Evil, Free Will Defenses, and Aquinas

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Abstract

The main purpose of this thesis is to reconcile a free-will defense with Thomas Aquinas'

metaphysics. The Free-Will Defense is an attempt at answering the logical problem of evil,

which states that the existence of God and the existence of evil are logically incompatible.

However, the Free-Will Defense presumes many concepts about causation, freedom of the will,

and the nature of God which Aquinas would not accept. Hence, the question arises as to whether

a free-will defense is something Aquinas can even offer as a solution to the problem of evil. In

this thesis, I argue that a free-will defense *is* compatible with Aquinas' metaphysical framework

and that the apparent inconsistencies between the two are only superficial. As such, I provide a

revised free-will defense that is consistent with Aquinas' framework that I call the Thomistic

Free-Choice Defense.

CONTENTS

§ Introduction

The question concerning an omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent God's relation

to evil has been around since Epicurus. Epicurus put the problem like this:

Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is not omnipotent.

Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent.

Is he both able and willing? Then whence cometh evil?

Is he neither able nor willing? Then why call him good?[1]

Thus, there appear to be two conflicting statements that, when both accepted, result in a logical

incompatibility, those being (1) God exists and (2) evil exists. The thrust of the problem of evil

deals with any kind of evil, be it natural evil (hurricanes, diseases, plagues, etc.) or moral evil

(murder, stealing, etc.).

The problem of evil (PoE), at least as it has been recently articulated, is for the most part

never discussed by Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274). Aquinas accepts (1) and (2) wholeheartedly,

and thus throughout his writings he rarely writes defensively on the topic. In *Questiones*

disputatae De Malo (QDM), he is more concerned with how we are to think about evil *given* that

God exists. With this in mind, Aquinas views the world as being a good, albeit fallen, creation

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[1] Hospers, John (1990) *An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis.* 3rd. Edition, Routledge, pp. 310
Of course, the quotation leaves out the possibility that God might be ignorant of the evils taking place, in
which case God will also not be omniscient.

created by a wholly good God and things aren't how they are supposed to be and thus offers an

answer to the problem of evil in which an omnipotent being can bring greater goods out of evil.[2]

Skipping forward 500-600 years, many philosophers have argued that one cannot adopt

those two positions and remain consistent, i.e., that God and evil both exist.[3] Even further, some

philosophers (such as JL Mackie and HJ McCloskey) have attempted to show that evil counts as

a *positive* case for concluding that God doesn't exist. While many attempts have been made to

show that the two positions are compatible, one of the more famous ones is known as the Free

Will Defense (FWD).[4] The FWD claims that evil (primarily, *moral* evil) is the result of human

beings abusing their free will and is not reflective of God's moral character. Yet God values a

world containing free creatures higher than a world without them, so evil must be a possibility if

God were to create such a world.

In order to have free will, human beings must be the cause of their own actions (or so

Plantinga argues) and not determined by any external factors. This position adopts many

assumptions that Aquinas himself would not accept, and so the question remains as to whether

Aquinas' views on the will and evil are compatible with a free will defense at all. Brian Davies

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[2] Of course, I use the phrase "problem of evil" loosely, as evil wasn't necessarily a problem for God's existence for Aquinas, as will be discussed more in Chapter 2.

[3] To be sure, this argument is usually called the *logical* problem of evil. It only has to do with the logical compatibility of the two positions. There is also the *evidential* problem of evil and the problem of *gratuitous* evil which are not the subject of this paper.

[4] The most popular version of the Free Will Defense, and the one that will be used for the purposes of this thesis, was put forth by Alvin Plantinga in his work *Nature and Necessity* (1974).

and (to an extent) Eleonore Stump argue that one cannot accept the FWD as a solution to the PoE from Aquinas' perspective due to the fundamental metaphysical differences that are inherently present. They argue that Plantinga's formulation presumes many theories on causality, evil, the will, and freedom that Aquinas would not accept.

First, it is important to state what the goal of my thesis is *not*. I am not arguing that Plantinga's FWD is wrong, or that the objections provided by Davies and Stump are without merit. In fact, I agree with both Plantinga and Davies/Stump. As such, the goal of my thesis is to reconcile Plantinga's FWD with the metaphysics of Thomas Aquinas and show that a FWD is a viable option as a response to the PoE from Aquinas' framework. Of course, a revision must be made. I take in to account the criticisms raised by Davies and Stump and reformulate a version of the defense that can be readily accepted by them while accomplishing the goal that Plantinga's original formulation attempted to accomplish, i.e., that God existing and evil existing are not logically incompatible due to the fact that a world containing free creatures necessarily entails a world in which those creatures might choose wrongly.

To accomplish this task, in Chapter 1 I first lay the fundamental framework under which Aquinas operates. Aquinas' views on how we are to respond to God's relation to evil follows from his metaphysics. As such, to provide an accurate revision of a FWD that can be accepted by a person who sympathizes with Aquinas' views, it is first necessary to start the discussion with his thoughts on the nature of evil. Of course, a discussion of evil cannot arise from Aquinas

without a discussion of what the good is, as one can only understand evil in comparison to the good. I then discuss how Aquinas' notion of good and evil rest in a more general metaphysical framework which is then applied to a narrower domain. This framework grounds what is good in every context which is then applied to the specific cases, such as natural or moral evil.

Once this metaphysical framework is established, I turn the discussion towards how Aquinas views the relationship of God and evil. In Chapter 2, I discuss the various objections Aquinas dealt with in how we are to understand such a relationship and how Aquinas responded to those objections. As previously mentioned, Aquinas didn't write defensively in the sense that evil was an actual objection against God, but more so argued how we are to view evil given that God exists.

In Chapter 3, I turn the discussion of evil in Aquinas' time to how it is discussed in contemporary philosophy. Primarily, I look at the works of JL Mackie and Alvin Plantinga. JL Mackie argues that God existing and evil existing are logically incompatible. You can't have one and have the other. And since evil is undeniable, one must conclude that God doesn't exist. Once I present Mackie's argument, I turn to Plantinga's response to Mackie. I present Plantinga's Free Will Defense and discuss the intended goal of Plantinga's argument.

After presenting the FWD, I discuss objections brought about by Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump against Plantinga. By "against" I do not mean that they are arguing Plantinga is wrong, only that if one were wanting to accept Aquinas' metaphysical framework, they couldn't

do so while accepting Plantinga's FWD as a response to the PoE. In the same way the PoE and God are logically incompatible, so to the FWD and Aquinas are logically incompatible.

Once those criticisms are raised, I present a revised version of the FWD that falls in line with Aquinas' views, taking in to account the objections Davies and Stump raise. This revised version, which I call the Thomistic Free-Choice Defense, is aimed to be a free will defense that is in line with Aquinas' views while still accomplishing Plantinga's goal, being to show that God existing and evil existing are not logically incompatible due to some other possible reason.

§I. On the Nature of Evil

In this chapter I discuss Thomas Aquinas' account of evil and evil's ontological status, specifically, how Aquinas adopts an Augustinian and Neo-Platonic perspective that evil is a privation of a due good. In order to provide a satisfactory account of how Aquinas reaches this conclusion about evil, it is first necessary to discuss the nature of goodness. Once Aquinas' metaphysical views on goodness have been established, I will then discuss evil generally speaking then focus the discussion of evil within the context of natural evils and moral evils. To be sure, this chapter is not arguing for the truthfulness of Aquinas' account of evil, but rather it's coherency.

There are some preliminary remarks to be made about the linguistic differences between our contemporary English use of words like 'bad' and 'evil' and what was used in Aquinas' Latin. In contemporary English, there is a stark contrast between saying Dr. Smith is a bad doctor and Dr. Smith is an *evil* doctor. The first assumes a lack of skill in Dr. Smith's abilities as a doctor while the latter has more to do with Dr. Smith's character, i.e., Dr. Smith may be personally intent on causing harm to his patients. Similarly, we may call a car 'bad' but we certainly wouldn't call a car 'evil', as evil may assume some sort of rational awareness of one's actions. For Aquinas, however, there was only the Latin word *malum* to cover both meanings, and consequently, context is important to determine what use Aquinas means when he uses the word. However, there is an underlying metaphysical foundation that links both conceptual differences of *malum*. While 'bad' and 'evil' may differ in some respects, they both refer to something true about the thing being discussed, and this foundation is that *malum* is a privation of a due good. To put it briefly, *malum* does not exist in itself, but rather exists in some already existing thing as a privation.

In order to understand badness or evil as a privation of a due good, it is first necessary to discuss briefly Aquinas' views on what Colleen McCluskey (2017) calls Aquinas' account metaphysical goodness.[5] The word 'good' as used today is usually connoted with admirability, praiseworthiness, or desirability. While these connotations aren't far removed from Aquinas' understanding, the good (*bonum*) does not specifically belong in the moral domain. And even when Aquinas' uses the term within a moral context, he grounds it in a larger metaphysical framework which is then applied to a particular instance. What is the absolute goodness for a thing is dependent on what is proper to it and not lacking anything that is proper to it. When the word 'good' is predicated of a subject like in the statements "that's a good car", "he's a good guy", or "those are good strategies", in contemporary English they may be used merely as equivocal terms, i.e., 'good' is not being used in the same sense in every case, but takes on a different meaning depending on the context. For Aquinas, there is an over-arching framework that grounds what is good in every context which is then applied to the specific cases.

This framework is mainly grounded in the view of the Transcendentals. The Transcendentals are concepts that transcend all the categories of being, and the good is one of those concepts.[6] Along with the good, other transcendentals include 'being', 'true', and what has come to be called 'one'. These terms are also convertible with one another, i.e., insofar as something has being, it is also one, true, and good. In the *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas argues

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[5] McCluskey, Colleen (2017) *Thomas Aquinas on Moral Wrongdoing*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK. pp. 36
[6] Referring to the ten categories of being as presented by Aristotle in his work *Categories* chapters 1-6. Aristotle wanted to create a classification of the natural world of all the possible kinds of things that can be the subject or predicate of a proposition.

that goodness and being are the same in reality (*secundum rem*) but only differ in idea.[7] They are

the same in that a thing is good insofar as it is desirable and something is desirable insofar as it is

actual, or exists in some way. To illustrate the Transcendentals, a drawn triangle exists from the

marker that it was drawn from. The triangle also has some degree of goodness insofar as it

conforms to the proper definition of a triangle. Accordingly, a triangle with straighter lines than a

sloppily drawn triangle will also be a more *true* triangle than the latter. It is also *one* in the sense

that it is *one* thing.[8]

Like the triangle, for each thing that exists, there is a set of essential properties that

determine what kind of thing it is. For triangles, those properties may be something like "having

3 sides" and "angles which total to 180 degrees." As McCloskey also rightly points out, these

essential properties that are characteristic of a being belonging to a certain kind also determine

its being and goodness.[9] However, while being and goodness are convertible with one another,

where they are distinct conceptually is that goodness also has the characteristic of desirability.

Hence, Aquinas takes the Aristotelian position that the definition of goodness is that it is

desirable. He writes:

> "*The essence of goodness consists in this, that it is in some way desirable. Hence the*
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> *Philosopher says (Ethic. i): "Goodness is what all desire." Now it is clear that a thing is*
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> *desirable only in so far as it is perfect; for all desire their own perfection. But everything*

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[7] ST I, q. 5, a.1, co. (All translations from the *Summa Theolgiae* will be taken from the Fathers of the English Dominican Province unless otherwise specified). "Respondeo dicendum quod bonum et ens sunt idem secundum rem, sed differunt secundum rationem tantum."

[8] Oneness in the sense that even though some object may be composed of parts (e.g., hands, legs, and arms on a human) it is still *one* object and not many. For an object to exist, it must be unified in some way.

[9] McCluskey, Colleen (2017) *Thomas Aquinas on Moral Wrongdoing*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK. pp. 39

is perfect so far as it is actual. Therefore it is clear that a thing is perfect so far as it

exists; for it is existence that makes all things actual...."[10]

The above quote provides a broad definition of goodness that Aquinas gives which we can then apply to more specific cases. There are thus two general senses of goodness that Aquinas accepts: (1) everything is good insofar as it has being, and (2) goodness is what everything desires (along with the dictum that everything desires preserving its own existence).[11] Since for Aquinas all beings act to preserve their own existence, what grounds the maximum goodness for a thing is the fulfilling of all the properties that are due to it according to its form, i.e., the being containing all the properties it ought to have and not lacking any properties it ought to have. To use a natural example, when we speak of living substances like oak trees, the oak tree would behave in such a way as to express its form, becoming a more perfect oak tree, and this would constitute its goodness and natural desires. This form also grounds the oak tree's specific functions, i.e., the oak tree has a natural desire to receive sunlight and water so it can grow, which is then directed toward it carrying out its proper function. Hence, the function of the roots are such that they may dig deeper into the ground so as to receive those nutrients.

This is the most general sense of goodness, and goodness takes on a *moral* nature when we bring goodness within the domain of reason, i.e., when reason dictates how one ought to act. And since it is of the nature of the human being to be a rational animal, the essence of a human being is to reason. Thus, when a rational being wills an act by the use of reason, the act has as its

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[10] ST I, q. 5, a.1, co. "Ratio enim boni in hoc consistit, quod aliquid sit appetibile, unde philosophus, in I Ethic., dicit quod bonum est quod omnia appetunt. Manifestum est autem quod unumquodque est appetibile secundum quod est perfectum, nam omnia appetunt suam perfectionem. Intantum est autem perfectum unumquodque, inquantum est actu, unde manifestum est quod intantum est aliquid bonum, inquantum est ens, esse enim est actualitas omnis rei.."

[11] The idea that everything is good insofar as it exists is originally attributed to Boethius, which Aquinas adopts.

end some goodness for that being. Human goodness is dependent on the exercising of actions that are in accordance with human nature. Goodness in general is then the object of the will, in the same way that color in general is the object of sight. To be sure, the term 'object' here is being used as it relates to goal-directedness, in the same way the 'object' of basketball is to score points. For Aquinas, to the extent that human acts have being, they also have goodness.[12] He writes:

> *"We must therefore say that every action has goodness, in so far as it has being; whereas it is lacking in goodness, in so far as it is lacking in something that is due to its fulness of being; and thus it is said to be evil: for instance if it lacks the quantity determined by reason, or its due place, or something of the kind."[13]*

In this quote we get a glimpse of Aquinas' conception of evil and how it relates to the good—it is a lack of something that is due to a thing. As such, one can say that goodness comes in degrees, i.e., some actions instantiate a far greater degree of goodness than other actions, and some beings instantiate a greater degree of goodness than other beings that belong to the same kind. Now that Aquinas' views on metaphysical goodness has been established, I now discuss how evil relates to this metaphysic, first discussing evil generally and then applying it to more narrower cases.

§I.II On Evil

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[12] Of course it may be objected that all human actions are in fact *not* good, but for Aquinas this is not rationally tenable. This will be developed further in this chapter.

[13] ST I-II, q.18, a.1, co. "Sic igitur dicendum est quod omnis actio, inquantum habet aliquid de esse, intantum habet de bonitate, inquantum vero deficit ei aliquid de plenitudine essendi quae debetur actioni humanae, intantum deficit a bonitate, et sic dicitur mala, puta si deficiat ei vel determinata quantitas secundum rationem, vel debitus locus, vel aliquid huiusmodi."

To discuss Aquinas' view on evil, I will be using his *Questiones Disputatae de Malo* (QDM). The QDM provides Aquinas' latest and most detailed exposition of evil, and therefore contains the best treatment Aquinas gives on the topic. Aquinas writes that evil, generally speaking, can be spoken of in two distinct ways: (1) the subject that is evil (*hoc aliquid*), and (2) evil as such.[14] To illustrate this distinction, Aquinas gives the analogy of whiteness. For (1), we can have a thing that is white, e.g., a white chair, a white dog, a white car, etc. In this way, 'white' is predicated of a particular subject. For (2), we can also understand whiteness more generally, or in itself. Skipping (1) and dealing with (2) first, Aquinas further elaborates that what is contrary to goodness is usually what is referred to as evil, and therefore, by analogy, evil must not have being, and therefore is not desirable. The very idea that evil desires nothing and is desired by nothing is, for Aquinas, a reason to hold that evil is not a real, independently existing thing.[15]

Since evil does not exist, how Aquinas talks about evil needs to be further elaborated. While everything that exists is good at some fundamental level, many things that exist in the world are not as good as they could be. For example, we might say that a tree is good insofar as its roots can dig into the ground well enough to absorb nutrients. However, to the extent that the tree does this poorly, it is a *bad* tree, i.e., while good, it is not as good as it could be. The roots of the tree are not functioning how they ought to. To use another example, healthy, good lungs are lungs that adequately provide oxygen to the body, and to the extent they do not, they are bad

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[14] See QDM q.1, a.1, co. and QDM q.16, a.2, co (All translations of Aquinas' *Quaestiones Disputatae de Malo* are taken from Brian Davies' and Richard Regan's translation *On Evil* (2003))
[15] QDM q.1, a.1, co. "Oportet ergo quod malum, quod universaliter opponitur bono, opponatur etiam ei quod est esse. Quod autem est oppositum ei quod est esse, non potest esse aliquid."

(perhaps due to lung cancer). But badness here is not something that exists in itself, it only exists in the qualified sense that the thing said to be bad is defective or is lacking something owed to it.

That said, not every privation is necessarily an evil. For instance, humans lack the ability to fly due to humans lacking wings. Since humans do not have flying as a property essential to their nature, lacking the ability to do so is not an evil. That is why evil is not just a privation, it is a privation *of a due good*. Blindness is an evil for a human because a healthy human has eyes that can see, since seeing is the proper function of the eyes. Evil, then, only exists *in* something already existing. If evil is a privation of a due good and good is convertible with being, then evil is also a privation of being and thus cannot have existence in itself. There are only good things that fail in their goal to reach the good.

Moving on to (1), Aquinas gives two ways in which we can call a subject evil. Something can be called evil in an absolute sense (*simpliciter*) or in a qualified sense (*secundum quid*).[16] Evil *simpliciter* is what has been conceptualized as a privation and includes the previous examples of blindness or failing organs. Evil *secundum quid,* on the other hand, is something that is not evil in itself, but evil for particular persons or things. He writes:

> "*And we call evil in a particular respect what is not evil as such; rather, we call evil in a particular respect what befalls something because it is deprived of a good that is required for the perfection of something else, not one that is required for its own perfection."*

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[16] QDM q. 1, a.1, ad 1. "Ad primum ergo dicendum, quod aliquid dicitur esse malum dupliciter: uno quidem modo simpliciter, alio vero modo secundum quid."

The thing is good absolutely but bad with respect to something else.[17] The example Aquinas gives is of justice, which is good in an absolute sense but bad for the prisoner who is punished due to the crime committed. Similarly, fire may be good in itself but bad for a house made of straw. This latter example perfectly demonstrates what may be construed as Aquinas' account of natural evils, to which I turn now.

<u>§I.III On Natural and Moral Evil</u>

In contemporary ethics, a distinction is usually made between natural (or physical) evils and moral evils. Natural evils may include things like floods, hurricanes, diseases, disorders, and other various things that occur in the natural world that are beyond the choices of human beings or other rational agents. Moral evils may include things like thievery, murder, deceitfulness, pride. The responsibility for these moral evils can be attributed to an acting rational agent. In natural evil, there is no intention of wrongdoing by the cause. The hurricane that tears down a village doesn't *intend* to cause harm—it doesn't intend to do anything at all. In contrast, moral evils are the result of an agent who willfully chooses to cause harm to others (or himself/herself). While natural evils only have victims, moral evils have victims *and* perpetrators.

For the most part, Aquinas didn't make this distinction as explicitly as it is often made today. However, we do find a similar distinction made in his *Summa Contra Gentiles* (SCG). To be sure, while the QDM offers the most mature account of evil Aquinas has written and has various examples of natural and moral evils, the distinction between the two is more prevalent in the SCG. In the first few chapters of SCG III (primarily chapters 4-15), Aquinas is providing a

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[17] This second way will also be important for the discussion on how Aquinas deals with objections regarding God causing evil in the world, which will be discussed further in chapter 2 on the problem of evil.

similar outline to the nature of evil like he does the QDM but also splits the conversation between evils in moral matters and evils in the natural order. While moral evils deal with evils that are the product of the will and voluntary action (which will be discussed later on), he also talks of evil "in the world."[18] He then uses examples like the ones previously mentioned in this section, e.g., blindness and so forth. Natural evils are just those evils that are *not* the product of the will and voluntary action and may be evil *simpliciter* or evil *secundum quid.* Blindness may occur because of defective genetics and thus an example of evil *simpliciter*, while a fire may burn a village down due to an active volcano and be an example of evil *secundum quid*. Both require an unrealized potential within the subject, but while one is due to a defect in the subject due its imperfection, the other might cause that imperfection in some way, while not being evil itself.

§I.III.I On Natural Evil

Natural evil can be either a failure of the natural order or because the natural order requires beings to survive off of other beings. Some beings can be indirectly sought by beings higher in the natural order, i.e., a being seeking what is good for it might be an evil for some other being, like when a wolf eats a sheep. To take cancer as another example, Aquinas would make the point that cancer is not something that is bad *simpliciter*, but bad for the thing that has it.[19] Cancer 'feeds' on the human person and is bad for the person involved, but good for the

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[18] SCG III 9.6 All translations from the SCG are taken from the Hanover House edition, edited by Joseph Kenny and translated by Vernon J. Bourke. "Dicitur etiam malum esse in mundo, non quasi essentiam aliquam habeat, vel res quaedam existat, ut sexta ratio procedebat: sed ea ratione qua dicitur quod res aliqua mala est ipso malo."

[19] Although, it may be argued that cancer is a genetic mutation/perversion of the DNA, in which case it may be bad *simpliciter*.

flourishing of the cancer. This is an example of natural evil due to a fallen natural order. Thus,

evil occurs as an unintended byproduct of a fallen natural order, or caused *per accidens*. Hence

why Aquinas writes that natural evil cannot have an intrinsic, or *per se*, cause.[20] In fact, all

instances of evil have a cause that, when driven back far enough, is good. When discussing the

cause of a deformity in a child, he writes:

> "*And the cause of the evil of giving birth to a monster is the deficient power in the semen.*
>
> *And if we seek the cause of deficiency that is the evil in the semen, we will come to a good*
>
> *that causes the evil by accident and not insofar as the good is deficient.*"[21]

Since evil is not a thing, it cannot be the cause of anything due to it lacking causal efficacy. It

occurs as an accidental side-effect of beings interacting with one another for the sake of other

desirable ends. Now that the nature of natural evils has been discussed, I now turn the attention

to moral evils.

§I.III.II On Moral Evil

Moral evil, as was lightly touched in the previous section, happens when a rational agent

intends to do something (or fails to do something) that prevents that agent from actualizing the

goodness of another agent (or actively harms that agent) or the agent itself. If there is one thing

about humanity that is for certain, is that we fail to act according to our best judgements. I

believe St. Paul said it best when he wrote in *Romans* 7:15-20 that we often do not do the things

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[20] QDM q.1, a. 3, co. "Dicendum quod causa mali est bonum, eo modo quo malum causam habere potest. Sciendum est enim, quod malum causam per se habere non potest."

[21] Ibid., q. 1, a. 3, co. "Huius vero mali quod est monstruositas partus, causa est virtus deficiens in semine. Sed si quaeratur causa huius defectus quod est malum seminis, erit devenire in aliquod bonum quod est causa mali per accidens, et non in quantum est deficiens." While the use of the word 'monster' is alarming here, for Aquinas the word did not have such a negative connotation as it does today. A 'monster' is just a defective creature, in the same way a person missing a finger may constitute being called a 'monster' per Aquinas' usage (only if the deficiency is natural).

that we want to do or what we know we ought to do, but do the very things we don't want to do. We often have the desire to do what is right but lack the ability to carry out that action. Carl N. Still and Darren E. Dahl (2008) say that moral failures turn us in to failed agents, responsible for failing to act in accordance with our own expectations.[22] They continue that moral failure is worse than failing to choose the best means to an end we may currently be seeking because it often involves the ends of the actions themselves, and ends play an important role into who we are as human beings. Indeed, Aquinas writes that evil and good are assigned specific differences in moral matters because moral matters are dependent on the will.[23]

If a person wills evil and has an understanding that the action is evil, this is due to a defect of the will in which the individual lacks the understanding of the good. For Aquinas, the will is an appetite, or power, for with its object being goodness in general, and thus believes that we cannot rationally desire evil because beings only desire things which exist (or could exist), and things that exist are good.[24] As such, moral evil results when one makes a rational choice to pursue something that is a good *simpliciter* but bad in actualizing the goodness of one's potential as a human or purposefully mistreats others. Thus, since the will is a necessary component of moral actions, it is worth briefly mentioning what the will is and how it relates to decision making.

Aquinas' account of moral evil arises out of his psychology. Human decisions and actions arise in virtue of an interaction between the intellect (*intellectus*) and the will (*voluntas*),

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[22] Still, Carl N. & Dahl, Darren E. (2008) "Evil and Moral Failure in *De Malo*,' in *Aquinas' Disputed Questions on Evil: A Critical Guide*, Cambridge University Press, pp 146
[23] SCG III 9.1 "Malum enim et bonum in moralibus specificae differentiae ponuntur, ut prima ratio proponebat, quia moralia a voluntate dependent."
[24] A more thorough treatment of the will (and what it means for the will to have an 'object') and how it relates to human decision making will be discussed in Chapter 5.

of which any defect in either of these may result in actions that are morally wrong. According to Aquinas, both the will and intellect are powers distinct from each other with separate objects. The will has as its proper object goodness in general, while the intellect has as its proper object the quiddity of a thing (what it is), or being in general. Intellect and will are thus engaged in a dynamic interaction that takes place which produces the outcome of a voluntary action.[25] Unlike animals, humans make decisions on a reasoned account of what they find to be good for them. They are the products of a human being's choice (*liberum arbitrium*) and not the product of external deterministic forces. While a complicated process for sure, Eleonore Stump (2005) elegantly condenses Aquinas' process of human decision making in five simplified stages. They are:

(i)   Intellect: Determines that a particular end is good under the current circumstance.

       Will: Approves or rejects that end.

(ii)   Intellect: Determines that the end is able to be achieved by the person willing and in the power of the willer.

       Will: *Intention*: the act of will to achieve the end through some means.

(iii)   Intellect: *Counsel*: Determines the various means to the desired end.

       Will: *Consent*: Accepting means proposed by intellect.

(iv)   Intellect: Determines the *best* means to achieve end under current circumstance.

       Will: *Electio*: Selecting means proposed by intellect as best.

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[25] The concept of voluntary action is also an important topic that will be discussed in greater detail, primarily in Chapter 3.

(v)   Intellect: *Command*: Intellect issues imperative.

         Will: *Use*: Issue control over some thing subject of the will, e.g., part of the body, intellect, or the will itself.[26]

This five-stage process is involved in any voluntary action, even those as simple as raising one's hand, Stump writes.[27] In morally wrong acts, either something has gone wrong with the intellect proposing something as good for the will that is not in fact good for it, or the will has gone wrong by issuing control over the intellect to introduce some new means as the best that is not in fact the best means to achieve the intended end. Per Aquinas, disordered acts of the will have the character of being morally wrong and one is morally culpable and blameworthy by the voluntary engagement of disordered acts.[28] However, since it is the case that the will has the good as its object, Aquinas further states that therefore we must will evil only insofar as it is under the aspect of some good.[29] As such, while evil in its most general form is a privation, within the moral domain an additional conceptualization of evil must be added. Gregory M. Reichberg (2002) writes that this additional conceptualization is that it be a privation *and* in opposition to the good. Reichberg uses the example of adultery: adultery is a privation in the sense that it is the absence of fidelity in a marriage, but also, and more importantly for moral matters, a voluntary violation of a commitment and actions that are opposed to that commitment.[30]

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[26] Stump, Eleonore (2005) '*Aquinas*,' Routledge, 1ˢᵗ edition. pp. 289
[27] Ibid., pp. 290
[28] QDM q.1, a.4, co.
[29] QDM q.1, a.1, ad 12. "Ad duodecimum dicendum, quod bonum et malum non sunt differentiae nisi in moralibus, in quibus malum positive aliquid dicitur, secundum quod ipse actus voluntatis denominatur malus a volito; licet et ipsum malum non possit esse volitum nisi sub ratione boni."
[30] Reichberg, Gregory M. (2002) "Moral Evil in Aquinas's "De Malo",' *The Review of Metaphysics*, Vol. 55, No. 4, pp. 752.

Fundamentally, one can simplify the relation between natural and moral evils as follows: Natural evils involve a privation of a good but is only caused *per accidens*, and moral evils involve both privations and voluntary agents acting contrary to the good. Hence, while every voluntary action is good insofar as it has being, and every voluntary action is always aimed under the guise of some good, voluntary actions can be both defective in will or intellect and be contrary to the nature of the agent. While the idea of all actions being aimed at some good may be hard to grasp, it is of deep fundamental importance, as without an intrinsic desirability of an end, Aquinas would say that one removes the necessary motivation to perform a voluntary action to begin with.

While this chapter is mainly expository in nature, it is important to set the groundwork for the discussion further along. One cannot discuss the problem of evil how it relates to God from Aquinas' perspective without providing an account of what Aquinas means when he uses words like 'good' and 'evil'. And since Aquinas' usage of the words are grounded in a vastly different framework from that used by contemporary philosophers, how Aquinas grounds those words will be instrumentally important when trying to provide a Thomistic response to the problem of evil. Now that we have the basic prerequisites of Aquinas' account of metaphysical goodness and evil laid out, in the next chapter I turn to the discussion on how evil, when viewed under Aquinas' scope, relates to his theological beliefs about God.

§II. God and Evil in Aquinas

While the ontological statuses of goodness and evil are of philosophical interest in their own right, they both cannot be understood properly in Aquinas without consideration of his theological backdrop. Aquinas was an Italian Dominican friar, and thus a devout Catholic. As such, Aquinas held that God is the highest good (*summum bonum*) and the creator of all things, and thus good and evil must be interpreted under this theological tradition. One may assert that evil poses a problem for God, in whatever form evil takes, e.g., natural or moral. In this chapter, I first discuss why I think Aquinas is offering a theodicy rather than a defense of evil, and then discuss the various objections against God due to evil being present in the world that Aquinas was familiar with and how he responds to those objections.

Here it is important to state what I mean when I use the word 'theodicy'. A theodicy can sometimes be an attempt at justifying God's actions to humanity, or a way to vindicate God of responsibility due to evil being present.[31] In this usage, Aquinas is definitely *not* offering a theodicy as Aquinas would deny that God's actions need to be justified to humanity.[32] The way in which I will be using the word will be as it is defined by Alvin Plantinga (1989). Plantinga differentiates between a *theodicy* and a *defense*. A person offering a theodicy offers an explanation as to why God permits evil. A defense, in contrast, consists in offering what God's reason might *possibly* be.

Both attempt to show that there is no contradiction in God existing and evil occurring, but a theodicy more so attempts to offer what God's reason truly is for allowing the occurrence of

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[31] Audi, Robert (1999) *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy 2nd Edition*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 699 "Theodicy is the enterprise of trying to answer this question [the problem of evil] and thereby to justify the ways of God to humans."

[32] More will be made on this point in Chapter 4.

evil. In a defense it is not necessary to argue what God's reasons might truly be, only that God's existence and evil occurring are both logically compatible, because there is some possible reason that might hold true.[33] As such, it is not necessary to a theodicy, under this usage, that the purpose be to justify or vindicate God. That said, using the term as it has been defined by Plantinga, it is clear that Aquinas is not writing a defense of God in which he is merely offering some possible alternative that may or may not be true. Aquinas' writing on the topic is very matter-of-fact and defends his views from objections as if his views were actually true, not just that God and evil are logically consistent.

Before diving in to the issue of how evil relates to God, it is important to note that there are two positions that Aquinas accepts wholeheartedly, and those are that God exists and that, with qualification, evil exists, and thus throughout his writings he rarely writes defensively on the topic.[34] Throughout the QDM and the majority of his questions on evil in the ST, Aquinas is more concerned with how we are to think about evil *given* that God exists. With that theological backdrop already in place, Aquinas views the world as being a good, albeit fallen, creation created by a wholly good God and things aren't how they are supposed to be. While there is a wide area of problems that Aquinas addresses concerning the topic of God and evil, the primary aim of my thesis is to provide a free-will style solution to the problem of evil as it is contemporarily construed.[35] Thus, the questions Aquinas addresses that are relevant to my thesis are: (1) Whether the existence of evil is incompatible with the existence of God and (2) Whether God is the cause evil.

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[33] Plantinga, Alvin (1989) *God, Freedom, and Evil,* Eerdmans Publishing, pp. 27-28
[34] That qualification being that evil 'exists' in the sense that evil exists as a privation in an existent being.
[35] Aquinas also deals with various topics such as how Satan relates to evil, the nature of sin, and so forth. However, for the purposes of this paper, the problem of evil mainly has to do with logical consistency and in what way God can be considered a 'cause' of evil, so those are the topics to be treated.

§II.I The Compatibility of God and Evil for Aquinas

Turning to (1), there are two ways in which Aquinas deals with objections which imply that the existence of evil is incompatible with the existence of God. The first of those ways (1.a) may be called the Greater Goods Solution (GGS) and the second way (1.b) deals with the fact that there is order in the world which can only occur if God existed. Regarding (1.a), in Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae,* the first objection offers an argument as to why one should think God does not exist due to the fact that there is evil in the world. It reads:

> **Obj 1.** *It seems that God does not exist; because if one of two contraries be infinite, the other would be altogether destroyed. But the word "God" means that He is infinite goodness. If, therefore, God existed, there would be no evil discoverable; but there is evil in the world. Therefore God does not exist.*[36]

What is interesting to note about Aquinas's response to this objection is that, rather than offer a theodicy, Aquinas jumps right into arguments for the existence of God and offers his famous 'five ways'. First, Aquinas wants to establish that there are good reasons for supposing that God exists. It is only after this is demonstrated that he will then discuss the question of evil. Aquinas holds the existence of God as already demonstrable before touching the nature of evil, and then discusses how one is to view evil given that God's existence is already known. Thus, as for (1), God and evil are not incompatible due to there being good grounds for supposing God exists and that evil is a real feature of the world.

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[36] ST 1, q. 2, a. 3, obj.1. "Videtur quod Deus non sit. Quia si unum contrariorum fuerit infinitum, totaliter destruetur aliud. Sed hoc intelligitur in hoc nomine Deus, scilicet quod sit quoddam bonum infinitum. Si ergo Deus esset, nullum malum inveniretur. Invenitur autem malum in mundo. Ergo Deus non est.

However, there is more to be said about (1), mainly, given that there are good grounds for supposing the existence of both God and evil, how are we to view the relationship between the two? Why would God permit evil to occur? This is the question that Aquinas deals with, and the answer he gives is taken from St. Augustine. We see in the response to the first objection Aquinas writes:

> **Reply to Obj 1.** *As Augustine says (Enchiridion xi): "Since God is the highest good, He would not allow any evil to exist in His works, unless His omnipotence and goodness were such as to bring good even out of evil." This is part of the infinite goodness of God, that He should allow evil to exist, and out of it produce good.*[37]

Here we are given a solution to the problem of evil in which God only allows evil to occur insofar as He can produce even greater goods from such evils. It is therefore right to say that evil is being directed as a means by God towards some end. The end for which evil is directed relates to some good which is itself greater than the sum of evil which came before it. Aquinas responds to what appears to be a version of the Euthyphro dilemma which states that a provider will remove evil as far as he can from those over whom he has care.[38] However, this is not the case. Many people still suffer evils, and thus God must not be omnipotent or lacks care for everything.

In response to this objection, Aquinas argues that God has a universal providence over all, not merely over some particular thing. He continues on to say that a person who is concerned with the well-being of some particular thing will remove defects as far as he can, but one who is concerned with the well-being of all may allow some defects to exist if it preserves the good of

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[37] Ibid., q. 2,a. 3, ad. 1. "Sicut dicit Augustinus in Enchiridio, Deus, cum sit summe bonus, nullo modo sineret aliquid mali esse in operibus suis, nisi esset adeo omnipotens et bonus, ut bene faceret etiam de malo. Hoc ergo ad infinitam Dei bonitatem pertinet, ut esse permittat mala, et ex eis eliciat bona."
[38] ST q. 22, a. 2, o. 2.

the whole. Therefore, some defects in nature will be allowed insofar as they are in accordance with the plan of universal nature, meaning, the defect of one thing is the greater good of another. He writes:

> *Since God, then, provides universally for all being, it belongs to His providence to permit certain defects in particular effects, that the perfect good of the universe may not be hindered, for if all evil were prevented, much good would be absent from the universe.*[39]

The example Aquinas gives to support this contention is the order of the animal world. Lions slay other animals for food, and lions would not be able to survive if there were no animals to slay. Many creatures in the world depend on the corruption (i.e. evil) of other creatures for their well-being. Additionally, moral virtues could not exist unless there were some situation which called for someone to exercise those virtues. Patience can only arise in a situation in which one restricts themselves from being easily irritated or provoked. Likewise, courage can only arise in a situation in which one overcomes fear or pain for the sake of something greater. Thus, God allows certain evils to occur because of the overall good of the universe and the divine plan.

In (1.b), Aquinas addresses those who may posit that evil is incompatible with God by arguing that the existence of evil presumes the existence of God. He writes in the SCG:

> *Now, with these considerations we dispose of the error of those who, because they noticed that evils occur in the world, said that there is no God. Thus, Boethius introduces a certain philosopher who asks: "If God exists, whence comes evil?" [De consolatione philosophiae I, 4]. But it could be argued to the contrary: "If evil exists, God exists."*

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[39] ST I, q. 22, a. 2, ad. 2 "Cum igitur Deus sit universalis provisor totius entis, ad ipsius providentiam pertinet ut permittat quosdam defectus esse in aliquibus particularibus rebus, ne impediatur bonum universi perfectum."

For, there would be no evil if the order of good were taken away, since its privation is

evil. But this order would not exist if there were no God.[40]

Remember that for Aquinas, evil is a privation of a due good. It is also disorder in ordered things, or something that is contrary to the good of a thing. Since Aquinas views evil in these terms, evil could not arise unless there are already good things existing ordered to some end, and the ultimate end of all things is the ultimate good, which is God. Hence, if evil does exist, then that means that there are good things ordered to an ultimate end. This is not to say that evil is a necessary by-product of the good in that if good exists, then evil must necessarily accompany it. It *is* to say that evil can only arise in a world where good things exist. Evil is dependent on good things to exist, but good things do not need evil to exist.

The group attributed to the objection Aquinas mentions are later found out to be the Manicheans. The Manicheans are a group of people that follow the teachings of an Iranian man named Mani who taught a very dualistic interpretation of good and evil in which good and evil existed on equal playing fields. Mani denied God's omnipotence due to the two opposing powers of good and evil.[41] For Mani, God represented the power of good while the devil represented the power of evil, and humanity is a sort of battleground of the souls between these two powers. Hence, good and evil are both real, substantial things under Mani's account. This conception of good and evil is obviously one that Aquinas rejects, as Aquinas would of course deny that evil can have any sort of separate existence apart from good things.

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[40] SCG III, q. 71, par. 10. "Per haec autem excluditur quorundam error qui, propter hoc quod mala in mundo evenire videbant, dicebant Deum non esse: sicut Boetius, in I de Cons., introducit quendam philosophum quaerentem: si Deus est, unde malum? Esset autem e contrario arguendum: si malum est, Deus est. Non enim esset malum sublato ordine boni, cuius privatio est malum. Hic autem ordo non esset, si Deus non esset."

[41] Coyle, John Kevin (2009) *Manichaeism and Its Legacy,* Brill, pp. 13

So why does the existence of order in the world imply the existence of God? This question can be answered by a brief explanation of Aquinas' fifth way for God's existence. In the ST, Aquinas addresses the question on whether God's existence can be demonstrated, and after his arguments from motion, efficient causes, possibility and necessity, and the gradation of beings, he talks about the governance of the world. He writes:

> *The fifth way is taken from the governance of the world. We see that things which lack intelligence, such as natural bodies, act for an end, and this is evident from their acting always, or nearly always, in the same way, so as to obtain the best result. Hence it is plain that not fortuitously, but designedly, do they achieve their end. Now whatever lacks intelligence cannot move towards an end, unless it be directed by some being endowed with knowledge and intelligence; as the arrow is shot to its mark by the archer. Therefore some intelligent being exists by whom all natural things are directed to their end; and this being we call God.[42]*

This argument addresses the observation that natural things that lack rationality still act towards some goal. An oak seed absorbs nutrients and behaves in a way so as to produce the end of becoming an oak tree and so forth. In humans, we are able to perceive the end for which we act. We can deliberate and make a decision towards some end, but most natural things lack this ability. Since we can see that things do act for some end even though those things lack the

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[42] ST I, q. 2, a. 3, co. "Quinta via sumitur ex gubernatione rerum. Videmus enim quod aliqua quae cognitione carent, scilicet corpora naturalia, operantur propter finem, quod apparet ex hoc quod semper aut frequentius eodem modo operantur, ut consequantur id quod est optimum; unde patet quod non a casu, sed ex intentione perveniunt ad finem. Ea autem quae non habent cognitionem, non tendunt in finem nisi directa ab aliquo cognoscente et intelligente, sicut sagitta a sagittante. Ergo est aliquid intelligens, a quo omnes res naturales ordinantur ad finem, et hoc dicimus Deum.

intelligence to direct their actions towards that end purposefully, God, for Aquinas, must be the being that is directing them towards that end.

To be sure, evil can only arise in things that are ordered. If there were no order, or no way things are supposed to be given their natures, we could not say there is evil. For Aquinas, it would not make sense to say blindness is an evil for a human being if there is no order to be found in the nature of human beings, or no way human beings are supposed to be or how they are supposed to be behaving. In a similar way, it would make little sense to say a car is broken if there were no end or purpose for a car. These ends could only arise if there were some being which created them, sustains them in existence, and orders them to the ultimate good.

§II.II God as the Cause of Evil

Turning to (2) on whether God is the cause of evil, Aquinas deals with the issue of whether God is an active cause of the evil occurring. To properly address this question, it is necessary to discuss the ways in which God can be viewed as a cause and also whether something good, generally speaking, can produce evil. There is an interesting passage in the Bible where God claims to be the creator and cause of evil. Isaiah 45:7 writes:

> *I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.* (Isaiah 45:7, KJV)[43]

This verse appears in an objection in the ST to demonstrate that God is the cause of evil in the world[44]. In Chapter 1, it was mentioned that there are two ways in which something can be called evil, evil absolutely (like blindness) or something that is good but evil for something else (like

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[43] Other translations may interpret the word 'evil' as 'calamity', 'disaster', or 'sorrow'.
[44] ST 1, q. 49, a. 2.

fire is evil for a house made of straw). The way Aquinas interprets this verse is that God's justice

can be an evil for a person to whom justice is due, like a sentencing to a prisoner. Justice is good

in itself, but evil for the person who did the wrongdoing. However, Aquinas holds that God is the

ultimate and continual cause of everything that exists, and this includes evil *simpliciter*, not just

evil *secundum quid*. It is one thing to say that God *allows* certain evils to occur for some greater

good, but it is another issue to say that God is also the *cause* of those evils occurring. This is

called the problem of *divine causation*, i.e., that God is the ultimate cause of everything and thus

the cause of evil.[45] Thus, to address (2), a discussion of Aquinas's views on primary and

secondary causation are in order.

Within Aquinas's thought, a primary cause is the cause of the being of everything. God is

referred to by Aquinas as the primary cause because God's being isn't dependent on something

outside of God. God is self-sufficient and is what actualizes and sustains in existence all other

beings outside of himself. In contrast, created beings are referred to as secondary causes because

their activity requires dependence on the primary cause. As an example, a stick can only move a

rock insofar as the stick is pushed by the hand. The stick acts as a secondary cause only because

its causal powers are derivative of the hand. The hand acts as the primary cause because the hand

is what imparts causal efficacy to the stick.

Where evil is concerned, God is the primary cause of evil while creatures are the

secondary cause. As is read in the ST, agents produce effects that have corruption and defects

only insofar as they are also corrupted and defective. Aquinas writes:

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[45] There is also the additional problem that divine causation poses, mainly, whether human beings can be free if God is the ultimate cause of everything, including their actions. This problem will be addressed primarily in Chapter 4.

...the evil which consists in the defect of action is always caused by the defect of the agent. But in God there is no defect, but the highest perfection, as was shown above (Question [4], Article [1]). Hence, the evil which consists in defect of action, or which is caused by defect of the agent, is not reduced to God as to its cause.

And then continues:

But it is manifest that the form which God chiefly intends in things created is the good of the order of the universe. Now, the order of the universe requires, as was said above, that there should be some things that can, and do sometimes, fail. And thus God, by causing in things the good of the order of the universe, consequently and as it were by accident, causes the corruptions of things....[46]

Since God has the good of the whole universe as his end, he causes evil in the universe only accidentally, via secondary causes. An example Aquinas gives is the limping of a leg. The limping is caused by a defect in the leg, but primarily caused by the agent moving. The limping will not happen unless the agent wills to move first, but the limp occurs only due to a defect in the leg. However, the limping of the leg is allowed due to some greater end the agent has in mind, say, making it to a pay phone to call for help. The limp is thus caused by the motive power of the leg as its primary cause, but the secondary cause of the limp is due to the crooked leg.[47]

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[46] ST 1, q. 49, a. 2, co. "…malum quod in defectu actionis consistit, semper causatur ex defectu agentis. In Deo autem nullus defectus est, sed summa perfectio, ut supra ostensum est. Unde malum quod in defectu actionis consistit, vel quod ex defectu agentis causatur, non reducitur in Deum sicut in causam. Sed malum quod in corruptione rerum aliquarum consistit, reducitur in Deum sicut in causam." And "Manifestum est autem quod forma quam principaliter Deus intendit in rebus creatis, est bonum ordinis universi. Ordo autem universi requirit, ut supra dictum est, quod quaedam sint quae deficere possint, et interdum deficiant. Et sic Deus, in rebus causando bonum ordinis universi, ex consequenti, et quasi per accidens, causat corruptiones rerum..."

[47] ST 1.2, q. 79, a. 2, co.

One can thus conclude that God causes evil in the world only in the qualified sense that God causes absolutely good things to affect things that are bad for the things being affected, and also God causes evil in the world but only in an accidental way for the purpose of the good of the whole. While there is more to be said about God's relation to evil in Aquinas, I will now turn to contemporary discussions on the PoE and how philosophers have dealt with it. There is still the primary problem of divine causation in regard to freedom of the will and moral responsibility which will be discussed in Chapter 4.

§III. Contemporary Views on the Problem of Evil from Mackie to Plantinga

While Aquinas operated under the assumption that God's existence was demonstrable before tackling how God relates to evil, more contemporary versions of the PoE do not assume this and use the existence of evil as providing a positive case against the existence of God. In this chapter, I discuss JL Mackie's (1955) popularized version of the PoE that argues the essential properties of God are in conflict with the existence of evil. Next, I discuss Alvin Plantinga's (1985) solution to J.L Mackie's version of the PoE. Plantinga offers the solution that God has *morally justified reasons* for allowing evil, mainly, the value of human freedom outweighs the evil which human freedom causes. This defense to the PoE is traditionally called the Free Will Defense (FWD).

Essentially, Mackie argues that the attributes said to be traditionally held by God are in conflict with other things we hold to be true, mainly, that evil exists. Hence, God and evil are not mutually compatible beliefs that one can hold. He writes:

> *In its simplest form the problem is this: God is omnipotent; God is wholly good; and yet evil exists. There seems to be some contradiction between these three propositions, so that if any two of them were true the third would be false. But at the same time all three are essential parts of most theological positions: the theologian, it seems, at once must adhere and cannot consistently adhere to all three.*[48]

More formally, Mackie's argument can be written as follows:

(1) God is defined as a wholly good, omnipotent being.

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[48] Mackie, J.L (1955) 'Evil and Omnipotence'. Mind, Vol. 64, No. 254, pp. 200
Note that this is essentially a contemporary recapitulation of the Epicurean argument.

(2) A good being eliminates evil as far as it can.

(3) An omnipotent being has no limits on what that being can do.

(4) Evil exists.

(5) Thus, a wholly good, omnipotent being does not exist.

Hence Mackie is arguing that the existence of God and the existence of evil are somehow involved in a contradiction, and the views of those who believe in both are inherently inconsistent. Mackie is allowing the possibility that one may reject (1)-(4) and thus the PoE will not be a problem for that person. However, a theist, at least of the standard monotheistic religions, will not want to deny (1)-(4), and thus the theist is caught in a seemingly conflicting set of beliefs. If the theist is to deny (1), the theist would have to deny God as traditionally understood. The theist will not want to deny God's maximum power, nor would he/she want to deny God's maximum goodness.[49]

Thus, the theist will most certainly accept (1). Skipping (2) for now and moving on to (3), this is Mackie defining what it means for a being to be omnipotent. If God has maximum power, that *just means* God has no limits on what God can do. However, this definition of omnipotence is not without its flaws. To say that there are no limits on what God can do is not to say that God can do just about any old thing. As Richard Swinburne rightly argues, God cannot create a married bachelor, a square-circle, or make the color red smell like bananas. This isn't a limit on

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[49] Mackie addresses a minority of theistic positions that may deny certain omni-attributes of God by saying this argument isn't for them. Most theists, however, do not take this position.

God *per se*, but more so acknowledges what power is capable of doing. [50] Thus, a more accurate

formulation of omnipotence may look something like this:

> ***Omnipotence:*** *A being S is omnipotent iff S is capable of doing X in which X is an action*
>
> *that is logically possible for a being of S's kind to do.*

So, rather than the logically impossible posing a limit on God's power, it rather shows the

speaker's inability to use language correctly, as the concepts, when put together in a sentence, do

not describe anything possible in the actual world. It is no slight on omnipotence to be unable to

do what is logically impossible.

Mackie does provide an objection to a view that is akin to that of Thomas Aquinas,

although Mackie doesn't name him specifically. Mackie responds to the view that evil is

necessary as a means to bring about greater goods. Since Aquinas viewed God as allowing evil

to occur for the sake of the greater end of the whole, evil becomes a means towards some end.

However, Mackie views this line of reasoning as a restriction on God's omnipotence as it would

make a causal law that one cannot have a certain end without a certain means and thus God must

be subject to some causal law. But Mackie holds that theists usually adopt a view of God in

which causal laws are made by God.[51] Aquinas would not accept this position, as causation is an

actualization of a potential, and those potencies are determined by a thing's essence which is

inherent in the object necessarily. Thus, fire burns a tree because of the nature of fire and the

nature of a tree, and God cannot change those relations without changing some essential property

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[50] Swinburne, Richard (1973) 'Omnipotence,' *American Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 10, No. 3, p. 231
[51] Mackie, J.L (1955) 'Evil and Omnipotence'. Mind, Vol. 64, No. 254, pp. 205.

of the thing, which would then make that thing cease to be the thing that it is.[52] Hence, many

evils occur as a result from the nature of material things. Aquinas writes:

> *Consequently as regards his form, incorruption is more natural to man than to other*
>
> *corruptible things. But since that very form has a matter composed of contraries, from*
>
> *the inclination of that matter there results corruptibility in the whole. In this respect man*
>
> *is naturally corruptible as regards the nature of his matter left to itself, but not as*
>
> *regards the nature of his form.[53]*

By their nature, material bodies are susceptible to corruption since they are composed of many

material components and elements that are capable of being separated and/or dissolved, and thus

any world God creates in which there are material beings, there is the possibility of corruption

and evil.

Moving on, the theist will not deny (3) insofar as omnipotence doesn't include doing that

which is logically contradictory, and Aquinas would agree that God cannot do the logically

impossible.[54] Additionally, (4) will not be denied by the theist. If one thing can be noticed about

the world, it's that people do terrible things, and the natural world doesn't always work the way

humans want it to. As has already been made apparent, there are various forms of natural and

moral evils. There are endless examples of both. Mackie, however, never offers an account of

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[52] There is more to be said about this, but for the purpose of this thesis and getting to the main issue of Aquinas and human freedom, this will suffice.

[53] ST. 1.2, q. 85, a. 6, co. "Unde ex parte suae formae, naturalior est homini incorruptio quam aliis rebus corruptibilibus. Sed quia et ipsa habet materiam ex contrariis compositam, ex inclinatione materiae sequitur corruptibilitas in toto. Et secundum hoc, homo est naturaliter corruptibilis secundum naturam materiae sibi relictae, sed non secundum naturam formae."

[54] See ST I, q. 25, a. 4, co. "Respondeo dicendum quod, sicut supra dictum est, sub omnipotentia Dei non cadit aliquid quod contradictionem implicat. Praeterita autem non fuisse, contradictionem implicat. Sicut enim contradictionem implicat dicere quod Socrates sedet et non sedet, ita, quod sederit et non sederit. Dicere autem quod sederit, est dicere quod sit praeteritum, dicere autem quod non sederit, est dicere quod non fuerit."

what evil actually is, but it appears to be equated with the suffering of creatures.[55] Whether evil

is a privation or some existing thing is never a topic of discussion in his paper. It may be

objected to the PoE that if evil is a privation, then there is no problem to be solved since evil

doesn't actually exist. Responding to this line of reasoning, H.J McCloskey (1960) argues that it

is not enough to seek a solution to the PoE by simply arguing that evil is a privation and isn't

real, therefore attempting to show that there is no problem to be found. McCloskey rightfully

states that this is merely sidestepping the problem by changing the name of what has to be

explained.[56] Whether evil is a privation and thus parasitic on something good for its existence or

some positively existing thing, it is a real feature of the world in need of explanation.

Moving towards (2), this proposition is a bit more controversial. Intuitively, a good being

will want to destroy all forms of evil. If Superman was taking a break eating a hamburger and

saw a man about to drive over an elderly woman with his car crossing the street, one will assume

that Superman will toss his hamburger and immediately save the elderly woman. Not because he

is coerced against his will to do so, but *because* of his morally good character, he *wants* to do so

and *because* of Superman's power, he *can* do so. Aquinas, for the most part, doesn't disagree

here. Nonetheless, Aquinas only agrees with Mackie insofar as an omnipotent being is concerned

with the well-being of a particular thing, and not with the well-being of the created order.

Superman, it might be assumed, would not save the woman from being hit if the effects from

saving her were such that it put the created order in jeopardy.

On the other hand, Alvin Plantinga (1989) goes further to strengthen Mackie's argument

by noting it is not enough that a being has maximum power and a wholly good character that evil

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[55] To be sure, *any* instance of evil allows Mackie's argument to work. It is just important to note that Mackie doesn't have a detailed metaphysical analysis of evil like Aquinas.
[56] McCloskey, H.J (1960) 'God and Evil' *The Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 10, No. 39, pp.

is capable of being disposed of. An omnipotent and omnibenevolent being must also have *knowledge* of the evil taking place.[57] If Superman didn't know about the man possibly hitting the elderly woman, he could not have ever acted in such a way as to prevent that evil from taking place. This scenario in no way affects Superman's power or good character. Therefore, God must also have knowledge of all evils taking place in order to rid the world of all the evils. Hence, in addition to omnipotence and omnibenevolence, God must also be *omniscient* (containing knowledge of all true propositions).[58]

As was discussed earlier in this chapter, it is fairly clear already how Aquinas would respond to this argument had he been aware of it. Of course, Aquinas does not recognize the PoE as construed by Mackie at all—Aquinas would accept (1)-(4) but also say that there are certain evils that are necessary to allow for the sake of some greater good of the created order. However, there is a very clear difference in concepts of Aquinas's conceptual framework (such as what it means to say of God that he is 'good') and that of the contemporary defender of the PoE (and those contemporaries responding to it) that will be addressed further in the next chapter. In the next chapter, I discuss Plantinga's solution to Mackie's version of the PoE and then illuminate the major conflict between Plantinga's solution and Aquinas's framework. Specifically, I will show a seemingly apparent inconsistency between Plantinga's views of human free will and how they diverge with Aquinas.

§III. Plantinga's Free Will Defense

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[57] Plantinga, Alvin (1989) *God, Freedom, and Evil,* Eerdmans Publishing, pp. 18
[58] While there is a debate on what omniscience entails, for the sake of this thesis, this is the definition of omnipotence I will be using.

If God has knowledge of the evil taking place, can do something about it, and *wants* to do something about it, why is there evil? Plantinga, as previously mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, offers the solution that God has *morally justified reasons* for allowing evil, mainly, the value of human freedom outweighs the evil which human freedom causes.

Here it is important to state the goal of Plantinga's argument. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, a theodicy about God and evil is an attempt at justifying God's actions to humanity. An example Plantinga offers of a theodicy is of St. Augustine, in which Augustine offers a free-will theodicy that a more perfect universe is one that includes rational and moral agents while permitting evil. This universe is a better universe than one which contained no free creatures, but God causally determining the action of every creature in the universe.[59]

A person offering a theodicy, then, offers an explanation as to why God permits evil. A defense, in contrast, consists in offering what God's reason might *possibly* be, as the mere possibility of a reason being the case is enough to show that the existence of evil is compatible with God. Both attempt to show that there is no contradiction in God existing and evil occurring, but a theodicy more so attempts to offer what God's reason truly is for allowing the occurrence of evil. Plantinga makes it clear that he is *not* offering a theodicy but offering a defense from the PoE. As such, it is not necessary to argue what God's reasons might truly be, only that God's existence and evil occurring are both logically compatible, because there is some possible reason R that might hold true.

To the argument, Plantinga argues that the existence of human freedom necessarily entails that evil be permitted. This does *not* mean that in order to have human freedom evil must

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[59] Plantinga, Alvin (1989) *God, Freedom, and Evil,* Eerdmans Publishing, pp. 27-28

also exist, but only that if God were to bring about human freedom, he could not do so without permitting evil. To be sure, the FWD put forth by Plantinga is not a solution to *all* evil (as Mackie's argument can be interpreted), rather, it is a possible solution to the problem of *moral* evil in which God allows created beings the possibility of choosing wrongly for the sake of preserving freedom. The main thrust of Plantinga's argument can be summed up in this paragraph:

> *A world containing creatures who are sometimes significantly free (and freely perform more good than evil actions) is more valuable, all else being equal, than a world containing no free creatures at all. Now God can create free creatures, but he cannot cause or determine them to do only what is right. For if he does so, then they are not significantly free after all; they do not do what is right freely.* ***To create creatures capable of moral good, therefore, he must create creatures capable of moral evil; and he cannot leave these creatures free to perform evil and at the same time prevent them from doing so.*** *God did in fact create significantly free creatures; but some of them went wrong in the exercise of their freedom: this is the source of moral evil. The fact that these free creatures sometimes go wrong, however, counts neither against God's omnipotence nor against his goodness; for he could have forestalled the occurrence of moral evil only by excising the possibility of moral good.*[60] (emphasis mine)

Thus, for Mackie's PoE to go through, an additional premise must be added in which God does not have any morally justified reason to permit the evil he could have otherwise prevented. The previous structure, Plantinga argues, does not have any *explicit* logical contradiction and

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[60] Plantinga, Alvin (1989) *God, Freedom, and Evil,* Eerdmans Publishing, pp. 166-167.

Mackie's version of the PoE entails there is a logical incompatibility between the propositions that God exists and that evil occurs.

However, Plantinga's argument attempts to undermine the logical incompatibility of Mackie's PoE by showing that *if* the FWD is even *possible*, then there is no logical incompatibility. Here I've made a model of how Plantinga's argument may look:

(i)   Free creatures cannot be causally determined to do what is right.

(ii)   If God creates free creatures, he cannot causally determine them to do what is right.

(iii)   If God creates free creatures, those creatures must be capable of choosing moral evil.

(iv)   If God creates a world which contains free creatures, it contains creatures capable of choosing evil.

(v)   If God creates a world which contains creatures capable of choosing evil, God can't guarantee that world will contain no evil.

(vi)   A world containing free creatures is more valuable, *ceteris paribus*, than a world which contains no free creatures.

(vii)   Thus, God has morally justified reasons for creating a world that contains free creatures.

(viii)   Thus, God has morally justified reasons for creating a world in which there is no guarantee evil will not occur.

The main thrust of the argument lies in this: free will is incompatible with causally determined actions. God, with all of the omni-attributes included, cannot causally determine a free creature's actions. For example, it might be possible that God can causally determine Susan to bake cookies

for the upcoming fundraiser. However, it is *not* possible that God can causally determine Susan to *freely* bake cookies for the upcoming fundraiser. To be causally determined and perform an action freely results in a logical contradiction, and thus omnipotence does not entail God can do that which is logically contradictory. As such, if God wants to create a world containing free creatures, God must necessarily allow the possibility that those free creatures will use their freedom to choose morally evil actions.

When discussing various possible worlds that God may actualize, Plantinga makes the following claim about what it means for God to bring about some state of affairs:

> *If God brings it about that I refrain from A, then I do not freely refrain from A.*[61]

This proposition expresses a necessary truth. A person is free with respect to A only if God does not bring it about, or cause to be the case, that that person refrains from A. God cannot play any causal role (except in the minor sense that God provides us with the materials to exercise our free will) in the free action of a human being for that action to be free. Plantinga further reinforces this position, writing:

> *What does the Free Will Defender mean when he says that people are or may be free? If a person S is free with respect to a given action, then he is free to perform that action and free to refrain; no causal laws and antecedent conditions determine either that he will perform the action, or that he will not. It is within his power, at the time in question, to perform the action, and within his power to refrain.*[62]

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[61] Plantinga, Alvin (1979) *The Nature of Necessity*,' Clarendon Press, Revised ed., pp. 172
[62] Ibid., pp. 165

Since God cannot causally determine a creature to freely perform some action, God thus necessarily allows the possibility that that creature will freely perform an undesirable action as well. God cannot causally determine Susan to freely bake cookies, nor can God causally determine Susan to not drink an entire bottle of whiskey then go for a joy-ride. Susan can freely choose to bake cookies or she can freely choose to over-drink and drive her car around, but God cannot make Susan freely choose to bake cookies over drinking and driving. The only option God has, according to Plantinga, is to take Susan's freedom away and coerce her to perform one action over the other, which results in Susan's action no longer being free, and this is not something God is wanting to do nor *can do*, as the following proposition is the case:

A world containing free creatures is better than a world containing no free creatures.

This sentiment is also shared by Richard Swinburne (1979). For Swinburne, the value of free will is not merely the possession of it as some balance between good and evil, but rather, our exercising of it ties significantly to our destiny and responsibility. A world containing creatures with no free will is a world in which humans would live as God's pets in an aquarium, where God always provides everything the pets need and robbing humanity of any valuable decision making.[63] Choices that are done freely are more valuable than choices that are coerced by God, even if those coerced actions result in no evil. To illustrate this point, if I were given the choice to have my wife obey my every command and only act in a way that I deemed as being the right action or between a wife that freely chooses to love me and make sacrifices for me, the latter is more valuable than the former. It is because my wife freely wills to make these sacrifices for me that makes her choices valuable. It is not the act itself, but that the act is done freely.

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[63] Swinburne, Richard (1979) *The Existence of God,* Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 219.

To sum up this section, the reason God allows moral evil in the world is that God has a morally sufficient reason to do so, mainly, the free will of humans is worth the evil that it entails. God allows humans to choose their ends and does not prevent those ends from being accomplished. In the next chapter I discuss why Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump claim a person cannot accept Aquinas' views on God and human freedom while accepting Plantinga's FWD.

§IV. Davies and Stump Against Plantinga's FWD

If one were to boil down Plantinga's FWD into three main propositions that make it work, that would be (1) God has *morally justified reasons* for permitting evil, (2) God cannot be the cause of a person's action if that action is to be free, and (3) for a person to act freely, that person must have a free will. However, all three of these propositions appear to be in deep conflict with Aquinas' own views. In this chapter, I first turn to Brian Davies and then Eleonore Stump's discussion of Plantinga's defense and how Plantinga's defense appears to be in conflict with Aquinas' account of human freedom. Essentially, Davies and Stump argue that one cannot accept Plantinga's FWD *and* Aquinas' account of human freedom. Aquinas would not and could not, they argue, use the FWD against the veracity of the PoE.

On (1), Alvin Plantinga offers the solution that God has morally justified reasons for allowing evil, mainly, the value of human free-will outweighs the evil which that freedom may cause. While Aquinas adopts the Augustinian position that God brings about greater goods from evils, Aquinas would deny that God does so for *morally justified reasons*. Brian Davies (2011) argues that Aquinas affirms that God exists and that God is good, but Aquinas does not defend God's goodness on *moral* grounds.[64] If the PoE implies that one must provide a possible justification for God on moral grounds, Aquinas would easily dismiss the problem as being a category mistake. As Davies argues, the problem does not engage with what must be said about God's nature. God, for Aquinas, is not a moral agent that behaves well or badly like humans do, but just to a greater extent. God is not a greater version of ourselves but just happens to behave the morally right way in every circumstance. God, as Davies rightly characterizes Aquinas, is not

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[64] Davies, Brian (2011) *Thomas Aquinas on God and Evil*, Oxford University Press, pp. 113

the sort of being that can be evaluated in the same way we evaluate people morally. However, God is still good, just, and merciful, but we mustn't think of these terms within a *moral* context.

To say "God is good" is not to say that good is a good so-and-so. Nor does this mean to say that he is good because he created a lot of good things. God is good essentially, and the goodness of other creatures is derivative of God's essential goodness. Davies lays out a bullet point list of how God's goodness relates to evil in the world, but there are a few key points I've paraphrased that I want to focus on:

> (1.i) Evil exists insofar as substances lack goodness that is proper to them.

> (1.ii) Evil is not an illusion. One can speak of evil as existing, but unlike substances, evil lacks an essence. Thus, evil *per* se cannot be caused, or held in being, by God.

> (1.iii) Something is good insofar as it succeeds in being in some way. Some things may be deficient, yet all are good in that they have being. The goodness of everything, since they have being, are caused by God.

> (1.iv) If God makes everything having *esse* to be, and if God is the creator of what has but is not *esse*, then God is no substance in the world. God causes all creaturely being and coming to be, and is no member of a natural kind.

> (1.v) To call God good is to say what he is by nature.[65]

(1.i)-(1.iii) have been adequately dealt with in Chapter 1, and it is clear that Chapter 1 lays out a very difference sense of the word 'good' that is understood beyond a moral context. The word

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[65] Davies, Brian (2011) *Thomas Aquinas on God and Evil*, Oxford University Press, pp. 115-117

'good', as Davies rightly argues, is not an adjective held by some things but not others, but applies to all beings insofar as they have being.

However, the temptation to say God is morally good is intuitive. If I were to stop an elderly woman from being robbed, you would be right to say that I did a morally good thing. Similarly, it seems natural to use that same line of reasoning to say the same thing about God. If God somehow divinely intervened and caused the robber to trip, stunting his ability to rob the elderly woman from being robbed, it is likewise natural to say that God performed a morally good action. However, human beings are moral creatures insofar as they act in a way that they are obliged to act.[66] God, to be sure, is not a being that has obligations in any meaningful sense. God's goodness isn't dependent on meeting some standard of goodness outside of himself that he is subject to. Rather, we, as moral creatures, are subject to the natural law, which is God himself.

As such, God is good in the sense that God contains no imperfections and no potentiality to be better. When God acts, God does not act morally, nor does one need to find God *morally justified reasons* for why he acts the way he does as if God had obligations to his creatures that are due to them. So, if the FWD requires that God is a moral agent, or needs morally justified reasons, Aquinas would not accept it. On the question of whether God is good, Aquinas writes:

> *To be good belongs pre-eminently to God. For a thing is good according to its desirableness. Now everything seeks after its own perfection; and the perfection and form of an effect consist in a certain likeness to the agent, since every agent makes its like; and hence the agent itself is desirable and has the nature of good. For the very thing which is desirable in it is the participation of its likeness. Therefore, since God is the first effective*

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[66] Ibid., pp. 117

cause of all things, it is manifest that the aspect of good and of desirableness belong to

Him; and hence Dionysius (Div. Nom. iv) attributes good to God as to the first efficient

cause, saying that, God is called good "as by Whom all things subsist."[67]

As Davies continues to say, one mustn't view God in the same way one may view a surgeon, wherein a surgeon may be morally exonerated for cutting people open for the sake of saving their lives, God can also be morally exonerated for allowing evils in the world.[68] Essentially, God is good because God lacks any imperfection and is also ultimately desired by all, and as previously mentioned, the good is that which all desire.

Moving to (2) that states that God cannot be the cause of human actions if that action is to be free, this seems like a plausible thing to say regarding human free will. If God is the cause of my action, then it doesn't seem possible that my action is free or that I could have done otherwise. I am not the ultimate source of my action, and thus the reason for my action finds its cause ultimately in God, not in myself. However, this also seems to conflict with what Aquinas says about God with what has been said in Chapter 2. God is the cause of everything that has being, and actions, like substances, have being. Thus, God is the cause of actions. What the FWD seems to require is that free creatures act causally independent of God, and God "takes his hands off the handlebars" so to speak, and lets the creature be a causally self-sufficient being (with

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[67] ST 1. q. 6, a. 1, co. "Respondeo dicendum quod bonum esse praecipue Deo convenit. Bonum enim aliquid est, secundum quod est appetibile. Unumquodque autem appetit suam perfectionem. Perfectio autem et forma effectus est quaedam similitudo agentis, cum omne agens agat sibi simile. Unde ipsum agens est appetibile, et habet rationem boni, hoc enim est quod de ipso appetitur, ut eius similitudo participetur. Cum ergo Deus sit prima causa effectiva omnium, manifestum est quod sibi competit ratio boni et appetibilis. Unde Dionysius, in libro de Div. Nom., attribuit bonum Deo sicut primae causae efficienti, dicens quod bonus dicitur Deus, sicut ex quo omnia subsistunt."
[68] Davies, Brian (2006) *The Reality of God and the Problem of Evil*, Continuum; 1st Edition, pp. 86

regard to actions). God, in taking his hands off the handlebars, becomes blameless in any potential crash that may occur by the rider.

Nevertheless, given what has been said about God's nature and his relation to creatures, Aquinas would never accept the possibility that a substance in the universe could for one second exist in some causally independent way of God, or act in some causally independent way of God. A passage by Aquinas that perfectly illustrates this point, mentioned by Davies, is found in the SCG:

> *It is evident, next, that God is the cause enabling all operating agents to operate. In fact, every operating agent is a cause of being in some way, either of substantial or of accidental being. Now, nothing is a cause of being unless by virtue of its acting through the power of God, as we showed. Therefore, every operating agent acts through God's power.*

And continues:

> *Again, every operation that results from a certain power is attributed causally to the thing which has given the power. For instance, the natural motion of heavy and light things results from their form, depending on whether they are heavy or light, and so the cause of their motion is said to be the generating agent that has given them the form. Now, every power in any agent is from God, as from a first principle of all perfection. Therefore, since every operation results from a power, the cause of every operation must be God.[69]*

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[69] SCG III, q. 67, par. 1 & 2. "Ex hoc autem apparet quod Deus causa est omnibus operantibus ut operentur. Omne enim operans est aliquo modo causa essendi, vel secundum esse substantiale, vel accidentale. Nihil autem est causa essendi nisi inquantum agit in virtute Dei, ut ostensum est. Omne igitur

This passage appears to be in deep conflict with what has been said about (2), and what is necessary for the FWD to get off the ground. If free-will is incompatible with causal determinism, then this active role had by God in all actions of creatures is not a thesis one can accept if one wants to adopt the FWD against the PoE.

As Davies further continues, all forms of the FWD speak of human freedom as if human beings can exist independently of God's causal action. When a human performs a truly free action, they are acting outside of God's causal powers.[70] When I make a make a free decision, God is no longer causally operating within me. God effectively takes the role of an observer. In essence, defenders of the FWD deny the full extent of God's causal role in the nature of creation. At no point in any created being's existence or actions is God not fully causing their being and causal efficacy. If God has such a causal role, then God brings my actions to be, and since my actions have being, then God must be the source of my actions. All actions fall under God's divine providence.

Lastly, (3) states that in order for a person to act freely that person must have free will. The term 'free will' carries a lot of metaphysical baggage for Aquinas that is not held by Plantinga or Swinburne. To illustrate the differences, Eleonore Stump writes that the majority of contemporary philosophers operate under a conception of the will in which the will is the mind's steering wheel, completely neutral in its own right but able to direct parts of the person. In

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operans operatur per virtutem Dei." And "Adhuc. Omnis operatio quae consequitur aliquam virtutem, attribuitur sicut causae illi rei quae dedit illam virtutem: sicut motus gravium et levium naturalis consequitur formam ipsorum, secundum quam sunt gravia et levia, et ideo causa motus ipsorum dicitur esse generans, qui dedit formam. Omnis autem virtus cuiuscumque agentis est a Deo, sicut a primo principio omnis perfectionis. Ergo, cum omnis operatio consequatur aliquam virtutem, oportet quod cuiuslibet operationis causa sit Deus."

[70] Davies, Brian (2006) *The Reality of God and the Problem of Evil*, Continuum; 1st Edition, pp. 121

contrast, Aquinas does not take the will to be a neutral faculty, but a "bent or inclination."[71]

Recall that for Aquinas, the will is a hunger, or an appetite, for goodness. The will is a power with an object, and by 'object' I mean it has a goal or end towards which it points. In the same way that sight is a power with its object being color in general but only sees particular colors at any given time, the will has as its object the good in general while the intellect presents the will with particular goods at any given time. As Stump says, "A free will is a will disposed to will the good and able to maintain such a disposition."[72] That being said, it is important to dive deeper into what the will is and how it relates to the intellect for Aquinas and why it is not free (at least in the sense Plantinga needs it to be) and also discuss Stump's further explanation of Aquinas' position on the corrupt nature of the will that also hinders it from being free.

When it is said that the will is directed towards goodness in general, the will itself does not make any judgements towards what is good, as what determines what is good is the job of the intellect. As was briefly mentioned in Chapter 1, the intellect presents a particular thing as good under certain circumstances, and the will wills them because the intellect presents them as good. As such, the intellect moves the will as a final cause and the will moves the intellect as an efficient cause. The intellect presents something as good to the will, but the will can direct the intellect to stop thinking about this particular good and present the will with a new good.

To illustrate this point, Stump provides the example of a person reading a magazine. Say you are sitting on your couch reading a magazine when you come across an advertisement asking you to donate money to an organization that helps starving children in poorer and less-fortunate areas of the world. The advertisement displays an emotionally powerful image of a child in need,

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[71] Stump, Eleonore (2003) *Aquinas*, Routledge, pp. 278
[72] Stump, Eleonore (1985) 'The Problem of Evil,' *Faith and Philosophy,* Vol. 2, No. 4., pg. 404

and the intellect immediately presents to your will that donating to this organization is a good thing. However, the intellect also recognizes that if you are to donate to this organization, you cannot afford the new computer you have been working hard and saving up for. Your desire for the new computer is stronger than donating money due to the current circumstances you find yourself in, and thus the will directs the intellect to stop thinking about donating the money and move on.[73]

For Aquinas, the will is *not* free (however, this doesn't not exclude a person having free choice). If having a free will means the will must be completely neutral in its acts, then the will is not free in the sense defenders of the FWD would have it. For the FWD to hold, a free will must be capable of choosing between morally good actions and morally evil actions, yet for Aquinas, this is not a possibility of the will. All actions are always directed towards the good, and the will cannot choose an action that has evil as its end. In the same way, sight cannot choose to stop looking at color, or hearing to stop hearing sound, so too the will cannot choose an action unless that action is under the guise of some good. This is not to say, of course, that every action is perfectly good and evil is not something that can be predicated of an action. Aquinas recognizes that people choose to do morally reprehensible things, but they do not do so because they view the end as evil, rather, they perceive the end as good and thus will the act. I can no more will something evil than my power of sight can stop perceiving color. To be sure, if having a free will requires the possibility that I can choose to do evil because I desire to do something evil and view the end of that action as evil in itself, then Aquinas would deny that human beings have free will.

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[73] This also entails a role in which the passions play in making decisions, but for the purposes of this thesis I have restricted the discussion to just the roles of the intellect and will.

Additionally, Stump argues that the will is not free in another respect, i.e., the will has been corrupted due to the effects of sin, and thus incapable of being free to the extent that it is operating how it should. She offers an account of the will as offered by St. Anselm. Per Anselm, human free will is a strength. Having the capacity to either remain healthy or get sick is not a strength, but only the capacity to remain healthy is. Additionally, the ability to will what one ought to will (as opposed to what one ought not to will) is a strength. This strength alone is free will, i.e., the willing what one ought to will, not just the capacity to will what one ought or what one ought not.[74]

Before the fall of Adam, humans could do evil because they could fail to use their strength to preserve their uprightness of their wills. Because Adam used his will to will what he ought not, the will acquired a disposition for willing one's own power/pleasure and letting the passions dictate what actions are to be chosen in preference to goods that are far greater, and which ought to be willed. So, while humans still have the capacity to will what they ought to will, under the effects of sin, their will has a difficult time in doing so. A person places the good of the lower appetites in preference to the greater goods. For example, I may choose to eat McDonald's cheeseburgers every day because the immediate desire of my tongue is to have that taste, and that desire is stronger than my desire to eat healthy and exercise. Under this conception of a free will, it is not the ability to choose cheeseburgers everyday over eating healthy that makes my will free. A truly free will is one which is not subject to the desire of the lower appetites, but rather always chooses what ought to be done under a certain circumstance. In this way, too, the will is not free.

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[74] Stump, Eleonore () 'The Problem of Evil,' *Faith and Philosophy,* Vol. 2, No. 4., pg. 403

As such, to sum up the main points of this chapter, defenders of the FWD operate under a nature of God in which God is a moral being that needs to be morally exonerated from his permission of evil. God, as such, is obligated to justify his reasons to his creatures. This moral justification of God consists in his value of human free will. God allows evil because he values free will higher than the evils which free will may produce. This is not God's fault, but the responsibility lies on the creature acting freely. This freedom is only possible if God plays no causal role in human actions and human free will were such that it is moral neutral in its decision making, being able to choose moral goods over moral evils. However, under Aquinas' understanding, God is not a moral being that has obligations towards his creatures, humans do not act independently of God under any point of their existence, and the will is not a neutral faculty, but always chooses under the guise of a good. As such, there appears to be a deep conflict with the FWD and Aquinas in which it may be asserted that the FWD is just not something Aquinas can use as a theodicy or a defense. In my next chapter, I will argue, contrary to Davies and Stump, that this is not necessarily the case and a free will defense is perfectly compatible with Aquinas' views.

§V. A Revised Free Will Defense

In the previous chapter, I discussed the deep conflict of Aquinas' views with those that defend the traditional FWD that were brought out by Davies and Stump. To be sure, I agree with Davies and Stump regarding the drastic differences in how God and the will are perceived in Plantinga's FWD. However, I disagree that these are necessary tenets to make the FWD work. The main purpose of this chapter is to reconcile Aquinas' views with the FWD and argue that Aquinas' views and a reformulated version of the FWD can be consistently maintained. To do this, I lay out the necessary conditions that I think are important for making a free will defense work. Once those conditions are presented, I respond to the objections raised by Davies and Stump and show that these objections present only a superficial conflict. Finally, I argue that Aquinas' views are actually in deep concord with those conditions and thus Aquinas is able to use a free will defense of his own.

§IV.I What's Necessary in a FWD

When philosophers like Plantinga and Swinburne offer a solution to the problem of moral evil like the FWD, there are a few main tenets that any free will defense needs to make it work. Those are (1) a human being must, to some degree, be capable of making free choices because, (2), those free choices are necessary in attributing blame of wrong actions to the human being, and (3), God cannot take responsibility for evil in the world either by causing evil or directing the ends of human actions which are considered evil.[75] In this section I discuss Aquinas' account of what may be more accurately described as freedom of choice (*liberum arbitrium*) rather than freedom of the will as presented by Plantinga. I then discuss the importance of free choices for

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[75] God can still cause evil accidentally, but accidental evil isn't enough to attribute responsibility as was mentioned earlier.

moral responsibility in Aquinas and discuss more directly the way in which God can be the cause of human action without being the cause of the ends of those actions.

On (1), Davies and Stump have rightly argued that Aquinas does not believe the will to be free in a completely neutral sense but is an appetite for goodness in general. This is not to say that Aquinas is in some sense a determinist, in which human beings are not capable of making free decisions. Aquinas' account of human decision making still allows for the occurrence of free action, but the term 'free' is a property of choice, not of the will. First, it is necessary to discuss what Aquinas believes makes an action *not* free, and then deduce from that what properties are necessary for free human action. Take a simple act such as waving for a cab. To say this act is free, it is common to suggest this act must not have any prior causes which determine that act to occur, and the person is the sole reason for the act taking place. A free act, for Aquinas, is more akin to one's ability to do otherwise.

To choose between any two options A or B, a free act is one which entails A or B are real options for me, and if I chose A, I could have easily chosen B instead. This notion of freedom is not wholly inconsistent with Aquinas' notion of the will. While the will is not a neutral power, it still plays an active role in decision making. The will can choose between A or B, but the only caveat is that A and B are both good actions (their goodness may differ in degree, however). When the intellect presents something to the will which the will perceives as good, the will can reject what the intellect presents and make it present some new option or deem what the intellect has presented as the right course of act. In the ST, Aquinas writes:

> *The proper act of free-will is choice: for we say that we have a free-will because we can*
> *take one thing while refusing another; and this is to choose. Therefore we must consider*
> *the nature of free-will, by considering the nature of choice. Now two things concur in*

choice: one on the part of the cognitive power, the other on the part of the appetitive

power. On the part of the cognitive power, counsel is required, by which we judge one

thing to be preferred to another: and on the part of the appetitive power, it is required

that the appetite should accept the judgment of counsel.[76]

When Aquinas speaks of the "cognitive power" he is referring to the intellect. The intellect acts

as a judge which deems an action as good. The "appetitive power", or the will, is what accepts

what the intellect has judged to be good. The will can also not accept this and then the intellect

will judge some new action to be good until a decision is reached. As such, freedom of choice is

the selection of a means towards some end. The end is always good, but one can chose between

means to achieve that end or choose some different end in general. What Plantinga refers to as

"free-will" is more in line with Aquinas' use of *liberum arbitrium* (free-choice). Aquinas never

uses the term "free-will". If "free-will" means a "completely neutral will" then Aquinas would

not consider the will free.

However, there are ways in which our ability to do otherwise is impeded, and in such

cases the action will *not* be free. If an action is produced by a passion rather than deliberation

Aquinas would not deem that action as free. Nor if the action was *coerced* by some outside

source would Aquinas consider that action as free. Actions produced by a passion are not

considered to be free actions because, as Stump rightly points out, the acts occur too quickly,

before reason can deliberate about those actions.[77] For example, if a baseball is being thrown at

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[76] ST 1, q. 83, a. 3, co. "Respondeo dicendum quod proprium liberi arbitrii est electio, ex hoc enim liberi arbitrii esse dicimur, quod possumus unum recipere, alio recusato, quod est eligere. Et ideo naturam liberi arbitrii ex electione considerare oportet. Ad electionem autem concurrit aliquid ex parte cognitivae virtutis, et aliquid ex parte appetitivae, ex parte quidem cognitivae, requiritur consilium, per quod diiudicatur quid sit alteri praeferendum; ex parte autem appetitivae, requiritur quod appetendo acceptetur id quod per consilium diiudicatur."
[77] Stump, Eleonore (2003) *Aquinas*, Routledge, pp. 297

my face and I quickly react by jumping out of the way so as to not get hit, this action has its source in an instinctual appetite, similar to what is found in animals. Free actions can only occur when deliberation is present, and deliberation can only be present in beings with rational capacities.

On (2), Aquinas makes it clear that moral responsibility can only be possible if humans have the freedom to do otherwise. He writes:

> *Man has free-will: otherwise counsels, exhortations, commands, prohibitions, rewards, and punishments would be in vain. In order to make this evident, we must observe that some things act without judgment; as a stone moves downwards; and in like manner all things which lack knowledge. And some act from judgment, but not a free judgment; as brute animals. For the sheep, seeing the wolf, judges it a thing to be shunned, from a natural and not a free judgment, because it judges, not from reason, but from natural instinct.[78]*

As was mentioned previously, free actions can only arise in rational agents capable of deliberation. When a rock rolls down a hill, the rock does not deliberate about a course of action and then proceeds to carry out that course of action. A rock just rolls downward and has no ability to decide not to roll downward. Additionally, actions that arise from animals are not free in the sense Aquinas requires because their actions arise from instinct. Like the example of the baseball, a sheep quickly reacts via instinct to the sighting of the wolf and runs. If actions from

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[78] ST 1. q. 83, a. 1, co. "Respondeo dicendum quod homo est liberi arbitrii, alioquin frustra essent consilia, exhortationes, praecepta, prohibitiones, praemia et poenae. Ad cuius evidentiam, considerandum est quod quaedam agunt absque iudicio, sicut lapis movetur deorsum; et similiter omnia cognitione carentia. Quaedam autem agunt iudicio, sed non libero; sicut animalia bruta. Iudicat enim ovis videns lupum, eum esse fugiendum, naturali iudicio, et non libero, quia non ex collatione, sed ex naturali instinctu hoc iudicat."

human beings were reducible to actions such as these, Aquinas argues that rewards and punishments for actions are incoherent.

Lastly, (3) states that God cannot be the cause of evil or the cause of evil actions by human beings in the world. Here it is necessary to discuss how freedom of choice relates to coercion. A coercive action is an action that is necessarily *against* the will of the agent. Since free choice must necessarily be voluntary, coercive acts are necessarily incompatible with free choice. As such, on discussing whether God causes human actions, it must be discussed whether God acting as a cause of the action is a coercive act.

§IV.II On Davies and Stump

The main thrust of Davies' and Stump's objections against the FWD are that (a) the FWD requires a depiction of God in which God must be seen as a moral agent, (b) in the FWD, God can in no way be involved as a causal role in human acts, and (c) the FWD requires a notion of the will in which the will is completely neutral. However, if one were to break down the essential properties of a free will defense, as was done in the previous section, none of the objections brought forth by Davies or Stump undermine the possibility of a free will defense against evil from Aquinas' point of view, so long as the details are consistent.

Regarding whether God is a moral agent, while Davies is correct to argue that this is an assumption implicit within Plantinga's writings, it is difficult to see why exactly this counts as an argument against the goal of the FWD. Whether God is a moral agent or not does not seem to be a necessary tenet of the FWD. Additionally, one could easily adjust the argument to say that, rather than God allowing evil because he has *morally justified reasons*, one could just say that God *has reasons*. In essence, God has reasons for allowing evil to occur, but those reasons are

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not morally justified reasons in the sense that those reasons must be justified to his creatures, and God is obliged to offer his creatures a justification for the reasons he chooses to allow evil. This still accomplishes what the FWD is attempted to accomplish. Now, what reasons could God have for doing this? In Chapter 2, I discussed a couple positions Aquinas uses to show why God might allow evil to occur, one being in doing so he is able to bring about greater goods. When Aquinas wrote about this, although it reads more like he is offering a theodicy (offering a real reason for why God allows evil), it could as easily be construed as a defense, showing that this solution, while doesn't have to be actually true, only needs to be possibly true to argue that the existence of God and evil are not logically incompatible.

On (b), there is an implicit assumption in Plantinga's FWD that needs to be explicitly stated, and that is if God causes person X to do action A, then God *coerces* person X to do action A. A coercive action is an action that is necessarily *against* the will of the agent. Since freedom must necessarily be voluntary, coercive acts are necessarily incompatible with free choice. So, does causation amount to coercion? It has already been stated in Chapter 2 the ways in which God causally interacts in the world and how that relates to him being the cause of moral evils. God causes evil in the qualified sense that he acts as a primary cause, while the evil is attributed to the human being as its secondary cause. The human being, being defective in some way, is responsible for the evil which occurs because of the actions that the human being chose. God thus causes evil only in an accidental way. By having the good of the whole universe and sustaining all beings in existence, evil arises as an accidental byproduct.

That being said, Aquinas definitely disagrees with the contention that, because God causes our actions, God thus coerces our actions. Stump provides a very thorough treatment of how external causes doesn't necessarily entail the coercion of human acts. She writes that there

are two sorts of necessity that might be imposed on the will, and that is necessity of coercion and the necessity of the end. Necessity of coercion is when some causal principle outside of the agent produces within the will a volition for some particular thing, which is incompatible with human freedom, as the agent is compelled by an extrinsic cause to perform an action that the agent cannot do otherwise. In contrast, the necessity of the end arises in a situation where the end to be desired only has one means to arrive at it, such as needing to take an airplane to get to France.[79] Here we can find two important things to note about Aquinas' views on freedom, those are (1) an external cause can act on an agent and not impede that agent's freedom insofar as that cause isn't against the will, and (2) freedom does not necessarily entail the ability to do otherwise (which will be important on the discussion regarding (c)).

Human acts, then, can be free even though they are caused by God because the will still contributes something to the act. God sustains the person in being and imparts to that person causal powers which are then used to perform an action, and this action is also in accordance with what that person wills. A coerced action is one in which the will contributes *nothing*, and the action is *against* the desires of the will. Neither of these are involved in God's way of acting as an external cause on the agent. As Stump writes, "What is sufficient for libertarian free will…is that the ultimate source of an action be the agent's own will and cognitive faculties."[80] So, while God causes person X to choose action A, God doesn't cause the person to *will A over B*. Thus, the worries assumed by Plantinga are not to be found in Aquinas' account of freedom and divine causation. God causing human actions in no way undermines human freedom.

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[79] Stump, Eleonore (2003) *Aquinas*, Routledge, pp. 298-299
[80] Ibid., pp. 304

Moving on to (c), that the will is an appetite for the good is in conflict with the more contemporary notion that the will, in order for it to be free, must be neutral in its own right. But here this conflict is, like the attribution of a moral nature to God, only a superficial conflict that needn't be necessary in a FWD. Freedom needs to be a property of the human being in some way, to be sure, but whether freedom is a property of human choice (*electio*) or the will (*voluntas*) is not so important. Plantinga attributes freedom to the will only, insofar as I can tell, because he doesn't have the same metaphysical constitution of the human being like Aquinas does. Plantinga attributes freedom to the will because he has nothing else to attribute it to, i.e., there is no distinction of the will and the intellect and how these two operate with one another. The will, having the necessity of the end (which is goodness in general) doesn't need to be neutrally free, only free 'enough' to attribute responsibility of the action to the agent. Thus, while the will doesn't have the property of being free, our choices *do* have that property, and all one needs to do is shift the line of where one is attributing freedom.

§IV.II A Revised FWD

I previously argued that there is no explicit contradiction in Aquinas' account of human freedom and what the essential properties of a free will defense must include in order to work. That said, I want to put forth what a free will defense might look like if it is to be compatible with Aquinas' metaphysics and do the job it is supposed to do. This revised version, I believe, is a variation that both Davies and Stump would agree with and fall within the framework of a Thomistic metaphysic. Additionally, this revised version will also be accepted by Alvin

Plantinga insofar as it accomplishes the same goal, i.e., that there is no logical contradiction in God existing and evil existing.[81] Consider the following argument:

(i) Free creatures cannot be coerced to will what is right.

(ii) If God creates free creatures, God cannot coerce them to will what is right.

(iii) If God cannot coerce them to will what is right, God cannot guarantee that a free creature will only will what is right.

(iv) If God cannot guarantee that a free creature will only will what is right, then God cannot guarantee that free creatures will not use their freedom to perform morally reprehensible actions.

(v) A world containing free creatures is more perfect than a world containing no free creatures.

(vi) Thus, God has good reasons for creating free creatures.

(vii) Thus, God has reasons for creating a world in which he cannot guarantee free creatures will not use their freedom to perform morally reprehensible actions.[82]

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[81] However, Plantinga might disagree with Aquinas' metaphysical framework as a whole, denying that there is such a metaphysical constitution of the human being that consists of powers like the intellect and will, both with objects to which they are directed towards. However, this is a topic for a different paper.

[82] For convenience, here is my rendition of Plantinga's version again as a direct comparison:
(1)   Free creatures cannot be causally determined to do what is right.
(2)   If God creates free creatures, he cannot causally determine them to do what is right.
(3)   If God creates free creatures, those creatures must be capable of choosing moral evil.
(4)   If God creates a world which contains free creatures, it contains creatures capable of choosing evil.
(5)   If God creates a world which contains creatures capable of choosing evil, God can't guarantee that world will contain no evil.
(6)   A world containing free creatures is more valuable, ceteris paribus, than a world which contains no free creatures.
(7)   Thus, God has morally justified reasons for creating a world that contains free creatures.
(8)   Thus, God has morally justified reasons for creating a world in which there is no guarantee evil will not occur.

This argument is more in line with Aquinas' views and consistent with the main thrust of the traditional FWD. Call this revision the Thomistic Free-Choice Defense (TFCD). On (i), the word 'cause' has been replaced with 'coerced' since 'cause' carries immense metaphysical baggage for Aquinas, and using 'coercion' is more consistent with Aquinas while being in line with what Plantinga is trying to convey.

The next premises (ii)-(iii) follow as a conditional. Since free creatures cannot be coerced do will what is right, *if* God creates such creatures, *then,* necessarily, he cannot coerce them to do will what is right. Moreover, I have replaced 'do what is right' with 'will what is right' since the choosing of a particular action is reflective of the desires of the will, and thus this phrasing is more appropriate with Aquinas' views.

Moving to (iv), I have revised 'choosing evil' with 'performing morally reprehensible actions' since, for Aquinas, a human being cannot choose evil in itself. Again, the will has as its object goodness in general, and so any action the agent chooses to do must necessarily have some good. However, this is not to say that humans do not do terrible things and everything we do is without faults. It is only to say that whatever action is chosen, there is some good that can be predicated of it. For instance, when a thief steals money, the thief desires the things money is capable of providing for him. These desires, for instance, buying food, clothes, etc., are not bad in themselves, but the means taken to achieve them is wrong. As such, what Plantinga would describe as "evil actions" Aquinas would describe as agents choosing some lesser good over a higher good. When a person chooses to satisfy the desires of his lower-level appetites, such as sensational desires, at the cost of satisfying the intellectual desires of seeking truth and the ultimate good (which is dictated by the natural law) that person chooses wrongly.

On (v), I have replaced the use of 'value' for a world that is more perfect because value is a loaded term that carries with it a lot of subjective connotations, and Aquinas wouldn't apply a value judgement to the world. Rather, Aquinas believes that it is factually the case that a world containing free creatures is an *objectively better* world than a world without them. Aquinas makes this point clear in the SCG where he writes:

> *An effect is most perfect when it returns to its source; thus, the circle is the most perfect of all figures, and circular motion the most perfect of all motions, because in their case a return is made to the starting point. It is therefore necessary that creatures return to their principle in order that the universe of creatures may attain its ultimate perfection. Now, each and every creature returns to its source so far as it bears a likeness to its source, according to its being and its nature, wherein it enjoys a certain perfection. Indeed, all effects are most perfect when they are most like their efficient causes—a house when it most closely resembles the art by which it was produced, and fire when its intensity most fully approximates that of its generator. Since God's intellect is the principle of the production of creatures, as we have shown above, the existence of some creatures endowed with intelligence was necessary in order that the universe of created things might be perfect.[83]*

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[83] SCG II, q. 46, a. 2 "Tunc enim effectus maxime perfectus est quando in suum redit principium: unde et circulus inter omnes figuras, et motus circularis inter omnes motus, est maxime perfectus, quia in eis ad principium reditur. Ad hoc igitur quod universum creaturarum ultimam perfectionem consequatur, oportet creaturas ad suum redire principium. Redeunt autem ad suum principium singulae et omnes creaturae inquantum sui principii similitudinem gerunt secundum suum esse et suam naturam, in quibus quandam perfectionem habent: sicut et omnes effectus tunc maxime perfecti sunt quando maxime similantur causae agenti, ut domus quando maxime similatur arti, et ignis quando maxime similatur generanti. Cum igitur intellectus Dei creaturarum productionis principium sit, ut supra ostensum est, necesse fuit ad creaturarum perfectionem quod aliquae creaturae essent intelligentes."

Here we have the Aristotelian/scholastic principle of *causal similitude*. This principle, as is stated in the above quote, states that an effect is most perfect the more it reflects its cause. Additionally, a cause cannot give what it doesn't have. Hence fire cannot cause a pile of straw to become wet, because it isn't in the nature of fire in the first place. When the straw catches on fire, this is because it reflects its cause. Additionally, when an artist makes a painting, the more that painting reflects the skills of the artist, the more perfect the painting is. Thus, since God is an intellect, a more perfect world is going to be a world which contains intellectual creatures, and the power of free choice can only arise in intellectual creatures.

Another reason can also be offered to support (v) from Aquinas' view, that being it is better God created a diversity of beings which contains both intellectual and non-intellectual creatures. On this he writes:

> *Hence we must say that the distinction and multitude of things come from the intention of the first agent, who is God. For He brought things into being in order that His goodness might be communicated to creatures, and be represented by them; and because His goodness could not be adequately represented by one creature alone, He produced many and diverse creatures, that what was wanting to one in the representation of the divine goodness might be supplied by another. For goodness, which in God is simple and uniform, in creatures is manifold and divided and hence the whole universe together participates the divine goodness more perfectly, and represents it better than any single creature whatever.*[84]

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[84] ST 1, q. 47, a. 1, co. "Unde dicendum est quod distinctio rerum et multitudo est ex intentione primi agentis, quod est Deus. Produxit enim res in esse propter suam bonitatem communicandam creaturis, et per eas repraesentandam. Et quia per unam creaturam sufficienter repraesentari non potest, produxit multas creaturas et diversas, ut quod deest uni ad repraesentandam divinam bonitatem, suppleatur ex alia,

This contention is odd at first glance, but Aquinas argues that the diversity of beings that arise in creation came about by the intention of God as a means to communicate his ultimate goodness to creatures and have his ultimate goodness represented by them. Thus, as every creature God creates is finite, they cannot adequately represent God's goodness, and therefore God creates an array of diverse creatures so that the inadequacy represented by any individual creature can be made up by others.

Moving on to (vi), we are able to conclude that God has good reasons for creating a world which contains free creatures, e.g., that the world is more perfect with them and more reflective of his goodness. To be sure, this is *not* to say that God has *morally justified* reasons for creating such a world. The reasons given have nothing to do with justifying God to his creatures or putting God on trial and needing to defend him in the face of the accusations his creatures are laying against him. Thus, God has reasons, but those reasons having nothing to do with him owing an explanation to his creatures. And from (vi), the leap to (vii) follows necessarily. A world containing creatures capable of making free decisions is a better world than one which lacks such creatures, given the possibility these creatures might choose to do the wrong thing.

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nam bonitas quae in Deo est simpliciter et uniformiter, in creaturis est multipliciter et divisim. Unde perfectius participat divinam bonitatem, et repraesentat eam, totum universum, quam alia quaecumque creatura."

§VI. Conclusion

In this thesis I hope to have achieved my goal of creating a free will defense influenced by Thomas Aquinas that deals with the issues brought up by Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump that still accomplishes the goal set out by Alvin Plantinga. I have argued that, while there are major differences between Plantinga's metaphysical framework and the framework operated by Aquinas, the differences are superficial in nature if the goal is to create a defense which shows the logical consistency of God and evil using human freedom. No doubt there have been many other ways to overcome this problem that do not involve invoking human freedom.[85] However, since Aquinas never used human freedom as a way of escaping the problem, my aim was to show that such a task could be done.

I discussed Aquinas' account of causation, and in doing so showed that God being the cause of human actions does not necessarily mean God coerces those actions. I also showed that the will doesn't need to have the property of freedom so long as some other aspect of the human being does have that property, which for Aquinas is the freedom to choose. Additionally, I argued that, while all actions have the good as their end, goodness comes in degrees and humans do not always choose the good they ought to choose, which results in a wrongful act.

That said, there is still more work to be done. So far as I am aware, contemporary philosophy of religion lacks a robust account of the will and how it relates to human acts. As such, further exposition on Aquinas' account of the will and how that compares to contemporary philosophy of religion will be of great value, since an account of what the will *is* will provide greater depth to a contemporary Thomistic discussion of freedom of choice. Additionally, on

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[85] For other responses to the PoE read Eleonore Stump's *Wandering in Darkness* (2012) and Richard Swinburne's *Providence and the Problem of Evil* (1998).

premise (v) of the TFCD, a discussion of whether Aquinas considers this world to be the best possible world (as per Leibniz) arises as a natural question since Aquinas does agree that there are objectively better worlds, e.g., worlds containing intellectual creatures are greater than worlds which lack them.

My TFCD takes into account the objections raised by both Davies and Stump and I believe they would agree with its conclusion. To whether my argument is a defense or a theodicy, I write that it is both. A theodicy in the sense that, if one accepts Aquinas' metaphysics, then what I have written (primarily in defending premise (iv) of the TFCD) is what Aquinas would take to the case. A defense in that, if Aquinas' metaphysical framework is *not* accepted (say for someone like Plantinga) it *still* satisfies the goal of showing that it is at the very least logically possible that it is true, and thus shows no logical inconsistencies. As a person who is sympathetic to the Thomistic worldview, I do believe that the premises are true and accept this as a theodicy (per Plantinga's usage).

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