

QUESTION 6

The Voluntary and the Involuntary

Since, therefore, one has to arrive at beatitude through certain acts, we must next inquire about human acts, so that we might know the acts by which one arrives at beatitude or by which the journey toward beatitude is impeded. But because operations and acts have to do with singulars, every practical science (*operativa scientia*) is brought to completion in the consideration of particulars (*in particulari consideratione*). Therefore, since moral theory (*moralis consideratio*) concerns human acts, it has to deal with them first in general (qq. 6-114) and then in particular (*ST 2-2*).

As regards the general consideration of human acts, what comes up first for consideration are the human acts themselves (qq. 6-48) and, second, their principles (qq. 49-114).

Among human acts some are proper to man, and some are common to man and the other animals. Since beatitude is proper to man, the acts that are properly human are more closely related to beatitude than are the acts that are common to man and the other animals. Therefore, we must first consider the acts which are proper to man (qq. 6-21) and, second, the acts which are common to man and the other animals and which are called the passions of the soul (qq. 22-48).

As regards the first topic, there are two things that come up for consideration: first, the nature of human acts (*de conditione humanorum actorum*) (qq. 6-17) and, second, the distinctions among them (*de distinctione eorum*) (qq. 18-21).

Now since what are properly called human acts are those acts that are voluntary—for the will is a rational appetite and is proper to man—we must consider human acts insofar as they are voluntary. Therefore, what needs to be considered first is the voluntary and the involuntary (qq. 6-7); second, the acts that are voluntary in the sense of being elicited by the will itself in such a way that they belong immediately to the will (qq. 8-16); and, third, the acts which are voluntary in the sense of being commanded by the will and which belong to the will through the mediation of other powers (q. 17).

And since voluntary acts have certain circumstances according to which they are judged, what needs to be considered first is the voluntary and the involuntary (q.6) and, after that, the circumstances of the acts in which the voluntary and the involuntary are found (q. 7)

On the first topic there are there are eight questions: (1) Is voluntariness found in human acts? (2) Is voluntariness found in brute animals? (3) Can there be voluntariness in the absence of any act? (4) Can violence be done to the will? (5) Is violence a cause of involuntariness? (6) Is fear a cause of involuntariness? (7) Is concupiscence a cause of involuntariness? (8) Is ignorance a cause of involuntariness?

Article 1

Is voluntariness found in human acts?

It seems that voluntariness (*voluntarium*) is not found in human acts:

Objection 1: As is clear from Gregory of Nyssa, Damascene, and Aristotle, the voluntary is that “whose principle exists within the thing itself (*in ipso*).” But the principle of human acts exists outside of a man and not within the man himself; for as *De Anima* 3 explains, a man’s appetite is moved to act by something desirable which exists outside of him and which is like an unmoved mover. Therefore, in human acts there is no voluntariness.

Objection 2: In *Physics* 8 the Philosopher proves that within animals there is no new movement that does not come from another movement that is exterior. But all of a man’s acts are new in the sense that no human act is eternal. Therefore, the principle of all human acts is from without (*ab extra*). Therefore, voluntariness is not found in human acts.

Objection 3: Someone who acts voluntarily is able to act on his own (*per se agere potest*). But this does not apply to men; for John 15:5 says, “Without me you can do nothing.” Therefore,

voluntariness is not found in human acts.

But contrary to this: In *De Fide Orthodoxa* 2 Damascene says, “The voluntary is an act that is a rational operation.” But human acts are like that. Therefore, voluntariness is found in human acts.

I respond: Voluntariness has to exist in human acts.

To see this clearly, consider that some acts or movements are such that their principle exists within the agent, i.e., within that which is moved (*seu in eo quod movetur*), whereas other movements or acts are such that their principle lies outside the agent. For instance, when a rock moves upward, the principle of the motion lies outside the rock, but when it moves downward, the principle of the motion exists within the rock itself.

Now among the things that are moved by an intrinsic principle, some move themselves while others do not. For since, as was established above (q. 1, a. 2), every agent effects movement or is moved (*seu motum agat seu moveatur*) for the sake of an end, what is perfectly moved by an intrinsic principle is that in which there exists some intrinsic principle not only of the thing’s being moved, but also of its being moved toward an end.

Now in order for something to be done for the sake of an end, some sort of cognition (*cognitio*) of the end is required. Therefore, if a thing acts or is moved by an intrinsic principle in such a way that it has some sort of cognition (*notitia*) of the end, then it has within itself the principle of its own act not only insofar as it acts, but also insofar as it acts for the sake of an end. On the other hand, if a thing has no cognition (*notitia*) of the end, then even if the principle of its action or movement exists within it, nonetheless, its principle of acting or being moved *for the sake of an end* does not exist within it, but instead exists in something else by which the principle of its moving toward the end is imprinted upon it. Hence, things of this sort are not said to move themselves, but are instead said to be moved by other things. By contrast, the things that have cognition (*notitia*) of the end are said to move themselves, since there exists within them a principle not only of their acting, but also of their acting for the sake of an end. And so since both things—viz., acting and acting for the sake of an end—come from an intrinsic principle, their acts and movements are called ‘voluntary’; for the name ‘voluntary’ signifies that the movement and the act come from the thing’s own inclination (*sit a propria inclinatione*).

And so it is that, according to the definition given by Aristotle, Gregory of Nyssa, and Damascene, what is said to be voluntary is not only “that whose principle is intrinsic” (*cuius principium est intra*), but also includes knowledge (*cum additione scientiae*).

Hence, since man especially has cognition of the end of his action and moves himself, voluntariness is found especially in his acts.

Reply to objection 1: Not every principle is a *first* principle. Therefore, even though it is part of the concept of the voluntary that its principle be intrinsic, it is nonetheless not contrary to the concept of the voluntary that this intrinsic principle be caused or moved by an exterior principle. For it is not part of the concept of the voluntary that the intrinsic principle should be a *first* principle.

Still, notice that it is possible for a given principle of movement to be first in a genus and yet not first absolutely speaking. For instance, in the genus of things that can undergo alteration (*in genere alterabilium*), the first altering being is a celestial body, and yet it is not the first mover absolutely speaking; instead, it is moved by a higher mover with respect to its local motion. So, then, a voluntary act’s intrinsic principle, which is a power that is cognitive and appetitive, is a first principle in the genus of appetitive movement, even though it is moved by some exterior being with respect to other species of movement.

Reply to objection 2: There are two ways in which a new animal movement is preceded by some exterior movement:

First, insofar as it is through an exterior movement that something sensible, which when sensed moves the appetite, is presented to the animal’s sensory power. For instance, a lion sees a stag because of the stag’s approaching movement and begins to be moved with respect to it.

Second, insofar as it is through an exterior movement that the animal's body begins to be changed in some way by a natural change, e.g. through cold or heat, and when the body is thus changed through the movement of an exterior body, the animal's sentient appetite, which is a power belonging to a corporeal organ, is also changed incidentally (*immutatur etiam per accidens*)—as, for instance, when because of some bodily alteration the appetite is moved to desire a given thing. However, this is not contrary to the concept of the voluntary, since, as has been explained, motions of this sort from an exterior principle belong to a different genus.

Reply to objection 3: God moves a man to act not only by proposing something to his sensory power or by affecting his body, but also by moving his will itself. For every movement of both the will and nature proceeds from Him as the first mover. And just as it is not contrary to the concept of a nature that the nature's movement proceeds from God as the first mover, given that a nature is a sort of instrument of God as a mover, so too it is not contrary to the concept of a voluntary act that it proceed from God insofar as the will is moved by God.

Nonetheless, what is common to the concept of a natural movement and to the concept of a voluntary movement is that these movements proceed from an intrinsic principle.

Article 2

Does voluntariness exist in brute animals?

It seems that voluntariness does not exist in brute animals:

Objection 1: 'Voluntariness' (*voluntarium*) comes from 'will' (*voluntas*). But since, as *De Anima* 3 says, the will exists in reason, there can be no will in brute animals. Therefore, neither is voluntariness found in them.

Objection 2: It is because human acts are voluntary that a man is said to be the master of his own acts. But brute animals do not have dominion over their own acts; for as Damascene says, "they do not act but are rather acted upon." Therefore, voluntariness does not exist in them.

Objection 3: Damascene says, "Praise and blame follow upon voluntary acts." But neither praise nor blame is appropriate for the acts of brute animals. Therefore, voluntariness does not exist in brute animals.

But contrary to this: In *Ethics* 3 the Philosopher says, "Young children and brute animals share in voluntariness." Moreover, Damascene and Gregory of Nyssa say the same thing.

I respond: As has been explained (a. 1), what is required for the concept of voluntariness is (a) that the principle of the act should be intrinsic (*sit intra*), along with (b) some sort of cognition of the end.

Now there are two sorts of cognition of the end, viz., *perfect* and *imperfect*.

A *perfect* cognition of the end occurs when there is not only (a) an apprehension of the thing that is the end, but also (b) a cognition of the concept of an end and (c) a cognition of the relation between the means ordered to an end (*quod ordinatur in finem*) and the end itself. And this sort of cognition of an end belongs only to a rational creature.

On the other hand, an *imperfect* cognition of an end is one that consists solely in an apprehension of the end, without a cognition of the concept of an end or a cognition of the act's relation to the end. This sort of cognition of an end is found in brute animals and occurs through the sensory power and the natural estimative power (*per sensum et aestimationem naturalem*) (cf. *ST* 1, q. 78).

Therefore, a perfect cognition of the end is followed by voluntariness in accord with its perfect concept—so that, namely, once the end has been apprehended, someone is able, in deliberating about the end and about the means to the end (*deliberans de fine et de his quae sunt ad finem*), either to move

himself toward the end or not to move himself toward it (*aliquis potest moveri in finem vel non moveri*).

By contrast, an imperfect cognition of the end is followed by voluntariness in accord with its imperfect concept—so that, namely, in apprehending the end one does not deliberate, but is immediately moved toward the end.

Hence, voluntariness in accord with its perfect concept belongs only to a rational nature, but voluntariness in accord with its imperfect concept belongs to brute animals as well.

Reply to objection 1: ‘Will’ (*voluntas*) names the rational appetite, and so it cannot exist in things that lack reason. On the other hand, ‘voluntary’ (*voluntarium*) is predicated denominatively of the will, and it can be extended to include things (*potest trahi ad ea*) in which there is some sort of participation in will, through some likeness to an act of will (*secundum convenientiam ad voluntatem*). And this is the way in which voluntariness is attributed to brute animals, viz., insofar as they are moved toward the end through some sort of cognition.

Reply to objection 2: A man’s being the master of his own acts stems from the fact that he has deliberation about his acts. For it is from the fact that reason, in deliberating, is open to opposites (*deliberans se habet ad opposita*) that the will has a capacity for both opposites (*in utrumque potest*). But, as has been explained, this is a respect in which voluntariness does not exist in brute animals.

Reply to objection 3: Praise and blame follow upon a voluntary act in accord with the perfect concept of voluntariness. This sort of voluntariness is not found in brute animals.

Article 3

Can there be voluntariness in the absence of an act?

It seems that there cannot be voluntariness in the absence of an act:

Objection 1: The voluntary (*voluntarium*) is what is from the will (*voluntas*). But nothing can be ‘from the will’ except through an act, at least an act of the will itself. Therefore, there cannot be voluntariness in the absence of an act.

Objection 2: Just as someone is said ‘to will’ because of the will’s act, so too, when the act of will ceases, he is said ‘not to will’. But *not to will* (*non velle*) is a cause of involuntariness, which is opposed to voluntariness. Therefore, voluntariness cannot exist once the will’s act ceases.

Objection 3: As has been explained (aa. 1-2), cognition is part of the concept of voluntariness. But cognition occurs through an act. Therefore, there cannot be voluntariness in the absence of any act.

But contrary to this: The voluntary is said to be that of which we are the masters. But we are the masters of both acting and not acting, of both willing and not willing. Therefore, just as acting and willing are voluntary, so too are not acting and not willing.

I respond: The voluntary is what is from the will. But there are two ways in which something is said to be ‘from something’: (a) *directly*, so that, namely, it proceeds from something insofar as that thing is an agent, in the way that giving warmth proceeds from heat; and (b) *indirectly*, from the very fact that the thing does not act, in the way that a ship’s sinking is said to be from the pilot (*a gubernatore*) because he stops steering the ship.

But note that it is not always the case that what follows upon the absence of an act (*ad defectum actionis*) is traced back causally (*sicut in causam*) to the agent’s not acting; this occurs only when the agent is able to act and ought to act. For if the pilot were unable to steer the ship, or if piloting the ship had not been entrusted to him, then the ship’s sinking, which happened because of the absence of steering, would not be imputed to him.

Therefore, since the will is able, by willing and by acting, to prevent its own not willing and its own not acting, and since it sometimes ought to prevent them, this not-willing and not-acting is imputed to the

will as if it were something that proceeded from the will.

And so there can be voluntariness in the absence of an act—sometimes in the absence of an exterior act but with an interior act, as when someone wills not to act, and sometimes in the absence of an interior act as well, as when he does not will anything.

Reply to objection 1: ‘Voluntary’ expresses not only what proceeds directly from the will as from an agent, but also what proceeds indirectly from the will as from a non-agent.

Reply to objection 2: ‘Not to will’ (*non velle*) has two senses:

In one sense, it is taken with the force of a single word, and in this sense it is the infinitive of the verb ‘to will-against’ (*infinitivum huius verbi nolo*). In this sense, just as when I say, ‘I will against reading’ (*nolo legere*), the sense is ‘I will not to read’ (*volo non legere*), so too ‘I do not will to read’ (*non volo legere*) signifies that I will not to read. And ‘not to will’, taken in this sense, is a cause of involuntariness.

In a second sense, ‘not to will’ is taken with the force of a phrase. And in this sense it is not the case that an act of the will is affirmed. And ‘not to will’, taken in this sense, is not a cause of involuntariness.

Reply to objection 3: An act of cognition is required for voluntariness in the same sense in which an act of will is required—namely, that it be in someone’s power to think about something and to will it and to do it. And in this sense just as not willing it and not doing it are, when the time comes, voluntary, so too is not thinking about it.

Article 4

Can violence be done to the will?

It seems that violence can be done to the will (*voluntati possit violentia inferri*):

Objection 1: Each thing is such that it can be coerced by something more powerful than it. But there is something more powerful than the human will, viz., God. Therefore, the will can be coerced at least by Him.

Objection 2: Everything passive is coerced by its active counterpart when it is changed by it. But the will is a passive power; for as *De Anima* 3 says, it is “a moved mover.” Therefore, since it is sometimes moved by its active counterpart, it seems that it is sometimes coerced.

Objection 3: A violent movement is one that is contrary to nature. But the will’s movement is sometimes contrary to nature; this is clear in the case of the will’s movement toward sinning, since, as Damascene says, sinning is contrary to nature.

But contrary to this: In *De Civitate Dei* 5 Augustine says that if something is effected by the will, it is not effected by necessity. But anything that is coerced is effected by necessity. Therefore, what is effected by the will cannot be coerced. Therefore, the will cannot be forced to act.

I respond: There are two sorts of acts of the will: (a) the one is an act that belongs directly to the will (*qui est eius immediate*) in the sense that it is *elicited* by the will, viz., to will; (b) the other is an act of the will that is *commanded* by the will and exercised by the mediation of some other power, e.g., to walk or to talk, which are commanded by the will by means of the power to effect local motion (*mediante potentia motiva*).

With respect to acts that are commanded by the will, the will is able to suffer violence, since the exterior members of the body can be prevented from executing the will’s command.

However, with respect to the will’s own proper act itself, violence cannot be done to the will. The reason for this is that the will’s act is nothing other than a certain inclination that proceeds from a cognitive interior principle (*ab interiori principio cognoscente*), in the same way that a natural appetite is

a certain inclination that proceeds from an interior principle and without cognition. Hence, it is contrary to the concept of the will's act that it should be coerced or violent, in the same way that this is also contrary to the concept of a natural inclination or movement. For instance, a rock can be borne upward through violence, but this violent movement cannot proceed from the rock's natural inclination. Similarly, a man can be dragged along by force, but it is incompatible with the concept of violence that this movement should proceed from his will.

Reply to objection 1: God, who is more powerful than the human will, is able to move the human will—this according to Proverbs 21:1 (“The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord, and He shall turn it wherever He wills”). But if this occurred through violence, then it would by that very fact not occur with an act of the will, and the will itself would not be moved. Instead, it would be something contrary to the will.

Reply to objection 2: When what is passive is moved by something active, it is not always the case that the movement is violent. Violence occurs when the movement is effected in a way contrary to the passive thing's interior inclination. Otherwise, all the alterations and generations of simple bodies would be unnatural and violent; and yet they are natural because of the natural interior aptitude of the matter or the subject for the relevant disposition. Similarly, when the will is moved in accord with its proper inclination by a desirable thing, then this movement is voluntary and not violent.

Reply to objection 3: Even if what the will tends toward in sinning is bad and contrary to its rational nature as a matter of fact (*secundum rei veritatem*), it is nonetheless something that is apprehended as good and as in conformity with its nature (*conveniens naturae*); for it is pleasing to the man because of some sensory passion or because of some corrupt habit.

Article 5

Is violence a cause of involuntariness?

It seems that violence is not a cause of involuntariness:

Objection 1: ‘Voluntary’ (*voluntarium*) and ‘involuntary’ (*involuntarium*) have to do with the will (*voluntas*). But as has been shown (a. 4), violence cannot be done to the will. Therefore, violence cannot be a cause of involuntariness.

Objection 2: As Damascene and the Philosopher point out, what is involuntary occurs with sadness. But it sometimes happens that someone suffers violence and yet is not thereby saddened. Therefore, violence is not a cause of involuntariness.

Objection 3: What proceeds from the will cannot be involuntary. But some sorts of violence proceed from the will, as when someone with a heavy body climbs upward, or as when someone twists his limbs in a way contrary to their natural flexibility. Therefore, violence is not a cause of involuntariness.

But contrary to this: The Philosopher and Damascene say, “Something is involuntary because of violence.”

I respond: Violence is directly opposed to the voluntary, just as it is likewise directly opposed to the natural. For it is common to the voluntary and the natural that both proceed from an intrinsic principle, whereas the violent proceeds from an extrinsic principle. Because of this, just as in the case of things that lack cognition, violence effects something contrary to nature, so in the case of things with cognition, violence brings it about that something is contrary to the will.

Now what is contrary to nature is said to be unnatural (*innaturale*), and, similarly, what is contrary to the will is said to be involuntary. Hence, violence is a cause of involuntariness.

Reply to objection 1: The involuntary is opposed to the voluntary. But it was explained above

(a. 4) that 'voluntary' is said not only of acts that belong to the will immediately, but also of acts that are commanded by the will. Thus, as was explained above (a. 4), with respect to acts that belong to the will itself immediately, violence cannot be done to the will, and so violence cannot make such acts involuntary. By contrast, with respect to acts commanded by the will, the will can suffer violence. And as regards such acts, violence renders them involuntary.

Reply to objection 2: Just as what occurs in accord with a nature's inclination is called natural, so what occurs in accord with the will's inclination is called voluntary.

Now there are two ways in which something is said to be *natural*: (a) first, because it proceeds from the nature as from an *active principle*, in the way that giving warmth is natural to a fire; (b) second, in accord with a *passive principle*, i.e., because there exists in the nature an inclination to receive an action from an extrinsic principle, in the way that the movement of a celestial body is said to be natural because of the celestial body's natural readiness (*propter aptitudinem naturalem*) for such a motion, even if what effects the motion is voluntary.

Similarly, there are two possible ways in which something is said to be *voluntary*: (a) in one way, *with respect to an action*, e.g., when some one wills to do something; (b) in the second way, *with respect to being acted upon*, viz., when someone wills to be acted upon by another.

Hence, when an action is done to someone by something exterior, then as long as the volition to undergo the action remains in the will of the one who undergoes the action (*manente in eo qui patitur voluntate patiendi*), there is no violence absolutely speaking. For even though the one who is undergoing the action does not contribute by acting, he nonetheless contributes by his willing to undergo the action. Hence, this cannot be called involuntary.

Reply to objection 3: As the Philosopher says in *Physics* 8, even if the movement of an animal by which the animal sometimes moves against the body's natural inclination is not natural to the body, it is nonetheless in some sense natural to the animal, since it is natural to the animal to be moved by desire. And so this movement is violent in a certain respect but not absolutely speaking.

And one should reply along the same lines for the case in which someone twists his limbs against their natural disposition. For this is violent in a certain respect, viz., with respect to the particular limbs, but not violent absolutely speaking, i.e., with respect to the man himself.

Article 6

Is fear a cause of involuntariness absolutely speaking?

It seems that fear (*metus*) is a cause of involuntariness absolutely speaking (*involuntarium simpliciter*):

Objection 1: Just as violence has to do with what is presently contrary to the will, so fear has to do with a future evil that is repugnant to the will. But violence is a cause of involuntariness absolutely speaking. Therefore, fear is likewise a cause of involuntariness absolutely speaking.

Objection 2: Whatever is such-and-such in its own right (*tale secundum se*) remains that way no matter what is added to it; for instance, what is hot in its own right is such that as long as it itself remains, it is hot regardless of what it is joined to. But what is done out of fear (*per metum*) is involuntary in its own right. Therefore, whatever fear is added to is likewise involuntary.

Objection 3: Whatever is such-and-such on some condition (*tale sub conditione*) is such-and-such in a certain respect (*secundum quid tale*), whereas what is such-and-such unconditionally (*absque conditione tale*) is such-and-such absolutely speaking (*simpliciter tale*). For instance, what is necessary on a condition is necessary in a certain respect, whereas what is necessary unconditionally (*absolute*) is necessary absolutely speaking (*simpliciter*). But what is done out of fear is unconditionally involuntary,

whereas it is voluntary only on a condition, viz., in order that the feared evil might be avoided. Therefore, what is done out of fear is involuntary absolutely speaking (*simpliciter involuntarium*).

But contrary to this: Gregory of Nyssa says, and the Philosopher likewise, that things done out of fear “are more voluntary than involuntary.”

I respond: As the Philosopher says in *Ethics* 3—and Gregory of Nyssa says the same thing in *De Homine*—things that are done out of fear are a mixture of the voluntary and the involuntary. For what is done out of fear, considered just in itself, is not voluntary, but it becomes voluntary in the given case, viz., in order to avoid the evil that is feared.

However, if one thinks about this matter correctly, actions of the sort in question are voluntary more than involuntary (*magis voluntaria quam involuntaria*), since they are voluntary absolutely speaking (*voluntaria simpliciter*), whereas they are involuntary in a certain respect (*involuntaria secundum quid*). For each thing is said to exist absolutely speaking insofar as it is actual, whereas insofar as it exists only in one’s apprehension, it exists in a certain respect and not absolutely speaking. Now what is done out of fear is actual insofar as it is done; for since acts are numbered among singular things and since a singular thing as such exists *here* and *now*, what is done actually exists insofar as it exists *here* and *now* and with other *individual conditions*. But what is done in this sense out of fear is voluntary insofar as it exists *here* and *now*, since in *this* case there is the obstacle of a greater evil that was feared; for instance, to throw the cargo into the sea during a storm becomes voluntary because of the fear of danger. Hence, it is clear that this action is voluntary absolutely speaking. The concept of the voluntary also applies to it because its principle is internal..

On the other hand, that fact that what is done out of fear is taken to be repugnant to the will when existing outside of this particular case has to do only with our thought. And so the action is involuntary in a certain respect, i.e., insofar as it is thought of as existing outside of this particular case.

Reply to objection 1: Things done out of fear (*per metum*) and things done through coercion (*per vim*) differ from one another not only with respect to the present and the future, but also in the fact that what is done through coercion is altogether contrary to the will’s movement and such that the will does not consent to it, whereas what is done out of fear is voluntary by reason of the fact that the will is directed toward it (*fertur ad id*)—not, to be sure, for its own sake but for the sake of something else, viz., to ward off the evil that is feared. For an action’s being voluntary for the sake of something else is sufficient for the concept of the voluntary, since the voluntary is not only that which we will for the sake of itself as an end, but also that which we will for the sake of something else as an end. Therefore, it is clear that in the case of what is done through force, the interior will does nothing, whereas in the case of what is done out of fear, the will does do something. And this is why, in order to exclude what is done out of fear from the definition of the violent, Gregory of Nyssa not only says, “The violent is that whose principle is external,” but also adds, “while what is being acted upon contributes nothing (*nihil conferente vim passo*).” For the will of the one who fears does contribute something to what is done out of fear.

Reply to objection 2: Things that are predicated absolutely (*ea quae absolute dicuntur*) are those, e.g., ‘white’ and ‘hot’, which remain regardless of what is added to them. On the other hand, things that are predicated relatively (*ea quae relative dicuntur*) vary according to their relations to different things. For instance, what is large in comparison to *this* thing is small in comparison to *that* thing.

Now something is said to be voluntary not only because of itself and, as it were, absolutely, but also because of another and, as it were, relatively. And so nothing prevents something that would not be voluntary relative to one thing from becoming voluntary relative to something else.

Reply to objection 3: What is done out of fear is unconditionally voluntary (*voluntarium absque conditione*), i.e., voluntary with respect to what is actually done. But it is conditionally involuntary (*involuntarium sub conditione*), i.e., involuntary if this fear were not present. Hence, given the argument contained in the objection, the opposite conclusion could rather be drawn.

Article 7

Is concupiscence a cause of involuntariness?

It seems that concupiscence [or sentient desire] (*concupiscentia*) is a cause of involuntariness:

Objection 1: Just as fear is a certain passion, so too is concupiscence. But fear is a cause of what is in some sense involuntary. Therefore, so is concupiscence.

Objection 2: Just as, because of his fear, the fearful man does something contrary to what he had intended (*contra id quod proponebat*), so does the incontinent man because of his concupiscence. But fear is in some sense a cause of involuntariness. Therefore, so is concupiscence.

Objection 3: Cognition is required for voluntariness. But concupiscence corrupts cognition; for as the Philosopher says in *Ethics* 6, “Pleasure”—or the desire for pleasure—“corrupts the judgment of prudence.” Therefore, concupiscence is a cause of involuntariness.

But contrary to this: Damascene says, “What is involuntary deserves mercy or indulgence (*miseriordia vel indulgentia*) and is done with sadness (*cum tristia agitur*).” But neither of these characteristics applies to what is done out of concupiscence. Therefore, concupiscence is not a cause of involuntariness.

I respond: Concupiscence is not a cause of involuntariness but instead makes something voluntary. For something is said to be voluntary from the fact that the will is directed (*fertur*) toward it. But the will is inclined by concupiscence toward willing what is desired. And so concupiscence makes it the case that something is voluntary rather than that it is involuntary.

Reply to objection 1: Fear (*timor*) is directed at what is bad, whereas concupiscence is related to what is good. Now what is bad in its own right (*malum secundum se*) is contrary to the will, whereas what is good is consonant with the will. Hence, fear acts as a cause of involuntariness more than concupiscence does.

Reply to objection 2: In the case of something done out of fear, the will retains a repugnance to what is done, considered in itself. By contrast, in the case of something done out of concupiscence, e.g., something incontinent, there is no remaining prior volition by which the will repudiated what is now desired; instead, the will changes in such a way as to will now what it previously repudiated. And this is why what is done out of fear is in some sense involuntary, whereas what is done out of concupiscence is in no sense involuntary. For the incontinent man who cannot control his concupiscence acts contrary to what he previously intended, but not contrary to what he now wills, whereas the fearful man acts contrary to what he even now wills in its own right.

Reply to objection 3: If concupiscence totally undermined cognition, as happens in the case of those who go out of their minds (*fit amentes*) because of concupiscence, then it would follow that concupiscence destroys voluntariness. And yet in such a case there would not, properly speaking, be involuntariness, either, since neither the voluntary nor the involuntary exist in things that do not have the use of reason.

However, sometimes in the case of actions done out of concupiscence cognition is not totally removed, since the cognitive power is not undermined; rather, what is undermined is just the actual thinking about *this* particular possible action (*consideratio actualis in particulari agibili*). And yet this very undermining is itself voluntary to the extent that what is voluntary is said to be within the will’s power—including not acting, not willing something, or, similarly, even not thinking about something. For as will be explained below (q. 10, a. 3 and q. 77, a. 7), the will is able to resist the passions.

Article 8

Is ignorance a cause of involuntariness?

It seems that ignorance is not a cause of involuntariness:

Objection 1: As Damascene says, “Involuntariness deserves leniency (*meretur veniam*).” But sometimes what is done out of ignorance (*per ignorantia*) does not deserve leniency—this according to 1 Corinthians 14:38 (“If anyone does not know, he shall not be known”). Therefore, ignorance is not a cause of involuntariness.

Objection 2: Every sin is accompanied by ignorance—this according to Proverbs 14:22 (“They are mistaken who do evil”). Therefore, if ignorance were a cause of involuntariness, then it would follow that every sin is involuntary. But this is contrary to Augustine, who says that every sin is voluntary.

Objection 3: As Damascene says, “What is involuntary is accompanied by sadness.” But some actions are done out of ignorance and yet without sadness—as, for instance, if someone, thinking that he is killing a stag, kills an enemy whom he wanted to kill. Therefore, ignorance is not a cause of involuntariness.

But contrary to this: Damascene and the Philosopher claim that a certain sort of involuntariness occurs because of ignorance.

I respond: Ignorance has to be a cause of involuntariness by reason of the fact that it is a privation of the cognition (*privat cognitionem*) which, as was explained above (a. 1), is a prerequisite for voluntariness. Yet not every instance of ignorance is a privation of this sort of cognition. And so notice that there are three ways in which ignorance might be related to an act of the will: (a) as something *concomitant* (*concomitanter*), (b) as something *consequent* (*consequenter*), and (c) as something *antecedent* (*antecedenter*).

It is related as something *concomitant* when the ignorance has to do with something which (a) is being done and yet which (b) would still be done even if the knowledge were present (*etiam si sciretur*). For in such a case the ignorance does not lead one to will that this thing be done; instead, it just happens that what is done is simultaneous with the ignorance—as in the example posited above, where someone wills to kill his enemy but kills him unknowingly, thinking that he is killing a stag. As the Philosopher points out, ignorance of this sort does not make for *involuntariness*, since it is not a cause of anything that is repugnant to the will, but it does make for *non-voluntariness*, since what one is ignorant of cannot be actually willed [here and now].

Ignorance is related to the will as something *consequent* insofar as the ignorance itself is voluntary. There are two ways in which this can happen, corresponding to the two modes of voluntariness posited above (a. 3):

In the first way, an act of will is directed toward the ignorance (*actus voluntatis fertur in ignorantiam*), as when someone wills to be ignorant so that he might be excused from his sin or so that he might not withdraw from sinning—this according to Job 21:14 (“We do not want knowledge of Your ways”). This is called *affected ignorance*.

In the second way, what is called voluntary is an ignorance of what one can and should know in the sense, explained above (a. 3), in which not acting and not willing are called voluntary. Ignorance in this sense occurs either (a) when someone does not actually think about what he can and ought to think about, and this is *ignorance by bad choice* (*ignorantia malae electionis*), which arises either from passion or from a habit, or (b) when someone does not take care to acquire knowledge (*notitiam*) that he ought to have, and, accordingly, this *ignorance of general principles of law* that everyone is obliged to know is voluntary and arises from a sort of negligence.

Now when the ignorance is itself voluntary in one of these ways, it cannot be a cause of involuntariness absolutely speaking. Yet it is a cause of involuntariness in a certain respect, viz., insofar

as it precedes the will's movement toward doing something that would not be done if the knowledge were present.

Ignorance is related to the will as something *antecedent* when the ignorance is not voluntary and yet is a cause of willing what the man would not otherwise will, as when a man is ignorant of some circumstance of an act which he is not obliged to know, and because of this he does something that he would not do if the knowledge were present. For instance, suppose that someone, having exercised due diligence and not knowing that someone is crossing a path, shoots an arrow with which he kills the one crossing the path. This sort of ignorance is a cause of involuntariness absolutely speaking.

Reply to objection 1 and objection 2 and objection 3: This makes clear the replies to the objections. For the first objection has to do with ignorance of things that one is obliged to know. The second objection has to do with ignorance by choice, which, as has been explained, is voluntary in a certain way. The third objection has to do with ignorance that is related to the will as something concomitant.