Secundo (Scotus) dicit in Quotlibet quod idem actus non solum specie sed numero, [in]differens potest esse sic quod erit solum primo actus naturalis, nec laudabilis nec vituperabilis, et postea manens omnino idem numero, potest esse

good, to meritoriously good can occur without any substantial change in the nature of some act. Ockham rejects this position of Scotus' because it asserts that, without a positive and essential change in the nature of an action, the act can change from non-voluntary to voluntary.¹²

Ockham hopes to avoid and remedy the problems he finds in the Scotistic analysis of moral goodness, by considering the circumstances and objects of a voluntary act as intrinsic moral determinants. The rectitude of an action is not its "proper" relationship; "the rectitude of an act is not a quality of the act nor its accident, therefore, it is the substance of the act."¹³ "If you ask, from where an act has its goodness or evil?--I say, from those causes by which the act has substance, because by the common object and all the circumstances, just as by many partial causes which, all asserted together, make one total cause."¹⁴ Ockham agrees with Scotus that often goodness is ex circumstantia;

virtuosus et moraliter bonus et tertio, idem manens, actus potest esse meritorius; quia secundum eum (Scotum) moralis bonitas vel meritoria non addit super substantiam actus nisi quosdam respectus ad circumstantias actus vel tantum unum respectum ad rationem rectam plene dictatam de circumstantiis, et ille respectus secundum eum oritur ex natura rei."

¹²Ibid., YY; "Quantum ad secundum quod dicit Johannes, dico quod impossibile est quod quicumque actus sit primo naturalis et indifferens solum, et postea intrinsece bonus moraliter vel meritorie; et hoc propter transitum de contradictorio in contradictorium; qui non potest salvari sine novo actu voluntatis, sic patuit prius."

¹³Quodl., III, q. 14.

¹⁴Sent., III, q. 10, P-Q. See above, note 7.

but according to Ockham the situational factors affect the nature and not simply the relationship of voluntary acts. Interestingly, Ockham objects to the formula "rectitude is relationship" because it renders the moral order completely "relative"--a charge often advanced against Ockham himself.

Although goodness is the substance of certain will-acts, Ockham's ethic should not be considered a "natural law" theory, at least not a Thomistic or a Scotistic doctrine of Natural Law. The claim that the substance of a will act is its rectitude must be balanced by the assertion that God can separate created will-acts from any moral status. The individual being of any act, its absolutum esse, can be present in the human will without entailing moral goodness or evil.¹⁵ Neither the love of God above all nor the murderous hate of one's neighbor have a moral status because they exist, or because they conform or conflict with an ideal conception of human nature. God could totally produce love for Himself in the created will: a madman could hate his neighbor. In both cases, the proper causes of morality are deficient. Hence, Ockham's position that rectitude is the substance of

¹⁵Sent., II, q. 19, F; "Deus potest omne absolutum causare sine omni alio quid non est idem cum illo absoluto; sed actus odiendi Deum quantum ad esse absolutum in eo non est idem cum difformitate et malitia in actu; ergo, Deus potest causare quicquid absolutum est in actu odiendi Deum vel nolendi, non causando aliquam difformitatem vel malitiam in actu..." Here the "esse absolutum" or absolute being of an act signifies the positive nature of that act as distinct from its causes. This phrase, probably taken from Scotus, Quodlibet 17, n. 6 (XXVI, 202), is rendered as the "simple nature" of an act, signifying the act qua subsistent rather than qua effect.

will-acts must be carefully interpreted. The nature of voluntary acts can be good in se, but not good per se. "Goodness" signifies volitive actions and their created causes.

2. Moral Evil

Ockham's debate with Duns Scotus has its interpretive problems. The Venerable Inceptor claims that rectitude is not a quality or accident attending will-acts, but the substance of volitive actions. By nature, virtuous acts differ from non-moral or immoral acts because virtuous acts include all the pertinent moral determinants. On the other hand, Ockham claims that God can separate the substance of any action from moral goodness or evil. This position seems to imply that the substantive will-act and its rectitude are not identical. Since Ockham did define "moral evil,"¹⁶ we can unravel parts of this problem through a

¹⁶Sent., II, qes. 4-5, H; "Malum nihil aliud est quam facere aliquid ad cuius oppositum faciendum aliquis obligatur." In the absence of an explicit definition of "moral good" in Ockham's texts, Baudry composes a definition of moral good--"le bien moral consiste à faire ce qu'on est tenu de faire"--in contrast to the given definition of moral evil. It does not seem inconsistent with Ockham's principles to consider this definition as ad mentem Ockham. However, Professor Baudry holds that this definition must be understood as a facet of Ockham's "voluntarism" or "subjectivism." "Il faut bien comprendre la portée de cette définition. Comme Dieu n'est soumis à aucune obligation, le bien tel qu'on vient de le définir n'existe pas pour lui. Dieu ne veut pas tel ou tel acte, parce qu'il est bon, parce que sa bonté intrinsèque l'imposerait à son intelligence et à sa volonté, il est bon parce qu'il le veut, parce qu'il le prescrit. (I S. d. 43, q. 1; IV, q. 8 et 9 E; III, q. 12 YY). La définition que Guillaume donne du mal moral et consécutivement celle qu'il aurait donnée du bien moral, doivent être mises en rapport avec ce qu'on appelle son volontarisme et, dans une certaine mesure, avec ce qu'on nomme aujourd'hui le subjectivisme moral." Cf. Lexique

systematic study of "malum." "Evil is nothing else than to do something when one is obliged to its opposite."

Probably the earliest treatment of moral evil by Ockham is found in Sent., II, question 5. Ockham asks, "Whether God is a natural or a free agent?" In answering this question Ockham raises a related issue--"How does evil exist and not be caused by God (non a Deo)?" Ockham replies that evil is not a "producible thing."¹⁷ Surely, Ockham recognizes that a moral agent can produce an evil act; a human will can do wrong. Thus, the statement that "evil is not a producible thing" must be understood to assert that "evil is not a substance or an individual being which exists independently." Ockham describes evil as "nothing else than to do something while one is obliged to its opposite." Since God is not necessitated or obliged to produce any action, He can not produce or create something which is contrary to His

Philosophique, pp. 32-33. The charge of divine voluntarism and moral subjectivism are strange bedfellows when these classifications come to rest in a single moral system. At any rate, to define moral evil as an action contrary to one's obligation and to define moral good as an action which fulfills one's obligation is not, at face value, a statement of moral voluntarism or subjectivism.

¹⁷Sent., II, q. 5, H; "Sed hic sunt dubia. Primum, quomodo malum est et non a Deo? Quia videtur quod sit eadem causam; reducere mala ad primum malum sicut bona ad primum bonum. Et sic erunt duae causae primae--una bona alia mala sicut dixerunt Manichaei. Sed istud dubium bene procederet si malum esset res factibilis, quid falsum est, quia malum nihil aliud est quam facere aliquid ad cuius oppositum faciendum aliquis obligatur, quae obligatio non cadit in Deum, quia ille ad nihil faciendum obligatur; nec praesupponitur malitia in causa, quae sit causam malitiae effectus, sed malitia effectus est causa malitiae in causa."

obligation, i.e., something evil. Thus, Ockham answers his immediate question by maintaining that God causes, at least partially, everything which exists. But since God is not subject to any moral obligation, He cannot produce an evil effect.

Ockham objects, in this initial treatment, to "reifying" or substantizing moral evil. Everything real--every individual substance and quality--is metaphysically good.¹⁸ Moral evil indicates a metaphysically good act which is produced in violation of the agent's moral duty. The presence of moral evil, therefore, does not require a "principle of darkness" or a Manichean "evilness" as the source of evil in the world. Indeed, it is incorrect to speak of an evil cause before an effect contrary to one's obligation has been produced.

Moral evil is not a singular thing but can be described as a voluntary effect which ought not to have been produced by the agent. Similarly, Ockham will object to "imagining" that moral goodness is a thing.¹⁹ Moral evil or moral goodness are incorrectly conceived as real qualities or as distinct beings.

¹⁸As Ockham explicitly says in the Ordinatio, Sent., I, d. 17, q. 1, Q; "Quod aliquis potest esse secundum se charus etiam si nihil habet sibi inherens nec habuit, quia ipsum secundum se est bonum nec est aliquid positivum nisi sit bonum; ideo potest sine omni tali esse objectum voluntatis et dilectionis." Also Quodl., VI, q. 2; "Ad argumentum principale, dico quod laudabile accipitur multipliciter. Uno modo pro omni natura quae est bona sive sit creata sive increata."

¹⁹Sent., III, q. 12, YY; "Unde omnes istae ymaginationes quae dicunt quod 'rectitudo' in actu addit aliquid supra actum absolutum vel respectivum false sunt; quia nihil aliud est quam ipsemet actus, et ideo carere rectitudine in actu est carere tali actu."

The terms "evil" and "good" can be truly predicated of certain human acts. They cannot truly exist as distinct beings.

In question 19, of book II, the Reportatio considers the question, "Whether an evil angel is always producing an evil act (in actu malo)?" Ockham answers in the affirmative: a devil is always in the state of sin because God will not concur with the devil in rejecting evil or causing a good act. However, God is not responsible for the evil actions of the devils even though His non-concurrence renders any good action impossible.²⁰ Since God is "not a debtor," He is not bound by any moral obligation. That man is a "debtor" is Ockham's rather pithy explanation of why a human being remains subject to moral obligations.

Unfortunately, Ockham does not explain the meaning of "debtor" which often occurs in his argument that God cannot sin and that a human agent can. One probable conjecture would be that "debtor" indicates a certain lack of freedom in acting. Not yet beatified, the viator is not free from the "servitude of

²⁰Sent., II, q. 19, G-H; "Aliter potest dici et reddi causa obstinationis malorum; et hoc supposito quod Deus concurrat ad omnem actionem creaturae ad minus sicut causa partialis, tunc potest dici quod Deus concurrat cum voluntate creata ad causandum actum odii et non vult concurrere cum angelo malo ad causandum actum bonum, puta, dilectionem Dei; et quia sic concurrat ad unum et non ad aliud, ideo potest dici obstinatus quia non potest elicere aliquem actum bonum. Si dicas quod tunc Deus peccat et est malus quia non vult concurrere ad actum bonum. Respondeo, nunquam peccat homo nisi quia tenetur facere quid non facit vel quia facit quid non debet facere; per ista sit homo debitor. Deus autem nulli tenetur nec obligatur tanquam debitor, et ideo non potest facere quid non debet facere, nec potest non facere quid debet facere." Also see Sent., IV, q. 3, q.

guilt," "the servitude of misery," or the "servitude of punishment."²¹ Perfect freedom, such as God possesses, does not imply the ability to sin,²² or the liability of guilt in His actions. Ultimately, the limitation of man's freedom flows from his ontological dependence. The human agent owes his existence to God so that the gift of being and life render man a "debtor." In a similar manner, a man is socially dependent upon the civil authority and spiritually dependent upon the church. Each benefit establishes a corresponding duty: Omni benefactori est

²¹Sent., II, q. 19, R; "Ad aliud dico quod libertas accipitur quinque modis; uno modo ut opponitur servituti culpaе, secundo ut opponitur servituti miseriae, tertio ut opponitur servituti penae, quarto ut opponitur coactioni, quinto modo ut opponitur immutabilitati. Quantum ad primam, secundam et tertiam, libertates, non est libertas in angelo malo, quia non est liber respectu peccati nec respectu miseriae nec respectu penae..." Ockham's statements about the lack of freedom or liberty in the bad angels can be applied to viatores with the exception of Christ and the mother of Christ. Cf. Sent., I, d. 41, q. 1, G; Sent., III, q. 13, T. Also see Sent., I, d. 1, q. 6, (I,501); where Ockham makes similar distinctions about the nature of "liberty," and shows that a rational creature does not have that liberty which "opponitur servituti culpaе vel servituti penae." Traditionally, the liberty from necessity, guilt and misery correspond to man's freedom according to nature, grace and glory in St. Augustine and Peter Lombard. See St. Bonaventure, Sent., II, d. 25, part 1, q. 1 (Vol. II, 594: Opera Omnia; Quaracchi, 1885).

²²Sent., IV, q. 14, E; "Ad primum istorum, concedo quod (posse peccare) non est libertas nec pars libertatis, quia si sic, tunc cuicumque competeret libertas ei competeret posse peccare, et per consequens Deus posset peccare, et similiter beatus, quod est falsum. Dico, igitur, quod libertas et posse peccare se habent sicut superius et inferius, ita quod quicumque potest peccare habet libertatem et non e contra. Et causa est, quia potens peccare habet libertatem et contingentiam respectu illorum actuum in quibus consistit peccatum, sed nec Deus nec beatus habet libertatem respectu talium sed respectu aliorum in quibus non est peccatum." Also see Sent., I, d. 10, q. 2, K.

benefaciendum.²³ The common stem of the noun "debitor" (one who owes something) and the verb "debet" (one ought to do something) perhaps adds credibility to this conjecture.

In this question Ockham describes "sin" in the same manner in which he previously defined "evil," namely, as a violation of one's obligation. For a Christian agent within the present dispensation there is no sharp distinction between acts done evilly and acts done sinfully. If a person violates his conscience, he thereby acts contrary to the divine precept.²⁴ The divine commands establish valid moral laws for the human agent. Within the ordained moral order, a person sins by producing a morally wrong act and causes a meritorious act when producing a perfectly virtuous act. Strictly speaking, however, the terms "sin" and "moral evil" have different connotations. Guilt occurs simultaneously with violation of one's conscience, but the eternal or temporal punishment signified by the term "sin" does not.²⁵

²³This moral norm is often asserted by Ockham as known evidently through experience. Cf. Sent., III, q. 12, H.

²⁴Sent., III, q. 13, C; "Impossibile est quod aliquis actus voluntatis elicited contra conscientiam et contra dictamen rationis sive rectum sive erroneum sit virtuosus; patet de conscientia recta quia talis elicetur contra preceptum divinum et voluntatem divinam volentem divinam volentem talem actum elicere conformiter rationi rectae."

²⁵Anita Garvens attempts to reduce Ockham's notion of good and evil to "positive" good and evil, i.e., to what is commanded or prohibited by God. "Wesentlich für das sittliche Handeln des Menschen ist nicht der Inhalt seines Tuns, sondern die Anpassung an den göttlichen Willen und dessen Erfüllung, der seinerseits nicht an bestimmte reale sittliche Sachverhalte gebunden ist." Franz. Studien, 21, p. 265. Garvens goes on to

One more issue requires mention from question nineteen.

Ockham asserts that the "absolute being" of any act can be separated from the difformity and wickedness which might accompany that act.²⁶ By "absolute being," Ockham seems to mean the

say that the only real meaning of "sin" is the punishment which follows some human acts (pp. 360-371). It is undeniable that some moral evil and good can be reduced to divine prohibitions and commands. Ockham recognizes valid human and divine laws which oblige the moral agent concerning things which are "nec bona sunt nec mala, nisi quia sunt prohibita vel imperata a superiore cuius est leges statuere." (Quodl., II, q. 14) But "positive" evil and good is only part of the story. Ockham also recognizes acts which are "natus esse bonus moraliter ex se"--these intrinsic goods will be discussed shortly. Regarding Professor Garvens second point, that sin means only the punishment which accrues to certain acts, it is best to simply consider Ockham's own statements. "Ad aliud dico quod Deus de potentia sua absoluta potest alicui infligere penam sine culpa praecedente, sed illa pena tunc non potest dici punitio quia istud nomen cannotat peccatum praecedens; sicut enim in brutis est pena sine peccato praevio. Tamen, de facto de potentia sua ordinata, Deus non infligit penam sine culpa praecedente vel in punitio ut est in nobis vel in alio ut in Christo cui pena fuit inflictata propter peccata nostra." Sent., II, q. 19, U. One cannot argue validly, therefore, that "he sinned, thus he will be punished necessarily" nor that "he is punished thus he must have sinned." Ockham removes the "freedom from misery and punishment" from man's competence; the "freedom from guilt" remains subject to the created will of viators. That God might choose not to punish a sinner does not mean he was not a sinner, i.e., guilty. The basic mistake of identifying moral evil with "sin," or moral good with "meritorious act," is the oversight of Ockham's strong assertion that a human agent can perform morally evil and morally good acts "ex puris naturalibus," but no human agent can sin or merit salvation "ex puris naturalibus." Human acts can be evil or good by nature, but no human act by nature results in eternal punishment or eternal reward.

²⁶Sent., II, q. 19, F; "Deus potest omne absolutum causare sine omni alio quid non est idem cum illo absoluto; sed actus odiendi Deum quantum ad esse absolutum in eo, non est idem cum difformitate et malitia in actu, ergo, Deus potest causare quicquid absolutum est in actu odiendi Deum vel nolendi, non causando aliquam difformitatem vel malitiam in actu, ergo etc...Item non minus, posset separari difformitas ab odio Dei quam bonitas moralis a dilectione Dei; sed dilectio Dei in angelo beato posset separari a bonitate morali et meritoria."

positive nature of some act as actualizing the volitional potency and inhering within the human soul. The will, when it desires some object, produces a volition which subsists within the soul as an accidental form. Each action, considered as a real quality of the human soul, is metaphysically good. The substance of any action producible by the human agent can be separated from the moral determinations of "evil" or "good." Thus, if God were the total cause of the act of hating God or loving God, that action of hate or love would not be morally significant. Again, if an insane person were to elicit an act of hate for God, then the "absolute being" of that hate would be without moral evil. Invariably, moral evil is the result of a voluntary and rational cause which deliberately chooses to produce this effect contrary to what ought to be produced. Thus, the terms "evil" or "good" never refer exclusively to what is done, i.e., the absolute being of the effect, but necessarily include a reference to the causes of that effect, i.e., a cause which is obliged not to produce or obliged to produce that effect.²⁷

²⁷Ibid., P; "Ad aliud dico quod aliquis actus ab una causa potest fieri bene, et si fiat ab alia (causa) non potest fieri nisi male, et tota ratio est quia una causa obligatur ad actum oppositum et alia non. Sic est in propositio, voluntas creata obligatur ex praecepto divino ad diligendum Deum et ideo stante illo precepto, non potest bene odire Deum nec causare actum odiendi, sed necessario male causat malitia moris, et hoc quia obligatur ex precepto divino ad actum oppositum, nec stante primo praecepto, potest sibi Deus oppositum precipere. Sed Deus ad nullum actum causandum obligatur, ideo quemlibet actum absolutum posset sine omni malo culpae causare et ejus oppositum, et ideo sicut posset causare totaliter actum diligendi sine bonitate vel malitia morali, QUIA BONITAS MORALIS ET MALICIA CONNOTANT QUOD

In book three of the Reportatio, question 10, Ockham raises two issues; first, the origins of an act's evilness or goodness, and secondly, the content of evil and good actions. Two questions are formulated: "From where does an act have its goodness or evilness?" and "What does the goodness or wickedness of an act add to the substance of a morally indifferent act?"

Pertaining to the first question, Ockham claims that the evilness of an action comes from the same causes which produce the substance of the act.²⁸ The "common object," the end, the dictate of Right Reason, and the circumstances--together these factors constitute the total object of volition. As the object of volition these factors establish the specific nature of the will-act. The fact that a moral agent produces some action while consciously rejecting his duty, is reflected by the nature of action produced. Ockham criticizes Duns Scotus for teaching that moral goodness is an "aspect (respectum) of conformity to all the circumstances" added to the substance of an act.²⁹ According to

AGENS OBLIGATUR AD ILLUM ACTUM VEL EJUS OPPOSITUM; ita posset totaliter causare actum odiendi Deum sine omni malitia morali propter eandem causam, quia ad nullum actum causandum obligatur." Notice that the text in capitals approximates the definition given as conjecture by Professor Baudry. See above, note 16.

²⁸Sent., III, q. 10, Q; "Si quaeras, Unde actus habet bonitatem suam vel malitia? Dico quod ab eis dum a quibus habet substantiam actus, quia ab objecto communi et omnibus circumstantiis tanquam a causis multis partialibus, quae omnes simul positae faciunt unam causam totalem."

²⁹Ibid., P; "Ex istis patet quid bonitas vel malitia addit super substantiam actus, quia aliter est dicendum secundum istam viam (Ockham) et aliter secundum viam Johannis. Nam

Ockham, Scotus' view makes moral goodness or evil a "something" which is extrinsic to the nature of voluntary acts. Ockham, on the other hand, teaches that the objects and circumstances of the will-act are causes which partially cause the substance of will-act. Thus, "this substance of the act is this goodness of the act and likewise, concerning a wicked act, this substance of the act is this wickedness of the act." Moral evil, therefore, depends upon the same cause on which the substance of the act depends.

Ockham's answer to his second question--what does the goodness or wickedness of an act add to the substance of a morally indifferent act?--depends upon the answer just given to the first question. Moral goodness or evil adds nothing to an act which is distinct from the substance of that act. "Evil" or

Johannes ponit quod substantia actus virtuosus et vitiosus posset esse eadem, sed dicitur esse virtuosus propter conformitatem ad circumstantias requisitas, quas non ponit esse objecta partialia actus virtuosus et vitiosus. Ideo, per eum, bonitas addit super substantiam actus respectum conformitatis ad omnes circumstantias. Quaere eum. Sed secundum istam viam, quae ponit quod omnes circumstantiae requisitae ad actum sunt causae immediatae partiales necessario requisitae ad actum perfecte virtuosum, actus virtuosus et vitiosus se habent ad actum in communi sicut haec albedo ad albedinem in communi. Et sicut haec albedo est de se haec et non per aliquid extrinsecum sibi, ita actus virtuosus qui primo est virtuosus et de se imputabilis est de se formaliter et intrinsece virtuosus; quia haec substantia actus est haec bonitas actus. Et similiter de actu vitioso, haec substantia actus est haec militia actus, et ab istis duobus posset abstrahi conceptus actus in communi, sicut ab haec albedine et ista, posset abstrahi conceptus albedinis." Professor Oberman unfortunately attributes the position of Scotus to Ockham when the Venerable Inceptor actually claims that the substance of virtuous and wicked acts are never identical. Harvard Theological Review, 53, p. 68.

"good" is predicated intrinsically, i.e., of the nature, of certain volitional acts. Evilness or goodness is not a positive entity or relationship added to the substance of intrinsically moral actions. But some actions, such as walking or eating or reading, are morally indifferent; that is, some actions are not "de se imputabilis" or "de se formaliter et intrinsece" virtuous or wicked. If I walk to fulfill an obligation and out of love for God, then the act of walking is extrinsically good. If I walk to avoid my moral duty, then the act of walking is extrinsically bad. The moral status of indifferent acts is extrinsic-- "walking" can be good or evil depending on the intrinsic goodness or evilness of the reason why an agent walks. Actions which are good or bad because they serve or execute an intrinsically good or bad action, do not receive anything "absolute, positive or relative (respectivum) distinct from that (indifferent) action."³⁰

Ockham treats the difference between intrinsically and extrinsically moral acts by means of different connotations. The principal denotation of "good" or "evil," when predicated intrinsically, is a substantive will-act. The principle significance of

³⁰Ibid., Q; "Si autem quaeras, Quid addit bonitas actus vel malitia super substantiam actus quid dicitur bonus saltem denominatione quaedam extrinseca, puta, actus partis sensitivae et similiter actus voluntatis. Dico quod nihil absolutum, positivum vel respectivum distinctum ab illo actu quod habet esse in illo actu per quamcunque causam; sed tamen est bonitas illa nomen vel conceptus connotativus significans principaliter illum actum sic neutrum, connotans actum voluntatis perfecte virtuosum et rectam rationem quibus conformiter elicitor. Ideo, denominatur virtuosus talis actus denominatione extrinseca." Also see Quodl., I, q. 20, where Ockham disputes Scotus' position on this issue.

"good" or "evil," when predicated extrinsically, is a morally indifferent act which could be a voluntary or a nonvoluntary act.³¹ But when predicated intrinsically or extrinsically, "good" and "evil" always connote the causes of the action which is principally signified. Thus, the objects and circumstances of an action as apprehended rationally and the voluntary choice of the total object are connoted by good or evil when predicated intrinsically. When predicated extrinsically, good or evil connote an intrinsically good or evil action as the cause of the morally indifferent effect. In either case, the moral values attributed to certain acts connote the causes of the acts.³² An

³¹In contrast to St. Thomas, and in agreement with Duns Scotus, Ockham is emphatic that voluntary acts can be morally indifferent. See St. Thomas, Summ. Theol., I-II, q. 18, art. 9; Scotus, Comm. Ox., II, d. 41, q. unica. Ockham argues that voluntary acts can be morally indifferent, because the human agent can spontaneously elicit some act. Ockham does not consider an act to be morally good or evil unless the agent deliberately and intentionally fulfills or violates his obligation. See Sent., III, q. 10, O and Q.

³²The function of connotative terms within Ockham's philosophy is aptly expressed by E. A. Moody. "The frequent charge that Ockham atomized the world by refusing to recognize relations as real entities distinct from substances and qualities fails to take account of the fact that the connotative terms relate the individuals by implying factual conditions by which the objects are tied together in an existential sense--something which cannot be done by treating relations as entities distinct from their relata and, in effect, as just another class of substances." "William of Ockham," The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed. by Paul Edwards, Vol. 5 (New York: Macmillan Co. and the Free Press, 1967), pp. 311-312. Ockham's treatment of moral evil and good show the correctness of Professor Moody's observation. The moral status of an action derives from the nexus or order of created cause and effect; nothing besides this nexus is signified by the term "good" or "evil," when predicated in a moral sense.

effect of the volitional potency is real because of its causes; a voluntary effect is really good or really evil because of the same causes by which the effect exists.

To simply desire an object produces a morally indifferent act. The actualization of the volitional power causes an "absolute being"--a real effect within the will. This will-act is good in a metaphysical sense, but this "absolute being" is not good or evil in a moral sense. The moral terminology which describes the real effects of the created will always connotes the causes of that voluntary effect. Thus, Ockham denies that the morality of an act is an addition to, or a subtraction from, the "absolute being" of some action.³³ A change in the objects and circumstances of a will-act changes the causes of a will-act and

³³Sent., III, q. 10, 0; "Respondeo, quod idem numero (actus) non potest esse primo indifferens et post intrinsece bonus vel malus; et dicitur ille actus intrinsece bonus vel malus cui primo convenit laus vel vituperium et cui primo est impredicamentabilis, quia ille actus voluntatis est indifferens qui elicitor circa objectum conveniens tali actui sine, tamen, circumstantiis requisitis ad bonitatem vel malitiam actus--puta, si diligam aliquem hominem non propter aliquem finem bonum vel malum, nec secundum rectam rationem nec contra, nec loco nec tempore determinato nec non, et ita de aliis circumstantiis virtuosis et vitiosis--iste actus non esset bonus moraliter nec malus, sed neuter et indifferens. Ad hoc, igitur, quod fiat bonus vel malus oportet eum circumstantiis virtuosis vel vitiosis; puta, quod voluntas diligat illum hominem propter finem talem et tempore determinato et sic de aliis. Sed sic diligendo, habet actum aliud, sicut dictum est prius, ergo et aliud actum voluntatis. Cum circumstantiae non sint nisi objecta partialia actus virtuosus, ad quorum variationem, variatur necessario actus; et propter eandem causam, non potest aliquis actus voluntatis primo esse virtuosus intrinsece et post vitiosus--idem dico actus numero--quia non potest esse mutatio nisi per mutationem circumstantiarum, puta, quia actus nunc est bene circumstantionatus et post male, et hoc non potest esse sine mutatione actus."

thereby, changes the nature of the will-act. When Ockham asserts that the moral goodness or evilness of an action, does not add or subtract some ontological component or relationship to the action, he does not imply that the nature of a morally good act is identical with the nature of a morally evil act. For example, the act of loving God above all is morally good; the act of loving God for personal gain or selfishly, is morally evil; these acts of loving God are specifically different.³⁴ Evil and good, in a moral sense, cannot be predicated of the same act.

One final question from the Reportatio, namely question nine of Book IV, must be considered. Ockham raises the question; Whether grace and virtues are infused in any penitent through the sacrament of penence? In the course of his answer, Ockham treats a related problem; What is mortal sin? His answer to this second question is pertinent to the discussion of moral evil.

Ockham begins his description of "mortal sin" by analyzing the grammatical or logical status of sin as a connotative rather than an absolute term. The term "mortal sin" has no "quid rei"

³⁴Ibid., N; "Respondeo, omnes circumstantiae actus voluntatis sunt objecta partialia illius actus, ita quod finis in omni actu est objectum principale sicut prius patuit, aliae circumstantiae sunt objecta secundaria partialia respectu illius actus. Exemplum, si enim ad hoc, quod actus voluntatis quo aliquis vult orare Deum sit perfecte virtuosus requirantur de necessitate istae circumstantiae; quia velit orare propter honorem Dei secundum rectum dictamen rationis in tempore statuto, puta die dominico, in loco determinato, puta in ecclesia; tunc iste actus sic virtuosus habet honorem Dei pro objecto principali, actum orandi pro objecto communi, rectam rationem, diem dominicum et ecclesiam pro objectis secundariis et partialibus.

but only "quid nominis."³⁵ Sin has no real definition (quid rei); only absolute terms which stand for one thing and refer wholly and exclusively to that one thing have a real definition.³⁶

"Mortal sin" has a nominal definition (quid nominis) which explains the meaning of the connotative term "sin" by explaining the multiple items signified by the term. The nominal definition of "mortal sin" is "some act of commission or omission because of which one is obliged to eternal punishment." That "sin" can signify an act of commission or omission indicates a greater precision on Ockham's part in describing moral evil. In Ockham's first study of "moral evil," he was satisfied to say that "evil is nothing other than to do something while one is obliged to do its opposite." Now Ockham distinguishes between evil which results from "doing something" and from "not doing something." The distinction shows an appreciation of affirmative as well as negative obligations; and a greater sensitivity to the signification and connotations of the term "evil."

Ockham's reasons for claiming that "sin" is a connotative term are a collective argument against considering evil as an ontological entity or as some type of subsistent reality. There

³⁵Sent., IV, q. 8-9, C; "Quantum ad primum dico quod peccatum mortale non habet quid rei, sed tantum quid nominis quia nihil unum reale dicit nec positivum nec privativum vel negativum; sed dicit multa non habentia aliquam unitatem, nec per se nec per accidens. Unde potest dici quod secundum quid nominis est aliquem commisisse aliquem actum vel omisisse propter quem obligatur ad penam eternam."

³⁶Cf. Chapter I, Note 34.

is no existent "sinfulness" which is distinct from other existents. Sin is "not a being because it is not precisely some one thing or simultaneously many things, but it is one name or concept signifying or meaning many things--it can even be called 'nothing'."³⁷ Everything real and positive signified by the term "sin" can be asserted without necessarily asserting an instance of sin. God can perform immediately every action which He usually performs through the causality of created agents, yet God cannot sin. "Mortal sin is not a real, positive 'something,' nor a being of reason; nevertheless, according to its nominal definition it includes many positive (beings), because it includes an act, and a potency, and a future punishment. Thus, that someone sins mortally is only to produce or to omit some act through which one is ordered to eternal punishment."³⁸

Ockham's analysis of "sin" cannot be simply equated with his notion of moral evil. Morally good or evil actions are not

³⁷ Sent., IV, q. 9, S; "Et ideo quando quaeritur, Quid est peccatum?, dicendum est quod non habet quid rei sed tantum quid nominis. Ideo non debet concedi quod est ens reale nec rationis sed bene in diffinitione ejus exprimente quid nominis ponuntur multa realia et ideo sic potest concedi quod non est ens quia non est aliqua res una praecise, nec multae res simul, sed est unum nomen vel conceptus significans vel importans plures res--potest etiam dici 'nihil,' quia omne positivum quid est in peccato posset poni per Deum, sicut per causam totalem in voluntate hominis et tamen non dicitur peccatum."

³⁸ Ibid., R; "Ad primum istorum dico quod peccatum mortale non est aliquid positivum reale nec ens rationis; tamen secundum suum quid nominis includit multa positiva, quia actum et potentiam et penam futuram, quia aliquem peccare mortaliter non est aliud nisi facere aliquem actum vel omittere propter quem ordinatur ad penam aeternam."

necessarily meritorious or damnable acts. Ockham is careful to defend the freedom of God to eternally reward or punish a creature's behavior.³⁹ On the other hand, the reasons which Ockham offers for asserting that "sin" is a connotative and not an absolute concept, also explain why "evil" and "good" are connotative concepts.

These four questions of the Reportatio contain the main elements of Ockham's thought on moral evil. Ockham does not seem to alter this initial analysis of evil. Certain facets of Ockham's doctrine are clear. First, he rejects any attempt to substantize moral evil as a metaphysical entity (substance, quality or relation). Secondly, he rejects any attempt to consider "evil" or "good" as absolute concepts which signify exclusively one thing, one privation or one relationship. Thirdly, the concept of "moral evil" signifies primarily the substance of a voluntary act and secondarily the causes of that will-act. Finally, he asserts that the concept of moral evil must connote causes which recognize and contradict a moral obligation. Insurmountable problems will arise if Ockham's logical analysis of the concepts of "evil" and "good" are confused with his metaphysical treatment of these issues. For example, moral evil is

³⁹In paragraphs "c" and "s" of question 8-9, Ockham asserts that sin does not necessarily imply a future punishment, nor does a punishment inflicted upon a creature by God imply a previous sin. Nor is an eternal reward automatically the consequent of a morally good act. Sent., IV, q. 3, Q; "Si aliquis diligeret Deum et faceret omnia opera Deo accepta, potest eum Deus annihilare sine aliqua injuria, ita sibi post talia opera potest non dare vitam aeternam sed penam aeternam sine injuria."

not other than the substance of certain will-acts (...haec substantia actus est haec malitia actus); and yet moral evil is not a substance nor an accident. Again, Ockham surely does not mean that moral evil is a fantasy or unreal, and yet he asserts that "sin"--a type of moral evil--can be called "nihil." Such problems are false: they result from confusing the distinct questions of significance and the signified.

Two further points require mention before moving to Ockham's doctrine of moral goodness. First, the notion of moral evil connotes the free and deliberate violation of one's obligation. Ockham also expresses this connotation as "against the dictate of Right Reason."⁴⁰ The "logical advantage" of the latter

⁴⁰Sent., Prologue, q. 10 (I, 292-293); "Autem omnis talis operatio possit dici praxis, videtur, quia omnis actio quae est in potestate nostra posset esse virtuosa vel vitiosa; sed omnis talis est praxis...Ista autem praxis dividitur in praxim virtuosam et vitiosam, quia utraque istarum est in potestate nostra. Praxis autem virtuosa posset sic describi: Praxis virtuosa est operatio existens in potestate voluntatis, nata elici conformiter rationi rectae ad hoc quod sit recta. Prima conditio patet, quia nulla operatio quae non est existens in potestate voluntatis est virtuosa sed magis naturalis. Secunda conditio patet secundum Philosophum, VI Ethicorum, electo recta--et per consequens nec aliqua operatio recta--non est sine recta ratione, quia non est major ratio de una operatione quam de alia. Praxis autem vitiosa est operatio existens in potestate voluntatis, nata elici difformiter rationi rectae, vel conformiter rationi erroneae et falsae. Prima conditio patet, quia aliter non esset imputabilis, quia illud quod non est in potestate voluntatis nullo modo est imputabile. Secunda conditio patet, quia omne malum elicitedum potest esse dictatum non esse eliciendum." This text should disprove a rather common charge that, for Ockham, no act is good or evil "ex se", or "in se." Cf. de Wulf, Histoire de la Philosophie Médiévale, p. 185; Austin Fagothey, Right and Reason: Ethics in Theory and Practice, 3rd ed. (St. Louis, C. V. Mosby Co., 1963), p. 154; Stephen Tornay, Ockham, p. 75. Ockham is not adverse to speaking about acts "natus esse bonus moraliter ex se" (Sent.,

expression is its clarity. "Obligation" is itself a connotative term whose nominal definition involves diverse referents. The dictate of Right Reason, however, is a specific act which inheres subjectively in the mind and whose natural function is to regulate or oblige the will's freedom. What is against one's judgment of Right Reason is thereby against one's moral obligation. Secondly, the meaning of "sin" must be distinguished from that of "evil." The temporal, finite actions of man cannot possess an inherent and necessary relationship to eternal punishment. Sin connotes the disapproval of God--the extrinsic determination that certain forbidden actions will be punished by damnation. Ockham can talk about moral evil without speaking of sinful acts. Ex puris naturalibus--through normal human powers--the agent might violate his moral obligation and reject the dictate of Right Reason. "Sin" carries the added connotation that this moral evil will be punished eternally.

3. The Meaning of Moral Good

In both the Reportatio and the Quotlibetal Questions, Ockham states that the "rectitude" or moral goodness of an act is not distinct from the substance of that act.⁴¹ The "rectitude"

III, q. 10, M); he can discuss moral good and evil without referring to the divine will (Sent., II, q. 19, P). What Ockham does assert is that the "absolute being of any action which the human will can produce is morally indifferent. Without a cause which is subject to moral obligation and capable of recognizing moral obligation, it is impossible to produce moral acts.

⁴¹See Quodl., III, q. 14; Sent., III, q. 12, YY; "Unde omnes istae ymaginationes quae dicunt quod rectitudo in actu

of an act is not some addition--either a positive or a relational entity--to the substance of an act. Rather, "what" the term primarily signifies is the substance of some will-act and not something distinct from that act. After examining Ockham's doctrine of moral evil, it is tempting to say that his conception of moral good could be described as "a will-act which is produced freely and in conformity to Right Reason." The metaphysically good is simply what is willable; every being is a possible object of volition and is thus willable.⁴² Moral good is what is willable according to Right Reason or according to one's obligation. Indeed, this description seems to be implied by Ockham throughout the Commentary on the "Sentences" and the Quotlibetal Questions in spite of the fact that Ockham does not explicitly offer to define "moral good."

The problem with Ockham's doctrine of moral goodness stems from two texts in which he considers the nominal definition of metaphysical goodness as "a being desirable according to Right Reason."⁴³ Clearly, the meaning of good, when used as a

addit aliquid supra actum absolutum vel respectivum, falsae sunt, quia nihil aliud est quam ipsemet actus."

⁴²For Ockham's description of metaphysical good as "the willable" or "that which can be desired by the will," see Sent., II, q. 26, 0; Sent., III, q. 13, S; Sent., I, d. 2, q. 1 (II, 23).

⁴³Sent., I, d. 2, q. 9 (II, 321); "Ideo dico quod passionis entis non sunt aliqua talis a parte rei, sed tantum sunt quidam conceptus importantes illud idem et omnia illa quae importat conceptus entis, connotando aliquod ens determinatum in aliquo. Et ideo ens debet poni in definitione indicante quid

transcendental predicate, can be expressed without the connotation of Right Reason.⁴⁴ The fact that every being is willable renders every being "good" in a metaphysical sense. How can Ockham consider "a being desirable according to Right Reason" as a description of a "property of being" when his exposition elsewhere strongly suggests that this definition applies to moral goodness?

A number of possible interpretations of these two texts can be offered, but the ambiguity cannot be explained away. First, it can be said that every real thing expresses both the will of God and a right reason of God.⁴⁵ Simply by the fact that something exists, it is willed by God and conformed to the right reason of God. Secondly, God could command that any being be loved by the created will so that every being could be willed according to the Right Reason of the creature. Thirdly, Ockham may consider these definitions--"good is a being desirable by the

nominis cuiuscunque passionis ipsius entis: ut si exprimatur quid nominis boni, debet dici quod 'bonum est ens appetibile a voluntate' vel aliquid tale, vel 'bonum est ens appetibile secundum rectam rationem,' vel aliqua talis oratio debet exprimi in qua ponitur ens in recto et aliquid aliud in obliquo. Et eodem modo bonitas debet dici 'entitas sic vel sic appetibilis a voluntate' vel aliquid consimile." Also see Summ. Log., I, 10.

⁴⁴In fact, Ockham does define "good" as a transcendental predicate without including the notion of Right Reason within the definition. See Sent., I, d. 2, q. 1 (II, 23).

⁴⁵In Sent., I, d. 41, q. 1, A and K; Ockham asserts that every volition of God is, by that fact, an act of right reason. A distinction between acts of volition and reason, or a moral requirement that acts of right reason precede acts of volition, would destroy the simplicity of the divine person according to Ockham's position. This text is quoted above, Chapter III, n. 36.

will" and "good is a being desirable according to Right Reason"-- as interchangeable because "good" in either a metaphysical and a moral sense is connotative. Neither use of the term signifies something distinct from the being itself. Ockham cautions against considering the properties of being as "in some way distinct from being."⁴⁶ Just as Ockham criticizes Scotus for teaching that moral goodness is an addition to a will-act (the addition of suitable relationships), so Ockham rejects Scotus' position that the concept of metaphysical goodness is an addition to the concept of being.

In the context of a discussion of the "properties of being," Ockham twice gives a definition of "good" as "a being

⁴⁶Sent., I, d. 2, q. 9 (II, 321); "Ad rationes probantes quod ens non dicitur quidditative de passionibus; dico quod procedunt ex falsa imaginatione. Imaginatur enim ac si passio esset aliquid simplex a parte rei de quo non praedicatur ens quidditative, ita quod bonitas esset a parte rei aliquo modo distincta ab entitate, et nec entitas includeret bonitatem nec esset formaliter bonitas, nec e converso. Et hoc simpliciter reputo falsum, quia nulla talis distinctio est ponenda in creaturis."

This assertion by Ockham answers Scotus' position on the properties of being, which Ockham understands to be: "Secundo dicunt 'quod ens non est univocum dictum in quid de differentiis ultimis nec de passionibus propriis entis'... De passionibus entis probant idem dupliciter: 'Primo sic; Passio per se secundo modo predicatur de subjecto, primo Posteriorum; ergo subjectum ponitur in definitione passionis sicut additum, ex eodem primo, et septimo Metaphysica. Igitur ens in ratione suae passionis cadit ut additum'..." Ibid., p. 297. See Allan B. Wolter's excellent study of Scotus' position on the transcendentals. The Transcendentals and Their Function in the Metaphysics of Duns Scotus (St. Bonaventure, New York: The Franciscan Institute, 1946), pp. 119-127. See Scotus, Quodl., 18, n. 4; where Scotus discusses the difference between essential goodness (metaphysical good) and secondary goodness (natural and moral good).

desirable according to Right Reason." De facto, or within the present moral order, not every being is to be willed according to Right Reason. Acts of hate for God, theft, adultery--these acts cannot be willed according to Right Reason "stante divino praecepto." Hence, it seems warranted to accept this definition as a description of moral goodness. When the context indicates clearly that Ockham is considering moral goodness, Ockham often approximates this definition--"a being willable according to Right Reason."

- 1) To worship strange Gods is evil. We will assert that the intellect dictates that this is evil because then it is really and apparently evil; because only this do I call really and apparently good or evil--what is judged by the intellect good or evil.⁴⁷
- 2) If you ask, however, what does the goodness or malice of an act add beyond the substance of an act which is called good at least by a certain extrinsic denomination? ... Goodness is that connotative term or concept signifying principally that act, thus indifferent, and connoting a perfectly virtuous act of the will and Right Reason, in conformity to which is elicited.⁴⁸
- 3) Thus, the rectitude of an action is not other than the act itself which ought to be chosen according to Right Reason.⁴⁹

⁴⁷Sent., III, q. 13, S; "Hoc solum voco realiter apparenter bonum vel malum, quid judicatur ab intellectu bonum vel malum, et si judicetur ab intellectu recto non errante esse tale, tunc non solum est apparenter bonum vel malum sed realiter quia sic dictat intellectus esse, sicut est in re."

⁴⁸Sent., III, q. 10, Q. See above, note 30.

⁴⁹Quodl., III, q. 14; "...ideo rectitudo actus non est aliud quam ipse actus qui debite elicitor secundum rectam rationem."

- 4) No act is morally good or virtuous unless the act of willing determines for itself to follow Right Reason or is caused by such volition; for example, to will to honor the father or continue the father's honor because I wish to do what Right Reason dictates.⁵⁰

The logical analysis of "good" reveals that it is a connotative concept. "Goodness" means a nexus of volitional effect, volitive cause and intellectual dictate. The term "good" is predicated correctly of a substantive will-act with reference to its distinct causes, freedom and reason. Separated from its history or causes, the volition is separated from its moral status. The root meaning of this concept does not signify the divine will either directly or indirectly. If God's causality is substituted for the created will in producing a finite volition, then the meaning of "moral good" is lost. To be sure, Ockham could define the good as the creature's obligation fulfillment or conformity to divine precepts. But obligation and conformity must be dictated by Right Reason and executed freely "because it is dictated by Right Reason." Invariably, therefore, moral goodness means the substantive will-act with its free and rational causes.

Ockham gives a shorthand definition of moral good and evil as conformity to obligation or rejection of obligation.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Quodl., III, q. 14; "...nullus actus est moraliter bonus vel virtuosus nisi sibi assistat actus volendi sequi rectam rationem vel quia causatur a tali velle; puta, velle honorare patrem vel continuare honorem quia volo quid recta ratio dictat."

⁵¹ E.g., Sent., II, q. 5, H; Sent., II, q. 19, P; Sent., IV, q. 9, S; Sent., I, d. 47, q. 1, D.

He often speaks about moral obligation, but we find no text in which Ockham explicitly defines moral obligation. Ockham implies that obligation is a type of necessity. The term "necessity" is used advisedly since, strictly speaking, the will cannot be necessitated by anything or anyone while producing an imputable act. But if the will is to act rightly, then it must execute the dictates of Right Reason. It is hypothetically necessary for the will to conform to Right Reason in order to produce a good action, although the will is not under any absolute necessity to produce a good action. Because recta ratio includes directives which are divinely revealed and directives which are known naturally, it is clear that the will is subject to two types of rule or obligation. First, the will must produce certain acts because those actions are conditionally necessary for salvation,⁵² that is to say, certain acts are obligatory because God has "posited" a reward or punishment regarding the performance of such acts. Ockham often mentions positive obligations which imply a consequent reward or punishment;⁵³ but he never asserts

⁵²Sent., I, d. 48, q. 1, H; "Ad secundum dicendum quod non conformans se voluntati divinae pro loco et tempore pro quo tenetur de necessitate salutis, peccat mortaliter." Also see Sent., Prologue, q. 10 (I, 299); An Princeps, c. 7 (Manchester ed., Vol. I, 257); Sent., IV, q. 3, T.

⁵³Sent., IV, q. 3, E; "Peccatum actuale non dicit aliud quam actum aliquem absolutum praeteritum per quem quis obligatur ad penam...similiter illa 'obligatio' non dicit aliquid absolutum in anima distinctum ab actu et habitu nec respectum realem, quia suus terminus non est. Igitur tantum respectum rationis si sit aliquis respectus." Also see Sent., IV, q. 9, E; Sent., II, q. 19, P; Sent., I, d. 42, q. 1, H; Sent., II, q. 5, H. This

that the only basis of moral obligation is a divine command.⁵⁴ Secondly, the will is obliged to follow the natural dictates of Right Reason. Ockham makes only cursory statements about natural or non-positive obligations. However, Ockham does assert that "as if by nature" things are ordered to certain ends.⁵⁵ Consequently, the natural dictates of Right Reason are obligatory or necessary as the condition for "all things being agreeably ordered." Thus, whether moral obligation is determined on the basis of revealed evidence or natural evidence, it is the dictate of Right Reason which recognizes the end as it ought to be attained and conveys this "ought" to the will. Ockham's formal

quotation indicates that "obligation" is a connotative term. Obligation is not some absolute or individual being, nor is it a real relation or respect. Consequently, "obligation" must have a nominal definition (quid nominis). A positive obligation or good connotes the will of God accepting some action as rewardable.

⁵⁴In fact, Ockham explicitly recognizes the presence of obligations which are not derived from the divine commands. "Quia semper peccat voluntas peccato commissionis quando elicit aliquem actum ad cuius oppositum obligatur per praeceptum divinum vel ordinationem divinam vel alio modo obligatur ad oppositum et nunquam aliter peccat." Sent., III, q. 13, M. Also see Sent., III, q. 12, YY, in finem.

⁵⁵Sent., Prologue, q. 11 (I, 309); "Ad omnes auctoritates respondeo quod procedunt de fine qui secundum rectam rationem-saltem ut in pluribus-debet intendi si omnia essent convenienter ordinata, et ideo quasi ex natura sua habet quod sit ordinabilis ad talem finem. Si tamen non actualiter intendatur, non est vere et proprie causa finalis." A non-Christian experiences moral obligations and recognizes moral goods without accepting the scriptural commands. See Sent., IV, q. 3, S; Sent., III, q. 10, I, in which Ockham discusses the difference between non-Christian and Christian virtues in terms of natural or supernatural ends, or in terms of natural or revealed motives for certain types of behavior.

description of moral goodness as "a being willable according to Right Reason," indicates the character of every actually good act and every possibly good act, while remaining open to the positive or evident determination of particular goods.

The logic of "good" depends upon Ockham's metaphysical stance and reflects certain "authorities" whom Ockham accepts regarding the nature of goodness. Ockham holds that only substances and accidents are real beings.⁵⁶ Obviously, "good" does not subsist as do trees and animals; nor is good a real accident which inheres in a substance as do heat and whiteness. Goodness does not add anything positive to a being.⁵⁷ "Good" is said or predicated; it does not subsist in the extra-mental world.

⁵⁶Summ. Tot. Log., I, c. 49 (ed. Boehner, p. 141); "Praeter res absolutas, scilicet substantias et qualitate, nulla res est imaginabilis." Also see Quodl., I, q. 18; Sent., I, d. 30, q. 3, C.

⁵⁷Quodl., III, q. 14; "Rectitudo actus non est qualitas actus, nec accidens ejus, ergo est substantia actus. Ad istam quaestionem, dico quod nunquam actus et sua rectitudo differunt, quia omnis actus aut est rectus essentialiter aut per denominationem extrinsecam. Si primo modo tunc substantia actus est sua rectitudo, quid patet ex hoc, quia impossibile est quod talis actus sit a voluntate creata nisi sit rectus, Si secundo modo, tunc iste actus dicitur rectus, quia causatur vel continuatur ab actu essentialiter virtutoso, ad cuius conformitatem dicitur actus rectus. Sed propter talem causalitatem vel conformitatem, nihil positivum recipit actus exterior." Also see Quodl., I, q. 20; and Sent., III, q. 10, Q. When Ockham asserts that "rectitudo" is not a quality of an act, rather it is the substance of an act, he means that "bonus" is predicated of the substance of an action. The goodness which inheres in an essentially good action is caused by the same acts which cause the substance of the act; namely, an act of Right Reason and an act of the will. Ockham does not mean that "rectitudo" exists as an independent thing as is clear in the following footnote.

Because goodness is not an absolute or a positive entity, it "inheres" in a thing by being predicated of it. For example, "truth" inheres in a proposition by being predicated of that sentence. The same statement--I am sitting--is true and false at different times but in each case the statement itself is exactly the same. Likewise, the same physical action--going to church--can be successively and extrinsically good and bad depending on the agent's intention. The reason that "good" is a connotative term rather than an absolute term, therefore, is the metaphysical position that "goodness" is a mode of being and not an entitative quality of being. Moral goodness is a determination of being predicated because of the volitive and intellectual causes of that being. This determination asserts no entity beyond the real effect of the created will and Right Reason.

Ockham refers his notion of "good" to the precedents within the thought of St. Augustine and Aristotle. St. Augustine maintained that every nature--whether created or uncreated--is praiseworthy and good.⁵⁹ This is a Christian outlook, in which

⁵⁸Sent., Prologue, q. 9 (I, 240); "Non potest dici secundo modo; quia nunquam potest causare conceptum rei nisi causet notitiam rei. Sed non est causa notitiae, sicut probatum est, ergo nec conceptus. Nec potest dici primo modo, quia non semper passiones illae sunt res absolutae realiter distinctae, secundum istos, quia 'creativum,' 'verum,' 'bonum' et huiusmodi sunt passiones aliquorum, et tamen non sunt res ab eis distinctae." See also Sent., I, d. 2, q. 9 (II, 321), where Ockham makes the same point in refuting the position of Duns Scotus.

⁵⁹Quodl., VI, q. 2; "Ad argumentum principale, dico quod 'laudabile' accipitur multipliciter. Uno modo, pro omni natura quae est bona sive sit creata sive increata. Sic loquitur

the Infinite Being is the Supreme Good and consequently, all finite beings share in the goodness of the First Cause. The transcendental or metaphysical definition of "good," therefore, is authorized by Augustine. Aristotle speaks about the moral connotation of "good."⁶⁰ Goodness can signify the means to the unqualified, final end or it can signify an action within human powers which deserves praise or blame.

In the Reportatio, Ockham divides the meaning of "good" into; (a) an honest and delectable good, and (b) that which is willable.⁶¹ In this early work, Ockham is sensitive to the various connotations of the word good. Partially, Ockham's carefulness in avoiding equivocations about the term good results from his notion of the will's freedom. Ockham does not think

Augustinus, iii De Libero Arbitrio, dicit 'Si laudatur rationalis creatura, quae facta est, nemo dubitat laudandum esse qui fecit.'" Also see Sent., I, d. 17, q. 2, Q.

⁶⁰Quodl., VI, q. 2; "Alio modo dicitur cuius bonitas ordinatur ad aliquem alium actum, et sic dicitur primo Ethicorum, quod optimorum non est laus. Tertio modo dicitur ut opponitur vituperabili, et sic est aliquod bonum existens in nostra potestate dignum retributione et laude."

⁶¹Sent., III, q. 13, S; "Ad tertium dico quod bonum accipitur dupliciter; uno modo ut dividitur in bonum honestum et delectabile, alio modo bonum est idem quid volitum vel accipitur pro omni illo quid est volibile. Et eodem modo malum accipitur dupliciter ut opponitur bono primo modo dicto vel ut accipitur pro aliquo quid est nolibile vel nolitum. Accipiendo bonum primo modo et malum prout opponitur bono primo modo, sic dico quod voluntas potest velle malum quid nec est bonum realiter nec apparenter, et potest nolle bonum quid nec est malum realiter nec apparenter. Prima pars istius conclusionis patet, quia aliter sequeretur quod nec posset mereri nec demereri committendo circa quidcunque objectum malum realiter et dictatum a recta ratione esse tale."

that the will must choose an object under the aspect of a good (sub ratione boni). A person always wills what is willable; but the experience of moral guilt and wrong-doing shows that a person can will something sub ratione mali. Everything actual or possible can be willed; but not everything should be willed in a given situation. Metaphysical good asserts only that a being is willable; that everything can be an object of the will's love. Moral good and evil assert the will's love of objects dictated or prescribed by Right Reason. For Ockham, the will's freedom requires the capacity to deliberately and single-mindedly accept or reject the directive of Right Reason, to fulfill or repudiate its obligation.

The association between the divine will and moral good involves four facets. First, every moral use of human freedom requires the co-efficiency of the First Cause. Created good and evil do not exist by necessity; if they obtain then God is co-agent. Secondly, the dictate of Right Reason must recognize the moral force of divine commands to be objectively correct. Knowing that God exists and prescribes some action is reason enough for Right Reason to dictate that action. Here those who claim that Ockham makes divine precepts the meaning of moral good have qualified support for their interpretation. No natural criteria of goodness should be preferred to a meaningful and "fulfillable" divine command. Right Reason cannot dictate contrary acts simultaneously but, on the basis of novel revelation, might dictate contrary actions successively. Thirdly, precluding any positive

law and obligation to guide the exercise of human freedom, the moral agent should direct his volition to the Greatest Good. God ought to be the final cause of moral behavior even though a revealed mandate forbids the love of God. Finally--and extrinsic to the nature of morally good actions--God accepts some actions as meritorious or conducive to eternal life. It must be emphasized that Ockham speaks of moral good as independent of meritoriousness;⁶² moral good refers to the substance of created will-acts while meritorious connotes the divine evaluation of those will-acts. Salvation and beatitude are free gifts of God but morality

⁶²Sent., I, d. 17, q. 2, E; "Verumtamen, illum actum esse meritorium non est in potestate naturae humanae, sive habeat charitatem sive non habeat, sed est in libera Dei acceptatione; ita quod sive charitas insit animae sive non insit et actu elicitio adhuc, est in postestate Dei acceptare illum actum tanquam meritorium vel non acceptare." Also see Sent., I, d. 17, q. 1, Q. It does not seem inconsistent with Ockham's exposition of damnable or meritorious acts to maintain that God could impose eternal punishment or eternal reward upon any act of man--even acts done unconsciously or undeliberately. However, Ockham strongly suggests that only actions done voluntarily and knowingly are accepted by God as worthy of eternal pain or reward. See Quodl., VI, q. 1; Sent., I, d. 17, q. 11, C; Sent., IV, q. 8-9, Z, in finem. Ockham implies that morally good or evil actions can be supernaturally meritorious or punishable. For example, a meritorious action is a morally good action which is produced out of love for God. "Nullus actus non meritorius posset dici de novo (actu) meritorius, quae non continuatur et causatur ex amore Dei. Similiter, nullus actus est moraliter bonus vel virtuosus nisi sibi assistat actus volendi sequi rectam rationem vel quia causatur a tali velle, puta, velle honorare patrem vel continuare honorem quia volo facere quid recta ratio dictat." Quodl., III, q. 14. Within the present moral order (stante divino precepto), charity is a necessary condition or cause of meritorious action. But actions which are morally good can be produced without charity. "In omni actu meritorio, caritas est causa efficiens partialis, tamen virtus potest esse moralis sufficiens quantum ad moralitatem naturalem, si habeat circumstantias debitas tali virtuti secundum naturam, sicut philosophi fuerunt virtuosus sine omni caritate, sed actum meritorium non possunt habere sine caritate." Sent., III, q. 10, I.

is within the normal competence of human nature.

Ockham separates the moral order from the economy of salvation. Since St. Augustine's doctrinal battle with Pelagius the Scholastics commonly held that grace was required for moral rectitude.⁶³ Ockham steps outside this tradition and was promptly accused of Pelagianism.⁶⁴ Partly, his motives were to maintain the created will's "freedom of opposites." The will whose natural powers were incapable of producing good or evil would not possess freedom in Ockham's estimate. Another reason involves the divine will. God's freedom and the contingent operation of His ordained will prohibit discussion of moral goodness as necessarily productive of beatitude. Ockham sees the possibility of a moral life ending in total annihilation as well as salvation.⁶⁵ This vision

⁶³Cf. De Correptione et Gratia, II (P.L., 44, 917). St. Thomas holds the same opinion in Summ. Theol., I-II, q. 109, art. 2. D. Odon Lottin indicates how another "Nominalist," Peter Abelard, was condemned at the Council of Sens for claiming that free will was sufficient for moral goodness. Psychologie et Morale..., I, pp. 23-25.

⁶⁴See the studies of Gordon Leff, Bradwardine and the Pelagians (Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought, New Series #5: Cambridge, University Press, 1957), and Hieko A. Oberman, Archbishop Thomas Bradwardine, A Fourteenth Century Augustinian (Utrecht, 1957). The papal commission at Avignon charged that this position "sapit heresim Pelagianam." See Pelzer, Revue d'Histoire ecclesiastique, 18, p. 251. The assertion that moral good is within the natural powers of the human will is not, however, endemic to "Nominalism." Gregory of Rimini says: "Homo non potest absque speciali Dei auxilio facere aliquem actum moralem non culpabilem, igitur homo non potest absque speciali auxilio Dei facere aliquem actum moraliter bonum." Sent., II, d. 26-29, q. 1, art. 1 (Venice, 1522), f. 93v.

⁶⁵Sent., IV, q. 3, Q; "...sicut Deus creat creaturam quamlibet ex mera voluntate sua, ita ex mera voluntate sua potest

requires that morality carry its own exigencies. Eternal life cannot be offered as the inevitable consequent or ulterior motive of moral behavior. Rather, the will should fulfill the obligation dictated by Right Reason precisely and exactly because it is dictated by Right Reason. Hence, Ockham announces the ironic partnership of God's absolute power and the "birth of the lay spirit" (G. de Lagarde), "a natural and rational ethic" (P. Vignaux), "the moral autonomy and freedom of man" (H. Oberman). The created will and Right Reason are the sufficient and essential causes of moral good; meritorious actions require the causal action of infused charity or divine acceptance. The created love for God above all is always morally good by nature, but never meritorious de natura.⁶⁶

To be sure, there is an "ordained" harmony between the order of morals and grace. Those actions presently prescribed by God in the Decalogue agree with the natural evidence available to the Practical Intellect. God's ordained will now rewards the performance of moral actions done for God's sake.⁶⁷ "Grace builds

facere de creatura quicquid sibi placet. Sicut enim si aliquis diligeret Deum et faceret omnia opera Deo accepta, potest eum Deus annihilare sine aliqua injuria; ita sibi post talia opera potest non dare vitam aeternam sed penam aeternam sine injuria. Et ratio est quia Deus nullius est debitor, et ideo quicquid facit nobis ex mera gratia facit. Et ideo ex hoc ipso quod Deus facit aliquid, juste factum est. Exemplum, Christus nunquam peccavit, et tamen fuit punitus gravissime usque ad mortem."

⁶⁶Sent., I, d. 17, q. 1, K. See the valuable study of Paul Vignaux, Justification et Predestination..., pp. 121-126.

⁶⁷Sent., I, d. 17, q. 2, D; "Deus voluntarie et libere acceptat bonum motum voluntatis tanquam meritorium quando elicitur

on nature"--in the sense that the connotation of causative charity or divine acceptance is added to the notion of "moral good" to produce the concept of "meritorious." But the agreement between criteria of moral and meritorious activity is factual rather than necessary.

It is somewhat difficult to reconcile this doctrine of moral good with what Ockham said about the specific nature of intrinsically good actions. Moral goodness is defined by its essential causes of will and Right Reason. The concept is predicated about a substantive will-act as dependent upon the will freely conformed to the obligation enunciated and dictated by Right Reason. Ockham's prolonged debate with Duns Scotus means to show that morally good actions are intrinsically (in se) and specifically distinct from indifferent or evil actions. Yet Ockham also claims that God could produce, as immediate and total cause, any action within the powers of man without thereby producing a moral action. Not subject to any obligation, God could perform those actions which would be evil and sinful for creatures without acting evilly. The coherence of these two assertions goes begging. If God cannot conform to a moral obligation since He is nobody's "debtor," how could He singularly produce the same specific nature of the creature's actions which are so conformed?

ab habente charitatem..." Also see Quodl., I, q. 20; and Sent., III, q. 12, K. The conceptual structure of moral good as connoting the causes of will and Right Reason, and of meritorious good as connoting the will, Right Reason and charity as suggested by Erich Hochstetter, Franz. Studien, 32, 11-12.

If the created will and Right Reason produce volitions which are intrinsically and essentially good, why must the term "good" connote causes which are separable and distinct from that volition? We find no answers, only Ockham's concern to maintain: a) God's capacity to produce directly every metaphysical entity which He now produces through secondary causes, and b) the partial causes-objects of volition effect the metaphysical nature of that volition.

One thing is clear. This "structural" definition of moral good gives the rational principles of morality a formal character. As the notion of "moral good" connotes its essential causes, so the various virtues signify volition conformed to prudence or Right Reason concerning the passions.

'Virtuous' and 'wicked' are connotative names and signify the act itself, not absolutely, but by connoting with this act the activity of the will and prudence. And when something connoted is lacking, such an act is not called 'virtuous.'⁶⁸

The content of Ockham's virtue-terminology invariably includes the essential causes of moral goodness--the created will and Right Reason. The principles formulated with this terminology, however,

⁶⁸Sent., III, q. 13, F; "...'virtuosum' et 'vitiosum' sunt nomina connotativa et significant ipsum actum non absolute, sed connotando cum hoc activitatem voluntatis et prudentiae. Et quando deficit aliquid connotatum non dicitur talis actus virtuosus." J. K. McDonnell, Religion and Ethics..., 110-114, 140-144, comments that the "generic descriptions" which Ockham offers for the virtues are not very useful in recognizing or observing specific instances of these virtues. While agreeing with this interpretation in general, we maintain that the basic or generic significance of value terms is the created will and Right Reason, not the divine will as Mr. McDonnell proposes.

cannot distinguish a priori between honest and dishonest actions, i.e., acts conformed and contrary to Right Reason's dictate.

The truth of these principles is secure against any novel legislation by God but their educative value is minimal. That "honest," "justice," "conformity to Right Reason," and "moral good" are obligatory becomes a matter of definition. Divine commands to "do what is dishonest" or to "act contrary to Right Reason" are possible as mental, verbal or written statements, but they would be meaningless or logically contradictory. A generic definition of moral goodness allows for formal ethical principles which organize the agent's deliberations. It provides a stable framework for morality with necessarily true directives. At the same time, this definition recognizes God's prerogative to affix a negative or positive obligation to any simple action within man's power.

CHAPTER VI

SOME CONCLUSIONS

An element of moral positivism seems to be endemic to Christian ethics. The recognition of moral laws, which are established and validated by the free decisions of the Creator, comes with a commitment to the truth of biblical revelation. Scripture contains laws regarding actions neither good nor evil in themselves such as the rites of circumcision and baptism. The Bible relates instances in which natural laws were either dispensed, clarified, determined or countermanded by God--depending on which exegesis is accepted--such as the divine command that Abraham kill his innocent son or that Osse marry an adulteress. How to reconcile the prerogatives of the Creator within the moral order with the exigencies of naturally known morality was one facet of the Scholastic effort to relate faith and reason. The frontier between "positive" and "natural" law shifted often in proportion to individual's estimates of the nature, stability and extent of these various types of moral laws.

Within the development of Medieval Philosophy, the most impressive aspect of Ockham's ethic is the bold treatment of God's omnipotence within the moral order. The possibility of divine commands to kill, lie, steal and hate God is seriously raised by Ockham. Ockham's speculation about God's absolute power to

command acts of fornication, adultery and "odium Dei" has received the concentration of many scholars as the central feature of his ethical system. Consequently, Ockhamism has been considered as an "extreme" position in the history of Scholastic ethical theory--a "pure" system of divine voluntarism. Perhaps the first instance of divine positivism or voluntarism.¹

Yet we have Ockham's own opinion that moral doctrine includes more than divine commands.

One should know that moral doctrine has many parts, of which one is positive and the other non-positive. Human positive science is that which contains human and divine laws which oblige someone to accomplish or avoid those things which are neither good nor evil unless because they are commanded or prohibited by a superior capable of establishing and deciding laws. Non-positive moral science is that which directs human acts without any command of a superior; just as principles known per se or known through experience direct thus, that namely, 'Everything honest is to be done,' and 'Everything dishonest is to be avoided,' etc., about which Aristotle speaks in moral philosophy.²

The interpretive problem, therefore, is to determine how Ockham reconciles his far-reaching conception of God's legislative authority with the Aristotelian requirements for a moral science.

¹Cf. Gordon Leff, Medieval Thought (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1958), p. 289; "Morality for the first time lay simply with God's arbitrary decree; with God and His will synonymous there could be no way of judging right or wrong other than by the decrees of His will." Also, A. P. d'Entreves, Natural Law. An Historical Survey (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1956), p. 69; and Vernon J. Bourke, History of Ethics, Vol. I, p. 153.

²Quodl., II, q. 14. See Introduction, note 9. Hereafter, texts quoted within the preceding chapters will be indicated by chapter number (Roman numeral) and footnote number.

The Venerable Inceptor admits diverse components within his ethical theory. Norms, determinants, evidence and values fit into the general categories of either "positive" or "non-positive." Our conclusions are brief; they mean to identify the major features of each category and show their relationship. The arguments for these conclusions rest mainly in the preceding chapters.

Positive Elements

Norms. The divine will and its contingent legislation represents a circumstance of special importance to the created moral agent.³ After recognizing through faith the revealed word of God in Scripture, the rational creature ought to conform to the mandates therein. Furthermore, men ought to affirm God's freedom in establishing norms of behavior for His creatures. In particular and extraordinary cases, God might order actions which are now inconsistent with natural and revealed general standards.

(Principal Objection) God commanded the children of Israel to plunder the Egyptians; therefore, He commanded theft. But theft is evil; therefore, He commanded evil...

(Ockham's Response) To the first principal argument, it is clear that to plunder the Egyptians was not evil but good. Thus, God did not command evil by ordering them to rob the Egyptians, nor did the children of Israel sin by plundering--

³III, 9.

except those who robbed in the wrong spirit by not obeying precisely the divine command.⁴

The claim was not uncommon within Scholasticism that God, the creator of the world, could redistribute the goods of the world. The enlargement of God's moral authority occurs with Ockham's unprecedented assertion that a divine command could require hate for God. Ockham sees no necessary connection or formal repugnance between the Uncreated Cause and any created effect. God is a spectator, not a participant in the moral order. Simple hate for God is not by nature evil or repellent to the Creator: insane persons or God Himself could cause this volition without moral guilt. The simple love for God is not by nature good or conducive to happiness: people can love God selfishly (i.e., ex amore concupiscentiae). Ockham holds that every simple act within the power of man's will (i.e., any volitive effect specified by a single object) could be subject to a negative or affirmative obligation through divine law. He demands recognition of the complex objects and situational factors which necessarily accompany volitions which are truly moral.

⁴Sent., I, d. 47, q. 1, A, G; "...praecepit filiis Israel spoliare Egyptios; ergo, praecepit furtum. Sed furtum est malum; ergo, praecepit malum... Ad primum principale, patet quod spoliare Egyptios non fuit malum sed bonum. Et ideo Deus praecipiendo spoliare Egyptios non praecepit malum nec filii Israel peccaverunt spoliando nisi illi qui malo animo non praecise obediendo divino praecepto spoliaverunt."

Valid moral laws must respect the capacities and possibilities of human nature and the norms of logical coherence.⁵ When expressed as directive propositions by the Practical Intellect, the divine commands must be conceptually consistent and signify something "do-able." These minimal requirements perhaps reduce to one. What cannot be done voluntarily cannot be a matter of obligation or morality. This primary standard of validity for moral laws pertains to both the positive and non-positive variety. An additional criterion must be applied to purely positive norms: every simple action subject to a positive obligation must be "do-able" while respecting the source of that obligation. Positive laws presuppose the authority of the legislator; certain actions are valued because they are commanded by "a superior capable of establishing and deciding laws." The fulfillment of positive obligations requires the proper intention or motivation towards a principle of obligation which is distinct from the nature of the action commanded. Here a unique problem arises. What if God commanded the creature to hate Him? The simple hate for God is within the power of the created will and thus Ockham admits in principle that this action could be subject to a positive obligation. But in this one case the motive for obedience would be "formally repugnant" to the obedient act; one would be obliged to hate God because of love for God. Everything other than God could be loved or hated by

⁵III, 15; and III, 53.

the created will for God's sake without any formal or psychological contradiction.⁶ Hence, while Ockham extends the realm of positive law to every act within the created will's power, the hate of God cannot be done virtuously. In this case, the metaphysical or natural possibilities of the human will are not co-extensive with its moral possibilities.⁷

Scholasticism was largely the endeavor of theologians. Ockham no less than St. Thomas or Duns Scotus considered himself first and foremost a theologian. Vitalized by belief in God as the Greatest Good and the Ultimate End, his moral theory dwells on the peculiarities of Christian behavior. Scripture contains certain mandates and rather than explicate the natural evidence and rational warrant for these revealed directives, Ockham is satisfied to say they express God's will for men. As Father

⁶Sent., III, q. 12, YY-AAA; "Si quaeras utrum conversio ad Deum actu caritativo et aversio ab Eo actu odiendi Eum opponitur formaliter. Dicendum est quod sic, quia diligere Deum supra omnia et odire Deum sunt actus contrarii. Si quaeras de conversione ad Deum actu caritativo et conversione actu quo diligitur creatura quam Deus non vult diligi, puta actum fornicandi. Sic non repugnant illi naturaliter et formaliter inter se, sed compatiuntur se in eodem quantum est ex natura actuum. Sed solum repugnant per causam extrinsecam, puta per Deum ordinantem talem creaturam nullo modo a voluntate creatura diligi... Si lex statuta removeretur, jam isti actus diligendi compaterentur se in eodem." Also see Sent., II, q. 19, F.

⁷In Quodl., II, q. 14, Ockham defines "morals" as "human acts which are controlled by the will absolutely;" or in a strict sense as "acts subject to the power of will according to the natural dictate of reason and according to the other circumstances." Cf. Introduction, note 9. God's moral authority is as extensive as the first meaning. But hate for God cannot be elicited within the strict sense of moral activity.

Philotheus Boehner indicates,⁸ Ockham envisions morality within the context of interpersonal relationships rather than rule by impersonal nature. The possibility of changes in the content of moral obligation is Scripturally demanded (e.g., the case of Abraham and Osee) and promotes the fundamental motive to please God when used pedagogically. Ockham never teaches that all moral norms derive their validity "ex praecepto superioris:" there are many universal directives whose validity is not relative to divine decree. Perfect virtue requires, however, that Christian agents value every created thing--even moral rules--as means to the Uncreated Good.

Values. According to Ockham, some actions are morally good only because God commands them. This can be understood about rites such as baptism, or particular duties such as Abraham received. Ockham appreciates the (remote) possibility that God might attach an obligation to performing any simple action within the agent's power--except the act of hating or disobeying God. To love God above all is intrinsically and necessarily good in spite of changing circumstances or divine commands to the contrary. As corollary, Ockham proposes that no physical or mental act, and no simple or non-complex act of volition, has a proper goodness or evilness by its nature.

⁸Collected Articles..., p. 153; "Ockham bases his ethics on one Personal principle, on God who is most powerful, most good and most wise and most just."

This description of the positive norms and values in Ockham's ethical doctrine is one side of the coin. Ockham thinks these positions can fit within the framework of an Aristotelian moral science. Concern for the divine prerogatives is a constant polarity of Ockham's moral teaching. The positive or voluntaristic features of his doctrine raise serious doubts for many critics that Ockham could consistently maintain any demonstrative and rationally based knowledge about the moral order. The burden of proof rests with those who claim that the divine will is not Ockham's last word in ethics.⁹

Non-Positive Elements

Norms. A novel understanding of "recta ratio" supports Ockham's claim of a "scientific" ethic. Right reason can designate any true directive proposition--this is its traditional significance. But Ockham also means by Right Reason a non-propositional act of the intellect--a simple act of assent to the apprehended directive or "right reason." Not a proposition itself, Right Reason cannot stand in logical contradiction to any directive. Practical assent or Right Reason is the psychological mechanism which renders the consideration of behavioral

⁹Various commentators have suggested that moral positivism is not an accurate classification of Ockham's moral doctrine, but without indicating how positivism and rationalism are related. Cf. Helmar Junghens, Ockham im Lichte der neueren Forschung (Berlin, Hamburg; Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1968), p. 253; Paul Vignaux, "Nominalism," D.T.C., 11, c. 771; and Othmar Suk, "The Connection of virtues According to Ockham," Franciscan Studies 10 (1950), pp. 29-30.

ends as normative for volition. To assent that "this is to be done" conveys an obligation or imperative beyond the assessment of truth. Regardless of the objective truth of a moral directive, the will is not obliged until the intellect recognizes or assents to its truth. This un-traditional sense of "recta ratio" is either included within the meaning of necessary moral rules or is presupposed by them. Inevitably, Right Reason and volitive freedom produce moral activity; these aspects of human nature become the basic moral "facts" upon which moral science is based.

Certain principles of morality organize deliberation about one's duty. These principles are known per se as necessarily true independent of any will-act, human or divine, Ockham mentions: Everything honest is to be done. Everything dishonest is to be avoided, The will ought to be conformed to Right Reason, All blameworthy evil is to be avoided.¹⁰ These and other universal norms¹¹ structure moral decisions and connect all virtuous actions as common principles. The truth of these directives is known by means of the constitutive concepts. It would be possible, but logically contradictory and unfulfillable, for God to command, "Act contrary to Right Reason" or "Do what is dishonest." The very meaning of Right Reason and honesty indicates an obligation of conformity and performance for the created will. It remains true that the will ought to conform

¹⁰Introduction, note 9.

¹¹IV, 23.

to Right Reason however one's positive obligations change through divine command. The natural function of Right Reason involves the determination and dictation of one's obligation. Whether natural evidence or divine commands warrant the judgment that "this ought to be done," the assent of Right Reason is the standard of virtuous will-acts. Ockham reasons that it would be impossible for moral agents to conform to rules about which they are (inculpably) ignorant. Believing that God is the Greatest Good who commands this particular act, Right Reason assents naturally and automatically that "this is to be done." Not believing in God, the judgments of the Practical Intellect remain autonomous and authoritative even while rejecting God's positive laws.

Ockham's redefinition of "recta ratio" stands in harmony with God's legislative authority; at the same time it explains why Ockhamism could foster a "lay spirit" and division between theological and natural ethics. The dictate of Right Reason carries a moral exigency; the agent should voluntarily conform to the intellect's dictate "because it is dictated."¹² It provides Ockham with a solution for the perplexing problem of the evidence and experiential foundation for moral values. Assent to a directive proposition has the natural function of recognizing, affirming and dictating an obligation. The judgment of practical truth asserts a personal duty. In constructing moral

¹²II, 83, 84.

laws with this conception of "recta ratio," Ockham asserts only a fact, but a psychological fact whose natural function is to establish a norm for volition.

The non-positive rules of morality which are necessarily true signify only the structure or framework of moral activity. Science concerns the universal for Ockham as well as for Aristotle; the Venerable Inceptor locates universality in the signification of concepts and words rather than in extra-mental things. Hence, the principles of demonstrative knowledge about ethics concern concepts. These principles are formally or analytically true; the constitutive concepts are connected necessarily by the verb "ought" because one term of the proposition invariably connotes or signifies the obliging dictate of Right Reason. The rationally necessary rules of morality signify the essential causes of moral activity--namely, the will as conformed to Right Reason's assent. Certain principles explicitly assert the "ethical order" of causes, e.g., The will ought to conform itself to Right Reason; others designate implicitly the causality of human freedom and Practical Intellect, e.g., Everything honest is to be done. Such directives offer generic descriptions of human moral response. They cannot divide the range of possible volitions into a priori categories of "conformed to Right Reason" or "contrary to Right Reason." Asserting only the structure of moral behavior, they cannot contradict any positive content or determination of right and wrong.

Values. Ockham's basic description of moral good is "that which can be willed and loved according to Right Reason."¹³ This meaning can absorb any "positive goods" since the will of God is respected by the "honest use of reason." Ockham is emphatic that actual moral value inheres in, or is predicated of, the created will. Subject to no obligation, the divine agent never produces a moral value when operating as total cause. As legislator, God might attach positive obligations to certain actions but the causes and consequently the meaning of "moral good" involves the created will and intellectual dictate.

It is necessary to distinguish between moral and meritorious good in Ockham's thought. Morality is within man's natural powers, salvation or merit is not. Some actions are motivated by the infused habit of charity and acceptable to God; but no created effect necessitates the divine will to grant eternal life. Reward or punishment is extrinsic to the nature of human acts. The love of God above all is morally good by nature but not conducive to beatitude by nature. Too often, commentators have described Ockham's doctrine of "meritorious" (and extrinsic) good as his final word in value theory. But Ockham clearly holds that moral good and evil are intrinsically different by nature, and specifically different in predication. Characteristic of Ockham's theory are the positions: a) that the simple nature of every human action is morally indifferent, and b) that actions called

¹³v. 47, 48, 49, 50, 68.

good have a complex nature deriving from the various circumstances and objects which are corporately dictated by Right Reason. These positions enable Ockham to distinguish fact and value; they also allow for God's prerogative to attach a positive obligation to every simple act (except hate for God) producible by men.

* * * * *

Ockham has no ethical system which can be classified as voluntarism, positivism, rationalism, subjectivism or formalism. These categories are all accurate to a degree and, for that reason, imprecise. Human knowledge about morals possesses no formal or systematic unity based upon a single subject, a specific type of evidence or one common principle. Our knowledge is simply a collection of logically compatible propositions which deal directly or indirectly with human operations. Based upon different sources of evidence, Ockham divides moral doctrine into the general classes of positive and non-positive. The harmony between these parts is not organic; it is simply the absence of mutual contradiction.

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APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Mr. David Clark has been read and approved by members of the Department of Philosophy.

The final copies have been examined by the Director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

May 19, 1973
(Date)

Francis J. Catania
(Signature of Adviser)