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WRITING SAMPLE  
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## FREE AND RATIONAL: SUÁREZ ON THE WILL

Notwithstanding our ignorance of him, Francisco Suárez (1548–1617) clearly stands as one of the most important philosophers at the threshold of early modern philosophy. His philosophical acumen was widely recognized prior to the twentieth century, when he was lauded as ‘the pope and prince of all the metaphysicians’.<sup>1</sup> His *Disputationes Metaphysicæ*, first published in 1597, promptly went through at least sixteen editions.<sup>2</sup> The Jesuit order, to which Suárez belonged, played a role in disseminating his work, but his influence extended far beyond Jesuit institutions. Protestant universities adopted Suárez’s work to such an extent that it has been suggested that Suárez’s metaphysics provided the received view in seventeenth-century German universities.<sup>3</sup> With respect to the topic of this paper in particular, Suárez’s account of the will and its freedom was widely influential. As one historian puts it:

If you argued for liberty of indifference in the seventeenth century, you were probably directly or indirectly following Suarez; and if you argued against it, you were probably directly or indirectly arguing against Suarez.<sup>4</sup>

Suárez is a key source for early modern libertarianism, i.e., the view that at the time of acting the will has the power both to act in some way and to refrain from

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<sup>1</sup>This commendation is frequently quoted in Latin as ‘*omnium metaphysicorum papa atque princeps*’ but all the instances I have seen rely on the same handful of secondary sources instead of citing the original. But the quotation is not apocryphal: it can be found as ‘*omnium Metaphysicorum Principis ac Papæ*’ in Adriaan Heereboord’s *Meletemata Philosophica* (Amstelædami: sumptibus JHenrici Wetstenii, 1680), 27.

<sup>2</sup>Francisco de Pablo Solá, *Suárez y las ediciones de sus obras: monografía bibliográfica con ocasión del IV centenario de su nacimiento, 1548-1948* (Barcelona: Editorial Atlántida, 1949).

<sup>3</sup>Karl Eschweiler, ‘Die Philosophie der spanischen Spätscholastik auf den deutschen Universitäten des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts’, *Spanische Forschungen der Görresgesellschaft* 1 (1928): 251–325. Online at <<http://www.fgbueno.es/ger/ke1928a.htm>>. Suárez’s influence in Protestant universities was often mediated by textbooks written by philosophers such as Christoph Scheibler (1589–1653), ‘the Protestant Suárez’.

<sup>4</sup>Norman Fiering, *Moral Philosophy at Seventeenth-century Harvard* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), pp. 120.

acting in that way.<sup>5</sup>

Despite Suárez's intrinsic merit as a philosopher and his historical importance as an influence on early modern philosophy, his treatment of the will has received virtually no recent attention.<sup>6</sup> My aim in this paper is to start filling in our picture of Suárez's views on the will. His position can be understood as a balancing act between the desire to attribute libertarian freedom to the will and the desire to maintain the will's status as a rational appetite. That is, Suárez wants to say that whatever the will chooses, there was some reason for it to so choose.<sup>7</sup> For example, suppose I have good reason to go buy groceries today, but, being free, I choose not to go buy groceries. On Suárez's view there must be something to say, some reason to provide, for why I chose not to go buy groceries. How much a libertarian can say is, of course, at issue.

In particular, I will argue that Suárez holds the following four theses:

1. Human beings have libertarian freedom.
2. The will can elect<sup>8</sup>  $x$  only if  $x$  has been cognized by the intellect and judged to be good.

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<sup>5</sup>Philosophical doctrines are often most widely diffused when adopted as dogma by religious groups. This might be true of Suárez's libertarianism as well. The bitter disputes between Calvinists and Arminians in much of non-Lutheran Protestantism are well-known; less well-known is that Jacobus Arminius (c. 1559–1609) was often accused of being a secret follower of Suárez and other Jesuit philosophers (see Carl Bangs, *Arminius: A Study on the Dutch Reformation* [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971], 295, and Caspar Brandt, *The Life of James Arminius*, translated by John Guthrie [London: Ward & Co., 1854], 234). Of course, Arminius, a Reformed minister, firmly denied that he was following Roman Catholic teachings: 'The rumour about my advising the students to read the works of the Jesuits and of Coornhert, I can call by no other name than a lie' (from a letter to the chief magistrate of Amsterdam, quoted in Brandt, *The Life of James Arminius*, 235). Is he so innocent of Jesuit influence? I am unaware of any scholarship addressing the issue, but it strikes me as an interesting potential chapter in the history of ideas.

<sup>6</sup>Half a century ago, Thomas U. Mullaney set out Suárez's view on freedom as a preliminary to criticising it from a Thomistic perspective in *Suarez on Human Freedom* (Baltimore: The Carroll Press, 1950). Unfortunately, his explication of Suárez is rather opaque.

<sup>7</sup>Suárez, along with his contemporaries, constantly attributes actions to the intellect and to the will. Locke famously ridicules such faculty psychology (*An Essay concerning Human Understanding* 2.21.14–20), but I think it is premature to conclude that Suárez affirms some pernicious faculty psychology. That is, I take it that on Suárez's view actions attributed to the will or to some other faculty are, for all that, first and foremost actions of the agent. So whenever he says that the will chooses something, we could instead say that the agent chooses something. But I will generally follow Suárez and talk of the intellect making judgements and the will making choices.

<sup>8</sup>I will typically use the term 'elect' instead of the term 'choose' in order to reflect Suárez's Latin verb '*eligo*' and the noun '*electio*'. I take the Latin terms to be technical terms in his moral psychology and want to reflect that fact. But little harm will be done in thinking of elections as choices, since I take all elections to be choices. I leave it an open question, however, whether all choices should be thought of as elections.

3. An intellect's judgement that  $x$  is good is sufficient for the will to be able to elect  $x$ .
4. An intellect's judgement that  $x$  is good does not necessitate the will to elect  $x$ , even if the intellect has not presented any better option.

There is a potential tension between the sufficiency and necessity conditions in (3) and (4). The challenge for Suárez is to explain these theses in a coherent and satisfying fashion.

Before examining Suárez's position more closely, I will provide some historical background (Section 1) by briefly characterizing the views of two predecessors, Aquinas and Scotus, both of whom greatly influenced Suárez's own thought on many issues. Suárez's account of the will illustrates his tendency to construct his views from elements borrowed from both Aquinas and Scotus. In Section 2, I introduce Suárez's views on the freedom of the will and argue that he is, indeed, committed to a libertarian account. I then turn to a key negative part of his project in which he argues against intellectualist accounts that ground freedom in the intellect (Section 3). This is one area in which he sides with Scotus rather than Aquinas, because, as we will see, he does not think that the intellect's judgements are free in the way Aquinas seems to think they are. Finally, in Section 4, I look at Suárez's account of how practical judgements relate to the will's activity as a way of coming to better understand his positive account.

## 1 Aquinas and Scotus

Suárez is extraordinarily conversant with the philosophical traditions prior to him and he often works through in some detail the positions taken by other philosophers before coming to his own conclusions. In particular, Suárez sees himself as continuing to work in the Aristotelian tradition as it was shaped by Aquinas. Here is how Suárez describes his relationship to Aquinas:

Since in my other lucubrations and theological disputations I always had St. Thomas as my first guide and teacher and I tried with strength to understand, defend, and follow his teaching, I will attempt to surpass my previous effort in the present work with even greater eagerness and affection. And I hope, with divine aid, to achieve that so that I will not depart from his true mind and view in any matter that is important and of some significance, drawing out his view not from my own head but from his classic expositors and defenders and, where

they fail him, from the various passages collected among them themselves.<sup>9</sup>

Suárez is undoubtedly right in identifying Aquinas as his ‘first guide and teacher’. Most of his works are clearly conceived as broadly following themes set forth in Aquinas’s *Summa Theologiæ* and Aquinas earns far more citations than any other medieval philosopher.<sup>10</sup> Suárez’s work is best seen as an attempt to further this tradition by spelling out further details and by responding to challenges raised against it.

We might, however, reasonably doubt whether Suárez is quite as faithful a disciple as he portrays himself to be here. He clearly conceives of himself as following Aristotle and Aquinas rather than, say, Scotus or Durandus. But his temperament is that of a harmonist. Suárez is especially influenced by Scotistic lines of thought. Scotus is the most frequently cited medieval philosopher after Aquinas, at least in the *Disputationes Metaphysicæ*.<sup>11</sup> So when Suárez sees Scotus apparently rejecting a Thomistic position he is as likely to try to find a *via media* that will give some semblance of reconciling both views as he is to defend Aquinas by rejecting Scotus’s arguments. In some cases Suárez adopts positions that look suspiciously like Scotus’s positions but then claims that Aquinas also holds these positions if he is just properly interpreted, as we will see. In these cases, we might well doubt whether Suárez correctly interprets Aquinas.<sup>12</sup>

Given these predilections, it will be worth looking at the views of Aquinas and Scotus before returning to Suárez. Two notes should be made first, however.

<sup>9</sup>*De Gratia*, Prolegemenum VI, cap. 6, n. 28 (= OO 7:322): ... *cum in aliis lucubrationibus nostris ac theologis disputationibus, D. Thomam semper tanquam primum ducem et magistrum habuerimus, ejusque doctrinam pro viribus intelligere, defendere ac sequi conati fuerimus, in præsentem opere, multo majori studio et affectu id præstare curabimus; speramusque cum divino auxilio consecuturos esse, ut a vera ejus mente atque sententia, in nulla re gravi aut alicujus momenti discedamus; non ex nostro capite, sed ex antiquis ejus expositoribus ac sectatoribus, et ubi illi defuerint, ex variis ejusdem locis inter se collatis eam eliciendo*. On this passage, cf. Elisabeth Gemmeke, *Die Metaphysik des sittlich Guten bei Franz Suarez* (Freiburg: Herder, 1965), 18–19. All references to Suárez will include a parenthetical citation of the *Vivès Opera Omnia* by volume and page number. All translations are mine.

<sup>10</sup>On citations, see J. Iturriz, ‘Fuentes de la metafísica de Suárez’, *Pensamiento*, número extraordinario (Madrid, 1948), 39–40.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup>In some cases, Suárez finds support for his favoured readings of Aquinas in texts that he mistakenly thinks are Aquinas’s. For example, Suárez’s account of the metaphysics of relations looks much more like Ockham’s account than Aquinas’s, but Suárez thinks he finds Thomistic support for it in a text spuriously attributed to Aquinas that is probably by Hervæus Natalis. See *Disputationes Metaphysicæ* XLVII.2.13 (= OO 26:789). Henceforth, cited as ‘DM’. All citations to Suárez will be by title, disputation, section, and paragraph number (or analogous divisions in the case of other works).

(1) In what follows I will present Aquinas and Scotus as I read them rather than as Suárez reads them. This distinction is especially relevant in the case of Aquinas, because, as I noted earlier, Suárez tends to read Aquinas as holding the views that he, Suárez, holds even in cases where one might have doubts about the plausibility of this reading. The present case is no exception, so in order to see where Suárez diverges from Aquinas, we cannot rely on his interpretation of Aquinas. What his interpretation is should emerge in the subsequent discussion of Suárez's own views. (2) At least some of my claims about Aquinas and Scotus are tendentious (though none should be novel). Still, I shall not try to defend them here since that would take me too far afield. I hope the relevant issues can emerge even if parts of my interpretation of Aquinas and Scotus should prove untenable.<sup>13</sup>

Let's have a particular case of decision-making in mind for ease of exposition. Suppose an agent is presented with the option of going either to London or to Paris. She deliberates about the matter, considering various reasons for and against going to either place. She concludes that both options are good, but that, on balance, going to London is the better option. Or, to use the scholastic jargon, her intellect judges that going to London is good, that going to Paris is good, but that going to London is the better option (she does not like finding out exactly how bad her French is). Now one of the crucial questions will be whether she is still free to go to Paris once she has made that judgement.

On Aquinas's view, what makes the will a rational faculty is that it is determined by judgements of reason. That is, the will's rationality depends on the rationality of something else, namely, the intellect. The will naturally desires the good, but it is the good as cognized by the intellect, not uncognized good. If the intellect cognizes an object as good or agreeable to the agent, the will desires it even if the object is not in fact good or agreeable for the agent. On the other hand, if the intellect does not cognize an object at all or cognizes it as bad, the will does not desire it. So if the will desires going to London, it is because the intellect judged going to London to be good; if the will prefers going to London to going to Paris, it is because the intellect judged going to London to be better

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<sup>13</sup>The literature on Aquinas's moral psychology is large. Relevant works include the following: David Gallagher, 'Free Choice and Free Judgment in Thomas Aquinas', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 76 (1994): 247–77 and 'Thomas Aquinas on the Will as Rational Appetite', *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 29 (1991): 559–84; Jeffrey Hause, 'Thomas Aquinas and the Voluntarists', *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 6 (1997): 167–82; Tobias Hoffman, 'Aquinas and Intellectual Determinism: The Test Case of Angelic Sin', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 89 (2007): 122–56; Terence Irwin, *The Development of Ethics: A Historical and Critical Study*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), *passim*; Scott MacDonald, 'Aquinas's Libertarian Account of Free Choice', *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 52 (1998): 309–28; Robert Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature: A Philosophical Study of Summa Theologiae Ia 75–89* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), ch. 7; and Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas* (New York: Routledge, 2003), ch. 9.

than going to Paris (ignoring complications introduced by cases of weakness of the will). Aquinas does still think that the will is the subject of freedom. The will is free both to move to going to London and to move to going to Paris. But the cause of this freedom is the intellect's deliberation rather than something in the will. Non-rational animals also act on the basis of apprehending something as to be pursued or avoided. Their apprehensions, however, are not free, but rather are necessitated by the object. Rational agents, in contrast, can deliberate about their options and are free to make different judgements through this process of comparing different options. As long as both going to London and going to Paris are neither perfectly bad nor perfectly good, so that the intellect can focus on either the good or the bad aspects of each, the intellect can judge of either of them that it is good or that it is bad. So these judgements are free and these are the judgements that Aquinas identifies as the causes of the will's free choices.<sup>14</sup>

This is not to say that the will cannot affect the intellect. The will might, for example, direct the attention of the intellect to one object rather than to another and so influence the intellect's practical judgements. But this does not mean that the will can lead to action apart from the judgements of the intellect. This very desire to direct the attention of the intellect to one object requires that the intellect have judged it good to be directed in that way.

For convenience, let's label the position that the intellect determines the will via its judgements 'intellectualism'. Not everyone interprets Aquinas as an intellectualist in this way. But many interpreters, medieval and modern, critics and defenders, have read him as being committed to intellectualism and so for present purposes I will assume this reading without further argument.<sup>15</sup>

Aquinas's intellectualism sparked fierce controversy. Many critics thought that it was incompatible with Christian commitments (Bishop Tempier of Paris condemned intellectualist theses in 1270 and 1277 that are reasonably attributable to Aquinas) and that it failed to provide grounds for the sort of freedom needed to ground moral responsibility.<sup>16</sup> Aquinas thinks that the intellect's freedom resulting from its capacity for deliberation is sufficient freedom for moral responsibility. But his critics insist that we need freedom in the will that is not merely derivative of deliberative freedom. The will must be able to reject the conclusions

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<sup>14</sup>The key features of Aquinas's moral psychology can be found in *Summa Theologiae* IaIIæ, qq. 1–21. *De malo* q. 6 is also of particular relevance.

<sup>15</sup>Most of the authors cited in footnote 13 on page 5 accept an intellectualist account, though they disagree over whether Aquinas is a determinist. Gallagher resists an intellectualist account; he claims that Aquinas allows the will to direct the intellect's attention without the intellect having judged that the will should do so.

<sup>16</sup>For an account of the reactions against Aquinas, see Bonnie Kent, *Virtues of the Will: The Transformation of Ethics in the Late Thirteenth Century* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1995), 110 f.

of intellect or else it is not really free. And if the will is not free, then sins are just the result of cognitive errors rather than of bad willing. Insofar as we think that cognitive errors are not the sort of thing to bear the weight of moral responsibility, this conclusion is problematic.

Scotus formulates a number of objections to Aquinas's intellectualism and provides a prominent alternative account. Scotus emphasizes that the will is not free if it is determined by the judgements of the intellect. On Aquinas's view if my intellect judges that going to London will better promote my happiness than going to Paris, then my will will desire going to London rather than going to Paris. This is because the will desires the good, i.e., my happiness, and it relies on the intellect to tell it where the good is to be found. Prior to the judgement of the intellect, the will can pursue either going to London or going to Paris. But once the intellect has judged going to London better, the will is no longer free to pursue going to Paris. Scotus denies that the will is free if it is necessitated in this way by the judgements of reason. He claims that even in the case where intellect judges that going to London will better promote my happiness than going to Paris, the will can refrain from moving to going to London. Genuine freedom of the will requires that it be free to pursue going to London or not to pursue going to London even after the intellect has made its judgement.<sup>17</sup>

Yet Scotus does want to maintain the conception of the will as rational desire. Having the will refrain from pursuing going to London against the recommendation of the intellect simply because of some passion is not sufficient for a free *rational* desire.<sup>18</sup> So in order to show how the will can be free from the determination of the intellect and yet rational, he adopts the two basic affections that Anselm posited: the affection for advantage (and Scotus identifies advantage with happiness) and the affection for justice. If the will had only an affection for happiness, then it would be necessitated by the intellect whenever the intellect judged that one course of action better promoted happiness than another. If the will were thus necessitated, the agent would not be blameworthy even if the course of action pursued were unjust. Blameworthiness requires that the agent

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<sup>17</sup>See, for example, *Rep. Par.* II, dist. 39, q. 2 (= 1891 Wadding-Vives edition v. 23, p. 205, n. 5): 'Consequently, whatever the onus imposed on the will is, I say that it is not some obligation (*receptum*) in the will caused by the revealing intellect. But it can be called a natural order, since it is difficult for the will not to be inclined to that which is prescribed at the last point by practical reason; still, it is not impossible' (*Quidquid igitur est onus impositum voluntati, dico quod non est aliquid receptum in voluntate ab intellectu ostendente. Sed potest dici naturalis ordo, quia difficile est voluntatem non inclinari ad id, quod est dictatum a ratione practica ultimatim, non tamen est impossibile*). Cf. *Ord.* III, dist. 17.

<sup>18</sup>NB: I am not using 'rational' here in the sense that Scotus uses it. He uses 'rational' as a contrast term to 'natural', so that the will turns out to be more truly rational than the intellect, since the intellect would be a natural power were it not for the influence of the free will.

have been able to will otherwise. Having the affection for justice provides that ability. Now when the intellect judges that going to London better promotes the agent's happiness than going to Paris, the will can still move to going to Paris and do so rationally, i.e., for the reason that going to Paris is more just than going to London (e.g., because the agent owes it to her mother to visit her in Paris).<sup>19</sup>

## 2 Libertarian freedom

In the case of Aquinas and Scotus, I did not explicitly consider whether they affirm libertarian accounts of freedom or not. Rather, I focused on their views about the psychological economy of rational agents, i.e., about the relationship between intellect and will. In the case of Suárez, I do want to establish that his is in fact a libertarian account, before examining his account of agents' psychological economy.

As Suárez notes, there is a general consensus among ancient philosophers, the Fathers of the church, and scholastic philosophers that human beings often act freely, i.e., that they have freedom of decision.<sup>20</sup> This is a consensus that has

<sup>19</sup>The main text for Scotus on the two affections is *Ord.* II, dist. 6, q. 2. Cf. the parallel treatment in *Rep. Par.* II, dist. 6, q. 2, as well as *Ord.* III, suppl. dist. 26. Scotus's account of the two affections has received quite a lot of attention from recent scholars, including the following: Marilyn McCord Adams, 'Duns Scotus on the Will as Rational Power', in *Via Scoti: Methodologica ad mentem Joannis Duns Scoti*, ed. Leonardo Sileo (Rome: Edizioni Antonianum, 1995), vol. 2, pp. 839–54; John Boler, 'Transcending the Natural: Duns Scotus on the Two Affections of the Will', *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 67 (1993): 109–26; Christophe Cervellon, 'L'affection de justice chez Duns Scot: justice et luxure dans le péché de l'ange', in *Duns Scot à Paris, 1302–2002: Actes du colloque de Paris, 2–4 septembre 2002*, ed. Olivier Boulnois, Elizabeth Karger, Jean-Luc Solère, and Gérard Sondag (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), pp. 425–68; John E. Hare, 'Scotus on Morality and Nature', *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 9 (2000): 15–38 and *God and Morality: A Philosophical History* (Malden, Mass: Blackwell, 2007), pp. 91–97; Mary Beth Ingham, 'Duns Scotus, Morality and Happiness: A Reply to Thomas Williams', *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 74 (2000): 173–95 and 'Did Scotus Modify His Position on the Relationship of the Intellect and the Will?' *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales* 69 (2002): 88–116; Terence Irwin, *The Development of Ethics: A Historical and Critical Study* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), vol. 1, §§363–71, 374–77; Sukjae Lee, 'Scotus on the Will: The Rational Power and the Dual Affections', *Vivarium* 36 (1998): 40–54; Rudy te Velde, '*Natura In Seipsa Recurva Est*: Duns Scotus and Aquinas on the Relationship between Nature and Will', in *John Duns Scotus: Renewal of Philosophy*, ed. E. P. Bos (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998), pp. 155–69; Thomas Williams, 'How Scotus Separates Morality from Happiness', *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 69 (1995): 425–45 and 'From Metaethics to Action Theory', in *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 332–51; and Allan B. Wolter, 'Native Freedom of the Will as a Key to the Ethics of Scotus', in *The Philosophical Theology of John Duns Scotus*, ed. Allan B. Wolter and Marilyn McCord Adams (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990), pp. 148–62.

<sup>20</sup>*DM* XIX.2.12 (= *OO* 25:696).

suffered little erosion subsequently.

Suárez also thinks that freedom of decision is assumed in our moral practices:

From this it is also clear that punishment and reward are not conferred on a human being only for the sake of subsequent actions (namely, so that he is enticed to them or drawn away from them) but also precisely and *per se* for the sake of the good or bad that he has performed in them. And for the same reason a human being is considered worthy of praise and honour on account of his actions, none of which could be understood if not for freedom. . . . this is the common way among everyone of thinking about human actions. For everyone judges those who act badly to deserve punishment by the fact that acting in that way was placed in their will and power. And for this reason they speak indignantly of injury inflicted by someone who was using reason but not when inflicted by someone who is insane or inattentive. Indeed, they do not even think a loss inflicted by these as an injury. Hence, . . . even those who deny freedom of decision, as long as they speak severely about injuries to them that are inflicted by other human beings and attempt to avenge them, they confess—whether they wish to or not—that they were inflicted freely. Because if it had not been in their power not to inflict such harms, then the concepts of injury, just anger, and vengeance would have no place there.<sup>21</sup>

I will use the term ‘freedom of decision’ as a translation for ‘*liberum arbitrium*’. Suárez clearly uses the term ‘*liberum arbitrium*’ as a name for the subject of the perennial philosophical question regarding the kind of freedom relevant in discussions of moral responsibility. Outside of that usage, he seldom uses the term ‘*arbitrium*’. I will use ‘freedom of decision’ in the same way. Nowadays the question is customarily referred to as the freedom-of-the-will question, a result, no doubt, of the popularity of the view that the freedom in question is located in the will. But using ‘freedom of the will’ as a translation risks obscuring the philosophical positions in play, since some of the positions affirming *liberum arbitrium* arguably do not locate said freedom in the will. Similar concerns suggest against ‘freedom of choice’, especially if ‘choice’ is also used as a translation of ‘*electio*’.

<sup>21</sup>DM XIX.2.16 (= OO 25:698): *Unde etiam constat pœnam et præmium non conferri homini solum propter subsequentes actiones, scilicet ut ad illas vel alliciatur vel ab eis retrahatur, sed etiam præcise ac per se propter bonum vel malum quod in eis operatus est. Et propter eamdem causam censetur homo dignus laude et honore ob actiones suas, quæ omnia sine libertate intelligi non possunt. Et hinc etiam confirmatur hunc esse communem modum sentiendi omnium hominum de humanis actionibus. Omnes enim judicant esse dignos pœna eos qui male operantur, eo quod sic operari in eorum voluntate et potestate positum sit, et ideo indigne ferunt injuriam illatam ab homine ratione utente, non vero illatam ab amente aut non advertente, immo damnum ab his illatum inter injurias non reputant. Unde, ut recte supra advertit Eusebius, ipsi etiam qui liberum arbitrium negant, dum graviter ferunt iniurias sibi ab aliis hominibus illatas et eas vindicare conantur, velint, nolint, eas libere illatas confitentur; quia si non fuisset in aliorum potestate talia nocumenta non inferre, nulla ibi esset ratio injuriæ aut justæ iræ vel vindictæ.*

The thought is that the way we ordinarily apply praise, blame, and other related concepts shows that we assume that at least some human actions are free. We praise and blame others for their actions, but we refrain from doing so when we think that they did not perform their actions freely. This suggests that we consider freedom a necessary condition for moral responsibility, i.e., for meriting praise and blame.

This consensus about freedom of decision might be thought superficial, however, since it holds only as long as we permit diverse conceptions of what the said freedom is. Suárez does not explicitly note that the consensus to which he appeals would vanish were his own understanding of freedom built into the question. He does, however, note that the terms ‘necessity’ and ‘free’ are used in a variety of senses.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, he is admirably clear about which senses he thinks are appropriate for the current discussion. There is a sense of natural necessity to which all non-rational things, including brute animals, are subject, a sense which he explained at some length in the previous section. To say that human beings have freedom of decision is to deny that they are always subject to necessity in that sense.<sup>23</sup>

Suárez defines this sense of natural necessity when answering the question whether there are created efficient causes that act necessarily. His answer is that there are many created causes that ‘act necessarily once all the things required for acting are present’.<sup>24</sup> He explains the inclusion of the ‘once all the things required for acting are brought in’ clause:

Now that condition ‘once all the necessary things are present’ is added, because one must presuppose that the cause is [i] sufficient, [ii] proximately apt, and [iii] complete with all the conditions required for acting. For if any of these is absent, the action will not follow, not, indeed, as a result of indifference or indeterminacy on the part of the cause, but as a result of the absence of some concause<sup>25</sup> or as a result of the absence of a power or condition necessary for acting.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>22</sup>DM XIX.2.8 (= OO 25:694–95).

<sup>23</sup>DM XIX.2.9 (= OO 25:695).

<sup>24</sup>DM XIX.1.1 (= OO 25:688): *Hæc quæstio est facilis, et ideo breviter dicendum est primo, dari in causis creatis plures, quæ necessario operantur, si omnia, quibus ad operandum indigent, adhibeantur.*

<sup>25</sup>It is not clear to me whether a concause for Suárez is just a contributing or accompanying cause or something else. The Latin term ‘concausa’ is sometimes used as a contrast term to ‘cause’. See: Johann Ramminger, *Neulateinische Wortliste*, s.v. ‘concausa’, [www.neulatein.de/words/1/004505.htm](http://www.neulatein.de/words/1/004505.htm) (accessed October 26, 2009).

<sup>26</sup>DM XIX.1.1 (= OO 25:688): *Additur vero illa conditio, Si omnia necessaria adsint, quia supponenda est causa sufficiens, et proxime apta, et cum omnibus conditionibus ad agendum requisitis. Nam, si aliquid horum desit, non sequetur actio, non quidem ex indifferentia vel indeterminatione causæ, sed ex defectu alicuius concausæ, vel ex defectu virtutis, aut conditionis necessariæ ad operandum.*

Suárez then proceeds to discuss nine putative conditions that must be present in order for a cause to act. He affirms six of the nine, including the conditions that the agent have sufficient power to act, that the patient be close to the agent, that there be a suitable medium between the agent and patient, that there be no impeding cause, and so forth.<sup>27</sup> The intent of this discussion is clear enough. When we ask, for example, if fire necessarily heats water, we are not asking whether whenever there is fire somewhere water will be heated. That is clearly not the case. A fire in England does not heat water in Canada. But the latter observation also fails to show that there are no necessary causal connections. If there is a fire, the water is nearby, no one is rapidly dumping ice into the water, and so on and so forth, then the fire does necessarily heat the water. In fact, according to Suárez all natural causation not involving rational agents involves such necessary causal connections.

We have seen what sorts of conditions need to be presupposed in order to ask whether a causal connection is necessary. We have not, however, seen a definition of necessity. Suárez provides that later: ‘the necessary is opposed to both that which is impossible and that which is possibly not’. Putting what we have seen together: ‘an action that is called necessary is one which cannot not be or become, always assuming that hypothesis, namely, that all things required for acting have been posited’.<sup>28</sup>

We are now in position to see what Suárez means when he asks if human beings perform free actions. What he is asking is whether there are cases where

<sup>27</sup>DM XIX.1.2–11 (= OO 25:688–92).

It is perhaps of some interest to note that one of the proposed conditions which he rejects is the one that says that the cause not be indifferent. The worry is that indifferent natural causes, i.e., causes that are indifferent but not free in the way that rational agents are, will not necessarily produce any of the effects to which they are indifferent. In fact, they will not produce any of the effects at all. Proposed examples of this kind of phenomenon include a perfectly circular fire at the centre of the earth, a perfectly flat piece of glass on a perfectly flat boulder with a perfectly flat boulder falling on it, and Buridan’s ass scenarios (cases where a brute animal has apprehensions perfectly equal in all respects of two objects, e.g., an ass between two precisely identical piles of hay). Suárez, however, does not think that these cases are best described as involving indifference. For example, he agrees that the fire at the centre of the earth would not move outwards but he thinks this is because of an impediment resisting the action rather than indifference. Suárez appears to be inclined to reject the possibility of indifference in the natural world. He is so inclined even in the case of Buridan’s ass, though he seems less confident that he has a persuasive response in this case so he grants that if it were possible for a brute animal to have apprehensions perfectly equal in all respects of two objects, then the animal would indeed not be able to move towards either.

<sup>28</sup>DM XIX.2.8 (= OO 25:694): *Proprie enim et dialectico more loquendo, necessarium opponitur tam impossibili quam possibili non esse, quo modo necessaria actio dicitur, quæ non potest non esse aut fieri, subintelligendo semper illam hypothesisim, scilicet, positis omnibus requisitis ad agendum, et de hac necessitate actionis diximus sectione præcedenti.*

we can both elect and not elect an action even once all the causes and required conditions for that election are present.<sup>29</sup> As he explicitly notes, voluntary actions are compatible with the sort of necessity just described, for voluntary actions are just uncoerced actions performed according to the agent's will. That is compatible with there being a chain of necessary causes running through the agent's will. If voluntary actions are taken to be free actions, then it is 'entirely obvious' that there are free actions.<sup>30</sup> But this is not the proper sense of 'free', according to Suárez. Rather, truly free actions are those that are free from the sort of necessity just described, i.e., actions free in a libertarian sense. What is at dispute is whether all we have are voluntary actions mixed with necessity (compatibilism) or actions free of necessity:

For no one ever doubted, or even could doubt, that human beings in many of their actions act spontaneously and by their own will, moving and applying themselves to a task by a prior cognition. But whether necessity and determination to one [effect] are mingled with this very voluntariness—this is what was called into controversy.<sup>31</sup>

A freedom untainted with necessity is what Suárez thinks is required in order for our moral practice to be justified. As we saw at the beginning of this section, Suárez argues for the claim that we have freedom in part by an appeal to consensus. But it is much less clear that there is much of a consensus once freedom is defined in the way Suárez defines it.

It is also a freedom that is less obviously consistent with an account of the will as a rational appetite. But seeing how this freedom relates to the rationality of the will requires delving deeper into the details of where Suárez locates the freedom.

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<sup>29</sup>Cf. Suárez's fellow Iberian Jesuit Luis de Molina (1535–1600), *Liberi Arbitrii cum Gratiae Donis, Divina Præscientia, Providentia, Prædestinatione et Reprobatione Concordia* [Antverpiæ: ex officina typ. Joachimi Trognæsii, 1595], disp. 2: 'But [freedom] can be taken in another way, insofar as it is opposed to necessity. Taken in this way, that agent is called free which, once all the requisites for acting are posited, is able to act and able not to act, or is able to do one thing in such a way that it is also able to do the contrary' (*Alio vero modo accipi potest, ut opponitur necessitati: quo pacto illud agens liberum dicitur, quod positus omnibus requisitis ad agendum, potest agere et non agere, aut ita agere unum, ut contrarium etiam agere possit.*).

<sup>30</sup>DM XIX.2.9.

<sup>31</sup>DM XIX.2.9 (= OO 25:695): *nullus enim unquam dubitavit, vel dubitare potuit, an operentur homines in multis actionibus suis, spontanee et propria voluntate sese moventes et applicantes ad opus prævia cognitione, sed an in hoc ipso voluntario misceatur necessitas, et determinatio ad unum, hoc est quod in controversiam vocatum est.*

### 3 Suárez's criticism of intellectualism

Suárez does not follow Scotus's conception of the will as having two basic affections. He does, however, agree that the will is not a free faculty if it is necessitated by the judgements of the intellect. That is, he locates freedom in the will rather than in the intellect. He begins his discussion of the question of how the will is determined by the judgements of reason by reviewing an argument for the claim that a free act of will is always necessitated by a judgement of reason. Given that will is rational desire, in accordance with Aristotle, it follows that will can be led only towards an object that is cognized as good by reason. So the will cannot choose an object prior to the judgement of the intellect, because to do so would be to choose an uncognized object. But neither is the will able to reject the judgement once it has been made, because doing so would again be in some sense to choose an uncognized object. That is, in rejecting the judgement, will would be choosing without any reason, since reason has obviously not made a judgement corresponding to that choice. Hence, the will is necessitated once the judgement has been made or it is not rational desire.<sup>32</sup>

So Suárez is clearly aware of the threat to the rationality of the will if one rejects the position that the judgements of reason necessitate the will. Insofar as the will can reject the judgements of reason, it looks irrational. It is also telling that Suárez attributes this argument to 'the disciples of St. Thomas' rather than to Aquinas himself. Whenever he does this, it is likely that he rejects a position that is widely attributed to Aquinas and that he will try to show that Aquinas does not in fact hold the rejected position.

Suárez then notes that the Thomists' position does not find favour with Henry of Ghent, Scotus and his disciples, and others. Suárez affirms the argument of Henry and Scotus:

And, certainly, the argument ... seems irrefutable to me. For if this judgment of reason is a prerequisite for acting in such a way that it is a necessary cause in its own genus with respect to a free act of the will, and if, once this judgment has been posited, the will is unable not to consent to it, then the will is not a power of the kind that is able—once all the things required for acting have been posited—to will and able not to will. Therefore, it is not a free power.<sup>33</sup>

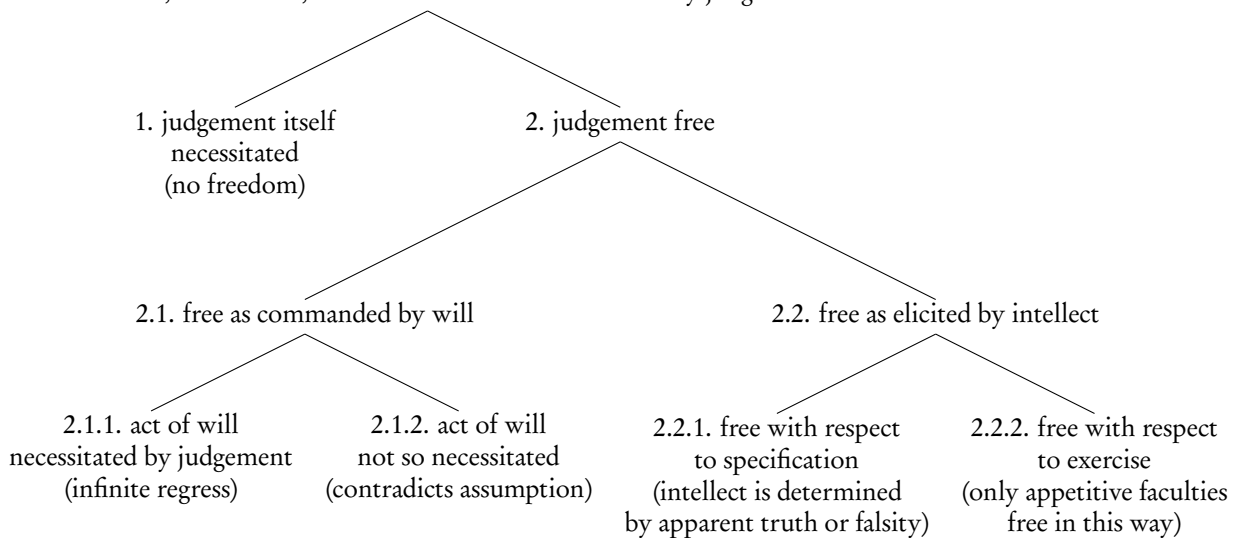
<sup>32</sup>DM XIX.6.1 (= OO 25:719).

<sup>33</sup>DM XIX.6.2 (= OO 25:719): *Et sane ratio ... apud me est irrefragabilis; nam si illud iudicium rationis est ita praequisitum ad operandum ut in suo genere sit causa necessaria ad actum liberum voluntatis, et illo iudicio posito voluntas non potest non consentire illi, ergo voluntas non est talis potentia quæ, positis omnibus absolute praequisitis ad operandum, possit velle et non velle; ergo non est potentia libera.*

Suárez thinks that he even has some support in Aquinas for this position, for Aquinas affirms that freedom is formally found in the will alone. But Suárez thinks that it is obvious that a faculty which lacks the power either to act or not to act once all antecedent conditions have been posited is not formally free. So if the will is not free to act or not act once the judgement of reason has been posited, then the will is not formally free. Suárez seems to think that Aquinas's claim that freedom formally resides in the will commits him to denying that the judgements of reason necessitate the will.<sup>34</sup>

Suárez offers an extended argument for why the necessitation of the will by the judgements of reason would destroy freedom of decision. The argument can be read as a *reductio ad absurdum*, proceeding by a set of nested dilemmas no one of whose horns is both plausible and allows for freedom. The following tree may help illustrate the structure of the argument. Each branching should be read as a disjunction (e.g., 'either [1] the judgement itself is necessitated or [2] the judgement is free'). The parenthetical comments at the leaves briefly indicate why that disjunct should be rejected according to Suárez. The numbers assigned to the nodes correspond to those used in the subsequent discussion.

Assume, for *reductio*, that all elections are necessitated by judgements



Elections are the acts of the will which Suárez thinks the will is free to either perform or not perform, so assume for *reductio ad absurdum* that all elections are necessitated in this way by a judgement. We now encounter the first dilemma:

<sup>34</sup>DM XIX.5.12 (= OO 25:715).

Either (1) the judgement in question is itself necessitated  
or (2) it is free.

If (1), then the will is certainly not free, since there is no freedom in either the making of the judgement or in the act of will. That is, both the judgement and the act of will proceed necessarily from prior conditions.<sup>35</sup> Now on my reading of Aquinas, he would reject (1), since the practical judgements resulting from deliberation are supposed to be free if they are judgments about objects that are only imperfectly good. This is part of Aquinas's more general commitment to doxastic voluntarism, or, better, doxastic libertarianism (since on Aquinas's account the doxastic freedom is not rooted in the will). He seems to think that there are only two kinds of cases in which the intellect's assent to a proposition is necessitated. The basic kind is that of first principles, i.e., propositions whose necessary truth we grasp simply by understanding the terms of the proposition. The second kind is that of demonstrative conclusions, i.e., conclusions that deductively follow from first principles. But Aquinas seems to be committed to a far-reaching doxastic libertarianism that says that in all other cases the intellect is free to assent or not assent. For our purposes, what is important is that he thinks that most practical judgements that say that something ought to be pursued or ought to be avoided are free.<sup>36</sup>

We start to see here what the crucial difference is between Aquinas's and Suárez's assumptions that leads Suárez to reject the Thomistic account of freedom. Aquinas accepts (2) and thinks that this is sufficient for freedom. Suárez does not think that (2) will help. This is not because Suárez rejects doxastic voluntarism outright. In fact, he does not. But his account of it crucially relies on the will and so is of no help for a position assuming that the will is wholly determined by the intellect. Suárez thinks that in at least some cases where it is not clear to a person whether a proposition is true or not the person can believe the proposition by willing to believe it. But it is only through the will that the intellect can be free with respect to believing a proposition.<sup>37</sup> Since we are assuming for *reductio* that all the will's elections are necessitated by judgements, we can see why judgements that are free for this reason are of no help by working through the next dilemma.

Suppose the defender of Aquinas goes with (2), given that (1) seemed so unpromising. There are two ways in which an act can be free, so Suárez introduces another dilemma:

<sup>35</sup>DM XIX.5.3 (= OO 25:719–20).

<sup>36</sup>ST Ia, q. 82, art. 2 co.; IaIIæ, q. 10, art. 2 and q. 17, art. 6; and IIaIIæ, q. 1, art. 4 co.

<sup>37</sup>DM XIX.5.20 (= OO 25:717).

Either (2.1) the judgement is free as commanded by the will  
or (2.2) it is free as elicited by the intellect.<sup>38</sup>

Scholastic philosophers typically analyse complete human actions into a series of acts, some of which are elicited and some of which are commanded. An elicited act is an immediate exercise of either the intellect or the will. A commanded act, on the other hand, is the object of an elicited act. Obvious examples of commanded acts are simple bodily acts. For example, usually my raising my hand is a commanded act. But my *willing* to raise my hand is an elicited act. Commanded acts are not restricted to bodily acts. The disjunct (2.1) indicates that Suárez entertains the possibility of acts of the intellect commanded by the will.<sup>39</sup>

In posing the dilemma between (2.1) and (2.2), Suárez relies on a general principle that he introduced earlier which says that acts can be free in either of two ways:

An action can be denominated as free in two ways: namely, either  
(i) as an elicited act or [free] proximately with respect to the power effecting the action, in the way that willing itself is free or (ii) as a commanded act or [free] remotely with respect to a power moving or applying a lower power to acting, in the way that walking is free.<sup>40</sup>

We might put the distinction as one between acts that are directly free and acts that are derivatively free by originating from directly free acts.<sup>41</sup> As we just saw, Suárez accepts that there are judgements that are free as commanded by the will, so (2.1) might seem a promising option. But:

Either (2.1.1) the act of will that commands the intellect is itself determined  
by the intellect  
or (2.1.2) it is not so determined.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>38</sup>DM XIX.6.3 (= OO 25:720).

<sup>39</sup>For a nice account of this distinction between commanded and elicited acts in the context of Aquinas's action theory, see Alan Donagan, 'Thomas Aquinas on Human Action', in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, edited by Norman Kretzmann, Anthony Kenny, and Jan Pinborg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 649–50. Also see Alfred J. Freddoso's brief explanation in Luis de Molina, *On Divine Foreknowledge (Part IV of the Concordia)*, translated by Alfred J. Freddoso (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1988), 92, fn. 14.

<sup>40</sup>DM XIX.6.3 (= OO 25:712): ... *dupliciter actionem aliquam denominari liberam, scilicet, ut actum elicited, seu proxime in ordine ad potentiam efficientem actionem, quomodo ipsum velle liberum est, vel ut actum imperatum, seu remote in ordine ad potentiam moventem seu applicantem inferiorem facultatem ad agendum, quomodo ambulare est liberum.*

<sup>41</sup>Cf. Randolph Clarke, *Libertarian Accounts of Free Will* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 4, fn. 2.

<sup>42</sup>DM XIX.6.3 (= OO 25:720).

If (2.1.2), then we have already abandoned our initial assumption that all elections are determined by the intellect, i.e., we have already accepted the position for which Suárez is arguing. But if we say that the act of will is itself determined by the intellect (2.1.1), we are beginning an infinite regress. For in that case, the initial election is necessitated by a judgement which is commanded by an act of will which in turn is necessitated by a further judgement and so forth. In order to avoid the regress, there must be a first act that is directly free. So we can see why the kind of doxastic voluntarism that Suárez condones cannot be of use to his opponent here.<sup>43</sup>

As for (2.2), Suárez rejects that it is possible for judgements to be free as elicited by the intellect because he does not think that the intellect is a formally free faculty. That is, he does not think the intellect is intrinsically free. He does not say here why one should deny that the intellect is formally free, but rather relies on lengthy arguments that he made in the previous section of the disputation to that effect. A sketch of the argument will have to suffice here. Again, Suárez introduces a further dilemma, since there are two ways for the intellect to be formally free:

Either (2.2.1) the intellect is free with respect to the specification of its  
own act  
or (2.2.2) it is free with respect to the exercise of its own act.<sup>44</sup>

The distinction between these two kinds of freedom is standard in the scholastic philosophers' conceptual toolbox for action theory. Its usual home is in discussions of the will, so let's start there. Specification of an act is the fixing of the species or kind of act. So to be free with respect to specification is to be able to will an object and also able to will a contrary object, i.e., an object of a different species. For example, an agent might be able to will to eat the apple and also able to will to eat the pear instead. To will to eat the apple is a different species of act than to will to eat the pear. To be free with respect to exercise, on the other hand, is to be able to will and also able not to will where the object is held fixed. For example, an agent might be able to will to eat the apple and able not to will to eat the apple. In this case, the species of act is held fixed, but the agent is able to exercise that act or to refrain from exercising that act.

In the case of the intellect, the acts in question are different. They will be acts such as assenting to a proposition or believing a proposition. Suppose we take the proposition that God exists. An intellect would be free with respect to

<sup>43</sup>*DM* XIX.6.3 (= *OO* 25:720).

<sup>44</sup>*DM* XIX.5.13 (= *OO* 25:715).

specification if it were able to assent to the proposition that God exists and also able to assent to the proposition that God does not exist. It would be free with respect to exercise if it were able to assent that God exists and also able not to assent that God exists.

With that background in place, we can return to Suárez's argument. He argues that the intellect is not free with respect to specification since the intellect's judgements are determined by the apparent truth or falsity of the objects of the intellect. For example, the intellect cannot dissent from what appears true. This is because the intellect is determined by its nature to assent to what is true and to dissent from what is false. If the intellect perceives neither truth nor falsity, then the intellect cannot elicit either assent or dissent. One might think that there are cases where the intellect sees degrees of both truth and falsity, such that it can freely judge either way. This might seem analogous to the claim that the will can freely choose in cases where the objects include both goodness and badness. But Suárez rejects this possibility, since he does not think that truth and goodness are analogous in the relevant ways. Truth and falsity cannot exist together in the same object. Goodness and badness, however, can do so, since the same object may be fitting to an agent with respect to one aspect but unfitting with respect to another.<sup>45</sup> In fact, he sees here—insightfully, in my view—a key difference between the will and the intellect. The only way the intellect can be undetermined with respect to its own act is if it does not see the object clearly. By contrast, the will can be undetermined with respect to its act even in cases where the agent has a perfectly precise grasp of the object. This is why there is no indifference with respect to acts of judgement in the divine omniscient intellect, but there is indifference in the divine will. So Suárez does not think that (2.2.1) can ever be true.<sup>46</sup>

Nor can the intellect be free with respect to exercise, since only acts that are directly voluntary, i.e., not derivatively voluntary the way external actions are voluntary, can be formally free with respect to exercise. But Suárez argues that only acts that are elicited by an appetitive faculty can be directly voluntary and so acts of the intellect cannot be directly voluntary. But then they cannot be free with respect to exercise and so (2.2.2) does not work either.<sup>47</sup>

So now that we have gone through all the options, we can put the pieces together. Since the intellect is not free with respect to the specification of its own act, i.e., not (2.2.1), and it is not free with respect to the exercise of its own act,

<sup>45</sup>The argument here seems to go a little too quickly. Even if truth and falsity cannot co-exist, *apparent* truth and falsity still might be able to and hence might allow the intellect to judge freely. My thanks to Scott MacDonald for drawing my attention to that point.

<sup>46</sup>*DM* XIX.5.14–16 (= *OO* 25:715–16).

<sup>47</sup>*DM* XIX.5.17–20 (= *OO* 25:716–17).

i.e., not (2.2.2), the intellect is not formally free. But then (2.2) does not hold. We also saw that (2.1) does not do the work needed here, so neither option can secure (2). Since (1) was rejected at the very beginning, we can now see, if Suárez is right, that none of the horns of these dilemmas can preserve freedom.

Since these troubles started from the assumption that all acts of the will are necessitated by judgements of reason, Suárez concludes that we should relinquish that assumption. So on his view practical judgements do not determine the will with necessity.

## 4 The role of practical judgements

Suárez does insist that practical judgements are necessary for the will to be able to choose. But to say that the judgements are a necessary condition for the choices of the will is not to say that they necessitate the will's choices. On Suárez's view, practical judgements are not judgements that say that such and such must be done. Rather, they are judgements that such and such is sufficiently good to be loved by the will. But these judgements do not necessitate the will.<sup>48</sup> Rather, the will may choose not to pursue the object, even though the judgement is also sufficient for the will to be able to choose to pursue it.<sup>49</sup> Or, in slogan form: '[the will] is determined by the intellect with respect to sufficiency, but it determines itself with respect to efficacy'.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>48</sup>This is the sort of Jesuit subtlety that Hobbes famously scorns. Hobbes argues that a sufficient cause just is a necessary cause. Hence, if a judgement is sufficient for the will to choose something, then the judgement necessitates the will to choose that thing. But Hobbes seems just to misunderstand the Jesuit position, since the position relies on a distinction between sufficiency for an ability and sufficiency for an exercise of that ability. See *Of Libertie and Necessitie* (London: Printed by W. B. for F. Eaglesfield, 1654), 72–73. Cf. Cees Leijenhorst, 'Hobbes' Theory of Causality and Its Aristotelian Background', *The Monist* 79 (1996): 431–34.

<sup>49</sup>*DM* XIX6.10–14 (= *OO* 25:722–24).

<sup>50</sup>*De voluntario et involuntario* VIII.4.11 (= *OO* 4:264): ... *ab intellectu determinatur, quasi quoad sufficientiam: ipsa vero se determinat quoad efficaciam*. Cf. Scotus on the will as having superabundant sufficiency in response to the question what reduces indetermined potency to act in *Quæstiones in Metaphysicam* IX, q. 15: 'I reply: there is a certain indeterminacy of insufficiency, based on potentiality and a defect of actuality, in the way, for instance, that matter without form would be indeterminate as regards the actuation given by form. There is another indeterminacy, however, that of a superabundant sufficiency, based on unlimited actuality, either in an unqualified or in a qualified sense... But the indetermination ascribed to the will is not like that of matter, nor, insofar as it is active, is it the indeterminacy of imperfection, but rather it is the indeterminacy of surpassing perfection and power, not restricted to some specific act' (*Responsio: est quedam indeterminatio insufficientiæ, sive ex potentialitate et defectu actualitatis, sicut materia non habens formam est indeterminata ad agendum actionem formæ. Est alia superabundantis sufficientiæ quæ est ex illuminatione actualitatis, vel simpliciter vel quodammodo... Indeterminatio autem quæ ponitur in voluntate non est materialis, nec imperfectionis, in quantum ipsa est activa, sed est*

Suárez seems to have at least two kinds of cases in mind when he says that the will is not necessitated by the intellect. Sometimes he describes the case such that it looks like the will is left free because of the way the intellect presented its judgements: namely, because it made no comparative judgement of the form  $x$  is better than  $y$ . The following passage suggests this kind of case:

I said above that a judgement about an object that must be loved is not necessary, but rather one about an object that can be loved; not a judgement about an object that must be elected, but rather one about an object that can be elected. Nor is a comparative judgement (as I will call it) always necessary, that is, a judgement that this is more worthy to be elected than the others. Rather, an absolute judgement is sufficient, that is, a judgement that this is worthy to be elected or is useful.<sup>51</sup>

This account leaves open the possibility that were the intellect to make a comparative judgement that going to London is better than going to Paris, the will would be necessitated to elect going to London. But the intellect does not always make such comparative judgements (Suárez later suggests that it normally does not<sup>52</sup>) and so, when it does not, the will is left free.

Suárez goes on to point out two variant kinds of cases in which there are comparative judgements of a kind, but where the will is still left free for a reason similar to what we just saw.<sup>53</sup> One case is where the intellect judges that two options are equally good. We saw earlier that Suárez has doubts about whether Buridan's-ass cases actually are possible, but he shows no indication of similar doubts about what we might call 'Buridan's-human' cases. That such cases arise seems quite plausible, especially once we note that we do not need a case in which the options are precisely equally good; all we need is a case in which they are sufficiently close to being equal so that a being with limited cognitive powers is unable to detect the difference. Such cases seem quite plausible, perhaps even ordinary. And in those cases Suárez thinks the will is free to choose either despite a comparative judgement that the options are equally good. The other kind of case is one in which the intellect judges one option to be better in one respect but the other option better in another respect. For example, we might judge that one kind of medicine to taste better than another, but judge the latter more likely to cure

*excellētis perfectionis et potestatis non alligatæ ad determinatum actum.*)

<sup>51</sup>DM XIX.7.6 (= OO 25:725): *quod supra dicebam, non esse necessarium iudicium de obiecto amando, sed de amabili, nec de eligendo, sed de eligibili, nec semper esse necessarium iudicium comparativum (ut sic dicam), scilicet, hoc esse eligibile præ aliis, sed sufficere absolutum, scilicet, hoc esse eligibile aut utile.*

<sup>52</sup>DM XIX.7.11 (= OO 25:726).

<sup>53</sup>DM XIX.7.6 (= OO 25:725).

the illness than the former. Here we have comparative judgements, but, Suárez thinks, the will is free to choose either. We might conclude, then, that the kind of judgement that would threaten to necessitate the will would be a comparative judgement that one option is better than another all things considered.

But would such a comparative judgement really remove the will's freedom? Suárez concludes that it would not on grounds that as long as the intellect does not judge that it is absolutely necessary that, say, one should go to London, the will can still refuse to elect going to London even if it was judged to be a better option than going to Paris. Suárez is worried here about safeguarding God's freedom, since in the case of God we cannot attribute freedom as a result of the absence of certain kinds of comparative judgements. God's omniscience precludes that. So Suárez takes as theological givens that (i) God judged that the Incarnation was the best means for redeeming human beings and yet that (ii) God could have elected other means for redeeming human beings. That is a counterfactual scenario, but Suárez also takes there to be actual scenarios of the same structure. In contrast to Leibniz, Suárez seems to think that God judged this world not to be the best world and yet nonetheless actualized this world.<sup>54</sup> In one passage, he makes it clear that there is no further reason to which to appeal in order to explain why God chose this world. He simply wished to and that is all that is to be said about the matter.<sup>55</sup> This power is not exclusive to God. Other rational beings can also elect one option even if the intellect has made a comparative judgement that says that another option would be better.<sup>56</sup>

There is a question why Suárez sometimes presents the will as being free as a result of an absence of a certain kind of comparative judgement, as we saw earlier. For if the will is free even when the intellect has made such a comparative judgement, then we have already secured freedom for all the cases covered by the former kind of scenario. So why present the former kind? It appears that Suárez is less confident about his conclusion that the will can elect contrary to a comparative judgement. In one place, he says that this conclusion is more probable than not but is less certain.<sup>57</sup> So perhaps the former sort of account is

<sup>54</sup>DM XIX.6.13. This is a curious case. One might have expected Suárez to take the position that we need the will to be free from necessitation by the intellect in order to safeguard our moral practices, but that, nevertheless, the will *ought* to elect in accordance with reason where that means electing whatever intellect judges to be best. That is, one might have expected him to say that the will is free to elect contrary to the intellect's comparative judgements but that to do so is blameworthy. Presumably, however, Suárez will decline to conclude that God is blameworthy for not having actualized the world he judged to be best.

As Andrew Chignell pointed out to me, there is also a tradition in theology of thinking about grace as *unmerited* favour. What Suárez expresses here is entirely in keeping with that tradition.

<sup>55</sup>*De voluntario et involuntario* VIII.4.11 (= OO 4:264).

<sup>56</sup>DM XIX.6.13 (= OO 25:723).

<sup>57</sup>DM XIX.6.13 (= OO 25:723).

intended to secure freedom even if the latter sort is deemed untenable. He may also want to include the former sort as an accurate description of how our actual decision-making often goes. Recall that he thinks that we do not ordinarily have comparative judgements in place when we elect to do something.<sup>58</sup>

We are now in position to see what Suárez's picture of the rationality of the will is. We might have thought that to say that the will is a rational appetite is to say that we can fully explain the will's elections by appeal to reasons provided by the intellect. If the will elects a course of action, it does so because intellect gave it reason to do so by judging that the course of action is a good one. This is what an intellectualist can say about the rationality of the will. Suárez can agree with much of it but not all of it. He can agree that the will can only elect a course of action if the intellect has cognized it and judged it good, thereby providing the will with reason to elect it. But we have to be careful what we mean when we say that the intellect judged it good. It is easy to hear a ring of finality in the phrase and think that the intellect has judged it to be better than any other course of action, all things considered. But Suárez rejects that such a judgement is required. Appeal to reasons provided by the intellect can partially explain an agent's actions, but not fully. If an agent follows the pleasurable course of action rather than the virtuous one, we can conclude that the agent judged the pleasurable course of action to be good to some degree. This judgement is unsurprising, since the course of action is pleasurable and pleasure is a good. And this is why the agent chose it. The judgement that the pleasurable course of action is good to some degree is sufficient to enable the will to choose that course of action. The course of action is good enough, so to speak. But we cannot conclude that the agent judged the pleasurable course of action better than the virtuous course of action all things considered. In fact, she might have made the converse judgement without the converse judgement necessitating the will. So part of the explanation for the agent's course of action is that she simply wished to pursue the pleasurable course of action.

Suárez is surely right to say that the intellect's judgement about the pursued object is sufficient to explain something, but his opponent might well press harder and demand that Suárez offer an explanation of why the agent pursued pleasure rather than virtue. Given that the will pursues goodness, must not there be some goodness that drew the will to pleasure rather than to virtue, some goodness that the intellect apparently did not cognize? Scotus, I take it, would say that the will pursued pleasure because it contributes to the agent's advantage and, since will has an affection for advantage, it can pursue pleasure even if the intellect judged that virtue contributes more to justice. Suárez is not as explicit about this contrastive question as one might have wished, but it seems that he is committed to saying

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<sup>58</sup>*DM* XIX.7.11 (= *OO* 25:726).

that in this case intellect judged that there was some goodness in both pleasure and virtue, that there was more in virtue than in pleasure, but, nevertheless, the will pursued pleasure. Why pleasure? Because it is good. Why pleasure rather than virtue? Merely because the will wanted to. This way of putting things may make Suárez's position sound more mysterious than Scotus's, since Scotus can give a reason for why the will pursued pleasure rather than virtue. Ultimately, however, Scotus is susceptible to the same sort of worry: why does the will pursue the advantageous course in this case when in other cases it does not? It seems that for both Scotus and Suárez there is at some point a contrastive question that lacks a satisfying answer.

A thoroughgoing intellectualist, on the other hand, avoids this worry, though at the expense of a satisfying account of freedom. For an intellectualist, if the will pursues one option rather than another, it must be because the intellect judged that option to be better.<sup>59</sup> We need to distinguish between two versions of the claim that the will is a rational appetite in order to capture the difference between Aquinas and Suárez. The moderate version holds that the will is responsive in a certain sort of way to reasons; namely, by requiring a reason for making a choice before being able to make it. That is, it holds that a judgement that *x* is good is necessary in order for the will to be able to elect *x*. The stronger version holds that as well but adds that the will's choosing one option over another must also be explained by appeal to reasons provided by the intellect. To say that, however, is to grant that the intellect's judgements necessitate the will's elections. Suárez affirms that the will is a rational appetite but he advocates the moderate version of that claim because he thinks that the only way to account for moral responsibility is leave the will free even after the intellect's judgements have been made.

## Conclusion

We have seen how Suárez develops a sophisticated and subtle account of the will to capture as best as possible a set of intuitions not entirely in harmony with each other. Suárez feels pressure from thinking about moral responsibility to affirm that the will is free in a robust sense. The category of voluntary actions, i.e., actions that we might call free in a compatibilist sense, is too broad and voluntariness too weak a condition; not all voluntary actions are actions for which the agent is morally responsible. But Suárez thinks that the category of free actions, i.e., free in a libertarian sense, fits the required role. Since he rejects the view that judgements of the intellect are intrinsically free, he has to locate freedom in the

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<sup>59</sup>Of course, a theory's ability always to answer such contrastive questions is a virtue only if they ought always to be answered. Whether that is so is a question for another time.

will. This, in turn, puts pressure on the claim that the will is a rational faculty. How is the will rational if it rejects the judgements received from the intellect? Suárez thinks, however, that he can affirm a moderate version of the claim by insisting that the will can only elect options judged to be good by the intellect. So the will never elects without reason to so elect. All he is compelled to abandon is the stronger claim that any election can be *fully* explained by appeal to judgements made by the intellect. It is difficult to see how a libertarian could do better than that.<sup>60</sup>

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