

## Voluntarism

It will reinforce the foregoing analysis to consider the genesis and implications of voluntarism a voluntarism that is somewhat more subtle than that of the Loquentes in lege Sarcenorum.

In the main, then, Scotus recognized three types of scientific affirmation. Either the nexus between the terms of a proposition is perceived immediately, as in a principle; or/mediately, as in a conclusion; or finally it is a pure matter of fact to be known solely by observing the conjunction of the terms in reality (In Met 1. 6, q 3, n 10 Viv 7 341 Ming I 236f) it is grasped/

This account of human knowledge provided the analogy for the analysis of divine knowledge. Naturally and necessarily God apprehends in his essence all possible natures or terms. With equal naturalness and necessity he knows which terms are conjoined necessarily and which are necessarily separated. But it is not possible for God to know the contingent in this fashion, for then the contingent would not be contingent but necessary (In I d 39 a 2 Garc 1209 n 1111 Minges II 102). As we observe contingent conjunctions, so God produces them freely. Hence, prior to any act of divine free will, divine knowledge of the contingent must be neutral; it is like Scotus' own stand on the question whether the number of the stars is odd or even

"Et ideo intellectus divinus concipiens terminos tales futurorum contingentium ante actum voluntatis solum habet cognitionem neutram de complexione, qualem habeo de ista complexione, an astra sint paria Report I d 38 q 2 Viv 22 468 Minges II 106.

To effect the transition from intellectual neutrality to determinate knowledge, an act of divine free choice is needed. Once the choice is made, divine intellect knows what happens to be or occur contingently with no less naturalness and necessity than it knows what must be or cannot be. In I d 39 a 3 §4 Garc 1223s n 1129 Minges II 104 ff.

As the analysis of human knowledge underlies the account of divine knowledge, so the account of divine knowledge underlies the distinction between the absolute and the ordered power of God. The absolute power of God extends to everything short of contradiction; and what involves a contradiction is settled by the divine inspection and comparison of terms. On the other hand, the ordered power of God is concerned with the contingent order of things; and as the truth of the contingent is basically a matter of will, so also contingent law and order is right and just because of a divine free choice.

"\*Secundum quod\* intellectus offert voluntati divinae talem legem, puta quod omnis glorificandus prius est gratificandus, si placet voluntati suae, quae libera est, recta est lex, et ita de aliis legibus. Deus igitur agere potens secundum istas bectas leges, ut praefixae sunt ab eo, dicitur agere secundum potentiam ordinatam. In I Send d 44 Garcia 1286 n 1181 Ming II 141. However, the present ordered power of God is not the sole possible ordered power of God. The present order is constituted by the contingent lws fixed by divine-~~fr~~ the free decree of divine will. Other orders would be constituted by other free decrees; ~~was// and as God is free to choose other decrees~~

and is the present sets of laws is right and just because God chose them, so other laws would be right and just because God chose them. "... sicut potest aliter agere, ita potest aliam legem statuere rectam." Ibid Garcia p 1287.

There is a further and more interesting implication which brings us back to human knowledge. The ~~dis~~ initial disjunction between analytic propositions and guess-work, say, about the number of the stars, reduced contingent truth to the humble status of being ultimately due to divine free choice. It follows that contingent truth cannot be an object of scientific knowledge. One can acknowledge contingent truth; one can be as certain of it as anyone could ask; but there is no use whatever asking why it is so. It is so, but there is not a reason for its being so; ~~there-is-only-a-else~~ its ultimate ground is not a reason but a free choice. Moreover, the realm of contingent truth is rather large. It includes everything that could be otherwise de potentia Dei absoluta. And the sole limit to the absolute power of God is the principle of contradiction. It follows that unless a truth is established by the principle of contradiction, it ~~cannot-be-analytic~~ is contingent, ultimately grounded in a divine free choice, and so ~~not-a-matter-of-fact~~ just a pure matter of fact for which it is idle to assign reasons.

The consequences for theology are worth noting.

Some supernatural truths are necessary, for example, the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity. But they also are mysteries, and so we cannot advance analytic propositions in their regard, for then we should understand the mysteries just as well as we understand natural truths.

Some supernatural truths are contingent, for example, the supernatural elevation of man. Because they are contingent, they are ~~a~~ purely and simply a matter of will. Hence for William of Ockham it is out of liberality and mercy that God ~~confers~~ contingently and freely confers grace on nature; again, it is no less out of liberality and mercy that God contingently and freely gives glory to those that persevere in grace; and, as Ockham added with some complacance, "sic etiam propria opinio maxime recedit ab errore Pelagii." P Vignaux, art Nominalisme, DTC XI 774.

There is, ~~is~~ of course, scientific knowledge. But precisely because it is scientific, it has to be valid for all possible worlds. ~~It-cannot-be-so~~ Science cannot deal with anything less, for anything less is not a matter of intellect but ultimately due to a free choice of divine will. Of course, the extent of such science is somewhat meagre, for its criterion is the principle of contradiction. Scotus had affirmed a cognitio intuitiva as knowledge of the present and existent. Ockham put two questions. Would there be a contradiction if God conserved in being such an intuition while gradually he moved the object off as far as you please? Would there be a contradiction if God conserved in being such an intuition while he caused the object to cease to exist? Ockham saw no contradiction. However Ockham did affirm that contradiction would arise if there were evident presence and real absence *ibid* 767-69. But the substitution of the word "evident" for the word

intuitive did not prove an impassible barrier for Nicholas of Autrecourt. In his debate with Bernard of Arezzo, Nicholas agreed that it would be contradictory to affirm evidence and deny appearance, but he saw no contradiction if affirming appearance and denying reality. Ibid 564 ff.

Finally, there are arguments ~~from~~ of convenience. But what can they be? Either the initial disjunction between analytic propositions and guess-work is valid or it is not. If it is not, let us go back to the beginning and revise the whole position. If it is ~~not~~, then arguments of convenience are bad arguments that happen to have right conclusions.

Such is the vacuum to which one is brought if one accepts the initial disjunction and if one follows it out to its logical conclusions. It is a sterile theology cut off from the sources of revelation (AAS 42 1950 568 f) and condemned to wander through the range of possible worlds, where nothing is necessary, for God is free, and nothing is impossible, for God is omnipotent.

Its basic error has two aspects. On the objective side it overlooks the fact that any ~~univer~~ created universe is the product of both wisdom and freedom. On the subjective side it overlooks the intelligibility of contingent fact. St. Thomas does not hold that the order of the existing universe is necessary, and yet he attributes it to the infinite wisdom of God. Necessity is one thing, and intelligibility another.

## The Root of Voluntarism.

Scotus was disposed to voluntarism by the affective theology of the Augustinian school (Gagnebet). But this disposition is little more than an apparent cause. The real root of voluntarism is intellectual theory, and it is to this that attention must be directed if ~~the~~ anything is to be done about the recurrence of voluntarism among those who can claim that they never read Scotus.

There are two ~~disiat~~ different manners in which the distinction between subject and object can be drawn. There is the psychological distinction; it rests upon the patent difference between seeing and seen, hearing and heard, imagining and imagined, understanding and understood, defining and defined, judging and judged. There is the metaphysical distinction; it supposes three propositions, for example, "I am," "it is," and "I am not it"; it defines the real distinction between real subject and real object by the truth of three such propositions. ~~#~~The difference between the two positions is obvious. On the psychological distinction the known is opposite to the knower; it is outside the knowing; and because it is outside and opposite, there arises the question of the bridge from the subject to the object and the Kantian distinction between the phenomenal object and the thing-in-itself. On the metaphysical distinction there is a ~~more~~ fundamental objectivity presupposed another objectivity prior to the distinction itself; only from three propositions can one have a real distinction between real subject and real object; yet each of the propositions by itself is objective in the sense that it is true. What is this more fundamental objectivity? It is the fact that the object of intellect is ens. It has the interesting implication that, since outside ens there is nothing, outside the known there is nothing. Further, since outside the known there is nothing, this fundamental objectivity cannot be relational and must be absolute; it cannot be relational, for there is nothing outside ens to which it can be related; it must be absolute, for it is the absolute that excludes relations. Finally, since the objectivity by which ens is known is absolute, it is silly to attempt to justify it by appealing to the confrontation of the psychological concept; for on the metaphysical view the confrontation is obtained not by ~~going~~ analysing "I am," "it is," and "I am not it," but by adding three more propositions, namely, "I know I am," "I know it is," and "I know I am not it." If these three are true, then a confrontation of real subject and real object is both had and known to be had; and their truth is a matter of absolute objectivity.

of the psychological ~~concept~~; for the ~~as~~ psychological ~~concept~~ knows nothing about absolute objectivity; and "nemo dat quod non habet." On the other hand, the psychological confrontation is deducible on the assumption of ~~metaphysical~~ absolute objectivity; all that is required is the truth of three more propositions, namely, "I know I am," "I know it is," and "I know that I am not it."

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There follows

distinction

The intuitionist will object, How do you know any of the six propositions? The basic answer holds for knowledge of any proposition. It is because one has an intellect, because intellect is "potens omnia facere et fieri," because "omnia" is coextensive with ens. Absolute objectivity rests upon an absolute ground, namely, that ~~our~~-intellect human intellect as "omnia potens" participates the omnipotence of God that created all things.

begin from/

But my present purpose is not epistemological. It is to reveal the falsification of the nature of human knowledge that results from the intuitionist notion that things are known by taking a look. I offer two examples: the Scotist negation of insight into phantasm; and the Scotist "distinctio formalis ex natura rei."

According to St. Thomas sensitive potencies present to intellect its proper object ~~in~~. De An a 15 c. But how can the sensible and particular present the intelligible and the universal? The-affirmation-is Scotus was fully aware that for an intuitionist such an affirmation was impossible. According Intellect must have presented to it a universal and intelligible object; and such presentation must be prior to any cognitional act of intellect. The point was developed in six arguments In I Sent d 3 q 6 Garcia pp 401-8 nn 447-52.

To this the Thomist answer is well known. It is to deny the supposition that the object of knowledge must be ~~in-act~~ object in act prior to the knowing. Prior to the act of understanding, one can say that the phantasm has been made intelligible in act by agent intellect, as the sun makes colors visible in act though no one is around to see; but that actuality constitutes no more than the potency to move vision or intellect CG II 59 §14. Actually being seen and actually being understood are identical with sight in act and understanding in act. The distinction between subject and object regards them both not as in act but as in potency I 14 2 c. Hence in the essential self-knowledge of God, there is no duality and so no definition of truth by similarity between knowing and known; there is identity and truth is just absence of dissimilarity I 16 § 5 2m.

even/

The same principle is illustrated by the formal distinction. For Aquinas understanding precedes conception, and so the distinction between/basic concepts can result not from the object but from the mode of understanding. But for Scotus concepts are produced by the object, so that ultimate distinctions cannot be attributed to the mode of understanding and must be derived from differences in the object itself. Thus, God the Father has intuitive knowledge of his essence and his paternity; the knowing corresponds exactly to what is; but God the Father knows that he communicates his essence but not his paternity to God the Son, and so there must be a formal non-identity in the object itself. In I Sent d 2 qq 4-7 a 5 §2; Garcia p 279 ff nn 325-27; B Jansen, Beiträge zur geschichtlichen Entwicklung der Distinctio formalis, ZkTh 53 1939 317-44 517-44.

The intuitionist thesis has an even graver consequence. It eliminates judgment. For Aquinas there are always two questions quid sit and an sit. Concepts are products of acts of understanding, and it is only per se that understanding is infallible. Hence the mere occurrence of a necessary nexus between concepts does not dispense with the ~~necessity~~ need of wise judgment evaluating the terms of the nexus I II 66 5 4m. But for Scotus the apprehension of the necessary nexus is already a judgment, and when there is no necessary nexus then certain knowledge rests upon the fiction of a cognitio intuitiva. To the vast over-simplification of the cognitio intuitiva there corresponds divine knowledge based upon divine will. To the laborious inquiries of scientific induction, to the cumulative probabilities involved in concrete assents, there corresponds the act of understanding with respect to data and the delicate operations of wise judgment in discerning probability from certitude. To such a theory of knowledge there corresponds the Thomist universe produced both by divine wisdom and divine freedom.