MEDIEVAL PROBLEMS OF CAUSATION AND DIVINE CONCURRENCE

BY

Zita Veronika Tóth

MA, Central European University, 2010
MPhil, Fordham University, 2014

DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
AT FORDHAM UNIVERSITY

NEW YORK

MARCH, 2017

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As most things, this dissertation reflects the joint effort of many people, in particular, I would not have been able to complete it without the help I received from my advisors and friends. Giorgio Pini has patiently read some very bad preliminary versions of almost every section, and his comments immensely helped me to develop less bad versions of them. Marilyn McCord Adams has also read and commented on many parts, and without her encouragement and support I would have given up on this project long ago. A very special thanks goes to Gloria Frost, who was willing to read this dissertation on a last minute notice. I also presented and discussed various sections of this work at various conferences, where I received some very helpful feedback; I would like to thank especially Gloria Frost again for inviting me to her Medieval Natural Philosophy workshop, and Martin Pickavé for letting me present a very early outline of a section at the Toronto Medieval Philosophy Colloquium. Russ Friedman, Chris Schabel, Giorgio Pini, and Peter Hartman have helped me with acquiring some manuscripts without which this would have been a futile project. Finally, I would like to thank the Fordham Latin reading group, which for many semesters was willing to put up with some rather obscure texts on divine concurrence for my sake, and all my friends and family for their support and for making me believe that I will, at some point, finish.

Li angeli, frate, e 'l paese sincero
nel qual tu se', dir si posson creati,
sì come sono, in loro essere intero;
ma li alimenti che tu hai nomati
e quelle cose che di lor si fanno
da creata virtù sono informati.

(Dante: *Paradiso*, c. 7)

CONTENTS

BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Imagine Norah kindling a fire. She strikes a match, places it on a piece of tinder. The tinder and the logs burst into flames, and a few seconds later the fire is cracking in the fireplace. As you approach it, you can feel its warmth. As you throw your newspaper on it, the fire ignites the pages.

Now also imagine, just as medieval Jewish, Christian, and Muslim philosophers believed, that there is a creator without whom the world would not exist. It's not just that the world would not have come into being, but that it would not exist *right now*. Without this creator, there would be no heat of the fire. Indeed, there would be no fire to bring about the heat, no Norah to start the fire, and no matches and tinder to start the fire with. If the creator wants Norah, the matches, the tinder, the fire, and the heat to exist, they do exist; if the creator does not want them to exist, they do not. In this case, you might ask: who did really bring about the fire? Was it Norah, by kindling it? Or was it this creator, by willing it to exist? Or perhaps both?

This cluster of problems is usually called the 'problem of divine concurrence.' To put the matter more formally, the question is this: if God causes the world to exist, is he also active in every causal operation in it? Is it meaningful to say in this context that the *fire* causes the heat? There are, roughly speaking, three ways to answer these questions. First, you might think that if there were such a God, then the fire indeed would not bring about anything, strictly speaking — and in this case, you would be an *occasionalist*, sharing a view with some medieval Islamic theologians (and later Malebranche). Second,

on the contrary, you may opt to argue that if there were such a God who created such a world as we live in, then this God would not contribute to the causal operations of the created world — and in this case, you would be a *mere conservationist*, sharing a view with only a few medieval thinkers. And third, if you are unsatisfied with either of the previous options, and say that if there were such a God who created such a world as we live in, then both God and things in the world would be causally active in causal operations — then you are a *concurrentist*, sharing the "standard" medieval view, that of Thomas Aquinas, John Duns Scotus, William Ockham, and many others.

This dissertation examines the history of this problem as it appeared in three distinct but interconnected debates. After some preliminary matters in Chapter 1 — discussing the problem in more detail and motivating it by reviewing the Latin medieval reception of Arabic occasionalism — the first debate I present concerned whether God is immediately active in every action of a creature, and if yes, what this divine concurring action amounts to (Chapter 2). As was mentioned, most thirteenth-century thinkers thought that the answer to the first question was affirmative. They disagreed, however, on how to understand God's concurring action, and, consequently, on the response to their mere conservationist contemporaries. Apart from their specific concern, their arguments also shed some light on how to understand the necessary connection between cause and effect in the medieval framework.

The second debate focused on divine concurrence in human volitions (Chapter 3). Although human volitions present special problems with which I cannot deal in detail in this work, interestingly, most arguments against the claim that God concurs with every volition apply to created causes in general. In this debate, the focus expanded to questions about divine foreknowledge, but the main aim remained the same: to account for concurrentism that can avoid falling into occasionalism or mere conservationism.

Occasionalism and the indemonstrability of the causal relation became a central problem in the third debate (Chapter 4). I show that although some fourteenth-century thinkers have been regarded as occasionalists, most of them preserve a clear distinction between genuine, *sine qua non*, and occasional causes. Gabriel Biel, the pre-reformation theologian seems to be the first one to explicitly argue that God is the only genuine causal agent in the world, but even his evaluation is more complicated than it is usually assumed.

I do not wish to claim that these were the only important aspects of the medieval discussion of divine concurrence, or that the authors I consider were the only or most influential ones. Indeed, for instance, as mentioned above, I will mostly disregard the connected and contentious issue whether and how God concurs with voluntary agents, and what this concurrence implies with respect to free will. My focus will be what I call 'natural,' i.e., non-voluntary causation; not because the voluntary case was less important for the medievals (in some sense, quite the contrary), but because theories of divine concurrence with voluntary agents in particular usually presupposed a theory of divine concurrence with created causes in general.

Regarding the authors I consider, I hope to demonstrate that they form some meaningful debates, which debates, at the same time, illustrate some important changes in how thinkers addressed the issue in the thirteenth and subsequent centuries. And while it is difficult to avoid all kinds of arbitrariness in such a selection, I concentrated on those figures who were influential either among their contemporaries or later, or who were unique enough to take the discussion into new territories.

Overall, there is an historical, a systematic, and a methodological upshot of this dissertation. On the historical side, I shed some light on some medieval figures and what they thought about causation and divine concurrence. I will mention some interpre-

tational debates in the individual chapters, and I also treat some authors (Durand of St.-Pourçain, Peter of Palude, Peter Auriol, Gabriel Biel) whose accounts of divine concurrence have not received much attention lately. As William Courtenay once noted, "few problems are as central to the philosophy and theology of the late Middle Ages as the problem of causality,"[1] and yet it is still a topic mostly set aside in the literature on medieval philosophy. The problem of divine concurrence is just one aspect of the more general problem of causation, but as will be seen below, it highlights an important and often overlooked difficulty that results from combining Aristotelianism with classical theism.

On the systematic side, I show that although the focus of the debate and the employed conceptual apparatus shifted, concurrentists remained occupied with avoiding both occasionalism and mere conservationism. As will be also seen, the question of divine concurrence is strongly intertwined with such seemingly unrelated issues as the nature of contingency, divine foreknowledge, or the demonstrability of the causal relation.

Finally, on the methodological side, I show that although we can learn a great deal about such contemporary philosophical problems as causation, causal powers, and divine action in the world by looking at the medieval discussions, this should be done with great care. For although it is tempting to abstract these medieval theories from their theological assumptions, nevertheless, as it will be shown here, even such seemingly purely metaphysical issues as the nature and scope of causal powers or the supposed necessary connection between causes and effects are unintelligible in the medieval context without the theological framework in which they originally arose.

1. William J Courtenay, "Covenant and Causality in Pierre d'Ailly," *Speculum* 46, no. 1 (1971): 94.

1 PRELIMINARY MATTERS

Before zooming in onto the three specific debates I consider here, two things are in order. First, I present in some more detail the central problem that the authors discussed in this dissertation were concerned with, together with some apparently easy solutions that do not work. Second, as will be seen especially in the first debate (Chapter 2), thirteenth-century authors were often confronted with the problem of divine concurrence as they read the views of some Arabic thinkers who thought that the only plausible account of causation for a theist is an occasionalist one. Thus, in the second section I briefly review some of this Arabic background, although mostly restricted to the authors and texts with which the later, Latin authors were apparently familiar.

1.1 THE PROBLEM OF DIVINE CONCURRENCE

The problem I call the 'problem of divine concurrence,' arose in a broadly speaking Aristotelian framework, with its Aristotelian metaphysical assumptions. By 'cause,' unless otherwise noted, I mean an efficient cause, that is, an agent that brings about an effect by a transeunt action (i.e., an action that originates from one thing and results in another).[1] According to Aristotle and most medieval thinkers, causes act in virtue

1. See, e.g., Suarez, *Disputationes Metaphysicae*, disp. 17, sec. 1 (Francisco Suarez, *On Efficient Causality: Metaphysical Disputations 17, 18, and 19* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 10).

of their *causal powers*, which powers are strongly related to ("flow from") their essence. Thus, fire is the cause of heat in an originally cold object, and the fire brings about this heat in virtue of its causal power (its heat). We need not go into the metaphysical details of this picture now, but it should be kept in mind that in this framework the causal relation is a relation between objects and not between events. As will be seen later in more detail, Aristotelian accounts in general also maintain that there is some kind of a necessary connection between causes and effects; the fire can explain the heating of the pot only because fire always and necessarily heats in appropriate circumstances.

In this Aristotelian framework, by the 'problem of divine concurrence' I mean the reconciliation of three claims, which — with the caveats elaborated below — seem to be individually plausible and jointly inconsistent:

(1) primary cause: For every x (where x is a result of a natural change), God is the cause of x;

(2) secondary cause: For every x (where x is a result of a natural change), the natural agent is the cause of x;

(3) One thing can only have one cause.

It is usually said that there are three main positions one can take to avoid the arising seeming inconsistency.[2] On the one end of the spectrum, occasionalism, denying (2) above.[3] On the other end of the spectrum, mere conservationism, denying (1), or at

Suarez, of course, is slightly anachronistic in the present context; nevertheless, by and large, a similar generic formula would have been acceptable for most of the thinkers I consider here. Freddoso gives an elaboration of this definition in Alfred J Freddoso, "God's General Concurrence with Secondary Causes: Pitfalls and Prospects," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 68, no. 2 (1994): 131–156, but I am not assuming for the present that all the authors I consider are committed to all the metaphysical claims Freddoso sees derivable from this definition (and indeed, many of these claims would be contested by some).

2. This does not mean that all of these have been equally well represented, either today or historically, as will be seen below, or that these positions would be uniform in any sense.

3. *Pace* some popular beliefs, occasionalism was not originally connected to the mind-body problem but was a result of the Islamic reaction against Aristotelian natural philosophy. For a detailed overview of medieval Arabic occasionalism and its Latin reception, see Dominik Perler and Ulrich Rudolph, *Occa-*

least some version of it.[4] Mere conservationism thus agrees with its alternatives that God created and conserves the world; but denies that he is causally active in its operations.[5] And in the middle, concurrentism, the "standard" view at least among medieval philosophers in the West, itself ranging over quite a wide spectrum, according to which both secondary causes and God are immediate causes of the secondary effects (thus denying [3], or at least some version of it).[6]

In other words, claims (1) and (2) above amount to a rejection of mere conservationism and occasionalism, respectively, and the third captures our (whether Aristotelian or non-Aristotelian) intuition that a thing can only have one principal cause — which intuition is, in some sense, granted by the thinkers I consider.[7] Concurrentism, roughly, is the view that can be characterized by the acceptance of both (1) and (2) (and in some sense, [3]). These claims can be and were further specified, but it is already apparent that the main

sionalismus: Theorien der Kausalität im arabisch-islamischen und im europaeischen Denken (Göttingen: Vandenhöck / Rupercht, 2000). I will briefly consider occasionalism in the next section (1.2).

4. This is, strictly speaking, not the "end" of the spectrum, which would rather be deism. *Pace* McCann and Kvanvig (Hugh J McCann and Jonathan L Kvanvig, "The Occasionalist Proselytizer: A Modified Catechism," *Philosophical Perspectives* 5 (1991): 587), however, deism seems to be quite rare, and virtually nonexistent before the seventeenth century.

5. Hence the 'mere' qualifier in its name, although the view has also been called simply 'conservationism' and 'weak concurrentism' (Timothy D Miller, "Continuous Creation and Secondary Causation: The Threat of Occasionalism," *Religious Studies* 47 (2011): 3–22).

6. Somewhat improperly and just for the sake of brevity, by 'secondary effect' I will mean the effects of secondary causes, such as the heating of water. I will also similarly use the expression 'secondary action' to refer to the action of the secondary agent. For some further details of the typology of these views, see Alfred J Freddoso, "Medieval Aristotelianism and the Case against Secondary Causation in Nature," in *Divine and Human Action*, ed. Thomas V Morris (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), 74–118; and Alfred J Freddoso, "God's General Concurrence with Secondary Causes: Why Conservation is not Enough," *Philosophical Perspectives* 5 (1991): 553–585. Although some authors have recently argued that mere conservationism and occasionalism are the only options one might have in solving the problem of divine concurrence (see, e.g., McCann and Kvanvig, "The Occasionalist Proselytizer"; and William Vallicella, "Concurrentism or Occasionalism?," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 70, no. 3 (1996): 339–359), medieval thinkers would strongly disagree.

7. E.g., Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* (henceforth *ST*) I, q. 105, a. 5, ad 2: "una actio non procedit a duobus agentibus unius ordinis," that is, "one action does not proceed from two agents of the same order" (Thomas Aquinas, *Pars prima Summae theologiae: a quaestione L ad quaestionem CXIX*, Leonine, Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Opera Omnia, vol. 5 (Rome: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1889), 476). Unless otherwise noted, all translations from the Latin are mine.

challenge the concurrentist faces is to navigate between the Scylla of occasionalism (by not maintaining [2]) and the Charybdis of mere conservationism (by not maintaining [1]) — both of which, as will be seen shortly, were unacceptable for most medieval thinkers.

One might say here — objecting thereby to the whole premise of this dissertation — that there are several easy ways to solve the problem of divine concurrence. Indeed, for instance, some have suggested recently that the problem of divine concurrence can be easily resolved if we regard God not as an efficient cause but some other kind, for instance a formal or final cause. Unfortunately, however, this is not how the problem was formulated in the medieval period. God as a creator meant precisely that he is a cause of the world is seemingly the same sense as fire is the cause of heat.

Perhaps more promising is the following suggestion. One could resolve the inconsistency by distinguishing between direct and indirect causes, and saying that while the secondary agent is a direct cause of the effect, God is only an indirect cause of it. The distinction could be put in Aquinas's words:

> One thing can be the cause of another in two ways, one way directly and another way indirectly. Indirectly as when an agent is the cause of a disposition to a certain effect, it is said to be the occasional and indirect cause of that effect; just as when we might say that the one who dries the wood is the cause of its burning.... But a thing is said to be the direct cause of something when it acts directly to it.[8]

The important part of this distinction is that a direct cause aims at the effect itself, while an indirect cause does not; the drying of the wood might eventually lead to its burning, but the burning need not be the primary intention of the one who dries the wood. Thus, one might argue that God is not a direct cause in this sense, as his aim

8. *ST* I, q. 114, a. 3: "causa alicuius potest dici aliquid dupliciter, uno modo, directe, alio modo, indirecte. Indirecte quidem, sicut cum aliquod agens causans aliquam dispositionem ad aliquem effectum, dicitur esse occasionaliter et indirecte causa illius effectus; sicut si dicatur quod ille qui siccat ligna, est causa combustionis eorum.... Directe autem dicitur esse aliquid causa alicuius, quod operatur directe ad illud" (Leonine ed., 5:535).

is not the specific effect of the secondary agent but, say, the excellence of the universe. As we will see, however, Aquinas and most thinkers I consider below would not argue this way but regard both the secondary agent's and God's action as direct causes of the secondary effect.[9]

Third, one could also try to make a distinction between immediate and mediate causes to solve the difficulty. One could say, for instance, that

immediate cause: c is an immediate cause of e iff (1) c produces e, and (2) for all c_2, if c produces c_2, then c_2 does not produce e. (Which is a somewhat complicated way of saying that an immediate cause is simply a cause that acts not by means of anything else.)

And similarly,

mediate cause: c is a mediate cause of e iff there is some c_2 such that c produces c_2 and c_2 produces e, and this is the only way c produces e. (Which, the distinction being exclusive and exhaustive, could also be expressed by saying that c is a cause of e but not an immediate cause of e.)

Note that this distinction is orthogonal to the one between direct and indirect causes. For instance, I can be a direct but mediate cause of an effect by aiming at it and bringing it about by the mediation of something else, such as when I aim at burning the wood and bring it about by first igniting some newspapers. Something might also be an indirect but immediate cause of an effect by bringing it about in an occasional way, just as I am an indirect but immediate cause of the newspaper's smoking. For an indirect and mediate cause we could consider my causal contribution to the burning wood's igniting the piece of cotton accidentally placed next to it, while the direct and immediate case is self-explanatory.

Given this distinction, one could maintain that while (1) and (2) are true, they refer

9. As can be seen from this characterization of a direct cause, the notion of efficient cause is strongly tied to that of a final cause. I will, however, leave aside now the problem of this interconnection and final causality in general.

to 'cause' in different senses: while the secondary agent is an immediate cause of the effect in the sense described above, God is only a mediate cause of the same effect.

Most medieval thinkers, however, do not take this route. As for example, Aquinas notes in the *De potentia*, "If, then, we consider the subsistent agent, every particular agent is immediate to its effect. But if we consider the power whereby the action is done, then the power of the higher cause is more immediate to the effect than the power of the lower cause."[10] Or, similarly, in the *Summa contra gentiles* he remarks that "just as it is not unfitting for one action to be produced by an agent and its power, so it is not inappropriate for the same effect to be produced by a lower agent and God: by both immediately, though in different ways."[11] As Aquinas makes clear in these passages, both God and the secondary agent are immediate causes of the same effect, and thus he cannot resort to the obvious solution according to which one is merely mediate. As will be seen below, all concurrentists share in this assumption, even though the meaning of 'immediate' will slightly vary from author to author (see especially sections 2.2.2 and 3.1.3 below), resulting in some disagreement in this respect.

A further way that would render (1) and (2) easily compatible is to say that God and the secondary agent are only partial causes of the whole effect. Although, as will be shown below, there is *some* sense in which this is true according to most concurrentists (in the correct understanding of 'partial'), they usually regard both God and the secondary

10. *Quaestiones disputatae de potentia* (henceforth *QDP*), q. 3, a. 7: "si consideremus supposita agentia, quodlibet agens particulare est immediatum ad suum effectum. Si autem consideremus virtutem qua fit actio, sic virtus superioris causae erit immediatior effectui quam virtus inferioris" (Thomas Aquinas, *S. Thomae Aquinatis Quaestiones disputatae 2: De potentia; De anima; De spiritualibus creaturis*, ed. P M Pession (Turin-Rome: Marietti, 1965), 58).

11. *Summa contra gentiles* (henceforth *SCG*) III, c. 70: "Sicut igitur non est inconveniens quod una actio producatur ex aliquo agente et eius virtute, ita non est inconveniens quod producatur idem effectus ab inferiori agente et Deo: ab utroque immediate, licet alio et alio modo" (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles: Liber tertius*, Leonine, Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Opera Omnia, vol. 14 (Rome: Typis Riccardi Garroni, 1926), 206).

agent as total causes of the secondary effect. For example, as Aquinas notes in the *Summa contra gentiles* again, when responding to an objection,

> It is also apparent that the same effect is not attributed to a natural cause and to divine power in such a way that it is partly done by God and partly by the natural agent; rather, it is wholly done by both, according to a different way.[12]

As this passage indicates, Aquinas — agreeing with most thinkers considered here — would not accept the solution according to which part of the effect is brought about by God and part of it by the secondary agent, in the same way as, for instance, one half of a house is built by one builder while the other half is built by another. And the reason for this is quite simple: as in the builder case, this would assume that God and the secondary agent have comparable powers and the secondary agent brings about its part on its own, which would contradict the main motivating principle of concurrentism, namely that secondary agents are not such.

Thus, the problem of reconciling (1) with (2) (while given [3]) cannot be solved in these easy ways for the authors I consider here, but instead they give some more elaborate solutions. Since concurrentist causation is a relation involving three *relata* — the secondary agent, the secondary effect, and God — these solutions have to address three, intertwined but separate issues.[13] First, they need to account for God's action as considered in itself or in relation to God. Second, for the secondary agent's action, and the

12. *SCG* III, c. 70: "Patet etiam quod non sic idem effectus causae naturali et divinae virtuti attribuitur quasi partim a Deo, et partim a naturali agente fiat, sed totus ab utroque secundum alium modum" (Leonine ed., 14:207).

13. It is worth noting, however, that the medieval conception of relations greatly differs from the contemporary one. While we tend to regard a relation between a and b as *one* relation that somehow obtains between those two objects, most medieval thinkers would say that we have *two* relations in this case: one, pointing from a to b, and the other, pointing from b to a, and these two need not be of the same kind. (For example, Aquinas would often say that the relation of 'being created' is a real relation from the point of the creatures, but only a relation of reason from the point of God.) On the medieval theories of relations, see Mark G Henninger, *Relations: Medieval Theories, 1250–1325* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

feature of the secondary agent by virtue of which it is able to causally interact with other agents. And third, they need to explain what these two actions — that of God and that of the secondary agent — bring about, that is, what in the secondary effect God and the secondary agent are responsible for, and what each of them acts on. These issues will guide the following investigations. I am going to present some medieval solutions to this problem as centered around three, interrelated but still distinguishable debates — all emerging from the questions provided by Peter of Lombard's *Sentences*.[14]

First, at least from around the late thirteenth century, the commentaries on the second book of the *Sentences* often contained a question directly considering whether God concurs with the action of every secondary creature, a question that was located in the broader context of the nature of creation and God's activity in general.[15] The participants of this first debate, which sprang mostly from Aquinas's legacy and the various reactions to it, were Aquinas, Giles of Rome, Durand of St.-Pourçain, and Peter of Palude, and thus, with the exception of Giles, the debate was mostly internal to the Dominican order. Giles of Rome, who was probably a student of Aquinas during Aquinas's second regency in Paris, cites and argues with his master (while agreeing with him that some form of concurrentism is the right view); Durand, who was in Paris a generation later, quotes both Giles and Aquinas and disagrees with both (denying divine concurrence); Peter of Palude argues against Durand, mostly disagrees with Giles, and supports at least one of Aquinas's positions, while citing all of them (but mostly Durand) verbatim

14. Peter Lombard's *Sentences* contains a collection of texts from the Bible and Church Fathers, divided into four books, and writing a commentary on it during the centuries I consider was required of every master of theology. For the medieval commentary tradition, see especially G R Evans, ed., *Mediaeval Commentaries on the* Sentences *of Peter Lombard*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

15. Freddoso notes ("Pitfalls and Prospects," 132) that Aquinas was the first one to treat this question in its own place, instead of part of a more general discussion of sinful action. I have not been able either to verify or to disprove this claim.

at length. As this debate will show, the concurrentist position was a multi-faceted view already in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.

The second context in which some authors considered the problem was that of sinful actions, also in the second book of the *Sentences*. Although this second debate considers divine concurrence from a specific standpoint, it is one that bears consequences for the view in more general as well. As was mentioned above, I will not discuss the problem of free will and other specifics of human agency; nevertheless, Peter John Olivi's arguments against concurrentism in general are embedded in the question about sinful volition, and so is Scotus's defense of concurrentism and Peter Auriol's rejection of it.

Finally, we can find discussions of the nature of secondary causes in the treatment of sacramental causality, also intertwined with the growing epistemological worries during the fourteenth century. Although most authors regarded natural and sacramental causation as very different in nature, when discussing the latter they sometimes considered both, especially the question how or whether either sacramental or natural secondary causes can be efficacious, or whether we can demonstrably know any difference between them. This context provided especially fruitful in the third debate, which considers again the problem of occasionalism and shows how the difference between genuine and *sine qua non* causality played an important but gradually diminishing role in Ockham, Pierre d'Ailly, and Gabriel Biel, respectively.

These three debates, although they arose in specific contexts, are interconnected: they all address the same problem of divine concurrence from a specific point of view, and the authors of the later debates take those of earlier ones into consideration. Thus, they all can be regarded as various attempts to develop an account of divine concurrence that is plausible and consistent with some basic claims of Christian theism as well as with some basic claims of Aristotelian natural philosophy.

Consistency with Aristotelian natural philosophy meant that with the exception of the very last author considered in this dissertation (Gabriel Biel, section 4.3), all others agreed that occasionalism is implausible. But to see what kind of occasionalism they were mostly acquainted with, we need to look into some of the Arabic authors to whom they attributed some versions of the view.

1.2 BACKGROUND: ARABIC OCCASIONALISM

Arabic occasionalism and its reception in the Latin West has been extensively treated elsewhere,[16] and a serious examination of it would far exceed the limits of the current project. Nevertheless, since it was one of the starting points of the medieval discussion, it will be useful to review it briefly here. As a starting point, it is worth looking at the kinds of occasionalism Giles of Rome discusses, as he seems to be one of the authors who discussed the position in most detail. (For Giles's arguments against these positions, see section 2.2.1 below.) As Giles notes in his *Quaestiones de esse et essentia*,

> Now some, speaking according to the law of the Moors and Saracens, as the Commentator says in the 12th book of the *Metaphysics*, say that no secondary agent and no creature can bring about anything. Whence they say that fire does not burn, but that burning is brought about by God himself without the fire.... The second error about this matter was Avicebron's in his book that is titled the *Fountain of Life*. Now he was not so foolish as to deprive all secondary agents of their proper actions, but only deprived corporeal things of ⟨being⟩ causes. For he said that spiritual agents, even if they are secondary and created agents, can create and effect something.... The third error about this question seems to have been Avicenna's, who posited the giver of the forms. For he did not deviate from the truth as Avicebron, to posit that bodies do not act. For he said that those natural bodies that we see,

16. Most especially, see Perler and Rudolph, *Occasionalismus*. For specific authors, see also below.

> change and act, but he denied that by such transmutation a substantial form is induced, instead ⟨claimed that⟩ only an accidental ⟨form⟩. But substantial form, according to him, is from the giver of the forms.[17]

I am not going to discuss in detail the extent to which Giles's description of Arabic occasionalism is correct. But as this passage shows, at least the thirteenth-century reception of Islamic thinkers focused on three ideas: the unnamed view, supposedly Al-Ghazali's, that no created things can bring about any change; on Avicebron's (received) view that corporeal things cannot bring about anything even though created spiritual beings can; and on Avicenna's (received) view that created things can bring about change but only accidental and not substantial ones. It is also worth noting that similar characterization of these views can be found in Averroes's commentary on the *Metaphysics*.[18] In what follows, I will briefly discuss these three positions, which provide the immediate background for the thirteenth-century Latin debates.[19] The order of my discussion will follow Giles instead of chronology.

17. *Quaestiones de esse et essentia* (henceforth *QDEE*), q. 4: "Nam quidam loquentes in lege maurorum et sarracenorum, ut innuit Commentator in 12 Metaphisice, volue-[fol.8rb]runt quod nullum secundum agens et nulla creatura potest aliquid operari. Unde dicebant isti quod ignis non combuerit, sed illam combustionem Deus per seipsum absque igne operatur.... Secundus error circa hanc materiam fuit Avicebronis in libro suo qui intitulavit Fontem Vite. Hic autem non fuit ita ebes ut ab omnibus secundis agentibus negaret actiones suas proprias, sed negavit causas solum a corporibus. Voluit enim quod agentia spiritualia, quantumcumque essent agentia secunda et creata, possent aliquid creare et efficere.... Tertius autem error circa hoc quesitum videtur fuisse Avicenne (Avicebronis, *a.c.*) ponentis datorem formarum. Hic enim non sic a veritate deviatur ut Avicebron ut poneret corpora nihil agere. Voluit enim quod ista corpora naturalia que videmus transmutarent et agerent, sed noluit quod per huius⟨modi⟩ transmutationem induceretur forma substantialis, sed accidentalis. Forma vero substantialis secundum ipsum erat a datore formarum" (Aegidius Romanus, *Quaestiones de esse et essentia, de mensura angelorum et de cognitione angelorum* (Venice: Per Simonem de Luere, 1513), fol. 8ra–vb).

18. See especially Book XII, text. 18.

19. It should be noted that somewhat contrary to the Latin reception, occasionalism did not dominate the discussion of causality in the Islamic world. Even in the 10th–11th centuries, which can be regarded as the peak of Islamic occasionalism, it was only one of the theological schools, the Asharites (so-called after the theologian Al-Ashari) who thought that there were no efficacious natures in the created world. For some details, see Majid Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, Third edition (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2004); Oliver Leaman, *An Introduction to Classical Islamic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); and Ayman Shihadeh, "From Al-Ghazali to Al-Razi: 6th/12th Century Developments in Muslim Philosophical Theology," *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 15 (2005): 141–179.

1.2.1 Al-Ghazali

Al-Ghazali's (1058–1111) reception in the Latin West is a somewhat complicated matter, since his main work, the *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, was not translated into Latin until much later. Indeed, Al-Ghazali was, for a time, regarded as a faithful follower of Aristotle, a reception based on his *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa*, in which he elaborates in detail on the position of the Peripatetics.[20] Al-Ghazali as an occasionalist became known mostly from Averroes's *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut* (which was also only translated later), from Averroes's *Metaphysics* commentary, and from Maimonides's *Guide of the Perplexed*.[21] It is worth keeping in mind that both of these authors are antagonistic to what they perceived as the Asharite occasionalist position.

Maimonides summarizes the occasionalist position at length; according to this summary, the Mutakallimun tradition affirmed God's immediate causality in everything *in place of* any intrinsic created causality. Since this summary was the basis of most later medieval thinkers' evaluation of the position, it is worth quoting in its entirety.

> What led them to this opinion [that an accident does not last during two units of time] is that it is not to be said that there is a nature in any respect whatever and that the nature of one particular body may require that this and the accident be attached to that body. Quite the contrary, they wish to say that God, may He be exalted, created the accidents in question now, without the intermediary of nature — without any other thing. . . . In accordance with this premise, they assert that when we, as we think, dye a garment red, it

20. It was translated in Toledo sometime towards the end of the twelfth century. For a detailed treatment of Ghazali's reception, see Hans Daiber, *Islamic Thought in the Dialogue of Cultures: A Historical and Bibliographical Survey* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), ch. 5.11. See also Henrik Lagerlund, ed., *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy: Philosophy Between 500 and 1500* (Dodrecht: Springer, 2011), 387–390. As has been shown (Daiber, *Islamic Thought*, 133), the only thirteenth-century authors to know his real teachings might have been Roger Bacon and Rymund Martin.

21. For further details, see W Montgomery Watt, *Muslim Intellectual: A Study of Al-Ghazali* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1963); R E A Shanab, "Ghazali and Aquinas on Causation," *The Monist* 58, no. 1 (1974): 140–150; and William J Courtenay, "The Critique on Natural Causality in the Mutakallimun and Nominalism," *The Harvard Theological Review* 66, no. 1 (1973): 77–94.

> is not we who are by any means the dyers; God rather creates the color in question in the garment when the latter is in juxtaposition with the red dye, which we consider to have gone over to the garment. They say that this is not the case, but that God has instituted a habit according to which, for example, black color does not appear except when a garment is juxtaposed with indigo. However, this blackness, which God creates when an object about to turn black is juxtaposed with blackness, does not last, but disappears instantly, and another blackness is created.... They assert that when a man moves a pen, it is not the man who moves it; for the motion occurring in the pen is an accident created by God in the pen. Similarly the motion of the hand, which we think of as moving the pen, is an accident created by God in the moving hand. Only, God has instituted the habit that the motion of the hand is concomitant with the motion of the pen, without the hand exercising in any respect an influence on, or being causative in regard to, the motion of the pen.... To sum it up: it should not be said in any respect that this is the cause of that. This is the opinion of the Mutakallimun.[22]

Thus, according to Maimonides, the Mutakallims are committed to the following claims:

1. Bodies have no nature, in the sense that some active properties would be necessarily related to the bodies.
2. In every body, God creates the accidents alone, independently of that body.
3. God creates these bodies and accidents at every instant of their existence.
4. God creates the accident in bodies according to an established order — for instance, when indigo is present, he creates blackness.

There are many interesting details in this picture, and it has been argued that Maimonides's presentation of the Mutakallimun tradition is, on some points, rather inaccurate. But setting the accuracy question aside, there are at least two remarkable points in this presentation. First, it shows that the Mutakallimun maintains that time is atomic, that is, it is composed of indivisible and independent instants. One of these instants is not causally related to the others; that the existence of thing s with accident a at t_2

22. *Guide* I, 73.6 (Moses Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed,* 2 vols., trans. Shlomo Pines (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), 1:200–202).

follows the existence of s with the same accident at t_1, is merely due to the will of God. God could also will s at t_2, to have a different accident, or not will s to exist at all. This argument from continuous creation became once more quite important in early modern philosophy, but as will be seen below, most later medieval thinkers would have deemed it unconvincing.[23]

Second, apart from the claim that states of affairs at t_1 and at t_2 are merely contingently related and wholly depend on God's will, the position also holds that things and their accidents are merely contingently related as well: a thing is not "responsible" for its accident which is created in it by God alone. Although these two contingency claims are *prima facie* independent,[24] in Maimonides's presentation the latter serves to establish the truth of the former.

Besides Maimonides, the other source of the Latin medieval thinkers' knowledge of the Arabic tradition was Averroes (Ibn Rushd). As was mentioned above, his *Tahāfut-al-Tahāfut* was only translated later, in 1328 (with the title *Destructio Destroctionum*, translated by Calo Calonymos),[25] but thinkers in the thirteenth century were already familiar with his commentaries on some works of Aristotle. Again, we need not go into the details of Averroes's theory of causation;[26] nevertheless, since some aspects of his treatment of the question will influence the later discussion, it is worth to outline it briefly here.

---

23. For Malebranche's similar argument, see Nicolas Malebranche, *Dialogues on Metaphysics and on Religion*, ed. Jolley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 115–116. For a contemporary presentation, see Vallicella, "Concurrentism or Occasionalism?," and for a possible response, Miller, "Continuous creation."

24. Although see Freddoso, "Medieval Aristotelianism and the Case against Secondary Causation in Nature," who has argued that an occasionalist position without this second claim is highly implausible.

25. For an edition of the Latin text, see Averroes, *Averroes'* Destructio Destructionum Philosophiae Algazelis *in the Latin Version of Calo Calonymos*, ed. Beatrice H Zedler (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1961).

26. For a comprehensive study on the subject, see Barry S Kogan, *Averroes and the Metaphysics of Causation* (New York, NY: State University of New York Press, 1985).

Averroes's discussion of what seems to be Ghazali's view, is rather cryptic in his *Metaphysics* commentary. As he describes it,

> Their extremism in this assumption led the theologians, among the people of the three faiths existing today, to the view that something can proceed from nothing, because if the form can be created, the whole can be created, and since the theologians of our religion believe that the agent acts only by creation and production from nothing but could not witness any such thing in the things which act one upon another on earth, they said that there is one single Agent for all the existents, that He is in immediate contact with them and that the action of this single Agent is concerned at one and the same time with contrary and concordant actions infinite in number. They deny that fire burns, water quenches thirst and bread satisfies hunger. They say that these things need a creator and a producer, that a body does not create a body nor any state in the body, and go as far as to say that when a man moves a stone by leaning against it and pushing it, he does not push it, but it is the Agent who creates the motion.[27]

Thus, according to Averroes's description, the "extremists" denied that any created thing can act on anything, since they thought that any change must be a generation *ex nihilo* which is impossible for any created, finite power. Consequently, they maintained that God (the "Agent") immediately acts on everything, solely bringing about every change in the created world. When we see fire heating a pot of water, it is not really the fire but God who brings about the heat in the water; or when we push and move a stone, it is not really us but God who creates the motion in the stone.

It is worth noting that Ghazali indeed endorsed occasionalism, he does seem to formulate his claim similarly to Averroes's interpretation. Thus, for instance, he notes:

> The one who enacts the burning by creating blackness in the cotton, [causing] separation in its parts, and making it cinder or ashes is God, either through the mediation of His angels or without mediation. As for fire, which

27. *In Met.* XII, text. 18; translation is from Averroes, *Ibn Rushd's Metaphysics: A Translation with Introduction of Ibn Rushd's Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics, Book Lām*, trans. Charles Genequand (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 112.

> is inanimate, it has no action. For what proof is there that it is the agent? They have no proof other than observing the occurrence of the burning at the [juncture of] contact with the fire. Observation, however, [only] shows the occurrence [of burning] at [the time of the contact with the fire] but does not show the occurrence [of burning] by the fire and [the fact] that there is no other cause for it.[28]

Ghazali could be hardly any more explicit about his claim. According to him, (1) when cotton ignites because it was put in proximity of fire, it is not the fire that brings about the burning in the cotton but God (or possibly his angels); (2) when the Philosophers argue from experience, they falsely claim that we can experience causation, since in truth we only experience correlation. This is where Averroes disagrees.

Averroes, just as some later thinkers discussed here (see especially Chapter 2 below), criticizes occasionalism on the ground that it contradicts sense experience. According to Averroes, we do experience causation, or even more, necessary connection between causes and effects, and occasionalism cannot give a plausible explanation of these experiences. In particular, Averroes thinks that we experience necessary connection not indirectly from observing many sequences, but by direct perception; that is, we directly observe that one thing produces another, and not just observe — as Ghazali would claim — the distinct and independent moments of the existence of things and their accidents.[29]

Ghazali's main motivation to endorse occasionalism was that otherwise, if one held an Aristotelian account of causation, miracles would become impossible. Consequently, for Averroes as well as for most medieval thinkers (see especially Chapter 2 below) the main aim was to work out an account of causation that warrants both created causal efficacy and the possibility of miracles (the precise meaning of 'miracle' is still to be determined).

Averroes addresses this issue, together with some metaphysical aspects of causation

28. Al-Ghazali, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*, trans. Michael E Marmura (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1997), 167.

29. Cf. Averroes, *Averroes' Tahāfut al-Tahāfut (The Incoherence of the Incoherence)*, trans. Simon Van den Bergh (London: Luzak, 1954), 519–520, 528–529; *Destructio* 405–406, 409–411.

in the Seventeenth discussion of the *Tahāfut*. In his discussion of miracles, he seeks to distantiate himself from both Avicenna's perceived necessitism and Ghazali's occasionalism, and based his own account on a distinction between various kinds of possibility. As he notes:

> Not everything which in its nature is possible can be done by man, for what is possible to man is well known. Most things which are possible in themselves are impossible for man, and what is true of the prophet, that he can interrupt the ordinary course of nature, is impossible for man, but possible in itself; and because of this one need not assume that things logically impossible are possible for the prophets, and if you observe those miracles whose existence is confirmed, you will find that they are of this kind.[30]

Thus, Averroes agrees with most later thinkers that miracles do not involve logical impossibility while they do involve an interruption of the ordinary course of nature. Interestingly, however, he does not make a distinction between physical and logical possibility, and thus whether miracles should be regarded as physically possible, is left undetermined.[31] Averroes provides in the subsequent passages the example of changing of the rod into a serpent. In his description, when the Prophet changed the rod into a serpent, this was something that was possible in itself, even though not possible for men to bring about — which seems to imply that according to Averroes, the prophet *as a human being* cannot bring about miracles.

In other places,[32] Averroes makes clear that although miracles interrupt the usual course of nature, they do have causes — causes which, as long as they are considered

30. Ibid., 515–516.

31. The interruption of the ordinary course of nature might suggest that we are dealing with physical impossibility when considering miracles; Kogan, however (Kogan, *Averroes*, 82), interprets the passage as stating their physical possibility. I find this interpretation somewhat implausible, but will not take a stance on the issue. For an in-depth discussion of Averroes on the notion of the 'possible,' see Taneli Kukkonen, "Possible Worlds in the Tahafut al-tahafut: Averroes on Plenitude and Possibility," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 38, no. 3 (2000): 329–347.

32. See especially his *Parva naturalia*; Kogan, *Averroes*, 83–85.

miracles, are unknown to us. Moreover, what distinguishes miracles from mere spontaneous events (that Aristotle had already discussed[33]) is that they serve to establish religious laws. Thus, Averroes, unlike some later thinkers, does *not* treat miracles as a manifestation of divine omnipotence or God's extraordinary will entering into the usual course of nature. Instead, he regards them as events that although outside the usual course of nature, are caused — by unknown, and non-human causes. Although there are several points of this account that are left undetermined, overall it enables Averroes to maintain that although physical causes necessarily cause their effects, there are some hidden and spontaneous causes that can break this necessity. Aristotle arguably already had a similar view of spontaneous causation, but without the claim that such spontaneously caused events have religious significance.

Overall, the later medieval discussion inherited from Averroes at least two things. First, especially in the thirteenth century, medieval thinkers found it important to elaborate on Averroes's arguments against occasionalism. Second, by their disagreement with the occasionalist position, they found themselves confronted with the same question that Averroes was confronted with: how to understand miracles and how to account for them in a framework that allows for created efficient causation. These problems were further qualified by the other two thinkers whom I very briefly consider in the remaining of this section.

1.2.2 Avicebron

The second position Giles mentioned in the above-cited passage was that of Avicebron's (Ibn Gabirol, 1021–1058). Avicebron's Latin reception, just as Ghazali's, is a somewhat

33. See especially his *Physics* II, 4–6.

complicated matter. His *Fons vitae* was translated into Latin in the mid-twelfth century by Dominicus Gundissalinus and John of Spain, and was quite widely read from there on;[34] but just as by Giles, he was often treated as an Islamic thinker, and occasionally as a Christian[35] (despite being a Jew). It is also worth mentioning that his most discussed and mostly questioned view was not his view of causation but of universal matter that he assumed to commonly underlie both material and spiritual beings.[36]

Regarding causation, here is what Aquinas says about Avicebron's account:

> For there were some who completely took away actions from the bodies. And this is the opinion of Avicebron in the book *Fons vitae*, where by the arguments that were discussed, ⟨Avicebron⟩ tries to show that no body acts, but every action that seems to be that of the bodies, are the actions of that spiritual power which penetrates through all bodies; so that fire, according to him, does not heat, but the spiritual power penetrating through it.[37]

Thus, according to Aquinas as well as according to Giles, Avicebron held that bodies do not act at all, and the actions we see them performing are rather actions of a spiritual power which penetrates through them in some way.

It has been argued that this interpretation of Avicebron is completely mistaken, and that he instead holds that bodies do have causal powers as their form given to them

34. See Isaac Husik, *A History of Medieval Jewish Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan, 1916), 59–79 for more details. The Latin translation was edited in Avicebron, *Avencebrolis Fons Vitae ex Arabico in Latinum translatus ab Iohanne Hispano et Dominico Gundissalino*, ed. Clemens Baeumker (Aschendorff, 1895), which is the source I use in this section.

35. See ibid.

36. *Fons vitae* V, 4; V, 5. For the later discussion, see Husik, *A History of Medieval Jewish Philosophy*, 64–65; Fernand Brunner, "La doctrine de la matière chez Avicébron," *Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie* 3rd ser. 6 (1956): 261–279; and John Dillon, "Solomon Ibn Gabirol's Doctrine of Intelligible Matter," in *Neoplatonism and Jewish Thought*, ed. Lenn Evan Goodman (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992), 43–59. The notion of spiritual matter was picked up later by some Franciscans, most notably by Duns Scotus.

37. *ST* I, q. 115, a. 1, co: "Fuerunt enim aliqui qui totaliter corporibus actiones subtraxerunt. Et haec est opinio Avicebron in libro fontis vitae, ubi per rationes quae tactae sunt, probare nititur quod nullum corpus agit, sed omnes actiones quae videntur esse corporum, sunt actiones cuiusdam virtutis spiritualis quae penetrat per omnia corpora; ita quod ignis, secundum eum, non calefacit, sed virtus spiritualis penetrans per ipsum" (Leonine ed., 5:538).

by God's moving action, and that the bodies act by these causal powers and thus bring about change in the world.[38] As with Ghazali above, I cannot get into the details of Avicebron's theory, and thus leave the interpretative question undecided, focusing mostly on the text that were discussed in the later medieval reception.

The medieval reception focused on a few passages of the *Fons vitae*, which was written as an extended dialogue between a master and his disciple. In one of these passages, which is somewhat long but worth quoting in its entirety because of its detailed description of the account, the Master notes:

> Quantity restrains it ⟨the substance⟩ from motion and prohibits it from going forward, because it seizes the substance and merges in it. And by this it is similar to the flame of fire which is obscure because of the humidity that is mixed in it, and that gives it a levity of motion, and like the dark air which is closed off from light penetrating it. And thus the passion of such a substance is manifest. But when the complex is subtle and suitable to accept ⟨it⟩, it is so that the actions of the intelligible substances could penetrate it, and then the action of the spiritual substances will appear in the body, because they penetrate and invade it, similarly to the sun when it penetrates some obstacle and goes through it. But it is not only quantity that prohibits the substance from acting, but also its essence is prohibited from motion for the reason that it is far away removed from the origin and source of motion.[39]

To the student's asking, how we can know such a thing, or whether there is any signs for it, the Master further explains:

38. See, e.g., John A Laumakis, "Aquinas' Misinterpretation of Avicebron on the Activity of Corporeal Substances," *The Modern Schoolman* 81 (2004): 135–149; and John A Laumakis, "Aquinas and Avicebron on the Causality of Corporeal Substances," *The Modern Schoolman* 84 (2006): 17–29.

39. *Fons vitae* II, 10: "quantitas retinet eam a motu et uetat eam a progressu, quia comprehendit eam et mergitur in ea. Ac per hoc est similis flammae ignis quae est obscura propter humiditatem commixtam illi et aufert ei leuitatem motus, et sicut aer nubilus qui prohibetur penetrari lumine. Et ideo passio huius substantiae fit manifesta. Cum autem complexio fuerit subtilis et parata ad accipiendum, hoc est ut penetrare possint actiones substantiarum intelligibilium in ea, tunc apparebit actio spiritualium substantiarum in corpore, quia penetrant et irrumpunt illud, ad similitudinem solis quando penetrat aliquod obstaculum et pertansit. Non solum autem quantitas prohibet eam ab agendo, sed etiam essentia eius prohibita est a motu eo quod longo remota est ab origine et radice motus; et quia non defluxit ad eam de uirtute agentis et mouentis omnia, unde ipsa fieret mouens et agens, accidit ei per hoc ut esset quieta, non mouens, et cum mouetur in se, id est patitur" (Baeumker ed., 41).

> You find the sign of this as manifest in reality, because every body, insofar as it increases its quantity, becomes heavier to move and weightier. . . . And from this it is clear that quantity is the efficient cause of heaviness and prohibiting motion. . . . Unless there is an agent spiritual power, which can be penetrated by these bodies, they would not move nor act. The sign of this is that every body is at rest and immobile.[40]

There is quite a lot going on in this passage, but the outline of Avicebron's view is clear. He does claim at least here that corporeal things only act by some spiritual agent in them, but not as corporeal things themselves, and elaborates on two reasons for such a view. The first reason has to do with quantity, which according to this description, makes a body immobile. Avicebron's explanation of this point is not very clear; he refers to the humidity that would hinder the fire in its motion and heating, or to the air which cannot be penetrated by light. Similarly to these things, quantity in general hinders the body in its motion and activity; in other words, the motion or activity cannot flow through the body if it has quantity or matter. Thus, Avicebron's first argument is based on the general Aristotelian characterization of matter, according to which it is inherently passive; the more matter a body has, the more passive it is, and, according to the argument, even if it has any matter at all, that can already hinder its activity.

The second albeit connected reason for the bodies' inactivity has to do with another aspect of Avicebron's broader framework, which is mostly Neoplatonic. According to this framework, the world is arranged according to a hierarchy, with material things on one end of the spectrum, the wholly immaterial God on the other end, and spiritual beings (possessing spiritual matter) laying somewhere in the middle.[41] Although both corporeal and spiritual beings have some kind of matter, this matter is not of the same

40. *Fons vitae* II, 10: "Signum huius rei inuenies in re manifesta, quia omne corpus, quanto magis accreuerit eius quantitas, erit grauius ad mouendum et ponderosius. . . constat per hoc quod quantitas est causa efficiens ponderositatis et prohibens a motu. . . . Nisi esset vis spiritualis agens, penetrabilis per haec corpora, nec mouerentur nec agerent. Signum autem huius est quod aliquid corporum est quietum et immobile" (Baeumker ed., 41–42).

41. E.g., *Fons vitae* V, 3.

kind: purely corporeal things consist of the lowest kind of matter, which has no other form but that of extension or corporeality, and whatever other forms supervene on them (color, figure, etc.).[42] Bodies as such, therefore, cannot act, because they are purely passive and in themselves are too far removed from the active source of motion.

Thus, as Avicebron continues, when we see bodies as if they were acting, what we really see is some spiritual power acting *through* the bodies. These spiritual powers penetrate the bodies just as sunlight penetrates and flows through a dark room, and thus they give the bodies their apparent actions. Similar claims can also be found later in the same work; for instance, Avicebron again notes that "the elements do not act insofar as they are bodies,"[43] and gives the further reason that this is because the motion of the elements are diverse, while their corporeality is the same, and thus the latter cannot be the cause of the former. Or, as again the Master reminds the student, "the body is at rest in the same place and does not have action."[44]

Avicebron's view then, at least as expressed in these passages, is close to how Aquinas and Giles characterized it. He seems to maintain indeed that bodily things do not act, or at least only act through spiritual agents that somehow penetrate them and act through them. As the later medieval thinkers noted, this view is not a thorough-going occasionalism, since Avicebron expresses no worries about the spiritual agents' capacity for acting, and even in the corporeal case, it is not God who acts directly but the spiritual agents (the number of these spiritual agents is unclear in the above passages).

It is also worth noting in connection to this that God is almost entirely missing from Avicebron's description. Whereas Ghazali's reasons for denying created natural causality were mostly theological and were based on a specific understanding of divine omnipo-

42. *Fons vitae* V, 3.
43. *Fons vitae* III, 43: "Motus elementorum non sunt ex eo quod corpus sunt" (Baeumker ed., 176).
44. *Fons vitae* III, 45: "corpus quiescens est in semet ipso et non habet actionem" (Baeumker ed., 179).

tence, Avicebron makes no appeal to any theological considerations.[45] Instead, quite contrary to Ghazali, his view follows exclusively from philosophical considerations, more precisely from a broadly speaking Neoplatonic view of the universe.

1.2.3 Avicenna

This last remark is also true of the last thinker considered in this chapter, Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā, 980–1037). Recall that according to Giles, Avicenna holds the view that created things can only bring about accidental but not substantial changes, and thus God exclusively brings about evey substantial change. Similarly, Aquinas says that

> Both Plato and Avicenna, who follows him in some things, held that corporeal agents act according to their accidental forms, disposing matter for the substantial form; but the ultimate perfection, which is by the introduction of the substantial form, is from an immaterial principle.[46]

It might seem somewhat surprising that Giles and, to a certain extent, Aquinas, included Avicenna in the list of thinkers holding an erroneous partial occasionalist position, provided that — as was noted above — Ghazali developed his view precisely as a reaction to Avicennean necessitism. As we will see, however, the view that Aquinas's and Giles's criticism target, is part of Avicenna's overall picture of causation. It should also be noted that Avicenna plays an important role in laying the foundations of some of the basic conceptual framework of the later medieval debates — for instance, clarifying the relation between causation and creation or between creation and conservation —, but

45. This is true of Avicebron's whole *opus* and according to Husik, *A History of Medieval Jewish Philosophy*, played a significant role in why he became mostly neglected in medieval Jewish philosophy.

46. *ST* I, q. 115, a. 1, co.: "Tam Plato quam Avicenna, in aliquo ipsum sequens, ponebant quod agentia corporalia agunt secundum formas accidentales, disponendo materiam ad formam substantialem; sed ultima perfectio, quae est per introductionem formae substantialis est a principio immateriali" (Leonine ed., 5:539).

I cannot outline his account in detail here and so will focus exclusively on his received (partial) occasionalism.

Avicenna's most extensive treatment of causation appears in the *Physics* and *Metaphysics* part of his *Book of Healing*. In the *Metaphysics*, he defines cause as that which gives existence to something else,[47] and holds, as can be seen from Ghazali's reaction,[48] that causes and effects are necessarily related. Avicenna's reasoning here is similar to that of some later Aristotelians: as he notes, if given cause c, its effect e can both possibly exist and not to exist, then c is not a sufficient condition of e. But this would mean that the connection between c and e as well as between c and $\neg e$ is the same, and consequently c cannot be regarded to be more a cause of e's existence than of its non-existence. Which means that if given c, e does not necessarily follow, then c cannot be regarded as the cause of e.[49]

Moreover, Avicenna, in this respect similarly to Avicebron, borrows some elements from the Neoplatonic thinkers, and holds that the kinds of things in the world form a hierarchy, which hierarchy is also manifest in the process by which the world continuously comes about from the first principle. On this emanationist account of creation, creation happens in stages (where these stages are not temporally but metaphysically ordered).[50] In the first stage, in which God, the First Principle gives existence, there comes to be a single intelligence, since the effect of the one First Principle can only be one. In the second stage, this first intelligence creates the outermost sphere of the universe together

47. Avicenna, *The Metaphysics of the Healing*, trans. Michael Marmura (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2005), 194.

48. For some presentations and criticisms, see, e.g., Michael Marmura, "The Metaphysics of Efficient Causality in Avicenna," chap. 12 in *Islamic Theology and Philosophy*, ed. Michael Marmura (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), 172–197; Amos Bertolacci, *The Reception of Aristotle's* Metaphysics *in Avicenna's* Kitab al-Sifa' (Leiden: Brill, 2006); and Kara Richardson, "Avicenna's Conception of the Efficient Cause," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 21 (2013): 220–239.

49. Avicenna, *The Metaphysics of the Healing*, 126–127.

50. For comparison, see the *Liber de causis*, prop. 4–5; see also sections 2.2.2 and 2.2.3 below.

with the soul that moves it, and also creates the second intellect. The second intellect, in turn, also creates these things — a sphere, its moving soul, and another intellect —, and the process goes on till the chain reaches the lowest intellect. This lowest intellect, which Avicenna also calls the Agent Intellect or the *dator formarum*, Giver of the Forms, creates the sublunar world, both its matter and its form, as well as the human souls.

The hierarchy of these stages of creation is also manifest in the kinds of efficient causation which are present at them. Thus, God, the First Principle, is the preeminent efficient cause, and the paradigm of all efficient causes.[51] The First Principle is a necessary and sufficient condition of the existence of the world, and hence creates the world from nothing and does this necessarily (a point that became contested in the later debates), by virtue of its essence.[52] While the first principle gives existence to an effect after absolute non-existence, the lower agents presuppose something in virtue of which they act. Thus, the intelligences presuppose something non-material to bring about their effects, while the lowest kind of agents, the agents of the sublunar world, presuppose a specific privation in matter on which they can act. Consequently, while the First Principle and the intelligences give existence to an effect which otherwise would not exist at all, the lowest type of efficient causes give existence to effects that otherwise would not exist *as such*.[53]

This is then the point that Giles's and Aquinas's criticism seem to address. According to Avicenna, things in the sublunary world only have a very limited causal agency. They can bring about specific accidents in a predisposed matter, such as heat in a cold

51. On how and whether this paradigm is applicable for all kinds of efficient causes, see, e.g., Richardson, "Avicenna's Conception of the Efficient Cause." For Avicenna's account of various kinds of agents, see also Marmura, "The Metaphysics of Efficient Causality in Avicenna."
52. Avicenna, *The Metaphysics of the Healing*, 202–203.
53. Ibid., 204.

patient; but the creation of other substances belongs to the *dator formarum*, the lowest intelligence who infuses all substantial forms into the matter of the sublunar world.

Just as it was the case with Avicebron, Avicenna's motivation to endorse his partial occasionalist view is less theological as it mostly relies on his Neoplatonic, emanationist theory of creation. Interestingly, then, this account became the target of both Al-Ghazali who thought that it did not leave enough space for divine freedom and omnipotence, and of later medieval thinkers who thought that it did not leave enough space for creaturely causation.

I cannot address here the question whether the later medieval interpretation of these authors is the correct interpretation of their works. What will be important for the following is that these received views formed the basis of the discussion of especially the first debate I present below (chapter 2). Thus, the medieval authors especially of the later thirteenth century had to accomplish at least two things. First, since they thought that occasionalism in all these forms is implausible (for some of their reasons, see below), they had to develop a non-occasionalist account of causation while still maintaining that God created the world from nothing and keeps it in existence at every instant. Second, although they disagreed with Al-Ghazali about causation in the sublunary world, they did share his motivation: that is, they did think both that Avicenna was wrong in positing necessary creation, and they did think that miracles are possible. As will be seen, certain kinds of miracles were indeed regarded as an imporatant test case for various accounts of divine concurrence (see especially section 2.3.2 below), and thus most medieval thinkers would have agreed with Ghazali's saying: "We must occupy ourselves with this question in order to be able to assert the existence of miracles and for still another reason, namely to give effective support to the doctrine. . . that God can do anything."[54]

54. Cited by Averroes, *Tahāfut*, 514.

2 | CONSERVATION AND CONCURRENCE

The first debate I present deals with the question whether God is immediately active in every operation of nature, and if so, what this activity consists in. The participants, Aquinas, Giles, Durand of St.-Pourçain, and Peter of Palude, were all active at the University of Paris during the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, and although they were not strictly contemporaries, Giles knew Aquinas, while Durand and Peter cite both of them almost verbatim.

The first section looks at Aquinas's account (ca. 1224–1275), which received some attention already during Aquinas's lifetime, among others by Giles of Rome (1245–1316), who was probably a student of Aquinas in Paris during the latter's second regency there.[1] The second section considers Giles's position, who being the first among the Augustinian Hermits to become a master of theology in Paris,[2] became one of the most respected Parisian theologians in the second half of the thirteenth century[3]: although he was temporarily suspended from teaching there after some investigations in 1277, he

1. For biographical details about Aquinas, see, e.g., Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: The Person and His Work*, trans. Robert Royal (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005).

2. See Stephen F Brown and Juan Carlos Flores, *Historical Dictionary of Medieval Philosophy and Theology*, Historical Dictionaries of Religions, Philosophies, and Movements 76 (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 2007), 125.

3. As the contemporary Godfrey of Fountaines noted, he was "better than anyone at the entire university." Cf. Henricus Denifle, ed., *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, sub auspicis consilii generalis facultatum Parisiensum (Paris: Delalain, 1889), 2:539; and P S Eardley, "The Foundations of Freedom in Later Medieval Philosophy: Giles of Rome and his Contemporaries," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 44, no. 3 (2006): 354.

returned and became a regent master in 1285, and was later elected general prior of his order.[4]

There has been some disagreement among interpreters of Giles about whether and to what extent he was a follower of Aquinas. Although Aquinas certainly influenced the thought of his students, and earlier scholars for a long time regarded Giles as nothing more than a faithful disciple of Aquinas, this view has been seriously questioned in the last few decades.[5] As will be seen below, the present case supports this rather careful evaluation; although Giles does agree with Aquinas that in every instance of natural causation both God and the secondary agent are causally active, their understanding of divine concurrence differ.

The third section is about two contemporaries, Durand of St.-Pourçain (1275–1334) and Peter of Palude (†1342); they are lesser known figures of this debate, and some of the historical details are relevant for understanding their theories of divine concurrence as well. I treat them together, since Peter's text is a direct response to Durand's while also borrowing extended portions of it.

---

4. Giles's defense of his own views against the investigations has been edited in Aegidius Romanus, *Aegidii Romani Opera Omnia, III.1: Apologia*, ed. R Wielockx, Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi (Florence: Unione Accademica Nazionale, 1986). For some more historical details of Giles's life, see Francesco Del Punta, Silvia Donati, and Concetta Luna, "Egidio Romano," in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, ed. Alberto Maria Ghisalberti, vol. 42 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1993), 319–341; and Stéphane Mercier's introduction in Aegidius Romanus, *Theoremes sur l'etre et l'essence*, ed. Stéphane Mercier (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2011); on his trial on particular, see also Johannes MMH Thijssen, "1277 Revisited: A New Interpretation of the Doctrinal Investigations of Thomas Aquinas and Giles of Rome," *Vivarium* 35, no. 1 (1997): 72–101.

5. Martin Pickavé goes as far as calling Giles an "anti-thomist" (at least in his *Reportatio*): Martin Pickavé, "An Early Witness of the Reportatio of Giles of Rome's Lectures on the Sentences: Note on the Edition of Concetta Luna," *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales* 71, no. 1 (2005): 183. For Giles's and Aquinas's comparative treatment of creation, see Giorgio Pini, "Being and Creation in Giles of Rome," in *After the Condemnation of 1277*, ed. Jan A Aertsen, Kent Emery, and Andreas Speer (Berlin, 2001), 390–409; or, with respect to sacramental causality, Marilyn McCord Adams, *Some Later Medieval Theories of the Eucharist: Thomas Aquinas, Gilles of Rome, Duns Scotus, and William Ockham* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). Giles's concurrentism is explored in some detail in Placidus Vollmer, "Die göttliche Mitwirkung bei Aegidius Romanus," *Divus Thomas* 6 (1928): 452–470, who, however, did not yet have access to the *Reportatio* or to the *Quaestiones de esse et essentia*.

Durand of St.-Pourçain is an interesting participant of this debate not only because he is the only mere conservationist mentioned by name by many medieval, early modern, and contemporary scholars alike,[6] but also because he considers and rejects both Aquinas's and Giles's position.[7] Although the extent of Durand's influence is not entirely clear at the moment,[8] he was certainly well known for his critical views of Aquinas's teachings (this was the time when the Dominican order was slowly establishing the authority of the Common Doctor, led by Hervaeus Natalis).[9] By denying the immediacy of God's action in the production of secondary effects, he provides an alternative view to concurrentism as considered so far.

It is worth mentioning here that Durand's teachings resulted in two investigations to determine their orthodoxy. Involved in these investigations — taking place in Paris in 1314 and 1316/17 — were Peter of Palude, Hervaeus Natalis, James of Lausanne, and

6. See, e.g., Francisco Suarez, *On Creation, Conservation, and Concurrence: Metaphysical Disputations 20-22*, ed. Alfred J Freddoso (South Bend, IN: St Augustine Press, 2002), d. 22, q. 1, n. 6; Nicolas Malebranche, *The Search after Truth*, ed. Paul J Olscamp and Thomas M Lennon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 680; Freddoso, "Why Conservation is not Enough" and Freddoso, "Pitfalls and Prospects."

7. His systematic treatment can be found in his *In Sent.* II, d. 1, q. 4; edited in Durand of St.-Pourçain, *Scriptum super IV libros Sententiarum: distinctiones 1–5 libri secundi*, ed. Fiorella Retucci (Leuven: Peeters, 2012). A rather brief discussion of Durand's view can be found in Johann Stufler, "Bemerkungen zur Konkurslehre des Durandus von St. Pourçain," *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters* Suppl. 3.2 (1935): 1080–1090.

8. On Durand's influence on later thinkers, see Monica Brinzei, Russell L Friedman, and Chris Schabel, "The Late-Medieval Reception of Durand's Sentences Commentary, with Two Case Studies: Peter Auriol and Nicholas of Dinkelsbühl," in *Durand of Saint-Pourçain and his* Sentences *Commentary: Historical, Philosophical, and Theological Issues*, ed. Andreas Speer et al. (Leuven: Peeters, 2014), 295–342, according to whom "Durand's impact on other theologians was immediate, widespread, and long-lived" (295).

9. Some, although rather limited aspects of Durand's thought as contrasted with Aquinas's and debated by Hervaeus have been examined in Mariateresa Fumagalli, *Durando di S. Porziano: Elementi filosofici della terza redazione del Commento alle Sentenze*, Pubblicazioni della Facoltà di lettere e filosofia dell'Università di Milano (Firenze: La nuova Italia, 1969); Isabel Iribarren, *Durandus of St. Pourçain: a Dominican Theologian in the Shadow of Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); and most recently in Andreas Speer et al., eds., *Durand of Saint-Pourçain and his* Sentences *Commentary: Historical, Philosophical, and Theological Issues*, Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales (Leuven: Peeters, 2014). Further biographical details can be found in Josef Koch, *Durandus de S. Porciano O.P.*, Forschungen zum Streit um Thomas von Aquin zu Beginn des 14. Jahrhunderts (Münster: Verlag der Aschendorfschen Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1927).

John of Naples. The first investigation issued a list of 93 propositions that were suspected of error or heresy;[10] the second investigation took a more directly Thomistic line, examining how much Durand disagreed with Aquinas, and issuing a list of 235 propositions. What is interesting for the present purposes is that one of these propositions concerns the question of divine concurrence, and that the "erroneous and dangerous" position cannot be found in Durand's "new" version of his *Sentences* commentary:[11]

> [17] The second book, first distinction, article 4, in his old ⟨version⟩ maintains and shows that God does not act immediately in the action of every creature; but we do not find this in his new, second ⟨version⟩. Also, in the same place ⟨i.e., the first version⟩, at the end of the article he says that it is doubtful whether God has to coexist immediately with every creature with regard to everything that is in a creature — which perhaps, as he says, is not true unless only with regard to those things that are immediately from God himself. And this article is only in his old ⟨version⟩, not in the new one.
> *If he means the exclusion of ⟨God's⟩ immediate power, this is an error and a dangerous view.*[12]

As this suggests, by the time of the first list of errors concerning Durand it was clear that Durand's position was not entirely orthodox, and the same remark appears in the later list of errors as well.[13]

10. For the edition of this list, see Durand of St.-Pourçain, *Kleine Schriften*, ed. Josef Koch, vol. 2 (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1973), 53–72.

11. Durand produced multiple redactions of his commentary on the *Sentences*, and the relationship between or in fact the number of these different redactions is not entirely clear at the moment. Koch had argued that Durand had three different versions; one was published in 1307/08 (redaction *A*), the second was composed between 1310–13 (redaction *B*), and the third later, between 1317 and 1327 (redaction *C*) (Koch, *Durandus*). For some further details on the relation and Peter of Palude's use of these various versions, see Peter of Palude, "Peter of Palude on Divine Concurrence: An Edition of his *In II Sent.*, d.1, q.4," ed. Zita V Toth, *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales* 83, no. 1 (2016): 49–92.

12. Durand of St.-Pourçain, *Kleine Schriften*, 57: "[17] Secundo libro d. prima a. 4 in suo antiquo innuit et probat quod deus non agit immediate in actione omnis creature; sed hoc non invenimus in suo secundo novo. Ibidem eciam in fine articuli dicit quod dubium est an 'oporteat deum immediate coexistere omni creature quantum ad omnia que sunt in ea quod forte', ut dicit, 'non est verum sed solum quoad illa que sunt immediate ab ipso'; et iste articulus est solum in suo veteri non in novo. *Si intendat exclusionem immediate* [in Koch: immediatam] *virtutis, error et periculosum.*" The final quotation is from *In Sent.* II, d. 1, q. 4 (Retucci ed., 56).

13. §52; Koch, ibid., 83. In fact,the Parisian condemnation of 1277 already labeled such a position as

The last author considered in this chapter, Peter of Palude, was first noticed in the twentieth century precisely because of his connection to Durand of St.-Pourçain. He was also a Dominican theologian, regent master in Paris in the first half of the fourteenth century, possibly belonging to the circle of Durand[14] but later also a chief participant of the investigations against him. Peter's *Sentences* commentary, written around 1310–15,[15] incorporates much of Durand's text,[16] and consequently there has been some disagreement concerning how much philosophical insight we should attribute to him.[17] As will be seen below, Peter heavily relies on his contemporaries when developing his account of divine concurrence as well; thus, his account is not so much a groundbreaking fourteenth-century contribution to the debate but rather an interesting case study of the early Dominican reactions against Durand.

erroneous (prop. 190 [16]): "Quod prima causa est causa entium remotissima. — Error, si intelligatur cum precisione, scilicet ita: quod non propinquissima." (Étienne Tempier, *La condamnation Parisienne de 1277*, ed. David Piché and Claude Lafleur (Paris: Vrin, 1999), 136.)

14. Jean Dunbabin, *A Hound of God: Pierre de la Palud and the Fourteenth-century Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 37 ff. which also contains further biographical details. Although the majority of Peter's *Sentences* commentary is still unedited, some pieces of it have been edited in Peter of Palude, "A proposito di Pietro da Palude (In I Sent., d.43, q.1): La questione inedita 'Utrum Deum esse infinitum in perfectione et vigore possit efficaci ratione probari' di Erveo Natalis," ed. Prospero Tommaso Stella, *Salesianum* 22 (1960): 245–325; and Peter of Palude, "Peter of Palude and the Parisian Reaction to Durand of St Pourçain on Future Contingents," ed. Russell L Friedman, Chris Schabel, and Irene Balcoyiannopoulou, *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 71 (2001): 183–300, the latter also providing the current *status questionis* of Palude's commentary on the first book of the *Sentences*.

15. Giuseppe Groppo, *La Teologia e il suo "Subiectum" secondo il prologo del commento alle sentenze di Pietro da Palude, O.P. (+1342)* (Rome: Pontificium Anthenaeum Salesianum, 1961) and Peter of Palude, "The Parisian Reaction," 214–215; see also Peter of Palude, "A proposito di Pietro da Palude."

16. The claim that Durand's lost version of the first book (if there was one) is virtually contained in Peter's commentary, was first defended in Koch, *Durandus*. For the accuracy of this claim, as well as for the best recent study on Peter's connection to Durand, see Peter of Palude, "The Parisian Reaction."

17. While according to Dunbabin, "modern readers... often find themselves baffled by the sheer quantity of opinions cited and the inconclusiveness of the conclusions.... In sum Pierre's attempt to expose Durand's weaknesses was like a man trying to trap a rat by throwing a duvet at it" (Dunbabin, *A Hound of God*, 33–34), Cyrill Vollert claims that Peter's work "approaches the best writing of modern authors in clarity and solidity" (Cyrill Vollert, *The Doctrine of Hervaeus Natalis on Primitive Justice and Original Sin* (Rome, 1947), 259–260). As will be seen below, regarding the question of divine concurrence the truth lies somewhere in the middle.

2.1 AQUINAS

Aquinas's account of secondary causation and divine concurrence has received surprisingly little contemporary attention,[18] despite being one of the usual reference points in the medieval discussions on the subject. There are several factors that complicate the assessment of this account. First, Aquinas's most widely read work both in his lifetime and in the decades following his death was his early *Sentences* commentary, and thus his account of causation was also most cited by later medieval authors (including Giles, Durand, and Peter of Palude) from there, instead of what we today would consider his more mature (but perhaps less detailed) works, the two *Summae*, or the treatise *De Potentia*. Second, unfortunately, it seems that most contemporary interpretations of Aquinas on divine concurrence do not consider his most elaborate and explicit account either; as will be seen, they mostly rest on what Aquinas says about divine concurrence in the context of creation. Finally, these problems are exacerbated by the fact that Aquinas emphasizes different aspects of divine concurrence throughout his career, and it is not immediately clear how his various accounts fit together or whether he was forced to change his mind about the question due to some criticism he received.

I will address these difficulties by presenting the two positions that Aquinas, at one point or another, seems to have maintained. These positions seem initially to form

18. Relatively recent papers include Petr Dvořák, "The Concurrentism of Thomas Aquinas: Divine Causation and Human Freedom," *Philosophia* 41, no. 3 (2013): 617–634 (about concurrence and human agency); Stephen L Brock, "Causality and Necessity in Thomas Aquinas," *Quaestio* 2 (2002): 217–240 (concerning the problem of causal necessitation in Aquinas); Gregory T Doolan, "The Causality of the Divine Ideas in Relation to Natural Agents in Thomas Aquinas," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 44, no. 3 (2004): 393–409; Michael Dodds, "Unlocking Divine Causality: Aquinas, Contemporary Science, and Divine Action," *Angelicum* 86 (2009): 67–86; Michael Rota, "Causation," in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, ed. Brian Davies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 104–114; and Ignacio Silva, "Thomas Aquinas Holds Fast: Objections to Aquinas within Today's Debate on Divine Action," *The Heythrop Journal* 54, no. 4 (2013): 658–667.

two distinct models of divine concurrence: the model of *determinate vs. indeterminate esse*,[19] and the model of *instrumental vs. principal causes*. These models will provide the general outline of this chapter. As will be shown, Giles's, Durand's, and Peter of Palude's primary reaction is to (1), Aquinas's later, mostly developed position is (2), while most contemporary accounts consider a model that seems to be also closest to (1) but originates from a rather specific interpretation of it.

2.1.1 The Determinate vs Indeterminate Esse Model

Aquinas first deals with the problem of divine concurrence in his *Sentences* commentary, book II, distinction 1, question 4, asking "Wether anything other than God effects anything."[20] He starts out by rather quickly summarizing and rejecting two erroneous positions, and then argues for a third option.

I will leave presenting his argument against occasionalism[21] for later, because it is somewhat more detailed in is *Quaestiones de potentia*.[22]. Besides occasionalism, Aquinas also argues against a view of some philosophers who deny God's immediate creation of everything but instead posit one that is only mediated: according to this view, God immediately creates the first created things, which in turn create the things farther away in the hierarchy, and so on.[23] Aquinas's argument against this view is rather brief

19. *Esse*, more or less, corresponds to 'being,' but since it is a technical term in Aquinas, I will in most cases leave it in Latin.

20. "Utrum aliquid aliud a Deo efficiat aliquam rem" (Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum magistri Petri Lombardi episcopi Parisiensis*, ed. Pierre Mandonnet (Paris: Lethielleux, 1929), 23).

21. Both the terms 'occasionalism' and 'mere conservationism' are modern labels, but I will apply them when the specifics of the views are not relevant.

22. *QDP*, q. 3, a. 7; cf. section 2.1.2 below.

23. Aquinas does not identify the source of this view, but it strongly resembles Avicenna's, as was seen above (section 1.2.3).

and points out that according to Faith, only God created everything; since the answer is mostly about the immediacy of creation and not about the immediacy of concurrence, we need not deal with it in detail.[24]

Having quickly dealt with occasionalism and mere conservationism, Aquinas presents a third, concurrentist option. According to this third option, things fall into two categories with respect to how they come to be. First, there are things that are created by God immediately and cannot be produced by a creature, either because of their metaphysical simplicity (either lacking matter, such as the angels, the intelligences, the human soul, or lacking form, such as prime matter), or because they lack a contrary out of which they could be produced (such as the celestial bodies), or because of the nature of their species (such as the first human being). Second, there are things that can and are produced by other created things, and these are the relevant ones for the current question. About these, Aquinas notes:

> The third position is that God effects everything immediately, and that particular things have proper operations by which they are the proximate causes of things. . . . Others, however, that are produced by motion and generation, can have a created cause, either so that ⟨the created cause⟩ has causality above the whole species, just as the sun is a cause in the generation of humans or of lions; or so that it has causality only with respect to a member of a certain species, just as man generates man, and fire generates fire. God, however, is also a cause of these, more intimately working in them than the other moving causes: because he is giving the *esse* of things, while the other causes are determining this *esse*. For there is no such thing the whole being of which receives its principle from some creature, since matter is only from God; but the *esse* is more intimate to the thing than that by which it is determined (since it remains when the others are removed, as it is said in the *Liber de causis*). Therefore, the operation of the creator pertains to the thing more intimately than the operation of the secondary cause, and thus that the creature is the cause of other creatures does not exclude that God immediately operates in everything.[25]

24. Even though, for Aquinas, the two are in some sense the same; cf. section 2.2.3 below.

25. *In Sent.* II, d. 1, q. 1, a. 4, co: "Tertia positio est, quod Deus immediate omnia operatur, et quod res

The account proposed here consists of two claims: (1) in the case of every being, God is responsible for its being or *esse*, while the secondary cause somehow determines this *esse*; and (2) since the former is more interior or immediate to the thing than the latter, God is a more interior or immediate cause of the secondary effect than the secondary agent. I will return shortly to the notions of determinate and indeterminate *esse*.

According to the second claim of the account, God is a more interior or immediate cause of the secondary effect than the secondary agent. The major premise of the argument comes from the *Liber de causis*, according to which c_1 is more immediate to e than c_2 iff we can remove or take away all of c_2's power and activity while c_1's power and activity still remains — but not vice versa.[26] And, according to the minor premise, the secondary cause in every action is precisely like that, since the indeterminate *esse* — God's effect — is the grounding principle in every change, presupposed by all the other elements of the change, and not vice versa.[27] But what are indeterminate and determinate *esse*, precisely? Unfortunately the first claim leaves these notions unexplained, and there seem to be at least two plausible ways to interpret them and consequently Aquinas's claim.

---

singulae proprias operationes habent, per quas causae proximae rerum sunt.... Aliorum vero quae per motum et generationem producuntur, creatura causa esse potest, vel ita quod habeat causalitatem supra totam speciem, sicut sol est causa in generatione hominis vel leonis; vel ita quod habeat causalitatem ad unum individuum speciei tantum, sicut homo generat hominem, et ignis ignem. Horum tamen causa etiam Deus est, magis intime in eis operans quam aliae causae moventes: quia ipse est dans esse rebus. Causae autem aliae sunt quasi determinantes illud esse. Nullius enim rei totum esse ab aliqua creatura principium sumit, cum materia a Deo solum sit; esse autem est magis intimum cuilibet rei quam ea per quae esse determinatur; unde et remanet, illis remotis, ut in libro de causis dicitur. Unde operatio creatoris magis pertingit ad intima rei quam operatio causarum secundarum: et ideo hoc quod creatum est causa alii creaturae, non excludit quin Deus immediate in rebus omnibus operetur" (Mandonnet ed., 25–26).

26. *Liber de causis* (heceforth *LDC*), prop. 1 (Adriaan Pattin, ed., "Le Liber de Causis: Édition établie à l'aide de 90 manuscrits avec introduction et notes," *Tijdschrift Voor Filosofie* 28 (1966): 134). Cf. also Aquinas's commentary on the same (Thomas Aquinas, *Sancti Thomae de Aquino super librum de causis expositio*, ed. H D Saffrey (Fribourg: Société philosophique, 1954)).

27. The priority here does not imply that indeterminate *esse as such* can exist apart from any determination, only that it is metaphysically prior to these determinations.

First, according to Aquinas's argument in the same passage, God is responsible for the indeterminate *esse* because his concurrence is needed for the matter of every created thing. Although his characterization is vague — it is not entirely clear from the text whether Aquinas regards the determinate/indeterminate *esse* distinction as the same or just analogous to the matter and form distinction — the passage suggests that the division of labor between God and the secondary cause in a natural causal action can be fleshed out in terms of the metaphysical division between matter and form in the effect. Since matter contributes to the thing's (the effect's) existence (it gives the thing its being in general), God is active in every operation of nature by bringing about the matter or the general existence of the effect. The secondary agent, in turn, makes the thing to have the specific quality it has by inducing the particular substantial or accidental form, depending on the characteristics of the change in question.

A second way to interpret Aquinas's notions of determinate and indeterminate *esse* is shown by Alfred Freddoso, who characterizes Aquinas's account as grounded in the distinction between essence and existence.[28] He seems to regard this distinction as identical with the indeterminate vs. determinate *esse* distinction, or at least uses the two interchangeably,[29] perhaps based on the consideration that both distinctions ultimately express distinctions between act and potency.[30]

Aquinas's distinction between *esse* and essence has, of course, been the subject of much interpretative disagreement, and I will not attempt to decide on these issues here. It is enough to note that Freddoso understands the distinction between *esse* and essence (or limited *esse*) not as a distinction between entities (since "the essence is not a limiting

28. See especially Freddoso, "Why Conservation is not Enough."
29. See, e.g., ibid., 561.
30. For interpreting essence and existence along these lines, see Norris Clarke, "The Limitation of Act by Potency in St. Thomas: Aristotelianism or Neoplatonism?," *New Scholasticism* 26 (1952): 147–157; and, in his defense, Sarah Borden Sharkey, "How Does One Limit Being? W. Norris Clarke on Thomas's 'Limitation of Act by Potency'," *The Saint Anselm Journal* 7, no. 1 (2009).

principle except insofar as it is 'already' actual"[31]) but rather as a distinction between two questions that they were meant to answer.[32] For instance, in the case of my cat, Sophie, on the one hand one might ask why Sophie is something rather than nothing (the answer given refers to existence — a principle of actuality); and, on the other hand, one might also ask why Sophie is a cat and not a dog (the answer given refers to essence). And in Freddoso's understanding, Aquinas claims that in every instance of natural causation, God is responsible for the existence (*esse*–as–such), while the secondary agent for the essence (*esse*-in-particular) of the effect.

Aquinas, as far as I know, never explicitly mentions the distinction between essence and existence in the context of divine concurrence, even though he does makes clear that existence is the proper effect of God when talking about creation. As, for example, he argues in the *Summa theologiae*, when discussing God's creative activity:

> We must say that it is necessary that everything that exists in any way, is from God. For if something is found in a thing by participation, it is necessary that it be caused in it by that to which it belongs essentially; just as iron becomes ignited by fire. But it has been shown above when treating of divine simplicity, that God is the self-subsistent being. And furthermore, it was shown that there can be no subsistent being except one, just as if whiteness were subsistent, it could not be except one, since whitenesses are multiplied according to their recipients. Therefore it remains that all beings apart from God are not their own being, but participate in being. Therefore

31. Freddoso, "Pitfalls and Prospects," 136.

32. Aquinas's most succinct and often cited statement of the distinction can be found in the *De ente et essentia*, c. 3: "This nature can exist in two ways, however: one way in singulars and in another way in the soul. . . . None of this pertains to the nature itself in its first or absolute consideration. For it is false to say that it pertains to the essence of man as such to exist in this singular, for then it would never exist outside this singular; similarly if it pertained to man as man *not* to exist in this singular, it would never be in him. But it is true to say that man, although not just as man, is such that it is in this singular or that, or in the soul. Therefore the nature of man absolutely considered clearly abstracts from any sort of existence, but in such a way that it does not prescind from either of them" (Thomas Aquinas, *De principiis naturae; De aeternitate mundi; De motu cordis; De mixtione elementorum; De operationibus occultis naturae; De iudiciis astrorum; De sortibus; De unitate intellectus; De ente et essentia; De fallaciis; De propositionibus modalibus*, Leonine, Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Opera Omnia, vol. 43 (Rome: Saint Thomas Foundation, 1976), 374).

> it is necessary that everything that is diversified according to the diverse participation in being, so as to be more or less perfect, is caused by one first being, which is the most perfect.[33]

According to the argument (and as is established in, e.g., chapter 2 of the *De ente*), there can be only one being whose existence is identical to its essence. But if this is the case, then the objects of the created world, which are many, do not have their existence as identical to (or part of) their essence, which means that they must derive this existence from something else. As one might complete the argument, this something else is either another thing in the world or not. The former, however, cannot be the case, since, according to the Aristotelian adage, "nothing gives what it does not possess,"[34] and it has just been shown that things do not possess existence by themselves. Therefore, the thing's existence must come from something self-subsisting, that is, God.

Aquinas also explicitly maintains that the existence of an object should be attributed to God as an efficient cause in every point of its existence:

> God is in everything; not indeed as part of their essence, or as an accident, but as an efficient cause is present to that in which its action is taking place. For every efficient cause must be connected with that upon which it acts and must touch it by its power. . . . Now since it is God's essence to exist, created existence must be his proper effect, as burning is the fire's proper effect. But God causes this effect in things not just when they begin to exist but all the time they are maintained in existence. . . . During the whole period of a thing's existence, therefore, God must be present to it, and present in a way

33. *ST* I, q. 44, a. 1, co.: "Respondeo dicendum quod necesse est dicere omne quod quocumque modo est, a Deo esse. Si enim aliquid invenitur in aliquo per participationem, necesse est quod causetur in ipso ab eo cui essentialiter convenit; sicut ferrum fit ignitum ab igne. Ostensum est autem supra, cum de divina simplicitate ageretur, quod Deus est ipsum esse per se subsistens. Et iterum ostensum est quod esse subsistens non potest esse nisi unum, sicut si albedo esset subsistens, non posset esse nisi una, cum albedines multiplicentur secundum recipientia. Relinquitur ergo quod omnia alia a Deo non sint suum esse, sed participant esse. Necesse est igitur omnia quae diversificantur secundum diversam participationem essendi, ut sint perfectius vel minus perfecte, causari ab uno primo ente, quod perfectissime est" (Thomas Aquinas, *Pars prima Summae theologiae: a quaestione I ad quaestionem XLIX*, Leonine, Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Opera Omnia, vol. 4 (Rome: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1888), 455).

34. E.g., *ST* I, q. 75, a. 1, arg. 1; cf. *Auct. Arist.* 37, 23 (Jacqueline Hamesse, ed., *Les auctoritates Aristotelis: Un florilège médiéval* (Louvain: Publications Universitaires, 1974), 333).

> that accords with the way in which the thing possesses its existence. Now, existing is more intimately and profoundly interior to things than anything else. . . . So, God must be, and be innerly, in everything.[35]

In this passage Aquinas makes clear that God is responsible for the existence of things, and by this he is immediately present to them. Of course, the line of reasoning presented here strongly resembles the one in Aquinas's second and third way or, more generally, in cosmological arguments for God's existence,[36] even though it is important to note that here the starting point is more general. The present argument does not assume the motion or change of things, nor even their contingency (as Aquinas makes clear elsewhere, the contingent/necessary divide is not identical to the not-self-subsisting/self-subsisting one), but only the distinction between their essence and existence. And Aquinas can thus say that just as the terminus of God's action is the existence of the creature, the terminus of the secondary agent's action is its essence (in substantial change), or some of its accidents (in qualitative change). Thus, when responding to an (Avicennean) objection, he notes:

> To the fifth objection it must be said that the term of a body's action is both an accidental form or a substantial form. For an active quality, such as heat, even if is an accident, acts in virtue of the substantial form as its instrument; and therefore it can act to bring about a substantial form. . . . And it acts to bring about an accident by its proper power.[37]

35. *ST* I, q. 8, a. 1: "Deus est in omnibus rebus, non quidem sicut pars essentiae, vel sicut accidens, sed sicut agens adest ei in quod agit. Oportet enim omne agens coniungi ei in quod immediate agit, et sua virtute illud contingere, unde in VII Physic. probatur quod motum et movens oportet esse simul. Cum autem Deus sit ipsum esse per suam essentiam, oportet quod esse creatum sit proprius effectus eius; sicut ignire est proprius effectus ignis. Hunc autem effectum causat Deus in rebus, non solum quando primo esse incipiunt, sed quandiu in esse conservantur. . . . Quandiu igitur res habet esse, tandiu oportet quod Deus adsit ei, secundum modum quo esse habet. Esse autem est illud quod est magis intimum cuilibet, et quod profundius omnibus inest, cum sit formale respectu omnium quae in re sunt, ut ex supra dictis patet. Unde oportet quod Deus sit in omnibus rebus, et intime" (Leonine ed., 4:82).

36. From a different starting point, but similar conclusion is reached by, e.g., Herbert McCabe, "Creation," *New Blackfriars* 61 (1980): 408–415.

37. *ST* I, q. 115, a. 1, ad 5: "Ad quintum dicendum quod corpus agit et ad formam accidentalem, et ad formam substantialem. Qualitas enim activa, ut calor, etsi sit accidens, agit tamen in virtute

As all this suggests, Aquinas does indeed maintain that God is the first cause of the existence of every being. And as we have already seen, the general picture of concurrence in these terms is rather simple: in every natural change, God is acting both on the agent and on the patient, by giving *esse* to both of them; and since a thing's existence is most immediate to that thing, therefore God's causal contribution is immediate. The secondary agent, in turn, is responsible for the essence of the effect, that is, for being the kind of thing it is.

What Aquinas says about God's giving *esse* does indeed support Freddoso's interpretation that when Aquinas talks about divine concurrence in terms of indeterminate and determinate *esse*, what he really is talking about is in terms of existence and essence. But whether his interpretation is indeed correct, or the two distinctions are merely analogous, I will not decide here; we should keep in mind that Aquinas, as far as I know, never explicitly claims them to be identical.[38] It seems, however, that no matter which of the two ways one interprets the indeterminate/determinate *esse* distinction, the account will face similar problems. The problems will appear once we try to apply the account in some more particular cases.

To apply the account in a particular case, consider Norah's activity of kindling a fire.[39] According to the account, when Norah generates a new instance of fire, God acts

---

formae substantialis, sicut eius instrumentum; et ideo potest agere ad formam substantialem; sicut et calor naturalis, inquantum est instrumentum animae, agit ad generationem carnis. Ad accidens vero agit propria virtute" (Leonine ed., 5:359).

38. Also, at least as Freddoso's presents it, the account would imply that if one rejects the essence/existence distinction, then one also has to reject the Thomistic model of divine concurrence, or perhaps even concurrence in general. This latter would be quite disastrous as many medieval concurrentists regarded the distinction as unwarranted. A quick overview of some of the debates especially in the late thirteenth-early fourteenth centuries is given by Michael Murray in his Introduction to Aegidius Romanus, *Theorems on Existence and Essence*, ed. Michael V Murray (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1953).

39. Although the example of fire is often used in both the medieval and the contemporary discussion of concurrence, the case can appear less than obvious due to the fire's ontological status, and the difficulty to see its matter and substantial form as clearly as in the case of, let say, an animal. But no matter

on the effect by giving it existence in general, which, according to the first interpretation given above, amounts to providing whatever the matter of the fire might turn out to be. (This does not mean, of course, that God had to create a *new* piece of matter at the same instant when Norah lit the fire. The matter might have been already created, but God still needs to maintain it with the same kind of activity as was exercised in its creation, and which is enough to ground immediate divine concurrence.) Norah, in turn, by lighting the fire with the help of her match, induces the substantial form of fire in the predisposed matter. Alternatively, one might say that God is acting on the fire by giving its existence, that is, being responsible for the fact that it *is* a fire; while Norah, giving essence by the help of her match, is responsible for the fact that it is a fire (instead of water, for instance). In either case, Aquinas would maintain that both God and Norah are directly responsible for the existence of the new piece of fire: without God, the fire would have had no matter, which would have made Norah unable to light anything; and without Norah, the fire would not have been a fire.

Trying to apply the account in this way already points to some of the difficulties with it. Aquinas's account, as expressed here in the *Sentences* commentary, has indeed been the subject of severe criticism right since its conception, and interestingly, Aquinas does not return to it later in his career. There are two problems that are especially puzzling about it, as is perhaps already apparent from the above example. First, as Giles of Rome and Durand of St.-Pourçain will point out, if this is all what Aquinas has to say about concurrence, then he has not given a satisfactory account, because what he says amounts to some kind of partialism: that is, to maintaining that both God and the secondary agent are partial causes of the effect in the same way as, for instance, two builders can

what the precise details of the natural philosophy of fire turn out to be, the question of concurrence will apply in a similar way; thus, I will leave the former question aside for the present.

be partial causes of a house if one builds the foundation and the walls while the other the roof of it. As Durand notes,

> That ⟨the position⟩ is not to the point is clear, because it is one thing to say that God produces immediately something that is in a creature, namely matter, which is one part of the composite substance, which is entirely true, but nevertheless not to the point; and another thing to say that God produces immediately everything that is produced by the creature. For when the action of the creature attains a form but not matter as the term of its action, as they say, we ask whether that form of the natural thing, which is attained immediately by the action of the creature, is also attained immediately by the action of God. They, however, treat the first point but not the second, which is clear from the middle term of the argument they adduce, and thus it is not to the point.[40]

Durand's point is quite clear, and in what follows I will call it the 'Objection from Partialism.'[41] If one understands the concurrentist position as claiming that *whatever* the creature brings about, God also immediately brings about, then he cannot say that one part of the effect is brought about by God and the other part is brought about the creature, since in this latter action God's immediate cooperation is not posited, despite the concurrentist's earlier claim to the contrary. It seems, however, that Aquinas is doing precisely that when he says that matter is brought about by God, and form is by the secondary agent, even though — as was cited in section 1.1 above — he explicitly rejects partialism in the *Summa contra gentiles*.[42]

40. *In Sent.* II, d. 1, q. 4: "Quod non sit ad propositum, patet, quia aliud est dicere quod Deus producat immediate aliquid quod est in creatura, scilicet materiam, que est altera pars substantie composite, quod utique uerum est nec hoc querit questio; aliud est dicere quod Deus producat immediate omne illud quod producit creatura. Cum enim actio creature attingat formam ut terminum actionis sue et non materiam, ut ipsimet dicunt, querimus utrum ipsam formam rei naturalis, ad quam immediate attingit actio creature, attingat etiam actio Dei immediate. Ipsi autem pertractant primum et non secundum, ut patet ex medio quod adducunt, et ideo non est ad propositum" (Retucci ed., 49–50).

41. Giles expresses the same doubt in d. 1, q. 8 of his *Reportatio*: "This is not right, because God either produces the form or does not. If not, then he does not act immediately in every action, which is false. If yes, then by the same reason that the creature produces the form, God also produces it" (Aegidius Romanus, *Reportatio Lecturae Super Libros I–IV Sententiarum*, ed. Concetta Luna, Aegidii Romani Opera Omnia (Florence: Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2003), 208).

42. See chapter 1, note 12 above.

The other problem with the account seems to be that although it is relatively easy to apply in cases of substantial change, such as when Norah generates a new piece of fire, or Sophie my cat is being generated by her parents, it is much harder to apply in cases of accidental change.[43] All of Aquinas's examples are about substantial changes, which might be because of the context in which he talks about concurrence in these terms, namely the context of creation; when considering creation, accounting for substantial change is the main task, and not accounting for accidental change (which already presupposes the former). Nevertheless, the problem still arises: does this account apply in cases of qualitative change? For instance, when a burning fire causes the quality of heat in a pot of water placed next to it, what does God precisely contribute to this action?

One could argue that since the *actus essendi* of a substance is the same act all throughout its existence (that is, two acts of existence are numerically identical if and only if the substances of which they are acts are numerically identical), God conserves (or creates) this same act throughout the accidental change. The new accidental form, which is acquired by the substance, is produced by the secondary cause. Thus, when the fire heats up the pot of water, God (1) keeps the fire in existence, in virtue of which its relevant active power (the ability to heat) is applied to the water; and (2) keeps the water in existence, with its relevant passive power (the ability to be heated). As a consequence, the water acquires a new accidental form, which accidental form is brought about by the fire's active power and with the water's passive power. Although this might suggest that Aquinas *is*, after all, a mere conservationist about qualitative changes, this is not precisely true: the immediate preserving of both the active and passive powers, for Aquinas, amounts to an immediate contribution to bringing about the effect, even if the accident has its *esse* by contributing to and determining the *esse* of the substance of which it

43. Durand also noted this difficulty in the same place.

is an accident. Borrowing an analogy from Peter of Palude,[44] God, by preserving the relevant passive power, immediately contributes to the effect in the same way as the one who makes the wax malleable immediately contributes to the shape of the seal.

Another way Aquinas might respond to the difficulty of accidental change is by noting that we can, in each new effect, distinguish its — whether substantial or accidental — existence and its specific characteristics. Thus, according to the above model, in each of these effects that it *is* a thing (quality or substance) is due to God; that it is *this kind* of thing, for instance heat, is due to the secondary agent. This might also avoid the objection from partialism, which assumes that the effects of God and the secondary agents are integral parts of a thing, just as the walls and roof are integral parts of a house. (Recall that the objection presupposes that God and the secondary agent can perform their actions independently, and their effects can exist independently as well.) But, as Aquinas may point out, although the existence of a thing is really distinct from what makes it a kind of thing it is, these are not integral parts of the thing. Rather, when my cat Sophie exists, it is the whole of her that receives existence; and of course, there is also not a part of a cat that would not be cat.

But to see why Aquinas maintains that every secondary agent needs divine concurrence, for some of the mechanics of this concurrence, and consequently for how this account differs from mere conservationism (which also maintains that God conserves everything in existence), I will turn now to Aquinas's *De potentia*, where he deals with primary and secondary causes in terms of principal and instrumental causes. His arguments here will also support the second response just given.

44. *In Sent.* II, d. 1, q. 4 (Toth ed., 89).

2.1.2 The Instrumental and Principal Cause Model

Apart from the *Sentences* commentary, the places where Aquinas explicitly and most extensively deals with the problem of divine concurrence is his *Quaestiones de potentia*, the first part of the *Summa theologiae*, and the parallel discussion in the *Summa contra gentiles*. In these places, after presenting occasionalism as a not quite sensible option, he shows that God acts in the operations of nature as a principal cause acts in the operation of its instrument. (I will call this the 'instrumental vs principal cause model', or IPCM. How it relates to the model discussed above, I will leave until section 2.1.3 below.) Interestingly, this aspect of Aquinas's treatment of divine concurrence has received far less attention than the one seen above.[45]

In the *De potentia*, Aquinas starts presenting his position with some arguments against occasionalism.[46] These arguments are, almost without exception, reductions: occasionalism is "manifestly opposed to the nature of sensation," is contrary to reason, and is contrary to (or at least unfitting for) God's goodness. Aquinas also raises an objection against the argument for occasionalism, which I am not going to examine here.

That occasionalism would entail some kind of skepticism has often been recognized.[47] As Aquinas argues,

> This position ⟨i.e., occasionalism⟩ conflicts with sense experience: now since

45. One notable exception is Dvořák ("The Concurrentism of Thomas Aquinas"), who discusses this aspect quite extensively especially in connection with human agency.

46. Some of these arguments can also be found in *SCG* III, c. 69. In other places sometimes he simply calls the position "foolish" (*stulta*) without any argument; see, e.g., *De veritate* (henceforth *QDV*), q. 5, a. 9, ad 4.

47. A recent restatement of a similar point can be found in Katherin A Rogers, "What's Wrong with Occasionalism?," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 75, no. 3 (2001): 345–369, although the object of the supposedly implied skepticism is different: while in Aquinas it is the proper sensibles, Rogers argues that it implies skepticism *tout court*. The further step, however, follows easily if one accepts that the main basis for our certainty in sense experience derives precisely from the fact that we cannot be mistaken about proper sensibles.

> a sense organ does not sense unless by being a patient with respect to the sensed object... it follows that man does not sense the heat of fire if there is not a likeness of the heat of the fire in the sense organ, produced by the agent fire. For if that *species* of heat in the organ were from another agent, then even if the touch would sense heat, it would not sense the heat of fire nor that fire bing heat, even though the sense would judge this, the judgment of which regarding proper sensibles does not err. [48]

Thus, if occasionalism is true, there can be no true sensation, not even about the proper objects of the senses; however, the senses do not err about their proper objects; therefore, occasionalism must be false. Aquinas does not argue for the minor premise, which is a basic principle of Aristotelian epistemology.[49]

The major premise is justified by Aquinas's claim that a sensible likeness of this fire, which is a necessary condition for sensing its heat, is a likeness of *this* fire precisely because it is produced by it; if it were produced by another one, or by a completely different agent such as God, it could not in principle be the likeness of this fire — just as way as if the *Guernica* had been painted by God and not by Picasso, it would not be numerically the same painting.[50] Thus, since we do have sensations of proper objects, for instance we do sense that this fire is hot, it means that God is not their sole cause as the occasionalist would maintain.

Moreover, Aquinas also argues here that occasionalism is contrary to reason insofar as it would deprive created things of all purpose. If things were unable to act, their substantial form would be of no purpose, and perhaps they themselves would be of no

48. *QDP*, q. 3, a. 7, co.: "Haec autem positio est manifeste repugnans sensui: nam cum sensus non sentiat nisi per hoc quod a sensibili patitur... sequitur quod homo non sentiat calorem ignis si per ignem agentem non sit similitudo caloris ignis in organo sentiendi. Si enim illa species caloris in organo ab alio agente fieret, tactus etsi sentiret calorem, non tamen sentiret calorem ignis nec sentiret ignem esse calidum, cum tamen hoc iudicet sensus, cuius iudicium in proprio sensibili non errat" (Marietti ed., 56).

49. For Aquinas, cf., e.g., *ST* I, q. 85, a. 6, co. For Aristotle, cf. *De Anima* III, ch. 3, 427b12. See also *Auct. Arist.* VI, 66 (Hamesse ed., 179).

50. This claim is of course quite contentious; for some details and later developments, see Rondo Keele, "Can God Make a Picasso? William Ockham and Walter Chatton on Divine Power and Real Relations," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 45, no. 3 (2007): 395–411.

purpose either. However, since we do not have such unpurposefulness anywhere else in nature, it is not reasonable to assume that we have it here.[51] Created things having no purpose and no action would also imply that their creator is not maximally good, which is not true.[52]

More could be said about these arguments and whether they would indeed convince the occasionalist; it seems, however, that that was not Aquinas's primary intention. The intention rather seems to have been to call his readers' attention to the occasionalist position and by this to motivate the discussion that follows, and for this such a quick consideration of them here will be sufficient.

Having rejected occasionalism, Aquinas distinguishes four senses according to which one thing's action can be the cause of another thing's action, and argues that God's action is the cause of the natural agent's action in all these ways.

1. In the first way, one thing acts though another's action "by giving it the power to act: thus it is said (*Physics*, IV) that the generator moves heavy and light bodies, inasmuch as he gives them the power from which that movement results."[53] Although Aquinas's example might not strike the contemporary reader as very illuminating, it refers to the fact that when someone creates a heavy object, he is responsible for that object's motion and inclination to move (assuming that the object's heaviness can account for this motion or inclination). Thus, for instance, we would praise the craftsman whose bookweight does its job well, that is, keeps our paperback Aristotle open by its

51. *QDP*, q. 3, a. 7. As Freddoso has argued, the only somewhat plausible occasionalist position is, indeed, the one that denies the existence of causal powers and natures altogether. (Freddoso, "Medieval Aristotelianism and the Case against Secondary Causation in Nature.") Aquinas's critique points in this direction, but he does not consider the option explicitly.

52. *QDP*, q. 3, a. 7.

53. *QDP*, q. 3, a. 7, resp.: "Uno modo quia tribuit ei virtutem operandi; sicut dicitur in IV Physic., quod generans movet grave et leve, in quantum dat virtutem per quam consequitur talis motus" (Marietti ed., 57).

weight, and in some way we would regard him as acting in the bookweight's action. And similarly, we would regard the other craftsman as a bad one if his bookweight does not do the task well. Or, we would regard the craftsman who made my sharp Swiss army knife to be, in some way, acting when I cut a piece of butter with its blade. And, as Aquinas notes, we can certainly regard God as acting in the operation of nature in this sense, "because he gave natural things the powers by which they can act."[54]

2. Aquinas would of course say that God's action is very different from that of the craftsman in that God is a *per se* cause of every creature, that is, were his action to cease, the creatures would also cease to be (and consequently to act). Some of this difference is made explicit in the second way, in which "the preserver of a power is said to cause the action; thus a remedy that preserves the sight is said to make a man see."[55] If a man has an illness by which he would become blind, and his medicine saves him from that, then the medicine is acting through his vision (and we would indeed praise the medicine for it); or although the Swiss army knife has a natural tendency to become blunt, by keeping it sharp I might be said to be acting through its cutting action. For Aquinas, since God not only created but also maintains the natural powers and inclinations of things at every moment of their existence, he is said to act through these natural causes in this second way. And in this way God's action in nature is quite different from the craftsman's action in his artifacts — who can die without his bookweights stop functioning.

54. *QDP*, q. 3, a. 7, resp.: "quia dedit rebus naturalibus virtutes per quas agere possunt" (Marietti ed., 57).

55. *QDP*, q. 3, a. 7, resp.: "alio modo conservans virtutem dicitur facere actionem, sicut dicitur quod medicinae conservantes visum, faciunt videre" (Marietti ed., 58).

3. Third, one thing is said to be the cause of another's action

> by moving it to act; by which we do not mean the conferral or preservation of the active power, but the application of the power to the action, just as a man is a cause of the knife's cutting by the fact that he applies the blade of the knife to cutting by moving it.[56]

And since, according to Aquinas, the secondary causes themselves are such that they are unable to apply their powers to their specific effects on their own, God has to be responsible for that application, and therefore be the cause of the secondary causes' effects. As he makes this latter point clear in the *Contra gentiles*:

> In every agent, in fact, there are two things to consider: namely, the thing itself that acts, and the power by which it acts.... But the power of a lower agent depends on the power of the superior agent, according as the superior agent gives this power to the lower agent whereby it may act; or preserves it; or even applies it to the action.... So, it is necessary for the action of a lower agent to result not only from the agent by its own power, but also from the power of all higher agents.[57]

But what is this application to action, and why would Aquinas say that the created things themselves are insufficient to apply their own powers? As some medieval critics later argued,[58] a proper effect of a cause is proper precisely because it follows from the cause without any other required concurrence.

The notion of application can be best understood by considering it against the broader

56. *QDP*, q. 3, a. 7, resp.: "Tertio modo dicitur una res esse causa actionis alterius in quantum movet eam ad agendum; in quo non intelligitur collatio aut conservatio virtutis activae, sed applicatio virtutis ad actionem; sicut homo est causa incisionis cultelli ex hoc ipso quod applicat acumen cultelli ad incidendum movendo ipsum" (Marietti ed., 58).

57. *SCG* III, c. 70, n. 5: "In quolibet enim agente est duo considerare, scilicet rem ipsam quae agit, et virtutem qua agit: sicut ignis calefacit per calorem. Virtus autem inferioris agentis dependet a virtute superioris agentis, inquantum superius agens dat virtutem ipsam inferiori agenti per quam agit; vel conservat eam; aut etiam applicat eam ad agendum, sicut artifex applicat instrumentum ad proprium effectum; cui tamen non dat formam per quam agit instrumentum, nec conservat, sed dat ei solum motum. Oportet ergo quod actio inferioris agentis non solum sit ab eo per virtutem propriam, sed per virtutem omnium superiorum agentium: agit enim in virtute omnium" (Leonine ed., 14:206).

58. Durand makes the point in his *In Sent.* II, d. 1, q. 4.

background of Aristotelian metaphysics. According to Aristotle, a change in a patient comes about by a transeunt action, and by this action the patient's passive power is reduced to actuality. (For instance, the heating of the water comes about by the fire's transeunt action by which the potentially hot water becomes actually hot.) As Aristotle argues, however, for the agent to perform such a transeunt action, it must undergo some change that is different from the action itself, just as the knife, no matter how sharp, cannot go from non-cutting to cutting unless someone moves it. Although the analogy is somewhat misleading, since we tend to think of fire as capable of burning by itself, Aristotle and Aquinas seem to regard the two cases as similar in this respect: the active power of the agent to act has to be somehow activated by another agent.

According to Aquinas, this other agent who ultimately activates the potencies of all agents is God, and this is what is meant by God's applying the agent's power.[59] (Here Aquinas could also refer to the principle *omne quod mouetur ab alio mouetur*, which plays an important part in his Second Way, where the conclusion is similar.)

4. Finally, an agent can be the cause of another's effect in the same way as a principal cause is the cause of the instrumental cause's effect The Swiss army knife is said to be an instrumental cause of this potato salad in case I, the principal cause use it when making the salad. The knife need a principal cause since it cannot make the salad on its own. As Aquinas notes,

> Fourth, one thing causes the action of another as a principal agent causes the action of its instrument: and in this way again we have to say that God causes every action of natural things.[60]

59. Cf. Dvořák, "The Concurrentism of Thomas Aquinas" for some more details.

60. *QDP*, q. 3, a. 7: "Unde quarto modo unum est causa actionis alterius, sicut principale agens est causa actionis instrumenti; et hoc modo etiam oportet dicere, quod Deus est causa omnis actionis rei naturalis" (Marietti ed., 58).

But granted that God applies the active power of the agent, why does Aquinas also need God as a principal cause that is acting through secondary causes as instruments? The answer lies in his understanding of principal and instrumental causes. For Aquinas (and Aristotle as well), for every cause there is a proportionate effect that it can bring about as its proper, principal cause. In cases, however, where the effect is higher in actuality than the cause itself, the cause must operate as an instrument of a higher principal cause. To return to our potato salad: a knife is perfectly capable of bringing about the cutting of potatoes, but it cannot be responsible, on its own, for the making of the *salad*. Or if I write something on a piece of paper, my pen is perfectly capable of bringing about some blue ink marks on a paper, but it cannot be the cause, on its own, of the meaningful sentence I am writing with it. To bring about these higher effects, the tools must operate as instruments of a higher cause — this case, of me. Similarly, Aquinas seems to think, every secondary effect surpasses the secondary cause's ability so that it requires a higher cause of which the secondary cause is a mere instrument.

Aquinas, in the same place, provides some reason for saying this:

> In every natural thing we find that it is a being and that it is a natural thing, and that it is of this or that nature. The first is common to all beings, the second to all natural things, the third to those in a species, while the fourth, if we add the accidents, is proper to this or that individual. Therefore the individual thing, by its action, cannot produce another in the same species unless insofar as it is an instrument of a cause, which includes the whole species, and, furthermore, the whole being of the inferior nature.[61]

Thus, Aquinas's argument calls attention to the fact that, as was also emphasized in the first model above, bringing a new thing into existence seems to surpass the causal

61. *QDP*, q. 3, a. 7: "In qualibet autem re naturali invenimus quod est ens et quod est res naturalis, et quod est talis vel talis naturae. Quorum primum est commune omnibus entibus; secundum omnibus rebus naturalibus; tertium in una specie; et quartum, si addamus accidentia, est proprium huic individuo. Hoc ergo individuum agendo non potest constituere aliud in simili specie nisi prout est instrumentum illius causae, quae respicit totam speciem et ulterius totum esse naturae inferioris" (Marietti ed., 58).

power of every natural substance, because it is the proper effect of a cause that can produce the whole species as such.

All in all, according to this IPCM model, God is the cause of the secondary agent's operation in all of the following four ways: (1) by creating the secondary agent and its power; (2) by maintaining the secondary agent and its power in existence; (3) by applying the secondary agent's power to its effect; and (4) by being a principal cause of the secondary agent's instrumental action.

To see how the IPCM can be applied to particular cases, we can return to some earlier examples. In case of a substantial change, such as Norah kindling the fire, God (1) creates Norah (or, more precisely, directly creates the first human beings and then directly contributes to Norah's creation) and her active powers, together with the active powers of the match; (2) maintains Norah and the match in existence during the kindling; (3) applies the lighting power of the match, that is, brings about that these powers become activated; and (4) acts as a principal cause of the fire's generation, since bringing about the fire exceeds the power of created causes as proper causes.[62] Again, Aquinas defended this last point by arguing that existence *as such* cannot be the proper effect of a created cause.[63]

The IPCM is also relatively easy to apply to accidental changes. Thus, in case of the

62. Strictly speaking, for Aquinas, the principal cause that moves the agent to the generation of a substance of the same species is a heavenly body; "man is generated by man and the sun." I will leave the concurrence of the heavenly bodies out of the picture here, first because it has since mostly been regarded as a somewhat obscure part of medieval Aristotelian cosmology, and more importantly because the motion of the heavenly body is in turn derived from God, and thus this step can be left out of the model without seriously modifying it.

63. As was seen above in section 1.2.3, Avicenna had somewhat similar reasons for holding the view that all change in the sublunar world requires the action of the *dator formarum*. What distinguishes Aquinas's account from Avicenna's is not so much the role of the primary cause as that of secondary causes: for Aquinas, despite requiring the concurrence of the primary cause, secondary causes are also active and have their characteristic operation, which is arguably not the case for Avicenna. See also 1.2.2, Avicebron's argument that created agents can only bring about accidental but not substantial change.

fire heating up the pot of water, God concurs by (1) creating the fire (or the first instance of fire) and its active heating power; (2) maintaining the fire and its active heating power in existence; and (3) applying the power of the fire to the water, that is, bringing about that the heating power of the fire becomes actualized. And since the new quality of heat also has a new — even if accidental — being, God must act through the fire as through an instrument as well.

From this it is also apparent why divine concurrence is, in some sense, *more* than principal causality with regard to created causes as instrumental causes. While we tend to think about everyday instrumental causation in a way that would allow for the instrumental cause to act solely in virtue of its own power (thus, one might say that the dividing of material is the proper effect of the knife, and as such can be brought about by the knife's power alone), this is not true of created causes. As Aquinas emphasizes multiple times, created causes not only have to be created and sustained by God at all times in such a way that there is no aspect of the created cause that it would have independently of God.

As a brief evaluation of the IPCM, two further questions need to be answered. First, it is not entirely clear from the above that in what sense Aquinas can still maintain that God is an immediate and direct cause of the secondary effect; and, on the other hand, if that is the case, then it is also not entirely clear why this model does not involve some form of occasionalism.

The first question arises especially since parts (1) and (3) of God's concurrence (as characterized above) seem to be merely mediate.[64] As for (1), God does not need to create directly the particular fire, but only has to account for the fact why there are fires

64. By this formulation I do not mean to imply — and nor does Aquinas — that God's action has real 'parts' or that God has multiple concurring actions. This is just a short way of speaking about God's concurring action as considered in various ways.

at all in general. And as for (3), again, applying the agent's power does not need to happen immediately; just as in the Second Way, an essential causal series with God at the beginning can account for the change of bodies, God can apply an active power to its action by the mediation of some other secondary cause as long as God stands at the beginning of the chain of applicants. It seems therefore that (1) and (3) cannot guarantee the immediacy of God's concurring action. So far then, this is not very different from what Durand would also accept, despite his explicit rejection of the instrumental causal model.[65]

Moreover, although God's concurring action (2) is immediate, it is only immediate with respect to the secondary cause and not with respect to the secondary effect. (Maintaining Norah and the match in existence does not immediately bring about the fire.)

It seems, therefore, that the only concurring action that can guarantee the immediacy of God's concurring action is his action as a power-applying and principal cause. As was noted above, when I write a sentence with a blue pen being an instrumental cause, I am immediately responsible for the sentence. Similarly, when God brings about Sophie the cat as a principal cause, then God is immediately responsible for Sophie's existence. In this sense, therefore, at least in substantial changes, God's concurring action is immediate both with regard to the secondary cause and with regard to the secondary effect. But if this is the case, how can Aquinas still maintain that secondary agents are genuinely efficacious?

As an answer, we can just repeat again what the IPCM says about concurrence, and as an example provide a contrast case where there is no secondary agency. Thus, let

65. As he notes in *In Sent.* III, d. 1, q. 3 (red. B): "Non oportet autem quod omnis creatura sit instrumentum Dei hoc modo, quia nec est etiam in actionibus naturalibus" (Durand of St.-Pourçain, *Scriptum super IV libros Sententiarum: distinctiones 1–7 libri quarti*, ed. Andreas Speer (Leuven: Peeters, 2014), 41). Which is, interestingly, the minor premise of a *modus tollens* by which he concludes that we should not understand 'instrumental cause' as being anything that presupposes anything else in its acting.

assume that Harry writes his diary with a self-made pen, which he also took care of ("maintained in existence"), saturated with ink, and applied to writing. Contrast this with the case where Harry, being a wizard, brings about the letters in his diary without the mediation of the pen, just by thinking about it. It seems natural to say that in the first case, the pen, despite being entirely dependent on Harry both in its existence and in its exercise of power, genuinely contributed to the writing of the letters (insofar as ink marks, of course, and not as meaningful sentences), while in the second case there was no such contribution. Thus, in a similar way, it seems natural to say that the secondary agent, despite being entirely dependent on God both in its existence and in its exercise of power, genuinely contributes to the secondary effect even if God could bring about the secondary effect without its mediation.

2.1.3 Summary

Did Aquinas change his mind in the *De potentia* and similar texts compared to what he had said earlier in the *Sentences* commentary? After all, in the former he never mentions indeterminate/determinate *esse*, while in the latter he says nothing about principal and instrumental causes. Despite this, however, it seems that the two accounts are compatible and even provide some support for each other — thus being rather two aspects of the same model than two different models on their own.

Recall that according to the model of indeterminate and determinate *esse*, God gives the indeterminate *esse* while the secondary cause is responsible for the determinate *esse*; which is at least analogous to God giving matter and the secondary agent giving form to the effect or God giving existence and the secondary agent giving the essence which the existence actualizes. According to the IPCM, God acts in the operations of nature by (1)

giving existence to the secondary cause and its causal power; (2) preserving in existence the secondary cause and its power, as well as the secondary effect and its passive power; (3) applying the power of the secondary cause to its action; and (4) acting as a principal cause of the secondary cause's action. The secondary cause, on the other hand, acts as an instrumental cause, while unable to bring about *esse* on their own but still contributing to the effect.

Thus all in all about divine concurrence, Aquinas could say that in every operation of nature God is immediately active both on the secondary cause and on the effect in the following way. Regarding the secondary cause, God keeps it and its active power in existence, applies its power to action, and helps it to bring about its effect as a principal cause helps an instrumental cause. Regarding the secondary effect, God gives it existence that makes the effect to be something rather than nothing, by acting as its principal cause. And finally, regarding the contribution of the secondary cause, the secondary cause is responsible for the essence of the effect, which essence determines the indeterminate *esse* given by God, and making the thing to be of a specific kind.

Consider again the case of Sophie, the cat, where Sophie is the effect, and her parents are her natural efficient causes. We know that Sophie has existence (insofar as she is something rather than nothing). She also has an essence, felinity, which consists of her matter in general (cat-flesh and cat-bones) and substantial form (cat-soul). That she is a cat (rather than a dog), is due to her parents' being cats. That she *is* a cat (rather than nothing), is due to God.

Sophie's existence, *in concreto*, is of course, the existence of a cat, and so in that sense, it is different (even specifically) from my existence: it involves doing things — having a certain kind of metabolism, sitting and purring on my keyboard while I am trying to type, etc. — that I am not doing while existing. As Aquinas would say, her

existence is determined by her essence, that is, her felinity. However, Aquinas would also say that we can consider this existence *in abstracto*, by entirely abstracting it from its determinateness by the essence — and if we do that, we arrive at an existence that is common to all: common in Sophie and in me, being perfectly general. This is the existence, before all its determinations, which is the direct result of God's activity. Without that activity, there would be nothing for Sophie's felinity to determine, and nothing to actualize Sophie's felinity — indeed, there would be no cat whatsoever. In this sense, therefore, God's activity is necessarily required for Sophie's parents to bring about Sophie, just as the parents' action is also required for God's concurrence, *given an instance of natural causation*. For such an instance, the two actions that make up bringing about Sophie are inseparable: they have to be so, since there is no existence-as-such in Sophie without Sophie actually existing, and there is also no Sophie without existence.[66]

Aquinas's account implies, however, that God is causally active not only on Sophie but also on her parents when generating Sophie. First of all, in order to reproduce, Sophie's parents need to exist, and their existence at that moment is due to God; God's sustaining activity of Sophie's parents is a necessary requirement for Sophie's existence. But more than this, God's concurrence is necessary precisely because Sophie's parents cannot even *try* to act on their own to bring about a new being.[67] Sophie's parents, in turn, bring it about that Sophie is a cat (rather than, say, a dog), by channelling God's creative activity according to their nature. That is, they induce a new substantial form

66. The 'given an instance of natural causation' is an important assumption here, since of course God's action cannot *simpliciter* presuppose the secondary agent's action as God could bring about Sophie on his own.

67. More precisely, in Aquinas's account, it is the father who possesses the generative power, but this aspect of the account does not play a role here and would be hard to justify in light of more recent biological findings.

in the predisposed matter by their generative power as God applies this power to action and acts as the principal cause in their generative act.

Cases of qualitative change, such as the fire heating up the pot of water, are similar. First of all, the fire has to exist in order to act, and this is due to God. God also acts on the fire by applying its power to action and being its principal cause; the fire would be unable to bring about a new accidental being of heat without this concurrence. Moreover, God also conserves the relevant passive power of the water, which is able to receive the heat once generated by the fire. The fire, in turn, acts according to its nature, and exercising its power, by which it is responsible for the new quality being a quality of heat (and not of coldness or wetness).

As Aquinas summarizes once more the position,

> The first among effects is being, and all others are some determinations of it. Therefore being is the proper effect of the primary agent, and everything else produces being insofar as they act by the power of the first agent. But the secondary agents, which somehow particularize and determine the first agent's action, produce as their proper effects other perfections, which determine being.[68]

In this way, therefore, in substantial as well as accidental changes, God and the secondary agent are both immediate and total causes of the secondary effect, although they as causes belong to a different order.

68. *SCG* III, c. 66: "Primum autem in omnibus effectibus est esse: nam omnia alia sunt quaedam determinationes ipsius. Igitur esse est proprius effectus primi agentis, et omnia alia agunt ipsum inquantum agunt in virtute primi agentis. Secunda autem agentia, quae sunt quasi particulantes et determinantes actionem primi agentis, agunt sicut proprios effectus alias perfectiones, quae determinant esse" (Leonine ed., 14:188–189).

2.2 GILES OF ROME: GOD'S UNIFORM ACTION

Giles deals with the problem of secondary causes and divine concurrence in several places, including his *Ordinatio*, the *Reportatio*, the *Theoremata*, and the *Quaestiones de esse et essentia*.[69] Interestingly, as a collation of Durand's and Giles's text clearly shows, both Durand and Peter of Palude were relying mostly on Giles's *Reportatio* when discussing the veiw. (In fact, Durand's description of Giles's view is hardly more than a paraphrase of the *Reportatio* passage.) Although this might seem somewhat surprising — after all, Giles's revised, *Ordinatio* version of *Sentences* II and his *Quaestiones de esse et essentia* were much more widely circulated than his unrevised *Reportatio* — Durand could not have used the *Ordinatio* version, since Durand's first redaction (between 1304 and 1308) was finished earlier than Giles's revision. Why Durand did not use (if he knew) the *Quaestiones* is not clear at the moment, but at least from this and from John of Paris's mention of the *Reportatio*[70] it seems likely that the Dominicans in Paris around the first decade of the fourteenth century did have a copy of or at least access to this work. In any case, apart from the *Reportatio*, I will also heavily rely on the *Quaestiones*, because its treatment is much more detailed than that of the former, and is perhaps the fullest account Giles gave of the question.

The following analysis of Giles's solution to the problem of divine concurrence will both be a case study of his often discussed relation to his master, and also shed some light on Giles's own metaphysical views. He, just like Aquinas, argues for the claim that

69. Although the latter two have sometimes been confused or regarded as the same, they are different works. For the history of the confusion, see Michael Murray's introduction in Aegidius Romanus, *Theoremata*. For the other works, see Aegidius Romanus, *In Secundum Librum Sententiarum Quaestiones (Ordinatio)* (Venice: Apud Franciscum Zilettum, 1581); Aegidius Romanus, *Reportatio*; and Aegidius Romanus, *Quaestiones de esse et essentia*.

70. Cf. Concetta Luna's introduction in Aegidius Romanus, *Reportatio*, 3–4.

God is immediately active in every operation of nature. A large part of his treatment consists in rejecting the alternative positions: he argues in detail against occasionalism, in some form against mere conservationism, and — at least in the *Reportatio* — specifically attacks Aquinas's position as was developed in his *Sentences* commentary. After presenting some of those arguments, I will focus on three points here that will illuminate some aspects of Giles's account: first, what 'immediate' means in saying that God is immediately active; second, how Giles understands God's concurrence; and third, what *esse* means in this understanding.

2.2.1 Giles against the alternative positions

Giles's treatment of occasionalism is much fuller and somewhat deeper than Aquinas's, which suggests that he might have known the position better. As was seen in Chapter 1, he references Averroes's *Metaphysics* commentary, Avicebron's *Fons Vitae*, and Avicenna (which was probably mistranscribed as 'Avicebron' by a scribe in the manuscript) when presenting three versions of occasionalism, which he considers to be different and facing different difficulties. He presents not only the views but also the arguments of those who held them — which enables him to form objections both to the view and to the arguments.

To quickly recap what was discussed in Chapter 1.2.1 in more detail, according to full-fledged occasionalism, as Giles puts it, "no secondary agent and no creature can bring about anything."[71] As Giles reconstructs the argument for this position, to say that a creature can bring about some change would entail that it can create from nothing; and

71. *QDEE*, q. 4: "nullum secundum agens et nulla creatura potest aliquid operari" (Venice ed., fol. 8rb).

since the latter is obviously proper only to God, so is the former. The justification of the major premise relies on a specific notion of change, according to which it involves the coming into being of some new entity; thus, bringing about change would imply bringing about something where there was nothing (of the sort) before, that is, bringing about something from nothing.

According to Giles, however, it is clear that such a position is both unreasonable and rests on a mistaken assumption — Giles's reasons here are similar to the ones that Aquinas has given. First, like most medieval authors and unlike some early modern ones, Giles thinks that occasionalism contradicts the senses, for we do see secondary agents acting in the world. Second, the argument for the position, according to Giles, simply commits the mistake of Parmenides (already treated by Aristotle in the *Physics* and more fully in the *Metaphysics*, which treatments Giles must have been familiar with). Giles agrees with the occasionalist that a secondary agent cannot create *ex nihilo*; indeed, he thinks that this is obvious just from what the expression 'secondary agent' means: it is secondary precisely because it can only act while presupposing the action of the first agent, and also presupposing something on which it can act. According to Giles, however, secondary agents can still act if we accept the Aristotelian answer, according to which it is not matter or form in itself that changes but the composite substance. Thus, while it would be improper indeed to say that fire can bring about the form of hotness-*as-such* (this would be an instance of creation *ex nihilo*), there is no problem in saying that it can bring about the accidental form of hotness-*as-in-the-water*.[72] Since the accidental form of hotness in some way already preexisted and was educed from the

72. Although Giles does not make it explicit, this response assumes that the existence of forms as such is different from the existence of composite substances — while bringing about a form as such exceeds the powers of created things, bringing about a composite substance does not.

potency of the water, bringing it about in the water is not an instance of creation *ex nihilo*.

The second position Giles treats is referred to as the position of Avicebron (see section 1.2.2 above). Recall that according to this position, when we see the water being heated up by the fire, it is not really the fire as corporeal substance that does the action, but rather some spiritual substance that penetrates the fire and acts in its stead. As was also seen above, this second view arose from two, strongly interconnected motivations. First, according to Avicebron, the quantity of matter in the sublunary material substances impedes the actions of these substances instead of helping them. The second motivation is based on a hierarchy of beings, with the First Agent on its top, and the material substances on the bottom. Since the First Agent is pure actuality, and every other agent is an agent insofar as it participates in the actuality of the First Agent, the material substances are too removed from this actuality to participate in it in such extent that would make them capable of action.

Giles's general argument against this position is the same as against the full-fledged occasionalist: it manifestly contradicts the senses. Against Avicebron's first argument it is pointed out that there is a difference between reflexive and non-reflexive actions; that is, actions that originate from themselves and actions that are originated by some other thing. As Giles argues, material substances are only incapable of the former, but not of the latter. Thus, while it is true that material agents cannot initiate actions on their own (here we can refer to the medieval *omne quod movetur ab alio movetur* principle), this does not mean that they cannot perform actions on something else when moved by something. The fire cannot initiate burning, and it cannot heat itself; nevertheless, once it is lit, it can heat up the water placed next to it.[73] Against the second argument,

73. Most medieval thinkers thought that the four elements — earth, water, air, and fire — can, in some sense, initiate motion, since they naturally tend to their natural place (earth downward, and so

which Giles just calls *frivolus*, it is noted that the conclusion does not follow: although material substances are indeed at the bottom of the hierarchy, it is not true that they do not at all participate in the activity of the First Agent. For unlike prime matter, they are not merely passive but have a substantial form, an active principle that enables their proper action.

The third erroneous opinion is that of Avicenna, who argued that since the active power in the substances are merely accidental forms (such as heat in the fire), they are unable to bring about anything but an accidental form (see section 1.2.3 above). Giles, however, denies that the active power of a substance is a mere accident of it. As he notes, "the hotness in the fire acts by virtue of its [the fire's] substantial form, and the active power in every body acts in virtue of its substantial form."[74] Thus, as Giles suggests, every power of a substance is a manifestation of its substantial form, and thus there is no inconvenience in saying that a new substantial form can result from its action.[75]

Giles raises some of the same arguments against the occasionalist position in the *Ordinatio*; however, these are even more *ad hominem* than in the *Quaestiones*. He remarks again that the occasionalist thinkers "did not have brains apt for goodness," and that Avicebron's *Fons vitae* should rather be called *Fons mortis* since it does not have a single truth in it.[76]

After rejecting these three variants of occasionalism, Giles also spends some time

on). Nevertheless, these natural tendencies are given to and sustained in the elements by an external cause, which these motions thus presuppose.

74. *QDEE*, q. 4: "Sciendum ergo quod calor in igne agit in virtute forme substantialis eius, ut virtus activa in quolibet corpore agit in virtute forme substantialis eius" (Venice ed., fol. 8vb).

75. As might be noted, some substances can also have accidents that are not essentially related to their substances. According to Giles, these accidents can be active, but only bringing about accidental change and not substantial one.

76. *Ord.* II, d. 1, q. 2, a. 6 (Venice ed., 31).

rejecting the view according to which God is *not* immediately active in every operation of a creature.[77] Against this view, Giles notes:

> God is not related to all things in the way the builder is related to the house, but rather in the way the builder is related to ⟨the act of⟩ building, so that he is a cause in act of any creature. But a cause in act is immediately operating in all of which it is a cause in act, just as the builder immediately causes the ⟨act of⟩ building itself. And since God is a cause in act of any nature, any motion, any operation, he brings about immediately every nature, every motion, every operation, just as if the fire heats, that heating is brought about immediately by God, who is its cause in act. For to posit that God immediately conserves every creature and doubt whether he brings about everything that there is is to doubt whether a cause in act immediately makes that of which it is a cause.[78]

The argument rests on a distinction between causes in act and causes in potency that — as Giles points out — was already used by Aristotle.[79] As Giles elaborates more on the distinction, a cause in act is such that its actuality is required by the effect to exist, while a cause in potency can cease to exist without the effect ceasing. For instance, the builder is a cause in act of the building process, since without the continuous action of the former the latter cannot exist. But the same builder is only a cause in potency of the built house, since even if the builder dies, the house continues to be a house.[80] As a

77. It is not clear whether any contemporary of Giles would have endorsed this position. Albert the Great mentions that mere conservationism "mostly disappeared from the lecture halls, and many moderns regard it as heretical" (*In Sent.* II, d. 35, a. 7, resp; Albertus Magnus, *Super II Sententiarum*, ed. Auguste Borgnet, Opera Omnia, vol. 27 (Paris: Ludovicus Vivès, 1893), 575); Durand's version of it, which is slightly later than Giles, will be discussed in the next section.

78. *QDEE*, q. 4: "Deus autem ad omnem creaturarum non se habet sicut edificator ad domum, sed magis sicut edificator ad edificari, ita quod est causa in actu cuilibet creature. Sed causa in actu est immediate operans omne illud cuius est causa in actu, ubi (pro: ut) edificator immediate causat ipsum edificari. Et quia Deus est causa in actu cuiuslibet nature, cuiuslibet motus, cuiuslibet operationis, immediate ipse operat omnem naturam, omnem motum, omnem operationem, ut, si ignis calefaciat, illam calefactionem operatur immediate Deus, cuius est causa in actu. Ponere enim quod Deus immediate conservat omnem creaturam et dubitare utrum efficiat omne quod fit est dubitare utrum causa in actu immediate faciat id cuius est causa in actu" (Venice ed., fols. 8vb–9ra).

79. Giles's reference is to *Phys.* II and *Met.* V.

80. *QDEE*, q. 4: "Quedam sunt cause in actu, quedam vero in potentia; cause vero in actu sunt simul cum ipsis causatis, ita quod non potest esse causatum in actu sine sua causa in actu; causatum autem in

clarification of this analogy, it should be noted here that Giles does not take the builder to be a (merely) providential cause of building, or a cause whose immediacy has only to do with providence over the whole process and with determining the ends of the process. Rather, as will be seen later, both the builder and God exercises immediate causality in the sense that they give existence to things.

After this distinction, both the major and the minor premise of the argument are clear. According to the major premise, being a cause in act is a sufficient condition for acting on the effect immediately. As Giles notes, this is clear from the example just cited; in the case of building, the builder is the immediate cause of the building process in the sense that he is responsible for every part of it, including its result. But as Giles also points out, the minor premise, according to which God is a cause in act of everything, follows if one accepts that God is the cause of existence of every object at every moment of their existence — which even the mere conservationist would accept, since according to him God has to immediately maintain everything in existence at all times. If this is indeed the case, the mere conservationist has to grant that God is a cause in act of every being just in the same way as the builder is the cause in act of the construction, and then it follows that God acts in every operation of nature just as the builder is responsible for every part of the building process and anything built by it.

Seeing these responses to the erroneous occasionalist and mere conservationist positions already shows some aspects of Giles's understanding of power and divine concurrence. In addition to these, however, at least in the *Reportatio* he also quickly discusses and rejects Aquinas's *Sentences* commentary view. In Giles's interpretation (which,

potentia absque sua causa esse potest. Dicimus enim quod edificator est causa ipsius fieri domus [aliter tamen et aliter] et ipsius edificati, ⟨aliter tamen et aliter⟩, quia ipsius edificari vel ipsius edificationis edificator est causa in actu, quia, cum edificator actu edificat, est ipsum edificari et ipsum fieri domum; sed ipsius domus est causa in potentia, quia, cum actu edificat, non est domus in actu, sed in potentia. Ipsum ergo edificari non potest esse sine edificatore, sed ipsa domus potest esse edificatore corrupto" (Venice ed., fol. 8vb).

as was mentioned above, corresponds to Durand's and Palude's as well), according to Aquinas God is responsible for matter while secondary agents are responsible for the induced form in every change, and since matter immediately contributes to the being of things, God's operation in nature is immediate.[81] As Giles notes, however, the view, understood this way, is problematic:

> Either God immediately produces the form, or he does not. If not, then he does not act immediately in every action, which is false. If yes, then in the way the creature brings about determinate *esse*, God also ⟨does⟩ in the same way.[82]

As was mentioned above, Durand will also raise the same criticism; it accuses Aquinas of partialism: since according to his account, the creature alone induces the form in a change, Aquinas cannot consistently maintain that God is active in *every* operation of a creature. We need not deal here in detail with the question whether Giles's criticism is correct. As was seen, it relies on a quite specific interpretation of Aquinas's early model, and Aquinas might avoid the difficulty by understanding the indeterminate/determinate *esse* distinction differently or by calling attention to God's role as principal cause in every change.

81. *Rep.* II, d. 1, q. 8: "Nulla creatura producit totum effectum, quia non producit materiam sed solum formam; solus Deus producit materiam; materia autem facit ad esse rei... Quod tamen materia non facit ad esse distinctum, sed forma dat esse distinctum. Et sic patet quod Deus dans materiam facit ad esse rei; creatura dans formam facit ad esse determinatum" (Luna ed., 207–208).

82. *Rep.* II, d. 1, q. 8: "Aut Deus immediate producit formam aut non. Si non, tunc non agit immediate in omni actione, quod falsum est. Si sic, ergo qua ratione creatura facit esse determinatum, eadem ratione Deus" (Luna ed., 208).

2.2.2 Giles's Account

Overview

Although Giles's treatment is more detailed in the *Quaestiones* to which I will return shortly, he also gives an overview of the position in the *Reportatio*, where he describes divine concurrence this way:

> An effect that is from God alone, is ⟨from God⟩ immediately and totally; but an effect that is from God by the mediation of secondary causes, is from God wholly immediately but not totally, that is, not in every way, because God uniformly acts in everything insofar as it depends on him, so that the diversity ⟨of things⟩ is only due to the diversity of recipients, which cannot receive uniformly, because they receive according to their natures; and thus the effect, insofar as it is from the influence of God, does not have any distinction, but it has distinction from the part that is from the secondary causes (acting diversely according to their diverse natures) and according to the diversity of those receiving God's influence.[83]

According to this account, in cases of natural causation, God is responsible for the effect wholly immediately but not totally (*totum sed non totaliter*). God is wholly a cause of everything, because there is no part of the thing that did not originate from him; nevertheless, he is not a total cause in every operation, because that would exclude the contribution from created causes. Giles illustrates this distinction with an example: In a living being, to exist is the same as to live, or, a human person is human just as much as he is an animal (that is, there is no part of the human person that would not be, at the same time, also part of the animal). However, if we just look at living things insofar as

83. *Rep.* II, d. 1, q. 8: "Effectus qui est a solo Deo, ⟨est⟩ totus immediate et totaliter; sed effectus qui est a Deo mediantibus causis secundis, est a Deo totus immediate, sed non totaliter, id est non omni modo, quia Deus uniformiter agit in omnibus quantum est ex parte sui, ita quod solum diversitas est propter diversitatem recipientium, qui non possunt recipere uniformiter, quia [non] recipiunt secundum naturas suas; et ita effectus, a parte illa qua est ex influentia Dei, non habet distinctionem, sed ex parte illa qua est ex causis secundis agentibus diversimode propter diversas naturas earum et propter diversitatem recipientis influentie Dei, habet distinctionem" (Luna ed., 208).

they exist, this does not distinguish them from non-living things; or similarly, if we just look at human beings insofar as they are animals, this does not distinguish them from other kinds of animals.[84] Now, according to Giles, God is responsible for the universal part (the *esse*) of every being, from which there is no distinction between things; and the secondary agent is responsible for what makes the thing distinct from others. In this sense, we can say that God is not totally responsible for the thing's existence (since he is not responsible for its diversity) even though he is wholly immediately responsible for it.[85]

Immediacy

To understand Giles's claim that God is *immediately* responsible for everything even though his action is completely uniform, it is worth considering first what precisely he means by the term 'immediate.' He discusses its meaning in the *Quaestiones*, where he distinguishes two senses of the term:

> 'Immediate' is understood in two ways, according to a two-way process. Now either you start from the causes and proceed to the effect, or, *vice versa*, you start from the effect and proceed to the causes. If you start from the causes, then you also immediately reach the principal and first cause; according to this process, therefore, 'immediate' means the same as principal and first. But if you start from the effect and proceed to the causes, then you at once reach the proximate and conjoined cause, therefore, according to this process of going backwards, 'immediate' signifies the same as proximate and conjoined.[86]

84. *Rep.* II, d. 1, q. 8: "In effectu vivente idem est penitus vivere et esse, et ideo totum est a Deo et totum est a secundo agente, quia totum quod dicit vivere, dicit esse, sicut idem dicunt homo et animal: nam omni modo quod dicit illud 'homo' dicit illud 'animal'. Ita Deus agit totum, sed non totaliter" (Luna ed., 208).

85. Although Giles makes no reference to it in this context, this way he might still be able to maintain that *forma dat esse rei* (*Auct. Arist.* 1, 189; 1, 201; and 1, 214): God gives *esse* insofar as it is considered in its uniformity, but the secondary agent, by virtue of its substantial form, gives it insofar as it is considered in its specificity.

86. *QDEE*, q. 4: "Secundum ergo duplicem processum, duplex accipietur immediatum. Nam vel in-

The distinction is illustrated by an often-used example, the king and his bailiff: a king is an immediate cause of whatever the bailiff does in the sense of being the principal cause (the bailiff cannot do anything but by the king); on the other hand, the bailiff is an immediate cause if we proceed from the effect, since he is the one who is the most proximate to his action.[87] (The distinction can also be found in Aquinas, and has often been called 'immediacy of supposit' (proximate sense) and 'immediacy of power' (principal sense).[88])

After clarifying this distinction, Giles claims that God is immediately active in every operation of a creature in *both* of these senses. As he notes,

> In this way, therefore, God operates in everything immediately, because in operating, he is not an instrument of anything, but all things are his instruments and he operates principally in everything. Furthermore, a natural agent is not only unable to effect anything unless it relies on the divine power, but it is also unable to bring about any effect unless in that effect God operates immediately, that is, proximately; because, as was shown in the second thesis, God, since he is a cause in act of everything, immediately acts in everything.[89]

---

cipies a causis et procedes ad effectum, vel modo resolutorio incipies ab effectu et procedes ad causas. Si incipies a causis, et immediate incides in causam principalem et primam; secundum hunc igitur processum idem sonabat immediatum quod principale et primum. Si vero incipias ab effectu et procedas ad causas, statim incides in causam proximam et coniunctam, secundum quem processum ergo resolutorium immediatum idem significabit quod proximum et coniunctum" (Venice ed., fol. 9rb–va).

87. *QDEE*, q. 4: "Secundum ergo hos modos loquendi dicimus quod rex operatur per ballium vel mediante ballio, et dicimus e converso quod ballium operatur per regem vel mediante rege. Prout ergo rex operatur per ballium, ballius erit immediatum agens, et tunc immediatum idem sonabit quod proximum et coniunctum. Sed quia e converso ballius operatur per regem, et rex potest dici immediate agens, quia non facit hoc auctoritate sua sed alterius. Sed si sua auctoritate agit, oportet quod immediatum hoc modo sumptum idem dicat quod principale et primum" (Venice ed., fol. 9rb).

88. E.g., Gloria Frost, "Peter Olivi's Rejection of God's Concurrence with Created Causes," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 22, no. 4 (2014): especially 662–663.

89. *QDEE*, q. 4: "Secundum hunc ergo modum, Deus operatur omnia immediate, quia in operando non est organum alicuius, sed omnia sunt organa ipsius et ipse omnia principaliter operatur. Rursus, agens naturale non solum non potest aliquid efficere ut ⟨non⟩ innitatur virtuti divine, sed etiam non potest in aliquem effectum nisi illum eundem effectum immediate, id est proxime, operetur Deus, quia, ut secunda declaratio ostendebat, Deus, cum sit causa in actu omnium, immediate operatur omnia. Deus ergo omne opus nature operatur immediate, id est principaliter, et operatur omne tale immediate, id est proxime" (Venice ed., fol. 9rb).

According to Giles, on the one hand, God acts immediately by the immediacy of power in every operation of nature, because he is not active by virtue of anything other than himself; on the contrary, everything else acts as his instrument or organ. On the other hand, God's action is immediate also by the immediacy of supposit, since the secondary agent cannot bring about the effect if God does not operate in that same effect as an immediate (proximate) cause. Indeed, in the *Ordinatio* Giles even claims that God's action is more immediate (even in the sense of proximity) than that of the secondary agent; that "the heat of the fire is more immediately produced by God than by the essence of the fire itself,"[90] since it is God and not the fire that conserves the essence of the fire in existence. If we look back at Giles's distinction of cause in act and cause in potency above, and recall that according to him, a cause in act is responsible for every aspect of the effect including its operations, it follows that God is indeed an immediate cause of operations in the world even in the sense of proximity just by immediately keeping everything in existence.

Although Giles thinks that God acts immediately in every operation of nature, as was mentioned above, he also thinks that God does not (usually) act totally. Giles seems to suggest that although it is true that there is no part of anything that did not originate from God, it is not only God who is causally responsible for every aspect of creatures. In order to understand this claim, however, we need to look at the nature of God's effects.

Universality

To see how God contributes to the operation of natural causes, we must turn back to the *Quaestiones*, where Giles offers an account of *how* it is that the same effect is, on the one hand, immediately from the secondary cause, and, on the other hand,

90. *Ord.* II, d. 1, p. 1, q. 2, a. 6: "Intimius enim operatur Deus actionem ignis quam ipse ignis" (Venice ed., 32).

also immediately from God. As was already briefly remarked in Giles's summary in the *Reportatio*, according his account God's action in the ordinary course of nature is his giving *esse* to created beings. When characterizing how this happens, he relies on Dionysius's characterization in the *Divine Names*:[91]

> God acts on everything in the same manner, but if there is diversity in things, that is because of the secondary agents by mediation of which God acts. For God acts in the same way in cooling and in warming, and it is this way how we see God uniformly bringing about this and that. But that this ⟨thing⟩ differs from that, such as the warming differs from the cooling, that is because of the secondary agents, so that because the warming is by the mediation of fire, but the cooling is by the mediation of water.[92]

Thus, according to Giles, God's action is uniform in the same way as the action of the sun is uniform: the sun gives the same light to everything, and the different ways in which the objects reflect the sunlight derive from the different natures (or the dispositions of the various surfaces) of the objects. In the same way, God gives the same *esse* to every created thing, and the diversity of effects derive from the different ways in which the secondary agents reflect this uniform divine action; which different ways, as Giles also makes clear, derive from the different dispositions or arrangements of matter.

As a later passage in the *Quaestiones* describes the same point once more:

> Thus, we think, as was mentioned above, that God, as he operates in these

91. For Dionysius, see *De diuinis nominibus* (Grosseteste tr.): "Etenim quemadmodum qui secundum nos sol, non ratiocinans aut eligens sed ipso esse, illuminat omnia participare lumen ipsius, secundum propriam potentia rationem, sic utique et per se bonum, super solem ut super obscuram imaginem segregate archetypum, ipsa exsistentia omnibus exsistentibus analogice supermittit totius bonitatis radios" (Dionysius Areopagita (Pseudo-), *Dionysiaca: Recueil donnant l'ensemble des traductions latines des ouvrages attribués au Denys de l'Aréopage*, ed. Ph. Chevallier (1937–1951), 146, col. 4).

92. *QDEE*, q. 4: "Deus uniformiter operetur omnia, sed si est diversitas in rebus hoc est propter secunda agentia mediantibus quibus operatur Deus. Ipsam enim infrigidationem operatur Deus et etiam ipsam calefactionem, et secundum hunc modum agendi quem videmus Deus uniformiter operatur hanc et illam. Sed quod differat hec ab illa, ut quod differat calefactio ab infrigidatione, hoc est propter secunda agentia, ut quia calefactionem operatur mediante igne, infrigidationem vero mediante aqua" (Venice ed., fol. 9rb).

> natural effects, is related ⟨to them⟩ in a uniform way. And because the effects are both the same and differ, as they differ they are from secondary agents which are related ⟨to them⟩ in various ways; as they are the same they are from the first agent, which is related ⟨to them⟩ in a uniform way. But God, just as he produces every effect as they are the same, could, in the same way produce them as they differ, neither is it from the insufficiency of God but from his goodness which he communicates to creatures.[93]

This passage makes an important clarification about the previous description. Perhaps avoiding an objection according to which Giles could not account for individual miracles, nor, perhaps, for the creation of distinct and diverse individuals, he points out that the uniformity of God's action is not an absolute necessity but follows from God's goodness. As this description suggests, although God could, in principle, be responsible also for the features that distinguish one thing from another, by his goodness he has granted the creatures to be responsible for this.

The universality of God's action is precisely what enables God to be a cause "wholly but not totally." Since God is responsible for the *esse* of things, he is responsible for these things wholly; but since this *esse* is universal, God is not a total cause since he is not responsible for the differences between the various things. As Giles summarizes this point once more in his commentary on the *Liber de causis*:

> God however does not bring about anything immediately wholly and totally, because if he brought about a thing wholly immediately and wholly totally, then the secondary agents would not concur to the production of any effect. . . . Thus in everything that is produced by the mediation of other causes God operates, and the other causes operate; but since God is the universal cause, the effect that God produces by mediation of other causes is said to be produced by God insofar as every cause communicates and has *esse*, God

93. *QDEE*, q. 5: "Intelligimus enim, ut supra tetigimus, quod Deus, ut operatur in istis effectibus naturalibus, se habet uniformiter. Et quia effectus conveniunt et differunt, ut differunt sunt a secundis agentibus que se habent difformiter, ut conveniunt sunt a primo agente quod se habent uniformiter. Posset tamen Deus, sicut producit omnes effectus ut conveniunt, ita posset eos producere ut differunt, nec est hoc ex insufficientia Dei sed ex bonitate ipsius quam communicat creaturis" (Venice ed., fol. 10vb).

> who operates in every cause is said to be the cause of things insofar as they have *esse*, and they participate in *esse*. . . . We imagine that God is related in the same way to the things, nevertheless not always the same thing comes into existence because of the variety of the secondary causes, and because the caused things do not differ in receiving *esse*, but in receiving *this esse*. Whence the effects produced by secondary causes are said to be by God as they are beings and as they have *esse*.[94]

Thus, although God's action is precisely the same when concurring with fire or with water, the former will bring about warmth, while the latter will bring about humidity because matter is not so arranged in the former as in the latter.

As was already seen above, the result of God's action is the *esse* of things, from which Giles also concludes that God's concurring action is a more principal cause of the effect than the action of the secondary agent, since *esse* is the first among created things and a principle of all other created things (a claim with which Aquinas would also agree). This latter claim is the fourth proposition in the *Liber de causis* commentary, and Giles offers three arguments for it.

First, the primacy of *esse* follows from *esse* being above the sensible, the animate, and the intelligences. For if we regard bodies, living things, and the celestial intelligences as the highest genera of created things, then if anything encompasses them, it must be (logically) prior to them. And that *esse* is such can be seen from the fact that it can be predicated of all three highest genera (that is, we can say that a body is an existing

94. *LDC*, q. 4: "Non tamen Deus facit quamlibet rem immediate totam et totaliter, quia si faceret quamlibet rem immediate totam, et immediate totaliter tunc secundaria agentia non concurrerent ad alicuius effectus productionem. . . . Ita quod in qualibet re producta mediantibus aliis causis operatur Deus, et operantur aliae cause; sed cum Deus sit universalis causa secundum illum modum effectus productus a Deo mediantibus aliis causis dicetur a Deo procedere in quo communicant omnes cause, et quia omnium causarum est dare esse, Deus qui operatur in omnibus causis dicetur potissime causa rerum, ut habent esse, et ut participant esse. Esse ergo illud repertum in rebus secundum quod entia dicuntur potissime effectus Dei, est ab ipso deo. . . . Imaginabimur itaque quod Deus se habet uniformiter ad res, non tamen sit idem semper propter varietatem secundarum causarum, et quia causata non differunt in accipiendo esse, sed in accipiendo hoc esse. Unde effectus producti mediantibus aliis causis, potissime dicuntur esse a Deo ut sunt entia ut habent esse" (Aegidius Romanus, *Super librum de causis* (Venice: Apud Iacobum Zoppinum, 1550 (repr.: Minerva, 1968)), fol. 14v H).

thing, and so on for the others).[95] Thus, when Giles elaborates on the meaning of *esse* in the *Quaestiones*,[96] he argues that the existence that actualizes a thing's essence is logically prior to the existence that actualizes its accidents: the logical order of a thing's coming to be is general existence — essence — existence of accidents.

The second argument Giles offers for *esse* being the first creature is an admittedly Platonic one, according to which the more extensive something is, the more prior it is. (We can think of the Platonic forms of goodness and beauty which, since all beings participate in them, are the most fundamental.) According to Giles, *esse* is such, and thus it is the first created thing.[97] It is worth noting here that Giles also calls God as *esse purum*, from which everything receives its *ratio essendi* and all its perfections. But he is not equating *esse purum* with the first created *esse*; rather, the latter is first only among created things but not simpliciter.[98]

The third argument relies on the premise that *esse* is the closest to the first being (that is, to God). In this neoplatonistic argument Giles emphasizes again that *esse* is the proper effect of God; and since as a proper effect it is closest to God, it must be the first among created things. It should be noted here that Giles is not claiming that *esse* as an effect of God can exist separately. The argument only assumes that *esse* is distinct from the things of which the *esse* it is.[99]

Now that Giles has shown that *esse*, taken generally, is the one, most universal and

95. *LDC*, q. 4: "Quicquid est supra sensum supra animam et supra intelligentiam, est supra omnia creata, est prima rerum creatarum, esse est huiusmodi; ergo etc" (Venice ed., fol. 13v).

96. Cf. especially qq. 5 and 10.

97. *LDC*, q. 4: "Quanto ergo sunt magis communia in entibus, tanto illa abstracta sublimiora et priora existunt" (Venice ed., fol. 14r).

98. Ibid.: " Deus sit ipsum esse purum in quo reservatur omnis ratio essendi, et omnis perfectio. Esse vero creatum et participatum est quid latismum: quia se extendit ad omnia entia. ... Et quia nihil est latius et universalius ente, nihil est prius eo."

99. It should also be noted that while the first argument seems to talk about *esse* in a thin, predicative sense, the second and third argument presuppose a more robust notion of it. I cannot go into the problematic details of this issue, but as will be seen, Giles's account of concurrence relies on the more robust notion of *esse*.

first created thing, he also needs to explain how the multiplicity of created beings comes about from this one *esse*. He compares this process of multiplication to the coming about of numbers from the number one: just as in the number case, when one is multiplied to three by the mediation of two, and so on, in creation also all multiplication comes about by the mediation of the intelligences (which are already multiple). The intelligences themselves are multiplied because the one infinite *esse* is joined with something finite (namely, their form or essence).

Applying all this to divine and secondary causes might raise the worry that was raised already regarding Aquinas: God giving *esse* and the secondary cause giving determinate *esse* might amount to some kind of partialism if the two kinds of *esse* are different constituents of the same thing, and God is responsible for the one while the secondary agent for the other.

It should be noted, however, that in the *Quaestiones* Giles makes clear that indeterminate and determinate *esse* are not two different parts of the same thing; on the contrary, a thing has one *esse* at a time, which can be considered from two different aspects. As he notes:

> For we concede that the same thing is caused by God and by nature, but not in the same way. As if God causes fire by the mediation of fire, the caused fire, insofar as it is fire, is from the fire; insofar as it is a being, it is from God. Therefore, the fire causes fire and being, and God causes being and fire; but the fire causes being because causes fire, God, however, conversely, causes fire because he causes being.[100]

Giles, therefore, would not accept that God and a secondary agent concur in such a way that each creates a part of the secondary effect — the indeterminate *esse* part and the

100. *QDEE*, q. 5: "Concedimus enim eandem rem esse causatam a Deo et a natura, sed non eodem modo. Ut si Deus mediante igne causat ignem, ignis causatus ut est ignis est ab igne, ut est ens est a Deo. Ignis ergo causat ignem et ens, et Deus causat ens et ignem; sed ignis causat ens quia causat ignem, Deus autem e converso causat ignem quia causat ens" (Venice ed., fol. 10rb).

determinate *esse* part. Rather, the indeterminate *esse* in a given object is always already determined, and so it is always already caused by the secondary agent as well. The point made here can be illustrated by an example of (another sort of) concurrence, when I draw a triangle with a marker, say, in order to demonstrate Pythagoras's theorem.[101] In this case, we can talk about an "indeterminate shape" and a "determinate shape" of the triangle, and while I am responsible for the former, the marker is responsible for the latter. Thus, I am immediately responsible for the triangle being a triangle, and also perhaps that it is a right angled triangle, etc. The marker, on the other hand, is immediately responsible for the specific shape of its lines, perhaps its specific angles, etc. Of course, there is no triangle without the specific shapes of its lines, and no specific shapes without triangle; no indeterminate shape without determinate shape, and vice versa. Nevertheless, it still can be said that these two aspects of the triangle's shape are due to two causes of a different order. And I am responsible for the specific shapes of the triangle insofar as and because I am responsible for its triangularity; the marker is responsible for the triangularity insofar as and because it is responsible for its specific shape.

It seems that Giles means something similar when he talks about determinate and indeterminate *esse* having causes of a different order. This does not commit him to the claim that these two *esse* can exist separately, or that they are distinct proper parts of the same substance. On the contrary, according to the above quoted passage, fire only has *esse* as it is already determinate (it does not have *esse* unless it is an *esse* of a fire). Nevertheless, it still can be said that these two aspects of the fire's *esse* are due to two causes of a different order; God is responsible for the determinate *esse* of the fire insofar as and because he is responsible for its indeterminate *esse*, while the secondary

101. Giles uses the triangle example in *QDEE*, q. 5 (Venice ed., fol. 10rb).

agent (the other fire) is responsible for its indeterminate *esse* insofar as and because it is responsible for its determinate *esse*.

From this it also follows that God's concurring action is a more immediate cause of the secondary effect than that of the secondary agent (again, Giles agrees here with Aquinas). Just as light is the first visible, because it is what primarily provides the *ratio* of visibility for other things (simply: it is only by light that we see other things), in a similar way, *esse* is the first among created things, because it is what provides the *ratio* for other things being created (simply: it is only because they participate in *esse* that they are produced).[102] And since whatever is produced first ('first' denoting logical and not temporal primacy here) belongs to a thing more immediately than whatever comes after, God is a more immediate cause than the secondary agent, even though he is not a total cause.

Giles has shown therefore that God acts in every operation of nature by his universal concurring action giving existence, and that his action is immediate. In these claims, although not the arguments for it, Giles's and Aquinas's accounts agree.

2.2.3 Giles and Aquinas

To see some of the details of Giles's account more clearly, it is worth to look at what distinguishes it from Aquinas's, at least considering Aquinas's explanation of concurrence in terms of determinate and indeterminate *esse*. For they agree that both God and the secondary agent are immediate causes of effects, moreover that God — at least in

102. *LDC*, prop. 4: "Hoc ergo modo prima rerum creatarum est esse, sicut prima rerum visarum est lux, quia lux est prima et principalis ratio quare aliquid videatur. Lux enim respersa in rebus facit ea esse visibilia. Sic ex esse sumitur prima et principalis ratio quare aliquid creetur, quia intantum aliquid est cratum et productum inquantum participat esse" (Venice ed., fol. 13v C).

some sense — is more immediate to the effect than the secondary agent. Perhaps more interestingly, they both think that this follows simply from the fact that God created the world and keeps it in existence at all times, and they also agree that creation and conservation are the same. Since creation and conservation are the same, God creates the world — with all its causes and effects — throughout the whole time of its existence, which is enough to ground immediate divine concurrence.

Most of Giles's disagreement with Aquinas in fact stems from their disagreement concerning certain respects of creation, thus it is worth pausing to consider that issue even if rather superficially.[103] As far as their agreement on the issue goes, both Giles and Aquinas think that creation and conservation are identical (both are God's furnishing the creatures with *esse*, in the first moment of their existence and continuously afterwards), and Giles's argument in the *Reportatio* closely resembles Aquinas's as formulated in the *De aeternitate mundi* and in *De potentia* (the former being a much later work). For instance, they agree that 'being created' is not a *terminus* of a motion (since motion always presupposes some matter while creation does not), but a relation that can exist between two things without the connotation of any temporality; it means to bring about something without presupposing anything else, or — from the effect's side — being entirely dependent on something for one's existence. They also agree that this dependence holds between God and creatures whenever a creature exists. And consequently, they both think that although it is demonstrably the case that God created the world, it is not demonstrably the case that this creation happened at a certain time, that is, that the world has a temporal beginning.

The identity of creation and conservation was not a uniformly held view during the thirteenth century, but on the contrary, was widely opposed in some theological cir-

103. For a more detailed comparison of Aquinas's and Giles's view on creation and conservation, see Pini, "Being and Creation in Giles of Rome."

cles.[104] Thus, for instance, Henry of Gent already attacks Aquinas's view,[105] claiming that Aquinas's (and, consequently Giles's) position entails a view according to which creation is necessary, which is contrary to the Christian faith.[106] Henry also shows that Aquinas's understanding of creation is a result of his mistaken notion of the distinction between essence and existence, for it assumes that existence is something *added* to the essence and is thus accidental.[107] Beside Henry's criticism, the condemnation of 1277 also contains some articles targeting some similar views; most notably, it condemns the propositions according to which creation is not a motion (article 187 [217]), and that the non-eternity of the world cannot be demonstrated (article 80 [91]).

Perhaps as a consequence of this and the investigations about Giles's doctrine in particular, later Giles was more cautious about putting forward his doctrine of creation explicitly. We need not go into the details of how Giles's doctrine changed (if it did); it is enough to note that following Aquinas's approach in the *De potentia*, he later maintained that although regarding God's action, creation and conservation is the same, and although regarding God's power, there is no contradiction in eternal creation, regarding the creature's side, the contradiction arises: 'being a creature' is not consistent with 'being eternal'. He also seems to have changed his view about whether God's creative act was identical to his essence.[108]

Although Giles and Aquinas agree on the identity of creation and conservation, in the

104. For a contemporary defense of their distinction, together with an overview of the medieval debates, see Richard Cross, "The Eternity of the World and the Distinction between Creation and Conservation," *Religious Studies* 42, no. 4 (2006): 403–416.

105. For a summary of Henry's arguments in his first quodlibet, see Pini, "Being and Creation in Giles of Rome," 396–399.

106. Henry's argument seems to be that if the identity of creation and conservation entails the eternity of the world, which dangerously approximates creation to necessary emanation.

107. For Henry, see *Quodl.* I, q. 7 (Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibet I*, ed. R Macken, Henrici Gandavo Opera Omnia, vol. 5 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1979)).

108. For a detailed treatment of these differences, see Pini, "Being and Creation in Giles of Rome," especially 403–409.

indemonstrability of temporal creation, and in the basic definition of creation according to which it is not a motion, their understanding of creation nevertheless differs in important respects, and the difference has consequences regarding divine concurrence as well.

On the one hand, as we have seen, Giles fully endorses Dionysius's sun analogy — both for creation and concurrence. Perhaps it is worth quoting Dionysius himself:

> For as our sun, through no deliberation and choice (*nec ratiocinans nec preeligens*), but by its very being, illuminates everything that has any proper power of participating in its light, similarly also the Good (which is above the sun, just as the archetype is above an obscure image), by its existence, sends to everything the rays of its whole goodness (according to their capacity).[109]

Giles endorses not only the analogy but also Dionysius's explanation of it, according to which God does not act by deliberation and choice; as Giles notes, "God produces everything *through no deliberation and choice* but uniformly, just as the sun illuminates everything uniformly."[110]

Aquinas, however, explicitly denies that God acts "through no deliberation and choice," at least if we take "no deliberation and choice" to imply the lack of freely willing, as the sun analogy suggests. As Aquinas remarks about the Dionysius passage:

> We have to consider, however, that what he said about the sun is not the same in God: ⟨namely, that⟩ not by deliberation and choice. . . . For the being of the sun is not its understanding or willing (even if it had intellect or will), and thus what it does by its essence is not done by intellect and will. But the divine being *is* his understanding and willing, and thus what he does by his essence, he does by intellect and will.[111]

109. *De diuinis nominibus*, sec. 4; see note 91 above.
110. *Ord.* II, d. 1, p. 1, q. 2, a. 6: "Deus non ratiocinans nec preeligens, sed omnia uniformiter operatur sicut sol, quantum est de se, omnia uniformiter illuminat" (Venice ed., 31, emphasis added).
111. *In Div. nom.*, prop. 4: "Considerandum est autem quod non replicavit in Deo: non ratiocinans aut praeeligens quod de sole dixerat; sed sicut de sole dixerat quod per ipsum suum esse illuminat, ita de Deo subdit quod per suam essentiam omnibus bonitatem tradit. Esse enim solis non est eius

Thus, while in Giles God acts through no deliberation or choice, for Aquinas, divine deliberation — being identical to the divine essence — is the source of God's action. In other words, while Giles accepts Dionysius's sun analogy and applies it directly to divine action, Aquinas thinks that the analogy is somewhat misleading as there is a salient difference between the sun and God in precisely the way they act.

Consequently, while Giles regards creation itself as a uniform action, which results in a uniform *esse* being differentiated only because of its recipients, Aquinas does not think so. In fact, when Aquinas discusses the same sun analogy in his commentary on the *De causis* that Giles used as an illustration, he argues that the very first created thing must already be diverse, otherwise it would be impossible to give a satisfactory account of how things, diverse in kind and in number, come about.[112]

All in all, both Aquinas and Giles maintain that

1. In every operation of nature, God's action is immediate: it is both a principal and a proximate cause of the secondary effect.
2. God gives indeterminate being to everything.
3. In an instance of natural causation, God acts by (1) maintaining in (indeterminate) existence the secondary cause and its power; and (2) giving (indeterminate) existence to the secondary effect.

Beside this, Giles also holds that God's action is wholly uniform and thus the diversity of the actions of the secondary causes comes about only by virtue of the diversity of their dispositions to receive the divine influence.

---

intelligere aut velle, etiam si intellectum et voluntatem haberet et ideo quod facit per suum esse, non facit per intellectum et voluntatem. Sed divinum esse est eius intelligere et velle et ideo quod per suum esse facit, facit per intellectum et voluntatem. Et ideo signanter dixit quod Deus segregatur a sole, sicut archetypum supra obscuram imaginem" (Thomas Aquinas, *S. Thomae Aquinatis In librum Beati Dionysii De divinis nominibus expositio*, ed. C Pera (Rome: Marietti, 1950), 88).

112. *LDC*, prop. 4 (Saffrey ed., 27–34).

2.3 DURAND'S CRITIQUE AND A RESPONSE

According to Durand, God is not immediately but only mediately active in every operation of nature. His arguments for this position are mostly negative, that is, he shows that the other options (occasionalism and concurrentism) are untenable. Concerning the latter, he develops his arguments in considerable detail, targeting concurrentism in general and the prevalent concurrentist positions (that of Giles and that of Aquinas) in particular.[113] As his arguments are cited by Peter of Palude almost verbatim, I will also discuss Peter in this section.

Durand dismisses the occasionalist position rather quickly, noting only that "it would take away the judgment of the senses, by which we experience creating things acting on each other, thus ⟨occasionalism⟩ is now rejected by everyone as improbable."[114] As was seen above, this criticism of occasionalism was not uncommon in Durand's time, and he could just take it for granted.

All the remaining positions agree (Durand does not consider deism at all, which did not seem to be a viable option for theists before the seventeenth century) that both God and the secondary agent is active in every operation of nature. Thus, what distinguishes Durand's position from Aquinas's and Giles's is not God's activity but the immediacy of this activity: while according to Aquinas and Giles, God is *immediately* active in every operation of nature, Durand argues that divine concurrence can only be regarded as a mediate action. I will start with Durand's general arguments against

113. Although Durand's precise targets are quite hard to identify in some cases. Perhaps this why even the recent critical edition of the text (Durand of St.-Pourçain, *Scriptum super IV libros Sententiarum: distinctiones 1–5 libri secundi*) cites Aquinas and Giles almost interchangeably, despite the fact that — as was seen above — their positions do differ.

114. *In Sent.* II, d. 1, q. 4: "quia hoc tollit a rebus proprias operationes, tollit etiam iudicium sensus, quo experimur res creatas in inuiciem agere, ideo nunc ab omnibus tamquam improbabile refutatur" (Retucci ed., 48).

concurrentism, mostly skipping his arguments targeted specifically at Aquinas and Giles (as those arguments have already been mentioned earlier in this chapter).[115] I will close this section with a defense that Peter offers for the concurrentist (specifically, mostly Aquinas's) position.

2.3.1 Durand's Dilemma

Durand's arguments against concurrentism in general are not very detailed; Peter, however, discusses them in some length in his own text. What Durand presents is a *reductio* against the concurrentist, which I will call *Durand's Dilemma*. Durand's Dilemma considers the actions of God and the secondary agent in an instance of natural causation, for example when fire produces heat. According to the concurrentist, when fire produces heat, it is not just the fire that performs the productive action but God also. But, asks Durand's Dilemma, are God's and the fire's action numerically identical, or are they numerically different? According to Durand's Dilemma, neither of these options is satisfactory, and hence concurrentism is false.

According to the first horn of Durand's Dilemma, God's concurring action would be identical with the fire's action, but this cannot be the case for two reasons. First, an effect of a certain natural kind is a proper effect of that kind because it does not surpass its ability: thus, heat is the proper effect of fire precisely because its production does not surpass the ability of the fire. If this is the case, however, then it seems that God's concurring action is superfluous.[116]

115. As was also mentioned but is worth keeping in mind, Durand's sources are Aquinas's *Sentences* commentary and Giles's *Reportatio*, instead of their later, more developed accounts.

116. *In Sent.* II, d. 1, q. 4: "illam potest habere creatura sine speciali influxu Dei supposita conseruatione sue nature et sue uirtutis actiue, quia actio que non excedit uirtutem speciei agentis sufficienter elicitur a sola uirtute speciei, frustra ergo poneretur aliud immeditum eliciens talem operationem" (Retucci

Second, God and the fire cannot act with numerically the same action also because they do not have numerically the same power. Durand offers some examples where two things cause another by the same action: it can either happen when one of them is only a mediate cause, or when they are causing the thing imperfectly (such as when two people are pulling a boat up on a river), or, in the exceptional case of the Father and the Son producing ("spirating") the Holy Spirit, when they have numerically the same power. As Durand notes, however, and as can be easily granted by the reader, there do not seem to be any scenarios where both causes are immediate and perfect causes of the effect by the same action while having different powers, in the way God and the fire are supposed to do.[117]

According to the other horn of Durand's Dilemma, God and the fire would act with numerically different actions, but Durand shows that this is not satisfactory either. For whether these actions are simultaneous or not, one of them will turn out to be superfluous. For instance, if the fire produces the heat *before* God produces it, it seems that God does not really contribute anything; if God produces the heat before the fire does, then the same is true of the fire. And since temporality is only an accidental feature of the story, the same would be the case with simultaneous actions.

Thus, Durand's Dilemma is meant to establish that the concurrentist position is false. And since Durand had already rejected occasionalism, he concludes that God is not immediately active in every action of a creature, but merely conserves these creatures

ed., 53). This was, of course, a standard objection against any concurrentist position, with a standard answer. As Peter of Palude will point out, it begs the question against the concurrentist, who maintains that having a relevant active power is *not* a sufficient condition for being capable of bringing about the effect — among others, the active power has to be maintained in existence by the first cause, has to be exercised, and (as Aquinas would point out) has to be applied by the first cause to its effect. (For Aquinas, see especially *QDP*, q. 3, a. 7. For Peter, see *In Sent.* II, d. 1, q. 4.)

117. *In Sent.* II, d. 1, q. 4: "Impossibile est eandem actionem numero esse a duobus uel pluribus agentibus, ita quod a quolibet sit immediate et perfecte, nisi in illis sit eadem uirtus numero; set in Deo et creatura non potest esse eadem uirtus numero" (Retucci ed., 54).

and their powers: God conserves the fire, but apart form this conservation, does nothing when the fire produces some heat.

Durand's argument is noteworthy because it is at least controversial what position Aquinas took on the numerical identity or difference of the concurring actions. For instance, Alfred Freddoso claims that Aquinas and the concurrentist in general should take the first horn of Durand's Dilemma, that is, maintain that God and the secondary cause act by numerically the same action[118] (his interpretation is probably based on Suarez[119]), while Peter claims that they act by "formally different and materially identical" actions.[120] I show here that Peter's interpretation, although his meaning is not entirely obvious, is right.

To understand Peter's claim and how it is supposed to help to answer Durand's Dilemma, it is worth briefly looking at Aquinas's stance on the question, which Peter is summarizing. Unfortunately, at first sight it seems that Aquinas says different things about the matter in different places. For instance, when responding to an objection in the *Summa*, he notes that "one action does not proceed from two agents of the same order, but nothing prevents that one and the same action proceed from a first and second agent."[121] Nevertheless, when he characterizes instrumental causality in the case of the master acting through a servant, he notes that "the action of the master and of the servant are different in number."[122]

118. Freddoso, "Pitfalls and Prospects," 151–156.
119. *Disputationes Metaphysicae*, disp. 22.
120. *In Sent.* II, d. 1, q. 4. For some history of the later medieval and early modern debates on this question, with some reference to later Thomists, see Dennis Des Chene, *Physiologia: Natural philosophy in late Aristotelian and Cartesian thought* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 319–324.
121. *ST* I, q. 105, a. 5: "Una actio non procedit a duobus agentibus unius ordinis, sed nihil prohibet quin una et eadem actio procedat a primo et secundo agente" (Leonine ed., 5:476). Suarez's interpretation is based primarily on this passage, and apparently so is Freddoso's.
122. *In Sent.* II, d. 40, q. 1, a. 4, ad 4: "Unde alia numero est actio domini et servi" (Mandonnet ed., 1021).

How are we to understand these remarks? How many actions are there in an act of concurrence? Aquinas's response is that it depends on how we count them:

> It should be known that we can divide efficient causes in two ways. One way, based on the effect (namely ⟨in the case of sacramental causation⟩ the disposing one which gives the disposition for the final form; and the perfecting one which induces the ultimate perfection). Another way, based on the cause — the principal and the instrumental agent. For the principal agent is the first mover, while the instrumental cause is the moved mover. But a twofold action belongs to the instrument: one that it has from its nature, and the other it has insofar as it is moved by the first agent, just as the fire, which is said to be the instrument of the nutritive power, as is said in the second book of the *De Anima*, by its nature dissolving, consuming, and such effects; but insofar as it is an instrument of the vegetative soul, it generates flesh.[123]

According to this passage, the instrumental cause in a given series has a double action: one that is proper to it by its nature, and the other that it performs merely in virtue of being moved by the principal agent — even if these two actions materially constitute the same process. For instance, when I write on a paper with a pen, the pen has a double action of bringing about colored strokes (its proper effect) and a meaningful sentence (its effect as instrument), even though there is nothing more to the latter than the collection of the former. Consequently, we can count actions in different ways, depending on whether we distinguish them based on their terminus or based on their principles. Regarding the former, according to the rather common medieval adage, "the action is in the patient,"[124] and thus, if two actions have the same terminus, they must

123. *In Sent.* IV, d. 1, q. 1, a. 4, qc. 1, co: "Ad cujus evidentiam sciendum est, quod causa efficiens dupliciter potest dividi. Uno modo ex parte effectus; scilicet in disponentem, quae causat dispositionem ad formam ultimam; et perficientem, quae inducit ultimam perfectionem. Alio modo ex parte ipsius causae in agens principale, et instrumentale. Agens enim principale est est primum movens, agens autem instrumentale est movens motum. Instrumento autem competit duplex actio: una quam habet ex propria natura, alia quam habet prout est motum a primo agente; sicut calor ignis, qui est instrumentum virtutis nutritivae, ut dicitur in 2 de anima, ex natura propria habet dissolvere, et consumere, et hujusmodi effectus: sed inquantum est instrumentum animae vegetabilis, generat carnem" (Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum super Sententiis: Liber quartus*, ed. Maria Fabianus Moos, vol. 4 (Paris: Lethielleux, 1947), 32).

124. Cf. *Auct. Arist.* 2, 101 (Hamesse ed., 148).

be the same. Regarding the latter, if we count the actions based on their principles or powers that produced them, then if two actions are produced by numerically different powers, they must be numerically different.

This also applies to Aquinas's theory of divine concurrence (and consequently to Peter's). Recall that for Aquinas and Peter, God's concurrence is necessary because created causes require a principal cause to produce their effects in the same way as my pen requires me to produce a sentence. Just as we might regard the marks on the paper either as colored strokes or as a meaningful sentence, we might similarly regard heat either as an existing accident or as an accident of a certain kind (warmth). And just as the pen brings about the former in virtue of its own nature while bringing about the latter in virtue of being my instrument, the fire similarly brings about the former in virtue of having the nature of fire while bringing about the latter in virtue of being God's instrument. This does not mean that there is some physically separate "accident-as-such" or "warmth-without-existing," just as my pen's double action does not mean that there are some "colored-strokes-as-such" existing separately from my sentence.

In this way, the secondary agent's action *considered as* bringing about some existence is identical with God's action, even though its action *considered as* bringing about something existing *in some way* is not identical with God's action. This interpretation seems to do justice to the passages seen above where Aquinas claimed that the action of instrumental causes are numerically distinct from that of the principal cause, to the *Summa* passage that seems to suggest the opposite, and to Peter of Palude's interpretation according to whom "God and the creature act with distinct actions formally, even though not materially."[125]

Thus, the concurrentist might say that this view falls between the two horns of Du-

125. *In Sent.* II, d. 1, q. 4: "⟨Deus agit⟩ per actionem distinctam formaliter, licet non materialiter" (Toth ed., 90).

rand's Dilemma, since there is neither strict identity nor strict non-identity between the actions. Of course, whether this solution to Durand's Dilemma is satisfactory will depend on whether one accepts the instrumental causal model it relies on, and the claim that actions can be counted in multiple ways. But, provided the Aristotelian claim that the action is in the patient, the problem is not specific to divine concurrence: it will arise in every case where we have two partial causes acting by different powers.[126]

2.3.2 Peter of Palude on Concurrence

Apart from responding to Durand's criticism, Peter of Palude also presents an independent argument against the mere conservationist position. For the closing of this section which can also serve as a hindsight motivation for endorsing a concurrentist model, I reconstruct this argument as fully as Peter's short text allows.

The argument, call it the Three Young Men objection, is directed against mere conservationism as such. Although the objection might seem at first somewhat cryptic, it is worth citing in Peter's original formulation:[127]

> In the furnace of the young men the fire was conserved in its being and in its active power, but it did not act for God did not act with it; therefore, fire with heat is not a sufficient cause of heating, because when it is posited the effect does not follow — and the same will be the case after the day of judgment. If you say that fire is a sufficient cause unless there is an impediment, I ask: in what way was the fire impeded? It was impeded either by the addition of an action or the subtraction of it. Not by addition, because there was nothing added to the fire, since it burned the soldiers and the cloths

126. Gloria Frost has recently suggested at a conference that maybe Aquinas needs a theory of "identity without sameness" to solve the problem of any kind of causal concurrence. I am not currently attempting to work out such a theory.

127. Similar and similarly cryptic formulations can be found in Peter's contemporary, Hervaeus Natalis, later in Ockham, and much later in Suarez. Indeed, we could call this the "standard medieval objection" against mere conservationism.

> of the children. . . and there was also nothing shielding them, such as some coldness.[128]

Thus, the Three Young Men objection points us to a test-case to consider when examining theories of divine concurrence. Although the test-case is a special one, according to the objection, it has more general implications regarding which theory of concurrence we should adopt. For according to the objection, not every theory can account well for this test-case, and thus if one wants to maintain that the test-case is at least logically possible, then one has to be careful not to adopt a theory on which it would turn out to be logically contradictory. More precisely, the Three Young Men objection argues as follows:

(1) Miracles such as the three young men not burning in the fiery furnace are possible;

(2) If mere conservationism were true, these miracles would not be possible;

∴ Therefore, mere conservationism is false.

I turn now to explain the premises and provide some support for them on behalf of Peter.

Miracles against Nature

The test-case referred to by the Three Young Men objection is — not surprisingly — the story of the Three Young Men, more precisely the story of them not burning in Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace. The story is reported in the book of Daniel, and is

128. Peter of Palude, *In Sent.*, II, d. 1, q. 4: "In camino puerorum conseruabatur ignis in suo esse et in sua uirtute actiua, non tamen agebat, quia Deus non coagebat; ergo ignis cum calore non est sufficiens causa calefaciendi, quia posita non sequitur effectus — et idem erit post diem iudicii. Si dicatur quod ignis est sufficiens causa nisi impediatur, quero: quomodo impediebatur? Aut agendo aut actionem subtrahendo. Non agendo, quia nec igni fuit aliud impressum calorem reprimens, quia combussit caldeos et combussit uincula puerorum, non uestes aut capillos; nec eis fuit aliud impressum, puta frigiditas" (Toth ed., 83).

worth quoting in its entirety since it contains a few interesting details that play some part in Peter's argument.

> ⟨Nebuchadnezzar⟩ ordered the furnace heated seven times more than it was usually heated. And he ordered some of the mighty men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. Then these men were bound in their cloaks... and they were thrown into the burning fiery furnace. Because the king's order was urgent and the furnace overheated, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell bound into the burning fiery furnace.... Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the fire. And the satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king's counselors gathered together and saw that the fire had not had any power over the bodies of those men. The hair of their heads was not singed, their cloaks were not harmed, and no smell of fire had come upon them.[129]

There are a few points to note about this story. First, according to the report, there was a natural substance, fire, (per our Aristotelian assumption) having its characteristic causal powers. We also learn that the causal powers of the fire were active and exercised, since the soldiers were burned by it — and so were, according to Peter's reconstruction, all the garments of the three young men except their cloaks. At the same time, however, the fire did not bring about its characteristic effect on some other patients, namely on the three young men, even though it seems that the three young men were just as well disposed to receive this effect as the other objects present.

Second, it is worth noting that this miracle belongs to a host of others of the same kind, the kind that is usually called miracles *contra naturam*, that is, miracles against nature.[130] In miracles *contra naturam*, "nature retains a disposition contrary to the effect

129. Daniel 3:19–27; translation is from the NRSV.

130. Aquinas distinguishes these from miracles *preter naturam* (beside nature), and from miracles *supra naturam* (above nature). In the former, God produces a form in a matter that nature could also produce, but not in the same way. (For instance, water could be turned into wine by natural causes, but it would involve some other elements and a long process including planting and caring for the vineyard, harvesting

produced by God";[131] that is, there is an object that keeps its nature with its causal powers, nevertheless God produces something that is the opposite of its usual effect. For instance, when Joshua stopped the Jordan river,[132] the river did not flow even though it kept its weight as was manifest when it flooded the surrounding lands. Or, in our present example, when the three young men were thrown into Nebuchadnezzar's fire, the fire did not burn them even though it kept its heat. The Three Young Men objection suggests that this is what the mere conservationist cannot consistently account for, while the concurrentist can.

Finally, it should be emphasized that the Three Young Men objection does not require that such miracles have ever actually happened but only that they are at least logically possible. For according to most classical accounts of divine omnipotence, God's power is limited by the law of non-contradiction; hence, if Nebuchadnezzar's fire does involve a logical contradiction, then not even God has the power to bring it about even in principle.[133]

Again, the story is meant as a hypothetical test-case: if we have a general theory of divine concurrence that would involve that this story is self-contradictory, and at the same time we would also like to maintain that the story is *not* logically self-contradictory, then we might need to adjust our general theory. Of course, one might also say that we could also just give up the logical possibility of such kind of miracles; it seems, however,

---

the grapes, fermenting, and so on, none of which took place at the wedding at Cana, where Jesus is reported to have turned water into wine *per saltum* and immediately.) In the latter, God produces a form in a matter that is not naturally apt to receive such a form even though both the form and the matter occur in nature in some different combination. (For instance, in the resurrection of the dead, God produces the form of life in the matter of a corpse; although both the quality of being alive and corpses exist in nature, the latter cannot naturally acquire the former.)

131. Aquinas, *QDP*, q. 6, a. 2, ad 3: "Contra naturam esse dicitur, quando in natura remanet contraria dispositio ad effectum quem Deus facit" (Marietti ed., 163).

132. Josh. 3.

133. For a classical formulation of such notion of omnipotence, see for instance Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 25, a. 3, or Ockham, *Quodlibeta Septem* quodl. VI, q. 1.

that the burden of proof is on the mere conservationist to show their logical impossibility on some independent grounds, and until he does so, Peter's first premise is at least a plausible one.[134] I turn now to explain his second premise, that is, why he thinks that if such kind of miracles are possible, mere conservationism is false.

Mere Conservationism and the Three Young Men

Why could not the mere conservationist account for miracles against nature just as well as any alternative theory? Recall that the distinguishing claim of mere conservationism is that God does not specifically contribute to the effects of secondary causes. But why cannot it also maintain that Nebuchadnezzar's fire might not bring about its characteristic effects on the three young men? In what follows, I suggest that according to the Three Young Men objection, mere conservationism cannot avoid the contradiction between miracles against nature and the Aristotelian claim that causes produce their effects necessarily; and I also show why a proposed solution, the *Mask solution*, does not work.

To understand the Three Young Men objection, we need to pay attention to an important feature of broadly speaking Aristotelian accounts of causation: that causes and their effects are necessarily related.[135] Although Aristotle himself rarely if ever expounds on the necessary connection between causes and effects,[136] it is usually agreed that Aris-

134. It is also worth noting that according to Peter, the same is going to happen after the Day of Judgment. I am not going to elaborate on this claim here, as it assumes some rather contentious claims of medieval cosmology; the idea, in short, is that after the Day of Judgment the elements will stop performing their operations even though they remain of the same nature and with the same causal powers, partly because the heavens stop moving and thus stop enabling physical changes. (For Aquinas's elaboration on this, see his *QDP*, q. 5, a. 7–8.) According to Peter, this scenario would present the same problem for the mere conservationist as Nebuchadnezzar's fire and the like as it can be regarded as a continuous state of *contra naturam* miracles in the sense defined above.

135. I am not going to defend the necessary connection requirement but merely aim to show that it is a plausible assumption in an Aristotelian account of causation.

136. Some short remarks can be found e.g., in *Metaphysics* IX, 1048a6–8.

totelians do require some form of it. (See for instance Al-Ghazali's arguments directed against the Philosophers, and the reactions to it by Averroes, section 1.2.1 above.[137])

This commitment to necessary connection is even more explicit in some Neo-Aristotelian accounts of causation. A nice example is Edward Madden's now almost classical formulation of it:

> If a man falls into a fiery furnace, is it necessary that he be incinerated? Of course not, since he might get out before being badly burnt, or he might have on an asbestos suit. But say he cannot get out—the door blew shut behind him—and he had on only ordinary clothes. Now is it necessary that he burn to death? It certainly seems so.... *To deny the heat while keeping the other properties plus the nature of fire that helps explain them all is to land oneself in a straightforward self-inconsistency.*[138]

Madden's claim is that *if* it were possible that the fire exercised its causal power while no heat was produced in a well-disposed recipient, that would mean that the fire had no nature of fire and was not really fire after all.

Thus, according to this view, the connection between an object and the manifestation of its powers in appropriate circumstances is necessary (this necessity being of the logical sort); without this necessity our scientific explanations and causal explanations in general would not make sense. If the fire is burning, it *must* produce heat, otherwise all scientific explanations involving fire would be uncertain. And indeed, causal powers are explanatory *precisely* because they necessitate their effects. As Madden suggests, without this necessity there would be just no explaining in the causal explanation.[139]

137. For a brief history of the "no necessary connection" argument against Aristotle and Aristotelians from Al-Ghazali through Autrecourt and Malebranche to Hume, see Steven Nadler, "'No Necessary Connection:' The Medieval Roots of the Occasionalist Roots of Hume," *The Monist* 96, no. 3 (1996): 448–468.

138. Edward H Madden, "Hume and the Fiery Furnace," *Philosophy of Science* 38, no. 1 (1971): 68, emphasis added. Others (e.g., Stephen Mumford and Rani Lill Anjum, *Getting Causes from Powers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011)) maintain that this necessity has to be qualified to hold only when there is no mask present; however, given no mask, the connection is still of metaphysical necessity.

139. Imagine that you try to explain why a coin ended on tail by referring to the coin flip as its cause.

Most medieval Aristotelians also adhered to some form of such powers-necessitism;[140] but as is easy to see based on the above, the theistic context presented a special problem. According to the Three Young Men objection, mere conservationism cannot avoid this problem, that is, cannot maintain, on the one hand, a necessary connection between cause and effect and also maintain, on the other hand, the logical possibility of *contra naturam* miracles. The reason for this is the mere conservationist's claim that "fire is a sufficient cause of heat," from which it follows that if there is a fire, it is sufficient to bring about the burning.

That the mere conservationist cannot reconcile the necessary connection requirement with the possibility of *contra naturam* miracles can be seen by positing one of the two requirements and arriving at a denial of the other. Thus, first, imagine that the story of Nebuchadnezzar's fire could possibly be true. Since according to the mere conservationist, fire and some properly disposed patients are the only relevant causes of heat, and since the fire and the properly disposed patients are the same in a normal fire and in Nebuchadnezzar's, the only difference between the two is that the former brings about the heat while the latter does not. Other than this, the two cases are identical; both fires are acting by their substantial heating power on properly disposed patients, which is sufficient to ensure that the effect follows except when it does not. If this is the case, however, no necessary connection can be posited.

Second, suppose that causes necessarily bring about their effects; whenever there is fire, there is also heat, just as Madden described above. But Madden's above-quoted example about the fiery furnace is provocative precisely because he claims that in a power-based

---

As even a small child could point it out, you did not explain what you ought to have explained — indeed, you would have given the very same explanation if the coin had ended on head instead. Avicenna would present a similar argument; see section 1.2.3 above.

140. See, for instance, Aquinas, *In Phys.* III, lect. 5; *QDV*, q. 28, a. 8; Ockham, *Rep.* IV, d. 1, q. 1. Later medieval authors such as Pierre d'Ailly and Gabriel Biel, and perhaps Peter Auriol seem to be exceptions; see sections 4.2, 4.3, and 3.3 below, respectively.

account of causation, a fiery furnace without burning is *in principle* impossible, and hence not even God could make it the case that Nebuchadnezzar's fire did not burn Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego while still remaining a fire and burning the soldiers. From which it follows that if we grant that causes produce their effects necessarily, we need to deny the logical possibility of miracles *contra naturam* — and perhaps say that the Biblical stories reporting them should be understood metaphorically and not as violating the usual course of nature. Since in this case there is not *really* (not even possibly) a fire without burning the three young men thrown in it, there is nothing the mere conservationist cannot account for.

None of these options were satisfactory for most medieval thinkers, however, who had independent reasons to endorse both Aristotle's notion of causal powers requiring some necessary connection, and the possibility of miracles against nature where this connection seemed to be violated. Now I turn to a solution that might be proposed to reconcile these views within the mere conservationist framework, and show why it does not help the mere conservationist.

The proposed solution (call it the *Mask solution*) is simple: since even according to the Aristotelian, a cause fails to produce its effect if there is a mask blocking its action, to save Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from burning, it is enough to say that some mask blocked the fire's heat. In other words, even though it was impossible for God to merely *will* efficaciously that the fire did not produce its heat, God could have placed some kind of a shield between the fire and the three young men, behaving just like a mask in blocking the manifestation of the fire's power.

Even Peter of Palude alludes to such a possible solution after raising the Three Young Men objection, according to which "the angel of the Lord turned the middle of the

furnace into something like a wind, a blowing of moisture,"[141] and his remark can be generalized. A mask or antidote can be anything that blocks a disposition's manifestation; for example, the manifestation of poison is masked if someone takes an antidote after swallowing the poison, or the manifestation of fire is masked if someone is wearing an asbestos suit.[142] Although there was no visible asbestos suit on the three young men when they were thrown into Nebuchadnezzar's fire, according to the Mask solution, God could have created an invisible one; thus, while the fire manifested its power and was a sufficient cause of the burning of the soldiers, the invisible asbestos suit protected Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from burning (see figure 2.1). (Obviously, the scenario needs to be a little more complicated in order to account for the burning of cloths and the not burning of cloaks, and to account for blocking the fire that was heated to seven times as usual, but the difference is merely in the complexity and strength of the suits, which should not present intractable problems for God.)

Despite its promise, however, the Mask solution turns out to be problematic. Peter does not spell out in detail its problems, apart from noting that the Bible only refers to such a mask as a metaphor (not a strong argument against the mere conservationist, who might in turn take the whole story of Nebuchadnezzar's fire as a metaphor). But his response can be strengthened by referring to some aspects of divine omnipotence as it has been understood since the early medieval period. There is a more general and a more specific problem arising from the Mask solution as combined with this understanding.

Concerning the general problem, according to the Mask solution, God counteracts the action of Nebuchadnezzar's fire, which fire and action he also keeps in existence. But

141. Peter of Palude, *In Sent.* II, d. 1, q. 4: "Angelus domini fecit medium fornacis quasi ventum roris flantem" (Toth ed., 83). Cf. also the Vulgate, Dan. 3:49–50.

142. Finks, mimics, and masks have received quite some attention in various recent treatments of dispositions. More examples can be found in David Lewis, "Finkish Dispositions," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 47, no. 187 (1997): 143–158; see also Anthony Everett, "Intrinsic Finks, Masks, and Mimics," *Erkenntnis* 71, no. 2 (2009): 191–203.

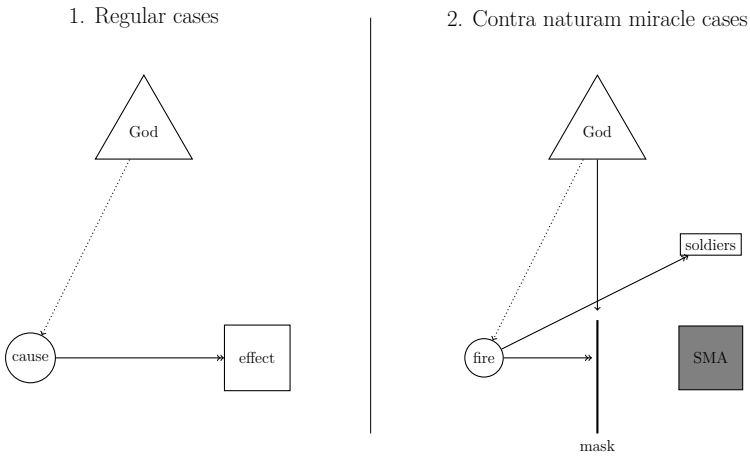

Figure 2.1: Mere conservationism and Nebuchadnezzar's fire

according to many classical theists, this picture is very misleading or even contradictory — since blocking a power that God also keeps in existence would mean that God acts with two contrary actions at the same time on the same creature.[143] As Alfred Freddoso has once summarized, "God does not have to counteract His creatures from without in order to make them do His bidding; He does not have to vie with them in order to exercise control over them. Rather, He controls them from within as their sovereign creator and governor."[144] Thus, as some theists would insist, there is at least a *prima facie* tension between saying that God created the world *ex nihilo*, keeps it in existence, and yet also maintaining that the world has such autonomous powers independent from God that God needs to counteract their exercise by creating something else. According to these theists, God controls creatures from within; that is, if he wants the fire not to burn, or not to burn certain properly disposed patients, then the fire will not burn them. It seems, however, that the mere conservationist when employing the Mask solution, cannot maintain that God is such a sovereign governor.

143. For a modern presentation of such an argument, see Herbert McCabe, "On Evil and Omnipotence," in *Faith within Reason*, ed. Brian Davies (Bloomsbury Academic, 2007), 67–93.
144. Freddoso, "Why Conservation is not Enough," 575.

There is also a more specific although not independent problem with the Mask solution. According to most medieval thinkers, God's omnipotence means that he can bring about anything that does not imply a logical contradiction, and consequently, "whatever God can effect by the mediation of an efficient cause, he can also effect by himself immediately."[145] (I will label this principle the *Principle of Omnipotence*). The Principle of Omnipotence, if true, should also be applicable in the case of Nebuchadnezzar's fire and the Mask solution. That is, if God can block the heat of Nebuchadnezzar's fire from the three young men by the mediation of an asbestos suit, then according to the Principle of Omnipotence, God must also be able to block it without such a mediation, immediately. Which is to say that if the mask solution works, then it is not needed. But as was seen above, God *cannot* immediately bring about that the three young men did not burn in the fire, if the mere conservationist wants to maintain that causes produce their effects necessarily.[146]

All in all, in the present reconstruction, one might summarize the Three Young Men objection as follows:

1. Miracles *contra naturam* are possible. [Assumption]
2. The Principle of Omnipotence is true: if God can do something by the mediation of secondary causes, God can do the same without their mediation. [Assumption]
3. If mere conservationism is true, then *if* miracles against nature are possible, then

145. Ockham, *Ord.* I, prol., q. 1: "Quidquid potest Deus per causam efficientem mediam, potest per se immediate" (William Ockham, *Scriptum in librum primum Sententiarum (Ordinatio)*, ed. Gedeon Gál, Opera Theologica I–IV (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1967), 1:35). Ockham was not unique in endorsing this principle; the 1277 Parisian articles already condemned a proposition according to which "God cannot produce the effect of a secondary cause without the secondary cause itself" (Art. 69: "Quod deus non potest in effectum cause secundarie sine ipsa causa secundaria," Piché ed., 100), and almost all medieval authors endorsed some similar formulation.

146. Someone could say that God might produce a nature that does not act uniformly. I see two reasons for why medieval authors to my knowledge did not consider this option. First, that natures act uniformly (at least for the most part) was a basic principle of Aristotelian metaphysics and natural philosophy; and second, this still would not have solved the same scenario as it will arise after the Day of Judgment.

God can bring them about by the mediation of a mask but not without their mediation. [Premise; justified by the necessary connection requirement]

4. If mere conservationism is true, then *if* miracles against nature are possible, then the Principle of Omnipotence is false. [from 2 and 3]

5. If mere conservationism is true, then either miracles against nature are not possible, or the Principle of Omnipotence is false.

6. Therefore, mere conservationism is false. [from 1, 2, 5]

Whether this was indeed in the background of Peter's argument is difficult to determine, but it seems to be supported by his remarks and by later discussions of the same issue. If this is true, it means that one motivating reasons to endorse concurrentism, at least in the early fourteenth century,[147] is to be able to account for the possibility of *contra naturam* miraculous cases with a certain understanding of Aristotelian causal powers and divine omnipotence. Moreover, whether one finds this argument convincing will, of course, turn on two things: whether one finds the assumptions plausible, and whether one thinks that there is any alternative to mere conservationism that could avoid the difficulty raised by the Three Young Men objection. Peter of Palude does not argue for the possibility of miracles *contra naturam*, that is, that they do provide a test-case that we should pay attention to. Nor does he argue for the Principle of Omnipotence or for the necessary connection requirement. Indeed, he takes these claims for granted, as they do seem plausible in a theistic Aristotelian framework.

147. The same argument is interestingly missing from Aquinas.

2.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter considered just one aspect of the debate about divine concurrence, the concern about working out a viable solution to maintain that both God and the secondary agent are immediately active in every operation of nature. As was seen above, although both Aquinas and Giles maintain that God is immediately active in every operation of creatures, their understanding of this activity differ. While Aquinas's most plausible model of divine concurrence seems to be that of principal and instrumental causes, which allows for God acting — as a principal agent — with different individual causes, bringing about different effects, Giles argued that God's concurrence is completely general and only individuated by the individual receptacles of this concurrence. Durand, who knew both Aquinas's and Giles's position quite well, argued that neither of them is satisfactory, given that they cannot account for the numerical sameness or difference of God's and the secondary agent's action. With Peter of Palude, who responded to Durand's objection and developed an argument against Durand's mere conservationist position, the discussion again returned to considerations about miracles. Specifically, Peter argued that mere conservationism cannot account for miracles against nature, that is, miracles where a thing preserves its disposition and nevertheless God produces an effect that is contrary to the characteristic effect of this disposition. As was seen in Chapter 1, miracles served as motivating cases for occasionalism as well. In the thirteenth and early fourteenth century, they play a slightly different role; contrary to Ghazali, most thirteenth-century authors thought that the view according to which both God and secondary agents are active, can accommodate miracles even of the special, *contra naturam* kind.

3 | SINFUL ACTS OF THE WILL

Although I said at the beginning that I will mostly abstain from considering the problem of divine concurrence with voluntary agents, this second debate, in some sense, does just that. Specifically, the debate I am going to discuss here addresses the question of how or whether God is causally active in the acts of the will, and even more specifically, in sinful acts. Sinful acts presented some special difficulties, since most medieval theologians wanted to maintain that although God is causally active in the operations of creatures, including the human will, he is not the cause of sinful volitions *as* sinful volitions. As was said earlier, however, I will not consider the problem that arises for the human free will specifically. The authors presented in this chapter, although directing their attention to the special case of sinful volitions, relied on (or argued against) some more general views of divine concurrence with secondary agents. These more general views will be the focus points in this chapter.

The first author, Peter John Olivi (ca. 1248–1298) is well known to scholars of the Franciscan order, since he was one of the most controversial Franciscans in the thirteenth century. Only a few details of his life are known, but he was almost certainly born in southern France probably in 1248 or perhaps in 1247,[1] entered the Franciscan order in 1259 or 1260, completed the novitiate in Béziers, and was then sent to the University

1. For historical studies of Olivi's life, see David Burr, "The Persecution of Peter Olivi," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 66, no. 5 (1976): 1–98, especially pp. 5–11; and Carter Partee, "Peter John Olivi: Historical and Doctrinal Study," *Franciscan Studies* 20, nos. 3–4 (1960): 215–260. As Burr notes, Olivi's "correct" name is *Petrus Iohannis* (instead of the more common nominative Iohannes), that is, 'Peter, son of John', or 'Peter Johnson Olivi'; nevertheless, I will stick to the usual — albeit incorrect — Anglicized usage.

of Paris. He did not went on to the magistrate there, and whether his commentary on the *Sentences* belongs to that period or was written later in Florence is currently unknown.[2] In any case, Peter became heavily involved in the poverty controversy of the order, was suspected of heresy multiple times, condemned by the Franciscan authorities in 1283, but only shown to be heretical later by the council of Vienne (1312). He died in Languedoc after spending most of his teaching career at Montpellier and Narbonne, on his deathbed declaring that he had received all his knowledge in Paris through a special divine infusion.[3]

The second author I consider in this debate is John Duns Scotus (ca. 1266–1308), who requires very little introduction as he is among the most well known authors of his time. It would be also quite unnecessary to lay out all the historiographical details about Scotus's works, as it has been done elsewhere in great detail;[4] nevertheless, in what follows, it will be important to keep in mind the various versions of his *Sentences* commentary. The earliest of these, the *Lectura*, contains his lectures that he gave in Oxford as a bachelor (the precise date is unknown; around 1297–1298).[5] Second, the *Ordinatio* is composed of the revisions of these lectures, written when Scotus was already in Paris (1300–1304), and probably contains Scotus's most elaborated views on some subjects albeit was never finished. Third, we have several *Reportationes* of Scotus's Paris lectures; those on the second book, which will be the main focus of this section, have not yet been edited.[6] Finally, a compilation of notes was later added to Scotus's

2. See, e.g., Valens Heynck, "Zur Datierung der Sentenzenkommentare des Petrus Johannis Olivi und des Petrus de Trabibus," *Franziskanische Studien* 38 (1956): 371–198, and on the other side, Burr, "The Persecution of Peter Olivi," 6.

3. The report is from Bernard Gui, cited in ibid., 5.

4. See, e.g., Thomas Williams, "Introduction: The Life and Works of John Duns the Scot," in *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*, ed. Thomas Williams (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 1–14.

5. For a critical edition of books 1–3, see Johannes Duns Scotus, *Ioannis Duns Scoti Opera Omnia*, ed. Carl Balic and assoc. (Vatican City: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1950–), vols. 16–21; book 4 is no longer extant.

6. That is, apart from a non-critical edition of the A version in Johannes Duns Scotus, *Opera Omnia*,

Sentences commentary by his student and secretary, William Alnwick (around 1312–1325).[7] As will be seen below, Scotus was well acquainted with Olivi's view on the subject of divine concurrence.

Finally, although Peter Auriol (1280–1322) belongs to the lesser known medieval thinkers, according to some, "there is every indication that Auriol should be counted along with Aquinas, Scotus, Henry of Ghent, Ockham, and Rimini as one of the most important theologians of the Late Middle Ages."[8] His commentary on the *Sentences* was probably written between 1314 and 1316, and survives in multiple redactions. At that time, Peter was probably either in Bologna or Toulouse, lecturing on the commentary as he was teaching at the Franciscan convent. In 1316 he moved to Paris, and earned his doctorate in theology there, also becoming regent master until 1321 or so.[9] Of the second book of his *Sentences* commentary only *Reportatio* versions remain, and the precise number of its redactions and its relation to the unfortunately rather unreliable Zanetti (1605) edition still needs to be determined.[10]

---

ed. Luke Wadding (Lyon: Laurentius Durand, 1639 (repr.: Georg Olms, 1968)), vol. 11. For a relatively recent summary of the convoluted status and authorship of the *Reportatio*, see P Barnaba Hechich, "Il problema delle 'Reportationes' nell'eredità dottrinale del b. Giovanni Duns Scoto, OFM," in *Giovanni Duns Scoto: Studi e ricerce nel VII centenario della sua morte*, ed. Martin Carbajo Nunez (Roma: Antonianum, 2008), 59–129.

7. Alnwick's *Additiones magnae* pertaining to the second book have not yet been edited. For a useful summary on the question of realiability of the *Additiones*, see Williams, "Introduction," 11.

8. Peter Auriol, "Peter Aureol on Divine Foreknowledge and Future Contingents: *Scriptum in Primum Librum Sententiarum*, Distinctions 38–39," ed. Chris Schabel, *Cahiers de l'Institute du Moyen Age Grec et Latin* 65 (1995): 66.

9. For further biographical details, see Buytaert's Introduction in Peter Auriol, *Scriptum super primum Sententiarum*, ed. E M Buytaert (Franciscan Institute, 1952).

10. A project of the critical edition of the commentary has only started relatively recently, and is still in progress. For a list of manuscripts and description of the manuscript tradition of book II, see Chris Schabel, "Place, Space, and the Physics of Grace in Auriol's *Sentences* Commentary," *Vivarium* 38, no. 1 (2000): 117–161, esp. 155–157. Some difficulties of the editing project are described in Katherine H Tachau, "The Preparation of a Critical Edition of Pierre Auriol's *Sentences* Lectures," in *Editori di Quaracchi 100 anni dopo: bilancio e prospettive*, ed. Alvaro Cacciotti and Barbara Faes de Mottoni (Rome: Edizioni Antonianum, 1997), 205–216.

3.1 PETER JOHN OLIVI

Peter Olivi, just like Durand of St.-Pourçain, provides a criticism of the concurrentist positions. Unlike Durand, however, he does not discuss the question of concurrence in general but presents his view — albeit having general implications — against divine concurrence with sinful volitions in particular, in the second book of his commentary on the *Sentences*.[11] Also unlike Durand, who addresses specific authors' versions of the view, Olivi attempts to refute concurrentism in its entirety, that is, in all its possible varieties.[12]

I start this section by giving a brief overview Olivi's goals in the relevant question of his *Sentences* commentary. Then I turn to present his arguments against three versions of concurrentism in more detail, and I close with some analysis of these arguments.

3.1.1 Overview

At the start of his treatment of sinful actions, Olivi refers to two opinions about actions in general. According to the first opinion, "the acts of sin and bad will... are not from God";[13] according to the second opinion, "God is the cause of everything, of substances as well as of actions and qualities, insofar as they are beings."[14] Within this second

11. As was mentioned above, the precise dates of Olivi's commentary are unknown, although the last redaction of it, which is contained in Jansen's critical edition, originates probably from the 1290s. In what follows, I will rely on the text as provided in the critical edition, based mostly on an early codex from 1300 (Petrus Iohannis Olivi, *Quaestiones in Secundum Librum Sententiarum*, ed. Bernardus Jansen (Quaracchi: Ad Claras Aquas, 1926)).

12. Notwithstanding that Olivi probably had some specific authors in mind when proposing these arguments.

13. *In Sent.* II, q. 116: "Quidam enim dixerunt quod actus peccatorum et malarum voluntatum... non sunt a Deo" (Jansen ed., 333).

14. Ibid.: "Alii vero dicunt quod Deus est causa omnium tam substantiarum quam actionum et qualitatum, in quantum sunt entia" (Jansen ed., 335).

opinion, Olivi further distinguishes two positions. According to the first, God causes the sinful actions immediately; according to the second, God's causal involvement in sinful actions is only mediate. As Olivi notes, the Lombard leaves the question undecided. Olivi agrees with the second opinion (in modern terminology, he is not a deist), but he argues for the thesis that the actions of created agents are not from God immediately but only mediately. He also thinks that this is true not only of sinful actions in particular but effects of secondary causes in general.

In the context of sinful actions, Olivi advances four lines of arguments for his position that sinful actions are caused immediately by the secondary agent (in this case, the human will) only, and not by God. He shows that sinful actions are not from God immediately since (i) they are caused immediately by a secondary cause; (ii) they originate from free will; (iii) they are evil; and (iv) creatures can be held blameworthy for them. All of these groups contain multiple arguments, and in what follows I will only deal with the first, which concerns secondary causal agency in general.

As Olivi argues here,

1. Actions that are immediately caused by secondary agents are not immediately caused also by God;
2. Sinful actions are immediately caused by secondary agents;
3. Therefore, sinful actions are not immediately caused by God.

The major premise obviously requires a general refutation of the concurrentist position, which holds precisely that the same actions can be both immediately caused by the secondary agent and nevertheless immediately caused by God. Olivi takes up the task of this refutation in this same place. And although the overall conclusion of the question concerns free agents only, in this first group of arguments he treats concurrentist causa-

tion more generally, as can be seen from his examples, which often refer to non-voluntary causes, such as fire.

Gloria Frost gives a detailed analysis of these arguments in her recent paper.[15] She argues that Olivi addresses his arguments against two models of concurrentism: what she dubs as the *DPA* model (*direct production of the action*), mostly held by Dominicans, and the *AP* model (*augmentation of power*), which is maintained by some Franciscan authors. According to the *DPA* model, "the operations of secondary causes are immediately produced by God in the same way that God immediately produces other objects, e.g. substances and properties, through the act of creation";[16] thus, for instance, when a piece of cotton is lit to fire, according to the *DPA* model, God immediately produces the heat and the flame. According to the *AP* model, on the other hand, "God has an action on the created power that is prior to and distinct from the actualized state of the power. This divine action on the created power augments that power to enable it to produce its act."[17] Frost distinguishes two kinds of the latter model; according to the first kind, the *influx model*, God's concurrence is an influx of power imparted to the secondary cause enabling its power to produce the action. The other version is called the *application model*, according to which God acts with the secondary cause as a principal cause concurs with its instrument.

I will return to Gloria Frost's paper in some more detail below when assessing Olivi's criticism, but for the presentation of Olivi's argument will proceed somewhat differently. It seems easier to divide the models Olivi treats into not two but three distinct ones, depending on what God is acting on when he is concurring with the secondary agent: as was seen in the previous chapter, God might be said to act on the secondary agent itself,

15. Frost, "Peter Olivi."
16. Ibid., 664.
17. Ibid.

on the action of the secondary agent, or on the secondary effect (or any combination of these). Olivi deals with all three of these options.

Moreover, although Frost characterizes the *DPA* and the *AP* models as "the mostly Dominican" and the "mostly Franciscan" one, respectively, this must be treated with some reservations especially since, as was shown in the previous chapter, Aquinas clearly endorses the application model and perhaps combines all the above models in his account, Giles (OSA) seems to have something similar to the influx model, while Scotus arguably holds something like the *DPA* (see the next section).

Thus, I will treat Olivi's arguments as directed against three models of concurrentism, which he seems to regard as a jointly exhaustive division of the concurrentist's logical space. These models describe God's concurrence *(1)* as God's immediate contribution to the secondary effect; *(2)* as an action augmenting the secondary agent's power; and *(3)* as an action on the secondary agent itself as God helps it to apply its power to the action.

3.1.2 Arguments against the Three Models

Olivi argues that none of the above listed three models works. It is worth noting, however, that he does not describe the targeted theories in detail, and thus these details can be only gathered from his arguments against them.

Against God's Action on the Effect

Olivi's first group of arguments is directed against a view according to which "⟨the secondary effects⟩ are immediately from secondary causes... and besides that... from

God, more immediately."[18] This is what Gloria Frost calls the *DPA* model, although perhaps it is easier to think about it as the model in which God produces the effect itself directly. According to this view, for instance, when a fire produces some heat, God also produces the same heat immediately. Standard analogies for the model include everyday examples such as two men pulling a ship up on a river, or two candles illuminating a room.

Olivi sees the main difficulty with this position in that the view implies that God produces the secondary effect both immediately and mediately. That God produces the effect immediately is explicitly maintained by the view; that he produces it mediately follows from the fact that according to the view, God maintains secondary causes in existence, and thus when they produce the effect, God also produces the effect by their mediation. Olivi advances three arguments that show that this is impossible.

(1) First, Olivi notes that such a view would imply that "God produced the effect twice, in two different ways, at the same instant."[19] And this is problematic because "⟨the secondary effect⟩ comes to be either as perfectly and indistantly from God in one way as in the other way,"[20] or less so. The latter cannot be the case. Olivi does not elaborate on the argument, but it seems that it would imply incompatible relational properties being true of the same thing: if the distance between God and effect e is d, then, at the same time, it cannot be the case that the distance between God and e is greater than d. On the other hand, if the view maintains that God produces the effect equally perfectly and directly in one way as in the other way, then it seems that

18. *In Sent.* II, q. 116: "sunt immediate a causis secundis... praeter hoc... sunt a Deo alio modo immediatiori" (Jansen ed., 338).

19. *In Sent.* II, q. 116: "Tunc eadem actio producitur a Deo bis et duobus modis, et hoc in eodem instanti" (Jansen ed., 338).

20. Ibid.: "Quaero etiam an ita perfecte sit a Deo et ita indistanter secundum unum modum, sicut secundum alterum. Et puto quod oportebit dicere quod sic. Alias secundum unum modum entitas actionis minus dependeret et plus distaret a Deo quam secundum alterum" (Jansen ed., 338).

the difference between immediate and mediate production has been eliminated — which makes it superfluous to maintain that God nevertheless produces the secondary effect *twice*.

I will return to this point below, but it is worth noting already that Olivi understands 'mediate' and 'immediate' in terms of or at least analogous to distance, which, as we have seen, is not necessarily how Giles or even Aquinas would have understood these notions. As Giles explicitly noted, by 'immediate' one can mean the immediacy of the power the king has when he acts by means of the bailiff (see section 2.2.2 above and also section 3.1.3 below).

(2) The second problem Olivi sees with the model also concerns these two ways of production, more precisely how the two ways are related to each other:

> These two ways of producing the action are either independent of each other or are connected and subordinated. If they are independent, then one could exist without the other, indeed it always does insofar as it is considered in itself. If, on the other hand, they are necessarily connected, then neither of them has any power except that of one total producing, of which, as it were, they are parts.[21]

That is, as Olivi argues, there are two ways one could spell out the relation between God's immediate and mediate production of the effect. First, one might say that the two actions are independent from each other; or second, one might say instead that one of them is subordinated to the other. According to Olivi, however, neither of these options would be satisfactory for a concurrentist.

First, if God's two actions are independent, that would mean that one could exist without the other. Thus, it could be the case, at least in principle, that God produces

21. *In Sent.* II, q. 116: "Item, aut isti duo modi producendi actionem sunt disparati aut sunt sibi connexi et subordinati. Si disparati, ergo unus potest esse sine altero, immo et semper est, tantum est de se. Si vero necessario sunt sibi connnexi, tunc ambo non habent vim nisi unius totalis modi producendi cuius sunt quasi partes" (Jansen ed., 338).

the secondary effect only mediately by the secondary agent. However, this cannot be true, according to the concurrentist, since they maintain precisely that God's immediate concurrence is *required* in the production of every effect — that is, an effect cannot be, even in principle, brought about by God's merely mediate production.

Neither does the second option work, however. In that case, God's immediate and mediate production can be considered as jointly providing one total cause of the secondary effect. This could happen in either of two ways. First, in such a way that the immediate and mediate production contribute in the same way (just as two, equally strong men pull a heavy ship up on the river), or second, in such a way that they do not contribute in the same way but one is a necessary condition of the other (just as the heavenly bodies are a necessary condition for the action of the elements).[22] However, they cannot contribute in the same way, since one is a mediate while the other is an immediate cause, and thus if there is a difference between immediate and mediate production, then the contribution of the two kinds of causes must be different. Therefore, the only possibility left for the concurrentist is to maintain that God's immediate contribution to the effect provides the necessary condition for his mediate contribution to the very same effect, which, as Olivi remarks, would be quite "miraculous":

> Because the first of those actions is brought about by God immediately, and then God will move the inferior causes to produce the same action which he had ⟨already⟩ produced with natural priority.[23]

Olivi's point seems to be that in this case the mediate production would be simply superfluous: given n_1 and n_2 as the instants of nature when God's immediate and mediate

22. *In Sent.* II, q. 116: "Tunc etiam aut concurrunt de pari ad eundem effectum, quod esse non potest, cum unus sit mediatus, alter immediatus, aut unus est prior altero et causa alterius, quod etiam dari non potest" (Jansen ed., 338).

23. *In Sent.* II, q. 116: "Et tunc est mirabile, quia prius actio illa est immediate facta a Deo et postea movebit Deus causas inferiores ad producendum eandem actionem iam a se prius naturaliter productam" (Jansen ed., 338).

production occurs, respectively, it seems that if effect e has already been produced at n_1, it does not need to be — or indeed, cannot be — produced at n_2.

Overall, Olivi's second argument against the claim that God directly produces the secondary effect shows that there is no viable way to understand the relation between God's immediate and mediate causation, despite that these would have to be present in every action of a creature. Gloria Frost sees Olivi's main concern in this argument to be about causal overdetermination; it seems, however, that although related to this, Olivi's concern is even more general. While the question whether causal determination is possible, might be a substantive metaphysical question, Olivi sees this version of concurrentism as leading to some logical contradiction no matter how it understands the relation between God's two kinds of concurrence: it either leads to the conclusion that a secondary cause can act without immediate divine concurrence (which contradicts the concurrentist's main claim), or to the conclusion that something can be produced (at least logically speaking) *after* it has already been produced. According to Olivi, since the currently treated version of concurrentism has no other alternative to explain this relation, it cannot be plausibly maintained.

(3) The third problem Olivi sees with the model is that it either leads to the impossible consequence that an action is wholly and totally brought about by two numerically different agents, or to the consequence that God and the secondary agent produce only parts of it:

> It is impossible that the same action is totally and immediately from two agents at the same time.... If it is said that not the whole essence of the action is from the secondary cause: then I ask whether any part of the action is totally from the secondary cause. And it has to be said that yes, and then about this the previous argument holds.[24]

24. *In Sent.* II, q. 116: "Item, impossibile est eandem actionem totaliter et immediate esse simul a duobus agentibus.... Si dicatur quod tota essentia actionis non est a causis secundis: tunc quaero an

Thus, Olivi's point is that if we accept that the secondary cause produces the action (or the effect) completely, then God cannot immediately produce the same effect — simply because there would be nothing left for God to produce.[25] We might note that both Aquinas as Giles would likely have accepted this; as Giles explicitly noted, God produces the effect wholly but not totally (*totum sed non totaliter*), as was discussed above (section 2.2.2).

If, on the other hand, we assume that both the secondary agent and God produce only parts of the effect, then the problem is the same as before: even the part from the creature should be immediately from God, since according to the concurrentist, the creature cannot bring about *anything* without God's concurrence.

As was seen above (especially sections 2.1.1 and 2.2.1), this is not an original criticism; the objection from partialism was the starting point of both Giles's and Durand's critique of Aquinas's early account, and perhaps the reason why Aquinas later preferred the explanation of concurrence in terms of principal and instrumental causes. What is perhaps novel in Olivi's formulation of the objection is that he thinks partialism is not only problematic for the concurrentist specifically, but also for more general metaphysical reasons. Namely, if we consider the part that is from God alone, and the part that is from the secondary agent, we would have to say that they are numerically different — indeed, the two would differ both in number and in species, and thus cannot constitute one effect.

All in all, the overall structure of Olivi's argument against the version of concurrentism

---

saltem aliqua pars actionis sit tota a causis secundis. Et oportebit dicere quod sic, et tunc saltem de illa currit argumentum praedictum" (Jansen ed., 338–339).

25. It might seem that Olivi's target slightly shifts in this argument, as he is talking about the production of action, and not of the effect as before. But he does not sharply distinguish between these two; although most medieval authors regard causation in the primary sense as a relation between two entities, and not as a relation between a substance and its action, the action is still a means of producing the proper effect and thus can be regarded as an *id quo*, an effect in the secondary sense.

according to which God's action is on the effect (or action) of the secondary agent, is clear. He points out difficulties with assuming that the effect is the result of both God's immediate and mediate action. In this case, either one of these two actions would be superfluous, or the view would lead to partialism with all its problems that had been recognized (and perhaps some more). Interestingly, Durand's worry that in this case it would be difficult to specify the numerical identity or difference of the actions (section 2.3.1), is missing from Olivi's considerations, as he seems to take their numerical difference for granted.

Against the Augmentation Model

Olivi directs the second group of arguments against the kind of concurrentism according to which God's cooperation and the creature's cooperation

> are not two modes of production but God is said to produce that action immediately, because God innermostly cooperates with the secondary causes to produce such an action, so that the secondary causes cannot produce it without such a cooperation.[26]

Thus, according to this model, divine concurrence is a necessary condition for the secondary agent to act, in such a way that this concurrence is brought about by God, and it is innermost to the creature precisely because it is God's action. Standard analogies for this kind of concurrence include everyday examples such as the sun and a human being generating a human (where the parent on its own would not have the necessary power to exercise);[27] or, perhaps, a human being who is unable to pull up the ship on the river on his own, and does not have anyone around to help him but only a can of spinach

26. *In Sent.* II, q. 116: "Forte dicetur quod non sunt duo modi producendi, sed Deus dicitur actionem illam producere immediate, quia Deus intime cooperatur causis secundis ad producendum talem actionem, ita quod causae secundae non possunt eam producere sine huiusmodi cooperatione" (Jansen ed., 339).

27. Cf. *Auct. Arist.*, 2, 65 (Hamesse ed., 145).

paste to increase his power. Aquinas arguably held this model (among others) especially when showing how the bringing about any effect surpassed the created power's ability without divine concurrence (see section 2.1.2 above).

Against such a view Olivi, again, advances multiple arguments, although he discusses them in varying detail. They all point to the difficulties arising from maintaining that God's concurrence is God's effect and not God himself.

First, Olivi points out that if this is the case, that is, that God's concurrence is indeed distinct from him, then it is difficult to see why it is immediate: "If it is an effect of God, then the aforementioned action is no more immediately from God than if it were from him only by the power of the secondary causes."[28] That is, according to the concurrentist, immediate concurrence means that God does not concur *merely* by the mediation of the secondary cause. However, as Olivi points out, if the created cause, c_1, can only act if God immediately concurs with it by creating c_2 (where c_2 is God's action), then God's concurrence via c_2 will not be more immediate than it would have been via c_1.

Second, Olivi argues that if God's action supplements the secondary agent's power so that it may be able to act, then "Why cannot God make some potency or active power or at least three concurring ones which are equal ⟨in power⟩ to that created cooperation?"[29] That is, there seems to be no reason for God not to be able to create a secondary agent in such a way that it had this greater amount of power to begin with. (If you become stronger by eating spinach paste, it seems to be possible, at least in principle, that you already had all the strength so that no drug is needed to augment it.) This means, however, *pace* the concurrentist, that God could have created something

28. *In Sent.* II, q. 116: "Si est effectus Dei, ergo actio praedicta non plus est per hoc immediate a Deo quam si fieret ab eo solum per potentiam causarum secundarum; quia modo non est ab eo nisi per hoc quod est ab illa cooperatione creata et a causis secundis. Et certe, illa cooperatio creata inter causas secundas debet computari" (Jansen ed., 339).

29. Ibid.: "Quare non potest Deus facere aliquam potentiam vel virtutem activam aut saltem tres in simul concurrentes quae aequivaleant illi cooperationi creatae?" (Jansen ed., 339.)

that did not need his concurrence — and if the concurrentist claims the opposite, then he derogates divine omnipotence insofar as he denies that God can create whatever is logically possible.

It is worth noting here that Olivi seems to be targeting a rather specific version of concurrentism. Most concurrentist, such as Aquinas and Giles, seem to think that God's action is not a creature in the same sense as Fido is a creature. According to them, while it would be impossible for a creature to bring about an effect on its own (for instance because it cannot create being), it is not impossible for God's action to do the same.

Third, Olivi argues, in regular cases of causation we see that the immediate effects of the secondary agents are similitudes of their active powers — just as, for instance, the sunbeam is a similitude of the sun, or the heat produced in a pot of water is a similitude of the fire's power of heat.[30] However, as Olivi points out, while it is easy to see how light is a similitude of the sun, or the heat of the fire, we cannot say the same thing about the effects of God's concurrence. It seems that the concurrentist would have to maintain that the the fire's augmented heating power (which is also the effect of God) is a similitude of God's active power by which he concurs. But this cannot be, since God's active power is different in species than the fire's power, and thus the latter cannot be a similitude of the former.[31]

Finally, fourth, Olivi presents the concurrentist with a nested dilemma (call it *Olivi's Dilemma*). According to Olivi's Dilemma, the concurrentist either has to maintain that

30. The propagation of the agent's power through the similitudes was indeed a common way of thinking about the cause–effect relation, especially in the case of vision (where this similitude is usually called the *species in medio*). This meant to explain, among others, how we can see far away objects even though there is no causation at a distance; see, e.g., Roger Bacon, *Roger Bacon's Philosophy of Nature: A Critical Edition of* De multiplicatione specierum *and* De speculis comburentibus, ed. David C Lindberg (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 1998), especially c. 3.

31. *In Sent.* II, q. 116: "Effectus immediati causarum secundarum sunt similitudines virtutis activae earum, ut radius est similitudo lucis solaris, et primus effectus caloris non est aliud quam similtudo caloris. Si igitur praedicta cooperatio divina est specie diversa ab ipso calore, quomodo similitudo caloris erit ab ea?" (Jansen ed., 339.)

by the divine cooperation, the active power (heat) of the fire is rendered more active; or the concurrentist denies this. The latter would obviously be inconvenient, since it would amount to saying that the divine cooperation does not help the fire's heat to achieve its effect, which, in consequence, would render the cooperation useless and thus unnecessary to assume.

On the other hand, if the concurrentist says that the divine cooperation does render the fire's heat more active, then

> ⟨the divine cooperation⟩ is either a habit, or some actual motion of that heat or of some other active power. But the first, namely that it is its habit, is ridiculous and improbable on many counts. But if it is its motion, then the form, insofar as it is form, would be moved per se and directly, and the active power, insofar as it is active, would be passive.[32]

Thus, as Olivi argues, if one posits divine concurrence that augments the fire's heating power, then one has to regard this concurrence either as some kind of habit of the fire's power, or as some active motion of it. About the former Olivi just notes that it is "ridiculous and multiply improbable" — most likely meaning that God's action obviously cannot be the habit of a created substance's power.[33] However, if God's concurrence is not a habit of the secondary agent's power but something that moves or enhances it, then the claim would imply that God is acting on the agent's form — and by this that the agent's form and active power, precisely inasmuch as active, would also be passive as a terminus of the divine action.

Thus, Olivi's arguments against divine concurrence, understood as supplementing the secondary agent's power, are meant to show that such a concurrence is either unnec-

32. *In Sent.* II, q. 116: "Si sic, ergo vel est habitus eius aut est quaedam actualis motio ipsius caloris seu cuiuscunque alterius activae virtutis. Primum autem, scilicet quod sit habitus eius, est ridiculosum et multipliciter improbabile. Si autem est eius motio, tunc forma, in quantum forma, per se et directe movetur, et virtus activa, in quantum activa, patitur" (Jansen ed., 339).

33. Even though the effect of this action, for instance grace, can be a habit of the mind, as Aquinas arguably thinks (cf. *QDV*, q. 27, a. 1).

essary or even impossible. It is unnecessary because God could just create things that already have the required amount of power to bring about their effects; or, at worst, it is impossible because it assumes that the creature's form, which is an active principle, is also passive at the same time.

Against the Application Model

Olivi's last argument in the previous section already points towards his third target, the form of concurrentism according to which "the cooperation is some application of the power of the created agent to its act."[34] Standard analogies of this model include everyday examples such as a person moving a stick to move a ball with, or me moving a knife and applying its power to cutting. As was seen above (section 2.1.2), Aquinas, at least in the *Quaestiones de potentia*, explicitly entertained such a model of divine concurrence, and it helped him to overcome some of the difficulties that arguably resulted from his account in the *Sentences* commentary. According to Olivi, however, there is no need for such a concurrence, for which conclusion he argues in three ways.

(1) First, natural powers seem to be capable themselves to be applied to their action, whenever the proper patient is well disposed and sufficiently near (that is, whenever the other, *sine quibus non* conditions are met). For instance, when a fire is burning, then it is, by its very nature, capable of igniting the piece of cotton placed next to it, provided that the cotton is dry, there is oxygen in the room, etc.; or the same fire, also by its very nature, is capable of warming up a pot of cold water when placed near enough to it. Thus, Olivi argues, it seems — if things indeed have causal powers — that by the

34. *In Sent.* II, q. 116: "Forte dicetur, sicut quidam dicunt, quod ista cooperatio est quaedam applicatio potentiae agentis creati ad suum actum" (Jansen ed., 340).

very nature of these powers together with the natures of the relevant passive powers, the active powers can be sufficiently applied to action.[35]

It is worth noting that Olivi does *not* argue against occasionalism here, and indeed this argument would not apply to that position. Olivi's point is rather that *if* one maintains that things have powers that they exercise, then it is very difficult to understand the nature of these powers without also maintaining that they can act — or perhaps even that they *necessarily* act — in the proper circumstances.

It is also worth noting that Durand has already formulated this argument, which seems to be the perhaps most common one against concurrentist theories (we will see it again in Peter Auriol, section 3.3.3 below). According to the usual answer (for Peter of Palude's formulation of it, see section 2.3.2 above), this argument begs the question against the concurrentist, who maintains that every effect surpasses the ability of created causes insofar as they involve bringing about some being, and thus a created power is simply never sufficient to operate on its own. It was also generally maintained that powers have to be educed from potentiality to actuality by some other agent, and thus their nature is not enough to explain why they act.[36]

(2) Second, resembling some of what has already been said above, Olivi argues that "that application should also be counted among secondary causes," and thus God's concurrence will not be immediate.[37] The application should be counted among secondary causes since, after all, it is created by God. But if this is the case, then the already seen difficulties arise: first of all, contrary to the concurrentist's position, God's concurrence

35. *In Sent.* II, q. 116: "Primo, quia multae potentiae naturales sunt a sua creatione vel generatione sufficienter applicatae ad actum, ita quod non egent nisi solum praesentia patientis idonei" (Jansen ed., 340).

36. See James A Weisheipl, "The Principle Omne quod movetur ab alio movetur in Medieval Physics," *Isis* 56 (1965): 26–45 for an overview of this principle.

37. *In Sent.* II, q. 116: "Ista applicatio est computanda inter causas secundas, unde per hoc actio ipsam sequens non erit immediate a Deo" (Jansen ed., 340).

in a natural causal action would not be immediate, and it would also be difficult to see why God could not have created just a single power that would encompass both of these and consequently would require no further divine concurrence.

(3) Finally, third, Olivi notes again that according to this version of concurrentism, it necessarily follows from the nature of creation that God has to apply the power of secondary causes to their actions. This, however, does not seem to be so. First, because it seems that there is no logical contradiction in creating something that can apply its own power to action without God applying it every time it acts; consequently, it falls within the divine power to create such a thing, and thus the concurrentist's claim is false. Second, even if that is not the case, God would also be able to bring about a power, higher than that of the secondary agent but lower than himself, which could apply the power of the secondary agent to action. In fact, according to Olivi, we do see numerous instances of such application: as our hand moves a sword, we apply the power of the sword to its cutting, or when we move a stick, we apply its power to thrusting. This means, however, that there *are* secondary causes that are sufficient to apply the power of other causes to action, which means that God's concurrence is unnecessary or at least not immediate.[38]

As was mentioned earlier very briefly, Aquinas for instance did maintain that some higher agent's concurrence is also needed; among others, he thought that the elements can only act if the heavens are moving. I will return to this in more detail in what follows, but it is worth noting already that Olivi's sword example is a similar to the one Aquinas uses (not with a sword but a knife, *De potentia*, q. 3, a. 7) when spelling out

38. *In Sent.* II, q. 116: "Mirabile est, si per unam potentiam superiorem sufficienter applicatam non potest Deus sufficienter applicare inferiorem, immo omnino oporteat quod omnes applicationes omnium causarum et potentiarum sint immediate a solo Deo. Nunquid manus applicat gladium ad scindendum et baculum ad percutiendum, et quid est aliud movere corpora impellendo ea nisi ea applicare ad motum?" (Jansen ed., 340.)

the various ways in which one thing an act through another. As is apparent from his description there, Aquinas would have regarded the mover of the sword not as a mediate but an immediate cause.

3.1.3 Evaluation of the Arguments

We will see in the next section that Olivi's position received some attention and invoked some defense of concurrentism among others by his confriar, Duns Scotus. Before turning to the later medieval reaction, however, it is worth to consider his critique in light of the previously seen theories: does his criticism apply to Aquinas or Giles or both, and is it successful against them? Since a big part of Olivi's criticism focused on the conclusion that God's action on the secondary effect cannot be immediate, a promising place to start assessing this criticism is to see whether Olivi uses the term 'immediate' in the same sense as his criticized thinkers. This is also the point upon which Gloria Frost's solution — on behalf of Aquinas — rests.

According to Frost, Aquinas (and, supposedly Giles) can respond to Olivi's argument by drawing a distinction between the immediacy of power and the immediacy of supposit. Aquinas draws the distinction in the *De potentia*, where the context is his discussion of how divine concurrence differs from the concurrence of the heavenly bodies (which, again, according to Aristotle's and Aquinas's natural philosophy, in some way give the elements their qualities and powers). As Aquinas notes here,

> God is the cause of every action insofar as every agent is the instrument of the operating divine power. Thus, if we consider the agents as supposits, every particular agent is immediate to its effect. If, however, we consider the power by which the action is produced, then the power of the superior cause will be more immediate to the effect than the power of the inferior cause; for

> the inferior power is not joined to the effect except by the superior power. . . . Therefore, the divine power is present to any acting thing in the same way as the power of the heavenly bodies needs to be present to any agent elementary body.[39]

According to this passage, and as Frost points out, Aquinas regards God's action as immediate because it is immediate *qua power* — that is, it is only by the divine power that the creature can exercise its own active power. On the other hand, the created agent is immediate to its effect *qua supposit* — that is, it is the secondary agent that actually performs the action that leads to the effect. Furthermore, Frost argues, Olivi's three difficulties with the first model can be overcome by the help of this distinction, and thus Olivi's overall critique is unsuccessful. For although Olivi called attention to the contradiction involved in saying that the same effect is both immediately and mediately from God, the contradiction disappears if one claims that the effect is immediately from God *qua power* and only mediately from God *qua supposit*.

The success of this solution depends on the plausibility of the distinction in question, whether it can be successfully applied against Olivi's case, and whether Aquinas and Giles did in fact apply this distinction in the way Frost suggests. I will argue that Giles — who is perhaps an easier case in this respect — cannot rely on this distinction since he explicitly claims that God is an immediate cause in both ways; furthermore, that even Aquinas's use of the distinction leaves open the possibility that he thought that God is an immediate cause *qua* supposit as well.

As Gloria Frost argues, the distinction is at least plausible. For instance, when an

39. *QDP*, q. 3, a. 7: "Sic ergo Deus est causa omnis actionis, prout quodlibet agens est instrumentum divinae virtutis operantis. Sic ergo si consideremus supposita agentia, quodlibet agens particulare est immediatum ad suum effectum. Si autem consideremus virtutem qua fit actio, sic virtus superioris causae erit immediatior effectui quam virtus inferioris; nam virtus inferior non coniungitur effectui nisi per virtutem superioris; unde dicitur in Lib. de Caus., quod virtus causae primae prius agit in causatum, et vehementius ingreditur in ipsum. Sic ergo oportet virtutem divinam adesse cuilibet rei agenti, sicut virtutem corporis caelestis oportet adesse cuilibet corpori elementari agenti" (Marietti ed., 58).

apprentice produces a bench under the direction of his master, the apprentice is acting by the immediacy of supposit (since he is the one actually making the bench), while the master is acting by the immediacy of power (since he is the one giving directions and thus enabling the apprentice to make the bench). Or, referring again to Giles's above seen example (section 2.2.2), when a bailiff acts, he can only act by the immediacy of supposit, since he would not have authority if not by the mediation of the king. On the other hand, the king in this case acts only by the immediacy of power, since — although having the power — he is not the one actually interacting with the other party.[40]

If we accept that the secondary effect is immediately from God *qua* power but not immediately from God *qua* supposit, then indeed Olivi's objections to all three of the above models fail. This failure is the easiest to see in case of the first model, according to which God acts on the secondary effect. As was seen above, Olivi's problems with this model resulted from the model apparently entailing that God is producing the action twice: once mediately and once immediately, while being also unable to satisfactorily specify how these two actions are related to each other. However, if we understand the model in such a way that God is immediate only *qua* power and mediate only *qua* supposit, the objections do not hold. For in that case, the supposed incompatible properties of the secondary effect — being both immediately and mediately from God — are not contradictory; something can be mediately from God in some respect and immediately from God in some other respect (namely, mediately *qua* supposit and immediately *qua* power). Also, with the help of this distinction one might maintain that God's mediate and immediate production is indeed one single action, which action is also identical to that of the secondary agent, just as in the case of the master producing the bench via

40. Cf. Giles, *QDEE*, q. 4.

the apprentice — which means that Olivi's second and third argument against the model are not sound either.

Neither are, according to this proposition, Olivi's arguments against the second and third model of concurrentism. Olivi's main concern with both models, as discussed above, was that it is difficult to see why God's action, when he augments or applies the secondary agent's power, would be immediate. If, however, one accepts the above distinction, the immediacy is easier to see. If the secondary agent cannot exercise sufficient power to bring about the secondary effect unless augmented by divine concurrence, or it cannot even apply its own power to action, that means precisely that God is immediate *qua* power with respect to the secondary effect. And according to Aquinas, the antecedent is true, since in every *per se* casual series the exercise of power of the lower members depend on that of the first member, and since created beings cannot bring about any *esse* in the world, they are related in such an essential way to God.

It seems then, that with the distinction between immediacy of power and immediacy of supposit, the concurrentist can adequately respond to Olivi's critique. The problem is, however, that unfortunately, this way is not open either to Giles, nor arguably to Aquinas, for different reasons.

It is not open to Giles, because as he explicitly claims, God's action on the secondary effect is immediate *both qua* power and *qua* supposit; and it is not open to Aquinas, at least in this form, because although according to the defense given above, God's action and the secondary agent's action are numerically identical, for Aquinas this is not quite the case, as was seen above (section 2.3.1).

That Giles does not accept the claim that God, *qua* supposit, is only a mediate cause of the secondary effect, is clear. Recall that after introducing the analogy of the king and the bailiff in the *Quaestiones de esse et essentia*, showing that the king is immediate

in the sense of principal, while the bailiff is immediate in the sense of proximate cause, he claims:

> According to this way ⟨i.e., by the immediacy of power⟩ God operates immediately in everything, because operating he is not another thing's organ, but everything is his organ, and he brings about everything in a principal way. On the other hand, the natural agent is not just incapable to effect anything if not infused with the divine power, but also cannot ⟨operate⟨ in the effect unless God proximately operates in the same effect (because, as the second proposition shows, God, since he is a cause in act of everything, immediately operates in everything). Therefore, God operates in every operation of nature immediately, that is, principally, and operates in every such immediately, that is, proximately.[41]

The "second proposition" referenced by Giles argues that God is an immediate (proximate) cause since (1) God is related to the conservation of things in the same way as he is related to their action, and since (2) God's conservation of things is immediate. For the latter claim, it can be easily seen that things are not sufficient for conserving themselves in existence, whence they require God's immediate presence in them. This means, however, that God immediately brings about the secondary effects as well, since he is responsible for their existence.[42]

Whether Giles's argument for the proximity claim is sound, we need not decide here.

41. *QDEE*, q. 4: "Secundum hunc ergo modum, Deus operatur omnia immediate, quia in operando non est organum alicuius, sed omnia sunt organa ipsius et ipse omnia principaliter operatur. Rursus, agens naturale non solum non potest aliquid efficere ut ⟨non⟩ innitatur virtuti divine, sed etiam non potest in aliquem effectum nisi illum eundem effectum immediate, id est proxime, operetur Deus, quia, ut secunda declaratio ostendebat, Deus, cum sit causa in actu omnium, immediate operatur omnia. Deus ergo omne opus nature operatur immediate, id est principaliter, et operatur omne tale immediate, id est proxime" (Venice ed., fol. 9rb).

42. *QDEE*, q. 4: "Sicut Deus se habet in conservando, sic suo modo se habet in agendo. Videmus enim quod Deus multa conservat per secundas causas, et tamen quodlibet immediate conservat per seipsum. Ita multa agit per secundas causas, et tamen quodlibet immediate agit per seipsum. . . . Sic, quantumcumque operentur agentia secunda, numquam sufficiunt aliquod corpus, nisi immediate adesset Deus operans illud. Posset enim sic argui: Deus immediate conservat quamlibet rem in esse, ergo Deus immediate quamlibet rem producit ad esse. . . . Et quia Deus est causa in actu cuiuslibet nature, cuiuslibet motus, cuiuslibet operationis, immediate ipse operat omnem naturam, omnem motum, omnem operationem, ut, si ignis calefaciat, illam calefactionem operatur immediate Deus, cuius est causa in actu" (Venice ed., fol. 8vb).

His intended conclusion, however, is clear: God is immediately active not just *qua* a principal cause but also *qua* a proximate cause in every operation of nature. Given this, therefore, he cannot maintain, as Gloria Frost does on behalf of the concurrentist (which concurrentist, to be fair, is Aquinas and not Giles), that God is only a mediate cause of the secondary effect *qua* supposit.

Turning now to Aquinas, his way of making the distinction, as quoted above, might indeed suggest that he regards God as merely a mediate cause *qua* supposit — even though Aquinas never claims this explicitly, and there are some considerations that point in the opposite direction. For instance, in the very continuation of the passage quoted above from the *De potentia* where he makes the distinction between the two kinds of immediacy, he says:

> But there is a difference ⟨i.e., between the power of God and the the heavenly bodies⟩: since wherever the divine power is, is the divine essence; but the essence of the heavenly body is not wherever its power is; and also because God is his power, but ⟨this is not true of⟩ the heavenly body. And therefore it can be said that God operates in everything insofar as everything needs his power in order to act; but it cannot be properly said that the heaven⟨ly body⟩ always acts in the elementary body, although it is by its virtue that the elementary body acts.[43]

As this passage suggests, for Aquinas, the case of God's concurrence is quite special: unlike even the heavenly bodies (and supposedly unlike every created being), God is *present* wherever his power is present. Thus, while it is easy to see why a master would be acting by the immediacy of power but not by the immediacy of supposit in the action of the apprentice (the master is not where his power is), it seems that for God, the two kinds of immediacy are more difficult to separate.

43. *QDP*, q. 3, a. 7: "Sed in hoc differt; quia ubicumque est virtus divina, est essentia divina; non autem essentia corporis caelestis est ubicumque est sua virtus: et iterum Deus est sua virtus, non autem corpus caeleste. Et ideo potest dici quod Deus in qualibet re operatur in quantum eius virtute quaelibet res indiget ad agendum: non autem potest proprie dici quod caelum semper agat in corpore elementari, licet eius virtute corpus elementare agat" (Marietti ed., 58).

Another concern that might be raised about the proposed solution is that it seems to suggest that Aquinas regards the concurring action of God and of the operating secondary agent as numerically identical; as illustrated with the example above, the master's action of producing the craft by instructing an apprentice, according to Frost, *is just* the apprentice's bringing about the same craft. The solution works insofar as Olivi's objections relied on the numerical difference of these actions (especially those against the first model); but as was seen above (section 2.3.1), Aquinas cannot maintain such a straightforward identity. As I argued there, he seems to hold the view that God's and the secondary agent's action are formally distinct even though materially identical.

Nevertheless, although Aquinas might not think that God's and the secondary agent's actions are identical in the strict sense, from this it does not follow that he regards them as independent, as Olivi's critique suggests. Especially in his arguments against the first model, Olivi suggests that God's mediate action (i.e., his action *via* the secondary agent) and his immediate action are different in such a way that God can bring about one without the other. But it seems that for Aquinas, this is not so; the two are related in a similar way as matter and form might be related, which although differ, in some way presuppose each other. If this is indeed the case, the objections that assumed a hypothetical case where either of the two actions is prior to the other, cannot get off the ground.

Olivi's objections against the second and third models, as was pointed out already, generally assumed that at least in principle, a created nature is such that it can bring about its effect without any further help. Most concurrentists, among them Aquinas, Giles, and Peter of Palude, would reject this claim.

Whether Aquinas, Giles, or any other concurrentist could provide a completely satisfactory response to Olivi's objections is not my aim to determine in this section. In

what follows, we will see how Scotus regards Olivi's position as unsatisfactory albeit well motivated by considerations of sinful actions.

3.1.4 Summary

With Olivi, the debate about whether God immediately concurs with secondary agents, moved to the context of human actions. In this context, Olivi argues that God does not immediately concurs with secondary causes, and his arguments apply to secondary causation in general. He presents and argues against three versions of concurrentism: the first, according to which God's action is on the secondary effect; the second, according to which God augments the secondary agent's power; and the third, according to which God applies the secondary agent's power to action. He thinks that all of these models involve some metaphysical contradiction or at least inconvenience, and concludes that God is not immediately active in these causal actions. I argued that although it would be easy to avoid most of Olivi's objections by distinguishing between immediacy of supposit and immediacy of power, the concurrentists we have seen so far might not take this route. This is also not Scotus's solution, who will present a *reductio* against Olivi's argument: he will argue that if Olivi were right, then God would have no knowledge about future contingents.

3.2 DUNS SCOTUS

Although a full exploration of Scotus's account of divine concurrence with secondary causes — together with his notions of essential order and creation — would require more than this space allows, his discussion of concurrence in the context of sinful actions provides a good contrast case to Olivi's treatment of the same. Even this narrow issue, however, has its complications, mostly due to some differences in emphasis in Scotus's different works, exacerbated by the sometimes complicated status of the current editions, as mentioned in the introduction of this chapter.

Moreover, according to Gloria Frost, "There is overwhelming evidence that shows that, by the time Scotus was at Paris, he was no longer convinced that God is an immediate cause of the created will's volition,"[44] which would mean that by his Paris years Scotus radically changed his mind on the present issue. Although I found the evidence less than overwhelming, signaling instead a slight shift in emphasis rather than a change in the basic view, I do not wish to take a stance on this question.[45] In what follows, I mostly rely on the *Ordinatio*, where the discussion is perhaps the most detailed, occasionally complementing it with the *Lectura* and very seldom with the *Reportatio*.

In the discussion about actual (as opposed to original) sin in the *Ordinatio* (d. 34–37), question 5 asks whether the created will is a total and immediate cause of its willing so that God, with respect to that willing, has no immediate efficient causality.[46] After

44. Gloria Frost, "John Duns Scotus on God's Knowledge of Sins: A Test-case for God's Knowledge of Contingents," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 48, no. 1 (2010): 30.

45. Scotus, indeed, does not give an explicit answer to the question of concurrence in the *Reportatio*, but this does not seem to imply that he rejected his earlier view entirely. Gloria Frost also refers to William Alnwick's *Additiones*, but again, the extent in which Alnwick was a reliable reporter of Scotus's views is, at least, questionable.

46. "Utrum voluntas creata sit totalis causa et immediata respectu sui velle ita quod deus respectu illius velle non habeat aliquam efficientiam immediatam, sed tantum mediatam" (Vaticana VIII, 408).

examining two possible positions on the question, Scotus answers the question negatively — implying therefore that the created will is *not* a total immediate cause of volitions in such a way that would rule out God's concurrence with regard to the same volitions. As will be discussed later in more detail (see section 3.2.3 below), Scotus's arguments for divine concurrence with volitions in particular will apply to secondary causes in more general.

I will start this section with a short exposition of Scotus's typology of causes, focusing especially on essentially ordered partial causes. This will give the conceptual means to describe his position on sinful actions more precisely. Second, I will show that in the context of sinful actions, Scotus regards God and the created agent as partial, essentially ordered, autonomous co-causes of volitions. My treatment of sinful actions will focus mostly on Scotus's arguments for endorsing some version of the concurrentist position. Third, I will argue that although Scotus did not consider the question explicitly, it seems that similar reasons for which he endorsed a concurrentist position in the case of sinful actions in particular, would also apply in the case of natural causation in general. I will close with a short comparison of his position to those we have seen before. As will be clear, Scotus's account, although a form of concurrentism, importantly differs from the previously seen concurrentist positions in two respects: first, unlike Aquinas and Giles, he regards God and the created will as partial causes; and second, perhaps more importantly, Scotus explicitly denies that created causes are instrumental causes, maintaining instead that they are essentially ordered to the first cause by a non-causal essential order.

3.2.1 Partial, Essentially Ordered, Autonomous Co-Causes

Before turning to Scotus's account of concurrence regarding sinful volitions, it will be useful to lay out some conceptual divisions regarding efficient causes that will make his stance on the former more clear.[47] These divisions concern immediate efficient causes, which Scotus regards as a type of essential order (that is, they constitute an order of priority and posteriority, the cause being prior than the effect — where 'priority' should be understood not in the temporal but in the logical sense). More precisely, in the relations of all four kinds of Aristotelian causes, cause and effect stand in an order of dependence;[48] the relevant kind of order of dependence is the one where the one member of the order is caused by the other.[49]

Concerning efficient causes understood this way, Scotus makes three further divisions.[50] The most basic one is the division between total and partial causes. As Scotus notes, one effect cannot have more than one total cause of the same kind, because then it would be produced twice; it might have, however, two or more partial causes of the same kind (for instance when two donkeys are pulling a weight together).[51] Thus, c is a total efficient cause of e iff it is sufficient to produce e in its entirety, and leaves no features of e unexplained. On the other hand, c_1 and c_2 are partial causes of e iff they

47. For further discussion of these, see Roy R Effler, *John Duns Scotus and the Principle 'Omne quod movetur ab alio movetur'* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1962).

48. The order of dependence is distinguished from that of eminence (*De primo principio* [henceforth *DPP*], 1.7–8), and is understood as an order in which "the prior according to nature and essence can exist without the posterior, but the reverse is not true." All references to the *DPP* are from Johannes Duns Scotus, *A Treatise on God as First Principle*, ed. Allan B Wolter (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1966), in Allan B. Wolter's translation.

49. This is, again, a substantial division, as Scotus thinks that there are things that do stand in the order of dependence without standing in a causal relation (*DPP* 1.11–12). See also below.

50. These mostly come from the *Ordinatio*, but a similar account can be found in the *DPP* as well. All the *Ordinatio* references are to the Vaticana edition (Johannes Duns Scotus, *Ioannis Duns Scoti Opera Omnia*).

51. E.g., *Ord.* I, d. 2, p. 1, q. 3, n. 173.

both are required for the production of e. In what follows, the main concern will be Scotus's further treatment of the various ways in which partial causes of the same effect, c_1 and c_2, can be related.

Scotus gives the perhaps most concise description of the various ways in which partial causes can be related in the *Ordinatio*:

> I make a distinction concerning multiple causes that concur to the same effect. For some of them concur in the same way, for instance two ⟨horses⟩ pulling the same weight. Others concur not in the same way, but having an essential order between them, and this can be in two ways: either so that the superior ⟨cause⟩ moves the inferior one in such a way that the inferior does not act unless it is moved by the superior (sometimes these are such that the inferior cause has its form or power by which it acts from the superior cause; and sometimes they have that form or power from another and they merely have their motion to actuality by the superior cause); or the superior cause does not move the inferior, neither gives ⟨the inferior cause⟩ its power by which it moves, but the superior has a more perfect power to act, and the inferior has a less perfect power to act.[52]

In this passage, Scotus makes two distinctions that will be relevant in what follows. (See also figure 3.1.)

First, he distinguishes two main kinds of relations that can hold between efficient causes of the same effect. On the one hand, c_1 and c_2 might exercise the same power when acting, such as when two horses pull a heavy weight, or two people pull a ship up on the river. In this case, although both c_1 and c_2 are necessary for the effect, this is not principally so: it can be regarded as a mere accident that neither of the horses or

52. *Ord.* I, d. 3, p. 3, q. 2, n. 496: "Distinguo de pluribus causis concurrentibus ad eundem effectum. Quaedam enim ex aequo concurrunt, sicut duo trahentes aliquod idem corpus. Quaedam non ex aequo, sed habentes ordinem essentialem, et hoc dupliciter: vel sic quod superior moveat inferiorem, ita quod inferior non agit nisi quia mota ex superiore, et quandoque causa talis inferior habet a superiore virtutem illam seu formam qua movet, quandoque non, sed formam ab alio, et a causa superiore solam motionem actualem, ad producendum effectum; quandoque autem superior non movet inferiorem, nec dat ei virtutem qua movet, sed superior de se habet virtutem perfectiorem agendi, et inferior habet virtutem imperfectiorem agendi" (Vaticana III, 293).

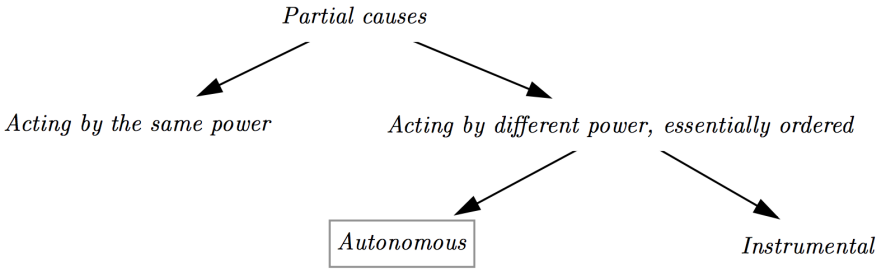

Figure 3.1: Essentially ordered partial causes

neither of the men possessed the sufficient amount of strength to pull the weight on their own. Were their powers change in their quantity, they would not require the concurring cause.

On the other hand, c_1 and c_2 might act in such a way that they exercise different powers. Scotus regards these causes as essentially ordered, since both of them are in principle necessary for the effect: there could be no accidental modification (e.g., growth in quantity) of the power of one cause that would enable it to bring about the effect without the contribution of the other cause.[53] Since the different contribution of c_1 and c_2 are due to their different natures, there is also an order of priority among them based on the greatness of the contribution they make to the effect; in other words, c_1 and c_2 are essentially ordered.

Second, among essential ordered causes, Scotus makes a further division. On the one hand, there are essentially ordered partial causes where the lower c_2 is being moved by c_1 (that is, c_2 can only exercise its causality by the simultaneous exercise of causality by c_1); and on the other hand, c_2 might exercise its causality independently of c_1.[54] In

53. Cf. also *Ord.* I, d. 2, p. 1, q. 1–2, n. 50.

54. There does not seem to be a settled terminology for the members of this division. Roy Effler calls them 'dependent' and 'independent' (Effler, *John Duns Scotus and the Principle 'Omne quod movetur ab alio movetur'*, 157), while William Frank 'participative' and 'autonomous' (William A Frank, "Duns Scotus on Autonomous Freedom and Divine Co-Causality," *Mediaeval Philosophy and Theology* 2 (1992): 154), respectively.

other words, first, it might be the case that the inferior cause needs the superior cause's motion in such a way that it cannot contribute to the effect without it. This could happen either because the inferior cause receives its power from the superior cause, or because the superior cause needs to move to actuality the power that the inferior cause had received from another source. But in either of these cases, the inferior cause depends on the superior cause in its very causing. Examples of this kind of essential ordered partial causes include standard cases of instrumental causation, such as the hand moving a stick to move the ball,[55] or me hitting the letters on the keyboard to type a certain text.

The perhaps more interesting — and for the present considerations more relevant — cases of essentially ordered partial causes are those where c_2 exercises its causality not as c_1's instrument but independently. As c_1 and c_2 are still partial causes, they can only bring about the effect if the other cause cooperates; nevertheless, both c_1 and c_2 possess their powers and move to act on their own. Despite moving on their own, however, c_1 and c_2 are essentially ordered: unlike in an accidentally ordered series, c_1's and c_2's contributions to the effect are very different. This difference accounts for their priority and posteriority as well; c_1 is called superior to c_2 because it possesses a more perfect power to produce the effect than c_2 does.

Since these essentially ordered autonomous partial causes constitute a rather peculiar category, it is worth to summarize their characteristics once more: c_1 and c_2 are essentially ordered, autonomous partial causes (with c_1 as the higher cause) just in case:

1. Both c_1 and c_2 are necessary for the effect. (partial causes)
2. c_1 and c_2 are only jointly sufficient for the effect, constituting a total cause.
3. c_1 and c_2 exercise different powers in their causality, and since these derive from more and less perfect natures (respectively), c_1 is prior to c_2. (essentially ordered)

55. *Ord.* I, d. 3, p. 3, q. 2, n. 496.

4. c_2 exercises its causality not as an instrument of c_1 but independently from it. (autonomous)

As an example of such autonomous, essentially ordered partial causes Scotus cites the concurrence of man and woman bringing about the offspring.[56] Both the father's and the mother's contribution are required to bring about an offspring, but neither of them receives its generative power from the other. Nevertheless, there is still an order among the two, since the father has a more perfect generative power than the mother does (according to Scotus's contemporary biology). Form and matter in composing an object also seem to be related in this way, or, to cite Scotus's more elaborately worked out examples, the intellect and cognized object are autonomous partial causes of cognition (the intellect being the higher cause),[57] while the intellect and will are also autonomous partial causes of volitions.[58]

With these notions at hand, we can turn now to Scotus's account of divine concurrence with sinful volitions. As will be seen, he regards God and the created voluntary agent as constituting an essentially ordered causal series of the second kind; that is, they are both partial, autonomous, essentially ordered causes of the same effect.

56. *Ord.* I, d. 3, p. 3, q. 2, n. 496.
57. E.g., *Ord.* I, d. 3, p. 3, q. 2, n. 486–494.
58. *Ord.* II, d. 25. It should be noted that Scotus explicitly distinguishes things that are in essential order from things that are in essential order *in causing* (e.g., *DPP* 3.10). The *De primo principio* is concerned mostly with the types of essential order that can stand between things, while this part of the *Ordinatio* with essential order that can stand between causes regarding their causality. Thus, it should not be a surprise that these orders are different; for instance, it is difficult to locate autonomous co-causes in the typology presented in the *De primo principio* even though Scotus claims there that his typology is exhaustive. For some further characterization of these categories, and some useful discussion, see Marilyn McCord Adams, "Essential Orders and Sacramental Causality," in *John Duns Scotus, Philosopher*, ed. Mary Beth Ingham and Oleg Bychkov (Münster: Aschendorff, 2010), 191–206.

3.2.2 Divine Concurrence in Sinful Volitions

Summarizing Scotus's various claims about the causes of volitions, William Frank has noted,

> If one were to systematize these three doctrines, a simple human volition would have as its total cause the integration of four essentially ordered partial co-causes: (1) divine will and (2) human will, which in turn operates only as a co-cause with (3) human intellect, which in its turn co-causes intellection with (4) the intellect's object.[59].

In what follows, I will mostly be concerned with the first two of these; that is, in the way the divine and the human will interact to bring about a volition.

Will as a Total Cause

Before arguing for his own view in distinction 34–37, question 5 of the *Ordinatio*, Scotus considers a few other positions one could take regarding the way in which the human and divine will interact in producing a volition. According to the first of these, the created will *is* a total cause of its volitions.[60] This view is a version of mere conservationism that seems to be very close to Olivi's; I will call it the Total Cause view (TC):

> **(TC).** The secondary agent is an immediate total cause of its effects, while God, although also a total cause, is only mediately so.

Scotus recognizes that maintaining TC has multiple benefits; he offers five arguments for such a position (a position that he will ultimately reject). I will treat the first two of

59. Frank, "Duns Scotus on Autonomous Freedom," 156.

60. The English term 'volition' is ambiguous. We might distinguish the will (*voluntas*), its act (*volitio*), and its object. (For instance, when Adam decides to eat the forbidden fruit, he has a power of the soul, that is, his will, whereby he forms the volition of eating the fruit.) In what follows, by 'volition' I will mean the formed intent or choice (e.g., that of eating the fruit), occasionally distinguishing it from the *act* of volition whereby we form this choice.

these in more detail, since Scotus considers them to be the most important motivators for TC.

According to the first argument, TC is necessary in order to maintain that there is contingency in things, and that the created will is free. As Scotus notes on behalf of the TC view,

> No power has perfectly in its capacity that which the power cannot cause by itself immediately nor by some other cause whose causation is [not] in that power's capacity. But God's causation is not in the created will's capacity... therefore, if God concurs immediately with respect to the created volition, then the created will does not have that volition fully in its capacity.[61]

For simplicity, I will reconstruct the argument as it is presented for free will (hence FW), but as will be seen below in connection to the next argument, it will apply to contingent things in general.

The argument runs this way (where ts are instants of time, ns instants of nature (more about this below), and v is a particular instance of volition).

(FW). Free will excludes concurrence:

1. If Peter freely wills to deny Christ ($\neg v$) at (t_1, n_2), then Peter, at (t_1, n_1), has a real capacity to not deny Christ (v) at (t_1).
2. But if Peter cannot cause v either by himself or by the mediation of some instrument he determines, then he has no real capacity for v.
3. If—as the concurrentist would insist—God's concurrence is required for Peter to bring about v, then Peter cannot cause v by himself.
4. If God's concurrence is required for Peter to bring about v, then—since God's

61. *Ord.* II, d. 34–37, q. 5, n. 99: "Nulla potentia habet perfecte in potestate sua effectum qui non potest causari ab ea immediate nec ab aliqua causa cuius causatio [non] est in potestate illius potentiae; causatio autem Dei non est in potestate voluntatis creatae... ergo si Deus necessario concurrat immediate respectu volitionis creatae, voluntas creata non habet plene in potestate sua illam volitionem" (Vaticana VIII, 409). To make sense of the argument I opted for the reading of ms. Y (in face of the editors' choice) in omitting 'non' in line 592 of the critical edition.

concurrence is evidently not determined by Peter—it is not an instrument that helps Peter bringing about v.

5. Therefore, if God's concurrence is required for Peter to bring about v, then Peter has no real capacity for v.

6. Therefore, if God's concurrence is required for Peter to bring about v, then Peter is not free in bringing about $\neg v$.

7. But Peter is evidently free in bringing about $\neg v$.

8. Therefore, God's concurrence is not required for Peter to bring about v.

The argument relies on some assumptions for which Scotus argues elsewhere, most importantly concerning the notion of free will. Since this is not the place to examine Scotus's notions of contingency and freedom of the will in detail, nor the surrounding debate about its originality,[62] it will be sufficient to summarize the account from the *Lectura*:[63]

> Our will is free to opposite acts (such as willing and not willing, and loving and hating), and secondly by the mediations of opposite acts, it is free to opposite objects as it freely tends towards them, and thirdly it is free to the effects that it produces either immediately or by moving some other acting powers.[64]

62. For a good summary, see, e.g., Stephen D Dumont, "The Origin of Scotus's Theory of Synchronic Contingency," *The Modern Schoolman* 72 (1995): 149–167; and a response in Scott MacDonald, "Synchronic Contingency, Instants of Nature, and Libertarian Freedom: Comments on 'The Background to Scotus's Theory of Will'," *The Modern Schoolman* 72 (1995): 169–174. For a non-libertarian reading of Scotus's notion of freedom, see Marilyn McCord Adams, *William Ockham* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987), 2:1123 ff. and 1315 ff.

63. Scotus's most detailed account of free will can be found in *Lectura* I, d. 39 (especially q. 5), and the parallel distinction of the *Ordinatio* (the authenticity of which, however, has been questioned; see the Introduction to vol. 6 of the Vaticana edition, in which the distinction is relegated to the Appendix). Cf. also his *Quaestiones in Metaphysicam* IX, q. 15. For an analysis of the *Lectura* passage, see the Introduction in Johannes Duns Scotus, *John Duns Scotus on Contingency and Freedom: Lectura I 39.* Introduction, Translation, and Commentary by A. Vos Jaczn, H. Veldhuis, A. H. Looman-Graaskamp, E. Dekker, and N. W. Den Bok (Dodrecht: Kluwer, 1994).

64. *Lect.* I, d. 39, q. 1–5, n. 45: "Voluntas enim nostra libera est ad actus oppositos (ut ad volendum et nolendum, et amandum et odiendum), et secundo mediantibus actibus oppositis est libera ad obiecta opposita ut libere tendat in ea, et tertio est libera ad effectus quos producit sive immediate sive movendo alias potentias executivas" (Vaticana XVII, 493).

As Scotus describes here, the will is free with regard to three kinds of things: whether to will a or not to will a; the objects of these acts; and the effects that it brings about mediately or immediately. These three notions of freedom are not independent (e.g., as Scotus notes, opposite objects can be only arrived at by opposite acts), but the argument FW will mostly rely on the first two of them.

A volition v is free in this interesting sense just in case that the will has a real capacity or power (*potentia*) for opposite acts (for willing and for not willing, that is, for v and $\neg v$).[65] That is, if Peter's volition to deny Christ at t_1 was free, there must have been prior to Peter's volition a real power in Peter's will for opposites: a power to choose to deny Christ *and* a power to choose not to deny Christ at t_1. This much so far would have been granted by most medieval thinkers who discussed free will.

Scotus, however, famously maintains that such a prior power or capacity is not sufficient to account for freedom if it is understood in the mere temporal sense (that is, as a capacity that Peter's will possessed at t_0). In that case, as Scotus notes, the will's freedom would be inexplicable if the will existed only for a single instant: if the will only existed at t_1, it would have no prior capacity, and thus it would have acted by necessity — which is, however, not the case.[66] Thus, instead of temporal priority, we need to understand the priority in terms of natural priority. In the Aristotelian sense, a is naturally prior to b just in case b depends on a for its existence but a does not depend on b for its existence. Then, just as we can index things to instants of time (t_1, t_2, etc., t_2 temporally depending on t_1), we can also index them to instants of nature (n_1, n_2, etc., n_2 naturally depending on n_1). The main advantage of such an indexing is that it allows for the truth of certain modal propositions in the composite sense where

65. *Ord.* I, d. 38, p. 2 and d. 39, q. 1–5, n. 16: "Istam libertatem concomitatur una potentia ad opposita manifesta" (Vaticana VI, 417).

66. *Ord.* I, d. 39, q. 1–5, n. 16: "Ponendo enim voluntatem creatam tantum habere esse in uno instanti, et quod ipsa in illo instanti habeat hanc volitionem, non necessario tunc habet eam" (Vaticana VI, 418).

indexing to mere time would involve a contradiction. For instance, saying that Peter has the capacity for v and $\neg v$ at the same time — understood as $\diamond(v \wedge \neg v)_{t_1}$ — seems to involve a contradiction as $v \wedge \neg v$ can *not* be true at the same time; but the contradiction can be avoided by indexing them to different instants of nature — thus understanding it as $\diamond(v_{n_1} \wedge \neg v_{n_2})_{t_1}$.[67]

With this at hand, we can return to premise (1) of FW: 'Peter freely willed to deny Christ at (t_1, n_2)' means that (1) Peter had at (t_1, n_1) a real capacity for willing v at t_1 and a real capacity for not willing v at t_1, *and* (2) Peter's capacity for willing v at t_1 is actualized at $(t_1, n_2,)$ where things indexed to n_1 are naturally prior to those indexed to n_2.

Premise (2) of FW is taken to be true by definition: for any v, if it is within Peter's power to do v, then Peter is able to bring about v either by his own causality, or by an instrument — that is, by something that depends on him for its causality (in the first sense of essential dependence above).

Moreover, premises (3) and (4) do seem to follow from the concurrentist view, according to which the creature is not able to bring about any effect on its own. For if Peter requires God's concurrence for v, then he is not able to bring about v on his own; and since God's concurrence obviously does not essentially depend on Peter in the second sense of essential dependence, it is not an instrument with the help of which he is able to bring about v. Thus, if it is indeed the case that Peter cannot deny or refrain from

67. As Scotus notes in *Ord.* I, d. 38, q. 2 and d. 39, q. 1–5, n. 20, "I have simultaneously the capacity for opposites, but I do not have the capacity for opposites simultaneously" (Vaticana VI, 424: "Simul habeo potentiam ad opposita sed non ad opposita simul"). One should keep in mind here that $\diamond$ denotes a real power and not a mere logical possibility (while the relation of these two notions in Scotus being highly debated; see, e.g., Simo Knuuttila, "Duns Scotus and the Foundations of Logical Modalities," in *Duns Scotus: Metaphysics and Ethics*, ed. Ludger Honnefelder, Rega Wood, and Mechthild Dreyer (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 127–144; and, on the other hand, Calvin G Normore, "Scotus, Modality, Instants of Nature and the Contingency of the Present," in *Duns Scotus: Metaphysics and Ethics*, ed. Ludger Honnefelder, Rega Wood, and Mechthild Dreyer (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 161–164).

denying Christ at t_1 without God's concurring action, then it is not in his power to deny or refrain from denying Christ. Granted premises (3) and (4), premises (5) and (6) follow.

Of course, this *reductio* so far only shows that if God's concurrence is posited for the acts of will, then there can be no freedom of this same will. Premise (7), however, which states the contrary (that is, that there *is* free will in created agents) is taken to be evident by Scotus. More specifically, as he notes in the *Lectura* and in the *Ordinatio*, it cannot be proven either from more evident things or *a priori* that there is free will or contingency in the world; nevertheless, we do need to assume it in order to make sense of human deliberation.[68] As Scotus cites Aristotle's and Avicenna's well-known passage, those who do not believe in contingency are lacking sense and deserve punishment, namely to be burnt, since for them, burning and not burning must be the same.[69] If premise (7) is posited, however, then it follows indeed that God's concurrence is not required in bringing about Peter's volition.

Scotus's second argument on behalf of TC is related to the first one as it relies on the notion of contingency.[70] Since contingency, for Scotus, is a result of free will (e is contingent just in case it was brought about by an agent — created or divine — who had the capacity to do otherwise in the sense above), just as free will, it is also a synchronic notion. Something at t_1 is contingent just in case its negation could have been the case at t_1. On behalf of the objector, Scotus argues that just as free will is incompatible with divine concurrence, so is contingency. If my will is determined by a superior cause to write tomorrow, and the higher, determining cause is unimpedible and immutable,

68. *Lect.* I, d. 39, q. 5, n. 39.
69. *Lect.* I, d. 39, q. 5, n. 40. Cf. Aristotle, *Topics* I, c. 9, 105a5–7; Avicenna, *Metaphysica* I, c. 9.
70. For his analysis of this notion, see *Lect.* I, d. 39, q. 5, n. 39 ff. Scotus regards contingency as a disjunctive transcendental (i.e., everything is either contingent or necessary), the applicability of which — similarly to that of freedom — cannot be demonstrated but must be assumed.

then no matter what I do, it will be the case that I will be writing tomorrow. If this is the case, however, then my writing tomorrow is not contingent, since by definition, something is contingent if and only if it can fail to happen. (It is worth noting that Scotus's argument here would apply to divine concurrence with any created cause; if the divine will is determined to act for a certain end, then that end cannot fail to occur and thus cannot be contingent.)

Again, these two arguments are meant to establish that TC is a plausible view, even though Scotus will reject it. Beside these two, he presents three others that one might employ to argue for TC. I will not consider these others here as they play little role in Scotus's formulation of his own position. Scotus formulates his own position by rejecting Olivi's view, and answering especially FW above.

Scotus against TC

Scotus comes to reject Olivi's view because he thinks that maintaining TC would pose two difficulties: it would contradict divine omniscience as well as divine omnipotence.

Omniscience would be violated because if Olivi's position is right, then there would be no way for God to know the future with certainty:

> God does not have knowledge of future contingents unless because he knows with certainty the determination of his will with respect to them, which will is immutable and unimpedible; but if the created will is a total cause with respect to its volition, and it is contingently related to that volition, then no matter how the divine will is posited to be determinate to one part of those that depend on the created will, the created will will be able to will otherwise, and thus certainty does not follow from the knowledge of the determination of the divine will.[71]

71. *Ord.* II, d. 34–37, q. 1–5, n. 120: "Probatio primae consequentiae, quia non habet scientiam de futuris contingentibus nisi quia certitudinaliter novit determinationem voluntatis suae respectu eorum ad quae voluntas est immutabilis et inimpedibilis; sed si voluntas creata it totalis causa respectu sui velle, et ipsa contingenter se habet ad illud velle — ergo quantumcumque voluntas divina ponatur

According to Scotus's argument,

1. If God does not concur with sinful acts of the will, God does not know the future with certainty.
2. But God does know the future with certainty;
3. Therefore, God concurs with sinful acts of the will.

The first, crucial premise of this argument relies on Scotus's account of divine foreknowledge, as worked out in detail elsewhere. Although it might seem that the problem of foreknowledge is a detour in the discussion of divine concurrence, interestingly, as will be seen in the next section, Auriol will pick up this argument and thus it is worthwhile to consider it here.

Scotus agrees with Aquinas (and most medieval thinkers) that God knows the future with certainty, including contingent events and the actions of free agents. He disagrees with Aquinas, however, about how this knowledge is attained. In particular, he rejects Aquinas's view that God knows future things by their real presence to God in God's timeless eternity, because he thinks it relies on a relation between non-existent *relata*.[72]

Instead of appealing to real presence, Scotus maintains that God knows future contingents by causing them:

> The divine intellect either presents simples whose union is contingent in reality, or — if it is a complex — the intellect presents it as neutral to itself; and the will, choosing one part, namely their conjunction in reality at some 'now', makes this determinately true: 'this will be at *a*.' But this existing determinately true, the ⟨divine⟩ essence is the basis in the divine intellect for understanding that truth.[73]

determinata ad unam partem eorum quae dependent a voluntate creata, poterit voluntate creata aliter velle, et ita non sequitur certitudo ex cognitione determinationis voluntatis divinae" (Vaticana VIII, 418–419). See also the parallel question in the *Lectura*, n. 129.

72. For Aquinas, see, e.g., *SCG* I, c. 66, or *QDV*, q. 2. For Scotus's criticism of Aquinas, see *Ord.* I, d. 38, p. 2, and d. 39, q. 1–5 (Vaticana VI, 409–411).

73. *Ord.* I, d. 38, q. 2 and d. 39, q. 1–5, n. 23: "Intellectus divinus aut offert simplicia quorum unio

According to this account, first the divine intellect understands all simples, that is, possible individuals and properties (such as 'Socrates' and 'whiteness'), without making any judgment about how these simples are related. At the same time, the divine intellect also understands the pairs of complexes that these simples form, one affirming and one denying one simple of another (such as the pair 'Socrates is white' and 'Socrates is not white'); the divine intellect presents these complexes as neutral at this point. Next, the divine will choses one part of these pairs, and then the divine intellect knows (by knowing the divine will) that the given complex is true (that is, knows that 'Socrates is white at t_1').

Scotus, of course, is not claiming that these stages of divine foreknowledge are temporally distinct. The distinction, again, might be best understood in terms of instants of nature, as discussed above. Thus, at n_1 the divine intellect understands all simples and pairs of complexes, such as p_1 and $\neg p_1$. At n_1, since the divine will has not yet determined what states of affairs will actually obtain, these propositions do not have truth values. Then, at n_2, God's will chooses one of the pair of these propositions, and at n_3, the divine intellect knows all the true propositions, in virtue of the divine will that chose them at n_2. The certainty of divine knowledge derives from the determination of the divine will, and thus the extent of the former is the same as that of the latter.[74]

This solution, as Scotus argues, solves the difficulty that Aquinas's account faces: God can know things that do not actually obtain, without assuming the relation of co-existence between them.And although this is a solution to God's knowledge of future contingents in general, the same applies also to sinful actions in particular.

---

est contingens in re, aut — si complexionem — offert eam sicut sibi neutram; et voluntas eligens unam partem, scilicet coniunctionem istorum pro aliquo 'nunc' in re, facit illud esse determinate verum: 'hoc erit pro *a*'. Hoc autem existente 'determinate vero', essentia est ratio intellectui divino intelligendi istud verum" (Vaticana VI, 428).

74. Aquinas would agree with this much; "God's knowledge extends insofar as his causality extends," he notes in *ST* I, q. 14, a. 11 (Leonine ed., 4:183).

It is clear, however, that if TC is true, God cannot know future sinful actions in this way. For if — as TC maintains — the created will is a total immediate cause of its volitions in such a way that it can always do otherwise, then divine knowledge will not follow from the determination of God's will. For instance, God might have determined his will that you are going to write tomorrow. If, however, your will is the total cause of the volition of your writing tomorrow, and this volition is also free in the sense of you having the capacity to decide otherwise, then you might decide not to write tomorrow. If this is the case, however, then God's knowledge cannot follow with certainty, for assuming that you do decide tomorrow not to write, God would not have known whether you will or will not end up writing tomorrow. Thus, if one maintains, like Scotus, that God has knowledge of future contingents because he knows the determination of his will, then — provided God has knowledge of future sinful human actions — the divine will must cooperate in these actions. Which means that the created will cannot be their total, immediate cause.

Apart from the argument from divine foreknowledge, Scotus regards TC as also incompatible with divine omnipotence. God is said to be omnipotent precisely because — assuming that x does not entail a logical contradiction — if God wills x, then x will happen. Now if a created will is a total cause, and it can will contingently, then it follows that it can will something contrary to the divine will. In that case, however, a volition would come to be that God did not will (indeed, of which God willed the opposite), which would mean that God is not omnipotent.

Based on these reasons, Scotus comes to conclude that God does concur with sinful volitions. There are, however, three related issues that still require clarification. First, given that the main motivation of Scotus's account of divine concurrence with sinful volitions is to account for divine foreknowledge and omnipotence, what kind of concur-

rence is that which will ensure that this motivation is met? Second, how can Scotus maintain — as he needs to, as was seen above — that despite divine concurrence, the created agent has the capacity to do otherwise (that is, how can he respond to FW)? Third, granted divine concurrence, if Peter's sinful volition to deny Christ is brought about partly by Peter and partly by God, then for what reason might we say that Peter is responsible for the sin for doing *his* part, while God is not responsible for the sin for doing *his* part? I will start with this last question as this will help to give a more general sense of Scotus's account.

Scotus on Sinful Actions

As a response to this third question, Scotus distinguishes between two aspects that are present in every sinful action and volition: the material and the formal aspect.[75] The material aspect of the sinful action is what makes it an action instead of not being one, without any consideration of its being meritorious or sinful. (For instance, when stealing a loaf of bread from the store, one can consider the act of carrying the bread itself, without reference to its specific circumstances or consequences. Similarly, the material aspect of a volition is what makes it a volition instead of not being one.) On the other hand, the formal aspect of a sinful action is what distinguishes it from other actions, namely its lacking of due justice. An action lacks due justice when the created will could have, given the same material aspect of the action, brought about an alternative, just action (e.g., by paying for the loaf of bread); and similarly for volitions.

Given the material and the formal elements of sinful action (which, to be precise, are elements not just of sinful but any voluntary action), Scotus maintains that (1) God is an immediate efficient cause of the material element while (2) the created will is a *per*

75. Scotus's lengthiest discussion of the nature of sin is in *Ord.* II, d. 34–37 (for the formal and material aspects of sin, see especially q. 2), and the parallel passages of the *Lectura.* See also *Ord.* I, d. 17.

se deficient or *per accidens* efficient cause of the formal element. That the first of these claims is true has already been argued for (God can have foreknowledge only if he is concurring with the action), but the latter requires some clarification.

Most thinkers agreed that the created will cannot be a *per se*, efficient cause of the formal element of sin; this follows already from Augustine's and Aquinas's (and, without the specific theological context, Aristotle's) doctrine that there is no efficient cause of privations as privations. The privation is a result of the created will being deficient in some way, namely in not giving the rectitude it owes to its action. It is in this sense then that the created will is not a *per se* efficient but a *per se* deficient cause of its sinful action. On the other hand, even though the will is not an efficient cause of the deficiency strictly speaking, it does efficiently cause something positive; which means that the created will is also a *per accidens* cause of the deficiency.[76]

Turning to the question of how it is possible that Peter commits a sin when denying Christ while God does not commit a sin when concurring with this sinful volition, Scotus gives an explanation by describing how an effect, which has two different causes, can have a deficiency from the part of one of the causes only. For instance, we can think of a painting, produced by the painter and by the (instrumental cause of) brushes; if there is a deficiency in the painting, that might either be the result of a deficiency in the painter alone (a bad painter working with good tools), or the result of a deficiency

76. Scotus, again just as Aquinas or even Aristotle, distinguishes two kinds of *per accidens* causes, depending on whether the accident is joined to the cause or to the effect. From the part of the effect, for instance, a builder is said to be a *per accidens* cause of whiteness when he builds a white house (as the whiteness is joined to the house only accidentally). On the other hand, from the part of the cause, it might be the case that a musician who also happens to be a builder builds a house; in this case, the musician is a *per accidens* cause of the house *ex parte causae*, since it is not his capacity as a musician that can account for his building. The will is a *per accidens* cause of the lack of justice in the second sense.

in the brushes (a good painter working with bad tools), or the result of a deficiency in both.[77]

Similarly, a volition can have a deficiency that is the result of one of its causes only; as Scotus argues, in sinful acts the deficiency occurs from the part of the created will. When bringing about a volition, the created will can, on the one hand, choose to have a righteous volition, in which case God concurs with the will to give the volition its righteousness. (That the created agent cannot be the sole source of the righteousness is clear from anti-Pelagian considerations.) On the other hand, the created will might choose to have an unjust volition; in this case, God does not concur with it, and thus when sinning, the created will deprives God of the opportunity to give the volition the justice he would have given, had the will acted justly. This means that although by his antecedent will (that is, prior to the creature's volition) God gives justice to every volition with which he concurs, by his consequent will he only gives justice to those volitions in which this is not hindered by the created will; and since God does not owe a positive just action to anyone, his omission of his justice-making concurrence in the case of sinful volitions does not make him culpable.[78]

Thus, according to Scotus's account, (1) God concurs with every volition, whether just or unjust, by being responsible for their material aspect; (2) All just volitions are just

77. *Ord.* II, d. 34–37, q. 1–5, n. 142–143.

78. *Ord.* II, ibid. Although this is not the place to examine this issue further, it is worth noting that there has been some disagreement about how to interpret Scotus's stance on God co-causing volitions. Is it the case that whenever there is an act of volition, whether sinful or good, God contributes what is required for the good act, and it is only the created will that makes the act lacking in justice? Or is it rather the case that God withholds his concurrence from the volitions that are not good due to the secondary agent? In the above brief description I partly followed the interpretation of Gloria Frost (Frost, "Duns Scotus") *pace* Richard Cross (Richard Cross, *Duns Scotus on God* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005)): God needs to concur in the material aspect of the sinful volition but not in its formal aspect if the volition is sinful. If God concurred the same way with just and unjust volitions, then by this concurrence alone God would not be able to know whether a particular volition is just or unjust. However, if God did not concur with sinful volitions even regarding their material aspect, then he would not be able to know them at all.

because of God's justice-making concurrence; (3) All unjust volitions are unjust because of the deficiency in the created cause and the consequent lack of God's justice-making concurrence.

Given (1)–(3), Scotus can indeed maintain that God foreknows sinful volitions by causing them.[79] Here are, again, what this knowledge of Peter's sinful volition (denying Christ) consists in:

1. God understands at (t_1, n_1) all simples, such as Peter, and the act of denying Christ.
2. God understands at (t_1, n_1) the relevant pair of complexes ('Peter wills to deny Christ,' 'Peter does not will to deny Christ').
3. God's will at (t_1, n_2) is determined to concur with Peter's sinful volition regarding its material aspect (that it *is* a volition); and at the same time, it is determined to not concur with Peter's sinful volition to give it justice. *Were* Peter's volition at t_2 different, God's will at (t_1, n_2) *would have* determined to concur with it in giving it justice.
4. By knowing the determination of his own will, God at (t_1, n_3) knows that Peter wills to deny Christ at t_2.

While (1), (2), and (4) are true of God's foreknowledge in general, (3) ensures that Peter's volition is free and thus Peter had the capacity even at t_2 to will otherwise. Were Peter to will otherwise, God's concurrence and thus his knowledge would have been different as well.[80]

79. Although Eef Dekker argues that in *Ord.* I, d. 38 Scotus's concern is not the "source-question" but the "determination-question" of divine foreknowledge (that is, he is not trying to give an account of *how* foreknowledge occurs but of why it is not contradictory to maintain divine foreknowledge with free agents), it seems that Scotus does not make such a sharp division between these questions. For some discussion, see Eef Dekker, "Does Scotus Need Molina? On Divine Foreknowledge and Co-causality," in *John Duns Scotus: Renewal of Philosophy*, ed. E P Bos (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998), 101–112.

80. I cannot explore this issue here, but it seems that — as some later Scotists maintained — Scotus needs some notion of middle knowledge in order to make sense of this counterfactual claim. For a defense of the need for middle knowledge for Scotus, see ibid.

3.2.3 Concurrence and Secondary Causes

How much of this account of divine concurrence with sinful volitions applies to secondary causes in general? Although Scotus does not treat non-voluntary agents in detail in the distinctions on sinful actions, in the *Lectura* he considers a preliminary objection against the TC view, which he then answers on behalf of the TC. According to the objection,

> God seems to be the highest cause with regard to volitions in the same way as with regard to the effect of a natural cause; therefore, if God has proper efficacy with a natural cause, it seems that he has the same with the will with respect to the volition.[81]

As the objector notes, it seems that God concurs in the same way with voluntary and non-voluntary agents, and since his concurrence should be posited in case of the latter, so should it be in case of the former. For our current concern the interesting premise of this argument is the major one, that is, that divine concurrence is the same regardless of whether the secondary agent is a voluntary agent or not. And interestingly, when Scotus answers this objection on behalf of TC, he does not object to the major premise but instead gives the response that it is consistent with the TC to maintain that something be a total cause in an instrumental way even though its effect has another total cause. But again, as Scotus ultimately rejects the TC view, this is not an overwhelming reason to regard his theory as applicable to all instants of secondary causation.

Unfortunately Scotus does not elaborate further on secondary causation in general in the present discussion, and thus the following account is rather a tentative reconstruction than a textual analysis. First, I will say something about how Scotus's motivation applies

81. *Lect.* II, d. 34–37, q. 4, n. 122: "Item, ita videtur Deus causa superior respectu volitionis sicut respectu effectus causae naturalis; igitur si Deus habeat efficientiam propriam cum causa naturali, videtur quod sic habeat cum voluntate respectu volitionis" (Vaticana XIX, 357).

to other cases, and then compare his account to Aquinas's to discover some details in which they disagree.

Regarding Scotus's motivation, as was shown above, his main argument against the TC view stems from the problem of divine foreknowledge and divine omnipotence, both becoming problematic if we assume that created free agents are total causes of their actions. But as was also mentioned above, voluntary actions are not a unique problem for God's omniscience if the TC view is correct, but the problem extends to contingent things in general. It seems that according to Scotus, if it is contingent whether it will rain tomorrow, and God does not concur with raining, then God cannot know now with certainty whether it will rain tomorrow or not rain tomorrow. From which it follows that if God does know that it is going to rain tomorrow, then he will concur with raining tomorrow.

As this shows, Scotus's account does not merely apply to volitional cases but to contingent ones in more general. Whether this implies that for Scotus, God concurs with *every* secondary agent and in every instant of causal activity, is difficult to determine. There seem to be no overwhelming reasons, however, why Scotus would deny general concurrence, given that he granted it in the most difficult cases, involving free created agency. Therefore, regarding every secondary agent as an essentially ordered, autonomous co-cause, seems to be at least a plausible reconstruction of Scotus's general account.

Some further details of this general account become apparent when comparing it to Aquinas's. First, it is worth emphasizing how different Scotus's general approach is, compared to his predecessor's. For instance, before turning to his own view, Scotus presents an interesting objection against TC that he answers on behalf of the view he is going to reject. According to this objection, the TC would contradict the notion of

essential order: since God is the creator of everything, he must also be a total cause of them, even if they are effects of secondary agents.

Scotus, although he will shortly turn to reject TC, provides an answer to this objection, which answer makes his target clearer. In this answer, he calls attention to the various ways in which causes can be ordered, as we have seen above. As he elaborates on the response in the *Lectura*,

> The order of causes is threefold: the first is the order of causes where one ⟨cause⟩ is principal and the other ⟨cause⟩ is less principal, so that ⟨the latter⟩ does not depend in its causality ⟨on the former⟩ — like the object and the intellect with respect to an act of understanding, and both are partial causes. . . . The other one is the order of causes, of which one is superior and the other inferior, and the superior moves the inferior; but neither of them is a total cause of the effect but they join into one total cause — like the sun and the generating person with respect to the generated one. There is, however, a third order of causes, both of which are a total cause of the effect, in such a way that one receives its whole causality from the other — and this order is that of essential causes.[82]

Here, in the response to the objection on behalf of TC, Scotus refers to the three kinds of essential order that was discussed above (here the order is different; (1) corresponds to autonomous partial causes; (2) to partial causes where c_2 receives its power from c_1; and (3) to causes where c_2 is moved to actuality by c_1 as its instrument). According to the response, it is consistent with the TC view to maintain that both God and the created agent are total causes of the secondary effect in the instrumental causal sense, and thus that God is also a total cause.

Scotus's target, the TC view then, encompasses not only Olivi's mere conservationism

82. *Lect.* II, d. 34–37, q. 4, nn. 124–126: "Ordo causarum triplex est: Unus est ordo causarum, quando una est principalis et alia est minus principalis, ita tamen quod non dependeant in sua causalitate — sicut obiectum et intellectus respectu actus intelligendi, et utrumque est causa partialis. . . . Alius est ordo causarum, quarum una est superior et alia inferior, et superior movet inferiorem; neutra tamen est totalis causa effectus, sed integrant unam causam totalem, sicut sol et generans respectu geniti. Est autem tertius ordo causarum, quarum utraque est causa totalis effectus, ita tamen quod una capit totalem causalitatem suam ab alia — et est ordo hic causarum essentialium" (Vaticana XIX, 357).

but also arguably one of Aquinas's positions, according to which secondary causes are instrumental causes. Moreover, as was seen above (sections 2.3 and 3.1), one of the motivations of both Durand's and Olivi's mere conservationism was the following consideration: (1) things cannot have more than one immediate total causes; (2) created things are immediate total causes of other things; (3) Therefore, God is not an immediate total cause of things but only a mediate one. As was also seen above (section 2.3.2), Peter of Palude and arguably Aquinas reject (1), and thus maintain that both God and the secondary agents are (in some sense) total and immediate causes of things. This is not, however, what Scotus maintains.

Scotus elsewhere makes clear that he mostly agrees with (1); as he notes, a thing cannot have more than one total causes, since in that case the thing would be produced twice.[83] Thus, the response Scotus gives instead to the mere conservationist argument is to reject (2); he maintains that both God and the secondary agent are *partial* causes of volitions. They are the kind of partial causes that exercise different powers due to their different natures, and both of them are necessary for the secondary effect, joining into one total cause. Their different natures also guarantee that one of them (God) is essentially prior than the other.

Second, it is also clear from this that according to Scotus and unlike Aquinas, created causes are not instrumental causes. In the above quoted passage from the *Lectura* (see also figure 3.1 above), if both c_1 and c_2 are causes of e, then either (1) c_1 and c_2 are autonomous co-causes, such as the intellect and the object of cognition in an act of understanding; or they are co-causes in such a way that (2) c_2 is moved by c_1; or in such a way that (3) c_2 receives its power from c_1.

Now it is clear that Scotus rejects (2) as a viable model of divine concurrence, for the

83. See note 51 above.

following reason. As he rather briefly remarks in the *Lectura*, if God and the secondary agent are related in way (2), that means that both are total causes but God is not an immediate cause of the secondary effect, unless one takes him to produce the secondary effect twice.[84] And although Scotus does not run Olivi's argument for the same claim explicitly, we might assume that his remark is due to similar considerations: if c_1 produces the effect as a principal cause, then if c_1 also produces the effect immediately, then c_1 produces the effect twice: once by the mediation of c_2, and once without the mediation of c_2. Scotus seems to regard the consequent as inconvenient, whence he concludes that *if* this order were the one that described how God and secondary agents concur, then God would only be a mediate cause. Being a mediate cause, however, is not enough to ground divine foreknowledge.

Third, recall that one question the concurrentist (and in particular, Aquinas) had to answer concerned the object of God's action. Does God act on the secondary cause or on the secondary effect in an act of concurrence? As was seen above (section 2.1.3), for Aquinas, the answer is arguably both, and this partly follows from his understanding of secondary causes as instrumental causes. For Scotus, the answer is arguably the second one only.

To see this, recall again, as we have seen, that Scotus's main argument against the TC view stems from the problem of divine foreknowledge and divine omnipotence, both becoming problematic if we assume a created free agent being a total cause of its actions. Scotus can grant divine foreknowledge of a thing only if God is a partial cause of its production; accordingly, for Scotus, God is primarily acting on the secondary effect (that is, the particular volition), by creating it in its material aspect.

Whether God also acts on the secondary agent besides the secondary effect is less clear

84. *Lect.* II, d. 34–37, q. 4: "Illa igitur causa causabit sola, ut causa totalis, effectum proprium, et non Deus immediate — vel idem effectus bis causabitur" (Vaticana XIX, 358).

in the account; Scotus maintains that the formal aspect of righteous volition is brought about by the secondary agent together with God's concurrence, but he seems to regard this concurrence not as an action on the will itself but rather as augmenting the will's action. Indeed, Scotus's account of freedom seems to preclude God's direct action on the will: although it is only with God's concurrence that Peter can bring about a righteous volition, still, whether the volition turns out to be righteous or not is, in an important sense, up to Peter. And if Scotus did maintain the need of a general divine concurrence, this is most likely to be true with God's action on natural causes as well.

As will be seen in the next section, Peter of Auriol will not find Scotus's position satisfactory, and he will criticize it on two grounds, partly defending Olivi's position: first, he shows that Scotus's account of divine foreknowledge of sinful acts, based on concurrence, is mistaken; second, he argues that there is no need for such concurrence for any other reason either.

3.2.4 Summary

Scotus's account of divine concurrence with secondary agents in bringing about sinful volitions can be regarded as a direct response to Olivi, even though the target of Scotus's criticism is arguably wider than merely Olivi's view. Scotus thinks that if Olivi were right, that is, the created will were the total cause of its volitions, which created will is also free, then God could have no foreknowledge of these volitions, which is absurd. As Scotus argues, the only way to ground foreknowledge is to maintain that God causes these volitions and knows them by knowing his own will. Thus, according to Scotus, God and the secondary agent are partial, autonomous co-causes of volitions, where 'autonomous co-cause' means that in their causal action, although one does depend on the other's

activity, one does not receive its power or the application of this power from the other. This is, again, a specific kind of essential order, and if one thinks — as, for instance Ockham did — that Scotus's notion of essential order is fundamentally mistaken, then one will need to reject his account of concurrence as well.

I also argued that although Scotus's main focus in this discussion is God's concurrence with voluntary agents, his arguments also apply to contingent things in general. Moreover, there seem to be no reason to assume that he would not grant God's concurring activity in other cases of natural causation, although again, this is an interpretation that is at least not contradicted (but not strongly supported either) by Scotus's texts.

Overall, with Scotus, the debate about divine concurrence extended to questions about divine foreknowledge. If one rejects Scotus's theory of divine foreknowledge, one is most likely to lose motivation to endorse his account. The next thinker to be considered here, Peter Auriol, will do just that.

3.3 PETER AURIOL

Auriol's contribution to the debate on whether God is causally active in bringing about sinful actions parallels Peter of Palude's contribution around the same time insofar as just as his Dominican contemporary, Auriol presents his view as a reaction to those discussed earlier in this chapter. As in many other areas, his position is unusual, as he defends Olivi, according to whom God is not an immediate cause of the actions of

secondary agents in general, and of sinful actions in particular.[85] The main target of Auriol's argument is Scotus's theory.

3.3.1 Divine Foreknowledge

As was seen in the previous section, Scotus's main argument for divine concurrence with created causes relied on his view that God knows about future contingents by causing them. Auriol disagrees with this claim. Although an exposition of the debate about divine foreknowledge would lead us too far from the current topic, in order to understand Auriol's criticism of Scotus it is worth to look briefly at why he thinks God does not know future contingents by causing them.[86]

Auriol's main problem with Scotus's account is that he thinks that Scotus cannot give a satisfactory account of human freedom, if he maintains that God co-causes human volitions. (Interestingly, as was seen above, to give such an account was one of the main motivations for Scotus to develop his model.) More precisely, Auriol thinks that (1) Scotus's account of the origin of contingency in the world is mistaken; and that (2)

85. Despite his unusual stance, and perhaps partly due to the difficult manuscript situation, Auriol's account of divine concurrence has remained relatively unnoticed. The sole exception seems to be a footnote, Frost, "Peter Olivi," n. 17. In what follows, I am mostly using the not entirely reliable Zanetti (1605) edition (Peter Auriol, *Commentariorum [*sic*] in secundum librum Sententiarum* (Rome: Zannetti, 1605)), proofread against ms. Florence, Conv. Soppr. A.3.120.

86. For a study on Auriol on this subject, see the introductory section in Peter Auriol, "Peter of Aureol on Divine Foreknowledge"; and Riccardo Fedriga, "Mente divina e contingenza in Pietro Aureolo," *Rivista di storia della filosofia* 68 (2013): 149–173. For the connected debate of excluded middles and bivalence regarding future propositions, see Calvin G Normore, "Petrus Aureoli and His Contemporaries on Future Contingents and Excluded Middle," *Synthese* 96, no. 1 (1993): 83–92. For early Franciscan arguments addressed particularly against Scotus's view, see Chris Schabel, "Early Franciscan Attacks on John Duns Scotus's Doctrine of Divine Foreknowledge," in *What is "Theology" in the Middle Ages? Religious Cultures of Europe (11th–15th Centuries) as Reflected in Their Self-Understanding*, ed. Mikolaj Olszevski (2007), 301–328.

Scotus's account of divine foreknowledge violates human freedom. I will briefly look at both of these criticisms.

First, for Scotus, as was briefly mentioned above, causes in the physical world are necessary, and thus the contingency of the future can only be grounded in the contingent (that is, free) will, and especially in the free divine will. According to Auriol, however, this is mistaken, because it misunderstands the divine nature.

According to Auriol, the divine will cannot ground contingency in the world since the divine will itself is not contingent. More specifically, he seems to think that due to divine simplicity, we cannot posit any potentiality in God, which implies that the divine nature is necessary in such a way that every aspect of it is necessary. As he notes,

> Second, ⟨this position is deficient⟩ in that it says that God can will what he does not will.... For according to this, it would follow that there is some will in God which would be able not to be, and that there is some will which is not in God although it could be; but this is impossible, because whatever is possible to be in God at any time, is wholly in act, and that which is not in act, is entirely impossible to be in him.[87]

Thus, according to Auriol, statements such as "God *could have* not created the world" cannot be literally true, since otherwise we would have to posit that God had some potentiality (i.e., of not creating the world) that was not actualized. But God cannot have such unactualized potentialities, since in a fully actual and necessary being, everything is actual.

This objection is noteworthy since it appeals to a notion of divine simplicity that seems somewhat close to Aquinas's — even though Aquinas explicitly denies that God created the world necessarily. And it is perhaps also noteworthy that Auriol does not

87. *In Sent.* I, d. 39, q. 65, a. 4: "Secundo vero in eo quod ait quod Deus potest non velle quod vult.... Secundum hoc enim sequeretur quod aliquod velle esset in Deo quod potuisset non esse, et aliquod velle non esset in Eo quod tamen esse potuisset; sed hoc est impossibile, quia quicquid umquam possibile est esse in Deo, totum est actu, et quod non est actu, est impossibile simpliciter in Eo esse" (Schabel ed., 197–198).

consider the "standard" response to such a position, according to which God, although his will is in some sense necessary, can will things contingently when his will is attached to creatures whose existence is not simpliciter necessary.[88]

Auriol's second objection against Scotus's position is that it does not leave any freedom for the human will.[89] In particular, regarding the question of divine foreknowledge, recall again that for Scotus, God knows future contingents because they are the results of the determination of the divine will: the divine intellect presents all possible pairs of contradictory statements ('You will write tomorrow'; 'You will not write tomorrow') to the divine will, which then freely chooses and actualizes one of the pairs, and thus the divine intellect knows which part of the pair will be true by knowing the will by the divine essence.

Auriol argues that God does not know the contingent future this way. As he notes,

> God does not know future things by a cognition of that which is not the cause of the future things, since every cognition is either of the thing in itself or of the thing by its causes; but it is clear that the determination of the divine will is not the cause of contingent future things — or at least, not of all of them — beause it is not the cause of the acts that are elicited by free choice, and especially of sins, because God is not the agent of evil things.[90]

Auriol's point is clear: God cannot know all future things by knowing the determination of his will, since some of these future things are not caused by this determination. If it is up to my free choice whether I will write tomorrow, then God's will does not cause my writing tomorrow, and thus God cannot know by knowing his will that I will

88. For Aquinas's formulation of this response, see *ST* I, q. 19, a. 3, ad 4.

89. I cannot here examine Auriol's quite elaborate account of human free will. For a detailed presentation and defense, see Tobias Hoffmann, "Peter Auriol on Free Choice and Free Judgment," *Vivarium* 53 (2015): 65–89.

90. *In Sent.* I, d. 38, q. 64, a. 1: "Deus enim non cognoscit futura per cognitionem illius quod non est futurorum causa, cum omnis cognitio vel sit rei in se vel rei per suas causas; sed manifestum est quod determinatio voluntatis divine non est causa contingentium futurorum — saltem omnium — quia non est causa actuum qui eliciuntur a libera arbitrio, et maxime peccatorum, quia Deus non est actor malorum" (Schabel ed., 96–97).

write tomorrow. (As was seen above, Scotus would simply deny that God does not cause in any sense those things that are the results of the acts of free will.) As Auriol points out, the problem is even worse with sinful volitions. According to Scotus's account, God knows that Peter will deny Christ because he knows the determination of his will. But either it is the case that the determination of God's will was not a cause of Peter's denying of Christ, in which case God would not know it by this determination; or God's will *was* the cause of Peter's denial, which is simply false.

The problem, however, as Auriol notes, is not limited to sinful actions, that is, it cannot be consistently maintained that at least for non sinful actions, God knows them by the determination of his will. For the question is about God's knowledge of any kind of contingent future things; and so if he can know *some* (for instance the sinful actions) without the determination of his will, then it seems that he can know all of them this way.[91]

Whether these objections of Auriol are successful objections against Scotus's view, I do not aim to determine here. It might seem that Auriol does not take into consideration all aspects of Scotus's account, especially with regard to natural priority among the various states of volition and knowledge, or else he begs the question against Scotus when claiming that God cannot know contingent acts by the determination of his will because that determination is not their cause. But again, Auriol's overall conclusion is clear, and it is also true that if one rejects Scotus's account of God's foreknowledge of future contingents, then thereby one also abandons Scotus's primary reason for accepting divine concurrence even in sinful volitional cases.

Having rejected Scotus's account of foreknowledge, Auriol maintains that God does not, strictly speaking, *fore*knows that Peter will deny Christ (the sentence 'Peter will

91. *In Sent.* I, d. 38, q. 64, a. 1.

deny Christ' has, indeed, no truth value until it is actualized). Nevertheless, God knows that Peter's denial will take place because he is an "eminent similitude" of all created things including all future ones as well, and thus can know these by his essence without the mediation of either his will or any representation. According to Auriol, this saves the contingency of future things, since God's knowledge neither precedes these things in any way nor is it eternally present to them (as Aquinas would maintain).[92]

Whether Auriol's solution to the problem of foreknowledge is successful, we need not decide here; as can be seen, it relies on Boethius's and Augustine's, even though at the same time criticizing Aquinas's.[93] It is clear from this account, however, that Auriol rejects Scotus's view according to which God's causal activity in instances of secondary causation is needed for his foreknowledge. In fact, he rejects that God's causal activity in instances of secondary causation is needed altogether. I turn now to spell out in more detail what he consequently thinks of divine concurrence proper.

3.3.2 Divine Concurrence in Sinful Volitions

Just as Scotus and Olivi, Auriol treats the question of divine concurrence in the context of sinful volitions; but just as before, his arguments in this specific context have some general implications as well. First, I will briefly present his view of concurrence in sinful volitions in particular; then I turn to some aspects of his view of divine concurrence in general.

92. *In Sent.* I, d. 38, q. 64, a. 1.

93. As Chris Schabel notes ("Peter of Aureol on Divine Foreknowledge," 68), Auriol's view is complex, and many of his contemporaries at the University of Paris believed that he denied divine foreknowledge altogether. Again, I cannot get into the details of his account here, but it seems that at least in the one version of his account, he maintains that God knows things that are future to us, but he knows them not as future, nor as present, but as somehow *indistant*.

Regarding divine concurrence in sinful volitions, Auriol develops his position after presenting and discussing Duns Scotus's and Olivi's stance on the same. His presentation of these authors is mostly fair, and after explaining their views as well as their arguments for them, he sides with Olivi in maintaining that God is not causally active in any way in bringing about sinful volitions. Since his presentation of Scotus and Olivi's position as well as a response to them takes up the majority of the discussion in his text, it is worthwhile to examine these arguments in some more detail. They will also quite clearly indicate Auriol's final position on the question.

He begins his question, "Whether a sinful action is from God," by discussing what seems to be Scotus's position, and contrasting it to what seems to be Olivi's.[94] As he summarizes the first opinion,

> In the sinful action there are two things, namely the substrate and the deformity, and the first is from God, just as any other positive nature, because God coacts with the action of a creature; but as far as the privation and deformity is concerned, which is in the sin formally, they say that the sin is only from the deficient will.[95]

As was seen above, this was indeed Scotus's solution, according to whom in every sinful volition, we need to consider two things: that it is a volition, and that it is in some way deformed. And as Auriol rightly summarizes, for Scotus, the first of these aspects is brought about by the concurring actions of God and the secondary agent, while the second one is a result of the secondary agent alone.

---

94. That Auriol knew Scotus's work quite well is also apparent in other areas. Once it was also assumed that he might have been a student of Scotus in Paris, although according to the latest scholarship this seems to be unsupported. See Russell L Friedman, "Peter Auriol," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N Zalta (2016) for more details.

95. *In Sent.* II, d. 38, q. 1, a. 1: "in actu peccati sunt duo, scilicet substratum et difformitas, et primum est a Deo sicuti quaelibet alia natura positiva, quia Deus coagit actioni creaturae; sed quoad privativum et difformitatem, quod est formale in peccato, dicunt quod peccatum est a sola voluntate deficiente" (Zanetti ed., 302).

Before presenting his argument against Scotus's view, Auriol also describes the alternative:

> The other is the opposite opinion, that not every act is from God, even insofar as the positive part is concerned in such a way that he would elicit them; and this, as they say, is especially true of our will. And if it is asked of them, in what way that act ⟨of the will⟩ depends on God, then they say that in relation to conservation — because according to them it is not the same as the relation of production.[96]

As was also seen above, this is indeed Olivi's position, although his motivation seems to have been the problems of divine concurrence not with human volitions in particular but with secondary agents in general. This is the position that Auriol deems "more rational" (*magis rationabilis*), and accordingly he presents some arguments for it that are novel when contrasted to Olivi's.

Auriol's first argument is one that he also employs in the context of foreknowledge, where he argues that Scotus's distinction between the material and formal elements of volition is not sufficient to explain how God knows these volitions. More precisely, Auriol maintains that in a deformed act (such as the act of will in question), the deformity is inseparable from the act itself that the deformity characterizes, and thus it cannot be the case that God causes the act of will but does not cause thereby the deformity in it.[97] Therefore, Auriol maintains that Scotus's solution to the problem of foreknowledge was resting on a mistaken assumption.

---

96. *In Sent.* II, d. 38, q. 1, a. 1: "Alia est opinio opposita, quia non omnis actus est a Deo, et quoad positivum elicitive, et hoc specialiter dicunt verum esse de actu voluntatis nostrae. Et si quaeratur ab eis, quomodo actus ille depndet a Deo, respondent quod in habitudine ad conservantem, quia secundum eos non est eadem habitudo cum habitudine producentis" (Zanetti ed., 302).

97. *In Sent.* I, d. 38, q. 64, a. 1: "Quod si ita dicatur, non valet. Impossibile est enim quod aliquid determinet ad actum quin determinet ad deformitatem inseparabilem ab illo actu; sed deformitas est inseparabilis ab illo actu numerali in quo est, et omnino ab actu odii divini deformitas separari non potest; ergo si determinet Deus voluntatem creatam ad actum, determinabit et ad deformitatem ac peccatum" (Schabel ed., 98).

The same argument is used here, in the context of divine concurrence, again to reject Scotus's position. According to Auriol,

> Whenever some things are related in such a way that one is a privation in the other that is inseparable from it, then whatever is acting in one, is necessarily acting in the other: but this is the way in which deformity and act are related, therefore etc.[98]

Thus, according to Auriol, we cannot say that God effects something even though he does not effect its deformity. Saying that God acts on the positive substrate of the volition but not on its deformity implies that these two parts are separable, which is not the case.

Auriol provides an example to support his argument: if we regard blackness as a lack of whiteness, and there is someone who produces blackness, we cannot say that he, at the same time, does not produce the lack of whiteness in the same subject.[99] Similarly, if we regard the act of hatred as lacking due justice, and there is someone (the secondary agent and God) who produces the act, we cannot say that *both of them*, at the same time, do not produce the lack of due justice. In other words, Auriol argues, in this case we cannot say that God caused the act but not the lack of due justice, because the positive and the negative parts are just as inseparable as blackness is from the lack of whiteness.

One might note here that Scotus's account may not necessarily assume that there is a real separability of the substrate of the act and its deficiency. His notion of essentially ordered autonomous co-causes seems to allow for cases where only one cause is deficient, and by their acting together the two causes bring about a deficient effect in such a way

98. *In Sent.* II, d. 38, q. 1, a. 1: "Probo consequentiam, quoniam aliquando aliqua sic se habent, quod unum est privatio in alio inseparabilis ab illo, quidquid agens in unum necessario agit in reliquum: sed ita se habet deformitas ad actum, ergo" (Zanetti ed., 303; ms. Florence, fol. 112vb).

99. *In Sent.* II, d. 38, q. 1: "Maior patet, quia enim privatio albedinis et nigredo est annexa inseparabiliter nigredini, ideo producens nigredinem necessario producit non albedinem" (Zanetti ed., 303).

that its deficiency is due only to the one deficient cause — even if the deficiency is not *in re* separable from the effect (see section 3.2.2 above). Auriol does not seem to consider causes ordered in this way.

Be that as it may, this is not the only argument that Auriol advances against Scotus's view. The second one is more complex and is also directed toward the same target. Recall that according to Scotus, the freedom of the will is preserved even given God's concurrence, since we can distinguish prior and posterior instants of nature by which we can secure the natural priority of the will nevertheless the temporal simultaneity of the secondary agent's and God's actions. According to Auriol, however, this is not sufficient to preserve human freedom. As he argues,

> If God concurs with the act of the will, this is either because he follows the determination of the will in that act, in such a way that the will in a previous instant of nature determines itself to that act, and because of this, God concurs with the determined will; or the other way, namely that God previously determines himself to act, and our will follows his determination, and comes to that action. But neither of these ways is satisfactory; therefore etc.[100]

Thus, according to Auriol, if God concurs with the acts of the will, this either happens in a way in which the will determines itself at n_1 and God follows this determination at n_2, or it happens conversely, namely so that God determines himself to act at n_1 and our will follows his determination at n_2. It is worth noting that Durand's Dilemma (see section 2.3.1 above) rested on a similar division, although Auriol's argument is specific to the will insofar as it presupposes that the will (contrary to other created powers) can

100. *In Sent.* II, d. 38, q. 1: "Si Deus coagit actui voluntatis, aut hoc est quia sequitur determinationem voluntatis in illo actu, sic quod voluntas prius natura determinet se ad actum illum, et ex hoc Deus coagit voluntati determinate; aut econverso prius Deus determinat se ad agendum, et voluntas nostra sequitur determinationem eius, et venit ad actionem illam. Sed nullo eorum eorum modorum est; ergo" (Zanetti ed., 303).

determine itself whether to act and in what way. But similarly to Durand, Auriol argues that neither of the options presented by the dilemma is satisfactory.

The first option is not satisfactory because "then God voluntarily concurs with sin; and also, we would have what we wanted to show ⟨i.e., that God does not concur in every act of the will⟩, because God would not concur in the determination."[101] That is, if we posit that first our will determines the action and then God acts, then we are committed both to the claim that if the will determines itself to sin, God will choose to concur with this sinning, and also to the claim that God was not immediately active in the determination itself, which contradicts the view as originally proposed.

The second option is not satisfactory either, according to Auriol. If Scotus maintains that God determines himself first and our will follows, that would mean that God determines the will to sin, in which case the will would not sin because it did not act freely but from an external source.[102]

As was seen above, according to Scotus, although the divine will determines his action at an instant prior to the determination of the human will, nevertheless, the divine will's determination does not causally necessitate the human will's determination. For Scotus, had Peter's will determined itself otherwise, God would not have concurred with the volition of denying Christ; even though, *since* Peter's will did determine itself this way, God had already determined that he would concur with (the positive substrate of) Peter's denial of Christ (see section 3.2.2 above for an elaboration on these details). As was mentioned earlier, Scotus's solution is arguably only successful if he has some notion of middle knowledge; and if middle knowledge in itself is problematic, then Scotus's

101. *In Sent.* II, d. 38, q. 1: "Tunc Deus voluntarie coageret ad peccatum; et etiam haberetur propositum, quia in illo determinare non coagit Deus" (Zanetti ed., 303).
102. Ibid.: "Nec potest dari secundus modus, quia tunc voluntas determinaretur a Deo ad peccatum: ergo non ageret a se sed ab illo, et ita voluntas non peccaret, quia de se non haberet, unde esset causa peccati, quia non libera; determinaretur enim ab extrinseco" (Zanetti ed., 303).

account will prove to be problematic as well. Perhaps Auriol signals at some problems connected to such an account in general, even though he does not spell out his argument in these terms.

As can be seen from these two objections, Auriol's main concern is indeed God's concurrence with the free actions of the created will, or perhaps with contingent actions in more general. Similarly to Durand and to Olivi, his arguments are mostly negative, that is, they are targeted against the concurrentist position especially as it was formulated by Scotus. Since he thinks that Scotus's account of contingency (as based on the contingent divine will) is mistaken, and neither Scotus's account of foreknowledge, nor his account of concurrence is successful at preserving human free will or contingency in the world, he concludes that God is not immediately active in bringing about human volitions. I turn now to his remarks that apply more generally to all created causes.

3.3.3 Concurrence and Secondary Causes

Apart from arguments against Scotus, relying on the incompatibility of divine concurrence with free human volitions, Auriol presents some arguments that concern secondary agents in general, and that will help to characterize his own view in more detail. I will group these arguments into three units: the first one, again, contains some negative arguments against concurrentist views in general; the second will highlight some fundamental differences between Auriol's and most concurrentists' understanding of creation and conservation; and the third one will address a worry that was already raised, for instance, by Peter of Palude against mere conservationism.

Problems with Concurrentism in General

Having rejected Scotus's account of divine concurrence with sinful volitions on the grounds that it is irreconcilable with free will (and also resting on a mistaken notion of contingency), Auriol presents two other arguments that are addressed against the concurrentist. Both of these arguments have been raised before.

The first argument is somewhat convoluted but is worthwhile quoting it in its entirety:

> The will is not a lesser power with respect to its act than other natural things with respect to ⟨their⟩ proper acts; but some natural principles elicit their action by themselves in such a way that God does not cooperate there actively, except by conservation; therefore etc.... I prove the minor by authorities and by reasons.... By reasons: because it does not appear why God could not communicate action to a creature, ⟨action⟩ that is not creation but an action ⟨that leads⟩ from a perfectible to the complement, and educed from potentiality to act. The reason is that for such an action no infinite power is required. Whence some solemn doctors say that God acts in everything insofar as being is concerned, understanding by 'being' everything that is apart from nothing, and thus since God causes matter in the inferior things that are in potency, therefore he created all such things insofar as being in potency is concerned, but not insofar as the complete being in act is concerned; thus God acts to universal being according to them, but the particular agent to the being such-and-such.[103]

This rather complex argument of Auriol has a quite usual and quite unusual part. Concerning the usual part, according to Auriol, it does not require infinite power to bring about a change in a subject — and thus, for instance, when fire produces heat in a

103. *In Sent.* II, d. 38, q. 1, a. 1: "Non est minoris potestas [potestatis *a.c.*] voluntas respectu sui actus, quam alia naturalia respectu actuum propriorum, sed aliqua principia naturalia sic eliciunt suos actus per se, quod Deus ibi non cooperatur active, nisi per conservationem; ergo.... probo minorem auctoritatibus et rationibus.... Secundo per rationes, quia non apparet, quare Deus non possit communicare creaturae actionem, quae non est creatio sed ex actione [actio *a.c.*] perfectibili ad complementum, et educta de potentia ad actum. Ratio est, quia ad talem actionem non requiritur virtus infinita. Unde Doctores quidam solemnes dicunt, quod Deus agit in omnibus quantum ad esse, intelligentes per esse omne quod est extra nihil, et ideo quia Deus causat materiam in qua inferiora sunt in potentia, ideo creavit omnia talia, quatum ad esse in potentia, non quoad esse in actu completum; sic ergo Deus agit ad esse universale secundum eos, agens autem particulare ad esse tale" (Zanetti ed., 303; ms. Florence, fol. 112vb).

previously cold pot of water, the fire's power is sufficient to bring about the change. As was seen in connection to Durand and Peter of Palude (section 2.3 above), as well as in Olivi in the previous section, this was a standard argument against concurrentism, and concurrentists often responded (such as Aquinas and Peter of Palude did explicitly) by denying the major premise. As was also seen (2.1.2 above), for Aquinas, even bringing about accidental change *would* require an infinite power since it involves creating a new accident.

What is unusual about Auriol's argument is that he refers to what seems to be Aquinas's early view — not as possibly raising an objection but as someone who agrees with his own view. He summarizes Aquinas's position — developed in the *Sentences* commentary, section 2.1.1 above — as maintaining that God brings about all potential or universal being (in Aquinas's terminology, *esse indeterminatum*) while secondary agents bring about the *esse tale*, or the being such-and-such (in Aquinas's terminology, *esse determinatum*). As was also seen above, especially in connection to Giles (section 2.2.1) and Durand (section 2.1.1), this account received some criticism early on, especially as it was regarded to imply some kind of partialism that was unacceptable to most of Aquinas's contemporaries. But instead of raising some similar arguments against the view, Auriol simply turns to Aquinas to support his own position: that God does *not* interact with secondary agents in all their actions, because, as Aquinas had maintained, God does not interact with them in bringing about the being such-and-such.

I discussed above Aquinas's position as well as the partialism objection to it. Aquinas, although not addressing the partialism objection directly, seems to maintain that it rests on a misunderstanding: when we say that God acts with all actions of secondary agents, this statement takes 'action' for something that brings about some change, and not just an aspect of it. He might also point out — along the lines of how Auriol argued against

Scotus — that this understanding assumes that the universal and particular beings of a thing are separable entities, so that the one who brings about one of them has nothing to do with bringing about the other.

Whether a response along these lines is successful we need not decide here. The perhaps more important point is that Auriol's agreement with Aquinas and Aquinas's explicit defense of concurrentism raises an interpretative worry, namely whether Auriol should be regarded not as a mere conservationist but rather as a concurrentist — a partialist for sure, but a concurrentist anyway.

It seems that the answer is negative — that is, that Auriol's disagreement with the concurrentist position is not merely verbal. This becomes apparent in the second argument he advances against the concurrentist in general. As he notes,

> I ask whether God as well as the creature brings about the thing totally, or part by part. The second cannot be the case, since in simple things there is no parts, and ⟨also because⟩ according to this what the creature brings about, God does not bring about; therefore, God does not contribute to every positive action. Neither can the first be the case, because it is impossible that the same thing be by ⟨multiple⟩ total causes of the same genus simultaneously.[104]

In this passage, despite his previous appeal to Aquinas, Auriol does raise the partialist worry that both Giles and Durand had addressed against Aquinas's early view. He spells out both horns of the worry in more detail than his predecessors. More precisely, he argues that God's concurring action either brings about the whole effect in every way or just part of it; but neither of these options are viable for the concurrentist.

On the one hand, God and the secondary agent cannot bring about the thing part by

104. *In Sent.* II, d. 38, q. 1, a. 1: "Quero utrum tam Deus quam creatura faciant illud totaliter aut quilibet partem et partem. Non est dare secundum, quoniam in simplicibus non est pars et pars, et propter ea partem quam faceret creatura, non faceret Deus; ergo non attingeret omnem actionem positivam. Nec potest dari primum, quia impossibile est idem simul esse a causis totalibus in eodem genere cause" (Zanetti ed., 303; ms. Florence, fol. 112vb).

part. In this case, as Durand and Olivi had pointed out already, no divine concurrence would needed for the creature's part, contrary to the initial concurrentist assumption. Moreover, as Auriol argues, such a partialist account would leave the production of simple things unexplained.[105]

On the other hand, according to Auriol, the concurrentist also cannot maintain that God and the secondary agent both produce the effect wholly. Auriol seems to agree with Scotus (as well as with Durand and Olivi) that one thing cannot have two immediate total causes of the same kind, because in that case the thing would be produced twice. Again, as was shown above, most concurrentists (with the notable exception Scotus) maintain that one thing *can* have two immediate total causes, provided that these causes are of different kind, such as God and the secondary agent.

All in all, with these arguments Auriol means to establish that the concurrentist position is wrong; God does *not* concur with all actions of the secondary agents, whether they are the acts of will or the actions of non-voluntary created things. These arguments, just as his arguments against Scotus, were exclusively negative ones, and thus they provide little elaboration on Auriol's own position. After rejecting the concurrentist view, however, he does raise and answer a few objections against his own theory, which objections help to characterize the view some more.

105. Interestingly, Auriol does not specify what kind of simple things he is talking about, but supposedly they are immaterial things such as angels. This part of the objection is rather surprising; Aquinas explicitly claims in the relevant text of his *Sentences* commentary (II, d. 1, q. 1, a. 4) that his subsequent account of concurrence only applies to material, generable things. Thus, it seems that according to Aquinas and most of his contemporaries, simple things do not change except by divine action (i.e., they are created from nothing, not generated, and they have no qualitative changes). Although this will lead to various difficulties concerning angels (see, e.g., Tobias Hoffmann, ed., *A Companion to Angels in Medieval Philosophy* (Leiden: Brill, 2012)), it seems that the problem of divine concurrence specifically does not arise for them.

Creation and Conservation

The first objection highlights an important underlying assumption of most concurrentist positions. As the objector notes, "Creation and conservation is the same; but according to you, God immediately conserves all creatures; therefore, he immediately brings about all creatures."[106]

This objection is noteworthy because as was seen above (section 2.2.3), both Aquinas and Giles thought that creation and conservation were the same. So did Bonaventure, Scotus, and perhaps the later Henry of Gent, and with that, all concurrentists I have considered so far in this dissertation. As was also mentioned earlier, however, this was not a universally held view, and, according to some, the view entails occasionalism.[107] Auriol's objector points out that the identity thesis, even if it does not lead to occasionalism, does entail some form of concurrentism, and thus if the identity thesis is true, Aureol's view turns out to be false.

In his response, Auriol grants the conditional and argues that creation and conservation are different. He presents three arguments against the identity thesis (while not surprisingly, two of them assume the falsity of concurrentism[108]).

The first of these arguments is the perhaps least interesting one since it formulates

106. *In Sent.* II, d. 38, q. 1, a. 1: "Idem est creatio et conservatio; sed per te Deus est immediate conservans omnem creaturam; ergo esset immediate agens omnem creaturam" (Zanetti ed., 303).
107. Most notably, see Cross, "The Eternity of the World." His thesis, which I cannot pursue in detail here, is surprising given the fact that none of the above mentioned authors adhered to occasionalism. Nevertheless, his argument rests on the claim that according to the identity thesis, if God is causally sufficient for the existence of the universe at any time, then he is causally sufficient for its existence at all times. But if he is causally sufficient for the existence of the universe at all times, then no created cause can concur with him to bring about any effect — therefore, either God cannot create, or occasionalism is true. As was seen above, however, that while it is true for Aquinas, Giles, and Scotus that God is sufficient for the existence of the universe at all times, there are certain features of the universe that in the present order are not due to God.
108. We need to remember that these arguments are not meant to establish that his mere conservationist position is correct, but only that he can answer some objections that are raised against his position by the concurrentist.

an objection that most thinkers of the opposite view had already considered. According to this argument, creation and conservation cannot be the same, since production is something that happens in an instant, while conservation involves temporal duration.[109] (The common response to such an objection was that the temporal duration is not an intrinsic feature of conservation but only a connotation of the term, and thus regarding their intrinsic features, the two actions are the same.[110])

Auriol's second argument is more interesting. As he notes,

> The production from the productive power is not such that it would remain with the subject, with the exception of divine production. . . . For it is a contradiction that something by itself is continuation, and that it is able not to continue ⟨to exist⟩: therefore, if production itself were continuation, then it would be eternal; but the consequence is false. . . therefore, continuation and production are not the same.[111]

The argument is somewhat obscure, but Auriol seems to be arguing here that while after something has been produced, then the production itself ceases, this is not the case with conservation, which is, by definition, a continuing process. That production itself cannot be eternal or continuous, is only shown by an appeal to the production of the divine persons; the Father producing the Son and the Holy Spirit is the only production that is continuous, in contrast with how things in the world are produced. Although one might note here that this argument seems to beg the question against the identity

109. *In Sent.* II, d. 38, q. 1, a. 1: "Conservatio vel est directe continuatio rei, vel actionis, vel productionis; unde Doctores, qui dicunt oppositum, dicunt quod conservatio est productio continuata. . . . Sed continuatio differt a productione: probo, quia productio rei in instanti, in quo est, non est continuatio, sed in toto tempore sequenti" (Zanetti ed., 303; ms. Florence, fol. 113ra).

110. Aquinas famously argued that creation does not entail a temporal starting point; see especially his *De aeternitate mundi*.

111. *In Sent.* II, d. 38, q. 1, a. 1: "Secundo, quia productio ex vi productionis non habet, quod manet per subiectum, excepta productione divina. . . . Contradictio enim est, quod aliquid de se sit continuatio, et [304] quod ipsum possit non continuari: ergo si productio seipsa esset continuatio, illa esset aeterna seipsa; consequens est falsum. . . ergo productio et continuatio non sunt idem" (Zanetti ed., 303–304; ms. Florence, fol. 113ra).

thesis (which holds precisely that the world is eternally created by God), again, Auriol's stance on the question is clear: production and conservation cannot be the same.

Finally, Auriol repeats the argument he has pointed towards earlier. As he notes,

> The same can be shown also because God communicates actions to creatures and does not communicate to them conservation, for whichever thing is created, it is immediately and totally conserved by God, but not everything is totally and immediately produced by God but by secondary causes; therefore, creation and conservation are not the same.[112]

The argument explains that God gave productive power to things in the world — such as for the fire to produce heat — but he did not give them conserving power. That is, even though fire has the power to produce heat, that heat is not conserved by the fire: when we remove the fire from the pot of water it just heated up, the heat in the water remains without the fire. From this, Auriol concludes that although God is not an immediate total cause when creation is concerned, he *is* such a cause when conservation is concerned — which means that creation and conservation are not identical.

It is worth noting here that although Auriol equates creation with production in these arguments (especially in the second and third one), this equation is not entirely obvious. According to most medieval authors, God does *not* communicate creative power to creatures; that is, although created things might be causally active, they are unable to produce something from nothing, which is what happens at creation.[113] Thus, Auriol's argument so far seems to give reasons to think that *production* (that is, bringing about a form in matter) is different from conservation; but of course, virtually no medieval thinker would have denied this claim. What is at issue is, rather, whether creation

112. *In Sent.* II, d. 38, q. 1: "Ad idem facit, quia Deus communicat actiones creaturis et non communicat eis conservationem, quaelibet enim res creatur immediate et totaliter conservatur a Deo, sed non quaelibet res totaliter et immediate producitur a Deo sed per causas secundas; ergo non est idem creatio et conservatio" (Zanetti ed., 304; ms. Florence, fol. 113ra).

113. Aquinas, Giles, even Durand, Peter of Palude, and Scotus would all deny that creatures can create.

ex nihilo is the same as conservation — and apart from the first one that referred to temporal starting points, the arguments did not answer this question.

As is also apparent (especially in the third argument), Auriol presupposes the truth of mere conservationism when arguing that creation and conservation are not the same. Again, these arguments occur in a response to an objection, and thus are not meant to serve as independent arguments for the mere conservationist thesis. According to the objector, if the identity thesis is true, then Auriol's theory of divine concurrence is false. As Auriol's argument makes quite clear, one man's modus ponens is another one's modus tollens; if the identity thesis implies concurrentism, then according to Auriol, the identity thesis must be false.

Auriol's quite detailed arguments against the identity thesis nicely illustrate the connection between several problems. Although it might seem that the problem of divine foreknowledge or that of divine concurrence with free will has little to do with such broader metaphysical issues as the nature of creation and conservation, as Auriol's arguments demonstrate, this is not the case. If his argument is sound, that means that if one rejects Scotus's theory of divine foreknowledge, and with that the concurrentist thesis that God is causally active in every action of creatures including those of free will, then one also has at least a strong motivation to reject that creation and conservation are identical. And as is also clear, although various concurrentists such as Aquinas, Giles, and Scotus, understand divine concurrence in quite different ways, they do share some common assumptions, such as the identity thesis.[114]

114. I do not mean to imply with this that the lines between concurrentists/mere conservationists and those between identity-theorsits/non-identity-theorists are the same. Durand is a good counterexample here, since he endorses the identity-thesis without endorsing concurrentism. Nevertheless, it seems that the identity thesis provides at least a strong motivation, even according to some mere conservationists, to endorse God's immediate concurrence with secondary agents.

The Three Young Men Objection

Recall that the perhaps most serious objection against mere conservationism, as for instance formulated by Peter of Palude against Durand's theory (section 2.3.2 above), referred to particular cases that are difficult to account for without positing divine concurrence. More specifically, if we assume that God does not concur with the fire in regular cases but the fire is a sufficient cause of burning, then it is difficult if not impossible to account for the possibility of fire *without* burning, as was manifest in the story of Nebuchadnezzar's fire and the three young men. More generally, the objector claims, it is difficult to account for the possibility of miracles against nature without positing divine concurrence with secondary causes.

Auriol explicitly addresses this objection, which points to the fact that it was indeed a commonly formulated one against mere conservationist positions in the fourteenth century. As was also apparent in Peter of Palude's formulation, a possible (although according to Peter of Palude, rather problematic) response from the mere conservationist was to posit some kind of a mask between the fire and the three young men, which mask, even though the fire exercised its heat, protected them from burning.

The mask solution, perhaps surprisingly, is not the solution that Auriol chooses. Instead, he claims:

> I grant that by conserving the fire and ⟨conserving⟩ the burning of the fire, God cannot bring about that the fire does not act, naturally speaking, or by his ordained power; he could, however, suspend the action and effect of the fire according to his ⟨absolute⟩ power.[115]

Auriol's response is very brief. As was seen above, the Three Young Men objection, at

115. *In Sent.* II, d. 38, q. 1, a. 1: "Concedo, quod conservando ignem et ignitionem ignis, non posset Deus facere quin ignis ageret, naturaliter loquendo, sive de potentia ordinaria; posset tamen suspendere actum et effectum ignis secundum potentiam suam" (Zanetti ed., 304; ms. Florence, fol. 113ra).

least in Peter of Palude's formulation, relied on the thesis that if mere conservationism is true, and "fire is a sufficient cause of heat," then not even God can bring about that the fire does not bring about the heat (for not even God's absolute power extends to what is logically contradictory). It is not entirely clear in Auriol's response whether he considers the case along these lines. But if he does, his solution seems to imply that he denies this necessary connection between fire and heat, even though maintaining — as a mere conservationist — that in normal circumstances, whenever there is fire, there is also heat. As he notes, if we consider God's power not in the context of the established order but absolutely, then he can bring about that the fire is present while the heat is not; which means that fire cannot be necessarily related to heat.

If this is indeed what Auriol's solution consists in, then with this, he is a forerunner of some thinkers who will be discussed in the next chapter (see especially Pierre d'Ailly and Gabriel Biel, sections 4.2 and 4.3 below). Among some authors in the fourteenth century, the contingent connection between cause and effect became indeed a not uncommon characteristic of theories of divine concurrence. What is also remarkable, however, is that whereas Auriol uses this contingency in order to answer an objection against his mere conservationist position, later authors generally tend to use it *against* mere conservationism, and as will be seen below in section 4.3.2, Gabriel Biel will arguably use it to establish the claim that God is the sole efficient cause of everything in the world.

3.3.4 Summary

Auriol provides an interesting case study in the debates on divine concurrence, for multiple reasons. First, as was shown, he is quite familiar with Scotus's position on the question of whether God concurs with sinful volitions, and he rejects that position. His

argument against Scotus is meant to show that Scotus misunderstands the notion and origin of contingency in the world, and that his theory of God's knowledge of future contingents is unsatisfactory because it cannot account for free will. Instead, Auriol argues that God knows the future by being indistant to it, which does not require divine concurrence in all causal actions. Second, Auriol also shows that the specific theory of divine concurrence one adopts, will determine (or at least, motivate) one's answer to questions about creation and conservation in general. Auriol granted that if creation and conservation are the same, then concurrentism is true; he argued, however, that creation and conservation are distinct. Finally, third, with his response to the Three Young Men objection, Auriol signals that he regards the connection between causes and effects as a contingent relation — a relation that can be interrupted by God's absolute power. As will be seen in the next chapter, this claim becomes a common starting point of the later discussions as well.

3.4 CONCLUSION

While Aquinas, Giles, Durand, and Peter of Palude were primarily concerned with the question of how to avoid occasionalism while also maintaining that God can bring about certain kinds of miracles, and consequently how to work out an account according to which both God and the secondary agent are immediate causes of things, the debate I considered in this chapter has slightly shifted the focus. Olivi, Scotus, and Auriol were mostly interested in working out an account that is metaphysically possible, preserves divine foreknowledge, and also preserves contingency in the world. Thus, especially in Scotus and afterwards, the considerations about divine concurrence extended to ques-

tions about foreknowledge, the nature of contingency in the world, the notion and causes of sin, and, to some extent, free will. Although these considerations were new to the debate, the basic question itself remained the same: whether God is causally active in every action of secondary causes, including human volitions.

Although the human volitional case presented some special problems, many arguments seen in this chapter applied to causes in general. Thus, Olivi and Auriol both thought that the concurrentist position is untenable not just in the voluntary case but also in non-voluntary causation, and thus in general we need to assume that God is not immediately active in the causal happenings of the world. By contrast, Scotus argued that if mere conservationism were true, then God could not foreknow any contingent event in the world, including the effects of human will.

More specifically, Olivi argued that concurrentists, no matter how they understand the divine action, will find themselves in some metaphysical impossibility or at least inconvenience. Scotus, although did not respond to Olivi's arguments in detail, showed that his main position is untenable, even though its motivations are strong when sinful volitions are concerned. According to Scotus, the only way God can foreknow future contingent things, including future volitions, is by immediately causing them; and thus, if we assume with Olivi that he is not their partial cause, we need to deny foreknowledge. Auriol, in turn, argued that Scotus's position on divine foreknowledge is mistaken, hence God does not need to cause things in order to know them, and indeed, causing them would take away their contingency.

Contingency and necessary connection will play an increasingly important role in the next debate I am going to present, where the focus is, again, slightly different. But as will be seen, Scotus's position remained quite influential in the fourteenth century, and Biel will refer to Auriol as well when discussing his own position.

4 | PROPER AND SINE QUA NON CAUSES

The third context in which authors, especially in and after the fourteenth century, discussed the question of divine concurrence was that of the sacraments. The question, in particular, was whether and how sacraments cause their effects in the recipient (that is, how they cause grace in the soul), and whether there is any difference between this causation and regular causation in nature. There were various difficulties arising for the medieval theologian about this subject, some of which will be explained in more detail below. To put it briefly, most thinkers I consider here wanted to maintain that sacraments *are* somehow causally related to the grace that follows them; sacraments "effect what they figure."[1] Nevertheless, most thinkers also thought that sacraments cannot be proper causes of grace, since that would involve serious metaphysical as well as theological difficulties (including a corporeal thing bringing about an incorporeal effect that surpasses its actuality).

In this discussion of sacramental causation, the notion of *sine qua non* causes[2] played an important role, especially in the thinkers after Duns Scotus. Thus, one of the main aims of this chapter is to show how this notion changed during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and how eventually the distinction between proper and *sine qua non* causation became eliminated. As will be seen below, with this elimination authors also began to question whether things have efficacious natures, and with this, the seemingly

1. E.g., Aquinas, *In Sent.* IV, d. 1, q. 1, a. 4, qc. 1.

2. A small note about the terminology: quite interestingly, it seems that the plural of the term underwent some change in the late fourteenth century; while Pierre d'Ailly still uses the form '*sine quibus non* causes,' in Biel, the plural is simply *sine qua non*. For the sake of consistency, I will stick to this latter usage.

remote debate on sacramental causation slowly paved the way for the early modern discussions of causation and occasionalism.

I will consider three thinkers in this chapter who, although were not contemporaries, still exhibit a remarkably continuous debate insofar as the later authors cite the earlier ones at great length. The three thinkers are William Ockham, Pierre d'Ailly, and Gabriel Biel.

William Ockham (ca. 1287–1324) requires little introduction as he is one of the most well known thinkers of his time. He studied in Oxford around 1318–1319, where he also wrote his commentary on the *Sentences*, the work that will be the main source of the discussion below. As is also well known, his teachings resulted in some investigations, and eventually he was sent to Avignon around 1324, where he finished his other main theological work, the *Quodlibeta*. The investigation in Avignon took a new turn with the arrival of Michael of Cesena, focusing now on Franciscan poverty; eventually, Ockham fled from Avignon and was subsequently excommunicated by Pope John XXII not for his philosophical teachings but for leaving the papal court without permission.[3]

Pierre d'Ailly (ca. 1351–1420) is most known to medieval historians due to his role in the debates surrounding the end of the Great Schism and his somewhat controversial views on papal authority.[4] He was working on his *Sentences* commentary in Paris around 1376–77,[5] including book II, which he never seems to have finished. Eventually he became Chancellor of the university, bishop of Le Puy and Cambrai, and then one of the

3. For details see, e.g., William J Courtenay, "The Academic and Intellectual Worlds of Ockham," in *The Cambridge Companion to Ockham*, ed. Paul Vincent Spade (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 17–30; and Volker Leppin, *Wilhelm von Ockham: Gelehrter, Streiter, Bettelmönch* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2003).

4. See, for instance, Louis B Pascoe, *Church and Reform: Bishops, Theologians, and Canon Lawyers in the Thought of Pierre d'Ailly (1351–1420)* (Leiden: Brill, 2005); and Francis Oakley, *Political Thought of Pierre d'Ailly: The Voluntarist Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964).

5. For a detailed treatment of the history, manuscript tradition, and *tabula questionum* of this work, see Monica Calma, "Pierre d'Ailly: Le commentaire sur les Sentences de Pierre Lombard," *Bulletin de philosophie médiévale* 49 (2007): 139–194.

leader cardinals of the Council of Constance (1414–1418) that ended the Great Schism. Thus, d'Ailly was very influential as a theologian of his time, and this is one of the reasons why it is interesting to look at his stance on divine concurrence.[6]

The final author I consider in this dissertation is Gabriel Biel (1420–1495). Biel has often been regarded as one of the last scholastics as well as a forerunner of the Reformation, and I consider him here because he does indeed manifest some characteristics of the closure of the medieval debates on divine concurrence. He cites and argues with almost every author mentioned in this dissertation (Aquinas, Peter of Palude, Durand, Scotus, Ockham, Pierre d'Ailly) and some others whom I did not discuss (most notably Thomas of Strasbourg and Gregory of Rimini). Biel studied in Heidelberg, Erfurt, and Cologne, getting acquainted with both the *via antiqua* and the *via moderna*, the Thomistic and more nominalist currents of thought of his time. He was instrumental in the founding of the University of Tübingen, where he became professor of theology. He wrote his *Sentences* commentary (the so-called *Collectorium*) around 1488–90, and it became an influential work both in some nominalist circles (*gabrielistae*) as well as for Luther.[7]

6. For further biographical details, see Leonard A Kennedy, *Peter of Ailly and the Harvest of Fourteenth-Century Philosophy* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1986); and Nicolas Weill-Parot, "Pierre d'Ailly," in *Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages*, ed. André Vauchez and Adrian Walford (Chicago: Fitzroy Darborn Publishers, 2000).

7. For further biographical details, see Heiko A Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology: Gabriel Biel and Late Medieval Nominalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963); and also the Introduction in Gabriel Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum: Libri quarti pars prima*, ed. Wilfridus Werbeck and Udo Hofmann (Tübingen: JCB Mohr, 1975).

4.1 WILLIAM OCKHAM

In recent decades, there has been some revived interest in Ockham's view of efficient causation, especially concerning whether, and to what extent, he was a Humean about efficient causality. As Marilyn McCord Adams has argued, Ockham holds neither the metaphysical thesis that causation is mere correlation, nor even the weaker epistemological claim that we cannot have knowledge or certainty of the principle of causality. Nevertheless, others still claim that Ockham, even if not strictly speaking a Humean, significantly contributed to — if not initiated — the emerging skepticism about causation especially observed in such figures as Nicolaus of Autrecourt and perhaps John Mirecourt.[8] After quickly reviewing the *status quaestionis* of this issue, what I will be most concerned with in this section is the connected question of Ockham's view of divine concurrence, especially concerning whether, and to what extent, he was an occasionalist.

The argument I offer in this section supplements Adams's earlier results regarding the question of Humeanism, since Ockham's treatment of divine concurrence and secondary causation is parallel to (and indeed, strongly grounded in) his broader metaphysical treatment of efficient causation. Thus, in both his metaphysical treatment and in the current question, he puts great emphasis on delineating what is demonstrable by the natural light of human reason and what is not so but can be still known to or believed by us. With regard to the question of divine concurrence, this will mean that for Ockham, both God and secondary agents are immediate causes of secondary effects, even though neither of these claims is demonstrable strictly speaking.

The main textual basis of this section is Ockham's commentary on the *Sentences*,

8. Adams, *William Ockham*, chapter 18; Marilyn McCord Adams, "Was Ockham a Humean about Efficient Causality?," *Franciscan Studies* 39 (1979): 5–48.

written around 1317–18, its first book surviving as a revised *ordinatio* and the other books as *reportationes*. Occasionally I will also rely on parts of the *Quodlibeta* and on the *Physics* commentary, which are slightly later works.[9]

4.1.1 Terminological Preliminaries

Ockham's treatment of causation in general and divine concurrence in particular is somewhat technical, and heavily relies on terminological distinctions made throughout this treatment or elsewhere. Thus, before turning to the details of his view, it will be useful to lay out some of these terminological preliminaries.[10] Some of the issues about these definitions will be discussed later, therefore they should be treated as preliminary descriptions rather than real definitions in the proper sense — indeed, for some of them, Ockham would say, no real definition can be given.

Efficient Causes

Ockham's most important and at the same time undoubtedly most contentious notion in these texts is that of an efficient cause. He gives slightly different formulations of what he means by the term *causa* in different places, and indeed the number of these definitions and the significance of the differences between them remain unclear. For instance, in the *Ordinatio*, he describes a cause as

9. See Paul Vincent Spade's introduction to Spade, *The Cambridge Companion to Ockham*, especially 5–11. All citations are from the critical edition, William Ockham, *Scriptum in librum primum Sententiarum (Ordinatio)*; William Ockham, *Quaestiones in librum secundum Sententiarum (Reportatio)*, ed. Gedeon Gál and Rega Wood, Opera Theologica V (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1981); William Ockham, *Quodlibeta Septem*, ed. J C Wey, Opera Theologica IX (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1980); and William Ockham, *Expositio in libros Physicorum Aristotelis*, ed. Gedeon Gál, Opera Philosophica IV–V (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: St. Bonaventure University, 1985).

10. A more detailed analysis of some of these can be found in Adams, *William Ockham*, chapter 18, especially in section 4.

> that which, when it is posited while others are destroyed, the effect follows; or that which, when it is not posited while whatever else is posited, the effect does not follow.[11]

Based on this and similar passages, it seems that for Ockham, the following gives at least an approximation of what we regard as efficient causes:

> **(EC).** c is an efficient cause of e just in case: if c is posited then e is (or can be) posited without any further entities, while if c is not posited then e cannot be posited either.

Thus, for instance, when we say that fire is the efficient cause of heat, then according to Ockham, what we mean is that if fire is present, then we need nothing else to explain the presence of heat; or, if fire is not present, we will not find heat either (at least, if we exclude extraordinary, miraculous cases).

Some of the intricacies of this definition will be discussed below in more detail. As will be seen, it will turn out that for Ockham it is both too broad and, in some sense, too narrow. It is too broad since there are things that are not properly speaking causally related nevertheless they fulfill EC; and it is too narrow for a general notion of efficient cause because it only picks out efficient causes that are total, immediate causes of their effects. To see this, a few, rather common but now more precisified distinctions need to be made.

Mediate and Immediate Causes

Perhaps surprisingly, Ockham regards immediate causes as the only kind of causes, properly speaking, that is, the only kind of causes that fulfill definition EC given above. As he notes in the *Reportatio*,

11. *Ord.* I, d. 1, q. 3: "quod ipso posito, alio destructo, sequitur ille effectus, vel quod ipso non posito, quocumque alio posito, non sequitur effectus" (OTh I, 416). See also the almost verbatim identical definition in the *Expositio Physicorum* VII, c. 3, 4: "illud est causa alicuius rei, quo non posito omni alio posito, res illa non est, et quo posito, res est" (OPh V, 629–630).

> That cause is said to be immediate which if posited the effect can be posited, and if not posited, ⟨the effect⟩ cannot be posited.[12]

This is mostly identical to definition EC given above, and is intentionally so: as Ockham makes explicit for instance in the *Physics* commentary, mere mediate causes are causes somewhat improperly speaking.[13] That only immediate causes can be regarded as efficient causes properly speaking, is because otherwise it could happen that an effect exists while its cause does not; in fact, this is the case in every *per accidens* ordered causal series. For instance, although Adam — according to the story of *Genesis* — is the first member of the causal series that generated me, I can continue on living even if Adam is not around any longer. This, however, contradicts EC above, according to which if the cause is not posited, the effect is not posited either. Thus, as Ockham notes explicitly, "every cause, properly speaking, is an immediate cause."[14]

It is worth noting that Ockham shares this view with many medieval thinkers, even though most of these thinkers would also distinguish between immediate causes (in the sense of proximate causes) and essentially ordered causes, where every member of the order would satisfy Ockham's definition. (For instance, when I move my hand to move a stick to move a ball, the movement of my hand satisfies Ockham's definition of an immediate cause, even though it is not a proximate cause of the movement of the ball.) Thus, Ockham seems to think that every member of an essentially ordered series is an immediate cause of the effect, and by this his notion of immediacy seems to be closest to what we called 'immediacy of power' in section 3.1.3 above.[15]

---

12. *Rep.* II, q. 3–4: "Illa causa dicitur immediata qua posita potest poni effectus et qua non posita non potest poni" (OTh V, 60).
13. *Exp. Phys.* VII, c. 3, 3: "Causa autem uno modo accipitur pro causa immediata . . . aliter accipitur . . . magis improprie pro illo quod est tantum causa causae" (OPh V, 628).
14. *Ord.* I, d. 45, q. un: "Omnis causa proprie dicta est causa immediata" (OTh IV, 665).
15. Cf. OTh IV, 666. Adams has argued, consequently (*William Ockham*, especially 772–780), that Ockham does not fully understand Scotus's notion of essential order, since in an essential *order*, the first member is not immediately conjoined to the last one even though Ockham's definition would apply

Partial and Total Causes

Similarly, the only kind of causes that fulfill definition EC above are total causes. Again, from the *Reportatio*:

> A total cause is that which if posited, while everything else is removed, the effect is posited if it is a total cause *de facto*, or ⟨the effect⟩ can be posited if it is a total cause *de possibili*.[16]

This definition is somewhat vague; for instance, it is not clear what "everything else" stands for. From other formulations it seems clear that Ockham does not mean that we can take away *everything*, including, for instance, the patient on which the agent acts. But again, the above passage should not be taken as a precise definition but rather a plausible description of how we recognize total causes; we know that it is the fire that is producing heat in a room by removing everything else from the room but the fire, and observing that the heat still remains. And of course, with partial causes this is not so: if c_1 and c_2 are partial causes of e, then if c_1 is posited without c_2 then e will not come about.

It should be noted, however, that having partial causes does not necessarily mean that the effect is divisible. For instance, when Ockham claims that God and the secondary agent are partial causes of the same effect, he considers Auriol's objection that we have seen above (section 3.3.3): if God is only a partial cause, then it seems to follow that every effect must be somehow divisible; but since there seem to be effects that are not

to it. Notice, however, that Scotus would agree with at least this much; as we have seen, for him, God and the secondary agent stand in an essential order in which God is prior to the secondary agent, nevertheless God is immediately active to the secondary effect.

16. *Rep.* II, q. 3–4: "Causa totalis est illa qua posita, omni alio circumscripto, ponitur effectus si sit totalis causa de facto, vel potest poni si sit causa totalis de possibili" (OTh V, 63). According to the usual distinction between *de facto* and *de possibili* causes (more commonly called 'causes in act' and 'causes in potency'), c_1 is a *de facto* total cause of e at t_1 just in case c_1 is actually being a cause of e at t_1; and c_2 is a *de possibili* total cause of e at t_1 if there is an n such that c_2 is a *de facto* total cause of e at t_n.

divisible, this cannot be the case. As Ockham notes in his response, however, the objector misunderstands the claim, because "both produce the whole effect, whether divisible or not."[17] As this shows, Ockham's definition of 'partial' and 'total' causes must be used with precision: it does not necessarily mean that each partial cause produces part of the effect, but only that both of them are necessary and jointly sufficient for its production.

A final note needs to be made about EC as well as all the distinctions following it, which points to a problem in Ockham's treatment not only of causation in general but of divine concurrence in particular. As will be discussed below in more detail, it seems that EC should be understood in a way that restricts it to natural causation; but if this is true, then it says nothing about the meaning — or the intelligibility — of God's being a cause. This will be especially problematic when we turn to the question of divine concurrence, and Ockham's claim that God is a cause of every created being.

4.1.2 Ockham on Efficient Causes

Before turning to the problem of divine concurrence, however, it will be helpful to look at Ockham's general discussion of efficient causes. Most aspects of this discussion has been well documented in Marilyn Adams's monograph,[18] and thus in this section I will often rely on her interpretation.

Ockham famously maintains that we have very restricted knowledge about whether things really act. For instance, in the *Reportatio* he notes:

> From this it follows that it cannot be demonstrated that any effect is produced by a secondary cause: because although when the fire approaches the

17. *Rep.* II, q. 3–4: "utraque causa producit totum effectum, sive sit divisibilis sive indivisibilis. . . sed neutra est de facto causa totalis" (OTh V, 75).
18. Adams, *William Ockham*, especially chapter 18.

> flammable thing, combustion always follows, nevertheless it could still be the case that the fire is not its cause. For God could have ordained that whenever fire is present to a patient close by, the sun would cause combustion ⟨in that patient⟩; just as He ordained with the church that when certain words are spoken, grace is produced in the soul.[19]

According to this argument, since it could be the case that fire be always followed by heat and nevertheless the former not be a proper efficient cause of the latter, it cannot be demonstrated that fire *is* a proper efficient cause of heat. Ockham's analogy is illuminating: if one were to demonstrate, based on constant correlation of c and e that c is a proper efficient cause of e, then by the same means one could demonstrate that sacraments are proper efficient causes of divine grace. Ockham thinks, however, in contrast to Aquinas,[20] that this would be absurd since sacraments are *not* proper efficient causes of grace but mere visible signs of it (more about this below).[21]

Ockham's argument assumes that the *only* way we could demonstrate the causal relation is by correlation. Although he does not argue separately for this claim, he refers to it as at least plausible:

> That this ⟨i.e., definition EC above⟩ suffices for something to be the cause of another, is manifest. For if not, then every way of knowing something to be an immediate cause of another would perish. For if from the fact that if this is posited the effect follows and not posited the effect does not follow, it does not follow that this is a cause of that effect, there is no way to know that fire is the cause of heat in the wood.[22]

---

19. *Rep.* II, q. 3–4: "Et ex hoc sequitur quod non potest demonstrari quod aliquis effectus producitur a causa secunda: quia licet semper ad approximationem ignis combustibili sequatur combustio, cum hoc tamen potest stare quod ignis non sit eius causa. Quia Deus potuit ordinasse quod semper ad praesentiam ignis passo approximato ipse solus causaret combustionem, sicut ordinavit cum Ecclesia quod ad prolationem certorum verborum causaretur gratia in anima" (OTh V, 72–73).

20. More precisely, Aquinas thought that sacraments are dispositive instrumental causes of grace; see section 4.2.2 below.

21. For Ockham's treatment of sacramental causation, see *Rep.* IV, q. 1.

22. *Rep.* I, d. 45, q. un.: "Quod autem illud sufficiat ad hoc quod aliquid sit causa alterius, videtur esse manifestum. Quia si non, perit omnis via ad cognoscendum aliquid esse causam alterius immediatam. Nam si ex hoc quod hoc posito sequitur effectus, et hoc non posito non ponitur effectus, non sequitur

That is, according to Ockham, correlation seems to be our only cognitive access to causal relations, and thus if correlation is not sufficient for causation, then we could never have knowledge about such claims as 'fire causes burning.'

Due to these and similar considerations, Ockham has often been interpreted as a Humean skeptic about causation, more precisely to maintain that we cannot have knowledge about the causal relation. This alleged skepticism, moreover, seems to be well motivated by his sparse ontology. As for instance, his contemporary, Walter Chatton aims to show:

> The first example is this proposition: 'Socrates generated Plato'. It is either required for the truth of this proposition that there existed a relation ⟨between them⟩, or not. But against this ⟨latter⟩: it could be both true that every absolute thing existed and nevertheless Socrates did not generate Plato.[23]

As Chatton points out, if one holds — as Ockham does — that there are no relations apart from absolute things (their foundations), then we could never know that Socrates generated Plato, for the simple reason that both it and its denial are compossible with the existence of Socrates and Plato as absolute things. Consequently, his contemporary critique as well as some modern readers have assumed that Ockham denies that we can have knowledge of the causal relation.[24]

Beside this epistemological claim, however, Ockham has also been interpreted to maintain the stronger metaphysical one that there *is* nothing more to causation than mere

---

illud esse causam illius effectus, nullo modo potest cognosci quod ignis sit causa caloris in ligno" (OTh IV, 665).

23. *Lect.* I, d. 30, q. 1, a. 4: "Primum exemplum est haec propositio 'Sortes generavit Platonem'. Aut requirit⟨ur⟩ ad hoc quod haec propositio sit vera quod aliquando praefuit res respectiva, et tunc propositum; aut non, et tunc non habetur propositum. Contra: simul stant quod omnia absoluta quae unquam fuerunt praefuerunt et tamen quod Sortes non generaverit Platonem" (Walter Chatton, *Lectura super Sententias*, ed. J C Wey and Girard Etzkorn (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2008), 234.

24. For Chatton's critique of Ockham's theory of causation, see Keele, "Can God Make a Picasso?"

correlation. We have already seen some textual basis for this claim. Recall that according to definition EC, a cause is that which if posited the effect follows, while if not posited the effect does not follow. Ockham seems to be saying here and in other similar passages that recognizing correlation is sufficient for knowing causation, assumedly because he thinks that there is nothing more to the latter than the former. As, for instance, Étienne Gilson notes, according to Ockham, "the relation of cause to effect cannot mean more to the mind than. . . a regular sequence between two phenomena," whence "Hume's philosophy could have dwelt with Ockham's theology without doing it much harm."[25]

Despite these considerations, however, it has been shown that Ockham's Humean interpretation — either in the metaphysical or in the epistemological sense — is incorrect. As Adams has suggested, according to Ockham, although correlations do usually serve as our basis on which we come to know causal relations even though we cannot demonstrate them, this neither means that there is nothing more to causal relations than correlations, nor that we cannot have evident knowledge of the causal relation. It is unnecessary to repeat this detailed critique of Ockham's traditional reading here,[26] nevertheless it will be useful to point to a few passages where Ockham explicitly maintains that there is more to causation than correlation, and where he claims that we can have evident knowledge about things being causes of other things. These passages will also play a role in what he says about divine concurrence.

That EC cannot be a proper definition of 'cause' for Ockham becomes apparent in his treatment of sacramental causation. For instance, in the *Reportatio* one of the objections he raises about sacramental causality runs thus:

25. Etienne Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1999), 66, 68.

26. See Adams, *William Ockham*, chapter 18; and Adams, "Was Ockham a Humean about Efficient Causality?"

> It seems that everything such that when it is posited another is posited, is a cause properly speaking; for it does not pertain to the notion of cause that the effect follows necessarily, but that the effect cannot exist without it. Therefore, it is enough that when it is posited the effect is posited and that the effect is not posited without it. Therefore, the sacraments are causes properly speaking.[27]

This objection is a common one, and will be repeatedly dealt with by d'Ailly and Biel (sections 4.2.3 and 4.3.2 below). Ockham, denying that sacraments are proper efficient causes of grace, responds to it by denying that the above formulated criterion — the criterion of correlation — indeed gives a sufficient condition of c being an efficient cause of e. Thus, against the objection he notes that

> To the first principal objection I say that it is true if it is so by the nature of the thing. But when it is so by the will of another, it is not true.[28]

As this shows, Ockham did not think that the notion of causality is exhausted by the notion of constant correlation. On the contrary, he distinguishes proper efficient causes from *sine qua non* causes, even though both fulfill definition EC. As he makes the distinction even more clearly:

> Therefore, to the question I first propose a distinction. . . . Because 'cause', if it is that the being of which is followed by another, can be taken in two ways. One way, when from the nature of the thing the presence and being of one is naturally followed by the being of the other. The other way, when the being of one is followed by the being of another merely by the will of another. And in this way we say that the meritorious act is a cause with respect to the reward merely by the divine will. And a *sine qua non* cause is a cause in the second way.[29]

27. *Rep.* IV, q. 1: "Videtur quod omne illud quo posito ponitur aliud sit causa proprie dicta, quia non est de ratione causae quod ad ipsam necessario sequatur effectus, sed quod non possit sine ea. Igitur sufficit quod ipsa posita ponatur effectus, et quod non ponatur effectus sine ea, igitur sacramenta sunt proprie causa" (OTh VII, 15).

28. *Rep.* IV, q. 1: "Ad primum principale dico quod verum est si sic sit ex natura rei.Quando tamen est ex voluntate alterius, non est verum" (OTh VII, 18).

29. *Rep.* IV, q. 1: "Ideo ad quaestionem primo praemittam unam distinctionem propter dicta Sanc-

According to this distinction, which will also play an important role in the following discussion,

> **(EC').** c is a proper efficient cause of e just in case if c is posited then e is (or can be) posited without any further entities, by the nature of c, while if c is not posited then e cannot be posited by the nature of c.

That is, proper efficient causes are those where c is followed by e *by the nature of* c, that is, by its own causal powers. Fire, for instance, is a proper efficient cause of heat in this sense.[30]

On the other hand,

> **(SQN).** c is a *sine qua non* efficient cause of e just in case if c is posited then e is posited without any further entities, not by its nature but by someone's will, while if c is not posited then e is not posited either by someone's will.

That is, *sine qua non* causes are those where c is followed by e not by the nature of c but by the will and power of another. Sacraments are *sine qua non* causes of grace, since they are followed by grace even though they do not possess sufficient power to effect it in any way; instead, God's will and power brings about grace every time when the sacraments are present.[31]

Thus, Ockham does not hold the metaphysical thesis that there is nothing more to causation than correlation, since correlation alone would not be able to account for this distinction. As Adams also convincingly demonstrates, he does not even hold the

---

torum et auctorum. Quia causa, cum sit illud ad cuius esse sequitur aliud, dupliciter potest accipi. Uno modo quando ex natura rei ad praesentiam et esse unius sequitur naturaliter esse alterius. Alio modo quando ad esse unius sequitur esse alterius ex sola voluntate alterius. Et isto modo dicimus quod actus meritorius dicitur causa respectu praemii ex sola voluntate divina. Et causa sine qua non dicitur secundo modo causa" (OTh VII, 12).

30. As Ockham repeats again in another *Reportatio* passage (*Rep.* II, q. 12–13): "That, which if posited another can be posited while removing everything else, and if not posited the other cannot be posited *naturally*, is its cause" (OTh V, 276, emphasis added).

31. For some interesting historical details of this distinction, see William J Courtenay, "The King and the Leaden Coin: The Economic Background of 'Sine qua non' Causality," *Traditio* 28 (1972): 185–209.

weaker epistemological claim that we cannot acquire knowledge of causation. Indeed, for instance in the *Ordinatio* Ockham says:

> It is a first principle that 'every herb of such species reduces fever': it cannot be syllogistically demonstrated by better known propositions, but its knowledge is accepted from intuitive cognitions, perhaps from many. For because he sees that after the consumption of such herb health follows in the feverish person, and removes every other causes of health, *he knows evidently that this herb was the cause of health*; and thus he has experience fom singulars.[32]

This passage is illuminating since it calls attention to two features of Ockham's epistemology of causation: first, he claims, contrary to the skeptical interpretation sketched above, that we can have evident knowledge of causation; even though maintaining, second, that this knowledge cannot be demonstrated from better known principles. These points will be also manifest in his theory of divine concurrence.

4.1.3 Ockham on Concurrence

Just as Ockham had been interpreted as a Humean with regard to efficient causation, he has also been interpreted as an occasionalist with regard to divine concurrence. In, again, Gilson's words, "Ockham's only objection to occasionalism would be the divine ideas which it presupposes, and its excessive rationality."[33] According to this interpretation, Ockham's "radical empiricism" could only lead him to deny secondary causation altogether. Similarly, and much more recently, Rondo Keele seems to maintain that — in contrast to Walter Chatton, his realist contemporary and critique — Ockham, due

32. *Ord.* I, prol., q. 2: "Hoc sit primum principium 'omnis herba talis speciei confert febricitanti': ista per nullas propositiones notiores potest syllogizari, sed eius notitia accipitur ex notitia intuitiva forte multorum. Quia enim iste vidit quod post co- mestionem talis herbae sequebatur sanitas in febricitante, et amovit omnes alias causas sanitatis illius, scivit evidenter quod ista herba fuit causa sanitatis; et tunc habet experimentum de singulari" (OTh I, 87; emphasis added).

33. Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, 68.

to his sparse ontology, came dangerously close to occasionalism, or was even implicitly committed to it.[34]

As with Ockham's alleged Humeanism, this interpretation is not without textual basis. In the continuation of the above quoted *Reportatio* passage, for instance, Ockham remarks that God could have ordained that everyday natural causation were just like sacramental causation, that is, that when fire approached a flammable material, God would cause combustion in it. And again, such an occasionalist interpretation would seem to fit well with Ockham's insistence on the claim that God's omnipotence implies that God can produce immediately whatever a secondary cause can produce, that is, for any particular secondary effect, God could bring about that it was produced not by its secondary cause but by God himself.[35] And since we might not know whether God *does* bring about such things perhaps even constantly, we might just as well be living in a world where secondary causes do not genuinely act.

Nevertheless, just as it has been shown that Ockham does not hold the Humean thesis, it can also be demonstrated that he does not come dangerously close to occasionalism either. However, while the former claim has received quite some attention as was seen above, this is not true about his theory of divine concurrence and alleged occasionalism. As I show in this section, Ockham maintains that both secondary agents and God are immediate causes of secondary effects, even though neither half of these — i.e., neither the falsity of mere conservationism, nor that of occasionalism — can be demonstrated, strictly speaking.

The question of divine concurrence, as treated in his *Sentences* commentary, is thoroughly intertwined with the question of whether God is a free cause, and so it is worth

34. Keele, "Can God Make a Picasso?," 409–411.
35. *Ord.* I, prol., q. 1: "Quidquid potest Deus per causam efficientem mediam, potest per se immediate" (OTh I, 35).

looking at that question first especially since one of Ockham's crucial arguments about divine concurrence will depend on it.

Divine Freedom

Ockham's thesis in this part of the *quaestio*[36] is that God brings about everything freely. Although this thesis itself is rather innocuous — no medieval theologian would have questioned it — Ockham develops his answer together with a rejection of Aquinas's and Scotus's arguments for the same.

Note that Aquinas's main tenet when considering God's freedom was to refute the position according to which creation happened by necessity, as some Neoplatonists (and arguably Avicenna) maintained. Aquinas does this by distinguishing acts by will and acts by necessity and considering the question whether God acts by the former or by the latter. Thus, for instance, in the *Summa theologiae* he claims that "it must be said that God's will is the cause of things, and that God acts by will and not by the necessity of nature, as some supposed."[37]

Ockham claims, however, that Aquinas's argument cannot establish the conclusion (namely, that God acts freely), since acting by will does not necessarily imply acting freely. As he notes, citing Aquinas, "the divine will and ours will God naturally, and thus when something is judged by the intellect, the will necessarily wills it."[38] Which means, as Ockham points out, that Aquinas is committed to the thesis that the will can be necessitated by the intellect, and thus the argument according to which God acts by will therefore freely, is not sound.

---

36. I.e., *Rep.* II, q. 4.

37. *ST* I, q. 19, a. 4: "necesse est dicere voluntatem Dei esse causam rerum, et Deum agere per voluntatem, non per necessitatem naturae, ut quidam existimaverunt" (Leonine ed., 4:237). Similar treatments can be found in *QDP*, q. 1, a. 5 and q. 3, a. 15, and in the *SCG*.

38. *Rep.* II, q. 3–4: "Voluntas divina et nostra vult Deum naturaliter, et sic quando aliquid iudicatur ab intellectu, voluntas necessario vult illud" (OTh V, 53). For Aquinas, see *ST* I, q. 60, a. 2–3, co.

Neither does Scotus's solution work, according to Ockham. As was mentioned above (section 3.2.2), according to Scotus, the divine will is contingently related to its effects, grounding thereby all contingency in the created world; if there were no contingency in the divine will, there could be no contingency in creatures either (since they do not act except by virtue of the first cause), which we know to be false.[39]

As Ockham notes, however, "from the contingency of the secondary cause one cannot argue for the contingency in the first cause."[40] For we might have concurring causes of a contingent effect, while one of these concurring causes not being free: for instance, when the will and an object concur as partial causes to form an act of volition, the former is a contingent cause of that volition while the latter is a natural, non-contingent cause of it. Thus, it is at least possible that in a contingent secondary effect, whose partial causes are the secondary cause and God, the former is a contingent cause while the latter is not.

Ockham thinks that these earlier arguments are mistaken because it cannot be demonstrated, strictly speaking, that God is a free cause of everything even though it should be believed. Take, for instance, an argument that Ockham deems more persuasive than the previous ones:

> Every non-impedible cause, equally directed towards many or infinitely many things, if at a certain time it brings about one of these things but not another, is a contingent and free cause. Because from the fact that it is not impedible and is and is equally and equally primarily directed towards all those things, there seems to be no reason why it produces one rather than another unless because of its freedom. But God is such a cause with respect to everything that is producible by him from eternity, therefore etc.[41]

39. Cf. *Ord.* I, d. 2, p. 1, q. 1–2, n. 79–88.

40. *Rep.* II, q. 3–4: "Ex contingentia causae secundae non potest argui contingentia in prima" (OTh V, 55).

41. *Rep.* II, q. 3–4: "Omnis causa non impedibilis aequaliter respiciens multa sive infinita si agat unum illorum in aliquo instanti et non aliud, est causa contingens et libera. Quia ex quo non est impedibilis

Thus, according to this proposed argument, since God is omnipotent and thus equally directed towards all producible things (i.e., all things that are logically compossible), the fact that he only created some of them could not be explained but only by his free will.

Nevertheless, Ockham does not think that this argument is, strictly speaking, demonstrative. As he notes later,

> This argument is not a demonstration to an infidel, because he would say that God is not immediately and equally directed towards all producible things, but produces the first intelligence by necessity, and by the mediation of the first produces the other or that first intelligence produces the other, and so forth. Therefore, if it could be shown by natural reason that God produces *de novo* when he produces one and not another, it would follow that we could show contingency in God.[42]

Thus, the reason why Ockham thinks divine freedom is indemonstrable, is because we cannot philosophically demonstrate that multiple diverse things in the world were created by God. One might maintain, with Avicenna, that the only thing that God produces is the first intelligence, and either God produces the second intelligence by the mediation of the first intelligence, or the first intelligence itself produces the second intelligence, and so on. In this case, however, God would, by himself, produce only one effect — and he would not be free in the relevant sense. This indemonstrability of divine free action is in fact the hook on which many of Ockham's claims about divine concurrence hang.

---

et aequaliter respicit omnia et aeque primo, non videtur ratio quare plus producit unum quam aliud nisi propter libertatem suam. Sed Deus est huiusmodi causa respectu omnium producibilium ab eo ab aeterno, igitur etc." (OTh V, 55–56).

42. *Rep.* II, q. 5: "Sed ista ratio non est demonstratio uni infideli, quia diceret quod Deus non immediate et aequaliter respicit omnia producibilia, sed producit primam intelligentiam necessario et mediante prima producit aliam vel ipsa prima intelligentia producit aliam, et sic etc. Si igitur posset probari per rationem naturalem quod Deus producit de novo cum producit unum et non aliud, sequeretur quod posset probari contingentia in Deo" (OTh V, 84). See also Avicenna, *Metaph.*, IX, c. 4.

God as Immediate Cause

Parallel to his treatment of divine freedom, Ockham thinks that God is an immediate cause of every created effect, albeit that this claim is not, strictly speaking, demonstrable. More precisely, he thinks that God is an immediate cause of every secondary effect both by the immediacy of power and by the immediacy of supposit,[43] the demonstration of which, however, would presuppose a demonstration of divine free action which — as was just seen — cannot be given.

Before turning to the specifics of Ockham's claim and argument, consider his admittedly crude analogy (*exemplum rude*):

> Imagine that a very strong man can carry ten pounds of weight on his own, and no one can carry that much without him. Then if one of the weak men were to carry that ten pounds with that strong one, nevertheless the strong would still be said to carry it immediately just as the weak one. And this does not make the weak one superfluous, if the strong one does not want to carry the ten pounds on his own.[44]

According to this analogy, we might imagine divine concurrence as the help a strong man gives to a weak one when carrying a heavy weight. The power of the created agent, although efficacious, is incapable to bring about its intended effect without God augmenting that power with his own. Although it is not clear how much one should read into this analogy, the example is telling in one respect: contrary to Aquinas, and more similarly to Scotus, Ockham does not seem to think that God is needed for the application of the secondary cause's power to its effect, but only that the power of the

43. For the distinction, see section 3.1.3 above. Note that in Ockham's terminology, 'immediacy of power' is called 'immediacy of cause,' while 'immediacy of supposit' is called 'immediacy of effect.' Otherwise, the distinction seems to be the usual one.

44. *Rep.* II, q. 3–4: "Exemplum rude ad hoc: ponatur quod unus homo fortissimus possit portare decem per se, et nullus alius posset portare sine eo. Tunc si aliquis debilis portet illa decem cum illo forti, nihilominus ille fortis dicetur immediate portare sicut debilis. Nec propter hoc superfluit ille debilis si fortis non vult per se portare decem" (OTh V, 72).

secondary agent, even if applied properly, is too weak to bring about its intended effect on its own. (This is what we called the 'augmentation model' above, in section 3.1.1.)

Since Ockham does not think that we can demonstrate that God actually creates (or created) multiple diverse things, neither does he think that we can give a strictly speaking demonstrative argument for God's being an immediate cause of multiple diverse effects. For it might be the case that similarly to creation, God only concurs with the first intelligence, while that concurs with the second and so on. Nevertheless, taken *that much* about divine freedom for granted, Ockham provides several arguments for the claim that God is immediate with both the immediacy of power and the immediacy of supposit. Most of these arguments rely on Ockham's already mentioned thesis that only immediate causes are causes properly speaking.

Indeed, that God is an immediate cause of secondary effects with the immediacy of power follows already from definition EC. If God exists, and keeps agents and powers in existence, they bring about their effect; if, *per impossibile*, God did not exist, the secondary effect would not exist either (of course, nor would the secondary cause, in that case). This means that God's power of maintaining things in existence is immediately joined to every secondary effect (as well as to every secondary cause), and thus God is their immediate cause by the immediacy of power.[45]

Furthermore, that God is not a mere mediate cause of things can be seen by assuming that God acts as a partial cause with the secondary agent. In this case, from the definition of partial causes it follows that both of them must be immediate causes. If c_1 and c_2 are partial causes of e, nevertheless e does not need c_2's power to come about, then it seems that c_2 is not in fact a partial cause of e, after all.

Moreover, every effect depends more on an unconstrained universal cause than on

45. *Rep.* II, q. 3–4 (OTh V, 63).

a constrained one. We experience, however, that there is no effect without at least a constrained universal cause being present and causing it — we experience, for instance, that no matter how proximate a cause is to its recipient, it does not act unless amended by the power of the sun (this is most obvious in the case of living thing.[46]) Since God is the most unconstrained and most universal cause, everything must depend on him the most.

Finally, as was seen already in Aquinas and Peter of Palude (section 2.3.2), one of the usual arguments for God's immediate concurrence, and one that Ockham also employs, is from the example of Nebuchadnezzar's fire and *contra naturam* miracles in general. If there is no immediate divine concurrence, then, Ockham argues, it cannot be satisfactorily explained[47] how the fire could maintain its substance and its proper operation, nevertheless not bring about its characteristic effect on the three young men.

From these arguments, Ockham concludes that God immediately produces every secondary effect by the immediacy of power — that is, in the way in which the king immediately acts when his bailiff acts on his behalf, or in a way a fire heats up some water in a kettle.

To be sure, Ockham is quick to point out that God is very much unlike the fire in some respects, and unlike any other physical cause. Thus, while we experience in the physical world that whatever produces an effect, itself changes, this is not true of God. God, in this respect, is more similar to how the human will causes (forms) a volition: it might happen, for instance, that you form a volition today to write tomorrow, and you preserve that volition until tomorrow comes. If you do indeed write tomorrow, then a partial cause of that writing is your volition that will not have changed since today.

46. Cf. *Auct. Arist.*, 2, 65: "homo generat hominem et sol" (Hamesse ed., 145).
47. I.e., explained without requiring God to act against his own creation, which Ockham — similarly to Aquinas or Peter of Palude — regards as impossible.

Thus, Ockham points out, similarly it can be the case that God wills something with unchanging will from eternity, nevertheless it comes about only at a certain time.[48]

Ockham's argument for the claim that God is immediate to secondary effects with the immediacy of supposit is rather brief. As he notes,

> An accident does not depend more on an accident than an accident depends on a substance. But God can bring about an accident as an effect without the mediation of a substance. Therefore, God can produce any accident as an effect without any other accident, and so with regard to all other things.[49]

The argument is somewhat cryptic, but seems to run like this:

1. An accident depends on a substance more than it depends on another accident; this can be taken for granted.
2. God can bring about an accident as an effect without the mediation of any substance. For instance, when the Eucharistic bread acquires a new accident, God brings that accident about without the mediation of anything (see below).
3. Therefore, God can bring about an accident without the mediation of any other accident — specifically without the mediation of the power of the secondary agent.

Although conclusion (3) of this argument does indeed follow from premises (1) and (2), it seems that Ockham only demonstrated that God *can* be an immediate cause with the immediacy of supposit, and not that God *is* indeed one. But again, just as previously, Ockham's goal here seems to be not so much to demonstrate divine concurrence than to clarify its mode once it is assumed to be true.

48. *Rep.* II, q. 3–4: "Potest enim aliquis nunc velle cras ista hora producere aliquem effectum et semper in tali volutnate perseverare, et cras talem effectum producere per velle istud continuatum per unum diem. Istud autem velle est causa partialis illius effectus extra producti. Et patet quod quando ille effectus producitur, voluntas de novo non mutatur" (OTh V, 59–60).

49. *Rep.* II, q. 3–4: "Non magis dependet accidens ab accidente, quam accidens a substantia. Sed Deus potest facere accidens sine substantia media in ratione effectus. Igitur potest facere quodcumque accidens sine alio in ratione effectus, et sic est de omnibus aliis" (OTh V, 66).

Further Characteristics of Concurrence

As was seen above, Ockham does not think that divine concurrence is philosophically demonstrable since he does not think that a demonstrable argument can be given against the view of Avicenna or of Aristotle (the latter maintaining, in Ockham's interpretation, that God is causally active only on the heavenly bodies but not in the sublunar world). If one were to think, however, that consequently Ockham's arguments do not show too much, one might be mistaken. For his arguments only take for granted that God is responsible for the creation of many individuals in the world; an assumption that occasionalists and mere conservationists alike would, for the most part, grant. Given this assumption, the rest (i.e., divine freedom and immediate divine concurrence) indeed follows, and Ockham also demonstrates several further characteristics of concurrence based on this assumption alone.

First, Ockham thinks that given the assumption, we can demonstrate that natural agents cannot be total causes of their effects (which can be regarded as an argument against Olivi's and Auriol's TC view). As he argues,

> A total natural principle, equally directed towards many things of the same kind, either produces all or nothing; but if a creature can create some individual, then by the same reason by which that one ⟨was created, it can create⟩ infinitely many. Because it is a natural agent, it is directed towards everything, therefore it can actually create infinitely many individuals. This is false, therefore, etc.[50]

As this argument shows, if the TC view were true and a natural agent could be a total cause, this would mean that a creature could create infinitely many things, which is false;

50. *Rep.* II, q. 6: "Principium totale naturale aequaliter se habens ad plura eiusdem rationis vel producit omnia vel nihil; sed si creatura potest creare aliquod individuum eiusdem rationis, qua ratione unum et infinita. Quia ex quo est agens naturale, aequaliter respicit omnia, potest igitur creare de facto infinita individua. Hoc est falsum, igitur etc" (OTh V, 91).

therefore, every natural agent needs a primary cause in order to direct it to a specific effect.

Second, according to Ockham, we can also show that God is an immediate primary cause with the primacy of perfection and unconstrainedness, but not with the primacy of duration. For these different senses of 'primacy,' consider, first, that when both the sun and the fire produce heat, the sun is primary to the fire with the primacy of perfection, since it has more of a power to bring about the heat than the fire does.[51] Second, we say that a cause c_1 is prior to c_2 with the primacy of unconstrainedness if c_1 can produce more diverse effects than c_2; the sun again is primary to an angel in this sense since it can concur with many diverse effects while an angel cannot. Finally, primacy of duration can also be taken in two ways: c_1 is primary in the first sense to c_2 just in case it is prior to it according to nature; c_1 is primary to c_2 in the second sense just in case c_1's causation precedes that of c_2 in time.

According to Ockham, it follows from God's omnipotence that whenever he concurs he is the primary cause both in perfection and in unconstrainedness,[52] since he has infinite power and can create whatever does not involve a logical contradiction — which is not true of any other cause. Moreover, as Ockham argues, God is primary to secondary causes with the primacy of duration in the first sense but not in the second sense; he by nature precedes everything, but at the same time when God acts to bring about the secondary effect, the secondary cause also acts and thus there is no temporal priority.[53]

Third, given the initial assumption, Ockham shows that God is a cause of secondary effects by both his will and his essence. Again, his position here is directed against that of Scotus, who argues that it is only God's will that is causally related to creatures: God's

51. *Rep.* I, d. 45, q. un.

52. Although in the divine case these two kinds of primacy are grounded on the same (the divine omnipotence), they do not necessarily overlap in other cases, as the angel example shows.

53. *Rep.* I, d. 45, q. un.

essence would be a natural, non-contingent cause, even though the secondary effects are related to God only contingently (as was shown above); thus, they must be related only to the divine will and not to the divine essence. As Ockham notes, however, this cannot be maintained since there is no real distinction between God's essence and his will due to divine simplicity, hence if an effect is causally related to one it must also be similarly related to the other. Nevertheless, Ockham thinks, just as a will can produce something necessarily (for instance, God's will necessarily produces the Holy Spirit, or an angelic will necessarily produces an intuitive cognition of that will in another angel), it is also possible for an essence to produce something contingently — and this is the way in which God's essence produces the secondary effects.[54]

Furthermore, Ockham also shows that God acts with an action that is both numerically distinct from and identical with that of the secondary agent, in different respects. Ockham's target here is the usual objection, seen before in Durand's and Auriol's formulation (sections 2.3.1 and 3.3.2, respectively), according to which if God's and the creature's actions are the same, then God's concurrence can be left out without really changing anything, but if they are different, then no matter whether one is prior or posterior or simultaneous with the other, the naturally posterior one will be superfluous.

Ockham's answer is somewhat similar to how Peter of Palude dealt with the same objection (in his case, Durand's), although much more technical. An action, as Ockham notes, can be taken in three ways. First, it can be taken *pro respectu*, which means that one considers the basis of the relation, which in this case is the agent. Since God's and the secondary agent's actions have different agents, they are different actions in this sense. Second, we can also consider actions *pro conceptu connotante*, meaning that the action stands for the agent while connoting the effect. Again, in this case actions

54. *Rep.* I, d. 45, q. un.

must be different if their agents are different, and thus God's and the secondary agent's actions will be different in this sense as well. Finally, we might consider actions to be taken *pro effectu*, that is, for their effect; in this respect, since the terminus of God's and the secondary agent's actions are the same, they can be considered as the same action.[55]

As all this shows, Ockham did think not only that God concurs with secondary agents while these secondary agents are causally active, but also that we can know quite many characteristics of this divine concurrence. Again, we need to remember that these arguments are all contingent on the unproven principle that God can act freely; but granted that, Ockham can show that God's concurrence is necessary for bringing about the secondary effect, this concurrence is immediate, primary, and that God concurs by his essence and his will, with an action that, in different respects, is both identical to and different from the secondary agent's action.

4.1.4 Ockham and Occasionalism

Ockham's biggest concession in terms of demonstrability is his repeated insistence that the falsity of occasionalism cannot be philosophically demonstrated. That is, as was mentioned above in connection with his denial of the demonstrability of the principle of causality (section 4.1.2), he thinks that we cannot demonstrate that fire produces heat in the water because we cannot demonstrate that it is not something else that is doing it. And we cannot demonstrate the latter, since the negation of it does not entail a contradiction. Recall the above quoted passage from the *Reportatio*:

55. As was seen above (section 2.3.1), Peter of Palude's response to Durand's dilemma is somewhat similar: by 'formal difference' he seems to mean something close to what Ockham means by *pro respectu* and *pro conceptu connotante* considerations, while his 'material difference' would at least imply Ockham's difference *pro effectu*. For Ockham, see *Rep.* II, q. 3–4.

> From this it follows that it cannot be demonstrated that any effect is produced by a secondary cause: because although when the fire approaches the flammable thing, combustion always follows, nevertheless it could still be the case that the fire is not its cause. *For God could have ordained that whenever fire is present to a patient close by, the sun would cause combustion ⟨in that patient⟩; just as he ordained with the church that when certain words are spoken, grace is produced in the soul.*[56]

Thus, Ockham points out, it is at least logically possible that God so ordained the world that whenever a flammable thing is near fire, the sun produces combustion in it. Interestingly, he does not consider here the more radical scenario according to which it would not be the sun but God himself producing combustion according to God's order. But by similar reasoning, it seems that Ockham would have to say that there would be no logical contradiction in that scenario either, and consequently, that occasionalism is not demonstrably false.

We can see the same point from another specific example where God's immediate action on physical things is more apparent. When in the *Quodlibeta* he considers whether a creature can create (the answer being the usual negative one), he raises an objection according to which a creature *does* create, namely when, for instance, in the Eucharistic wine it induces some change. According to the metaphysics of sacraments presupposed here, in the Eucharistic wine there is no subject that would receive change — in fact, all the accidents in it are accidents without a substance, because the substance of the wine is not present. Thus, when the Eucharistic wine approaches a fire, and the fire induces some heat in it, the fire seems to *create* the heat, since creation is distinguished from causation precisely on the grounds that the former does not presuppose a subject while the latter does. And this would be a problem since creation in this sense was held to be

56. *Rep.* II, q. 3–4 (emphasis added); cf. note 19 above.

unique only to God. (As will be seen below, this example will play a significant role in the later discussion, especially in Gabriel Biel, section 4.3.2 below.)

Ockham responds to the objection this way:

> I reply that I understand the principle in question as follows: When the effect is by its nature apt to be caused and apt to exist naturally in the presence of the agent, then bringing about something is nothing else than the effect's existing in this way. In the case under discussion, however, this is not the way it is, since the heat in question is not naturally apt to be produced by the fire. For the heat exists without a subject, and a natural agent is not able to produce anything without a patient. *Hence, if God did not produce this heat, then nothing would be produced here in the presence of the fire.* For there is no recipient subject here.[57]

Thus, despite what we expect based on our experience, what happens when the Eucharistic wine approaches the fire is *not* that the fire induces some heat in it; indeed, fire can do nothing in this case, since there is no subject on which to act, and all natural agents presuppose a subject to act on. Instead, as Ockham claims, the new accident in the wine is created by God directly.

Based on this argument, it seems that Ockham, even if not considering such scenarios explicitly, must be committed to the claim that we cannot demonstrate that occasionalism is false. For since we know that cases like qualitative changes in the Eucharistic wine actually happen, we cannot exclude the possibility of it *always* happening. Imagine someone, with no knowledge of sacramental theology and metaphysics, whose only experience of causation is one involving the Eucharist. Although she might be justified in concluding from her experiences that fire causes heat in the wine, her judgment in this case would be wrong. Since only those propositions are demonstrable whose nega-

57. *Quodl.* II, q. 9: "Illud principium intelligo sic: quando effectus natus est naturaliter causari et esse ad praesentiam agentis, tunc efficere non est nisi effectum sic esse. In proposito autem non est sic, quia ille calor non est natus produci ab igne, quia est sine subiecto; et agens naturale non potest aliquid producere sine passo. Unde si Deus non produceret illum calorem, nihil produceretur ibi ad praesentiam ignis, ex quo non est ibi subiectum patiens" (OTh IX, 156; Freddoso tr., 131–132).

tion entail a contradiction, and since — as we have just seen — it is not the case with propositions such as 'the heat in the presence of fire is produced by the fire,' Ockham seems to be committed to the claim that we cannot demonstrate that occasionalism is actually false.[58]

Given that the falsity of occasionalism is indemonstrable strictly speaking, can we nevertheless *know* that occasionalism is false? Again, this is a question that Ockham does not consider explicitly, although it seems that he would be committed to saying something like 'yes, with qualifications.' The 'with qualifications' part refers to the fact that as was noted above, Ockham does not think we can have intuitive cognition of the causal relation.

We cannot have intuitive cognition of the fire's causing heat in the Eucharistic wine, since it does not actually do so. But as Ockham notes, we cannot have intuitive cognition of c causing e even if it in fact does. For instance, intuitive cognitions are (partially) caused by the object of which the intuitive cognitions they are; nevertheless, *even if* we see an intuitive cognition together with the object of which the intuitive cognition it is, we cannot know intuitively that the object caused the cognition, and not God. As Ockham notes:

> We should know that the one who sees intuitively the cognition of a singular, does not see that singular intuitively as that singular at which the cognition is terminated. Because even if an angel sees intuitively the cognition of a singular object, and — as we suppose — also sees the singular object intuitively, nevertheless he does not see that the cognition is of the singular object. . . . Even if there is just one singular object close enough to the intellect, from this he cannot evidently know that the cognition is of that singular object, and caused by it partially as by an efficient cause, because the cognition could be by God alone.[59]

58. It is important to emphasize, however, that — unlike for instance Gabriel Biel later — he does not explicitly consider occasionalism in the context of the qualitative change in the Eucharistic wine.

59. *Rep.* II, q. 16: "Aliud est sciendum quod videns cognitionem singularis intuitive, non videt illud

This is part of a longer argument in the context of angeology, but the important point is clear: according to Ockham, we cannot know the causal relation between c and e intuitively because (1) it could be the case that e is caused by another individual, the most similar to c, which is also nearby but we do not see it (Ockham's example later in the same passage: it could be the case that we see a smoke and a fire, and judge that the smoke is caused by the fire, while in fact it is caused by another fire that is just behind the one we see), and, more importantly in the present context, because (2) it could be the case that God actually causes e. Thus, as Ockham continues the above quoted passage, we can know that c causes e "only through many arguments,"[60] but as we have seen above, there is no *demonstrative* argument for the claim that fire — and not God — causes heat.

Should this result worry us, or at least, should it worry Ockham? According to Gilson, it should:

> When the presence of a certain fact is regularly attended by the presence of another fact, we call the first one a cause and the second an effect. And beyond that we know nothing. . . . Consequently, if causality is what they say it is, the existence of what they say cannot be proven, causality is nothing. . . . A sacramental universe is not a self-contradictory notion; it is at least a possible universe, and we might well be living in such a world without being aware of it.[61]

It seems, however, that whether one should really take the logical possibility of a sacramental universe to endanger our everyday notion of causality, depends on what standards of certainty one adopts. And as far as Ockham is concerned, the answer is 'no.'

singulare intuitive quatenus ad illud singulare terminatur cognitio. Quia etsi angelus videat cognitionem alicuius singularis intuitive, et illud etiam singulare intuitive — ponamus — non tamen videt quod ista est huius singularis. . . . Et etiam si tantum esset unum singulare approximatum intellectui, adhuc non posset evidenter scire quod ista cognitio est huius singularis, et ab eo partialiter et effective, quia ista cognitio potest esse a solo Deo" (OTh V, 378–379).

60. *Rep.* II, q. 16: "nisi per multos discursus" (OTh V, 379).

61. Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, 66–67.

The indemonstrability of the falsity of ocasionalism is only worrisome (if one is worried about occasionalism at all) if one thinks, with Descartes or Nicholas of Autrecourt, that we can be certain only of demonstrable things, that is, if one thinks that we can be certain of something only if its negation entails a contradiction. As was just seen, according to Ockham, occasionalism is not like that, and thus it follows that if this is Ockham's standard of certainty, then he would be committed to the claim that we cannot be certain and cannot know that occasionalism is false.

Ockham, however, together with most of his contemporaries, does not think that we need such unqualified certainty in order to have knowledge. For instance, according to him, we can have certainty regarding judgments about sense experience (from intuitive cognition) as well as about such abstract concepts as 'substance,' even though neither of these is demonstrable strictly speaking: even though, for instance, God could even bring it about that we have an intuitive cognition of non-existents,[62] and even though we sometimes see a man when he is actually not one.[63] Nevertheless, according to Ockham, we do have knowledge of things like 'this is a man,' even if this knowledge is not infallible.

Consequently, it seems that Ockham's lack of interest concerning some skeptical consequences of his thesis that the falsity of occasionalism cannot be demonstrated, is not a mere coincidence. That the falsity of occasionalism cannot be demonstrated should be indeed worrisome for Ockham if he were committed to the thesis that we need strict demonstration for certainty, or even for knowledge. It seems, however, that he allows for lower standards of certainty, and thus he can consistently maintain that even though we cannot *demonstrate* that occasionalism is false, we can be fairly certain about it.

62. We need not get into the debate whether or to what extent this is possible, and what skeptical consequences it entails. For a summary of this long debate, see Marilyn McCord Adams, "Intuitive Cognition, Certainty, and Scepticism in William Ockham," *Traditio* 26 (1970): 389–398. Ockham seems to think that if God causes an intuitive knowledge of non-existent, then the intellect would judge that it did not exist and thus would not be deceived.

63. The standard example for this latter is Tobit and the angel in the book of Tobit, 5.

4.1.5 Summary

In summary, just as many of his contemporaries, Ockham thinks that God freely and immediately concurs with every created agent, and is thus a partial cause of every effect. But he also thinks that neither the falsity of mere conservationism nor the falsity of occasionalism is philosophically demonstrable. We cannot demonstrate that mere conservationism is false, since if Aristotle is correct, God only produces the first effect immediately and not the generable effects of the sublunar world. Its demonstrability would depend on the demonstrability of God being a free cause; and since the latter — *pace* Scotus — is not demonstrable, according to Ockham, God's immediate concurrence with secondary agents is not demonstrable either. The falsity of occasionalism is not demonstrable since God *in principle* could have made the world such that its efficient causes are not those which we think they are; in fact this happens in cases involving qualitative changes in the Eucharist. Can we arrive at a logical contradiction by assuming that we live in a sacramental universe? According to Ockham, we cannot. But do we have good reasons to suppose that we do not in fact do so? According to Ockham, we do. Whether this is enough to satisfy someone's skepticism regarding occasionalism will depend on one's standards for certainty; Ockham is not worried about the skeptical consequences since he thinks that we can have good reason to accept that something is true even if we cannot demonstrate it.

4.2 PIERRE D'AILLY

Pierre d'Ailly's earlier reception has been somewhat similar to Ockham's as it followed that of nominalism in general. Thus, for instance, George Lindbeck could conclude his paper by saying that the study of people of like d'Ailly "will enable us better to appreciate the need for an explanation of the adherence of men like Ailly to a position which forced on them what must seem to us in our day highly artificial solutions to highly artificial problems,"[64] or that "it does not seem exaggerated to say that Pierre d'Ailly was a nominalist in spite of himself."[65] Although the general reception of nominalism has changed quite radically in the last few decades, this is not entirely true of the reception of d'Ailly. Thus, Leonard Kennedy, almost three decades later, still characterizes d'Ailly's *Sentences* commentary as "a meditation on the absolute power of God,"[66] and claims that for d'Ailly, "the created world is constantly trembling on the verge of being changed drastically or even annihilated."[67] From the claim that d'Ailly was committed to holding a contingent relation between causes and effects, Kennedy also draws the conclusion that d'Ailly was an occasionalist.[68]

In this section my aim is to give a somewhat more balanced account of d'Ailly's view of efficient causation and divine concurrence. I show that although divine omnipotence and absolute power does play a significant role in d'Ailly's argumentation, his conclusions

64. George Lindbeck, "Nominalism and the Problem of Meaning as Illustrated by Pierre D'Ailly on Predestination and Justification," *The Harvard Theological Review* 52 (1959): 45.
65. Ibid., 54.
66. Kennedy, *Peter of Ailly and the Harvest of Fourteenth-Century Philosophy*, 27.
67. Ibid., 55–57.
68. In fact, d'Ailly had been interpreted as an occasionalist already by Malebranche (*The Search after Truth*, 680), and even before that, arguably by Molina (*Liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis, divina praescientia, providentia, praedestinatione et reprobatione concordia. Liber II, dd.25–28.*, 159–160) and by Biel as will be seen below.

are less radical than some of these interpreters suggest.[69] In particular, I argue that it is important to separate the question of necessary connection between causes and effects on the one hand, and the question of occasionalism on the other hand: from the denial of the former, the latter does not follow. While d'Ailly maintained indeed that the connection between secondary causes and their effects is contingent, he did not maintain that secondary causes cannot or do not efficaciously exercise their powers.

The main textual basis of the following analysis is d'Ailly's commentary on the *Sentences*, where he addresses the problem of divine concurrence and secondary causation in at least two contexts: in his critique of Aristotle's argument for the first unmoved mover (as well as of Aquinas's First Way) in the first book (his "negative account"), and in his treatment of sacramental causality in the fourth (his "positive account"). I will start with his negative account, which has received much more attention than the positive one.

4.2.1 Knowledge and Opinion: Autrecourt and d'Ailly

We have already seen in Ockham that there is distinction between the questions whether something is the case, whether we can know about it, and whether we can know about it by demonstrative reasoning. Pierre d'Ailly relies on this distinction as well, while probably also being acquainted with the writings of his earlier contemporary, Nicholas of Autrecourt.

Autrecourt's now quite well-known critique of our knowledge of causation derives

69. More moderate approaches to d'Ailly in general can be found in Francis Oakley, "Pierre D'Ailly and the Absolute Power of God: Another Note on the Theology of Nominalism," *The Harvard Theological Review* 56, no. 1 (1963): 59–73; Courtenay, "Covenant and Causality"; and in Olaf Pluta, *Die Philosophische Psychologie des Peter von Ailly* (Amsterdam: Verlag B.R. Gŕuner, 1987).

from his principle that since there is no degrees of evidence, everything we know must be reducible to the first logical principle, that is, to the law of non-contradiction.[70] As a result of this principle, Autrecourt is rather skeptical not only about our knowledge of efficient causes, but also about our knowledge of substances.[71] As he notes for instance in his letter to Master Giles:

> And this, namely the fact that such an inference ⟨i.e., an inference from sense experience to the existence of substances⟩ is valid, does not suffice to show that there is something other than the objects of the five senses and our formal experiences, as some people, insufficiently reflecting, believe. For when they are confronted with the fact that it cannot be evidently shown that there is a substance, they positively believe this to be so, because the following inference is valid 'There is an accident; therefore, there is a substance; but whiteness is an accident (as people say); therefore etc'.... I claim, however, that this inference is neither evident by itself nor by experience.[72]

70. The perhaps first introduction to the writings of the "medieval Hume" — as well as the origin of this (probably incorrect) label — can be found in H Rashdall, "Nicholas de Ultricuria, a Medieval Hume," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 7 (1906): 1–27. Since then, a number of monographs have appeared on Autrecourt and especially on his skepticism; see especially Julius Rudolph Weinberg, *Nicholas of Autrecourt: A Study in Fourteenth-Century Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948); Frederick Copleston, "The Logical Empiricism of Nicholas of Autrecourt," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 74 (1973): 249–262; Johannes MMH Thijssen, "John Buridan and Nicholas of Autrecourt on Causality and Induction," *Traditio* 43 (1987): 237–255; Christophe Grellard, *Croire et savoir: Les principes de la connaissance selon Nicolas d'Autrécourt* (Paris: Vrin, 2005); and Christophe Grellard, "Scepticism, Demonstration and the Infinite Regress Argument (Nicholas of Autrecourt and John Buridan)," *Vivarium* 45, no. 2 (2007): 328–342. An edition of Autrecourt's surviving treatise, the *Exigit ordo* was published in Nicholas of Autrecourt, "Exigit Ordo," *Mediaeval Studies* 1 (1939): 179–280 (for an English translation, see Nicholas of Autrecourt, *The Universal Treatise*, trans. Leonard Kennedy, Richard Arnold, and Arthur Millward (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1971)), while his correspondence (with translation) in Nicholas of Autrecourt, *His Correspondence with Master Giles and Bernard of Arezzo: Critical Edition with Introduction, Translation, and Explanatory Notes*, ed. Lambert Marie De Rijk (Leiden: Brill, 1994). I will rely on the English translations of these editions.

71. Although attempts have been made to shift the focus to his more positive philosophy; cf. especially Christophe Grellard, "La statut de la causalité chez Nicolas d'Autrécourt," *Quaestio* 2 (2002): 267–289, and Christophe Grellard, "Nicholas of Autrecourt's Atomistic Physics," in *Atomism in Late Medieval Philosophy and Theology*, ed. Christophe Grellard and Aurelien Robert (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 107–126.

72. Letter to Master Giles, §13: "Nec illud, scilicet quod talis consequentia sit bona, valet ad ostendendum rem aliam esse ab obiectis quinque sensuum et ab experientiis formalibus nostris, sicut aliqui credunt imperfecte considerantes. Nam cum eis proponitur quod non potest evidenter ostendi quod sit aliqua substantia, credunt quod ymo, eoquod ista consequentia est bona 'accidens est; ergo substantia est; sed albedo est accidens (ut dicunt); igitur'.... Sed dico quod ista non est evidens ex se nec per experientiam" (De Rijk tr., 107).

According to Autrecourt's argument, the inference from accident to substance is unjustified. For one can either regard 'accident' as already presupposing a substance in its definition, in which case the inference would be a valid one, but the minor premise of the argument (that there *is* such an accident) would be unknown. Alternatively, if one does not include in the definition of 'accident' that it is an accident of a substance, the inference of the major premise is invalid and so the conclusion does not follow. (As can be seen from this, contrary to Aquinas or even Ockham, Autrecourt denies that we can have simple, non-inferential knowledge about substances.)

Autrecourt's argument against reasoning from causes to effects (and *vice versa*) is structurally similar.[73] As he claims in the *Exigit*,

> Only opinion, not certainty, is had concerning things known by experience, in the way in which it is said to be known that rhubarb cures cholera, or that magnet attracts iron. When it is proven that certitude comes from the proposition existing in the mind which states that what is usually produced by a non-free cause is its natural effect, I ask what you call a natural cause. A cause which has produced what has happened usually, and which will still produce in the future if the cause lasts and is applied? Then the minor premise is not known. Even if something has been produced usually, it is still not certain whether it must be produced in the future.[74]

A similar argument can be found in Autrecourt's letter to Master Giles as well. Thus,

73. His skepticism regarding efficient causation has been examined in detail in Grellard, "La statut de la causalité." That Autrecourt's argument against our knowledge of efficient causation was based on Al-Ghazali's similar argument, is shown by Harry A Wolfson, "Nicolaus of Autrecourt and Gazali's Argument against Causality," *Speculum* 44, no. 2 (1969): 234–238; although see also Courtenay, "The Critique on Natural Causality in the Mutakallimun and Nominalism." William Courtenay calls this skepticism "one of the major revolutions in fourteenth-century philosophy" (Courtenay, "Covenant and Causality," 100). Whether this is indeed the case we need not decide for the present.

74. *Exigit*: "De scitis per experientiam illo modo quo dicitur sciri rheubarbarum sanat choleram vel adamas attrahit ferrum, habetur solum habitus conjecturativus, non certitudo, cum probatur quod certitudo per propositionem quiescentem in anima quae est illud quod producitur ut inpluribus a causa non libera est effectu ejus naturalis; quaero quid appellas causam naturalem; vel illam quae produxit praeteritum ut in pluribus et adhuc produceret in futurum si duret et applicetur? Et tunc minor non est scita, esto quod aliquid sit productum ut in pluribus; non est tamen certum an sic debeat esse in futurum" (Kennedy tr., 119).

according to Autrecourt, the inference from cause to effect is unjustified. For one can either regard 'cause' as already presupposing its usual effect in its definition, but in this case, the minor premise of the argument ('rhubarb is a cause of healing') would be unknown, because we do not experience something to be a natural cause in this way. . Alternatively, if one does not include in the definition of 'cause' that it is always followed by its usual effect, but then the inference of the major premise ('there is cause, therefore, there is an effect') is invalid and so the conclusion does not follow.

As was mentioned above, these arguments against certainty about substances and causes rely on Autrecourt's claim that "the certitude of evidentness had no degrees."[75] In the world of natural causes it is not contradictory to say (and therefore its opposite cannot be derived from the first logical principle) that the cause exists and the effect does not come about; for instance, the cause might have simply been impeded by some other cause. But furthermore, *even if* there were no (natural) impediment, we still could not achieve certainty about the existence of an effect from the existence of its cause, because "from the fact that something is known to be, it cannot be inferred evidently... that there is some other thing."[76] If the cause and the effect are two distinct things, and for any two things, God can maintain one while destroying the other, it could be the case that God destroys the effect while maintaining the cause (or *vice versa*).

Now it might seem that Pierre d'Ailly expresses similar worries and thereby some skeptical conclusions in his negative account, which can be found in his criticism of Aristotle's (and hence Aquinas's) argument for the first unmoved mover (henceforth

75. Second letter to Bernard, §6; see also ibid., §7.
76. Second letter to Bernard, §11.

AFM).[77] Before getting to some specifics about d'Ailly's objections, it is worth noting that in d'Ailly's reconstruction, Aristotle's argument runs thus:

> It is evident that there can be something newly produced, and consequently something producible and not by itself therefore by something else. And about this I ask as before and similarly about the one after: thus, we either arrive at something that is first without qualification, and then we have the proposition, or there will be an infinite regress which is evidently impossible, etc.[78]

Thus, according to the AFM — which, in this context, is an objection against d'Ailly's claim that the existence of one God is not demonstrable — since there are newly produced things, which are produced by something else, and since there is no infinite regress in these producers, there must be a first being. D'Ailly raises six objections against this argument; three of them are worthwhile to consider here because they often serve as key texts for d'Ailly's occasionalist reading.

First, as d'Ailly notes, "the newness of things cannot be evidently inferred from the natural appearances."[79] That is, although the AFM (at least in d'Ailly's reconstruction) relies on the assumption that there are things coming into existence in the natural world, as well as things ceasing to exist, according to d'Ailly, this is not evident from what we experience. According to d'Ailly, all we experience, strictly speaking, is accidental change,[80] and when we draw some inference from this about substantial changes, that inference is at best unjustified (for the same reasons we have seen in Autrecourt above),

77. As will be seen below in more detail, most of what d'Ailly says even in this criticism is not very original, as similar worries can already be found in Ockham and especially in later authors. But my focus will be d'Ailly in what follows.

78. *In Sent.* I, q. 3, a. 3: "Evidens est aliquid posse noviter esse et per consequens tale esse producibile et non a se ergo ab alio. Et de illo quero ut prius et sic super ultra: vel ergo deveniam ad aliquid simpliciter primum et habetur propositum, vel erit processus in infinitum quod est evidenter impossibile, etc" (Strasbourg ed., fol. 74ra). All quotes from d'Ailly's *Sentences* commentary are from Pierre d'Ailly, *Questiones super Sententiarum* (Strasbourg, 1490 (repr.: Minerva, 1968)).

79. Ibid. (Strasbourg ed., fol. 74ra).

80. *In Sent.* I, q. 3, a. 3.

or at worst mistaken. Our inference might not be merely unjustified but also mistaken if the atomists are correct; unfortunately d'Ailly does not elaborate on this point, merely noting that this is the position of some "moderns" (perhaps that of Autrecourt or Gerard of Odo), but he seems to think that the atomist position is not demonstrably false.[81]

Second, d'Ailly also objects to the assumption, taken to be evident by the AFM, that if something newly comes to be, it is produced by some other thing; for instance, that if there is a new heat, it must be produced by the fire. First, d'Ailly notes, it might be the case that the effect comes to be merely by the removal of an impediment, while no positive *per se* cause concurs. Second, more importantly in the present context, he notes that we cannot *experience* evidently that one thing produces another:

> You say that fire effects or produces heat and is its efficient cause, nevertheless it could be the case that the heat exists and not by that fire but by God alone, while the fire is related to the heat entirely similarly as before according to all of our appearances; therefore, etc.[82]

This text is quite often cited as a proof that d'Ailly endorsed the view according to which God is the only efficient cause; however, one needs to be attentive to the context of the present discussion. D'Ailly's claim here is not metaphysical but epistemological: we cannot experience, strictly speaking, that certain effects are produced by natural causes. Since in principle it is possible (and God could make it the case) that the same appearances remain while the heat is not produced by the fire, our experience that the heat *is* produced by the fire, cannot be evident in the strict sense. This shows, indeed, that for d'Ailly, the same apparent effect could be produced by different kinds

81. For a detailed overview of medieval atomistic theories, see Christophe Grellard and Aurelien Robert, eds., *Atomism in Late Medieval Philosophy and Theology* (Leiden: Brill, January 2009).

82. *In Sent.* I, q. 3, a. 3: "tu dicis quod ignis efficit vel producit calorem et est eius causa efficiens, constat tamen quod iste calor posset esse et non esse ab illo igne, sed a solo deo, igne se habente ad illum calorem omnino similiter sicut prius secundum omnem nostram apparentiam etc. quare etc" (Strasbourg ed., fol. 74rb).

of causes, and consequently we cannot evidently know by experience that God is not the sole efficacious agent in the world — a claim with which, as was seen above, Ockham explicitly agrees (section 4.1.4). It does not show, however, that d'Ailly thinks that God *is* the sole efficacious agent in the world — a claim that both him and Ockham would reject.

D'Ailly's third objection to the AFM is very brief, pointing out that we cannot know evidently that any causes are essentially ordered. Aristotle's argument arguably assumes that there is essential order among causes, that is, there are causes that are kept in existence and act only because of the action of other causes.[83] According to d'Ailly, however, this assumption is unfounded, as there are no evident reasons given — and perhaps none can be given — that there exist such essentially ordered causes.

These claims of d'Ailly are indeed somewhat skeptical: they imply that we cannot have absolutely evident knowledge of efficient causes, cannot evidently know whether any natural things are produced by other natural things, or indeed, whether anything is ever newly produced at all. We also cannot absolutely evidently know — assuming that there are efficient causes in nature — whether any of these causes are essentially ordered. As a result, the argument for the first mover fails on several counts. Moreover, d'Ailly's arguments considering God's possible intervention also imply that he does indeed see the relation between causes and effects as contingent: the same effects could have very different causes (or perhaps no secondary causes at all), and the same causes might produce different effects (or perhaps no secondary effects at all).[84]

83. Although Aristotle himself does not use the terminology of 'essential order,' Scotus's argument in the *DPP* explicitly relies on this claim. As both Ockham and d'Ailly point out, Scotus does not provide an argument that would show that there *are* such causes in nature.

84. It should be noted however that d'Ailly's point is not entirely clear here. Namely, it is not entirely clear whether he is talking about numerically the same effect being produced by different causes, or just effects that look indistinguishable *to us* being produced by different causes. The difference between these claims is subtle but important: endorsing only the latter, one could still maintain that a given effect necessarily implies its cause.

It must be emphasized again, however, that these are all epistemological claims, and as such, they are all quite similar to the claims we have already seen in Ockham, with perhaps a greater emphasis on the possibility of divine action. D'Ailly is not objecting to the thesis that anything is newly produced, or that there are natural efficient causes, or that there is essential order between them. What he is objecting to is the claim that these theses are demonstrable in the strict sense, that is, reducible to the principle of non-contradiction.

As I also mentioned when discussing Ockham (section 4.1.4 above), such a claim has serious skeptical consequences — including that we cannot know in any way whether there are secondary causes — only if one maintains that all kinds of evidence must be reducible to the first logical principle. As was also seen above, Ockham rejects this claim, and so does — in contrast to Autrecourt — d'Ailly as well. As d'Ailly notes,

> I say that evidence is twofold: one is the evidence of the first principle or reducible to it; the other is conditional evidence, such as evidence to our natural reason, which is about the first. Absolute evidence can be described simply as a true assent without hesitation caused naturally, to which it is impossible for the intellect to assent and thus assenting being deceived or err. Evidence *secundum quid* can be described as an assent without hesitation caused naturally, to which it is impossible to assent, and given God's general influence and no miracles, thus assenting being deceived or err.[85]

Thus, according to d'Ailly, echoing also John Buridan's remark on the same,[86] absolute evidence is such that if our intellect assents to it, there is no possibility to err. Conditional

85. *In Sent.* I, q. 1, a. 1: "Dico quod duplex est evidentia: quaedam est evidentia primi principii vel reducibilis ad ea; alia est evidentia conditionata, qualis est evidentia nostri ingenii quae est circa primam. Evidentia absoluta simpliciter potest describi quod est assensus verus sine formidine causatus naturaliter, quo non est possibile intellectum assentire et in sic assentiendo decipi vel errare. Evidentia autem secundum quid potest describi quod est assensus sine formidine causatus naturaliter, quo non est possibile, stante dei influentia generali et nullo facto miraculo, intellectum assentire et in sic assentiendo decipi vel errare" (Strasbourg ed., fol. 44r).

86. See his commentary on the *Posterior analytics* I, q. 2; or on the *Physics* I, q. 4. For a study of the notion of evidence in the fourteenth century, see Anneliese Maier, "Das Problem der Evidenz in der Philosophie des 14. Jh.s," *Scholastik* 38 (1963): 183–225.

evidence, on the other hand, is restricted to the natural order, that is, assumes that God is acting by his ordained power.[87] Although this is a weaker kind of evidence than its absolute counterpart, it is still sufficient for our natural reason to assent by it to true propositions. This means that even though the cause and effect relation cannot be reduced to the first principle, that does not imply that we can have no evidence for it whatsoever and that d'Ailly would not have a positive account of causation.

4.2.2 Sacraments, Sine qua non, and Occasional Causes

Pierre d'Ailly's positive account of causation occurs in a discussion of *sine qua non* causality; his occasionalist interpretation seems to rely precisely on the claim that for him, all natural causes are merely *sine qua non* causes in the sense defined above (section 4.1.2). Before turning to examine this claim, however, it is worth to look again at what *sine qua non* causes are and what they were used for in the context of the sacraments.

As was mentioned above, discussions of *sine qua non* causality in the context of sacraments[88] were focused on the question whether and how sacraments cause grace in their recipient or whether and how meritorious acts cause the reward given by God.[89] There

87. For an overview of the dialectic of God's absolute and ordained power, see William J Courtenay, *Capacity and Volition: A History of the Distinction of Absolute and Ordained Power* (Bergamo: Pierluigi Lubrina Editore, 1990).

88. The other context in which *sine qua non* causes played a role was that of cognition; see, e.g., Jean-Luc Solère, "Sine Qua Non Causality and the Context of Durand's Early Theory of Cognition," in *Durand of Saint-Pourçain and his* Sentences *Commentary: Historical, Philosophical, and Theological Issues*, ed. Andreas Speer et al. (Leuven: Peeters, 2014), 185–227.

89. For an extensive and careful treatment of sacramental causality, see Adams, *Some Later Medieval Theories of the Eucharist*, especially 51–79. See also Marilyn McCord Adams, "Powerless Causes: The Case of Sacramental Causality," chap. 4 in *Thinking about Causes*, ed. Peter Machamer and Gereon Wolters (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2007), 47–76, especially for the various problems that were faced, both on the theological and the philosophical front, by most medieval thinkers.

were various positions one could take on this question, with a couple of considerations that had to be taken into account.

First, on the one hand, in contrast to the Albigenses, who did not regard the physical sacraments as any more than regular ordinary objects that were in no way related to the produced grace, most medieval thinkers maintained that there *is* some causal connection between the sacraments and the grace produced; that is, in the (almost) ordinary course of nature, grace follows the Eucharistic bread while it does not usually follow the non-Eucharistic one.[90]

On the other hand, however, most medieval thinkers recognized that the causal connection between the Eucharistic bread and the conferred grace cannot be an ordinary one, since in the latter cause and effect are similar and the cause surpasses the effect in some way, while neither of these holds in the case of the sacraments where it would have had to be explained how a material action could result in a spiritual effect. This last worry was also strengthened by most theologians' agreement that it is only God who can create grace and not any creature.

Given these considerations, implying that sacraments must be causes but in some non-ordinary way, there were various ways to flesh out what this "non-ordinary way" might consist in. The distinctions between these ways will be important to understand d'Ailly's position and to see how the question of occasionalism arises in this context.[91]

First, some — arguably Aquinas — maintained that sacraments are *instrumental causes* of grace. As was seen in chapter 2, for Aquinas, an instrumental cause is a

90. For an official, albeit later formulation of this doctrine, see the Council of Trent, session VII, especially canons 2 and 6; Henry Denzinger, ed., *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, trans. Roy J Deferrari (Createspace Independent Publishers, 2013), §845, §849.

91. For further characterizations of these ways and also for some others, see Courtenay, "Covenant and Causality"; and Adams, *Some Later Medieval Theories of the Eucharist*, especially ch. 3.

cause that needs a principal cause because its own nature and powers are by themselves insufficient to bring about the effect. As Aquinas puts it with regard to the sacraments,

> It should be said that an agent cause can be in two ways, principal and instrumental. A principal cause operates by the power of its form, to which the effect is made similar, just as the fire heats by its own power. And in this way only God can cause grace.... But the instrumental cause does not act by the power of its form, but only by the motion by which it is moved by the principal agent. Whence the effect is not made similar to the instrument, but to the principal agent, just as the bed is not made similar to the axe but to the artifact that is in the mind of the craftsman. And in this way the sacraments of the new order cause grace.[92]

Thus, instrumental causes are genuine efficient causes, but they produce an effect that they cannot produce by their own proper power. And, according to Aquinas, this is the case with the sacraments: although the produced grace surpasses the proper power of the sacraments, this proper power still genuinely contributes to the production of grace in case God also contributes to it.

Second, which is also arguably Aquinas's position, some held that sacraments are *dispositive* causes of grace. As Aquinas notes in his *Sentences* commentary,

> It must be known that 'efficient cause' can be divided in two ways. One way based on the effect, namely in dispositive cause, which cases a disposition to the final form; and perfecting cause, which induces the final perfection. The other way based on the cause, in principal and instrumental agents.... But to the ultimate effect, which is grace, ⟨the sacraments⟩ do not pertain instrumentally, unless dispositively.[93]

92. *ST* III, q. 62, a. 1, co.: "Et ideo aliter dicendum, quod duplex est causa agens, principalis et instrumentalis. Principalis quidem operatur per virtutem suae formae, cui assimilatur effectus, sicut ignis suo calore calefacit. Et hoc modo non potest causare gratiam nisi Deus.... Causa vero instrumentalis non agit per virtutem suae formae, sed solum per motum quo movetur a principali agente. Unde effectus non assimilatur instrumento, sed principali agenti, sicut lectus non assimilatur securi, sed arti quae est in mente artificis. Et hoc modo sacramenta novae legis gratiam causant" (Leonine ed., 12:30).

93. *In Sent.* IV, d. 1, q. 1, a. 4, qc. 1: "Ad cujus evidentiam sciendum est, quod causa efficiens dupliciter potest dividi. Uno modo ex parte effectus; scilicet in disponentem, quae causat dispositionem ad formam ultimam; et perficientem, quae inducit ultimam perfectionem. Alio modo ex parte ipsius

According to this account, dispositive causes are part of a two-step causal process: first, a lower cause creates a disposition in the patient, which is necessary for it to receive the effect that the higher cause produces in the second step. For a more everyday example, one can think of the sun as a dispositive cause of fire when it dries out the wet wood, or heating a cup of water as a dispositive cause of it dissolving a certain amount of salt. What is important in these examples is that the dispositive cause, just like an instrumental cause, does have a genuine causal contribution, even though this contribution — in contrast to that of an instrumental cause — is not a direct but merely an indirect contribution towards the final effect. Applying all this to the sacraments, one might say that the sacraments are genuine efficient causes (or at least instrumental causes) of the disposition of the soul that enables the soul to receive the grace produced by God.

Third, one might maintain that sacraments are mere accidental causes. An accidental cause and the effect are not related at all by their natures; the cause merely happens to be present when the effect is created, but there is no connection between them apart from this co-presence. For instance, the whiteness of the builder is a mere accidental cause of the building, since it in no way affects the builder's art (his building ability) or action (the actual building). This kind of causality was not usually applied to the sacramental case at least in pre-Reformation theology, but it is important to mention it because of its supposed connection to the fourth option.

Finally, fourth, one might maintain that sacraments are *sine qua non* causes. As was pointed out above, instrumental and dispositive causes agree in that they contribute to the effect in some way by their own nature. *Sine qua non* causes, by contrast, agree with occasional causes in that they are *not* causes by their own nature. Indeed, one might say

causae in agens principale, et instrumentale.... Ad ultimum autem effectum, quod est gratia, non pertingunt etiam instrumentaliter, nisi dispositive" (Moos ed., 32).

that *sine qua non* causation does not constitute a category of its own since *sine qua non* causes are merely occasional causes. As, for instance, Aquinas notes when discussing a view similar to d'Ailly's,

> For a *sine qua non* cause, if it in no way contributes to the production of the effect either by disposing or by make it better, as far as it is a cause, does not have anything above accidental causes — in the same way as the whiteness is the cause of the house if the builder is white. And according to this view, the sacraments would be only accidental causes of sanctification. That ordination, however, what they say, or pact, does not add anything as far as the notion cause is concerned, but only as far as the notion of sign; just as also the tin coin is a mere sign indicating who has to accept it.[94]

Thus, according to Aquinas, there is no difference between how the whiteness of the builder is the cause of the building and how the piece of tin is the cause of the receiving of goods bought with it. In both cases, the relation is merely accidental, since it could have been the case that the builder was not white, or it could have been the case that instead of tin coins, wealth would be expressed by something else.

In contrast to Aquinas, however, Ockham and d'Ailly think that although neither *sine qua non* nor accidental causes are genuine causes (that is, they do not produce an effect by their nature), there is a meaningful difference between them in the sense that accidental causes are in no way required for the effect to come about while *sine qua non* causes are — albeit this requirement does not follow from the nature of the things. As Ockham notes, for instance, accidental causes are not causes even in the weak sense of fulfilling definition EC above (section 4.1.1), while *sine qua non* causes are causes in that sense:

94. *In Sent.* IV, d. 1 q. 1 a. 4, qc. 1, co.: "Causa enim sine qua non, si nihil omnino faciat ad inducendum effectum vel disponendo vel meliorando, quantum ad rationem causandi, nihil habebit supra causas per accidens; sicut album est causa domus, si aedificator sit albus; et secundum hoc sacramenta essent causae per accidens tantum sanctificationis. Illa enim ordinatio quam dicunt, sive pactio, nihil dat eis de ratione causae, sed solum de ratione signi; sicut etiam denarius plumbeus est solum signum indicans quis debet accipere" (Moos ed., 31).

> A *sine qua non* cause is something more than an accidental cause.... But merit is but a *sine qua non* cause of reward and grace, because it is neither a principal nor an instrumental cause, just as the passion of Christ is a *sine qua non* cause of grace, but neither is an accidental cause of grace. Furthermore, an accidental cause is such that when it is removed the effect is nevertheless posited — as the example of whiteness that is an accidental cause of the act of building, shows — but nothing is posited in the soul if the sacrament is removed.[95]

Thus, Ockham thinks that there is an important difference between *sine qua non* and accidental causes. While in the current legislative order I might need a tin coin to acquire some goods (the tin coin being a *sine qua non* cause of my buying a sandwich), there is no order according to which I would have to be sunburnt to build a building (the sunburn being an accidental cause of the act of building).

D'Ailly follows Ockham in distinguishing *sine qua non* causes both from proper causes and from accidental causes; in fact, his formulation of the distinction is almost verbatim the same as his predecessor's:

> To see however how sacraments are the cause of grace and how they are not, and to save the sayings of the saints and doctors, we must distinguish ⟨various senses of the term⟩ 'efficient cause.' For since a cause is that to the being of which another follows, something can be said to be a cause in two ways. In one way, properly: when to the presence of the being of one, by its power and by the nature of the thing, follows the being of another; and in this way, fire is the cause of heat. In the other way, improperly: when to the presence of the being of one the being of the other follows, but not by its power nor by the nature of the thing, but merely by the will of another. And in this way are meritorious acts causes with respect to the reward. And also in this way is a *sine qua non* cause a cause.[96]

95. *Rep.* IV, q. 1: "Causa sine qua non aliquid plus dicit quam causa per accidens.... Sed meritum non est nisi causa sine qua non respectu praemii et gratiae, quia nec est principalis nec instrumentalis, sicut etiam modo passio Christi est causa sine qua non respectu gratiae, et tamen neutrum est causa per accidens respectu gratiae. Praeterea causa per accidens est illa qua amota nihilominus ponitur effectus. Exemplum de albo quod est causa per accidens respectu actus aedificandi, sed amotis sacramentis non sequitur aliquid in anima" (OTh VII, 8).

96. *In Sent.* IV, q. 1, a. 1: "Ad videndum autem melius quomodo sacramenta sunt cause gratie et

Just as was seen above, therefore, *sine qua non* causation is based not on the nature of the cause, but on the will of an agent who makes a pact to accept a certain cause as a sign and then produces the effect. For d'Ailly, in the context of the sacraments, this means that although the nature of baptismal water as water has nothing to do with the production of grace, it is always followed by grace by God's decision. And although the water does not produce the grace, it is related to it somehow more strongly than, for instance, the temperature of the same water is related to the same gracce. Now the question is whether there is anything more in regular natural causes than this kind of *sine qua non* causality, according to d'Ailly.

4.2.3 Sacramental and Natural Causes

As was seen above, d'Ailly thinks that we cannot demonstrate that there are any causes in nature, nor that there is any substantial change in the world. Yet, he also thinks that there *are* such causes and such change, as it is manifest in his response to one of the objections raised when discussing sacramental causality. This objection and response again closely follows Ockham's treatment of the same.

Recall that Ockham, in his discussion of sacramental causation, raised an objection against his own position, according to which since there is nothing more to causation than one thing following the presence of another, we should regard sacraments as causes as well, since this correlation also holds between them and the produced grace (section

quomodo non, et ad salvandum dicta sanctorum et doctorum distinguendum est de causa efficiente. Quia enim causa est illud ad cuius esse sequitur aliud, dupliciter potest aliquid dici causa. Uno modo proprie: quando ad presentiam esse unius virtute eius et ex natura rei sequitur esse alterius; et sic ignis est causa caloris. Alio modo improprie: quando ad presentiam esse unius sequitur esse alterius, non tamen virtute eius nec ex natura rei, sed ex sola voluntate alterius; et sic actus meritorius dicitur causa respectu premii. Sic etiam causa sine qua non dicitur causa" (Strasbourg ed., fol. 31vb).

4.1.4 above). D'Ailly reiterates this objection in a very similar form when discussing the same, although in his formulation it is more detailed and is possibly showing some of Autrecourt's influence:

> Anything that if it is posited, another one is also posited, is its proper cause; now by the account of a proper cause it is not true that the effect would necessarily follow or that the effect cannot be posited without the cause, because the fire is a proper cause of heat and nevertheless heat follows the fire not necessarily but merely contingently, as it is clear from the fire with the three young men in the furnace. And heat can also be produced while the fire is present so that the fire causes nothing, as it is clear from the case when God by himself produced heat while suspending the action of the fire. Thus, for something to be a proper cause of another, it is enough that if the former is posited the latter is posited, and if it is not posited, then the latter is not posited either. But this is the case with the sacraments with respect to grace, therefore etc.[97]

Just as Ockham, d'Ailly starts from a preliminary definition of efficient cause (that which if it is posited the other one is posited, definition EC above). The objector argues that this is a sufficient definition, since necessary connection cannot be supposed to hold between causes and effects (citing the example of Nebuchadnezzar's fire). But if this is so, the objector points out, then the sacraments should also be regarded as proper efficient causes.

As was seen above, Ockham responded to the objection by distinguishing once more *sine qua non* causes and proper efficient causes, and showing thereby that there *is* a difference between how ordinary physical things in the world and how sacraments act. While the former act by their natures, the latter do not.

97. *In Sent.* IV, q. 1, a. 1: "Quia videtur quod omne illud quo posito ponitur aliud sit proprie causa illus; nam de ratione cause proprie dicte non est quod ad ipsam necessario sequatur effectus aut quod non possit poni sine ipsa, quia ignis est proprie causa caloris et tamen non necessario sed mere contingenter ad ignem sequitur calor, sicut patuit de igne trium puerorum in fornace. Similiter calor etiam igne presente potest produci igne nihil causante, sicut patet si Deus se solo produceret calorem suspendendo actionem ignis presentis. Igitur ad hoc quod aliquid sit proprie causa alterius sufficit quod ipso posito ponatur illud et ipso non posito non ponatur. Sed sic est de sacramentis respectu gratie, etc., igitur etc." (Strasbourg ed., fol. 32ra).

D'Ailly's approach to the objection is, again, almost the same. As a response, he proposes a series of statements emphasizing the distinction between natural causality and the causality of the sacraments. The fourth of these proposition concerns necessary connection:

> The fourth proposition is that no secondary cause is a proper cause of some effect, nor does some effect follow from some secondary cause by the nature of the thing in such a way that from the cause the effect would necessarily follow or that the effect would necessarily presuppose that cause; rather, the effect follows from the secondary cause merely contingently and the secondary cause precedes its effect merely contingently.[98]

As was seen above, and as this passage shows, d'Ailly grants the objector that there is no necessary connection between cause and effect. One needs to realize, however, that this claim is less radical than it seems, for at least two reasons. First, because as was seen before (section 2.3.2), even Aquinas or Peter of Palude would grant such a claim *in some sense* (namely if we consider the natural agent alone as an efficient cause, without divine concurrence), together with Scotus and of course Ockham. And second, because despite Kennedy's claim to the contrary cited above, no occasionalism follows from it — as d'Ailly makes clear in the next proposition:

> The fifth proposition: that notwithstanding the aforesaid, some secondary efficient cause is a proper cause in such a way that it produces the effect by its proper power... that is, by the power which is in it.[99]

Thus, d'Ailly — just as Ockham before him — emphasizes that there are efficient causes

98. *In Sent.* IV, q. 1, a. 1: "Quarta propositio est quod nulla causa secunda sic est proprie causa alicuius effectus nec aliquis effectus sic ex natura rei sequitur ex aliqua causa secunda quod causa necessario inferatur effectum vel quod effectus necessario presupponat illam causam; immo effectus pure contingenter sequitur ex secunda et secunda causa pure contingenter antecedit effectum suum" (Strasbourg ed., fol. 32ra).

99. *In Sent.* IV, q. 1, a. 1: "Quinta propositio: quod non obstantibus predictis aliqua causa efficiens secunda sic est proprie causa quod ipsa agit effectum virtute propria... id est virtute que est in ipsa vel que est ipsamet et non sibi aliena" (Strasbourg ed., fol. 32ra).

in the world that produce their effects by their power, and thus that God is not the only efficacious agent. Again, similarly to Ockham, he makes a distinction between proper secondary causes, for which the preliminary definition EC is insufficient, since besides constant conjunction, a proper effect has to come about *ex natura rei*; and causes *sine qua non* that do not act on the effect by their nature.

This means that although Kennedy and other interpreters were right about d'Ailly's denial of necessary connection between causes and effects, they were wrong about his endorsement of occasionalism. The two questions are indeed independent. One can hold that causes are contingently related to their effects while also holding that things in the world are proper causes; one might also hold — arguably some occasionalists did — that God is the sole efficient cause precisely because efficient causation requires necessary connection that we do not see in the created world.

All in all, d'Ailly's treatment of efficient causation adds little to Ockham's treatment of the same. As was also seen above, Ockham was not committed to occasionalism, neither did he consider the occasionalist worry explicitly. In this latter, d'Ailly arguably differs.

4.2.4 D'Ailly and Occasionalism

D'Ailly differs from Ockham in that he considers some further arguments, which although do not force him to endorse occasionalism, clearly show how the emphasis of the debate has changed by his time — as well as point forward to the next author, Gabriel Biel, who will cite and belabor these passages extensively.

First, d'Ailly notes that even though there are proper efficient causes in nature, *that* something is a proper efficient cause is by the will of God alone. As he explains,

> Although to the presence of a proper secondary cause an effect follows not just by the will of God but by the power of that cause and by the nature of the thing, nevertheless, that that to the presence of some secondary cause an effect follows by the power of that cause or by the nature of the thing, is only by God's will.[100]

D'Ailly's claim in this passage is rather ambiguous. First, he might be claiming that God could have created a universe in which there are no created efficient causes at all — which seems to be a rather modest claim, because according to virtually all Western medieval thinkers, God could have not created at all, and it is certainly within God's power to create whatever world he wants to that does not involve a logical contradiction.

Second, d'Ailly might mean that God could choose not to concur with efficient causes, in which case they would be insufficient to produce the effect by their proper power. Again, this is a claim that even Aquinas, Peter of Palude, Scotus, or Ockham would grant and illustrate with the example of Nebuchadnezzar's fire.

Third, d'Ailly's position might be that even given this present universe and the things with their specific natures within it, God could make it the case that these things would stop being efficient causes. Although Aquinas seems to think that something similar will be the case after the day of judgment when the heavens stop and consequently the elements will not bring about their proper effects any more,[101] he also seems to think that given the current order of universe, the nature of things, and God's concurrence as well as that of the heavenly bodies, things act by necessity. If this is d'Ailly's intended meaning, then by this he denies necessary connection not just between causes and effects (a rather usual claim) but also between things and their causal powers (a rather unusual one).

100. *In Sent.* IV, q. 1, a. 1: "Licet ad presentiam cause secunde proprie dicte sequatur effectus non solum ex voluntate Dei, sed ex virtute ipsius cause et ex natura rei, tamen quod ad presentiam alicuius cause secunde sequatur aliquis effectus virtute ipsius cause seu ex natura rei solus est ex voluntate Dei" (Strasbourg ed., fol. 32va).
101. *QDP*, q. 5, a. 7.

Which one of these is the correct interpretation of d'Ailly's passage is, based on the current texts, questionable. If his position is indeed the third one, it might be tempting to read him as maintaining that God could change the universe into an occasionalist one perhaps without us even noticing. This is the reading of the passage that Gabriel Biel will adopt and defend (see section 4.3.2 below).

The above passage might also give the impression that for d'Ailly, all natural causes are *sine qua non* causes: just as a tin coin is a cause of me getting a sandwich not by necessity but by the agreement upon which the use of money rests, it might seem that for d'Ailly, the fire is a cause of the produced heat not by necessity but merely by God's decision that fire shall produce heat. It must be pointed out, however, that the two cases differ. In the first case, even *given the agreement*, the coin has no nature to produce me getting a sandwich; in fact, it does nothing like that by its proper power. In the second case, however, having God decided that the nature of fire be such as to produce heat, the heat *is* produced by the fire's own proper power. Thus, even given the strongest, third reading of the passage as discussed above, d'Ailly's claim amounts to no more than a "second-order occasionalism": it is indeed by God's will that things in the created world are efficacious. This is a claim, however, that — with the qualifications as explained in the previous paragraphs — perhaps even Aquinas would grant.

The second passage worth considering in this context occurs when d'Ailly discusses and rejects Aquinas's position regarding the sacraments. Against the position according to which sacraments are dispositive instrumental causes, d'Ailly puts forward an interesting argument, which is worth quoting in its entirety:

> I argue against him ⟨i.e., Aquinas⟩ with a single argument, proving the aforementioned thesis: because a position that posits a plurality without necessity, is irrational. It is against the teaching of the philosophers, as is clear in the *Physics*. . . . For since nature does nothing in vain, when a few things suf-

> fice to save the appearances, it should always be posited ⟨rather than many things⟩. And just as when following natural reason, nothing is to be posited unless natural reason requires it, similarly, following faith, nothing is to be posited unless the truth of faith requires it. But it is neither by natural reason nor by the truth of faith that the aforesaid opinion posits the sacrament of the new law as effective cause of grace in the way explained above, as will be clear below. It is some necessity entirely fictional and superfluous to posit universally in the sacraments such a supernatural power, as in the water and in the words said, or to posit in the soul some disposition before the grace, which is a character or embellishment, because without such a necessity we can save all ⟨appearances⟩, as will be seen below. Therefore, the aforesaid opinion is irrational.[102]

D'Ailly's argument starts with the principle of parsimony: whenever something can be explained by fewer things without giving up any of the phenomena present, that explanation is to be preferred compared to the one that posits more things. D'Ailly applies this principle to Aquinas's explanation of sacramental causality; this explanation, as briefly described above, describes sacraments acting as dispositive causes, and thus posits a two-step causal process, the first part of which is brought about by the sacraments' proper power. According to d'Ailly, Aquinas's account violates the principle of parsimony, since the same grace can be explained without positing in the sacraments any proper power and causal efficacy whatsoever — as d'Ailly's own account of sacraments as *sine qua non* causes shows.[103]

102. *In Sent.* IV, q. 1, a. 1: "Arguo contra eam unica ratione, probando conclusionem predictam, quia illa positio est irrationabilis que ponit pluralitatem sine necessitatem. Nam hoc est contra doctrinam philosophorum [*sic*], ut patet primo *Physicorum*. . . . Quia enim natura nihil facit frustra semper ubi paucitas sufficit ad salvandum apparentias magis est ponenda. Et sicut sequendo rationem naturalem nihil est ponendum nisi quod ratio naturalis concludit, ita sequendo fidem nihil est ponendum nisi quod veritas fidei convincit. Sed predicta opinio nec ex ratione naturali nec ex veritate fidei cogitur ponere sacramenta legis nove esse causas effectivas gratie modo superius declarato, ut in sequentibus patebit. Hec est aliqua necessitas immo omnino fictio et superflutas ponere universaliter in sacramentis talem virtutem supernaturalem sicut in aqua vel in verbis prolatis, aut ponere in anima aliquam dispositionem previam gratie quae sit caracter vel ornatus, quia sine tali pluralitate possunt omnia salvari ut inferius apparebit. Igitur predicta opinio est irrationabilis, et per consequens conclusio vera" (Strasbourg ed., fol. 31va).

103. It should be noted that similar arguments against Aquinas can already be found in Scotus and Ockham.

The argument is interesting because although d'Ailly does not take the further step (Gabriel Biel arguably will, as will be shown in the next section), the same principle could be applied in non-sacramental cases as well. *If* we can save all the phenomena by positing no causal agency of created things, then it seems that the explanation that posits both God's causal power and the created things' causal power, is irrational if no further considerations are present.[104] Again, d'Ailly does not consider this position, even though — if the third reading of the previous quoted passage is the correct one — it is difficult to see how he would deny the antecedent of the conditional. In other words, he seems to be committed to the claim that it *could* be the case, with things and supposedly our experiences remaining the same, that God were the sole efficient cause in the world. But if so, it is not clear, once the principle of parsimony is applied to to sacramental or natural causality, how one can avoid *some sort of* occasionalism with respect to these causes.[105]

This all shows two things. First, that d'Ailly's position is not entirely clear here regarding the status of a *possible* occasionalist universe — that is, whether he thinks that it could be *our* universe right now or in the future, or some universe entirely different from ours from the start of creation. Second, if we adopt the former, stronger reading, it might seem that although d'Ailly was quite explicit about rejecting occasionalism regarding natural causes, at various points he had endorsed all the premises of an argument leading to it.

104. For some earlier thinkers, arguably for Aquinas, there *were* such further considerations. As we will see, however, perhaps by d'Ailly's and certainly by Biel's time, these did not play a significant role in reasonings about causes.

105. The 'some sort' is important here, because the 'occasionalist' label is too vague, including both *sine qua non* and accidental causality. D'Ailly's conclusion, explicit in case of the sacraments, is the former.

4.2.5 Summary

Although Pierre d'Ailly has for a long time been regarded as an occasionalist, he turns out to be much less original in his theory of divine concurrence than this label would suggest. His treatment of sacramental causation and most of his general considerations about efficient causes closely follow Ockham's treatment of the same.

Just as Ockham does, and perhaps even more, d'Ailly emphasizes the distinction between what is demonstrable strictly speaking and what we have good (but not demonstrative) reasons to assume to be true. Again, just as Ockham does, he makes a distinction between accidental, *sine qua non*, and proper efficient causes: while an accidental cause only happens to be present when the effect comes about (as in the example of the whiteness of the builder), and a *sine qua non* cause is a cause because a volitional agent has once decided that whenever it is present, the effect will be produced, a proper efficient cause acts by its nature. While sacraments are merely *sine qua non* causes of grace, ordinary causes in nature are efficient causes properly speaking. Consequently, just as in Ockham, the rejection of necessary connection does not entail the endorsement of occasionalism; while d'Ailly did reject necessary connection between natural causes and their effects, he maintained that created things have and efficaciously exercise causal powers.

Besides these similarities, I also pointed to a few passages where d'Ailly, even if not explicitly maintaining occasionalism, presents some arguments that might make him perhaps more a forerunner of occasionalism than his predecessors. These proposed arguments, although their intended meaning at some points remained unclear, with some further assumptions might eventually lead one to conclude a form of occasionalism

('sinequanonism'). As will be seen in the next section, Gabriel Biel will arguably endorse these further assumptions and the resulting theory.

4.3 GABRIEL BIEL

Biel's critical reception in general has mostly focused on his relationship to Luther, especially regarding the extent to which he can be regarded as a forerunner of the Reformation.[106] As far as his theory of causation and divine concurrence goes, Fred Ablondi and Aaron Simmons have recently argued that Biel, despite all appearances to the contrary, did not endorse occasionalism; that "Biel is best understood as giving an *occasionalist defense*... rather than an *occasionalist theodicy*."[107] I will return to this claim in section 4.3.3 below, but can provisionally say here that I will not entirely follow their interpretation. Biel's notion of *sine qua non* causation has also been examined by Dominik Perler,[108] whose reading of Biel is closer to the present one.

Just as in Ockham and especially in Pierre d'Ailly, Biel's most extended treatment of causation can be found in his discussion of the sacraments at the beginning of the fourth

106. See, for instance, Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology*; James E Biechler, "Gabriel Biel on Liberum Arbitrium: Prelude to Luther's De Servo Arbitrio," *The Thomist* 34, no. 1 (1970): 114–127; Richard P Desharnais, "Gabriel Biel: Last or Distinguished among the Schoolmen?," *International Studies in Philosophy* 10 (1978): 51–58; and Charles Morerod, "Le manque de clarté de Gabriel Biel et son impact sur la Réforme," *Nova et Vetera* 25, no. 3 (2000): 15–32.

107. Fred Ablondi and J Aaron Simmons, "Gabriel Biel and Occasionalism: Overcoming an Apparent Tension," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (2011): 160, emphasis in the original. Although I find Platinga's distinction somewhat difficult to apply in the present case (the distinction originally meant to highlight two different approaches to the evidential problem of evil), they seem to mean that although Biel examined the consistency of the occasionalist position, as well as the best arguments for it, he ended up neither affirming nor denying it.

108. Perler and Rudolph, *Occasionalismus*, 189–200.

book of his *Collectorium* (a commentary on the *Sentences*).[109] Biel divides the question into three articles: he starts out with some definitions (*notabilia*), then presents some theses (*conclusiones*), and closes with some objections and replies. This is important to keep in mind because although he returns to causation and the question of occasionalism in all of these, the implications of his discussion in the different contexts might be different.

I will start examining Biel's view by discussing his take on sacramental causation proper. Then I turn to his characterization of *sine qua non* causation in general, and close with some discussion on whether he can be regarded as an occasionalist. In my analysis I show that although Biel might have stopped short of explicitly affirming that God is the only causal agent (that is, affirming occasionalism), he eliminates the distinction between genuine and *sine qua non* causes, and the elimination of this distinction with some additional assumptions that Biel grants, does lead to such a view.

4.3.1 Sacraments as Causes

Biel's treatment of sacramental causation proper strongly resembles Ockham's and d'Ailly's treatment of the same. Biel, just as his predecessors, defines sacraments as "efficacious and certain sign[s] of grace,"[110] and defines causes as "that to the being of which the other follows; the thing, which when posited, some other thing is also posited in being, and if not posited, the other is not posited in the same way as it was posited before."[111] Biel also notes that according to these definitions as well as to all the authorities on the

109. *Coll.* IV, d. 1, p. 1, q. 1. Edition in Gabriel Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum: Libri quarti pars prima*.
110. *Coll.* IV, d. 1, p. 1, q. 1, a. 1: "signum efficax et certum" (Werbeck ed., 5).
111. Ibid.: "ad cuius esse sequitur aliud; res, qua posita in esse, aliqua alia res ponitur in esse et qua non posita, aliud non ponitur eo modo quo ponitur" (Werbeck ed., 14).

subject, sacraments are causes in the following sense: God has so instituted them that whenever they are posited in a well-disposed recipient, grace is produced. Biel devotes the majority of his subsequent discussion to argue that although sacraments are causes in this sense, nevertheless they are *not* causes in the sense in which for instance Aquinas had thought them to be. I will not consider all of Biel's arguments here, but only three of them that he either explicitly applies not only to Aquinas's theory of sacramental causation but of divine concurrence in general, or those that reveal some more general spect of Biel's understanding of the same. Even in these arguments, Biel borrows heavily from Scotus's, Ockham's, and d'Ailly's arguments for the same.[112]

Recall that for Aquinas, sacraments are dispositive instrumental causes of grace, bringing about an ornament or character of the soul which is necessary to receive the grace created in it by God. Moreover, even though sacraments are instrumental causes, they possess some special power in virtue of which they bring about their effects as instruments.[113] Biel disagrees with both of these claims.

First, Biel notes that the ornament of the soul that according to Aquinas the sacrament is supposed to produce, is superfluous for the conferral of grace. It is superfluous since God, being omnipotent, can certainly effect grace in the soul without any disposing conditions, as for instance it happened with some Old Testament figures. Since God can directly infuse grace in the soul without the sacraments first producing anything, positing this production violates the principle of parsimony.[114]

The principle of parsimony is explicitly invoked in another argument as well, which is directed against Aquinas's claim that sacraments act by their power. The argument in Biel's formulation is almost verbatim the same as in d'Ailly's:

112. For a detailed examination of the earlier arguments, see Adams, "Powerless Causes."
113. See section 4.2.2 above.
114. *Coll.* IV, d. 1, q. 1, a. 2 (Werbeck ed., 21–22).

> Every opinion that posits plurality without necessity is rather irrational and should be rejected; but such is this opinion, positing an ornament and power in the sacraments in the aforesaid way; therefore, it is irrational. The major is proved by Aristotle, first book of the *Physics*. . . . Therefore, just as following natural reason nothing should be posited unless natural reason concludes it, in the same way, in matters of faith, nothing should be posited unless the truth of faith or the authority of Scripture or the determination of the church or a certain argument requires it. . . . To the positing of this plurality of ornament and power in the sacraments in the aforesaid way, there is no necessity or natural argument requiring it, nor authority of Scripture when understood correctly affirming it, nor compelling determination of the church. . . . Hence it seems pure fiction, especially in the sacrament of the Eucharist, to posit in the species of the bread some ornament or preceding disposition, and a power in them to the transubstantiation of the bread, which is instituted only by the divine power.[115]

In other words, since the power in the sacraments that Aquinas's account would posit can be eliminated without sacrificing the efficacy of the sacraments — which efficacy, according to Biel, is entirely due to God's production of grace — these sacramental powers should not be posited.

These arguments from parsimony are interesting in the present context for at least two reasons. First, as was mentioned above in connection to d'Ailly, it is difficult to see what would make a salient difference between sacramental and natural efficient causation in such a way that while the principle is plausibly applied in the former case, it would not similarly be applied in the latter. Thus, whether or not Biel explicitly considers parsimony reasons in natural causation, the question at least arises why we need to

115. *Coll.* IV, d. 1, p. 1, q. 1, a. 2: "Omnis opinio, quae ponit pluralitatem sine necessitates, est penitus irrationabilis et reprobanda; sed talis est haec opinio ponens ornatum et virtutem in sacramentis modo dicto; ergo est irrationabilis. Maior probatur per Philosophum I Physicorum. . . . Sicut ergo sequendo rationem naturalem nihil est ponendum nisi quod ratio naturalis concludit, ita in credibilibus nihil est ponendum nisi quod fidei veritas aut Scripturae auctoritas vel ecclesiae determinatio aut certa ratio convincit. . . . Ad ponendum hanc pluralitatem ornatus et virtutis in sacramentis modo dicto nulla est necessitas aut ratio naturalis convincens neque Scripturae auctoritas bene intellecta affirmans nec determinatio ecclesiae compellens. . . . Unde videtur pura fictio, et maxime in sacramento eucharistiae, ponere in speciebus panis quendam ornatum vel dispositionem praeviam et in eis virtutem ad transsubstantiationem panis, quae sit sola virtute divine instituta" (Werbeck ed., 26).

posit, according to him, causal powers in ordinary things if we can account for everything without them.

Second, these parsimony arguments also point to a notable difference between Aquinas's and Biel's general approach to the problem at hand. While in Aquinas, parsimony reasons play almost no role in the discussions of either sacramental or natural causation but fittingness arguments abound, by Biel's time we can find hardly any fittingness arguments and arguments from parsimony seem to take precedence. Although I am not attempting to draw any far-reaching conclusions from this fact alone, it highlights an interesting difference in approach between the two thinkers.

Besides the parsimony problems, Biel also raises a more general worry about Aquinas's account. In particular, he calls attention to a problem with Aquinas's view on instrumental causation, which played a role both in his account of sacramental causation and of divine concurrence in general (see section 2.1.2 above).

Recall that according to Aquinas, an instrumental cause performs a double action: first, it acts according to its own proper power, and second, it also acts according to the power of the principal cause — even if the two effects are materially the same. Biel seems to suggest — again, following Scotus[116] — that Aquinas's conception is mistaken, since the instrumental cause does not act by its own proper power at all.

What happens, according to Biel, in instrumental causation is that the principal cause has two effects: the first one is to move the instrument, and the second one is to bring about the effect itself. Thus, for instance, while Aquinas maintains that when I write with a pen, the pen acts by its own power in bringing about the colored strokes while it acts by me in bringing about the meaningful sentence, according to Biel, it is only I who

116. Cf. *Ord.* IV, d. 6, q. 5, a. 8.

is acting here: first by moving the pen and second by bringing about the meaningful sentence.[117]

Applied to the sacraments, all this means is that the sacraments do not act as instrumental causes by their proper power but merely by the power of God, and, consequently, that they have no proper disposing effects on their own. And although Biel does not make the further claim here, it seems that if the same critique is applied to Aquinas's theory of divine concurrence, it would follow that secondary causes, which Aquinas regards as instrumental causes, do not act by their natures and proper powers at all but only by the power of God — a conclusion which Aquinas would surely reject.

Based on these and some other considerations, Biel concludes that sacraments are neither disposing nor proper instrumental causes of grace but *sine qua non* causes. More precisely, he maintains that they are *sine qua non* instrumental causes of grace, in the following sense: they act in virtue of a higher agent, and they do not have any intrinsic proper form by which they attain the effect. But in order to see some of the details here, and to consider how this all relates to created causation in general, I turn now to Biel's account of *sine qua non* causation.

4.3.2 Causes, Sine qua non and Proper

As was quoted earlier, Biel defines 'cause' as "that to the being of which the other follows; the thing, which when posited, some other thing is also posited in being, and if not posited, the other is not posited in the same way as it was posited before."[118] I also noted that this is (almost) the very same definition that Ockham gave (definition EC).

117. *Coll.* IV, d. 1, p. 1, q. 1, a. 2, conclusio 4 (Werbeck ed., 25).
118. See note 111 above.

But while Ockham went on to show that this definition does not capture *entirely* what a real cause is (that is, something that acts *ex natura rei*), Biel argues that every part of this definition is necessary and altogether sufficient for characterizing causation. In other words, Biel will argue for what I will call the 'No Distinction Thesis' (NDT):

> **(NDT).** There is no distinction between proper and *sine qua non* causes, since both act only by the divine will.

This is an unusual claim; but before discussing it, it is worth looking at some more usual aspects of Biel's account.

Similarly to Ockham and d'Ailly, Biel thinks that the relation between causes and effects is contingent. Although he does not explicitly emphasize this claim (supposedly because, as was seen above, it was not a contentious one), the claim appears when he points out that the last clause of EC ("if not posited, the other is not posited in the same way...") is needed in the definition in order to distinguish causes from simultaneous effects. For instance, suppose that c always produces e_1 and e_2 simultaneously, and thus it is true that when e_1 is posited, e_2 is also posited. But if this is the case, what is the difference between the $e_2 - c$ relation and the $e_1 - e_1$ relation? As Biel notes, one might say that what distinguishes the $e_2 - c$ relation from the $e_2 - e_1$ relation is that the former is necessary while the latter is merely accidental. But as Biel remarks here, this is not an acceptable solution, since just as the $e_2 - e_1$ relation, the $e_2 - c$ relation is also contingent, as can be seen from the example of Nebuchadnezzar's fire, which just as Ockham and d'Ailly, Biel also cites.[119]

As was seen above in connection to d'Ailly, the contingency claim alone implies nothing with regard to the NDT or to the elimination of proper efficient causes. Biel, however,

119. *Coll.* IV, d. 1, p. 1, q. 1, a. 1: "Non ad positionem ignis sequitur necessario calor vel combustio, ut patet de pueris in camino ignis. Unde omnis effectus pure contingenter sequitur ex causa secunda" (Werbeck ed., 14).

formulates another claim that will more directly lead to it: as he argues, there is nothing that would distinguish relation $e_2 - c$ above from relation $e_2 - e_1$ when considered in themselves, since there is nothing "happening" in one that is not happening in the other. In Biel's words,

> We also should not imagine that there is some medium between the immediate cause and the effect, in virtue of which it is said to cause, or that this cause transfers something from itself to the effect or something similar. But to cause is this: that to the mere presence of a thing another thing starts to exist or be.[120]

What Biel seems to be denying here is that there would be anything passing from the cause to the effect in a causal series. If this is indeed Biel's claim, it is unusual; on most medieval accounts, the cause makes the effect more actual, which involves transferring something to the recipient, even if this transfer is not necessarily to be imagined as a physical exchange of some kind of baggages. Thus, for Biel it seems that there is nothing intrinsic to the causal relation that would distinguish it from the correlation of, say, simultaneous effects, and that is why the last clause of definition EC is indeed necessary. (For even if e_1 and e_2 are simultaneous effects of c, it is *not* true that e_2 could not be posited in the same way if we removed e_1, while it *is* true that it could not be posited in the same way if we removed c.)

After these clarificatory remarks about definition EC, Biel turns explicitly to defend the NDT. He cites Ockham's standard distinction between *sine qua non* and genuine causes, and Peter of Palude's assimilation of the former to accidental causes,[121] and argues that Ockham's distinction is unfounded. It is not unfounded because Peter of

120. *Coll.* IV, d. 1, p. 1, q. 1, a. 1: "Nec est imaginandum quod inter causam immediatam et effectum sit aliquod medium, ratione cuius diceretur causare, aut quod ipsa causa aliquid ex se transfundat in effectum aut huiusmodi. Sed causare est ad nudam praesentiam rei aliam rem incipere vel esse" (Werbeck ed., 15).

121. In which Peter of Palude, again, follows Aquinas, as was seen above.

Palude is right, but unfounded because there is no distinction between *sine qua non* and proper causes. Biel puts forward multiple arguments for the NDT; the first is an argument from no necessary connection (in the sense specified below); the second is an argument from infinite regress. He also considers and rejects the standard medieval objection against occasionalism, the objection from sense experience.

No Necessary Connection

The first of Biel's argument relies on the contingency of the cause-effect relation; the argument is interesting because as was seen above, some form of contingency was accepted by earlier thinkers as well for whom it did not lead to Biel's conclusion. I will return to what precisely does the work in Biel's argument below. The argument is rather long, but is worth quoting in its entirety since it points to several characteristics of Biel's account of secondary causes:

> The power to cause some effect is in the first cause fully and sufficiently, and is in no created thing fully and sufficiently, unless inasmuch as the first cause... freely and contingently willed and determined himself that to the presence of this thing he will produce that effect. For instance: that fire or heat is the cause of heat, is for this reason, that God determined himself so that to the presence of the heat he wills to produce the heat in the other subject. Thus, the heat is not a cause of heat by any other power existing in it.... And if God did not determine it this way, then the same heat... would be heat and would not be the cause of heat. Whence God produces nothing by the secondary cause that he does not produce principally in the same way and not less as if only he produced it.... And therefore this division of causes into proper and *sine qua non* causes, does not seem to hold.... This argument seems to me strong and quite probably concluding that, if God determined himself that from this day, to the utterance of some words that are uttered by anyone, he would will to give rain, then those words just uttered would be the proper causes of rain, which God produced to their utterance, just the same way as heat is the cause of heat.[122]

122. *Coll.* IV, d. 1, p. 1, q. 1, a. 1, notabile 3: "Virtus causandi effectum quemcumque est plene et suffi-

Thus, Biel seems to argue this way:

1. No creature has by itself sufficient power to produce an effect unless by God's will.
2. Thus, when we say that fire produces heat, it is only because God determined that there be a conjunction between the fire present and the production of heat.
3. This production of heat by God is the same as if the fire had not even been there.
4. Therefore, the distinction between *sine qua non* and proper causes does not hold.
5. Consequently, if God had determined to produce rain when certain words are uttered, this utterance would be the cause of rain just as properly as the fire is now the cause of heat.

I am going to elaborate on each of these claims in turn.

First, Biel notes that no created thing is sufficient to bring about another thing unless by God's will. As was seen above, this claim in itself is not new to Biel; indeed, Aquinas already pointed it out in his argument for the claim that created causes are instrumental causes of God. What is novel in Biel is how he uses this claim in the rest of the argument to establish the NDT.

Second, connected to this, Biel thinks that the conjunction between a cause and its proper effect is solely determined by God. This claim is similar to d'Ailly's claim above (4.2.4), but as was pointed out regarding d'Ailly's account, it is also somewhat ambiguous. It is one thing to say that it is by God's will that we live in a world where secondary causes produce their effects. It is another thing to say that for any time and

---

cienter in prima causa et in nulla re creata sufficienter et plene, nisi quatenus ipsa causa prima... libere et contingenter voluit et se determinavit, quod ad praesentiam talis rei vult producere talem effectum. Gratia exempli: Quod ignis sive calor est causa caloris, ex eo est, quia determinavit se Deus, quod ad praesentiam caloris vult producere calorem in alio subiecto. Nec sic calor habet esse causam caloris per aliquam aliam virtutem sibi inexistentem.... Et si non sic determinasset ⟨Deus⟩, calor idem... esset calor et non esset causa caloris. Unde Deus nihil facit per causam secundam, quin illud faciat per seipsum aeque principaliter et non minus quam si solus faceret.... Et ideo illa distinctio causae in causam proprie et causam sine qua non non videtur subsistere.... Illa ratio videtur mihi fortis et satis probabiliter concludere quod, si Deus determinaret se, quod ab hac die ad prolationem alicuius verbi a quocumque prolati velit dare pluviam, verbum illud iam prolatum proprie esset causa pluviae ad eius prolationem a Deo causatae sicut calor est causa caloris" (Werbeck ed., 16–17).

any secondary cause, when that secondary causes produces its effect, it produces it by God's will. And it is yet another thing to say that it is by God's will that God produces the effect whenever a secondary cause is present. As was shown above, d'Ailly's meaning is most probably the first of these. Biel's meaning is possibly the second or third.

With this, Biel also claims that we experience the correlation of secondary causes and their effects because God had decided that whenever one is present, the other will be produced. Thus, although fire has no power to bring about heat unless by God's decree, by God's decree, heat is produced whenever and only when fire is present — which is sufficient for fire to be called a cause, since it fulfills definition EC. God's decision to correlate fire with heat is a contingent one: the fire could remain the very same fire, while "producing" water, if God were to decide that way.

As was also mentioned above in connection to d'Ailly, the contingent relation between a thing and its causal powers that this claim presupposes would not have been granted by many earlier authors, including Aquinas: for instance, when God brings about coolness in spite of Nebuchadnezzar's fire burning, according to these authors it is a special kind of miracle that by definition is against the thing's own nature and thus cannot become its proper effect.[123] This seems to be the kind of necessary connection (i.e., the necessary connection between a thing and its nature and proper effects), which if denied, enables someone like Biel to run the "no necessary connection" argument.[124]

Third, Biel also notes explicitly, even though it was already present in his earlier discussion, that God's production of heat when the fire is present and his production of it when the fire is absent, is the same. Thus, it is not to be imagined that fire

123. Indeed, it seems that Biel would just abandon the various distinctions between miracles; since there is no *nature* of things with their proper powers, the distinctions based on it are not helpful in this context.

124. For another, early modern version of the "no necessary connection" argument, see Nadler, "'No Necessary Connection'," who surprisingly leaves Biel out of the Al-Ghazali–Autrecourt–Malebranche–Hume lineage.

somehow "helps" God to bring about the heat; the only relevant difference between the production of heat in the presence and absence of fire is that while the former accords with God's present decree, the latter does not. Of course, as was seen earlier, this is in sharp contrast with for instance Aquinas's and Giles's account, according to whom even though God *could* produce every secondary effect by himself, he does not do so when he acts through secondary causes. It is also in sharp contrast with Ockham's analogy of two men carrying a ten pound weight while neither of them being superfluous (section 4.1.3 above).

Fourth, Biel concludes from the above that the common distinction between proper and *sine qua non* efficient causes is unfounded. Recall here that according to the distinction, a proper cause has its effect *ex natura rei*, while a *sine qua non* cause has it merely by the will of another. But, as was seen in (2) above, Biel has already argued that fire is the cause of heat merely by the will of God, and the same is true of every natural cause.

Finally, fifth, as an illustration of all this, Biel presents a quite interesting example. God could decide from tomorrow that whenever someone utters the sentence 'rain shall fall,' God produces rain and so it does fall; and when no one utters the sentence 'rain shall fall,' then God does not produce rain and so it does not fall. In this case, the utterance meets definition EC: when it is posited, so is the effect, and when it is not posited, the effect is not posited either. Since according to Biel, there is nothing more to proper efficient causes than what this definition describes, the utterance 'rain shall fall' will be an efficient cause of rain in the very same way as fire is now the efficient cause of heat.

All in all, Biel thinks that the NDT is true, that is, there is no intrinsic difference between proper causes and a *sine qua non* causes. What might distinguish them —

and justify the use of two terms even though what they signify is the same — is their different connotation of the timing of God's decree. On the one hand, 'c_1 is the proper cause of e' connotes that God decreed at the creation of the world that e would follow whenever c_1 is present; on the other hand, 'c_2 is a *sine qua non* cause of e' connotes that God's decree happened sometime later.

Argument from Infinite Regress

Biel's second argument for the NDT occurs in the third article of the text, which contains objections both to his treatment of sacraments proper and to his treatment of causation in general. The objections consist of several arguments and examples that purport to refute his claims. In particular, the third objection is directed against NDT, and against Biel's further claim that therefore the sacrament of the Eucharist is a cause of grace in the very same sense as fire is the cause of heat. There are three arguments (*instantiae*) advanced by the objector, each of which is answered by Biel in turn. The second one of these is interesting because in his response, Biel provides a further argument for the original thesis.

According to the objection, there is an important difference between a proper cause and a sacrament, since the former "has in it a natural power by which it produces the effect,"[125] while the latter does not, as has been argued before. In short, while proper causes act by their proper powers, sacraments do not and thus the NDT fails. (This objection, of course, is not more than a restatement of Ockham's and d'Ailly's position.)

For his response, Biel points out that the first conjunct of the claim is false, that is, it is not the case that things act by their natures, strictly speaking. As Biel argues,

125. *Coll.* IV, d. 1, p. 1, q. 1, a. 3: "Causa anturalis habet in se virtutem naturalem, per quam producit effectum" (Werbeck ed., 32).

> Not every natural cause acts by the power that exists in it and really distinct from it. Which I show: Take (as example for a cause) heat A. Now I ask whether A, when heats, acts by itself or by some power added to it. If the first, then we have what we wanted to show ⟨i.e., there is no power by which the heat acts⟩. If the second, then I ask about that power, whether it acts by itself or by something else. And thus there will be a regress to infinity of actually existing things, which is impossible, or there will be a power that acts by itself and not by something added to it. And that will be the most proper cause. Therefore, there is no difference ⟨between proper and *sine qua non* causes⟩.[126]

Biel's argument aims to show that it is *not* the case that all natural proper causes act by their powers that are distinct from them, since if we regard these powers themselves as proper causes, then the same question could be asked about them as before (i.e., the question in virtue of what they act). This either leads to an infinite regress or to something that acts by its own — and *that* power will be the very same as a *sine qua non* cause.

The argument is noteworthy because Biel does not seem to take into account the distinction, usual in earlier authors, between *id quod* and *id quo* causes: the former would stand for the fire while the latter for its heating power. Since traditionally the two were not causes in the very same sense, the regress would not be generated. It also shows how Biel differs from earlier authors in his understanding of causal powers, which was manifest in his first argument for the NDT as well. While most earlier thinkers would regard the power of fire as something that is part of or at least strongly related to the fire's essence, the target of Biel's argument assumes that powers are some entities added to the already existing thing (*virtutes superadditae*). As Biel argues, since there

126. Ibid.: "Non omnis causa naturalis agit per virtutem sibi inexistentem a se realiter distinctam. Quod probo: Signo unam (exempli causa) A calorem. Quaero, an A calefaciendo agat per se vel per virtutem superadditam. Si primum, habetur propositum, quod agens naturale non agit per virtutem sibi inexistentem. Si secundum, quaero de illa virtute, utrum agat per se vel per aliam. Et erit sic processus in infinitum rerum actu existentium, quod est impossibile, aut dabitur una virtus, quae seipsa, non per superadditam agit. Et illa erit propriissima causa. Ergo illa differentia nulla" (Werbeck ed., 32).

is no significant ontological difference between the thing and its superadded power, it is meaningful to ask the same question about their action that has already been asked about the action of the object itself, generating the regress. Therefore, as Biel concludes, it cannot be a distinguishing mark of proper causes that they act by their powers, and thus the objection against the NDT fails.

Sense Experience

As was seen especially in chapter 2 above, arguments against occasionalism often relied on reports of sense experience. According to most medieval authors, we do experience causation in the world: when you see a fire crackling in the fireplace, your vision is caused by the fire. Or when you approach the fire and feel its warmth, it is the warmth *of* the fire that you feel — which could not be unless the fire caused it. It is not surprising therefore that one of the objections considered by Biel against the NDT refers to the fact that we do experience that things act by their powers (which would mean that we also experience that things acting in the world are not mere *sine qua non* causes).

The context in which Biel discusses this issue is not directly tied to an objection from sense experience but to an objection to the thesis (used in one of Biel's arguments) that no creature can create, that is, produce something *ex nihilo*. The objector points out that there are, in fact, cases where a creature seems to create, as the following example shows. The example was already seen in connection to Ockham above (section 4.1.4), and is about the case of a sacrament in a seemingly normal causal interaction; as the objector puts it,

> It seems that even now in fact a fire produces heat without a subject, and, consequently, creates. The antecedent is clear from the sacrament of the

> altar. If fire is applied to the consecrated chalice, it produces heat, as it appears to the senses, and this heat is not in a subject.[127]

Thus, according to the objection, when the fire heats up the consecrated chalice with the transubstantiated Eucharistic wine in it, the heat that the wine seems to receive from the fire is not, strictly speaking, in a subject (since the wine is not there, and Christ's body is not disposed to receive the heat). As this shows, even regular fire can bring about heat without a subject.

Biel responds to the objection by denying the reliability of sense experience in such scenarios, and affirming instead that no creature can create, even by God's absolute power — and in this, he agrees with virtually all medieval thinkers (with perhaps the exception of d'Ailly). But the remarkable point about this example is that it seems to cast doubt on the reliability of sense experience regarding the causal relation in general. As in this case, even though it *seems* that the heat was produced by the fire, while we know that it was not so produced but was produced by God alone, it can be similarly argued that the senses do not reliably inform us about the origin of the causal relation *in general*. And this seems to be indeed Biel's point, which he summarizes again in his conclusion:

> To the senses it appears that to the presence of the fire heat follows. And we do not deny this. But whether that heat follows by the action of the fire or by that of God alone, does not appear to the senses. And because of this, the one who denies the action of the fire, does not deny anything that appears to the senses.[128]

127. *Coll.* IV, d. 1, p. 1, q. 1, a. 3: "Videtur quod etiam nunc de facto ignis producit calorem sine subiecto, et per consequens creat. Antecedens patet in sacramento altaris. Nam si ignis applicatur calici consecrato, producit calorem, ut patet ad sensum, et iste calor non est in subiecto" (Werbeck ed., 30).

128. *Coll.* IV, d. 1, p. 1, q. 1, a. 3: "Ad sensum apparet quod ad presentiam ignis incipit esse calor. Et hoc non negatur. Sed an ille calor incipiat per actionem ignis vel solius Dei, non apparet ad sensum. Et per hoc negans actionem ignis nihil negat apparens ad sensum" (Werbeck ed., 31).

Thus, Biel uses the example of the Eucharistic chalice and the fire to establish that sense experience is not a reliable guide with regard to determining where a productive action came from, even if the senses may be reliable with regard to their proper objects (like color and heat). Consequently, as Biel can point out, all arguments against the NDT that rely on sense experience, fail: by sense experience, we can quite reliably determine *sine qua non* causes, but cannot reliably determine anything more.

Although Biel was certainly not the first one to call attention to the limited scope of sense experience as long as efficient causes are concerned — a hundred years earlier Autrecourt pointed out something similar, as was briefly discussed above, and even Ockham held that we do not have intuitive cognition of the cause-effect relation — Biel's text seems to be the first one where this argument appears in the context of the NDT.

4.3.3 Biel and Occasionalism

But did Biel ultimately endorse occasionalism? Fred Ablondi and Aaron Simmons have recently argued that Biel, even though he presents a good case for the view, stopped short of actually endorsing it. They think that "Biel clearly concludes his discussion of causation by asserting that natural causes are causes proper,"[129] and that he merely provided a "defense" and not a "theodicy" of occasionalism (in Platinga's sense). It seems, however, that the evidence they cite for this claim leaves the question undecided.

Although Ablondi and Simmons do not distinguish these issues, there seem to be two questions worth addressing here: first, whether the NDT implies occasionalism, and

129. Ablondi and Simmons, "Gabriel Biel and Occasionalism," 166.

second, whether Biel endorsed the NDT. My response will be rather conjectural but affirmative for both of these questions.

First, it should be noted here that the NDT is not identical to occasionalism, and whether Biel subscribes to this latter might seem at least undetermined in the above texts. According to occasionalism, what happens in a $c-e$ causal scenario is that when c is present, God produces e, and perhaps whenever c is present, he always produces e by his free decree. On the other hand, what happens for the NDT view is that when or whenever c is present, God decides that e will be produced — either by c or by God himself. Although occasionalism and the NDT view agree in that whether c will be followed by e or some completely different effect is up to God's free will at each time, nevertheless, they may disagree in who does the producing. Returning to Biel, his argument served to establish merely the NDT view, as was seen above; in principle, it could be imagined that in his example, the utterance 'rain shall fall' would, by God's decree, acquire a new causal power to produce rain, and thus it would be a *sine qua non* but still efficient cause of rain falling.

Although this reading would save Biel from accepting occasionalism, it is not likely to be correct. In an earlier quoted passage, for instance, Biel says that "God determined himself so that to the presence of the heat *he wills to produce the heat* in the other subject."[130] Although the sentence, again, does not explicitly say that God actually *produces* the heat, only that he *wills* the producing, its active construction does seem to suggest that the subject of the producing is God.

Moreover, as was also seen above, Biel seems to hold that there are neither added nor inherent causal powers of things. First, as is clear in his argument from infinite regress, he thinks that things do not have powers distinct from them: as he notes, "That

130. See note 122 above.

a secondary cause is the cause of a thing is not by some natural property added to it."[131] This means, however, that the utterance 'rain shall fall,' when it becomes indeed followed by rain by God's decree, cannot acquire a new causal power that was not in it before, since there are no such causal powers. On the other hand, it also seems that on his view, these powers cannot be parts of the things either. As Biel says, when fire starts producing coldness by God's decree, the form of the fire remains the same.[132] This means, however, that fire cannot produce cold by some acquired new internal constituent, because it does not change. But if Biel thinks that there are neither added nor inherent causal powers of things, then it is difficult to see how they could genuinely act.

If this is correct, then even though Biel often cites d'Ailly to show that his own position is nothing more than what his predecessor has already claimed, this is not entirely true. While they agree in claiming that it is only by the divine will that to the presence of the fire heat follows, for d'Ailly, the divine will determines that the fire will bring about the heat, while for Biel, it determines that God himself will do it.

The second question concerns whether Biel ultimately endorses the NDT view, and this is where my reading differs from Ablondi's and Simmons's. It is true that Biel himself is rather cautious after defending the NDT. For instance, he notes that

> These I do not write as asserting anything, but merely as rehearsing an argument, to give occasion to the doctors to occupy themselves, whose information in these matters I ask and expect.[133]

Moreover, he offers a way to reconcile the usual talk of the doctors with the theory he just proposed (with both the NDT in general and the application of it to the sacraments

131. *Coll.* IV, d. 1, p. 1, q. 1, a. 1: "Quod causa secunda est causa rei, non habet ex aliqua naturali proprietate superaddita" (Werbeck ed., 18).
132. *Coll.* IV, d. 1, p. 1, q. 1, a. 3: "Potest enim ordinare Deus quod ad praesentiam ignis produceretur frigiditas in subiecto approximato, manente forma ignis" (Werbeck ed., 30).
133. *Coll.* IV, d. 1, p. 1, q. 1, a. 3: "Haec non scribo quicquam asserendo, sed tantum recitando, occasionem dare cupiens doctoribus, quorum in his informationem peto et exspecto" (Werbeck ed., 36).

in particular). Indeed, he notes that "⟨my opinion⟩ does not depart from the way the doctors speak."[134]

But does this mean that he did not positively endorse the NDT, after all? Although Ablondi and Simmons argue that the answer is 'yes,' their thesis remains unconvincing for at least two reasons.

First, Biel seems to express no concerns with any specific part of the argument he presented for the NDT; on the contrary, he repeats multiple times that despite the usual initial reactions, the NDT is indeed a plausible theory. Thus, having no evidence for the contrary apart from the above quoted cautionary remark, I see no reason to question the seriousness of Biel's argued position.

Second, perhaps more importantly, it is worth looking at *why* Biel thinks that his opinion does not depart from the sayings of the others. In his explanation, he claims that the difference between his and the doctors' position is merely a verbal one, and the fact that there is no *in re* distinction between proper and *sine qua non* causes does not mean that their *quid nominis* definitions could not be distinct. (With an anachronistic example, 'the numbers that are divisible by 3' and the 'numbers whose sum of digits is divisible by 3' are the very same numbers, but we can still have two different *quid nominis* definitions of them based on these different characterizations.)

Thus, Biel elaborates, one might maintain, if he wills, that sacraments are causes merely *sine qua non* while natural causes are proper efficient causes, even if the two do not really differ — the professors, according to Biel, maintained this truly "because it was pleasing to the magisters to talk in this way and the signification of the term is taken from the usage in speaking; for the terms are used *ad placitum*."[135]

134. Ibid.: "interim non recedens a communi modo loquendi doctorum" (Werbeck ed., 36).
135. *Coll.* IV, d. 1, p. 1, q. 1, a. 3: "quia magistris placuit sic loqui et ex loquendi usu trahitur significatio termini; sunt enim termini ad placitum utentium" (Werbeck ed., 36).

Giving *quid nominis* definitions is easy since it only describes how we use a term. Thus, Biel argues, one might say that, on the one hand, efficient causes are proper as long as God decreed to produce their effects right when they were created; thus, God decreed to produce heat when fire is present when he first created fire, and this decree has not changed. On the other hand, one might say that causes are *sine qua non* insofar as God did *not* decree at their creation what effect he will produce when the cause is present, but only decreed it later. Thus, God did not decree at the creation of water and certain uttered words that grace will be produced, since it was not produced before the sacrament of Baptism was instituted. But the decree was made at the institution of the sacrament, after which water and the uttered words "act" in the same way as if they were proper efficient causes.

All in all, it seems that Biel did little to genuinely reconcile his position with that of the doctors; saying that he does not disagree with others because everyone uses the terms however they like, is not a strong argument for agreement. Moreover, Ablondi and Simmons discard the idea of Biel's being merely cautious on the ground that "in claiming the sacraments are merely *sine qua non* causes, Biel is very much outside the mainstream" already.[136] As was seen above, however, this is not entirely true; regarding sacraments as merely *sine qua non* causes was the mainstream nominalist way of dealing with sacramental causality, originating perhaps from Duns Scotus and certainly present in both Ockham and Pierre d'Ailly. It seems therefore that Biel's text alone is insufficient to establish that he did not subscribe to the view argued for here, that is, to the elimination of the distinction between proper and *sine qua non* causes.

136. Ablondi and Simmons, "Gabriel Biel and Occasionalism," 167.

4.3.4 Summary

Although there has been some attempts recently to show that Biel did not endorse occasionalism, I showed in this section that this cannot be established with certainty from his text. In his discussion of sacramental causation, Biel formulates and defends the thesis that there is no distinction between proper and *sine qua non* causes. Although he cites Ockham and d'Ailly often, his conclusion is closer to occasionalism than either of his predecessors'. His starting point is indeed Ockham's definition of a 'cause,' but by his argument from infinite regress and questioning the reliability of sense experience in cause-effect scenarios, he arrives at the explicit endorsement of the thesis that created beings are mere *sine qua non* causes. Given his other claims about causal powers — that there is neither additional nor inherent causal power in a thing — this seems to imply that creatures do not bring about anything as a contribution to the effect of a secondary cause. With this, Biel seems to be among the first ones to maintain some form of occasionalism in the West regarding created causes. Although Biel's influence on the early modern discussion of the subject is still mostly unstudied, it could be an exciting area for further research on early modern occasionalism.

4.4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I looked at a debate on sacramental causation that at the same time had some broader implications concerning the nature of efficient causation and divine concurrence. Although the authors considered here were not contemporaries, as I hope

to have shown, their views can still be regarded as constituting a rather continuous development of some interrelated subjects.

First, both Ockham and d'Ailly (and, to a lesser extent, Biel) emphasized that we have to distinguish questions about demonstrability and questions about knowledge and truth. Both Ockham and d'Ailly maintained that we cannot demonstrably know efficient causal relations, nevertheless those relations exist and we can even know about them by abstractive reasoning. Failing to recognize this distinction may have led some to interpret both Ockham and d'Ailly as occasionalists, even though they explicitly rejected the view.

Second, we have seen that the preliminary definition of efficient causes was the same in these three authors, even though they went on to amend the definition in different ways. Ockham and d'Ailly thought that "that which if posited the other one is posited, etc." gives only a preliminary definition of efficient causes, and if the efficient cause is a proper efficient cause, it also acts by its own nature. Biel, by contrast, thought that the definition is altogether necessary and sufficient for defining causes.

Connected to this, the three authors were all concerned with the difference (or the lack thereof) between *sine qua non* and proper efficient causes, usually considered in the context of sacramental causation. The main question was whether there is a difference between how, for instance, baptismal water produces grace in the recipient, and how fire produces heat in a nearby patient. Ockham and d'Ailly agreed that the difference is significant: *sine qua non* causes, such as the baptismal water in this case, do not act by their own proper power but merely by the power of a higher cause, while proper efficient causes such as fire do act by their own proper power, which is directed to bring about a proper effect. Although d'Ailly arguably points toward eliminating this distinction, the step is only made by Biel who explicitly argues that all created causes are *sine qua non* causes, arguably endorsing thereby a form of occasionalism.

The three authors' general approach to the question also uncovered some mostly implicit assumptions of earlier accounts regarding the nature of necessary connection, causal powers, and methods of argumentation. Thus, as was pointed out, while most earlier authors would agree that causes and effects are only contingently related, most of these authors would deny that the relation between a thing and its nature and causal powers is also contingent. D'Ailly arguably at least considers such a contingent relation between things and their powers, while Biel explicitly assumes it in his argument. Also, while parsimony considerations played little role in most earlier accounts, in Ockham, d'Ailly, and Biel this role becomes more and more prominent.

BRIEF CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the very beginning I said that there are three upshots of this dissertation: one historical, one systematic, and one methodological. It is time to briefly substantiate these three points now, as I hope by this point to have done enough to warrant them.

The most obvious result of this work is indubitably historical: I presented three debates on divine concurrence, all taking place during the Middle Ages, roughly between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries. As I mentioned earlier, the literature on this aspect of medieval philosophy is scarce, and thus apart from the occasional interpretative debates that I signaled when dealing with the individual authors, the main result is a presentation and analysis of some theories that although mostly neglected in the contemporary literature, were meant to be a crucial part of medieval theories of causation in particular and of both metaphysics and philosophy of religion in general.

In Chapter 2, I considered how Aquinas, Giles, Durand of St.-Pourçain, and Peter of Palude dealt with the problem of plausibly maintaining that both God and the secondary agent are immediately active in every operation of creatures. As I showed, although both Aquinas and Giles maintain that God is immediately active in every operation of creatures, their understanding of this activity differ. While Aquinas's most plausible model of divine concurrence seems to be in terms of principal and instrumental causes, which allows for God acting — as a principal agent — with different individual causes, bringing about different individual effects, Giles argued that God's concurrence is completely general and only individuated by the individual receptacles of this concurrence. Durand,

who knew both Aquinas's and Giles's position quite well, argued that neither of them is satisfactory, given that they cannot account for the numerical sameness or difference of God's and the secondary agent's action. With Peter of Palude, who responded to Durand's objection and developed an argument against Durand's mere conservationist position, the discussion turned (or rather returned) to considerations about miracles. Specifically, Peter argued that mere conservationism cannot account for miracles against nature, that is, miracles where a thing preserves its disposition and nevertheless God produces an effect that is contrary to the characteristic effect of this disposition.

While Aquinas, Giles, Durand, and Peter of Palude were primarily concerned with the question of how to avoid occasionalism while also maintaining that God can bring about certain kinds of miracles, the debate I considered in Chapter 3 has slightly shifted the focus. Olivi, Scotus, and Auriol were mostly interested in working out an account that is metaphysically possible, preserves divine foreknowledge, and also preserves contingency in the world. Although these considerations were new to the debate, the basic question itself remained the same: whether God is causally active in every action of a secondary cause, including human volitions. Thus, Olivi and Auriol thought that the concurrentist position is untenable not just in the voluntary case but also in non-voluntary causation, and thus argued that in general we need to assume that God is not immediately active in the causal happenings of the world. By contrast, Scotus argued that if mere conservationism were true, then God could not foreknow future contingents, including the effects of human will.

Finally, in Chapter 4, I looked at a debate on sacramental causation that at the same time had some broader implications concerning the nature of efficient causation and divine concurrence. As I showed, both Ockham and d'Ailly (and, to a lesser extent, Biel) emphasized that we have to distinguish questions about demonstrability and questions

about knowledge and truth. Both Ockham and d'Ailly maintained that we cannot demonstrably know efficient causal relations, nevertheless those relations exist and we can even know about them by abstractive reasoning. Moreover, the three authors also shared a preliminary definition of efficient causes ("that which if posited the other one is posited, etc."), but differed on how to amend this to give a characterization of proper efficient causation. In the context of sacramental causation, it was an important concern to work out a way to distinguish *sine qua non* from proper efficient causes: thus, Ockham and d'Ailly agreed that *sine qua non* causes do not act by their own proper power but merely by the power of a higher cause, while proper efficient causes such as fire do act by their own proper power, which is directed to bring about a specific effect. Biel, on the other hand, denied the distinction, and argued that all created causes are merely *sine qua non* causes, arguably endorsing thereby a form of occasionalism.

Still on the historical side but on a more general level, the dissertation highlighted some interesting changes in approach regarding the subject of divine concurrence during the later Middle Ages. While in the first debate the main target of arguments were the occasionalist position, the occasionalist view played little role in the second and third debates where the focus shifted first towards accounting for sinful acts and then towards some partly metaphysical and partly epistemological worries about *sine qua non* causation. We can also find a change in some characteristic ways of argumentation; while in earlier authors fittingness arguments were customary, by the time of Ockham and Biel arguments from divine omnipotence and parsimony took precedence. These general tendencies are especially worth to keep in mind when examining how the medieval discussions shaped the early modern ones, where the problem of divine concurrence again became quite prominent given some background considerations about laws of nature or the mind-body problem.

The second result of this investigation is systematic. Although all of the presented debates took place in some rather specific contexts, the main question remained one that can still be of interest for the metaphysician or philosopher of religion today: how to work out an account that preserves both some basic Aristotelian assumptions and at the same time can account for some basic assumptions of Christian theism. Basic Aristotelian assumptions included claims about things and their causal powers, while Christian theistic ones included claims about creation, conservation, and divine omnipotence. It seems that even if the conjunction of these might not be the most widely shared view today, they are on the table especially for some analytic philosophers of religion.

Beside the main concern, the investigation also uncovered some dependencies between seemingly distinct problems. In Chapter 2, perhaps most obviously, we saw how considerations about the nature of creation and the possibility of certain kinds of miracles played an important role in working out a theory of divine concurrence: if Peter of Palude's argument is sound, then accepting the possibility of miracles against nature (with some other background assumptions) implies concurrentism. In Chapter 3, perhaps less obviously, we saw how the problem of divine concurrence is tied to questions about the nature of contingency, foreknowledge and future contingents, or free will and sinful actions; and in particular that a certain theory of divine foreknowledge (that of Scotus) again, implies concurrentism. Finally, in Chapter 4, we saw how certain epistemological considerations about demonstrative reasoning, and some other rather specific considerations about sacraments paved the way to a view that arguably eventually lead to occasionalism.

Finally, all that has been said also has some broader implications regarding how one may approach certain questions in medieval philosophy. Precisely because of the dependencies that were highlighted above, there are various issues in medieval philosophy that

although seem purely metaphysical at first, cannot be understood without the theistic context within which they arose. Thus, for instance, most medieval views on the nature of necessary connection between causes and effects cannot be understood without considering miracles; or most medieval views on causal powers in general cannot be understood without considering such specific theological issues as divine foreknowledge or certain teachings on the sacraments.

Consequently, while I hope to have shown that contemporary metaphysicians and philosophers of religion can learn a lot from some medieval views on certain topics, especially since these views would be a welcome complement to some Neo-Aristotelian accounts of causation and also to recent work on divine action, there is a cautionary remark to be said. Namely, because of the interconnectedness of the above issues, even though it might be tempting to abstract some medieval metaphysical views on causation from its theological background, or to abstract some medieval views on divine actions from its Aristotelian foundations, if this can be done at all it needs to be done with great care.

Roughly two hundred years after the the lastly considered author here had died, Malebranche remarked that "when we posit forms, faculties, qualities, virtues, or real beings capable of producing certain effects... we insensibly adopt the opinion of the pagans because of our respect for their philosophy."[137] As can be seen from all the above discussions, many medieval philosophers shared Malebranche's worry that there is a *prima facie* tension between some aspects of Aristotelian metaphysics, on the one hand, and some basic Christian teachings, on the other hand. Nevertheless, most of these medieval philosophers also thought that the two were ultimately reconcilable. The reconciliation was often nuanced, involving a rather complicated machinery spelling out divine concur-

137. Malebranche, *The Search after Truth*, 446.

rence with secondary causes. But if successful, it could open the way for the medieval philosopher to investigate things in terms of their forms, faculties, and causal powers, which proved to be enormously helpful for treating some further issues in medieval philosophy and science — which is another story that I aim to return to later.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

Aegidius Romanus. *Quaestiones de esse et essentia, de mensura angelorum et de cognitione angelorum*. Venice: Per Simonem de Luere, 1513.

———. *In Secundum Librum Sententiarum Quaestiones (Ordinatio)*. Venice: Apud Franciscum Zilettum, 1581.

———. *Super librum de causis*. Venice: Apud Iacobum Zoppinum, 1550 (repr.: Minerva, 1968).

———. *Theorems on Existence and Essence*. Edited by Michael V Murray. Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1953.

———. *Aegidii Romani Opera Omnia, III.1: Apologia*. Edited by R Wielockx. Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi. Florence: Unione Accademica Nazionale, 1986.

———. *Reportatio Lecturae Super Libros I–IV Sententiarum*. Edited by Concetta Luna. Aegidii Romani Opera Omnia. Florence: Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2003.

———. *Theoremes sur l'etre et l'essence*. Edited by Stéphane Mercier. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2011.

Albertus Magnus. *Super II Sententiarum*. Edited by Auguste Borgnet. Opera Omnia, vol. 27. Paris: Ludovicus Vivès, 1893.

Aristotle. *The Complete Works of Aristotle*. Edited by Jonathan Barnes. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991.

Averroes. *Averroes' Tahāfut al-Tahāfut (The Incoherence of the Incoherence)*. Translated by Simon Van den Bergh. London: Luzak, 1954.

———. *Averroes'* Destructio Destructionum Philosophiae Algazelis *in the Latin Version of Calo Calonymos*. Edited by Beatrice H Zedler. Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1961.

———. *Ibn Rushd's Metaphysics: A Translation with Introduction of Ibn Rushd's Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics, Book Lām*. Translated by Charles Genequand. Leiden: Brill, 1986.

Avicebron. *Avencebrolis Fons Vitae ex Arabico in Latinum translatus ab Iohanne Hispano et Dominico Gundissalino*. Edited by Clemens Baeumker. Aschendorff, 1895.

Avicenna. *The Metaphysics of the Healing*. Translated by Michael Marmura. Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2005.

Denifle, Henricus, ed. *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*. sub auspicis consilii generalis facultatum Parisiensum. Paris: Delalain, 1889.

Dionysius Areopagita (Pseudo-). *Dionysiaca: Recueil donnant l'ensemble des traductions latines des ouvrages attribués au Denys de l'Aréopage*. Edited by Ph. Chevallier. 1937–1951.

Durand of St.-Pourçain. *Kleine Schriften*. Edited by Josef Koch. Vol. 2. Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1973.

———. *Scriptum super IV libros Sententiarum: distinctiones 1–5 libri secundi*. Edited by Fiorella Retucci. Leuven: Peeters, 2012.

———. *Scriptum super IV libros Sententiarum: distinctiones 1–7 libri quarti*. Edited by Andreas Speer. Leuven: Peeters, 2014.

Gabriel Biel. *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum: Libri quarti pars prima*. Edited by Wilfridus Werbeck and Udo Hofmann. Tübingen: JCB Mohr, 1975.

Al-Ghazali. *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*. Translated by Michael E Marmura. Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1997.

Hamesse, Jacqueline, ed. *Les auctoritates Aristotelis: Un florilège médiéval*. Louvain: Publications Universitaires, 1974.

Henry of Ghent. *Quodlibet I*. Edited by R Macken. Henrici Gandavo Opera Omnia, vol. 5. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1979.

Hervaeus Natalis. *In quatuor libros Sententiarum commentaria*. Paris, 1647 (repr.: Gregg, 1966).

Johannes Duns Scotus. *Ioannis Duns Scoti Opera Omnia*. Edited by Carl Balic and assoc. Vatican City: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1950–.

———. *A Treatise on God as First Principle*. Edited by Allan B Wolter. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1966.

———. *John Duns Scotus on Contingency and Freedom: Lectura I 39*. Introduction, Translation, and Commentary by A. Vos Jaczn, H. Veldhuis, A. H. Looman-Graaskamp, E. Dekker, and N. W. Den Bok. Dodrecht: Kluwer, 1994.

———. *The Examined Report of the Paris Lecture (Reportatio I-A)*. Edited by Allan B Wolter. September 2008.

Johannes Duns Scotus. *Opera Omnia*. Edited by Luke Wadding. Lyon: Laurentius Durand, 1639 (repr.: Georg Olms, 1968).

John Buridan. *Questiones super octo Phisicorum libros Aristotelis*. Paris, 1509 (repr.: Minerva, 1964).

Luis de Molina. *Liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis, divina praescientia, providentia, praedestinatione et reprobatione concordia. Liber II, dd.25–28.* Edited by J Rabeneck. Ona: Collegium maximum Societatis Iesu, 1953.

Malebranche, Nicolas. *Dialogues on Metaphysics and on Religion*. Edited by Jolley. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

———. *The Search after Truth*. Edited by Paul J Olscamp and Thomas M Lennon. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Moses Maimonides. *The Guide of the Perplexed,* 2 vols. Translated by Shlomo Pines. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963.

Nicholas of Autrecourt. "Exigit Ordo." *Mediaeval Studies* 1 (1939): 179–280.

———. *The Universal Treatise*. Translated by Leonard Kennedy, Richard Arnold, and Arthur Millward. Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1971.

———. *His Correspondence with Master Giles and Bernard of Arezzo: Critical Edition with Introduction, Translation, and Explanatory Notes*. Edited by Lambert Marie De Rijk. Leiden: Brill, 1994.

Pattin, Adriaan, ed. "Le Liber de Causis: Édition établie à l'aide de 90 manuscrits avec introduction et notes." *Tijdschrift Voor Filosofie* 28 (1966): 90–203.

Peter Auriol. "Commentarium in secundo Sententiarum." Florence, Conv. Soppr. A.3.120, s. XIVex.

———. *Commentariorum [*sic*] in secundum librum Sententiarum*. Rome: Zannetti, 1605.

———. *Scriptum super primum Sententiarum*. Edited by E M Buytaert. Franciscan Institute, 1952.

———. "Peter Aureol on Divine Foreknowledge and Future Contingents: *Scriptum in Primum Librum Sententiarum*, Distinctions 38–39." Edited by Chris Schabel. *Cahiers de l'Institute du Moyen Age Grec et Latin* 65 (1995): 63–212.

Peter of Palude. "A proposito di Pietro da Palude (In I Sent., d.43, q.1): La questione inedita 'Utrum Deum esse infinitum in perfectione et vigore possit efficaci ratione probari' di Erveo Natalis." Edited by Prospero Tommaso Stella. *Salesianum* 22 (1960): 245–325.

———. "Peter of Palude and the Parisian Reaction to Durand of St Pourçain on Future Contingents." Edited by Russell L Friedman, Chris Schabel, and Irene Balcoyiannopoulou. *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 71 (2001): 183–300.

———. "Peter of Palude on Divine Concurrence: An Edition of his *In II Sent.*, d.1, q.4." Edited by Zita V Toth. *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales* 83, no. 1 (2016): 49–92.

Petrus Iohannis Olivi. *Quaestiones in Secundum Librum Sententiarum*. Edited by Bernardus Jansen. Quaracchi: Ad Claras Aquas, 1926.

Pierre d'Ailly. *Questiones super Sententiarum*. Strasbourg, 1490 (repr.: Minerva, 1968).

Roger Bacon. *Roger Bacon's Philosophy of Nature: A Critical Edition of* De multiplicatione specierum *and* De speculis comburentibus. Edited by David C Lindberg. South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 1998.

Suarez, Francisco. *On Efficient Causality: Metaphysical Disputations 17, 18, and 19*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994.

———. *On Creation, Conservation, and Concurrence: Metaphysical Disputations 20-22*. Edited by Alfred J Freddoso. South Bend, IN: St Augustine Press, 2002.

Tempier, Étienne. *La condamnation Parisienne de 1277*. Edited by David Piché and Claude Lafleur. Paris: Vrin, 1999.

Thomas Aquinas. *Pars prima Summae theologiae: a quaestione I ad quaestionem XLIX*. Leonine. Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Opera Omnia, vol. 4. Rome: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1888.

———. *Pars prima Summae theologiae: a quaestione L ad quaestionem CXIX*. Leonine. Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Opera Omnia, vol. 5. Rome: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1889.

———. *Summa contra gentiles: Liber tertius*. Leonine. Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Opera Omnia, vol. 14. Rome: Typis Riccardi Garroni, 1926.

———. *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum magistri Petri Lombardi episcopi Parisiensis*. Edited by Pierre Mandonnet. Paris: Lethielleux, 1929.

———. *Scriptum super Sententiis: Liber quartus*. Edited by Maria Fabianus Moos. Vol. 4. Paris: Lethielleux, 1947.

———. *S. Thomae Aquinatis In librum Beati Dionysii De divinis nominibus expositio*. Edited by C Pera. Rome: Marietti, 1950.

———. *Sancti Thomae de Aquino super librum de causis expositio*. Edited by H D Saffrey. Fribourg: Société philosophique, 1954.

Thomas Aquinas. *S. Thomae Aquinatis Quaestiones disputatae 2: De potentia; De anima; De spiritualibus creaturis*. Edited by P M Pession. Turin-Rome: Marietti, 1965.

———. *De principiis naturae; De aeternitate mundi; De motu cordis; De mixtione elementorum; De operationibus occultis naturae; De iudiciis astrorum; De sortibus; De unitate intellectus; De ente et essentia; De fallaciis; De propositionibus modalibus*. Leonine. Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Opera Omnia, vol. 43. Rome: Saint Thomas Foundation, 1976.

———. *Corpus Thomisticum*. Edited by Enrique Alarcon. 2000.

Walter Chatton. *Lectura super Sententias*. Edited by J C Wey and Girard Etzkorn. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2008.

William Ockham. *Scriptum in librum primum Sententiarum (Ordinatio)*. Edited by Gedeon Gál. Opera Theologica I–IV. St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1967.

———. *Quodlibeta Septem*. Edited by J C Wey. Opera Theologica IX. St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1980.

———. *Quaestiones in librum secundum Sententiarum (Reportatio)*. Edited by Gedeon Gál and Rega Wood. Opera Theologica V. St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1981.

———. *Expositio in libros Physicorum Aristotelis*. Edited by Gedeon Gál. Opera Philosophica IV–V. St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: St. Bonaventure University, 1985.

———. *Quodlibetal Questions*. Translated by Alfred J Freddoso and Francis E Kelley. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991.

SECONDARY MATERIAL

Ablondi, Fred, and J Aaron Simmons. "Gabriel Biel and Occasionalism: Overcoming an Apparent Tension." *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (2011): 159–173.

Adams, Marilyn McCord. "Intuitive Cognition, Certainty, and Scepticism in William Ockham." *Traditio* 26 (1970): 389–398.

———. "Was Ockham a Humean about Efficient Causality?" *Franciscan Studies* 39 (1979): 5–48.

———. *William Ockham*. South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987.

———. "Powerless Causes: The Case of Sacramental Causality." Chap. 4 in *Thinking about Causes*, edited by Peter Machamer and Gereon Wolters, 47–76. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2007.

———. "Essential Orders and Sacramental Causality." In *John Duns Scotus, Philosopher*, edited by Mary Beth Ingham and Oleg Bychkov, 191–206. Münster: Aschendorff, 2010.

———. *Some Later Medieval Theories of the Eucharist: Thomas Aquinas, Gilles of Rome, Duns Scotus, and William Ockham*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Bertolacci, Amos. *The Reception of Aristotle's* Metaphysics *in Avicenna's* Kitab al-Sifa'. Leiden: Brill, 2006.

Biechler, James E. "Gabriel Biel on Liberum Arbitrium: Prelude to Luther's De Servo Arbitrio." *The Thomist* 34, no. 1 (1970): 114–127.

Borden Sharkey, Sarah. "How Does One Limit Being? W. Norris Clarke on Thomas's 'Limitation of Act by Potency'." *The Saint Anselm Journal* 7, no. 1 (2009).

Brinzei, Monica, Russell L Friedman, and Chris Schabel. "The Late-Medieval Reception of Durand's Sentences Commentary, with Two Case Studies: Peter Auriol and Nicholas of Dinkelsbühl." In *Durand of Saint-Pourçain and his* Sentences *Commentary: Historical, Philosophical, and Theological Issues*, edited by Andreas Speer, Fiorella Retucci, Thomas Jeschke, and Guy Guldentops, 295–342. Leuven: Peeters, 2014.

Brock, Stephen L. "Causality and Necessity in Thomas Aquinas." *Quaestio* 2 (2002): 217–240.

Brown, Stephen F, and Juan Carlos Flores. *Historical Dictionary of Medieval Philosophy and Theology*. Historical Dictionaries of Religions, Philosophies, and Movements 76. Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 2007.

Brunner, Fernand. "La doctrine de la matière chez Avicébron." *Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie* 3rd ser. 6 (1956): 261–279.

Burr, David. "The Persecution of Peter Olivi." *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 66, no. 5 (1976): 1–98.

Calma, Monica. "Pierre d'Ailly: Le commentaire sur les Sentences de Pierre Lombard." *Bulletin de philosophie médiévale* 49 (2007): 139–194.

Clarke, Norris. "The Limitation of Act by Potency in St. Thomas: Aristotelianism or Neoplatonism?" *New Scholasticism* 26 (1952): 147–157.

Copleston, Frederick. "The Logical Empiricism of Nicholas of Autrecourt." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 74 (1973): 249–262.

Courtenay, William J. "Covenant and Causality in Pierre d'Ailly." *Speculum* 46, no. 1 (1971): 94–119.

———. "The King and the Leaden Coin: The Economic Background of 'Sine qua non' Causality." *Traditio* 28 (1972): 185–209.

———. "The Critique on Natural Causality in the Mutakallimun and Nominalism." *The Harvard Theological Review* 66, no. 1 (1973): 77–94.

———. *Capacity and Volition: A History of the Distinction of Absolute and Ordained Power*. Bergamo: Pierluigi Lubrina Editore, 1990.

———. "The Academic and Intellectual Worlds of Ockham." In Spade, *The Cambridge Companion to Ockham*, 17–30.

Craig, William Lane. *The Problem of Divine Foreknowledge and Future Contingents from Aristotle to Suarez*. Leiden: Brill, 1988.

Cross, Richard. *Duns Scotus on God*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005.

———. "The Eternity of the World and the Distinction between Creation and Conservation." *Religious Studies* 42, no. 4 (2006): 403–416.

Daiber, Hans. *Islamic Thought in the Dialogue of Cultures: A Historical and Bibliographical Survey*. Leiden: Brill, 2012.

Dekker, Eef. "Does Scotus Need Molina? On Divine Foreknowledge and Co-causality." In *John Duns Scotus: Renewal of Philosophy*, edited by E P Bos, 101–112. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998.

Denzinger, Henry, ed. *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*. Translated by Roy J Deferrari. Createspace Independent Publishers, 2013.

Des Chene, Dennis. *Physiologia: Natural philosophy in late Aristotelian and Cartesian thought*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996.

Desharnais, Richard P. "Gabriel Biel: Last or Distinguished among the Schoolmen?" *International Studies in Philosophy* 10 (1978): 51–58.

Dillon, John. "Solomon Ibn Gabirol's Doctrine of Intelligible Matter." In *Neoplatonism and Jewish Thought*, edited by Lenn Evan Goodman, 43–59. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992.

Dodds, Michael. "Unlocking Divine Causality: Aquinas, Contemporary Science, and Divine Action." *Angelicum* 86 (2009): 67–86.

Doolan, Gregory T. "The Causality of the Divine Ideas in Relation to Natural Agents in Thomas Aquinas." *International Philosophical Quarterly* 44, no. 3 (2004): 393–409.

Dumont, Stephen D. "The Origin of Scotus's Theory of Synchronic Contingency." *The Modern Schoolman* 72 (1995): 149–167.

Dunbabin, Jean. *A Hound of God: Pierre de la Palud and the Fourteenth-century Church*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Dvořák, Petr. "The Concurrentism of Thomas Aquinas: Divine Causation and Human Freedom." *Philosophia* 41, no. 3 (2013): 617–634.

Eardley, P S. "The Foundations of Freedom in Later Medieval Philosophy: Giles of Rome and his Contemporaries." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 44, no. 3 (2006): 353–376.

Effler, Roy R. *John Duns Scotus and the Principle 'Omne quod movetur ab alio movetur'*. St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1962.

Evans, G R, ed. *Mediaeval Commentaries on the* Sentences *of Peter Lombard*. Vol. 1. Leiden: Brill, 2002.

Everett, Anthony. "Intrinsic Finks, Masks, and Mimics." *Erkenntnis* 71, no. 2 (2009): 191–203.

Fakhry, Majid. *A History of Islamic Philosophy*. Third edition. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2004.

Fedriga, Riccardo. "Mente divina e contingenza in Pietro Aureolo." *Rivista di storia della filosofia* 68 (2013): 149–173.

Frank, William A. "Duns Scotus on Autonomous Freedom and Divine Co-Causality." *Mediaeval Philosophy and Theology* 2 (1992): 142–164.

Freddoso, Alfred J. "Medieval Aristotelianism and the Case against Secondary Causation in Nature." In *Divine and Human Action*, edited by Thomas V Morris, 74–118. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988.

———. "God's General Concurrence with Secondary Causes: Why Conservation is not Enough." *Philosophical Perspectives* 5 (1991): 553–585.

———. "God's General Concurrence with Secondary Causes: Pitfalls and Prospects." *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 68, no. 2 (1994): 131–156.

Friedman, Russell L. "Peter Auriol." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N Zalta. 2016.

Frost, Gloria. "John Duns Scotus on God's Knowledge of Sins: A Test-case for God's Knowledge of Contingents." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 48, no. 1 (2010): 15–34.

Frost, Gloria. "Peter Olivi's Rejection of God's Concurrence with Created Causes." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 22, no. 4 (2014): 655–679.

Fumagalli, Mariateresa. *Durando di S. Porziano: Elementi filosofici della terza redazione del Commento alle Sentenze*. Pubblicazioni della Facoltà di lettere e filosofia dell'Università di Milano. Firenze: La nuova Italia, 1969.

Gilson, Etienne. *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1999.

Grellard, Christophe. "La statut de la causalité chez Nicolas d'Autrécourt." *Quaestio* 2 (2002): 267–289.

———. *Croire et savoir: Les principes de la connaissance selon Nicolas d'Autrécourt*. Paris: Vrin, 2005.

———. "Scepticism, Demonstration and the Infinite Regress Argument (Nicholas of Autrecourt and John Buridan)." *Vivarium* 45, no. 2 (2007): 328–342.

———. "Nicholas of Autrecourt's Atomistic Physics." In *Atomism in Late Medieval Philosophy and Theology*, edited by Christophe Grellard and Aurelien Robert, 107–126. Leiden: Brill, 2009.

Grellard, Christophe, and Aurelien Robert, eds. *Atomism in Late Medieval Philosophy and Theology*. Leiden: Brill, January 2009.

Groppo, Giuseppe. *La Teologia e il suo "Subiectum" secondo il prologo del commento alle sentenze di Pietro da Palude, O.P. (+1342)*. Rome: Pontificium Anthenaeum Salesianum, 1961.

Hechich, P Barnaba. "Il problema delle 'Reportationes' nell'eredità dottrinale del b. Giovanni Duns Scoto, OFM." In *Giovanni Duns Scoto: Studi e ricerce nel VII centenario della sua morte*, edited by Martin Carbajo Nunez, 59–129. Roma: Antonianum, 2008.

Henninger, Mark G. *Relations: Medieval Theories, 1250–1325*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.

Heynck, Valens. "Zur Datierung der Sentenzenkommentare des Petrus Johannis Olivi und des Petrus de Trabibus." *Franziskanische Studien* 38 (1956): 371–198.

Hoffmann, Tobias, ed. *A Companion to Angels in Medieval Philosophy*. Leiden: Brill, 2012.

———. "Peter Auriol on Free Choice and Free Judgment." *Vivarium* 53 (2015): 65–89.

Husik, Isaac. *A History of Medieval Jewish Philosophy*. New York: Macmillan, 1916.

Iribarren, Isabel. *Durandus of St. Pourçain: a Dominican Theologian in the Shadow of Aquinas*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Keele, Rondo. "Can God Make a Picasso? William Ockham and Walter Chatton on Divine Power and Real Relations." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 45, no. 3 (2007): 395–411.

Kennedy, Leonard A. *Peter of Ailly and the Harvest of Fourteenth-Century Philosophy*. Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1986.

Knuuttila, Simo. "Duns Scotus and the Foundations of Logical Modalities." In *Duns Scotus: Metaphysics and Ethics*, edited by Ludger Honnefelder, Rega Wood, and Mechthild Dreyer, 127–144. Leiden: Brill, 1996.

Koch, Josef. *Durandus de S. Porciano O.P.* Forschungen zum Streit um Thomas von Aquin zu Beginn des 14. Jahrhunderts. Münster: Verlag der Aschendorfschen Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1927.

Kogan, Barry S. *Averroes and the Metaphysics of Causation*. New York, NY: State University of New York Press, 1985.

Kukkonen, Taneli. "Possible Worlds in the Tahafut al-tahafut: Averroes on Plenitude and Possibility." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 38, no. 3 (2000): 329–347.

Lagerlund, Henrik, ed. *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy: Philosophy Between 500 and 1500*. Dodrecht: Springer, 2011.

Laumakis, John A. "Aquinas' Misinterpretation of Avicebron on the Activity of Corporeal Substances." *The Modern Schoolman* 81 (2004): 135–149.

———. "Aquinas and Avicebron on the Causality of Corporeal Substances." *The Modern Schoolman* 84 (2006): 17–29.

Leaman, Oliver. *An Introduction to Classical Islamic Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Leppin, Volker. *Wilhelm von Ockham: Gelehrter, Streiter, Bettelmönch*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2003.

Lewis, David. "Finkish Dispositions." *The Philosophical Quarterly* 47, no. 187 (1997): 143–158.

Lindbeck, George. "Nominalism and the Problem of Meaning as Illustrated by Pierre D'Ailly on Predestination and Justification." *The Harvard Theological Review* 52 (1959): 43–60.

MacDonald, Scott. "Synchronic Contingency, Instants of Nature, and Libertarian Freedom: Comments on 'The Background to Scotus's Theory of Will'." *The Modern Schoolman* 72 (1995): 169–174.

Madden, Edward H. "Hume and the Fiery Furnace." *Philosophy of Science* 38, no. 1 (1971): 64–78.

Maier, Anneliese. "Das Problem der Evidenz in der Philosophie des 14. Jh.s." *Scholastik* 38 (1963): 183–225.

Marmura, Michael. "The Metaphysics of Efficient Causality in Avicenna." Chap. 12 in *Islamic Theology and Philosophy*, edited by Michael Marmura, 172–197. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984.

McCabe, Herbert. "Creation." *New Blackfriars* 61 (1980): 408–415.

———. "On Evil and Omnipotence." In *Faith within Reason*, edited by Brian Davies, 67–93. Bloomsbury Academic, 2007.

McCann, Hugh J, and Jonathan L Kvanvig. "The Occasionalist Proselytizer: A Modified Catechism." *Philosophical Perspectives* 5 (1991): 587–615.

Miller, Timothy D. "Continuous Creation and Secondary Causation: The Threat of Occasionalism." *Religious Studies* 47 (2011): 3–22.

Morerod, Charles. "Le manque de clarté de Gabriel Biel et son impact sur la Réforme." *Nova et Vetera* 25, no. 3 (2000): 15–32.

Mumford, Stephen, and Rani Lill Anjum. *Getting Causes from Powers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Nadler, Steven. "'No Necessary Connection:' The Medieval Roots of the Occasionalist Roots of Hume." *The Monist* 96, no. 3 (1996): 448–468.

Normore, Calvin G. "Petrus Aureoli and His Contemporaries on Future Contingents and Excluded Middle." *Synthese* 96, no. 1 (1993): 83–92.

———. "Scotus, Modality, Instants of Nature and the Contingency of the Present." In *Duns Scotus: Metaphysics and Ethics*, edited by Ludger Honnefelder, Rega Wood, and Mechthild Dreyer, 161–164. Leiden: Brill, 1996.

Oakley, Francis. "Pierre D'Ailly and the Absolute Power of God: Another Note on the Theology of Nominalism." *The Harvard Theological Review* 56, no. 1 (1963): 59–73.

———. *Political Thought of Pierre d'Ailly: The Voluntarist Tradition*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964.

Oberman, Heiko A. *The Harvest of Medieval Theology: Gabriel Biel and Late Medieval Nominalism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963.

Partee, Carter. "Peter John Olivi: Historical and Doctrinal Study." *Franciscan Studies* 20, nos. 3–4 (1960): 215–260.

Pascoe, Louis B. *Church and Reform: Bishops, Theologians, and Canon Lawyers in the Thought of Pierre d'Ailly (1351–1420)*. Leiden: Brill, 2005.

Perler, Dominik, and Ulrich Rudolph. *Occasionalismus: Theorien der Kausalität im arabisch-islamischen und im europaeischen Denken*. Göttingen: Vandenhöck / Rupercht, 2000.

Pickavé, Martin. "An Early Witness of the Reportatio of Giles of Rome's Lectures on the Sentences: Note on the Edition of Concetta Luna." *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales* 71, no. 1 (2005): 175–185.

Pini, Giorgio. "Being and Creation in Giles of Rome." In *After the Condemnation of 1277*, edited by Jan A Aertsen, Kent Emery, and Andreas Speer, 390–409. Berlin, 2001.

Pluta, Olaf. *Die Philosophische Psychologie des Peter von Ailly*. Amsterdam: Verlag B.R. Gr´uner, 1987.

Punta, Francesco Del, Silvia Donati, and Concetta Luna. "Egidio Romano." In *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, edited by Alberto Maria Ghisalberti, 42:319–341. Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1993.

Rashdall, H. "Nicholas de Ultricuria, a Medieval Hume." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 7 (1906): 1–27.

Richardson, Kara. "Avicenna's Conception of the Efficient Cause." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 21 (2013): 220–239.

Rogers, Katherin A. "What's Wrong with Occasionalism?" *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 75, no. 3 (2001): 345–369.

Rota, Michael. "Causation." In *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, edited by Brian Davies, 104–114. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Schabel, Chris. "Place, Space, and the Physics of Grace in Auriol's *Sentences* Commentary." *Vivarium* 38, no. 1 (2000): 117–161.

———. "Early Franciscan Attacks on John Duns Scotus's Doctrine of Divine Foreknowledge." In *What is "Theology" in the Middle Ages? Religious Cultures of Europe (11th–15th Centuries) as Reflected in Their Self-Understanding*, edited by Mikolaj Olszevski, 301–328. 2007.

Shanab, R E A. "Ghazali and Aquinas on Causation." *The Monist* 58, no. 1 (1974): 140–150.

Shihadeh, Ayman. "From Al-Ghazali to Al-Razi: 6th/12th Century Developments in Muslim Philosophical Theology." *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 15 (2005): 141–179.

Silva, Ignacio. "Thomas Aquinas Holds Fast: Objections to Aquinas within Today's Debate on Divine Action." *The Heythrop Journal* 54, no. 4 (2013): 658–667.

Solère, Jean-Luc. "Sine Qua Non Causality and the Context of Durand's Early Theory of Cognition." In *Durand of Saint-Pourçain and his* Sentences *Commentary: Historical, Philosophical, and Theological Issues*, edited by Andreas Speer, Fiorella Retucci, Thomas Jeschke, and Guy Guldentops, 185–227. Leuven: Peeters, 2014.

Spade, Paul Vincent, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Ockham*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Speer, Andreas, Fiorella Retucci, Thomas Jeschke, and Guy Guldentops, eds. *Durand of Saint-Pourçain and his* Sentences *Commentary: Historical, Philosophical, and Theological Issues*. Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales. Leuven: Peeters, 2014.

Stufler, Johann. "Bemerkungen zur Konkurslehre des Durandus von St. Pourçain." *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters* Suppl. 3.2 (1935): 1080–1090.

Tachau, Katherine H. "The Preparation of a Critical Edition of Pierre Auriol's *Sentences* Lectures." In *Editori di Quaracchi 100 anni dopo: bilancio e prospettive*, edited by Alvaro Cacciotti and Barbara Faes de Mottoni, 205–216. Rome: Edizioni Antonianum, 1997.

Thijssen, Johannes MMH. "John Buridan and Nicholas of Autrecourt on Causality and Induction." *Traditio* 43 (1987): 237–255.

———. "1277 Revisited: A New Interpretation of the Doctrinal Investigations of Thomas Aquinas and Giles of Rome." *Vivarium* 35, no. 1 (1997): 72–101.

Torrell, Jean-Pierre. *Saint Thomas Aquinas: The Person and His Work*. Translated by Robert Royal. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005.

Vallicella, William. "Concurrentism or Occasionalism?" *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 70, no. 3 (1996): 339–359.

Vollert, Cyrill. *The Doctrine of Hervaeus Natalis on Primitive Justice and Original Sin*. Rome, 1947.

Vollmer, Placidus. "Die göttliche Mitwirkung bei Aegidius Romanus." *Divus Thomas* 6 (1928): 452–470.

Watt, W Montgomery. *Muslim Intellectual: A Study of Al-Ghazali*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1963.

Weill-Parot, Nicolas. "Pierre d'Ailly." In *Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages*, edited by André Vauchez and Adrian Walford. Chicago: Fitzroy Darborn Publishers, 2000.

Weinberg, Julius Rudolph. *Nicholas of Autrecourt: A Study in Fourteenth-Century Thought*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948.

Weisheipl, James A. "The Principle Omne quod movetur ab alio movetur in Medieval Physics." *Isis* 56 (1965): 26–45.

Williams, Thomas. "Introduction: The Life and Works of John Duns the Scot." In *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*, edited by Thomas Williams, 1–14. Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Wolfson, Harry A. "Nicolaus of Autrecourt and Gazali's Argument against Causality." *Speculum* 44, no. 2 (1969): 234–238.